

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE WILL BE A PRE-MEETING
FOR MEMBERS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE AT 9.30AM**

County Hall
The Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

8th April 2015

Notice of Meeting:

Children and Young People Select Committee

**Thursday 16th April 2015 at 10.00am
The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk NP15 1GA**

AGENDA

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Item No	Item
1.	Apologies for absence.
2.	Declarations of Interest.
3.	To confirm and sign the following minutes (copies attached): (i) Ordinary Meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 27 th January 2015. (ii) Ordinary Meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 12 th February 2015.
4.	Public Open Forum.
5.	Estyn Inspection letter – Monitoring Visit 2 nd to 5 th March 2015 (copy attached).

<p>6.</p>	<p>Scrutiny of the following reports (copies attached):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) report on Children’s Services. (ii) Children’s Services Development Report. (iii) Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) report on the Fostering Inspection 2014. (iv) Capital Budget Monitoring 2014/15 Month 9 Outturn Forecast Statement.
<p>7.</p>	<p>Work Programming (copies attached):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Select Committee’s Work Programme for 2014 – 2015. ii) The Cabinet Forward Work Planner.
<p>8.</p>	<p>To note the date and time of the next meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee:</p> <p>Thursday 21st May 2015 at 2.00pm.</p>

**Paul Matthews,
Chief Executive**

Children and Young People Select Committee

County Councillors:

D. Blakebrough
P.R. Clarke
P.S. Farley
L. Guppy
R.G. Harris
D.W. H. Jones
P. Jones (Chairman)
M. Powell
A.E. Webb

Added Members

Voting on Education Issues Only

Canon. Dr. S. James (Church in Wales)
Vacancy (Catholic Church)
Mrs. A. Lewis (Parent Governor Representative)
Mrs. S. Ingle-Gillis (Parent Governor Representative)

Added Members

Non-Voting

Mr. G. Murphy (NAHT)
Vacancy (ASCL)
Vacancy (NUT)
Vacancy (Free Church Federal Council)
Vacancy (NASUWT)
Mr. K. Plow (Association of School Governors)

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Outcomes we are working towards

Nobody Is Left Behind

- Older people are able to live their good life
- People have access to appropriate and affordable housing
- People have good access and mobility

People Are Confident, Capable and Involved

- People's lives are not affected by alcohol and drug misuse
- Families are supported
- People feel safe

Our County Thrives

- Business and enterprise
- People have access to practical and flexible learning
- People protect and enhance the environment

Our priorities

- Schools
- Protection of vulnerable people
- Supporting Business and Job Creation
- Maintaining locally accessible services

Our Values

- **Openness:** we aspire to be open and honest to develop trusting relationships.
- **Fairness:** we aspire to provide fair choice, opportunities and experiences and become an organisation built on mutual respect.
- **Flexibility:** we aspire to be flexible in our thinking and action to become an effective and efficient organisation.
- **Teamwork:** we aspire to work together to share our successes and failures by building on our strengths and supporting one another to achieve our goal

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on Tuesday 27th January 2015 at 2.00p.m.

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Jones (Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Blakebrough, P.S. Farley, R.G. Harris, and M. Powell

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor E.J. Hackett Pain - Cabinet Member for Education and Learning.

ADDED / CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Mr. K. Plow (Monmouthshire Association of School Governors)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. T. Jelfs	-	Head of Children's Services
Ms. J. Morris	-	21 st Century Schools
Mr. R. Austin	-	Principal Office for Inclusion
Ms. S. Hawkins	-	Principal Officer Additional Learning Needs
Mrs. N. Wellington	-	Finance Manager
Mr. M. Gatehouse	-	Policy and Performance Manager
Mr. M. Jones	-	Acting Access Unit Manager
Ms. D. Morgan	-	Senior Officer
Ms. A. Drew	-	Deputy Finance Manager
Mr. A. Evans	-	Accountant
Ms. S. Harp	-	Families First Programme Manager
Ms. H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.- Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors P.R. Clarke, L. Guppy, D.W.H. Jones, A.E. Webb, Canon Dr. S. James, Ms. S. McGuinness, Chief Officer for Children and Young People

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.- Declarations of Interest are identified under the relevant minute.

MINUTES

3.- The minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 10th December 2014 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

4.- There were no items raised by members of the public.

STRATEGIC RISK ASSESSMENT

5.- We scrutinised the Strategic Risk Assessment report in which Select Committee Members were provided with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.

The purpose of the report was to inform the Select Committee's work programme. The Strategic Risk Assessment was available on The Hub and was now a live document allowing it to be updated and monitored regularly throughout the year.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- Risk 8a and 8b presented separately but the risk levels were the same. It was noted that these risks were intertwined but an explanation for their separation would be added and would be available on The Hub.
- Risk 4 – It was important that the Authority was able to demonstrate progress. Further visits by Estyn would be held and it was noted that good progress was being made and was able to be demonstrated.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the income generation target required to be met by the Youth Service, the Policy and Performance Manager stated that as a whole, the Enterprise Directorate was looking to develop support and guidance to help officers with income generation including on marketing services.
- It was noted that the Youth Service would be attending the Select Committee in May 2015.
- The Select Committee would receive further updates at future Select Committee meetings with regard to the Strategic Risk Assessment.

We resolved to:

- (i) receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) use the Risk Register to inform the future work programme for the Select Committee.

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA

6.- County Councillor P. Farley declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as he is a governor of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 27th January 2015 - continued

We scrutinised the report regarding the proposed changes to the School Funding Formula for threshold payments and job evaluation.

The Finance Manager informed the Select Committee that threshold payments were made to teaching staff that were paid on the upper pay spine. Currently all staff were funded on their actual scale point and progressed every two years to reflect actual pay increases.

Threshold Funding

Recently, the pay policy for teaching staff had changed and staff could progress much quicker. They were no longer required to wait for two years and they could move more than one incremental point in the form of performance related pay.

The decision on pay progression was the decision of the governing body, and they must follow the performance pay policy. Should a governing body decide to accelerate a teachers pay, incrementing them every year or above a one point progression, under the new proposals this will not be funded.

The funding will continue at the current rate of every other year for teachers on the upper pay spine. This is proposed to allow all schools to have access to the funding of pay. Should governing bodies wish to accelerate teachers progression then the school would need to fund this.

Of the thirteen consultation responses received, twelve were in agreement with this proposal. One did not agree with this proposal and suggested an alternative.

It was noted that the proposal was to leave the funding as it currently stood moving on a two year basis when staff reach the upper pay spine.

Job Evaluation Funding

Three proposals were put to the working group:

- (i) The total Job Evaluation funding is distributed via the Age Weighted Pupil Unit element, (pupil numbers).
- (ii) The funding for Mounon House job evaluation element remains with Mounon House and the remaining schools funding is pooled and distributed via the Age Weighted Pupil Unit, (pupil numbers).
- (iii) The funding for Mounon House job evaluation element remains with Mounon House and the remaining schools funding is pooled and distributed via the General allowances element of the formula.

Mounon House has a higher ratio of non-teaching staff due to the nature of the provision. The working group raised concerns that by pooling the funding this would see a large reduction in its budget.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding Mouton House School, it was noted that the school was included in stages two and three of the review of consultation.
- It was noted that there had been a low response regarding of the consultation process. However, officers had informed Head Teachers at cluster meetings so they were aware of the consultation process being undertaken.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding teacher progression, it was noted that all schools had to follow the pay policy. Head Teachers did not regard the changes as being an issue for staff members.
- In comparing with other local authorities across South East Wales and Wales as a whole, around 90% were reviewing changing their school funding formula.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

CHANGE TO THE DELEGATION OF SEN FUNDING (SEN LUMP SUM ALLOCATION) FOR SCHOOLS WITHIN MONMOUTHSHIRE

7.- County Councillor P. Farley declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as he is a governor of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

County Councillor M. Powell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as she is a governor of King Henry VIII Comprehensive School.

We scrutinised a report in which Select Committee Members were provided with an update on the proposed change to the formula for distributing the SEN delegated lump sum to schools within Monmouthshire.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Draft schools' budgets were being prepared and savings were being identified.
- Work was being undertaken with schools to help them achieve a balanced budget.
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning informed the Select Committee that having spoken with head teachers, most schools will not be in deficit. Initially, some schools will be but this will not be the case in 2015/16.

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- Individual targets for individual children were being identified.
- The Education Achievement Service (EAS) has a business case targeting performance.
- Concern was expressed that, as an authority, we might be discriminating against some children if funding for Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and Free School Meals (FSM) provision were brought together. It was noted that deprivation was linked to FSM provision and that this option provided the least disruptive influence. It was also noted that this was not the Authority's only funding mechanism as band funding was also available.
- If funding was maintained then current staff levels will be maintained.
- Endeavouring to upskill staff in order for children with ALN to remain within school to receive their education. Budgets were delegated to schools in order to identify their respective needs.
- There was currently no special school for girls located within Monmouthshire.

We resolved to receive the report and receive an update in six months' time.

SCHOOL ADMISSION POLICY AND CATCHMENT AREA REVIEW

8.- We scrutinised a report in which Select Committee Members were provided with information regarding the changes being proposed to the School Admission Policy and the School Catchment Review.

Having received the report the following points were noted:

- The proposed changes, if approved by Cabinet, will apply to applications for school places for the academic year 2016/17 and onwards. The proposals were currently out for consultation.
- The proposed changes to the catchment areas will increase the number of children living in Monmouthshire attending schools within the County.
- There has been an increase in demand from parents of children living in the Usk area for their children to attend Monmouth Comprehensive School.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding arrangements for secondary school catchment areas and whether a balanced view was being undertaken due to the uneven sizes of the four secondary schools within Monmouthshire, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning stated that catchment area distribution was not

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

a simple process with various factors having to be addressed. The Catchment Area Review Advisory Group had taken on board the views of all of the schools which had been added to the information collated via the consultation process. The consultation process will be looked at holistically.

- Pupil projection figures were being looked alongside Local Development Plan (LDP) data.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and note its content;
- (ii) that any further comments regarding the review of catchment areas should be referred to the Children and Young People Directorate;
- (iii) that the Select Committee receives a further update regarding the review of catchment areas after the consultation period has closed.

