

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Strategic Risk Assessment</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> May 2024</b>
<b>DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To provide members with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That members scrutinise, on an on-going basis, the risk assessment and responsibility holders to ensure that strategic risks have been appropriately identified and risk is being appropriately managed.
- 2.2 That members use the risk assessment to inform the future work programme of the committee and brief chairs of other committees where issues are of relevance to their work.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The strategic risk assessment ensures that:
- Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority
  - Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate
  - Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority.
- 3.2 The Strategic Risk Assessment, in appendix 1, is continually updated based on the latest evidence. This is in line with the council's strategic risk management policy; a summary of this is provided in Appendix 2.
- 3.3 Strategic risks covered by the assessment are those which affect the council as a whole. The assessments focus is typically on key risks which could significantly jeopardise the council's ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned. The risk assessment also only covers high and medium level strategic risks. Lower level or operational risks are not registered unless they are projected to escalate within the three years covered. The strategic risk assessment should continue to focus on medium term risks to service delivery.
- 3.4 The strategic risk assessment is a detailed document. Any significant changes or updates made to each risk can be found in the 'key changes' column in the summary table at the start of the full Strategic Risk Register. Some of the more significant recent changes are:
- The risk level for risk 10, relating to the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP), is expected to decrease to medium post-mitigation for the year 2026/27 as a result of the RLDP being proposed for adoption during 2025/26
  - The risk level for risk 12, relating to the rising cost-of-living, has increased from medium to high, post-mitigation, for the year 2025/26 to reflect the ongoing hardship that is likely to be faced by many as a result of the continued cost-of-living crisis; the risk level is assessed to return to medium, post-mitigation, for 2026/27.

- Risk 14, relating to public bus services, has been refocused as a result of the immediate financial risk having been mitigated; the current risk now stems from a changing delivery model. The inherent risk of a reduction in public bus services, however, remains unchanged.

- 3.5 The council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and has controls in place to assess, manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks to service delivery. The strategic risk register will regularly evolve and adapt in line with this. The up-to-date register is accessible on the council's intranet so members are able to utilise it at any point in the year to re-prioritise their work plans as appropriate.
- 3.6 The council's Risk Management Policy and Guidance has been reviewed, having been informed by the findings of an internal audit review into the council's risk management arrangements, feedback from Governance and Audit Committee and input from the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet. This refreshed policy and guidance, along with an overview of the strategic risk register, was presented to Governance and Audit Committee at their 29<sup>th</sup> April meeting; it will be presented to Cabinet for formal approval at their meeting on the 5<sup>th</sup> June, along with the full strategic risk register.
- 3.7 The assessment is one part of the Council's risk management arrangements. Risk is managed through a variety of processes, for example, through teams' service plans, through Emergency Management Plans and business continuity arrangements, health and safety procedures and insurance arrangements.

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

- 4.1 To provide timely, relevant information on strategic risks as part of the performance management framework for ensuring the authority is well run and able to contribute to achieving the Council's purpose.

#### **5. AUTHORS:**

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Appendix 1: Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment – May 2024

Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment

Ref	Potential Risk	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Key changes
<b>Risks to resources</b>				
1	It will not be possible to deliver all of the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan leading to slower than desired progress towards our purpose as a result of a tightening financial position	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	A six-month progress update on meeting commitments set out in the Community and Corporate plan was presented to Cabinet in January 2024. During this meeting Cabinet agreed to reflect on the deliverability of the community and corporate plan in light of the current and future budget pressures.
1b	A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	This is a new risk added to the strategic risk register, to ensure that that the risk to the speed at which the council is able to make decisions and implement change as a result of the slim majority is assessed and managed.
2	Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The 2024/25 budget was approved by Council in February following scrutiny by various committees, public and stakeholder consultation. Despite setting a balanced budget for 2024/25 there remains some risk as a result of a dynamic financial situation. Further work will be undertaken to develop the medium-term financial strategy and plan that will include an ongoing assessment of pressures, risks and modelling assumptions along with a clear plan and approach to address the budget shortfalls forecast.
3	The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	A revised and updated Asset Management Strategy was approved by Council in January, introducing clearer alignment with the Community and Corporate Plan and establishing key principles which will inform strategic decision making for the council's land and property portfolio.
4	Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The development of a revised people strategy aligned to the community and corporate plan is a significant mitigating action for this risk; this strategy is due to be presented to Cabinet in June.
5	Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	A range of mitigation action continue to be undertaken to mitigate this risk.
<b>Risks to service delivery</b>				
6	Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The nature of the risk has been updated reflecting the increased complexity in safeguarding presentations and increased vulnerability within communities. The 2022/23 annual Safeguarding Evaluation report was presented to Council in December 2023. The strategic risk has been updated in line with the findings of this evaluation.
7	Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/25 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	A Placement Development Strategy was presented to Council in April, setting out the strategy for the expansion and development of in-county residential and supported accommodation placements for children who are looked after.
8	Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The risk has been updated reflecting the on-going pressure across the social care and health system, together with workforce shortages in some areas. Progress with mitigating actions has been updated including recruitment campaigns, care at home and the micro- carers project.

9	High absence rates, particularly among vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic will result in a worsening of educational attainment	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The nature of the risk and mitigation actions have been updated. The change reflects the progress made in mitigating the risk of implementing the new national curriculum on learning and the continued risk of delayed impacts of the pandemic on learning through reduced attendance levels and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools.
<b>Risks to policy priorities</b>				
10	a) The council is unable to proceed with the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan due to a failure to identify and agree suitable Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites  b) The council does not support the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan  c) Delays to the adoption of a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) inhibits our ability to take forward key policy objectives such as job creation and affordable housing development  d) High phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye limit development opportunities within a significant proportion of the county	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The risk level for this risk is expected to decrease to medium, post-mitigation, for the year 2026/27 as a result of the RLDP being proposed for adoption during 2025/26.
11	a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge  b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	The Climate Emergency Strategy is being reworked into an overarching Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy to align with the new Community and Corporate Plan and is due to be presented to Cabinet in May 2024. This reworked strategy will be underpinned by 4 action plans to better reflect the breadth of work that is taking place: Internal decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change.
12	The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The risk level for this risk has increased from medium to high, post-mitigation, for 25/26, to reflect ongoing financial hardship that is likely to be faced by many families as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.
13	Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Through Rapid Rehousing the council has facilitated increased resources into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. New arrangements have been established with partner agencies such as the DWP and Shared Benefit Service to support more people at risk of homelessness. A total of 261 awards were given during the 23/24 financial year to both households at risk of homelessness to help tackle arrears/debt and households experiencing homelessness to enable them to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives.
14	A reduction in public bus services as a result of a reduction in funding makes it harder for people to access key services across the county	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	A revised risk of the possible reduction in public bus services has been identified.
15	Increased legal challenge to council decisions and service delivery resulting in delays, increased costs and reputational harm.	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	2024/25 – Medium (6) 2025/26 – Medium (6) 2026/27 – Medium (6)	This has been identified due to the risk of delays to council decision making as a result of legal challenges.

#### Risks to resources

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that:
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			It will not be possible to deliver all of the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan leading to slower than desired progress towards our purpose as a result of a tightening financial position						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) and Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)			<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	All		<b>Strategic objective</b>	All	
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
<p>The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires us to plan on a decadal and generational basis. We updated our medium-term Community and Corporate Plan following the election of a new Council in May 2022 to align to the aspirations of the new administration. This will inform the development of a medium-term financial plan. The publication of three-year indicative budget settlements will aid this process but higher levels of inflation and pay awards above present assumptions make planning for the longer term difficult. A replacement Local Development Plan is currently being developed and other medium-term strategies such as the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy will be updated. The global outlook has changed the world considerably since 2020, and we must consider the longer-term impact on future generations, and plan for these accordingly. The council's key enabling strategies that facilitate the delivery of our Community and Corporate Plan are currently being updated to reflect new and emerging priorities.</p> <p>The authority is likely to face significant budget pressures as the UK Government begins to repay the debt accrued to meet the costs of the pandemic. Alongside this, it is expected that the NHS will continue to consume an increasing proportion of public sector expenditure. Both adult and children's social care are facing acute pressures with escalating demand, increasing complexity and workforce shortages all contributing. While there is pressure to free-up hospital beds, the care system does not have the capacity to accommodate this, meaning that more resources will be drawn into these acute settings.</p> <p>These issues are compounded by workforce shortages and low levels of pay compared to other sectors. In Monmouthshire, high property prices make it difficult for staff to remain in or relocate to the area.</p> <p>Housing shortages are contributing to increasing levels of homelessness with limited affordable accommodation to meet the 2,400 applicants registered as in need on the Housing Register. This is compounded by the National Development Framework, which will limit the development of housing that is affordable for the key workers of the future. Limited housing growth will also have an impact on future council tax receipts, which the county is dependent on as it receives the lowest settlement of any local authority in Wales meaning that more must come from council tax or commercial income streams. The funding formula does not take adequate account of the relative higher costs of providing services in rural areas where public services cannot be easily centralised to generate economies of scale.</p> <p>An additional challenge that poses a threat to the long-term viability is climate change with increasing frequency of adverse weather events. The county of Monmouthshire has one of the highest carbon footprints in Wales with an older housing stock, which will be costly to decarbonise. The geography also means that decarbonising council operations will be more challenging than in urban areas.</p>									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>					<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
<b>Mitigating Action</b>		<b>Responsibility Holder</b>		<b>Timescale</b>		<b>Mitigation action progress</b>			
Ensure affordability and deliverability of the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan in the context of the wider economic climate		Strategic Leadership Team		Ongoing		The Community and Corporate Plan was endorsed by Council in April 2023. A six-month progress update on meeting commitments set out in the plan was presented to Cabinet in January 2024. During this meeting Cabinet agreed to reflect on the deliverability of the community and corporate plan in light of the current and future budget pressures, and to receive a report in the first quarter of 2024/25 setting out revised measures alongside targets for performance up to the final year of the plan, taking advantage of in-year work done on becoming a Marmot Region with a move towards improved measurement of outcomes rather than outputs where possible.			
Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users		Strategic Leadership Team		Ongoing		<p>The Council has undertaken a range of assessment and research to understand well-being in the county including the well-being assessment, population needs assessment, and research for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). These were used to inform the new Community and Corporate Plan, alongside information generated by cross-party working groups held in July and August 2022.</p> <p>A month-long consultation period on the 24/25 budget proposals took place at the beginning of 2024, where residents and local businesses were encouraged to engage and share their views. A range of events were held, both face to face and virtually, to ensure all residents had the ability to participate. Feedback from the events was carefully considered and resulted in a number of changes being made to the draft budget proposals and some savings being reversed.</p> <p>The contemporary policy challenges that we need to meet, working with our communities, are complex and evolving. These include transitioning to net zero, tackling the determinants of health inequality, making sure our children do well, and social care reform. We need to ensure that our understanding of these in the county remains up-to-date and current to inform our priorities. There is a need to develop our thinking and</p>			

