

**SUBJECT: Our Monmouthshire: What Matters Communities**

**MEETING: Democratic Services Committee**

**DATE: 5<sup>th</sup> June 2017**

**DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To highlight issues raised by communities during the engagement work that informed the development of the Well-being Assessment.

## **2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, by taking action in accordance with the sustainable development principle aimed at achieving well-being goals. One of the responsibilities the Act places on the Public Service Board is to prepare and publish a local Well-being Assessment within twelve months of the Assembly elections.
- 2.2 Monmouthshire's Well-being Assessment was endorsed by Council and approved by the Public Service Board prior to the election. It is now being used to help shape a Well-being Plan for our county and will contribute to the evidence base for the development of the authority's strategy and the Future Monmouthshire programme.

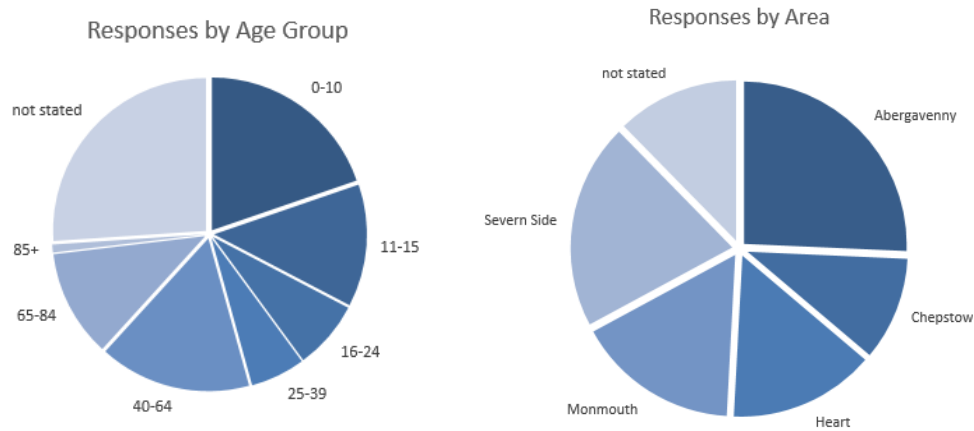
## **3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members are invited to consider how the approach used to produce the Well-being Assessment can inform the development of a more participative approach to local democracy.
- 3.2 Members are invited to consider how the subsequent analysis can be used alongside information gathered during canvassing and from ward surgeries to develop business insights that can be taken forward by public services and communities working together.

## **4 KEY ISSUES**

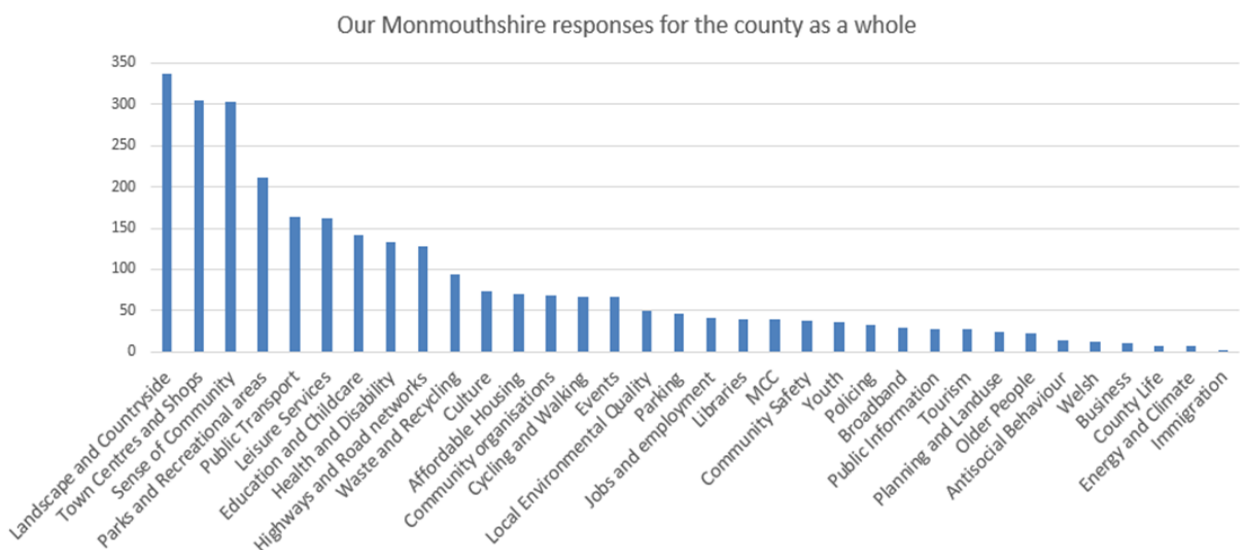
- 4.1 During the production of the well-being assessment colleagues from the local authority and other partners from the Public Service Board carried out extensive engagement within communities under the banner of *Our Monmouthshire*. They attended over 80 events and invited contributions on postcards, social media and the Monmouthshire Made Open digital engagement platform. Over a thousand people contributed and shared their thoughts on what was good about the area and what would make it better. This was placed alongside data, research and an analysis of future trends.