WORK PROGRAMME

9.- We received the Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- The time of the next Children and Young People Select Committee Meeting, to be held on 12th February 2015, would be amended to commence at 2.00pm.
- The following items would be added to the work programme:
 - Progress update on the Schools Funding Formula.
 - Home to School Transport.
 - Youth Service
- Due to tight timescales it might not be feasible to bring an update regarding the Review of School Catchment Areas to the Children and Young People Select Committee meeting in February 2015. Therefore, Select Committee Members might wish to forward any comments to the Head of Resources, Children and Young People Directorate regarding this matter to be incorporated into the School Catchment Advisory Panel.
- Performance of Safeguarding Children will be scrutinised by the Select Committee in June 2015.
- Adoption matters to be added to the work programme.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

- Ongoing dialogue with Head Teachers of Secondary Schools to continue regarding schools' performance / progression. The meetings to be held within a County Council building.

We resolved to receive the work programme and noted its content.

CHILD POVERTY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

10.- We scrutinised a report on the Child Poverty Strategy consultation and were informed that the Welsh Government was consulting on revisions to the draft Revised Child Poverty Strategy for Wales. The consultation period was scheduled to conclude shortly.

We were informed that the revised Strategy underlines the Welsh Government's commitment to achieve the three strategic objectives set out in their 2011 Child Poverty Strategy:

- To reduce the number of families living in workless households.
- To improve the skills of parents / carers and young people living in low income households so they can secure well paid employment.
- To reduce the inequalities which exist in the health, education and economic outcomes of children and families by improving the outcomes of the poorest.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Select Committee was pleased that rural poverty had been recognised in the report.
- The Welsh Government needs to revisit its transport policy as it was not mentioned in this document. Particularly, funding for Post 16 Transport provision, which was vital in rural areas.
- Pre-School support - In England it equates to 15 hours in which the parent may choose how to use this time, e.g., over a two day period allowing the parent to seek employment over a two day period. In Wales, the 15 hours was spread over the five working days, equating to three hours per day of pre-school support. This did not make it easy for the parent to seek employment under these conditions. An amendment to the policy similar to that in England would be more beneficial. The Families First Programme Manager stated that the comments would be added to the document.
- Concern was expressed that the document received today had come to the Select Committee for scrutiny quite late and that in its current form it would not be regarded as a proper response from the County Council. In order for the document to meet the consultation deadline, it

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dated 27th January 2015 - continued**

needs to be badged accordingly, i.e., incorporating the consultations from a number of groups but not the response from the County Council. The Select Committee should receive copies of the considered views of the groups that have been consulted and their submitted responses.

- The comments of the Select Committee would be noted.
- A Select Committee Member suggested that the Farmer's wives groups associated with the Farmers' Unions should be consulted on this document.
- It was noted that the Welsh Government has a consultation email circulation list. There may be an opportunity, in terms of the Select Committee's work programme, that if future consultation processes are imminent, officers could report these directly to the Select Committee in order for the Committee to receive early sight of them. However, the Scrutiny Manager stated that this matter needed further debate as there was a need to schedule the forward work planner in advance and documentation would be required in good time.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and note its content;
- (ii) that In order for the document to meet the consultation deadline, it needs to be badged accordingly, i.e., incorporating the consultations from a number of groups but not the response from the County Council. The Select Committee should receive copies of the considered views of the groups that have been consulted and submitted responses.

CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

11.- We received the Cabinet Forward Work Planner and noted its content.

NEXT MEETING

12.- The next meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held at County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk on Thursday 12th February 2014 at 2.00pm.

The meeting ended at 3.55pm.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee held in the
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on Thursday 12th February
2015 at 2.30p.m.**

PRESENT: County Councillor P. Jones (Chairman)

County Councillors: P.R. Clarke, P.S. Farley, L. Guppy, R.G. Harris,
D.W.H. Jones and M. Powell

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

County Councillor E.J. Hackett Pain - Cabinet Member for Education
and Learning.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms. S. McGuinness	-	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Ms. T. Jelfs	-	Head of Children's Services
Ms. S. Randall-Smith	-	Head of Achievement and Attainment, Education
Mr. R. Austin	-	Principal Officer for Inclusion
Mr. M. Howcroft	-	Assistant Head of Finance
Mrs. N. Wellington	-	Finance Manager
Mr. W. McLean	-	Head of Policy and Performance
Ms. C. Robins	-	Programme Manager
Ms. H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mr. R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.- Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D. Blakebrough and A.E. Webb and from Mr. G. Murphy and Mr. K. Plow.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.- Declarations of Interest are identified under the relevant minute.

MINUTES

3.- The minutes of the following meetings were confirmed and signed by the Chairman:

- Special Meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 9th October 2014.
- Ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee dated 27th November 2014.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 12th February 2015 - continued**

PUBLIC OPEN FORUM

4.- A member of the public requested an update regarding the future of the Special Learning Needs Unit at Deri View Primary School, Abergavenny and whether the unit would be closed in July 2015.

County Councillor R.G. Harris declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest regarding this matter as he is a governor of Deri View Primary School.

County Councillor M. Powell declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest regarding this matter as she is a governor of Deri View Primary School.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning stated that the Head Teacher of Deri View Primary School had sent a letter to all parents with children at the school who use the Special Learning Unit explaining that the school was part of an overall consultation process which started on 26th January 2015 regarding Additional Learning Provision across the County and that Deri View Primary School was a part of this consultation process. The Cabinet Member read out the letter to the Select Committee and to the member of the public.

The Cabinet Member stressed that no decision had been taken regarding the future of the Special Learning Needs Unit. A six week consultation period was underway and representations could be made during this period.

The member of the public was informed that she could present her views on this matter via the consultation process, school governors or via her local Member.

SELF EVALUATION UPDATE

5.- We scrutinised the Children and Young People Self Evaluation report in which Select Committee Members were provided with information summarising the current position of the Children and Young People Directorate in relation to Recommendation 6 in the Estyn Inspection Report Monmouthshire County Council November 2012 and in Annex B in the Post Inspection Action Plan.

In presenting the report, the following points were provided by Officers:

- The report covers improvements that have been made in terms of performance management generally, including the Check In Check Out process for officers (CICO), also performance management specific to Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Inclusion, the Youth Service and information around the political process that has driven improvements in this area and in all areas.
- An addendum to the document was presented to the Select Committee around the area of political process which acknowledged the work undertaken in improving the political management system.

In doing so it was noted that:

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 12th February 2015 - continued**

- Chief Officer and Cabinet Member meetings were held and recorded.
- The Internal Monitoring Board (IMB) had been established at the same time the Ministerial Recovery Board (MRB) was put in place. The IMB comprised of representatives from all of the political groups and received all of the papers that went to the MRB. In turn, the minutes of the IMB meetings were presented to Full Council.
- The Chair of the MRB has been to a full Member seminar to provide an update on where the MRB sees the Council's position and he will return again to provide a further update.
- There was considerable data regarding school performance that was available on the HUB.
- The Chief Officer for Children and Young People brings her Chief Officer report to Full Council which was key to identifying how the Directorate manages and achieves its goals.
- The Children and Young People Select Committee has undertaken considerable work with regard to policy development leading to a marked step up in political involvement in how the Education service was being held to account.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- The Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee was not on the list of consultees with regard to this report. It was considered that the Chair should be consulted on all reports presented to the Children and Young People Select Committee.
- Reference to Recommendation 1 of the Estyn Inspection in the introduction to the report needed to be expanded upon to outline examples of what has been done. The Chief Officer for Children and Young People agreed to amend the document accordingly.
- The Children and Young People Directorate was the first directorate to implement the new staff appraisal system, Check In, Check Out (CICO). Select Committee Members considered that this system might be beneficial to Members in their development and further information on the subject would help Select Committee Members in understanding the system better when scrutinising performance management in future. The Chief Officer for Children and Young People stated that the results of the next Estyn visit will provide an indicator as to whether CICO was working within the Directorate and she would also take back the request for Member training in CICO.
- In response to a question raised by a Select Committee Member regarding training provided for teachers and teaching assistants for

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 12th February 2015 - continued**

ASD friendly schools and that only 17 schools had received training, the Head of Achievement and Attainment for Education stated that schools were invited to attend the training and where possible staff would work with them to meet that request. The aim was to get all schools trained but were providing a programme to address schools in particular need at that time. Therefore, the training will continue.

- The 17 schools referred to a total for the year. This would be clarified in the next draft of the report.
- Page 15 of the report – Monmouthshire LAC Attendance 2010/11 – 2013 / 2014 – The actual numbers would be added alongside the percentages.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE), it was noted that pupil behaviour was improving. FTE's had fallen dramatically in recent years, which was due to the proactive nature of the schools and the Pupil Referral Unit.

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PERFORMANCE SUMMARY NOVEMBER 2014

6.- We scrutinised the Children and Young People Performance Summary for November 2014.

Select Committee Members were informed of the judgements made of Monmouthshire Schools for the academic year 2013- 2014 by Estyn inspection teams and a summary was received regarding Monmouthshire schools' inspection judgements since the introduction of the new Common Inspection Framework in September 2010.

In scrutinising the report, the Select Committee considered that some of the data differed to that outlined in a report to be received later in the meeting. It was noted that this report referred to historical data and did not contain data that had recently become available which had indicated that the position was now much more positive. It was therefore agreed that future performance summary reports would contain an introduction explaining this position.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- Schools that have gone into follow up or into a category have been removed from local authority or Estyn monitoring.
- Figures were better than Wales as a whole. Monmouthshire was comparably doing quite well and improving with schools being removed from a category.

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dated 12th February 2015 - continued**

- Similarly, Monmouthshire schools that were amber and red have specific support and intervention plans in place.
- The report did not include the schools that were inspected in 2014 and this report was a snapshot in time which did not take into account the schools that had now been removed from monitoring.
- It was considered that the explanation received in respect of the report indicated that Monmouthshire's schools were achieving much better than indicated in the report and it would have been helpful if this information had been added to the report to provide a clearer picture of the state of Monmouthshire's Schools. However, it was noted that Monmouthshire still had a way to go in order for Monmouthshire's profile to meet the Welsh profile, but progress was being made.
- Paragraph 5.9 of the report – amend the sub heading as follows:

'Follow up Activity for Estyn as a Whole'

We resolved to receive the report and noted its content.