			ideas as we plan for the longer term. The involvement and participation of and engagement with Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents will be strengthened to help further understand experiences in the County, and to ensure programmes are bold and ambitious.
Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and adapt to reflect the global uncertainty on public finances.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	June 2024	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be presented to Council in June. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will follow which will outline a more specific delivery plan. It is important that both the MTFS and MTFP have regard to the cause and impact on meeting the well-being objectives and wider ambition of the Council set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.
Review and update enabling strategies following the adoption of a new Community and Corporate Plan and learning from the pandemic to ensure alignment of resources with the organisations policy priorities.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	June 2024	The enabling strategies will be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>1b</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>		Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) and Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	All	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All			
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
The local elections of May 2022 resulted in no political party having overall control of the Council. The Labour party was the largest party and formed a new cabinet without an overall majority. The lack of a majority Council has resulted in a politically unstable council, which has had a significant effect on the speed of the organisation's decision making and the ability to implement policy change. A coalition agreement has subsequently been reached between the Labour party and the Green party which provides a slim political majority of one councillor. The democratic process has seen some decisions be subject to call-in which can cause uncertainty in some projects.									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>					<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
2026/27	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
<b>Mitigating Action</b>			<b>Responsibility Holder</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Mitigation action progress</b>				
Undertake pre-decision scrutiny on relevant decisions			Chief Officer Law & Governance and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	Each scrutiny committee has an established forward plan. This is shared regularly with department management teams to seek their input on items that will require scrutiny. A number of special meetings have been held to ensure decisions are scrutinised in advance of decisions. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the forward plan to ensure appropriate time can be allocated by scrutiny committees to forthcoming decisions.				
Utilise members seminars and scrutiny workshops to engage and involve all councillors in the development of policy			Chief Officer Law & Governance and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	Members seminars are being used to share developments and involve councillors on significant forthcoming decisions. Recent seminars include on the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and Culture Strategy.  Scrutiny workshops are being held to seek councillors' involvement in the development of proposals, these include the review of primary school catchments and Gypsy and Traveller needs assessment.				
Maintain a fully populated forward work planner of Cabinet and Council business			Chief Officer Law & Governance	Ongoing	An established forward work planner for cabinet and Council business is available to all councillors and is a standing item on the agenda of scrutiny committees to inform their own work programme. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the forward plan to ensure all interested parties are sighted as early as possible on planned decisions being brought forward.				

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>		Peter Davies (Deputy Chief Executive) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	All	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All			
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
Councils across the UK are continuing to face significant financial challenges. It is widely acknowledged that local government funding has not kept pace with increased service demand and inflationary pressures. The Council has seen continuing financial headwinds which are severely impacting the service operating environment. The Inflationary drivers impacting pay and supplies and services continue to far outstrip available resources: demand led pressures continue to									

increase in the areas of Homelessness, Social Care, Children’s additional learning needs, and Transport; interest rates have risen sharply to combat inflation, significantly above economic forecasts; the Council continues to deal with a shortage of staff resources due to ongoing labour market challenges which require the use of more costly temporary solutions; supply chain issues continue which require more costly alternative or expedited arrangements; the cost of living crisis continues to have a significant impact on our communities. This will be further exacerbated over the medium term by a weak growth forecast in the UK economy impacting on public sector spending, and by heightened interest rates that will impact housing costs. All the aforementioned results in a growing need for supportive Council services, a reduced demand for income generating services, increased risks around debt recovery, and a continued high-cost operating environment.

Current modelling predicts a continuously increasing budget deficit, despite a higher than expected increase in Welsh Government funding, with a shortfall of £35million predicted in 2027/28. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and therefore any budget shortfalls will need to be met through a combination of pressures being mitigated, additional savings and income or reserve contributions. This will be particularly challenging set against the backdrop of an ambitious Corporate and Community Plan being implemented.

There is not a consistent picture of schools’ balances. There has been a fluctuating trend with some schools showing a continuing reduction in schools balances, which is of concern, and others a more stable trend. However, grants awarded to schools at 2020/21- and 2021/22-year ends have resulted in a large increase in overall school balances. At 2022/23 year end, five schools were in deficit, compared to sixteen forecast to be in deficit by year-end 2023/24. Several schools continue to carry structural budget deficits which will need close monitoring as we move into a difficult budget year for schools in 2024/25.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

Mitigating Actions			
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Ensure that services deliver within budget, deliver savings targets and continue to identify, review and challenge pressures.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Ongoing	<p>The 2022/23 revenue budget culminated in an overspend of £3.5m which required funding from earmarked reserves to cover the additional expenditure incurred following acute pressures experienced within Adult’s and Children’s services, Homelessness, and Education. The 2023/24 budget set in March 2023 accommodated additional costs of delivering services of £26m or 14%. Whilst income and funding increased by 9% (£16m) to meet some of these costs, the Council needed to find savings of 5% (£10m) from services.</p> <p>Cabinet received an early financial update for the year at their July 2023 meeting which highlighted significant early pressure on the Council’s budget of around £6m. As part of a package of measures to tackle this, Cabinet approved the use of £2.5m of useable revenue reserves to increase the Council’s overall level of inflation contingency. This equated to the amount of reserves that were originally anticipated to be required to support the 2022/23 budget outturn position, but were not ultimately called upon. When set alongside a further unbudgeted grant assumption of £1m, this left a remaining forecast budget pressure of £2.6m. Cabinet immediately instigated mitigating action to develop a structured approach to tackling the remaining forecast deficit through £2.1m of budget recovery proposals brought forward by services.</p> <p>The Month 9 2023/24 budget update forecasts an overall revenue budget deficit of £314k, a slight deterioration of £29k from the Month 6 update. The overall deficit is due to a combination of a shortfall in services being able to meet their budgeted savings targets of £1.866m and in-year budgetary pressures across three of our frontline service directorates; this is offset significantly by in-year use of reserves of £2.5m to mitigate inflationary pressures, and savings within treasury, corporate costs, and financing budgets. This use of £2.5m of reserves is in addition to the use of £3m of reserves that was approved as part of the 2023/24 budget. Further mitigation is provided by utilising a maximum of £4m of capital receipts to meet revenue expenditure under regulation.</p> <p>There remain key specific budgetary risks presenting for the remainder of this financial year and beyond. Homeless presentations continue to be volatile; increased level and complexity of demand within social care continues to provide a financial risk; the risk that further non-delivery of budgeted savings targets in the current difficult operating environment will impact on both 2023/24 and the medium-term if alternative strategies to deliver savings cannot be found; reducing debt recovery; limited reserve cover; the deteriorating and volatile wider economic climate.</p> <p>Work will continue to deliver on the structured approach to tackling the underlying budget pressures, which will continue to explore all available options open to the Council. There is a requirement for all services to continue to bear down on avoidable cost and identify further income opportunities wherever possible for the remainder of the year, in order to limit the call on severely limited useable revenue reserves.</p>

Develop a set of budget proposals for 2024/25	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	March 2024	<p>Cabinet published their budget setting process and timetable at their meeting in November 2023. This highlighted an initial budget gap of £14.4m, which was made up of gross expenditure pressures of £22.7m or 10%, offset by modelled increases in funding of £8.3m or 4% of increased Welsh Government grant, Council tax and fees and charges for services. This is the second successive year that the Council has needed to tackle gross expenditure pressures of £20m+. Whilst the Council in the past has regularly dealt with financial challenges in the order of £5m - £10m in an annual planning cycle, the scale of the pressure for 2024/25 is challenging.</p> <p>Budget proposals were subject to scrutiny at various committees as well as a month-long public consultation process at the beginning of this year; in total the council engaged with 206 attendees across 13 stakeholder events. Feedback received through these channels resulted in some changes being made to proposals, namely removing the requirement of schools to make efficiency savings of £835k; the removal of the proposal to introduce a charge for food waste bags; the removal of the proposal relating to increasing planning application fee income. A final cost pressure within Adult's social care was also recognised within final budget proposals. Final proposals were approved by Council at their meeting in February.</p> <p>Despite setting a balanced budget for 2024/25, there remains some risk as a result of the dynamic financial situation. The key risks remaining to be assessed and managed in 2024/25 are: the deliverability of budget savings proposals; continued service demand pressures in children's social services; demographic changes such as an increasing elderly population, changes in pupil numbers, increase in special educational need provision and increase in homeless presentations; late notification of grant funding streams being removed or reduced; the risk of pay awards being greater than modelled budget assumptions and not being fully funded by UK and Welsh Government; uncertainty around UK Government funding of increased employer pension contributions; an uncertain economic and political environment. Further work will be undertaken to develop the medium-term strategy and plan that will include an ongoing assessment of pressures, risks and modelling assumptions along with a clear plan and approach to address the budget shortfalls forecast.</p>
Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-term financial plan, that is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios, to guide our budget setting in line with agreed strategic objectives and responsiveness to challenges, such as the cost-of-living.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	June 2024	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be presented to Council in June. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will follow which will outline a more specific delivery plan. It is important that both the MTFS and MTFP have regard to the cause and impact on meeting the well-being objectives and wider ambition of the Council set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.
Develop and deliver an Asset Management Strategy aligned to the Community and Corporate Plan	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Timescales as per strategy	The updated Asset Management Strategy has been adopted, introducing clearer alignment to the Community & Corporate Plan and establishing key principles which will inform strategic decision making for the council's land and property portfolio. The Asset Management Strategy is delivered via the associated Asset Management Plan, which is subject to regular monitoring and progress reporting.
Progress the Delegation Agreement with Cardiff Council, for the discharge and provision of council strategic and operational procurement services	Head of Enterprise and Community Animation	Timescales as per strategy	<p>The authority has entered into a collaboration with Cardiff Council, for mutual benefit, in the discharge and provision of the council's procurement services. The arrangements provide increased capacity and expertise to strengthen the council's procurement arrangements, such as in the use of data, to lead to better informed business decisions and business alignment. The effectiveness and impact of the arrangements will need to be assessed on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The council's Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 and delivery plan were approved by Cabinet in June 2023. This strategy ensures that our procurement processes are aligned with our objectives outlined in the Community and Corporate Plan, and sets out our key procurement objectives, which include contributing to reducing the Council's carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2030 and making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and the third sector.</p>
Continue to work closely with schools to ensure their financial plans are as robust as possible to minimise any impact, whilst continuing to improve standards for our young people.	Finance Manager – Children & Young People	Ongoing	Collective School Balances at the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year amounted to £6.956m surplus. The majority of the surplus balance brought forward into 2022/23 was due to several grants being awarded to schools at 2021-22 year-end, including Revenue Maintenance, Winter of Wellbeing, ALN New System, Recruit Recover & Raise Standards, Attendance Support & Community Schools, RISG and LA Education Grant. The 2022/23 Month 9 forecast anticipated a draw on reserves of £4.652m. Between then and year-end, additional income including EAS income and Ukraine funding not included in school forecasts were received by schools, as well as some schools not investing as planned. This resulted in the draw on reserves being reduced to just under £2.7m.