4.2 The engagement took place throughout the county over four months and targeted people of all ages and characteristics. The following charts give an indication of the age ranges and geographical coverage of respondents:



4.3 Monmouthshire’s assessment is based on areas, loosely clustered around our five largest towns. Looking below county level helps us understand some of the differences within and between communities.

4.4 The responses were tagged retrospectively to help identify themes. The following chart shows how often things were mentioned. The topic that generated by far the most comments was landscape and countryside, with these comments being overwhelmingly positive about how the beautiful area and landscape benefit both residents and visitors. The next largest category of comments was about town centres and shops. These comments vary to some extent on where people come from. Some people are happy with their town centres and shopping provision, others are unhappy about empty shops, particularly in Caldicot. A lot of people also commented on the strong sense of community where they live.



4.5 The comments were looked at alongside a wide range of data highlighting issues such as journey times of over 2 hours on public transport from the heart of the county to

leisure centres, the large ratio between house prices and earnings, rising levels of obesity and increases in the proportion of older people in Monmouthshire.

- 4.6 The quantitative and qualitative information was used to identify key challenges and opportunities facing the county, these are shown as appendix 1 of this report. There will be a short presentation to the committee highlighting some of the findings and giving some more detail about the process that produced it. Members who wish to look at the full assessment can download it from [monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire](http://monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire).

## **5. REASONS**

- 5.1 To ensure that members understand the findings of the Well-being Assessment and how this can be used to inform the work of the committee.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None at this stage. Any new specific projects brought forward to deliver the council's Well-being Objectives will be subject to separate decisions in accordance with the council's constitution.

## **7. FUTURE GENERATIONS ASSESSEMENT INCLUDING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 7.1 This report does not propose any change in policy or service and so no assessment has been completed.

## **8. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

None

## **9. AUTHOR**

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### Challenges and Opportunities Identified in the Well-being Assessment

#### Short-term

- Monmouthshire has high levels of social capital and volunteering. By taking an asset and place based approach there is an opportunity to improve well-being.

#### Medium-term

- Wage levels available for local jobs are lower than the average for Wales and the UK. When coupled with high property prices and limited land for future housing development this makes it difficult for young people to live and work locally.
- The signing of the £1.2 billion City Deal by the ten local authorities in South East Wales brings an opportunity to leverage around £4 billion of private sector investment creating jobs and boosting economic prosperity across the whole of the region.
- Limited public transport, particularly in rural areas, makes it harder for people to access jobs, services and facilities. There are also future opportunities from investment in public transport through the City Deal and advances in technology such as automated vehicles.
- Employment patterns are changing with more zero hours, casual contracts and freelance work emerging. Meanwhile technological advances such as automation, robotics and the advance of artificial intelligence could result in around a third of existing UK jobs disappearing meaning tomorrow's workforce will need a very different skillset to those of today's school leavers.
- There is a need to increase healthy behaviours and with increasing evidence that what happens during the first thousand days of a child's life from conception to their second birthday can have a big impact on how healthy and happy they are as they grow up.
- An ageing population brings many opportunities, however there are also challenges for service provision and increases in the number of people living with long term conditions which will create pressures on health and social care services.
- There are many vulnerable people in our society, this can arise from many things such as mental or physical disability or factors such as age, rural isolation and loneliness. Identifying preventative activity and integrated approaches can protect people from serious harm and improve well-being.
- Arts and culture can have a positive impact on emotional health and well-being providing opportunities for expression and social contact. However funding for the arts can come under pressure and there is a need to increase accessibility of arts, culture and heritage to maximise their contribution to well-being.
- Monmouthshire has experienced a growth in the demand for Welsh medium education and if this trend continues there will be a need to ensure adequate provision
- Air pollution causes significant problems for people's health and is a major contributor to premature deaths in Wales. In Monmouthshire the greatest problems are caused by vehicle emissions and this is particularly apparent in Usk and Chepstow.
- Water pollution is a concern, especially from changing agricultural practices

## Long-term

- There is inequality between communities and within communities. This includes in educational attainment, wage levels and health outcomes. Research shows that inequality has a negative impact on many aspects of well-being with more equal societies experiencing better outcomes.
- Children who experience stressful and poor quality childhoods are more likely to adopt health-harming behaviours during adolescence which can themselves lead to illnesses and diseases later in life. This can be perpetuated through the generations.
- Reducing levels of physical activity which along with dietary changes are leading to growing levels of obesity. This is likely to lead to an increase in long-term conditions associated with it such as type 2 diabetes
- Development, climate change and pollution all present risks to the natural and built environment. These are central to our well-being and need to be protected and preserved for future generations.
- Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding, as well as many other risks, so mitigating climate change and building resilience will be crucial for communities

The assessment can be downloaded from [monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire](https://monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire)