REVENUE MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 9 OUTTURN FORECAST STATEMENT

7.- County Councillor P. Farley declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under the Members' Code of Conduct, as he is a governor of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

We scrutinised the report in which Select Committee Members were provided with information on the forecast revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of month 9 for the 2014/15 financial year.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- In response to a Select Committee Member's question in which the Assistant Head of Finance was invited to express his opinion on the future of Monmouthshire's schools budgets for next year in light of the information provided, the Assistant Head of Finance stated that there would likely be an increasing challenge ahead for Head Teachers and that they would most likely be required to work more collectively going forward.
- It was noted that Chepstow Comprehensive School was in significant deficit last year which had worsened. The Assistant Head of Finance stated that he had spoken with the Head Teacher and governors of the school and since December 2014, they had put together five proposals for recovery with only two of them being viable to allow the deficit to be paid off in the time allowed. Due to the size of the deficit the school was purporting to recover the debt over a period of time that was longer than usual. The School and governors were looking at a redundancy

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 12th February 2015 - continued**

prospect and were engaging with staff. It was noted that the largest part of the school's costs were staffing related and it was not easy to reduce staffing costs in a timely fashion.

- The Head of Children's Services stated that two vacant posts within the directorate had now been filled reducing the number of agency staff being used by the Directorate. However, there were four agency staff being used due to an increase in demand on the Directorate's resources. Therefore, there might be a need to create a temporary contract for a period of 18 months as this would be more cost effective than using agency staff.

We resolved to:

- (i) receive the report and note its content;
- (ii) note the position concerning third quarter revenue monitoring (£144,000 deficit) and to note the action Chief Officers were taking to address the overspends in their service areas;
- (iii) note that a caveated use of reserves was being sought in relation to redundancy costs incurred by services this year totalling £545,000, whilst services will continue to find compensatory savings additional to the mandates to mitigate the net cost pressure by the end of the financial year.

WORK PROGRAMME

8.- We received the Children and Young People Select Committee Work Programme. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Representatives from Coleg Gwent to be invited to a future Children and Young People Select Committee Meeting regarding Post 16 Transport costs contributions.
- It was likely that a special meeting of the Select Committee would be required to scrutinise Home to School Transport. A date for this meeting would be arranged in due course following discussions with the Passenger Transport Manager.
- Receive an update on the Adoption Process Pan Gwent at a future Select Committee meeting.
- In response to a Select Committee Member's question regarding the Select Committee reviewing and scrutinising schools' policies, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning stated that changes to schools' policies were presented to the County Council's Joint Advisory Group (JAG) in which trade unions were able to submit their views before being presented to Cabinet for approval. It was considered that

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 12th February 2015 - continued**

the Select Committee might have a role to play in this process before Cabinet receives the amended policy.

We resolved to receive the work programme and noted its content.

CABINET FORWARD WORK PLANNER

9.- We received the Cabinet Forward Work Planner and noted its content.

NEXT MEETING

10.- The next ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Select Committee will be held at County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk on Thursday 16th April 2014 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 4.12pm.

**Minutes of the Children and Young People Select Committee
dated 12th February 2015 - continued**



Mr Paul Matthews
Chief Executive
Monmouthshire County Council
The Rhadyr
Usk

March 2015

Dear Mr Matthews,

Estyn Monitoring Visit 2 -5 March 2015

Following Estyn's inspection of education services for children and young people in November 2012, the authority was identified as requiring special measures. A monitoring plan was subsequently agreed with your Estyn link inspectors and the third of a series of four scheduled monitoring visits took place in March 2015. This letter records the outcomes of that visit.

In March 2015, Clive Phillips HMI led a team of three inspectors to review the progress made by the authority against one of the recommendations arising from the November 2012 inspection.

The team held discussions with the leader of the council, elected members, the chief executive, senior officers, the cabinet member and other relevant officers. Inspectors scrutinised documentation, including evidence on the progress made on the recommendation in the context of additional learning needs, inclusion and youth support services.

At the end of the monitoring visit, the team reported their findings to you, as chief executive, and to the leader of the council, the relevant cabinet member, the chair of the children and young people select committee and senior officers. A representative of the Welsh Government observed the feedback.

Outcome of the monitoring visit

Recommendation 6: Ensure that performance management is effective and robust and allows elected members and senior officers to identify and address underperformance

In our inspection of children and young people's education services in 2012, we noted that performance management processes were not consistently implemented within the education directorate and that leaders and managers were not always able to direct staff effectively or hold them to account well enough for their work. The education directorate's performance management systems lacked coherence and were not sufficiently linked to strategic corporate priorities.

During the last 12 months, the local authority has developed a new corporate performance assessment process, which is providing a more robust system to manage performance. The process is ensuring that the children and young people (CYP) directorate's priorities appropriately reflect the corporate priorities. This is assisting individuals and teams within the CYP directorate to have a better understanding of their roles and how their work contributes to that of the directorate and wider corporate priorities. The local authority's processes for managing performance are now more consistent, more transparent and better understood by staff in the CYP directorate, although it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy and procedures in improving performance.

The CYP's service improvement plans align well with the key corporate themes within the single integrated plan. The service improvement plans identify broadly the priorities for improvement appropriately. However, it is not always obvious in the service improvement plan what actions the local authority is taking to address the areas for improvement.

The CYP's directorate has a more effective system for reporting on the progress against the actions in the service improvement plans and on the achievement of performance indicators to senior officers and elected members. Staff at all levels are beginning to be held to account more rigorously for their areas of responsibility.

The CYP directorate's use of performance data has improved, for example in identifying progress of vulnerable groups and pupils with additional learning needs. The authority has also improved the range of data in the youth service, which means that the authority and its partners have a better understanding of how the provision helps learners to progress and achieve. However, the access that schools have to management information systems is still too inconsistent. The information and analysis provided in the managers' reports are not always helpful enough to ensure that messages are identified accurately. In addition, teams do not always give enough attention to detail when reviewing their performance. As a result, areas for improvement are not picked up well enough.

The regional school improvement commissioned services are providing better quality information to the local authority on standards and leadership in schools, which in turn enables the local authority to identify underperformance and to use its statutory powers where necessary. As a result, the local authority is intervening more

appropriately in underperforming schools. Headteachers from underperforming schools have been invited to attend scrutiny meeting to account for the performance in their schools. School leaders now have a better appreciation of their lines of accountability, and this is beginning to impact well on the outcomes achieved by their pupils. There is also an increasing rigour and better clarity to the process of setting school attainment targets and this is helping to promote more appropriate expectations for improvement in the local authority's schools.

The authority has appropriate arrangements to scrutinise aspects of the education department's work. The arrangements align well with the monitoring of the post inspection action plan and the priorities of the education department.

Next steps

The authority should continue to address all the recommendations from the 2012 inspection. The final visit in the autumn 2015 will evaluate progress against all of the recommendations.

Your link inspectors will continue their work with the authority. They will confirm arrangements for the final visit with you in due course.

I am copying this letter to the Welsh Government and the Wales Audit Office for information.

Yours sincerely

Clive Phillips
Assistant Director

cc: Welsh Government
Wales Audit Office



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Inspection of *Children's* Services

in Monmouthshire
County Council

Introduction

Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) undertook an inspection of children's services in Monmouthshire County Council in November 2014. Inspectors looked closely at the experiences of children and young people who had needed or still need help and/or protection. We also considered the quality of outcomes achieved for children and families. This included a small sample of children and young people who were looked after. Inspectors read case files and interviewed staff, managers and professionals from partner agencies. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition, inspectors evaluated what the local authority knew about how well it was performing and what difference it was making for the people who it was trying to help, protect and look after.

During this inspection no widespread or serious failures were identified by inspectors that left children being harmed or at risk of harm. However, management oversight of practice was insufficient.

The local authority acknowledged that prior to April 2014 there was insufficient attention given to improving frontline practice. There has since been a greater focus and attention to improving practice in children's services particularly in the last six months; these developments need to be embedded and sustained. Inspectors were pleased to note that senior managers were committed to achieving improvements in the provision of help and protection for children and families.

The recommendations made on page 5 of this report identify the key areas where post-inspection development work should be focused. They are intended to assist Monmouthshire County Council and its partners in their continuing improvement.



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Summary

Theme 1: Access Arrangements

Thresholds between “early help” (the provision of information, advice and signposting) and statutory social services interventions were not appropriately understood or operating effectively. Although children and young people in need of help and/or protection were generally identified by professionals from all agencies, the quality of referral information sharing was poor. When contacts were received where there was an obvious indication of significant harm, prompt and effective action was taken. However, if there was no obvious indication of significant harm, decisions to progress contacts to a referral and/or an initial assessment were not timely. Neither was the system for tracking/managing contacts acceptable; there was a risk of cases being lost and/or of lengthy delays to children and families receiving the help they needed. Management oversight of access arrangements was insufficient. As a consequence some children were left in need and some were potentially left at risk of significant harm.

Theme 2: Assessment

Children and young people who are, or who are likely to be, at risk of harm were identified and protected. Child protection enquiries were generally thorough and timely although strategy discussions did not routinely include information from all relevant partners. Overall, assessments were timely and contained appropriate information from a range of sources. The quality of risk analysis within assessments was variable; often risk was implied rather than explicitly articulated. Although assessments were generally child-focussed, they did not always take account of children’s communication needs. Nor did they detail children’s diversity requirements or explicitly express their wishes and feelings often enough. The quality of recording throughout the assessment process was poor and as a result failed to evidence the depth of enquiry that had been undertaken. Most assessments were not shared with children and families. Although the timeliness and quality of decision-making was adequate, management oversight of the assessment process was ineffective. Overall the quality of assessments was inconsistent. The impact of lack of engagement and lack of transparency was that children and families were not always clear about the purpose of the help they received and/or the need for protection.