			Five schools were in a deficit by the end of 2022/23, which points to structural budget deficits remaining in some cases, or a lack of planning for budgetary risks in the current economic environment. The Month 9 2023/24 forecast notes a significant movement in cumulative School balances forecast for the year, moving from a surplus of £4.25m to a forecast deficit of £1.35m at year-end. Sixteen schools are currently forecast to be in deficit by year-end. The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision. Higher than budgeted pay awards have also impacted upon budgets. Finance teams will continue to support schools to closely monitor and manage expenditure through to the financial year-end in order to mitigate the impact on closing balances.
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<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	3	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability			
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Peter Davies (Deputy Chief Executive) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All	

**Reason why Identified**

Underlying the Capital Strategy is the recognition that the financial resources available to meet council priorities are constrained by the level of one-off reserves and capital receipts that the Council holds and the level of capital grant funding from Welsh Government and other funding bodies, and the extent to which the Council is able to entertain further prudential borrowing. The core capital programme has been impacted in recent years in order to enable the Band A new schools programme to be funded, which has now successfully concluded. Subsequent to a Council decision having been secured the 3-19 school in Abergavenny has progressed into contract and is in its construction phase, supported under the Welsh Government Band B programme.

There remain a considerable number of pressures that sit outside any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP, and this has significant risk associated with it. These include property and highways infrastructure, DDA work, and public rights of way. In addition to this, there are various schemes/proposals (e.g. Monlife, tranche C Future schools, climate emergency response, any enhanced DFG spending etc.) that could also have a capital consequence, but in advance of quantifying those or having Member consideration of these items, they are also excluded from current capital MTFP. In the event of emergency pressures, resources will have to be diverted. Projects, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, also require significant capital investment to realise the outcomes.

The timing of capital receipts always remains uncertain due to market conditions. Future investment in capital schemes is in part dependent on future success of achieving capital receipts and there are risks attached to some receipts materialising. There is a risk associated with relying on the use of capital receipts in the same year that they come into the council and the potential for this to have significant revenue pressures should receipts be delayed and temporary borrowing be required. Significant further capital receipts are now not forecast and until such time as the outcome of the Replacement Local Development Plan is known and for which the Council has put forward a number of strategic sites in its ownership.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

**Mitigating Actions**

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Regularly review assumptions as part of the capital MTFP taking account of any new information that is relevant and the consequential impact on the revenue MTFP.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Ongoing	<p>The MTFP model was reviewed and updated as part of the budget process for 2023/24 to reflect the impact of the current economic situation, the revised demands and assumptions that this brings, together with aligning with the policy objectives of the new Cabinet.</p> <p>The value of Capital receipts forecast after 2022/23 drops off quite considerably which is reflective of the replacement local development plan (RDLP) not proceeding as quickly as envisaged in the original delivery agreement. This will have a substantial impact on the balance of receipts available to fund future capital investment demands. It is therefore important that reliance on capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction (to fund one-off revenue costs eligible to be met from capital resources) is seen as a short-term measure only.</p> <p>The Council has strengthened its scrutiny and challenge of the Capital Programme through the established Capital and asset management working group (CAMWG). The process in place looks to ensure that projects are prudent, affordable and will deliver tangible benefits to core policy objectives over the long term. The Capital Programme will be reviewed and reconsidered during the budgetary process to ensure that the revenue implications of capital expenditure are accurately reflected in the revenue MTFP and that the capital expenditure plans of the Council remain affordable, prudent and sustainable.</p>

Continue to monitor the Capital budget	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Ongoing	<p>The 2022/23 capital expenditure outturns showed a net underspend of £94,000 against budget, primarily due to overspends of £621k in enabling service transformation and £180k in the refurbishment of borough theatre being offset by underspends in various schemes which were instead funded by grants or the release of budgets.</p> <p>102 capital schemes have required slippage into 2023/24 totalling £33,098,000, representing 42% of the total budget for the year. Whilst delays in progressing capital schemes can be expected due to varying external influencing factors, the large number of schemes requiring slippage, along with the explanations given by budget holders, point to more underlying issues such as unrealistic profiling of budgets and a lack of resourcing to manage the volume of schemes being planned.</p> <p>£3.415m more capital receipts are forecast to be available over the medium term than forecast at Month 9, following under spends within the capital programme; additional grant being secured for existing schemes, or; where capital receipts forecast over the medium term have increased. Whilst positive, there remains a need for caution over committing any further receipts to either capital investment or increasing the level of capitalisation direction given the level of unbanked receipts contained within the forward projections.</p>
Further refinement of priority assessments in the property and infrastructure budgets to ensure all pressures have been considered and ranked.	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services & Head of Placemaking, Housing, Highways and Flood	Ongoing	<p>A regular programme of property condition surveys is underway, supported by routine compliance checks for all assets. This information as well as technical input from MCC's Landlord Services team, will continue to be used to inform prioritisation of planned 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>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 and assessments will inform the capital MTFP and pressures that will need to be accommodated and funded therein in future financial years The Capital Working Groups and Asset Management Working Groups will contribute to decisions on the capital spend and MTFP.</p>
Deliver the Asset Management Plan to manage the Council's land and property portfolio	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	Timescales as per plan	The Asset Management Strategy has been adopted, introducing clearer alignment to the Community & Corporate Plan and establishing key principles which will inform strategic decision making for the council's land and property portfolio. The Asset Management Strategy is delivered via the associated Asset Management Plan, which is subject to regular monitoring and progress reporting.
Help sustain Council Services and enhance the asset base by investing in commercial property assets in order to increase the net rental income stream for the Council in line with the Asset Management Strategy	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	Ongoing – see Asset Management strategy	<p>The Asset Management Strategy commits to maximising and commercialising assets wherever possible, including achieving income generation or revenue enhancement where opportunities are identified to do so. The core principle is achieved with acknowledgement of the council's policy objectives and ambition to achieve both financial and social returns.</p> <p>The performance of the council's commercial and investment portfolios are reported to Performance &amp; Overview committee on six monthly cycles. The updates provided include an acknowledgement of the performance of the assets, their capital value and risk, market information and transaction updates. Officers provided recommendations and updates in accordance with the revised financial performance terms, as outlined in the Asset Management Strategy.</p>

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<p>Potential Risk that:</p> <p>Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services</p>
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<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Matthew Gatehouse (Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All				
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
There is a global skills shortage, and the impact is being felt in several sectors that Monmouthshire County Council is either a part of or competes with for talent. Some services have identified challenges with recruitment; Social Care, Operations and Facilities are all facing difficulties, which is affecting service provision.									
There is a continuing risk that staff well-being could be impacted by a range of factors from work related pressures such as staff in some areas are facing considerably increased workloads to meet increasing demand, to personal home-based factors such as financial strains due to the rising cost of living.									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>				<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>					
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
<b>Mitigating Action</b>		<b>Responsibility Holder</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Mitigation action progress</b>					
Recruit and retain staff more effectively		Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	<p>Recruitment issues are being reflected nationally within some sectors, and the council is not exempt from this. Positions within Social Care, Operations and Facilities, for example, are seeing a dramatic reduction in applicants, and this is impacting on service provision. Solutions for the national recruitment issues do not sit solely with local authorities. However, HR and managers within the council are working together to try to reduce the recruitment problem and determine ways of lessening its impact on services.</p> <p>The People team have 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. The Communications Team are promoting positions in a variety of ways to reach a broader audience, using drives such as 'Job of the Week'. The Leaders Q&amp;A sessions are encouraging discussion between service areas to promote networking and sharing ideas.</p> <p>Recruitment arrangements need development to meet remaining challenges. An e-recruitment system is being implemented to support the development of recruitment as a genuine talent acquisition process. This will benefit recruiting managers who want speed, simplicity and agility.</p> <p>HR staff sit on various local government groups and are collaborating with partner organisations to identify commonalities and information sharing. This is being fed into Welsh Government to inform their decision-making and to influence their response to the issue.</p>					
Develop the support mechanisms to support staff wellbeing		Head of HR	Ongoing	<p>The Digital 'Cwtch' continues, although less frequently, along with a People Leaders Q&amp;A session. The people services team has developed a People Leaders Support Site which enables 'live' discussion/news feed, enabling direct support and a shared learning platform for managers and head-teachers.</p> <p>Staff well-being is affected by a range of factors, including additional work pressure and demand, personal factors and societal factors. Learning from, and building on, arrangements from the pandemic, staff well-being needs continual support. The use of networks and communication digitally, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce. This has also created the conditions for a wider system of self-supportive networks sharing practice, ideas and support.</p>					
Embed workforce planning into team management processes to ensure the right skills, expertise and knowledge are available for future changes		Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	<p>The ability of the organisation to plan the workforce it needs to meet current and future demands, and to implement this, requires development, especially given recruitment and national skill challenges. A team with a specific focus on workforce planning and development in the Council has been established, incorporating recruitment, retention, Apprenticeship, Graduate and Internship and training. We have introduced the Apprentice Graduate and Intern Strategy (AGI) to support and increase the number of opportunities across the council. Work continues on this as an integral part of strategic workforce planning. The team is working with service areas to strengthen workforce planning arrangements. A revised people strategy is being developed to align to the community and corporate plan</p>					

			and take account of latest evidence. This will also consider the findings from the Audit Wales Springing forward review on workforce. This revised strategy is due to be presented to Cabinet in June.  The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning. A learning management system was procured in the Summer of 2022 and is being implemented in a phased roll-out which commenced in April 2023.
Adopt a qualitative approach to ensuring professional development, wellbeing and information flow is taking place for those that want or need it	HR Manager	Ongoing	The staff appraisal process, Check In-Check Out, needs to evolve to meet the varying needs of the organisation based on learning that a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective for the varying services the council delivers.  Arrangements are being developed to ensure there is meaningful staff/line manager engagement and communication by right. Colleagues need to be given the 'right' to seek meaningful 1-1s on a regular basis, and there needs to be a focus on improving the skills of line managers to enable a variety of different approaches to the process so that performance development is realistically achieved. There is also a need to ensure feedback loops are in place to evaluate whether this is happening effectively, and to determine if they are informed by other enabling arrangements such as Service Business Plans, and staff training and development needs.

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	5	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Sian Hayward (Head of Information, Technology & Security) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)		<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All			
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
There have been a number of high-profile cases across both public and private organisations where cyber-attacks and data breaches have compromised service delivery and financial loss. These attacks occur due to insecure infrastructure or staff who are not cyber literate and may inadvertently introduce attacks through their personal actions. Cyber security can also be compromised through a lack of structured governance arrangements, risk assessments and planning.  Digital working has increased in recent years bringing an increase in the potential for loss of data through cyber incidents.									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>					<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
<b>Mitigating Action</b>		<b>Responsibility Holder</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Mitigation action progress</b>					
Ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard the organisation's data and systems from cyber-attack		Cyber security service	Ongoing	<p>The Council recognises that total elimination of cyber-attack is not possible, but we will ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard data and systems from cyber-attack via: Physical barriers to the network, staff awareness, training and culture and structured governance, risk analysis and business continuity planning.</p> <p>Significant investments in ICT infrastructure and software have been undertaken, which will mitigate against the likelihood of a cyber-attack.</p> <p>An operational risk register, which is exempt from publication under the Data Protection Act, is maintained by the Information Security Team, the SRS Security Team and MCC.</p> <p>A cyber security report was taken to Governance and Audit Committee in February 2024 to provide assurance to the committee that the arrangements in place are robust.</p>					

**Risks to service delivery**

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	6	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young people), Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)		<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	People Scrutiny Committee			<b>Strategic objective</b>	A Connected Place Where People Care	
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
The Council and its partners must maintain a consistent focus on safeguarding vulnerable people in order to both prevent and reduce the likelihood of harm, and to respond effectively to reduce risks if harm occurs.									
The consequences of the pandemic and the current economic and social pressures on families generates pressure within the social care and health system with more complex presentations and increased vulnerability within communities. This demand pressure, alongside ongoing social care workforce recruitment and retention challenges, impacts on the council's ability to protect children and adults who are at risk.									
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) conducted an assurance check in February 2021 and reported broadly positive findings under the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: People – Voice and Control, Prevention, Well-being, Partnerships and Integration. A further CIW Performance Evaluation Inspection of Adults social services was undertaken in July 2022, which includes performance of Adults Safeguarding. This found that <i>"The local authority responds to immediate safeguarding concerns. Through reading social care records, we saw evidence of professionals in the safeguarding team working effectively with colleagues from the local health board and the police, as well as wider local authority teams, to protect adults at risk"</i> . Areas for improvement included further work to embed the threshold for safeguarding concerns and to ensure that statutory timescales for undertaken enquiries are met.									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>					<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
<b>Mitigating Action</b>			<b>Responsibility Holder</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Mitigation action progress</b>				
Continually monitor and evaluate safeguarding processes and practice and ensure good accountability for safeguarding. Ensure that where actions are identified from self-evaluation processes that these are implemented.			Safeguarding & quality assurance service manager	Ongoing	<p>Progress against the council's safeguarding priorities is evaluated annually and the priorities reflect the cornerstones for keeping people safe in Monmouthshire, as set out in the Corporate Safeguarding Policy.</p> <p>The most recent Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in December 2023. The report evaluates the progress of the Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2022/23, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2023/24. This evaluation report forms an integral part of the improvement of safeguarding practice across the Council and drives the work of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group.</p> <p>A safeguarding 'self-assessment' is undertaken on a two-year rolling programme, on a directorate basis via the Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation (SAFE). The key development has seen directorates sharing the outcomes of their SAFEs through a work-shop approach, using real case studies from their service areas to demonstrate safeguarding in action.</p>				
Drive the strategic agenda and the associated programme of activities for safeguarding through the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG).			Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG) meets bi-monthly, chaired by the Statutory Director (Chief Officer). Every directorate has a representative on the group, and minutes are retained for each meeting. The WASG continues to provide leadership, direction, oversight, support and challenge to strengthen safeguarding activity in the Council.				
Ensure that robust systems are in place within the authority to respond to any concerns regarding child protection and protection of adults at risk.			Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	<p>The continued upward trend in demand within both children's and adult's services puts services under immense pressure. Children's services remain committed to promoting good practice around child protection and safeguarding through an on-going programme of service and practice development. There is a joint safeguarding hub in place to manage children and adults safeguarding referrals which assures a high level of multi-agency engagement and timely decision making. Children's services promotes good practice in child protection and safeguarding through strengths based practice and risk assessments, and staff members receive appropriate training and support to carry out their duties. Family support services across all tiers of need and vulnerability are in place.</p> <p>Adult safeguarding referrals remain in an upward trend, although have recently stabilised. CIW carried out an assurance check in February 2021, and the report specifically identified positive working practices within the safeguarding arena. They did, however, identify some areas for improvement, specifically in relation to the number of adult safeguarding enquiries completed within seven days, and improved management oversight in</p>				

			<p>the adult safeguarding records viewed. The CIW Performance Evaluation undertaken in July 2022 found that there has been an increase in the proportion of adults safeguarding enquiries completed in seven days during 2021/22, but that further improvement in timeliness is needed.</p> <p>The outcomes from the inspection report related to Adult safeguarding arrangements will be addressed and monitored via an action plan. CIW will monitor progress through its ongoing performance review activity with the local authority.</p> <p>Safeguarding reports for children and adults are produced on a 6-monthly basis. This has shown room for improvement in meeting our timescales within the statutory framework. The number of children on the child protection register fluctuates, and at Q3 2023/24 was 102. The number of Looked After Children 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. As a result, significant demand on Children's Services remains.</p>
<p>As a statutory partner of the regional safeguarding boards, continue to work with other statutory partners to ensure that there are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and that they are working well.</p> <p>Share learning and development in safeguarding.</p> <p>Implement the recommendations and learning from any Domestic Homicide review, adult practice review or child practice review that is undertaken under the safeguarding board.</p>	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	<p>There continues to be full representation at all levels of the work of the regional safeguarding board. There is strong engagement in regional approaches to addressing the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation of children; Modern Day Slavery; Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse; Sexual Violence (VAWDASV); and Contest (PREVENT anti radicalisation).</p> <p>The Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG) has been implemented, with representation from the Safeguarding Unit, Public Protection, Partnerships, Police, Gwent Missing Children's Team, Education and community-based teams. This group has overseen the development of a Monmouthshire Protocol for responding to Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation.</p> <p>The Council's safeguarding unit supports quarterly safeguarding learning networks to share learning and developments in safeguarding across agencies.</p>

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	7	<b>Risk</b>	Potential: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	People Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	A Connected Place Where People Care				
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
<p>The council is supporting 204 children who are looked after (March 2024). The number has stabilised in recent years, although it remains higher than the average of children who are looked after across Wales. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) being looked after by the local authority is increasing and is currently 16.</p> <p>The 2022/23 budget for Children's services was £17.8m. Despite receiving an additional £1m in grant funding to support the development of services to support the eliminate agenda, there was an overspend at outturn of £4.147m. This was mainly as a result of increased demand very high-cost placements for children who are looked after. The workforce position within children's services also remains challenging, with increasing reliance on employing agency workers which has a significant impact on the budget.</p> <p>There is an insufficiency of placements for children who are looked after at a local, regional and national level, particularly those with complex needs or disabilities. Because of this, there is a risk that we may need to place children in unregistered provision in emergency situations. This is likely to be exacerbated by the Welsh Government's policy commitment to eliminate profit from the care of looked after children which could lead to instability within the market. This creates an on-going risk for the council that is difficult to fully mitigate at present.</p>									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>					<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress					