Theme 3: Care Management & Review

Children and young people identified as being in need of help or protection, including children looked after, generally experienced timely and effective multi-agency help and protection. The quality of care planning and review was adequate. Some good services were delivered to families and good quality direct work with children was evident. However, risk based planning and authoritative practice were not sufficiently well evidenced. There were significant deficits in multi-agency risk management, in particular with regard to the use by social services of “contracts of expectations” which fail to adequately protect children. Managers did not effectively challenge poor quality

risk management practices. Workforce stability had been recently achieved in children's services and social workers were committed to achieving good outcomes for children and families. This stability now needs to be consolidated and sustained in order to achieve continuous improvement in outcomes for children and families.

Theme 4: Leadership & Governance

Leadership management and governance arrangements did comply with statutory guidance and arrangements for effective engagement were in place. Senior leaders were committed to improving safeguarding and this was reflected well in strategic planning. Strategic plans had not been effectively disseminated throughout children's services. More focussed and sustained improvement is required to establish an effective strategy for the delivery of good quality services and outcomes for children, young people and their families. The authority worked well with partners to deliver help, care and protection for children and young people and showed a high level of enthusiasm and commitment to corporate parenting.

Local joint needs analysis did not inform planning for children's services. Neither performance management, quality assurance monitoring nor strategies to ensure the authority sustained a culture of learning were sufficiently well embedded to provide a thorough understanding of the difference that help, care and protection was making for children and families. Senior leaders were insufficiently well sighted on front line work in children's services.

Services were delivered by a suitably qualified, experienced and competent workforce that was able to meet the needs of local children, young people and their families. Most social workers expressed trust and respect for senior managers and said that morale was high within the workforce. Management oversight and supervision was accessible but was insufficiently effective in supporting the workforce to deliver services that result in positive outcomes for children and families.

Recommendations

1. Training should be delivered for all professionals/agencies to ensure that the thresholds for access to children's services are clearly understood and consistently applied; this training should incorporate completion of quality referral information and reports to conference.
2. Effective systems must be in place to ensure that all children who meet the threshold for an initial assessment by children's services receive a timely assessment that is of good quality so that their safety is secured.
3. Strategy discussions and decisions should be informed by the involvement of all relevant professionals and clearly record the rationale for decisions and agreed timescales for action.
4. The quality and consistency of record keeping should be improved; all staff and managers should ensure that their records are of good quality, are up to date and are systematically stored.
5. The quality of risk assessment and risk management should be improved; policies and toolkits should be revised to focus explicitly on risk assessment and management in children's services and staff should be trained appropriately. "Contracts of expectation" should not be used to manage risk; statutory child protection processes should be initiated where there are safeguarding concerns.
6. There should be a greater focus on engaging with children and involving them in the assessment process; this should include taking more account of children's communication needs and a more detailed analysis of their cultural, religious and other diversity needs.
7. The quality of assessments and plans should be improved to ensure that they are consistently of a good quality, with a clear focus on the needs, risks and strengths of children, and that desired outcomes, timescales and accountabilities for actions are clear.
8. Performance management and quality assurance arrangements, including scrutiny of service demand and routine auditing of the quality of practice, should be more effectively embedded so that managers at all levels have timely, relevant and accurate performance and quality assurance information to enable them to do their jobs effectively and to deliver improvements.
9. The consistency and quality of management oversight, direction and supervision of front line staff throughout children's services should be improved.
10. Senior leaders should take steps to enhance their line of sight on frontline work and ensure the improvements needed in children's services are prioritised and the pace of improvement sustained.

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Findings

Theme 1: Access Arrangements

What we expect to see

Thresholds between “early help” (the provision of information, advice and signposting) and statutory social services interventions are appropriately understood and are operating effectively.

Key findings

1. Children and young people in need of protection were identified by partners and appropriate referrals were made to children’s social services.
2. The quality of information recorded on referral forms was poor.
3. The arrangements for interface between Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) and statutory services were not working effectively.
4. When contacts were received where there was an obvious indication of significant harm prompt and effective action was taken.
5. When contacts were received where there was not an obvious indication of significant harm, decisions to progress to referral were not timely; as a result children were left at potential risk.
6. Timely decisions about whether or not to progress contacts to a referral and/or an initial assessment were not made.
7. Children, young people and families were not always being offered help and/or protection when needs and/or concerns were first identified.
8. Management oversight of access arrangements was insufficient.

Explanation of findings

1.1. Children and young people in need of protection were identified by partner agencies and appropriate referrals were made to children's social services. Partner agencies reported that, overall the response to referrals by duty social workers was constructive and helpful albeit not always timely. Most partners said that, in their view, thresholds were generally appropriately and consistently applied by children's services staff.

Quote from partner:

"We find the duty desk very helpful but there are sometimes delays in deciding if our referral meets the threshold".

1.2. Referrals were usually made using the recently improved Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF). We found that the quality of information recorded by partners on many of the MARFs was poor, containing inaccurate information. Referrals also lacked clarity and detail about background information, in particular reference to former concerns and incidents that would inform the context of the family circumstances. It was not always obvious which agency or professional had completed the referral form. Children's services duty staff receiving referrals were insufficiently proactive about obtaining clarification/confirmation of poor quality referral information in a timely manner. This meant that social workers needed to source information about families to better inform themselves about the levels and types of risk posed before decisions could be made about whether/how to progress to assessment. In doing so, there was often an over-reliance on self-reporting; with workers frequently relying solely on information obtained from telephone contact with families without verification. These deficits created unnecessary delays in decision making which potentially meant that children were left at risk. Lack of detailed information also inhibited a sensitive and responsive service approach to children and families as well as hindering staff personal safety risk assessments prior to undertaking initial visits.

1.3. The arrangements for interface between Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) and statutory services were not working effectively. There were up-to-date policies, procedures and guidance in place but inspectors did not see firm evidence of a shared understanding of thresholds between these partners and statutory services. This was further borne out by the views expressed by some health partners who reported that their skills, knowledge and experience of working with children and families, particularly younger children, was not sufficiently valued by children's services staff. The authority had already identified the need to improve and further develop JAFF arrangements to ensure children and families were more effectively able to access early help. A social worker had been recruited as a JAFF co-ordinator within the last six months. The post-holder had recently initiated regular monthly training events for staff, centred on achieving a greater understanding of shared thresholds. She was also enthusiastically and actively involved in improving referral pathways, including "step-up" and "step-down" arrangements. Whilst inspectors welcomed these developments it is too early to comment on the sustainability of any improvement achieved so far.

1.4. We found that when contacts were received where there was an obvious indication that a child or children were at risk or had suffered significant harm, a prompt decision was made to progress this to a referral and effective action was taken in all cases inspectors reviewed. Inspectors saw no examples of children and families being subjected to child protection investigations unnecessarily. Child protection investigations were undertaken by suitably experienced social workers following information sharing at a strategy discussion.

Quote from a mother:

“We got a really speedy service, exceptionally swift in fact. What we got meets our child’s needs. How could it be better? The social worker came to our home. There was no need for us to queue in a busy office. The social worker and the duty officer have been wonderful. It took some time in discussion over the phone and at home to work out what we needed. I have much respect and admiration for them. They are both very respectful. They know what the job is about but don’t talk down to us and treated us with respect”.

1.5. When contacts were received where there was not an obvious indication of significant harm, decisions to progress to referral were not always timely. As a result children were left at potential risk and families were not always being offered help early enough. The volume of contacts received by Monmouthshire children’s services had risen during the first half of 2014-15. This increase was not anticipated and remains unaccounted for. The increase coupled with high staff turn-over, staff absence and significant changes in working practices led to a backlog of work during summer 2014. We acknowledge that steps had been successfully taken to improve staffing stability and as a result the backlog had been cleared. However, inspectors found that contacts were still not being dealt with in a timely manner. It was not apparent, in light of the continuing upward trajectory of referrals, how the authority will sustain capacity to avoid the creation of a further backlog or to ensure that all contacts receive a timely and appropriate response in future.

1.6. Between April and September 2014, 215 of 1870 contacts progressed to become referrals in a timely way. Others were appropriately signposted to services or, if current cases, the information was conveyed to the allocated social worker. However, a significant proportion of contacts were routed into a process labelled “further enquiries”. This appeared to be a temporary holding position for contacts with as yet insufficient information available to clearly identify the case as meeting the threshold for progression to referral. Timely decisions about whether or not to progress work to a referral and/or for an initial assessment were not therefore being made.

1.7. The unacceptability of these arrangements was exacerbated by a lack of methodical tracking of the progress and/or completion of these enquiries. This meant there was potential for some cases to be lost indefinitely in the system leading to children being

left at risk without action being taken. Inspectors found that there were unacceptable delays in completing enquiries and in some cases children and families were not seen or spoken to for several weeks. This drift resulted in them being left in need and potentially at risk when the provision of early help could usefully have been provided to immediately improve their circumstances and reduce risks.

1.8. Inspectors also saw examples of cases being closed where there was a clear indication that children and families were in need of help and support, albeit with no obvious indication that the level of need met the threshold for significant harm. Nevertheless, these cases clearly should have progressed to an assessment prior to deciding how and by whom support could most effectively be provided. The impact was that children and families were not being helped when they should have been.

1.9. Management oversight of access arrangements was clearly insufficient. These cases did not receive the management oversight needed to assure the authority that children were appropriately safeguarded and families received the timely support they required. Managers did not routinely audit case file records in respect of this work and so did not secure an accurate view of the quality of practice. Inspectors saw only very limited evidence of management sign off or approval of work nor were there sufficiently robust systems in place to track progress or oversee the quality of work. There was no up-to-date written guidance for staff undertaking the duty/intake function.

1.10. Inspectors noted that senior practitioners and managers were very responsive to concerns raised by inspectors during the fieldwork period concerning these significant deficits, and that some immediate remedial action was taken to increase the tracking and management oversight of access arrangements. However, urgent action is required to review and improve arrangements for managing contacts made to the authority if thresholds and timely decision making are to be effectively operated to protect children. It is also important that workers receive clear and contemporary guidance about providing early support for children and families to prevent escalation of need and potential risk.

Summary

1.11. Thresholds between “early help” (the provision of information, advice and signposting) and statutory social services interventions were not appropriately understood or operating effectively. Although children and young people in need of help and/or protection were generally identified by professionals from all agencies, the quality of referral information sharing was poor. When contacts were received where there was an obvious indication of significant harm, prompt and effective action was taken. However, if there was no obvious indication of significant harm, decisions to progress contacts to a referral and/or an initial assessment were not timely. Neither was the system for tracking/managing contacts acceptable; there was a risk of cases being lost and/or of lengthy delays to children and families receiving the help they needed. Management oversight of access arrangements was insufficient. As a consequence some children were left in need and some were potentially left at risk of significant harm.

Theme 2: Assessment

What we can expect to see

Children and young people who are, or who are likely to be, at risk of harm are identified and protected.

Key findings

1. Child protection enquiries were thorough and timely and were informed by decisions made at a strategy discussion.
2. Strategy discussions were timely and generally managed in accordance with guidance.
3. Strategy discussions did not routinely include information sharing with all key agencies.
4. Assessments were developed from a wide range of sources including information from partners, parents and carers.
5. Assessments identified when poor parental mental health or substance misuse and domestic violence were adversely affecting children.
6. The quality of risk analysis contained within assessments was variable.
7. Assessments were child focussed but they did not articulate children's wishes and feelings often enough.
8. Assessments did not take account of children's communication needs often enough nor were children's diversity needs sufficiently well captured.

Explanation of findings

2.1. Generally we found that child protection enquiries were thorough and timely and that they were informed by decisions made at strategy discussions. Strategy discussions as well as outcome strategy discussions were timely and generally in accordance with guidance. Strategy meetings were utilised very rarely. The majority of strategy discussions were held between police and children's services and did not routinely involve discussions with other key agencies. Inspectors recognised the resource implications and logistical difficulties associated with multi-agency meetings. Nevertheless, not involving partners, particularly health and education, early enough limited the range and volume of information obtained/shared resulting in a negative impact on the quality and breadth of risk assessment.

2.2. Records of strategy discussions and section 47 enquiries varied too much in quality. Whilst decisions made were generally clear, too many records lacked detailed planning arrangements concerning roles, responsibilities and timescales for future action. Neither was there consistency about methods for storing records of section 47 enquiries. A small number of staff interviewed by inspectors had great difficulty finding these records on case files even where they had a clear recollection of carrying out and indeed recording the enquiry themselves. The impact of such poor recording and storage practices was to prevent new workers, or those taking over a case when the allocated worker was absent, as well as managers, from swiftly understanding the needs and risks associated with children and families. Inspectors recognised that work already underway to develop a new electronic case management system will go some way to address these deficits.

2.3. A significant minority of the assessments we reviewed had not been completed in a timely manner. Nevertheless we found that most of the assessments had been developed from a wide range of evidence, including relevant and appropriate information from partner agencies as well as from parents and carers.

Practice example report from a father:

The child's father was impressed by the fact that the social worker made one of her visits to the child unannounced. He believed that this showed her experience and skills in gathering and analysing information. His overall opinion was that she was respectful, listened, made sure she had all the information she needed and kept him informed of what would be likely to happen next. He felt involved in the assessment processes and in the decision making. He felt she had made a positive difference to his daughter's life and to his, both personally and professionally. She instilled confidence in him, arranged meetings at times and places that were accessible for him. Importantly she recognised the impact her involvement was having on his family.

2.4. Generally assessments reflected levels of need and/or concern appropriately. Most assessments inspectors reviewed identified when poor parental mental health or substance mis-use and domestic abuse were adversely affecting children.

Many assessments were clearly child-focussed and inspectors saw some good analysis of risk, including analysis of history leading to effective action. However, quality was variable.

Practice example from staff interview:

There is evidence that the folder taken out by social workers when completing an assessment improves professional standards. The folder contains the consent for information, a service user feedback form, the complaints and compliments policy and procedures and a copy of the basic information on the child and family. This gives an opportunity for the parent to confirm family details are correct and places the work on a proper footing. The social worker who is from an agency has worked in another authority where this documentation at first point of contact was not available. The agency worker said: "This is brilliant - all the documentation is in one place."

2.5. Risk analysis was frequently not clearly articulated within the assessment framework but rather implied by the descriptions given of children's and family's circumstances. The introduction in May 2014 of a revised Risk Management Policy (fully implemented in September 2014 alongside a new recording template) was seen by inspectors as a constructive attempt to help guide practitioners into more explicit risk analysis. However, this policy requires further work and staff and managers will subsequently need to be appropriately briefed if this welcome development is to support them as intended.

2.6. Assessments did not always reflect sufficient engagement with children. In many of the cases we reviewed, children had not been seen and/or spoken to alone where this would have been appropriate. Whilst inspectors did see some good examples of effective engagement with children in the assessment process a small proportion of assessments did not take account of children's communication needs. Neither were the diverse needs of children arising from their culture, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or sexuality sufficiently well detailed in assessments; this information is critical in helping children understand their experiences as well as informing the care and support they receive. Too often children's wishes and feelings were not explicit in assessments. The impact of this limited engagement in their assessments was that children and young people lacked a clear perception of what needed to be done to ensure their safety and wellbeing. It was noteworthy that the authority had already recognised the need for better engagement with children and as a result the head of service had recently commissioned training for social workers in play therapy, to increase their confidence and capability to engage more effectively with children and to elicit their wishes and feelings.

Practice example from case file:

The social worker appeared to relate very well to this child and carefully took him through the events that led to the allegations being made. This was handled sensitively but directly.

2.7. The template for recording assessments had been updated just prior to the inspection fieldwork, so the inspection team reviewed a mixture of assessments recorded on previous and current models. Regardless of the template many assessments were undated. Some of these documents failed to: evidence the depth of enquiry; reflect the dynamic nature of change in light of emerging issues and risks; or demonstrate the cumulative impact of social work interventions to date.

2.8. The revised Child & Family Assessment template did not encourage practitioners to distinguish the varied risks and needs associated with multiple siblings within the family and again this contributed to confused recording. Some records were duplicated to sibling case files, which meant that they were not always personal to the child. This hampered new workers or those taking over a case when the allocated worker was absent, as well as managers, from swiftly understanding the needs and risks associated with individual children. Moreover, it reduced the value of the records to children reading them. Evidence from case files, borne out by feedback from some parents, suggest that very few assessments were shared with children and families. The impact of this, coupled with poor recording practice and limited engagement with children, resulted in children and families not always fully understanding the purpose of the help they received, nor what they needed to change to ensure children were appropriately safeguarded, and that their prospects for better outcomes were improved.

2.9. As with access arrangements we found that the quality of management oversight of assessments was ineffective. Although the timeliness and quality of decision making in respect of the initiation of child protection enquiries was adequate, the overall quality of assessments was variable, in particular the quality of risk assessments required improvement. Fewer than half of the assessments we reviewed had been signed off or approved by a manager/senior practitioner.

Summary

2.10. Children and young people who are, or who are likely to be, at risk of harm were identified and protected. Child protection enquiries were generally thorough and timely, although strategy discussions did not routinely include information from all relevant partners. Overall, assessments were timely and contained appropriate information from a range of sources. The quality of risk analysis within assessments was variable; often risk was implied rather than explicitly articulated. Although assessments were generally child-focussed, they did not always take account of children's communication needs. Nor did they detail children's diversity requirements or explicitly express their wishes and feelings often enough. The quality of recording throughout the assessment process was poor and as a result failed to evidence the depth of enquiry that had been undertaken. Most assessments were not shared with children and families. Management oversight of the assessment process was ineffective, although the timeliness and quality of decision making was adequate. Overall the quality of assessments was inconsistent. The impact of lack of engagement and lack of transparency was that children and families were not always clear about the purpose of the help they received and/or the need for protection.

Theme 3: Care Management & Review

What we can expect to see

Children and young people identified as being in need of help or protection, including children looked after, experience timely and effective multi-agency help and protection through risk-based planning authoritative practice and review that secures positive outcomes.

Key findings

1. Social workers could articulate well children's needs and the risks associated with their care, as well as actions required for reducing risk and achieving desired outcomes.
2. The quality of care plans was inconsistent with timescales for action and roles and responsibilities often unclear.
3. The quality of risk management was often ineffective.
4. Social workers were committed to improving outcomes for children.
5. Many children had experienced frequent changes of social worker.
6. Stabilisation of the workforce had been recently achieved along with an improvement in staff morale.
7. Social workers undertake some good quality direct work with children and their families.
8. Although limited in range, the quality of services delivered for children and families was good.
9. Child Protection conferences and core groups were timely, well chaired, child focussed and well attended by families and partners.
10. Statutory visits were not timely or well recorded.
11. Progress of child protection plans were regularly reviewed.
12. The quality of case recording was poor.

Explanation of findings

3.1. Social workers could articulate well children's needs, and the risks associated with their care as well as the actions required for reducing risk and achieving desired outcomes. However written plans did not reflect this. Most plans were explicitly derived from assessments and clearly outlined objectives for change, but many plans were less specific about timescales for completion of work and did not always clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies involved, nor expectations on family members.

3.2. As with risk assessment, the quality of risk management was also variable. Actions identified to address risk tended to be generic and did not include enough information needed to support required responses from agencies or from families. Consideration of patterns of behaviours and/or previous concerns did not routinely inform planning to minimise/manage risk in any of the plans reviewed, nor was there a recognised need to include contingency planning. The impact of this was that other professionals were not always clear about expectations on them to take action in specific circumstances. This limited the effectiveness of risk management. Moreover, evidence from service users suggested that children and families were not fully aware of risk management arrangements, leading to distrust of professionals and of social workers in particular.

3.3. The most concerning examples of poor risk management were reflected in the authority's use of "written agreements" or "contracts of expectations". These "agreements" were entered into with families who were not formally engaged in either child protection or court proceedings. The arrangements were often entered into without the knowledge or agreement of partner agencies and with no clarity about how the family's (lack of) compliance was to be monitored and/or reported on. The consequences of a family's non-compliance with these agreements were neither clear nor enforceable. This practice clearly had the potential for children to be left in unsafe environments.

3.4. All the social workers and managers we interviewed were clearly committed to improving outcomes for the children and families they worked with. However, evidence from case reviews showed that many children had experienced frequent changes of worker, often at short notice. This had impacted negatively on the quality of casework and relationships between children, families and staff. In a significant minority of cases we saw the quality of social work support was poor, with long gaps between visits and an overall lack of purpose, leading to slow progress against the plan.