Continue to implement the fostering strategy on the recruitment, retention and skills development of in house fostering.	Head of Children's Services	Ongoing	<p>Where Monmouthshire children are not able to remain with their families, providing in-house fostering services is always our first choice. However, there is an insufficiency of in-house carers in Monmouthshire, particularly carers who are able to provide more specialist care or look after sibling groups; in 22/23, there was 1 generic foster carer approved at panel, and in 23/24, 7 generic foster carers were approved. This creates an over-reliance on private and independent providers where the right placement for a child cannot be assured.</p> <p>The council is working with Foster Wales to run active campaigns to increase the rates of in-house foster carers to provide accommodation and support to children requiring it. The team is focused on 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 our fosters carers to continue in their valuable roles, we are working at a local and regional level to ensure that our on-going offer to foster carers – both financial and practical – is as good as it can be.</p>
The service continues to strengthen its preventative offer to support children living safely at home, with their families and communities, and continues to review and monitor the Children Looked after population in line with Welsh Government expectations around reduction	Head of Children's services	Ongoing	<p>The council is supporting 204 children who are looked after (March 2024). The number has risen substantially in recent years but has recently stabilised, although it remains higher than the average of children who are looked after across Wales.</p> <p>There is a coherent approach to early help and prevention to support families. This allows families to receive support at the right level of intensity to enable parents to provide their children with the safety, nurture and care then need. Services are in place to support the rehabilitation of children following periods of being looked after e.g. Building Stronger Families; to provide medium-term holistic support to families making sustainable change e.g. Achieving Change Together Team; and to provide a therapeutic response to parents and carers in supporting children with trauma presentations e.g. MyST.</p> <p>Over the next year, family support will be further strengthened 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. An additional focus over next period will be to increase resilience within Child Protection services as we continue to work with increased levels of risk and vulnerability within the community.</p>
Develop and expand the Children's Services Commissioning Strategy in response to the intention to eliminate profit from children's social care	Head of Children's services	Five years	<p>We have a commissioning strategy in place to help us 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 children with very complex needs. Further opportunities to develop residential and supported accommodation placements are in place.</p> <p>Work is underway to develop further residential placement opportunities for children who are looked after. The commissioning strategy includes increasing the numbers of in-house carers and the expansion of residential and supported accommodation options within the county. A Placement Development Strategy was presented to Council in April, setting out the strategy for the expansion and development of in-county residential and supported accommodation placements for children who are looked after. There are huge challenges with this work particularly around workforce, resources and the time it takes to develop provision. Whilst 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.</p>

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	8	<b>Risk</b>	Potential: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases			
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	People Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	A Connected Place Where People Care	
<b>Reason why Identified</b>						
Referrals to Adult's Services have increased over recent years, and services are facing unprecedented pressure as a result. There are waiting lists in place for social care assessments and some people are having to wait for services to meet their assessed needs, particularly care at home/domiciliary care. Monmouthshire has specific challenges in providing sufficient home care due to rurality and demographics. Demand following the pandemic and the increase in acute respiratory illnesses, together with the aging demographic has increased the complexity of presenting need, and services are under immense pressure as a result, which is causing delays in service provision.						

The fragility of the social care sector and the availability of care staff remains a key risk. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in care posts has exacerbated the pressure, and this is being impacted by, and impacting upon, hospital discharge protocols. The current financial context for both health and social care places restrictions on the ways in which services can respond to need.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Work with Welsh Government to recruit and retain care staff		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health		Ongoing	<p>Recruitment and retention of care staff has been a considerable concern for some time. In terms of ensuring that we have the sufficient workforce, particularly in key posts around direct care, mental health, team leader posts and occupational therapy, this is an on-going endeavour. The perceptions of working in social care tend to be negative; however, we are trying to counteract these negative perceptions and demonstrate the opportunities, career progression, work life balance and job satisfaction that people experience who work within the sector. Attraction and recruitment of people into the social care sector continues to be a challenge.</p> <p>We were successful in securing a grant from social Care Wales to film a video to challenge these perceptions and support the recruitment of people into the sector which resulted in an increase in applications. 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. At February 2024 the number of vacancies across the social care sector was 34; this has decreased from 56 in February 2023.</p>				
Work to address the difficulties in the health and social care system through the Regional Partnership Board and its sub-groups.		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health Head of Adult Services		Ongoing	<p>There are on- going regional partnership meetings to identify and address difficulties across health and social care. These include Gwent Adult Service Partnership, and at a local level the Integrated Services Partnership Board. At a local and regional level, grant money received via the Regional Partnership Board is used to best effect to meet population needs and respond to demand pressure in areas such as hospital discharge and winter planning.</p>				
Monitor requests for Domiciliary Care to ensure demand is being met and delays are minimised		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health		Ongoing	<p>On-going pressure across the social care and health system, together with workforce shortages in some areas, has meant that we continue to face a number of challenges in being able to respond to people's care and support needs as timely as we would want. All referrals are triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Access to care and support is not always timely; the number of hours of unmet care needs was 804 hours at March 2023; this has subsequently been reduced to 306 hours at March 2024.</p> <p>We are undertaking case reviews and applying the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act to ensure a strengths-based approach looking at individual, family and community based support where appropriate. We are working to ensure that for both in-house and providers services, home care runs are coordinated as efficiently as possible.</p>				
Implement a 'place-based' approach to create sustainability in care at home services		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health		Ongoing	<p>The Council remains committed to developing a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. A place-based approach is being progressed that encompasses all aspects of the community, including third sector, housing, education, residential settings and the community itself. This also needs to allow those wishing to live independently the opportunity to shape their own support to meet their own goals and desires.</p> <p>A micro-carer pilot was 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 micro-carer 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 micro 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.</p>				
Ensure the long-term sustainability of social care providers		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health & Head of Public Protection		Ongoing	<p>It is vital that social care providers are able to provide care and support after the period of the pandemic and as such the council has a role in ensuring their financial sustainability through fair fee negotiations and supporting with recruitment and training. We build positive relationships with our local providers and intervene and provide</p>				



			support where difficulties emerge. We have effective contract monitoring in place, based on partnership approaches.
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<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	9	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: High absence rates, particularly among vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic will result in a worsening of educational attainment
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<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young People) and Cllr Martyn Groucutt (Cabinet member for Education)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	People Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	A Learning Place
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**Reason why Identified**

The pandemic caused widespread disruption to learning, with a significant effect on both teachers and learners. Vulnerable learners have been particularly affected, with the gap in attainment between vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and those without vulnerabilities widening. Longer-term effects of the pandemic on pupil well-being and attendance have emerged. 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.

Meeting the needs of vulnerable learners remains a priority and the gap in attainment between those not eligible and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) remains a concern. There is variation in FSM learner progress and outcomes across schools. Leadership, management, capacity and performance has been identified as in need of improvement in some schools.

The new curriculum was rolled out from 2022. The disruption resulting from the covid-19 pandemic may impact on the ability of some schools to fully and effectively implement the curriculum and this will need to be monitored throughout the remainder of the academic year. Given the external pressures of the new curriculum and the wider aspects of the reform agenda, such as the introduction of the ALN Act, some schools may not return to levels of teaching and learning that were seen prior to the pandemic as quickly as necessary. This also recognises that there will be significant pressures on schools to support accelerated learning and wellbeing provision.

There is an increasing demand for support for children with additional learning needs. There are also challenges in meeting the demand for Welsh Medium education provision in the future.

Estyn’s report into Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire County Council was published in April 2020. The report concluded that the authority’s education service does not give cause for significant concern. There are four recommendations for development:

- Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals;
- Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards;
- Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision;
- Strengthen the use of information gathered through self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

**Mitigating Actions**

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Work with Education Welfare Services to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are able to access excellent teaching and learning.	Head of Achievement and Attainment	Ongoing	Attendance is still a legacy of the pandemic and an issue in schools but particularly in secondary schools. Education Welfare Officers are working with vulnerable pupils to bring them back into the educational setting, where possible. There are varying reasons for pupil absence, so a different approach is being adopted for different cohorts, and the Education team are working with multiple agencies to ensure these children and young people return to school.  The teams are focused on the appropriate interventions for learners but there has also been work undertaken to provide additional depth and breadth to our understanding of the full range of reason for absence such as those reasons that are emotionally based.
Support learners’ wellbeing through excellent teaching and learning and through wider school-based activity	Head of Achievement and Attainment Head of Inclusion	Ongoing	It is vital that all Monmouthshire settings understand that the principal means of supporting wellbeing in school is through excellent and engaging teaching and learning for all learners. There will be times and areas where this has to be supported and developed by other interventions.  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: currently 43% of schools are working with the team.

Ensure the agreed arrangements with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) continue to challenge and support schools	EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People	Ongoing	<p>Working with the local authority, EAS continue to provide ongoing challenge, monitoring and evaluation work in schools with a continued particular focus on vulnerable learners. All schools will continue to be provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances and to allow for changes in light of the pandemic.</p> <p>Schools have prioritised the wellbeing of all pupils as a pre-requisite for effective learning. This includes the development of a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, suitable for use in a range of contexts, and additional support to close the gap, to recover and to raise standards for priority groups.</p>
Develop and implement plans to address the recommendations in Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services	EAS & MCC	Ongoing	<p>Monmouthshire County Council underwent an Estyn inspection in February 2020. The themes from the inspection included pursuing excellence, creating an holistic vision and strategy for learners with additional learning needs, securing better outcomes for our learners eligible for free school meals (FSM) and improving the way we use data in our evaluations. Draft ALN and FSM strategies have been developed in response to the impact of COVID-19. We also continue to develop leadership across our schools and create better learning environments for all our learners.</p> <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. 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 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. 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 requiring more extensive access to schools to understand and evidence their progress.</p>
Ensure that the Additional Learning Needs review delivers sustainable, adequate and appropriate support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs	Head of Achievement and Attainment	Ongoing	<p>The new ALN Strategy identifies four distinct and ambitious work streams, all of which aim to build sustainable and resilient provision and are now embedded in the business plans of the ALN and Educational Psychology Services. The Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) cross-directorate initiative has been developed as part a whole school, whole authority approach to promoting attendance and well-being in Monmouthshire schools. The Education Psychology Service's training platform has continued to be developed, which provides information on support for well-being, as well as other key issues.</p> <p>The ALN team have been a key part of the regional preparations and developments for the new ALN and Tribunal Act legislation, which was implemented in September 2021. In preparation for the implementation of the Act, all Monmouthshire ALN Coordinators have been provided with an extensive range of training through the regional ALN transformation initiative, and Headteachers have been kept up to date with developments associated with ALN implementation through head teacher meetings and targeted communications.</p> <p>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.</p>
Continue to monitor the implementation of the new school curriculum	EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People	Ongoing	<p>The new curriculum was implemented in September 2022, which was a significant challenge. The position of schools in implementing the new curriculum was varied; some were in a strong position as they had undertaken significant work prior to the pandemic; others less so and will require additional support and time to bring them up to speed. For those schools that have been unable to move forward at pace, there is bespoke support available, and a framework around them to continue the move forward at their own pace. Schools will have support from their school improvement partner or their school-to-school link. School development planning guidance has been provided to help with strategic planning over the next year, and there is a national professional learning programme for senior leaders, headteachers and middle leaders. Professional learning support is also available for Teaching Assistants. Estyn inspections of nine primary and two secondary schools indicate that most schools have a clear vision for the curriculum.</p>