3.5. Inspectors recognised that the authority had experienced a period of workforce instability with high staff turn-over and a reliance on agency workers. Many staff told us they had seen a good deal of successive and poorly communicated organisational change within children's services over the last two/three years and that this had a negative impact on their morale. However, we noted that the authority had made extensive efforts during the last nine months to successfully recruit appropriately skilled and experienced social workers. We also noted a re-focussing of senior management attention on the improvements required in children's services. This was evidenced for example by additional support to temporarily retain a small contingent of agency social workers over

establishment to support transitional staffing arrangements and provide continuity. Finally, it was apparent from constructive and positive responses that inspectors received from most staff interviewed, that overall staff confidence and morale had improved significantly since the permanent appointment of the new head of service nine months ago.

Views expressed by parents and grandparents:

Both mother and grandparents spoke very positively about their contact with the social worker. Mother said she was always accessible and returned calls. She explained what she was doing and why. The mother felt listened to, supported and involved in the process. She had trust and confidence in the social worker to do what was right for the child. She believed that the decisions made to date were right for the child despite being very distressing for her. This was echoed by the grandparents who scored the social worker "ten out of ten" for all aspects of her work.

3.6. A review of contemporary practice demonstrated that in many cases, social workers now undertake direct work with children and their families. They also form positive relationships with children that help them to express their wishes and feelings. Inspectors welcomed this move to a more child and family centred approach which promoted the value of effective engagement as a critical component of the social work role. This positive improvement needs to continue to be built upon, embedded and sustained.

Quote from social worker:

"I have put a great deal of work into this case and I think the family are pleased with the outcome. There has been a lot of input from other professionals such as Action for Children and the school which has all contributed to a better outcome."

3.7. As in many other rural authorities, the range of family support services available was limited. The specific gap in service provision most frequently highlighted was the limitation of the availability of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). However, evidence from case reviews and some service user feedback suggests that the quality of health and voluntary sector social care services, as well as direct work undertaken by social workers and including services delivered to children with disabilities, was good.

Quote from a parent:

"The staff in the service are very personable and friendly. It was a speedy response. There are a lot of good services here. They met my son and talked to him. They know their jobs very well but treat you with respect and listen carefully. They don't talk down to you. My child got just what he needed."

3.8. We saw examples of professionals from partner agencies contributing constructively to progressing both child protection and child in need plans. Partner agencies equally reported effective working relationships with social workers notwithstanding some reservations concerning a lack of information provided about recent organisational changes in children's services.

Practice example of direct work with children:

"The use of the NSPCC tool 'Underwear Rules' afforded a very good opportunity to engage this four-year-old child in some meaningful discussion"

3.9. When decisions were made that a child protection conference was required following an investigation, conferences were convened within appropriate timescales. Overall social work reports to conferences were of an adequate or good quality that provided sufficient information for partners to make appropriate judgements based on an analysis of risk. The quality of reports from partner agencies was too variable and a lack of a standard format for reports exacerbated this.

3.10. We saw some mixed examples of the quality of planning by social workers for conferences, and partners reported that families did not often have a clear understanding of the child protection process including the purpose of core groups and conferences. However, arrangements to share reports with families beforehand were reported to have improved significantly in the last 12 months.

3.11. Conferences were well chaired and child focussed. They were attended by most statutory agencies and by families. We also saw good examples of the mindfulness and support given by social workers and conference chair to the potential sensitivities for families attending conferences.

Practice observation case conference:

During a review conference there was a professional dispute. A representative from a partner agency was confrontational and expressing views and opinions that were not child-focussed; the professional was prioritising a parent's needs over those of the child. Both social worker and conference chair stayed calm and responded in a measured way; they reminded the professional of the purpose of conference and stressed the priority for protecting the child whilst being mindful of the needs of the parent. The confrontation was resolved and the professional agreed to contribute more actively to core groups than had been the case to date. This outcome both protected the child and provided appropriate support to the family.

3.12. Generally, satisfactory plans were made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, or multi-agency child in need plans were determined when de-registration had taken place. Overall the progress of plans was considered thoroughly at review child protection conferences and, with one significant exception seen by inspectors, escalated to pre-proceedings agreements under the Public Law Outline when plans had not reduced risk or concerns were increasing.

Quote from a father:

"I am very happy with the service we are receiving. Social services can't get it right first time but they learn from what works and put it right. When things came to a head earlier in the year and my wife was at breaking point, the social worker and manager got to grips with the problem and gradually over the past few weeks things have got much better. Both the social worker and the conference chair are always very accommodating. I was apprehensive about working with social services at the start because of the bad press but I now have every confidence in the service. The social worker makes herself easily available - we have her mobile number and can contact her easily. She always gets back to us within good time. The social worker has arranged and chaired a number of multidisciplinary conferences for our child. The meetings were well chaired and we received copies of reports in good time. The reports are always accurate and well written. After a difficult period for us as a family we have got to a settled arrangement. We've got there now. They have done a good job."

3.13. Core groups were convened sufficiently frequently and were well attended by relevant agencies and by families. We saw recent evidence that core groups kept the child at the centre of planning and were progressing work within the child protection plan. However, when children were subject to a child protection plan they were not always visited within agreed timescales, although an improving picture was emerging since greater workforce stability was recently achieved. It is too soon to comment on the extent to which this improvement was embedded into routine practice.

3.14. The quality of recording by social workers when children were seen alone and for distinguishing when visits were unannounced was inconsistent. An explicit record of discussions with children and families about the progress of plans and whether their lives were improving was too variable. The majority of recording we saw showed general conversation about day to day activities and interests, although we did see some good records of children clearly expressing what life was like for them. We noted that the local authority had recognised the need to improve recording practice and had already commissioned staff training due to be delivered in the near future.

3.15. Although generally we found the quality of care planning and review to be adequate, the quality of risk management and contingency planning was poor. We noted that managers recognised that the quality of plans, and specifically risk management planning, needed to improve. Some staff training in risk assessment had been undertaken; however, other improvement activities such as managers undertaking regular case audit have still to be put into practice. Additionally, we saw little evidence of managers challenging poor risk management practice either with individual practitioners or with the workforce as a whole.

Summary

3.16. Children and young people identified as being in need of help or protection, including children looked after, generally experienced timely and effective multi-agency help and protection. The quality of care planning and review was adequate. Some good services were delivered to families and good quality direct work with children was evident. However, risk based planning and authoritative practice were not sufficiently well evidenced. There were significant deficits in multi-agency risk management, in particular with regard to the use by social services of “contracts of expectations” which fail to adequately protect children. Managers did not effectively challenge poor quality risk management practices. Workforce stability had been recently achieved in children’s services and social workers were committed to achieving good outcomes for children and families. This stability now needs to be consolidated and sustained in order to achieve continuous improvement in outcomes for children and families.

Theme 4: Leadership & Governance

What we expect to see

Leadership management and governance arrangements comply with statutory guidance and together establish an effective strategy for the delivery of good quality services and outcomes for children, young people and their families. The authority works with partners to deliver help, care and protection for children and young people and fulfils its corporate parenting responsibilities for looked after children. Leaders, managers and elected members have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of practice and performance to enable them to discharge their responsibilities effectively. Services are delivered by a suitably qualified experienced and competent workforce that is able to meet the needs of local children, young people and their families.

Key findings

1. Leadership, management and governance arrangements complied with statutory guidance.
2. Arrangements for effective engagement with strategic partners were in place as was good cross service area joint working within the council.
3. The local authority knew its strengths and areas for improvement.
4. The pace of improvement needs to be sustained for managers and leaders to be assured that arrangements are effectively delivering good quality services and outcomes for children, young people and their families.
5. Local needs analysis did not sufficiently inform the authority's service strategy, partnership arrangements or commissioning for children's services.
6. The voices of children and young people were not sufficiently captured or used to shape service development.
7. Lack of clear communication or translation of strategic plans into a more focussed framework for delivery of children's services hindered the workforce from achieving better outcomes for vulnerable families.
8. Senior leaders were committed to improving safeguarding.
9. Senior leaders did not have a direct line of sight on the experiences and challenges that front-line workers were often confronted with.

10. Regular and effective case audit of child protection work was established. However, case file audit by managers throughout children's services had not been embedded into core business. The use of performance monitoring information and quality assurance monitoring did not effectively drive continuous improvement.
11. Strategies to ensure the authority sustained a culture of learning were not sufficiently well embedded.
12. A suitably qualified and competent workforce was in place and workforce stability had recently brought about a positive improvement of the quality and consistency of service delivery to children and families.
13. Generally staff had welcomed new ways of working and reported an increased trust in senior managers. Most social workers reported good morale. A significant minority of staff and some partners reported that communication about changes needed to improve.

Explanation of Findings

4.1. At the most strategic level in the authority, the important principle that families are supported was very clearly established within the council's Single Integrated Plan (SIP) 2013 – 17. The unified strategic needs assessment that underpinned the SIP drew widely on relevant information sourced from within the council, as well as from partner agencies, and was compiled in consultation with key stakeholders. Local authority elected members, the chief executive and chief officers were clear about their respective roles, and clear lines of accountability were in place to ensure that they effectively discharged their individual and collective responsibilities to deliver on the plan.

4.2. Leadership, management and governance arrangements complied with statutory guidance, and arrangements were in place for effective engagement with strategic partners. We noted the authority's leadership of the Safeguarding Children's Board (SCB) and its involvement to the Local Service Board (LSB). Evidence provided by partners suggested that the contributions of the director of social services and the chief executive officer were seen as cohesive and confident within these Gwent-wide fora. Inspectors also recognised the effectiveness of leadership and management arrangements in place within the council for cross-service area communication and joined-up working; this was specifically evident in respect of children's services with children and young people and enterprise service areas.

4.3. The local authority was aware of its strengths and areas for development. Political leaders, chief executive and chief officers stated that improving safeguarding arrangements and supporting children's services to deliver better outcomes for children and families were the council's highest priorities. Inspectors recognised the commitment and enthusiasm for improvement shown by chief officers and elected members and also

that some progress had been made. However, we found that in order for management and governance arrangements to deliver strong strategic local leadership, which clearly demonstrates improved outcomes for children and their families, the pace of improvement needs be sustained.

4.4. Senior managers and elected members told us that they had responded constructively to the improvement notice issued by Estyn in 2012, and that they had utilised the accompanying recovery plan as a catalyst to drive improvements to safeguarding arrangements across all council service areas. Estyn noted in April 2014 that the authority had appropriately prioritised safeguarding in its strategic planning and set the foundations in place for improving safeguarding arrangements. We found that elected members, the chief executive and the director of social services recognised the need to secure and sustain the improvements made to date.

4.5. Leaders, including elected members, had identified that improvements were required in children's services. In April 2013 services were restructured. Subsequently, many plans, procedures and practices have been implemented and a new head of service had been permanently appointed nine months ago. Additional investment to support a targeted development programme for children's services had also been agreed. These initiatives demonstrated a clear commitment from leaders to focus improvement activity on children's services. We recognised that work had been initiated by senior leaders to increase their awareness of the challenges facing children's services and as such we observed an improving picture. Nevertheless, we found that an insufficient analysis and understanding of underlying complexities and continuing risks had sometimes resulted in reactive or retrospective responses rather than those based on effective strategic planning. Moreover, the authority was still to evidence the sustainability of positive change, as well as a beneficial impact on outcomes for children and their families. Elected members and senior officers demonstrated an appreciation that although some services for children and families had begun to improve, they still had a long way to go.

4.6. The authority's children's services development plan was not sufficiently well informed by an analysis of the needs of local children, young people and families. Although some useful information had been obtained during consultations for the unified strategic needs assessment, this information had not evidently informed commissioning for children's services. Neither did we see evidence that partnership arrangements were grounded in joint strategic needs analysis, with improving outcomes for children and families stated as shared priorities. This lack of alignment meant that the collective accountability for helping and protecting vulnerable children was inhibited. We noted that the recent decision to re-position the strategic arrangements for JAFF into the policy and partnerships service area, alongside other Families First funded initiatives with direct links to the LSB, had the potential to create more effective joint service planning for children and families in need of help. Moreover, the corresponding systematic needs tracking process recently introduced for all families referred to JAFF will assist the authority and its partners to increase their understanding of the needs of local children and families to better inform service planning in future.

4.7. A high level of enthusiasm and commitment was expressed by leaders and senior managers towards corporate parenting, and inspectors welcomed plans to recruit a care leaver to an apprenticeship post within the council with the purpose of promoting greater participation of children and young people in influencing service design and strategic thinking. However, generally we found that improving effective engagement with service users had been too slow. Therefore, the voices of children and young people were not sufficiently captured or used to shape service development.

4.8. The council's strategic vision, "sustainable and resilient communities"; had not translated well into policy and practice in children's services, nor was it effectively disseminated throughout the workforce. Whilst some staff were able to conceptualise their own role as making a contribution to the wider authority theme that "families are supported"; most could not. All staff we interviewed, without exception, expressed commitment to improving outcomes for children in need of help and protection. However, some staff and operational managers expressed frustration and concern about how organisational changes within children's services had hindered professionals from forming effective working relationships with children, young people and families. We found that lack of clear communication and a disconnect between strategic plans and a focussed framework for delivery of children's services had militated against staff, operational managers and partners understanding of what was expected of them. This had resulted in some confusion and inefficiencies which had negative implications for achieving better outcomes for children in need of help of protection.

4.9. We found that senior leaders and elected members were insufficiently well sighted on how well children and young people were being helped and protected. We noted that formal arrangements were established for chief officers and members to meet with heads of service and other senior managers to better facilitate their own learning as well as to review progress; also that staff commented positively about more recent improved visibility of senior managers. However, senior managers and elected members did not take sufficient action to ensure they regularly and systematically heard the views of front-line workers through direct feedback. Arrangements, as recommended by Lord Laming¹ following the death of Victoria Climbié, for senior managers and elected members to regularly monitor front line work through visits to children's services teams were not in place. As a result, senior leaders did not have a direct line of sight on the experiences and challenges that front-line workers were often confronted with, learning from which could help drive improvement.

4.10. Management information was not systematically utilised to challenge performance or improve the quality of services for children and families. Inspectors recognised the close and regular attention paid by senior leaders to children's services key performance indicators and that the authority had made improvements in achieving these targets. Since the establishment of the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit in September 2012, a quality assurance and performance reporting framework has been in place. However, this was still being developed. We found case audit focussed on child protection work.

¹ The Victoria Climbié Inquiry Report Her Majesty's Stationary Office 2003

This successfully included direct and immediate constructive feedback to allocated case workers and their managers. However, routine auditing of cases by managers across children's services had not been embedded into core business. Nor did performance monitoring and quality assurance arrangements include information gained from a sufficiently wide range sources, including user feedback, analysis of complaints or direct consultations with staff. Inspectors noted the authority's recognition that the value of performance reporting could be increased by taking a thematic rather than a purely numeric approach and that work had begun to progress this methodology. However, we found that reporting on performance and quality had not yet routinely or effectively contextualised quantitative with qualitative information in a way that was sufficiently meaningful to better inform analysis of service effectiveness in respect of improving outcomes for children.

4.11. Strategies to ensure that the local authority sustained a culture of learning were not sufficiently well embedded. Most staff we interviewed expressed positive views about the availability/accessibility of formal and required training and inspectors recognised an increasing commitment from the authority to invest in learning and development. However, systematic arrangements were not yet sufficiently well-established to effectively capture and disseminate wider learning from social work practice, complaints or compliments to facilitate the service improvement. Neither were improvement actions arising from child protection case audit or complaints incorporated into the Children's Services Development Plan. All of this, coupled with the ineffective management oversight identified through the case review aspect of this inspection, not only inhibited contemporary understanding of the service's effectiveness but also potentially failed to deal rigorously with areas for development. As a result the use of performance information and quality assurance monitoring to drive continuous improvement was not consistently effective.

4.12. Impediments to recruitment and retention of a skilled and experienced workforce had, until recently, negatively impacted on performance in children's services. However, social workers have now been recruited into permanent posts following a targeted recruitment campaign over the past nine months. A small number of experienced agency workers had been retained to facilitate continuity; however, reliance on agency workers to deliver core business functions had been significantly reduced. Inspectors welcomed this workforce stability and recognised it as significant progress. We found that there had already been a positive impact on the quality and continuity of the social work services received by children and their families. Strategies for retention of staff and for succession planning now need to be further developed, implemented and embedded in order to consolidate the good progress made to date.

4.13. Overall, we found a suitably qualified competent workforce with the capacity to deliver good quality services to children and families. The majority of staff we interviewed told us that workloads were manageable both in terms of volume and complexity. Social workers also reported that supervision, both formal and informal was sufficiently frequent and of good quality. However, our review of supervision and appraisal records

demonstrated that the quality of supervision and appraisal of social workers was too variable. Whilst a number of supervision records did include reflective supervision and a consideration of welfare and training needs, too many poorly recorded case consultation or the rationale for decision making. Appraisal documentation we reviewed did not include any reference to social work competencies or continuous professional development for social workers. Nor did we see clear performance objective setting for either personal or professional development. Inspectors also had some concerns about the lack of clarity between senior practitioner and team manager roles and responsibilities in respect of supervision and management oversight. We found that management oversight and supervision was accessible, but not sufficiently effective, in supporting the workforce to deliver services resulting in positive outcomes for children and families. A review of these roles and their respective workloads could potentially result in more effective support for staff.

4.14. The authority had implemented an “agile working” model for all staff including children’s services. Staff had been provided with the necessary IT equipment to support remote working and a wide range of communication methods had been encouraged. Until recently teams and individuals had been dispersed throughout the county. In June 2014 all children’s services teams moved into one building. Inspectors noted that three ‘satellite’ contact centres were in the process of being identified and that these will also be appropriately equipped for agile working. These whole service efficiencies had been broadly welcomed by most staff we interviewed. Some staff articulated that the move had broken down silo working and greatly improved communication within and between teams. Most of the staff we spoke to told us that senior practitioners and managers were now more visible and more accessible for both formal and informal case consultation and supervision.

4.15. Staff in children’s services consistently reported a positive change in culture since the permanent appointment of the head of service nine months ago. Many staff told us that trust and respect for senior managers had increased and that they felt more involved in the process of change. This was evidenced by the enthusiasm shown by staff for contributing to “experiments” in new ways of working, such as the introduction of specialist court workers. We also found that operational managers had been innovative and had worked hard to champion a supportive and nurturing environment for staff through, for example, the implementation of “buddying” arrangements and weekly “moans & groans” sessions. Finally, many relevant policies and procedures had been updated and loaded onto the children’s services computer hub for access.

4.16. All of these positive developments were not only recent but were also very reliant on staff proactively accessing them. Inspectors saw only limited evidence of managers monitoring staff access or taking remedial action in respect of staff who were either less capable or less enthusiastic about the new arrangements. We also heard from a small number of staff that they felt ill-informed and unsupported within the new working environment. Some partners expressed the view that the authority had failed to keep them informed about changes in children’s services and that as a result they

had experienced difficulties and/or delays in accessing relevant services. Inspectors were concerned that the authority could not reasonably be assured at the time of this inspection that they had effective mechanisms in place to effectively communicate with all staff, particularly new staff. Nor were there sufficiently robust systems in place to monitor the extent to which staff were consistently accessing and capitalising on the support arrangements available to them. We found a significant minority of staff were feeling disenfranchised. Further work is required to embed new arrangements, to ensure that all staff are adequately supported on a continuous basis and that partners are appropriately updated.

Summary

4.17. Leadership management and governance arrangements did comply with statutory guidance, and arrangements for effective engagement were in place. Senior leaders were committed to improving safeguarding and this was reflected well in strategic planning. Strategic plans had not been effectively disseminated throughout children's services. More focussed and sustained improvement is required to establish an effective strategy for the delivery of good quality services and outcomes for children, young people and their families. The authority worked well with partners to deliver help, care and protection for children and young people and showed a high level of enthusiasm and commitment to corporate parenting.