			The Council and EAS continue to work with schools in ensuring that they are successfully implementing the new curriculum and meeting the needs of students. The authority has commissioned from the EAS a county wide review of teaching of learning in all schools. Around 50% has been completed but progress has slowed due to industrial action. EAS and the council continue to monitor the progress schools are making towards the implementation of the curriculum and identify those who may need additional support.
Deliver the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in collaboration with neighbouring authorities	Head of Achievement and Attainment	Timescales as per WESP	<p>The agreed WESP is a long-term planning tool, which sets our direction for the next 10 years. It is an ambitious plan and interfaces clearly and closely with the local authority five-year Welsh language strategy, which is currently being reviewed. 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.</p> <p>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. The proposal to increase the capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni is currently out for consultation ahead of Cabinet decision in April.</p>
Continue to improve the quality of self-evaluation in the Children and Young People (CYP) directorate.	Chief Officer Children & Young People	Ongoing	<p>The Chief Officer's report provides an assessment of performance in the Children &amp; Young People directorate. It captures the emergence from the pandemic and the challenges that remain for the local authority. It also assesses performance in line with the emergent Corporate Priorities of the newly elected administration.</p> <p>An evaluation of the progress of CYP in meeting the wellbeing objectives of the Council formed part of the Self-assessment Report which was presented to Council in October 2023.</p>

#### Risks to policy priorities

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that:			
			<p>a) The council is unable to proceed with the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan due to a failure to identify and agree suitable Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites</p> <p>b) The council does not support the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan</p> <p>c) Delays to the adoption of a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) inhibits our ability to take forward key policy objectives such as job creation and affordable housing development</p> <p>d) High phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye limit development opportunities within a significant proportion of the county</p>			
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Craig O'Connor (Head of Placemaking) and Cllr Paul Griffiths (Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development)		<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Place Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	A Safe Place to Live A Thriving and Ambitious Place
<b>Reason why Identified</b>						
<p>The current Local Development Plan ran until 31st December 2021; it will remain the principal development plan for decision-making purposes until the adoption of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This does not change the urgent need for the council to make timely progress on its RLDP and to adopt it as soon as realistically possible to address key issues and challenges, including rebalancing our demography and responding to the climate emergency, and to meet the future needs of the county.</p> <p>Factors contributing to the delays include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Covid-19 pandemic delayed progress of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) by interrupting programmed public engagement.</li> <li>• Updated evidence, for example the Welsh Government published the corrected 2018-based population and household projections in August 2020. This new data resulted in the need to revisit the Growth and Spatial Options and Preferred Strategy stages of the RLDP process in 2021.</li> <li>• Welsh Government challenged the level of development in the June 2021 Preferred Strategy on the basis that it is not consistent with Future Wales: the National Plan 2040, which identifies that new housing development, essential services and facilities, advanced manufacturing, transport and digital infrastructure should be in Newport, Cardiff and the Valleys. A revised preferred strategy was therefore required.</li> <li>• High levels of phosphates in the rivers Wye and Usk have resulted in Natural Resources Wales placing restrictions on development that can take place within the catchment area.</li> <li>• Local elections and the need to ensure the RLDP direction of travel aligns with the new Administration's priorities.</li> <li>• Delays to the council identifying and agreeing appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites.</li> <li>• Multiple organisations and funding mechanisms beyond the Council's remit are involved in delivering infrastructure improvements.</li> </ul>						

The Council is now proceeding with a new Preferred Strategy that responds to the Welsh Government objection and unresolved water quality constraint in the upper River Wye catchment. A revised Delivery Agreement has therefore been prepared which sets out an amended timetable for Plan preparation. The revised timetable shows that the adoption of the RLDP is anticipated in Summer 2025. This unavoidable delay will impact on the Council's ability to address the identified issues and objectives until the RLDP is adopted and puts pressure on the deliverability of the housing and employment figures over the Plan period, with more reliance on delivery towards the end of the Plan.

There are a range of issues and challenges the RLDP will need to address:

- The delivery of affordable housing continues to be a concern. There are a significant number of households on the Councils waiting list, and there are limited remaining opportunities within the current LDP to deliver affordable homes because most strategic sites have been delivered and the remaining few cannot currently proceed due to phosphates.
- There is a recognised lack of suitable employment land in the northern part of the County (Abergavenny and Monmouth in particular). Delays to the RLDP mean that new allocations to attract investors or retain growing businesses will not be available. There may be some scope for employment sites to come forward adjacent to settlement boundaries outside of the current LDP allocations but in parts of the county these are affected by phosphate restrictions.
- The RLDP will identify areas with potential for renewable energy. A delay to the RLDP will have limited impact in this regard because renewable energy schemes such as solar farms can come forward for consideration via the existing LDP and under national planning policy.
- There is a need to ensure the RLDP's growth ambition is matched by infrastructure delivery, much of which is delivered by other bodies. This alignment is required to ensure sustainable development to support future economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

**Mitigating Actions**

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Prepare a replacement Local Development Plan to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.	Head of Placemaking	Spring 2026	<p>The Preferred Strategy was subject to statutory public consultation and engagement for 8 weeks during July – August 2021. The Second Call for Candidate Sites commenced alongside the Preferred Strategy consultation. Approximately 450 responses were received to the Preferred Strategy consultation. Approximately 150 candidate sites proposed for development were submitted, together with 8 candidate sites for protection.</p> <p>Following the consultation/engagement on the Preferred Strategy, a number of challenges arose which have impacted on the progression of the RLDP and require further consideration, including the Welsh Government objection to the Preferred Strategy level of growth and phosphate water quality issues in the Rivers Wye and Usk.</p> <p>In response, an amended Preferred Strategy was endorsed by Council in December 2022 for consultation in December 2022 and January 2023. The amended Preferred Strategy has regard to the above challenges, whilst also ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses the core issues of delivering much needed affordable housing at pace and scale, responding to the climate and nature emergency by delivering zero carbon ready new homes for our communities, and ensuring our communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic. This strategy also provides the strategic direction for the development and use of land in Monmouthshire (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park) over the Plan period 2018 to 2033 and identifies how much sustainable growth is needed and where this growth will broadly be located.</p> <p>The consultation resulted in approximately 220 responses and 650 representations on the Candidate Sites register. Of significant note, the Welsh Government Planning Division's response was supportive. As a result of the consultation, a small number of changes were proposed; Council endorsed an updated Preferred Strategy on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2023. This amended strategy will form the basis for the Deposit Plan, due to be reported to Council in Autumn 2024 for endorsement for public consultation subject to the timing of the UK General Election.</p> <p>There is a risk that the council will be unable to proceed with the Deposit RLDP if appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites are not identified. Three sites have been identified for consultation by Cabinet following assessments by officers of council owned land. These sites are now subject to six weeks of public consultation. Cabinet's decision on which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites will be included in the Deposit Plan and will be informed by the findings of this consultation.</p>
Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the Rivers Usk and Wye	Head of Placemaking	Ongoing	Natural Resources Wales' (NRW) announcement of water quality (phosphate) issues in Riverine Special Areas of Conservation, including the River Wye and River Usk, has significant implications for the progression and

			<p>implementation of the RLDP. The Council is proactively liaising/working with various organisations, including NRW, Welsh Water and Welsh Government, and local authorities and the development industry, to seek solutions/a way forward with this issue.</p> <p>Over the last few years there has been significant work in this area and there is planned strategic phosphate mitigation work in the form of phosphate stripping being installed in Llanfoist (Abergavenny) and Monmouth WwTW to serve their settlements. This will enable appropriate development to be permitted within these settlement areas. There has also been a comprehensive review of the Environmental Permits of wastewater treatments across Monmouthshire and, where there is capacity, appropriate development proposals will be permitted. The candidate sites that will be proposed within the Deposit Plan will not have an adverse impact on water quality within the River Wye or Usk.</p> <p>In March 2022, a Motion for the Rivers and Ocean was declared, followed by a draft action plan in September which outlined the steps the Council will take to protect our rivers and ocean. The plan outlines exactly how the Council will work with partners and organisations to tackle the issues currently preventing development in both the river Wye and Usk catchments and how it will work proactively to seek solutions to river pollution. It has recently been restructured to ensure clarity on where we lead, where we are partners and where we lobby. The updated action plan will form part of the reworked Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and action plan, which is due to be presented to Place Scrutiny Committee in April before being presented to Cabinet in May.</p> <p>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 based upstream from Monmouthshire, where we have no legislative 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 an effective solution.</p>
Ensure RLDP growth ambition is met by essential infrastructure	<p>Head of Placemaking</p> <p>Head of Decarbonisation, Transport and Support Services</p> <p>Head of Enterprise and Community Animation</p>	April 2024/ ongoing	<p>Close working is being undertaken on the infrastructure requirements and the delivery between the Local Planning Authority and colleagues in the Local Education Authority, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Highways Authority, Passenger Transport Unit, Active Travel Team, SUDs Approval Body and Green Infrastructure team. The Infrastructure Plan will be published alongside the Deposit Plan.</p> <p>A Local Transport Plan will be presented to Cabinet in April 2024.</p> <p>The Employment, Economy &amp; Skills Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2024.</p>

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Risk</b>	<p>Potential Risk that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge</li> <li>b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities</li> </ul>				
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>			Strategic Leadership Team & Cllr Catrin Maby (Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Place Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All
<b>Reason why Identified</b>							
<p>Tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy is one of the biggest challenges facing our society. Rising temperatures and more extreme weather events bring increased risks to our communities and are causing long-term and potentially irreversible damage to our planet's eco-systems, with significant local impacts such as flooding and loss of species. If we are to stand a chance of slowing the rise in the Earth's temperature, we need to act now. In 2019, councillors were unanimous in declaring a climate emergency. The council will strive to reduce its own emissions and work with communities and local businesses to help them reduce their emissions. This will require engagement, community involvement and commitments from third parties. Current modelling predicts a continuously increasing Council budget deficit, with many pressures on the Council's budget. The council's medium-term financial planning needs to be developed, reflecting realistic and accurate funding requirements, to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term, in line with corporate priorities.</p> <p>When considering climate change, it is important to consider both how Monmouthshire is contributing to climate change, but also how resilient the county is to the likely impacts of climate change. Extreme weather, such as flooding and the record high temperatures in Summer 2023, can impact significantly on infrastructure, homes and businesses, along with disruption to community life and public services, particularly critical public services people rely on such as care services.</p>							
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>				<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>			

Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress					
Deliver the Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Strategy		Head of Decarbonisation, Transport and Support Services	Timescales as per strategy	<p>The climate emergency action plan was updated in 2021, informed by extensive community engagement and the latest evidence, including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring actions remain up to date. We have made good progress on some of the actions in the plan.</p> <p>We have developed baseline carbon emissions data for 2019/20, and reported emissions to Welsh Government in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, but there is not yet enough detailed understanding about the extent to which some of the actions in the plan reduce emissions to understand the precise impact some of the work we are undertaking is having. This makes it difficult to ensure activity and resources are focused in the right areas. We are sourcing additional expertise and capacity to help develop trajectories and pathways to the 2030 net zero carbon target. This will enable us to establish where we should best be focusing our resources to generate the maximum carbon savings. A carbon footprint data baseline assessment will be completed. Costed trajectory plans are currently underway which will be completed by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Work to reduce carbon emissions at a regional level continues through the work of the Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) who have identified climate and environment as one of their two key priorities. This work is strengthened through the development of a Gwent PSB Wellbeing Plan which was approved by Council in June 2023 before being approved by the Gwent PSB. In addition, there is also collaboration across the Cardiff Capital Region to reduce carbon emissions, including the development of Local Area Energy Plans.</p> <p>The Climate Emergency Strategy is being reworked into an overarching Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy to align with the new Community and Corporate Plan, and is due to be presented to Place Scrutiny Committee in April before being presented to Cabinet in May. This reworked strategy will be underpinned by 4 action plans to better reflect the breadth of work that is taking place: Internal decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change. A mechanism to evaluate delivery of these outcomes will be established, including performance metrics where relevant.</p>					
Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change.		Strategic Leadership Team	Ongoing	<p>In recent years, council services have considered what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start thinking about how to adapt to these risks. In 2021, some services updated these Climate Change Risk Assessments to allow service areas to better understand their necessary adaptation requirements. We are in discussion with Welsh Government to better understand their expectations around climate adaptation. We are also part of broader assessments of climate risk being carried out by the Cardiff Capital Region as part of their Carbon Disclosure Project commitments.</p> <p>The Replacement Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Changes to national planning policy on flooding are still awaited, but officers intend to take a precautionary approach, avoiding all built development on greenfield sites at known flood risk. Welsh Government has produced The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, and in response, Monmouthshire is currently reviewing our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Flood Risk Management Plan; a new combined strategy document will be presented to Cabinet in May.</p> <p>Much of the work to coordinate emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We will continue to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.</p> <p>As part the reworking of the Climate Emergency Strategy, climate adaptation, which includes preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change, will be embedded across each of the 4 action plans. Some of the actions within this include developing the management of green infrastructure to improve climate resilience;</p>					

			increasing urban tree canopy, including new street trees and in car parks to provide a cooling effect; and continuing to promote and support council services with business continuity and emergency response strategies.
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<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities
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<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>	Frances O'Brien (Chief Officer Communities and Place) and Cllr Angela Sandles (Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	People Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All
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**Reason why Identified**

Monmouthshire is a beautiful county, blessed with strong communities and a competitive local economy. However, the county's relative affluence compared to much of Wales, when viewed through the lens of aggregated data, masks the day-to-day reality and lived experience of those citizens who are experiencing poverty, financial hardship and who do so in the context of the considerable financial inequality that exists within the county. In many ways, living in an area of relative affluence and wealth whilst struggling to make ends meet can make that experience even harder and more isolating. This is Monmouthshire's particular challenge and one that we are determined to understand and address.

For families on lower incomes the rising cost of living, including higher energy prices and cost of fuel, rising food prices and high inflation – risks adding additional financial pressures to households. This also follows financial challenges experienced through the pandemic. This is causing significant pressures and is resulting in an increasing number of families requiring additional public service support from services such as housing support, Mental health, health, debt advice and customer contact and support services. Many of these services have already seen increasing demands and complexity in support required through the pandemic. The cost-of living will also impact Council staff, including costs for working, which could impact staff well-being and capacity to deliver services.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8

**Mitigating Actions**

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Undertake data modelling to identify communities at greatest risk and use this to target pro-active responses such as commissioning of services	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	We have undertaken extensive data analysis and qualitative research furthering understanding of inequality at a local level and how the affects people's lives. Close working with partners is being undertaken to help understand the situation and act accordingly (e.g. the number of food bank parcels issued, referrals for housing support, nature or queries to Citizens Advice, use of Register Social Landlords hardship funds).
To implement the discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	The Council is also delivering a range of activities to support residents including the Money Matters campaign which signposts to sources of support and further delivery of the campaign to staff in schools and other projects related to the costs of the school day. The Council also teamed up with Mind Monmouthshire and Citizens Advice Monmouthshire to set up cost of living support drop-in sessions at schools and leisure centres across the county. These sessions are available to all, including residents and colleagues, and offer advice on ensuring people are getting all the money and benefits they are entitled to, making money go further and guidance on managing energy bills. They also provide help and advice on getting back into work or more secure employment as well as emotional and wellbeing support.
Work in partnership with community fridges to identify individuals and families in need of further support.	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	Community Fridges are citizen-led projects that seek to prevent food waste and to stop fresh food going to landfill. The food is accessible to the whole community with no means-testing. Whilst their ethos is primarily environmental, their presence in a community does have the ability to reduce the amount of money spent on essential outgoings for poorer families.  Community Fridges are currently operating in Monmouth, Abergavenny, Caldicot, Goytre and Chepstow, with around 480 people visit a community fridge each week, with each fridge saving around 2 tonnes of food going to landfill per month. We have secured funding for consultancy support to help the community fridge volunteers and to look at sustainable funding options, common policies, practices and developing new fridges.  There is a risk that community fridges support residents who otherwise would have reached the foodbanks, which require a referral process and can trigger more extensive support which may be required. We are working alongside the community fridges to sensitively support frequent users to connect with appropriate support, particularly through the Housing Gateway.

Work with the Gwent PSB to use the Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce inequalities across Gwent	Chief Executive	Ongoing	Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) has formally agreed to become a 'Marmot Region', and to work in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) to use the social determinants of health approach as the basis for the response to well-being and health inequalities in Gwent. The Gwent PSB have adopted the eight Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce inequalities across Gwent as part of the Gwent PSB Well-being Plan.
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<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market			
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>		Frances O'Brien (Chief Officer Communities and Place), Matthew Gatehouse (Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships) and Cllr Angela Sandles (Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	People Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	A Safe Place to Live A Fair Place to Live

**Reason why Identified**

The Council is currently experiencing significant challenges and risks in relation to homelessness. Initially due to the pandemic, Welsh Government required Councils to avoid people sleeping rough, then made the subsequent decision to transition homeless services with the aim of homeless becoming rare, brief and unrepeated, together with an improvement in the quality of homeless accommodation. Welsh Government homeless policy changes through the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Support, whilst positive, has created challenges. Although homeless presentations have remained broadly consistent, the impact of Welsh Government policy has seen a significant increase in demand for homeless accommodation. This in turn has impacted significantly on the Housing Options Team operationally in respect of the need to identify alternative accommodation, which largely has relied on B & B, re-housing households, housing management and placement break downs. This has also created placement and staffing challenges.

There are problems regarding the availability of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation, the type and quality of accommodation and the range of housing support available necessary to meet current and emerging homeless need. Further challenges are also being experienced in respect of acquiring existing accommodation and repurposing properties due to the buoyant market in Monmouthshire and constraints relating to funding eligibility and Planning. There are also delays in the construction of new homes due to labour and supply chain problems, and phosphates issues in the north of the county.

The Renting Homes Act, which came into force from 1 December 2022, has made significant change the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties. There is a risk this could impact on the private rented sector in the County and reduce the availability of rental properties, further decreasing housing availability and increasing accommodation challenges in the County. The Council is anecdotally seeing evidence of landlords leaving the market.

Monmouthshire has welcomed more refugees from Ukraine, in absolute terms, than any area in Wales apart from Cardiff. Hosts have opened their homes and all these refugees will need alternative accommodation when these temporary arrangements come to an end. In addition, many of those who have come through the Welsh Government Super Sponsor Scheme have found jobs and placed children in local schools, but are now struggling to find suitable accommodation and are faced with unaffordable rent prices in the private sector. A shortage of move-on accommodation combined with uncertainty over long-term funding will challenge our ability to provide suitable long-term accommodation for fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The widening of asylum dispersal from 2022 will put further pressure on the housing market as the council plays its part in assisting the Home Office to move asylum seekers from hotels and other unsuitable accommodation in line with aspirations for Monmouthshire to become a county of sanctuary.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8

**Mitigating Actions**

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Implement systems to meet the requirements of the new Phase 2 Homeless Transition Plan	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	Through the Rapid Rehousing strategy Welsh Government sets out their future homeless policy intentions. The core of rapid rehousing is to prevent homelessness, minimise the use and time spent in temporary accommodation and increase the availability of settled accommodation with support if needed. The necessity to provide temporary accommodation continues to increase, and many applicants need specialist accommodation and housing support, which largely is not available in Monmouthshire or existing capacity is insufficient.  The Rapid Re-Housing Transition plan was adopted by Cabinet in April 2023. This sets out the Council's five-year plan to prevent homelessness, increase accommodation and focus support, and includes active buy-in from wider agencies involving homelessness, for example, the role of Health and Social Care is extremely important in homeless prevention and helping people (such as young people and those with mental health issues) maintain their existing accommodation.



			<p>The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan seeks to address the identified issues listed above, and help to transform homeless services in Monmouthshire. We have worked with housing association partners to make additional general needs social housing available for homeless households, and the proportion has increased from 47% in 2021/22 to 59% as of February 2024. Whilst positive, there is concern how much scope there is to allocate further social housing to homeless applicants without being overly detrimental to other housing need groups. Housing Support has been remodelled to include high-need accommodation for young people, dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement support. We have also expanded private sector accommodation under the Monmouthshire Lettings Service.</p> <p>There remain challenges that need to be addressed including the lack of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation, and the need to introduce either new support schemes or expand existing schemes for homeless applicants, particularly in respect of young people and those with mental health and substance misuse needs. Support is needed for those households in temporary accommodation, of which there are 193 as of February 2024.</p>
Deliver the Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26 and action Plan	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	In July 2022 Cabinet approved the Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26. The document provides a single strategic view of the Council's approach to homelessness prevention, housing support service delivery, statutory homelessness functions (delivered by the Housing Options Team) funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the Housing Support Grant (HSG) programme. The Council has and will continue to engage closely with Welsh Government in respect of the Council's HSG annual funding allocation, which at present is insufficient to meet identified support needs in the County.
Develop suitable accommodation for homeless people, including long-term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing and specialist provision for those with additional needs	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	<p>A Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was approved by Cabinet in 2023, which includes a detailed action plan setting out how the council will address the challenges it faces around homelessness, homeless accommodation and housing support.</p> <p>Through Rapid Rehousing the council has facilitated increased resources into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. New arrangements have been established with partner agencies such as the DWP and Shared Benefit Service to support more people at risk of homelessness. A total of 261 awards were given during the 2023-2024 financial year to both households at risk of homelessness to help tackle arrears/debt and households experiencing homelessness to enable them to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives. The Council has also built on previous initiatives to support homelessness, such as introducing Housing First, Substance Misuse Support and support for young people with higher need through the recent expansion of the Housing First scheme with Pobl and the introduction of MoYo - dedicated housing floating support for young people.</p> <p>The council has also increased the availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households through a range of means including partnerships with private landlords through Monmouthshire Lettings; more social homes being allocated to homeless households; more homes through new build developments and acquisitions. This has included dedicated temporary accommodation for young people; the council has been well supported by Monmouthshire Housing, Pobl and Melin in this regard. In addition, the Council has started to acquire accommodation for temporary accommodation and the first approval has been given to re-purpose a Council owned agricultural property. The increased support for those at risk of homeless combined with the increase in availability of both temporary and settled accommodation have both contributed to the reduced use of costly B&amp;B accommodation.</p>
Prepare an RLDP to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.	Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning	Ongoing	Detailed update provided as in risk 10.
Work with Welsh Government, local sponsors and landlords to identify a range of accommodation to accommodate Ukrainian refugees.	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	The authority has been successful helping those fleeing the war in Ukraine to find properties in the area. Hosting, under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, has remained stable, with residents going above and beyond what was initially asked of them. We have exceeded the 'population share' of refugees identified by Welsh Government.

			Recognising the challenges faced by this community, we have established a specialised team comprising of two homeless prevention workers, two Community and Wellbeing Officers, complemented by dedicated translation and administration support. Our approach involves close collaboration with local landlords to cultivate strong local networks and access to properties (PRS), addressing concerns related to affordability and financial assessments.
Work with national providers and the Home Office to identify suitable accommodation for those fleeing persecution and ensure that appropriate support services, including trauma informed support, are available.	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	The Home Office has made all local authorities Asylum Dispersal Areas. This has broadened the responsibility for accommodating asylum seekers in Wales which had previously been shouldered by a small number of authorities. The Home Office's chosen accommodation provider has been unable to secure any suitable sites in Monmouthshire at affordable rent levels mirroring the challenges faced by the local population. Officers continue to meet with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and Home Office.  In September 2023 Council passed a motion committing the authority to formally becoming a county of sanctuary. An application has been submitted to the County of Sanctuary network and we are awaiting confirmation that we have met the criteria for accredited membership.

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk that: Reliance on grant funding for the delivery of public bus network and the proposed implementation of a franchising model may result in an inability to provide long-term certainty of services that are essential for residents to access key services						
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>		Frances O'Brien (Chief Officer Communities and Place) and Cllr Catrin Maby (Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment)	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>	Place Scrutiny Committee	<b>Strategic objective</b>	All			
<b>Reason why Identified</b>									
The vast majority of bus services within Monmouthshire are operated under contract to the council. The majority of the funding to pay for the contracts comes from special-purpose Welsh Government grants (currently called Bus Services Support Grant and Bus Network Grant). Furthermore, as part of the reform of public transport in Wales, the Welsh Government have introduced the Bus Reform Legislation. This legislation will introduce a franchising model that will be operated by Transport for Wales, meaning that the responsibility for designing, tendering and monitoring local networks may no longer sit with local authorities. This means there is inherent uncertainty of the long-term future of bus services, and it could result in a reduction of local services which may be essential for some residents to access key services.  Monmouthshire is a rural county where isolation can be exacerbated when people have limited access to affordable transport. A significant reduction in public bus services could result in the isolation of some members of our community, particularly those who are reliant on public transport to access key services. An effective public transportation system is also key to reducing the county's carbon emissions, which are relatively high per person, and becoming a greener place to live.									
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>					<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12
2026/27	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2026/27	Almost certain	Moderate	Medium	8
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>									
<b>Mitigating Action</b>		<b>Responsibility Holder</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Mitigation action progress</b>					
Review performance of tendered bus services, identify opportunities to improve frequencies or add new routes and seek additional funding opportunities to implement proposed enhancements		Head of Decarbonisation & Transport and Public Transport Planning Manager	Ongoing	Newly tendered bus services were launched on the 1st April. An update on performance will be provided when available.					
Review our networks and look to enhance the demand responsive provision		Public Transport Planning Manager	Ongoing	Transport for Wales/Local authorities' 'regional scrum' bus coordination meetings, a Cardiff Capital region (CCR) Bus Working Group and a Welsh Government (WG)/Transport for Wales (TfW)/MCC Traws Cymru Delivery Group have been established and are meeting regularly. TfW is undertaking a study into options for Traws services in Monmouth.					
Carry out tendering of bus services within the county		Public Transport Planning Manager	Ongoing	Newly tendered bus network started 1 April – this is expected to increase passenger usage and reduce support per trip. TfW, MCC and operators are working on improved information to attract more passengers. MCC has successfully bid for WG Local Transport Fund grant which is helping to deliver bus infrastructure enhancements. MCC is working with operators to extend multi-operator bus tickets across Monmouthshire. We are also working with TfW to introduce bus-rail integrated tickets for key Monmouthshire routes.					

<b>Ref &amp; Status</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Risk</b>	Potential Risk of:
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		An increase in the number of legal challenges to decisions resulting in delays and increased costs									
<b>Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible</b>		James Williams (Chief Officer Law and Governance) and Cllr Mary-Ann Brocklesby (Leader)		<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>		All		<b>Strategic objective</b>		All	
<b>Reason why Identified</b>											
The Council has seen an increase in legal challenges in recent years. As plans are developed to address the financial challenges faced by the Council there is a risk that those challenges increase in frequency. These legal challenges expose the Council to legal and reputational risk, as well as taking increased time and cost to address.											
<b>Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)</b>						<b>Risk Level (Post-mitigation)</b>					
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score		
2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2024/25	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6		
2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2025/26	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6		
2026/27	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2026/27	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6		
<b>Mitigating Actions</b>											
<b>Mitigating Action</b>			<b>Responsibility Holder</b>		<b>Timescale</b>		<b>Mitigation action progress</b>				
Impact assesses service changes and policy decisions			Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships		Ongoing		An established Integrated Impact Assessment template and guidance is in place and is completed for all decisions that require an assessment. These assessments are challenged by a panel of policy officers prior to decision. There is a need to ensure impacts are assessed at the start and throughout the development of changes and policy to ensure any appropriate mitigation can be undertaken.				

## Appendix 2: Strategic Risk Management Policy – Summary

This sets out the Council’s policy and approach to strategic risk management. A copy of the full policy and guidance is available to staff and members on the council’s intranet the Hub (Finance & Performance Management section – risk assessment)

Risk Management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of controlling them or responding to them. Strategic risks are those which affect the Council as a whole. Typically these will be key risks which could significantly jeopardise the Council’s ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned.

The Council is committed to the effective management of risk. As a large public sector organisation, it is exposed to a wide range of risks and threats in delivering key services to communities. Within the Council the purpose of risk management is to:

- preserve and protect the Council’s assets, reputation and staff
- promote corporate governance and aid good management in controlling and managing risks
- support successful delivery of strategic aims, objectives and outcomes
- improve business performance and better anticipate calculated risks where these are likely in delivering improvements
- avoid unnecessary liabilities, costs and failures

The Council seeks to ensure that risk management is effective from strategic to individual services and employees. Therefore, all employees and councillors are responsible for ensuring there are good levels of internal control and risk management throughout the Council in order that the Council’s specified outcomes are achieved.

The Council uses a ‘traffic light’ system of Red/Amber/Green associated with High/Medium/Low to categorise risk levels. This is determined using the risk matrix below.

<b>High risk</b>	The risk is <b>highly likely</b> to occur and the impact will be major. Management action/control evaluation and improvement is required coupled with continued pro-active monitoring
<b>Medium risk</b>	The risk is <b>unlikely</b> to result in a major issue, however, if it did the impact would be <b>significant or serious</b> . This risk is relatively less significant than a High risk however it needs to be closely monitored within timely management action/controls to ensure it does not escalate.
<b>Low risk</b>	The risk is <b>very unlikely</b> to occur and the impact will be <b>minor or moderate</b> at worst. Risk will be managed by seeking control improvements where practical and / or monitoring and reviewing at regular intervals

Risks are also given a score. Scores of 1-4 are low risks, scores of 6-9 are medium risks and scores 12-16 are high risk. Providing a score as well as a risk level allows the variations within risk levels to be more clearly stated.

Major (4)	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)
Substantial (3)	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)
Moderate (2)	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)
Minor (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)
	Unlikely (1)	Possible (2)	Likely (3)	Almost certain (4)