4.18. Local joint needs analysis did not inform planning for children's services. Neither performance management, quality assurance monitoring, nor strategies to ensure the authority sustained a culture of learning, were sufficiently well embedded to provide a thorough understanding of the difference that help, care and protection was making for children and families. Senior leaders were insufficiently well sighted on front line work in children's services.

4.19. Services were delivered by a suitably qualified, experienced and competent workforce that was able to meet the needs of local children, young people and their families. Most social workers expressed trust and respect for senior managers and said morale was high within the workforce. Management oversight and supervision was accessible but was insufficiently effective in supporting the workforce to deliver services that result in positive outcomes for children and families.

APPENDIX 1

Contextual information about Monmouthshire

Children living in this area

- In 2013 Monmouthshire had the fourth lowest rate (10.8%) of children under the age of 16 living in working age households with no one in employment amongst the Welsh local authorities.
- According to the 2011 Census the percentage of people age three and over who spoke Welsh in Monmouthshire was 9.9%. This was one of the lowest rates amongst Welsh local authorities compared to 19.6% Wales average.
- The percentage of pupils of compulsory school age eligible for free school meals is 11.9%, lower than 19.3% nationally. This level of eligibility is the second lowest in Wales.
- None of the 58 areas of Monmouthshire are in the 10% most deprived area in Wales.
- Approximately 18,355 children and young people under the age of 18 years old live in Monmouthshire. This is 0.6% of the total population in Wales. (Welsh Government 2013 mid-year population estimates, as of June 2014)
- 12% of the population aged under four were on Flying Start health visitors caseloads during 2013-14, compared to the Welsh average of 19%. (Welsh Government Flying Start summary 2013-14)

Child protection in this area

- Timeliness of initial child protection conferences, core group meetings and child protection reviews was an area for improvement in 2012-13. The council's performance in these areas has improved significantly during 2013-14.
- As at 31 March 2014, there were 49 children on the child protection register, a decrease of 13 compared with 31 March 2011.

Children looked after in this area

- As at March 2014, Monmouthshire had 103 children being looked after by the authority, an increase of 23 compared with 31 March 2011.
- 34% of looked after children were placed outside the local authority at 31 March 2014².
- Monmouthshire's percentage of looked after children with three or more placements in the year was higher than the Wales average in 2013-14.

² based on children for which a valid placement postcode has been provided and excluding children placed for adoption

- Completion of statutory visits to looked after children in accordance with regulations had deteriorated from 66.9% to 65.3%, considerably lower than the Wales average of 85.3% in 2013-14.
- Performance in relation to initial care planning and statutory visits for looked after children were weaker than other comparable local authorities and the Wales average in 2013-14.
- School attendance statistics for looked after children has improved during 2013-14, with the percentage attendance of looked after pupils whilst in care in primary and secondary schools at 95.9% and 93.3% respectively.

Children in Need

- Performance in respect of completion of child in need reviews in accordance with statutory timetable had significantly improved during the year 2013-14 from 19.5% to 57.5%. However, this remains well below the national average of 78.8%.

APPENDIX 2

Information about the inspection

The inspection of the local authority was carried out under chapter 6 of Health and Social Care (Community Health Standards) Act 2003.

Methodology

Fieldwork for this inspection was undertaken during the weeks commencing 10th November 2014 and 24th November 2014.

Most inspection evidence was gathered by looking at individual children and young people's experiences. This was done through a combination of case-tracking and case-file reviews.

Additional evidence was collected from service user survey, review of documentation as well as interviews and focus group discussions with staff, managers and elected members.

- We reviewed/tracked 44 case files. This included 35 interviews with staff/other professionals, 11 interviews with families and three direct observations of practice.
- We undertook a survey of 64 service users. We received responses from six children and seven adults.
- We reviewed 10 sets of staff supervision records as well as six sets of appraisal documentation.
- We reviewed 17 stage one complaints, 1 stage two complaint and 13 compliments.
- We undertook a range of individual interviews and focus groups with senior and operational managers, elected members, partner agencies, senior practitioners and social workers.

The inspection team

The inspection team consisted of four inspectors employed by CSSIW and two fee-paid inspectors.

Lead inspector: Bobbie Jones

Team inspectors: Ann Ferris, Pam Clutton, Sandy Pearce

Fee Paid Inspectors: Bryan Isaac and Sheila Booth



SUBJECT: CHILDREN'S SERVICES DEVELOPMENT REPORT

MEETING: Select Committee

DATE: 16th April 2015

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To advise members of the developments in Children's Services
- 1.2 To update members on the significant budget issues and financial requirements of the service.
- 1.3 It should also be noted that the requests contained in this report only meet current demands and does not include further increasing service demand for Children's Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Select endorses a commitment to increase financial resources to Children's Services to meet current demand requirements as detailed within this report.
- 2.2 Members note that this report relates to a number of additional posts. All posts are seen to be permanent posts apart from the 4 additional Social Worker posts (see 5.2), currently covered by agency staff. These posts are viewed as being 18 month posts, whilst further work is undertaken to consider whether service demand can be reduced. It is therefore, unclear at this time, whether these additional posts will be needed long-term. In addition one of the Social Work posts within the Placement and Support Team (see 5.4) is for 12 months only.
- 2.3 As noted at 5.1 of this report Members have previously agreed an increase of £900,000 to Children's Services. Therefore consideration needs to be given to addressing the short fall on the current expenditure of £300,000 in relation to the costs of placements.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Work has progressed in Children's Services over the past year to make changes to service delivery. These have included a greater focus on a child centred approach as well as implementing a number of practice changes.
- 3.2 In addition the service was tasked with ascertaining the current and future needs of the service to further enhance service delivery to children. This has taken place over the past 8 months and significant progress has been made to enable a better understanding of the needs of children and the needs of our staff group to deliver the services required.
- 3.3 A focus on training has been implemented to begin to underpin effective practice and develop a more child focussed approach across Children's Services. This has included play therapy, case recording, risk and vulnerability and life story work training.

3.4 An inspection took place in April 2014, the outcome of which resulted in a further inspection being undertaken. This key inspection took place with 4 weeks' notice to the department. This was undertaken by CSSIW over a 3 week period in November 2014. This looked at Children's Services as well as a full Fostering Inspection. Weeks 1 and 3 focused mainly on the front end of Children's Services that included a case review of 42 cases and interviews with case holding social workers on 24 of those cases. Inspectors also attended meetings, such as, core groups, Child Protection Conferences, meetings with multi-agency partners, meetings with staff groups, visits to children and their families.

The Fostering Inspection took place mainly over 2 days during week 2. Inspectors reviewed foster carer files (asking for 2 additional files on arrival) and interviewed staff and the Team Manager. In addition the inspector attended a Fostering Panel meeting and attended FC4FC (foster carer support group).

3.5 The information in this report and the associated business cases were provided to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on the 24th March 2015. SLT agreed to the requests and are currently working with Children's Services to develop a timeline to introduce these posts. They will not all be needed at the same time. For example, until the new Social Workers in the Placement Team have assessed new foster carers, we will not need the additional psychology support until carers have been agreed by the Fostering Panel.

4. REASONS:

4.1 It is apparent from discussion within Wales that demand generally is increasing alongside complexity of cases within Children's Services.

4.2 This is also evident from within the service that demand has continued to increase. Although this is not necessarily apparent in the number of referrals, it has been evidenced in the complexity of cases coming into Children's Services. To provide some context to this complexity, looking at referral information for the past 6 months, there are significant numbers of referrals as a result of parental substance misuse (104 referrals) and domestic violence (97 referrals). There have been increasing numbers of cases where the perpetrator of abuse is not clearly identified resulting in full assessment and investigations by Police and Children's Services. It would be unsafe to leave a child in this risky environment and if no suitable family member can be identified this child would need to become looked after, at least for the duration of the assessment period. This increased demand on the service has resulted in higher and more complex caseloads for staff.

4.2 Alongside complexity of cases we have seen an increase in the number of significant threats to staff. This results in a number of issues, such as, two staff working on a case, safety measures put in place to support staff, which increases costs within in the service, both financially and emotionally.

4.3 The main referral reasons for referrals made are currently linked to domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse. At this time there is little evidence of referrals being made as a specific result of poverty, although it could be argued that a rise in domestic violence, drug and alcohol misuse could be linked to reduced income in families.

4.4 A number of key pieces of work have been commenced to establish need, demand and risks over the past 6 months. This has been developed around a number of areas, which included, Children's Services budgets, threshold in general and threshold between Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) and Children's Services. In addition business

cases have been developed to address areas of development to enable a proactive response from the service that is timely and meets the needs of children, young people and their families.

- 4.5 As noted above, a key focus has been on enabling Social Workers to engage children and young people effectively with a child focused approach in addition to a more effective practice approach. A review of caseloads took place in January 2015. There are two areas of case work in Children's Services these are children's cases and foster carer cases. The service currently has 28.51 FTE Social Workers. Taking children's cases first, there were 521 cases open to the service on the 28th January 2015. This area of service has 23.51 FTE Social Workers, the average of which equates to approximately 23 cases per Social Worker. Due to the increased demands of the work it is our view that caseloads should be approximately 14 cases per full time worker. It appears, therefore that in some cases workers are essentially carrying almost 1.5 caseloads and not a case load each. Caseloads are dependent on the needs of any child and their family, numbers of children in a family, social worker experience, hours worked and case complexity. In addition we currently have a number of Senior Practitioners who have increasing caseloads which in turn reduces their availability to support Social Workers effectively, which cannot be maintained long-term. On the 28th January 2015 there were 3 unallocated cases. Additional agency workers in place to cover additional demand were covering approximately 60 cases, which would otherwise have been additional unallocated cases. These cases cannot be left unallocated as they were cases in the initial stages of referral, child protection, children in Court processes or looked after children.

It is also of note that short-term absence has risen in the past 12 months and it is evident that staff are working far in excess of their contracted hours. Monmouthshire County Council has a duty of care to its staff and increased caseloads as well as increased hours are unsustainable and can result in wrong decisions being made. This could most importantly have a negative impact on a child and their family, but also the perception of Monmouthshire County Council.

- 4.6 With regard to the Placement and Support Team. There are 5 FTE Social Workers in this area of the service currently support 47 fostering families in Monmouthshire. Their role is to assess potential generic foster carers, respond to Court demands to assess potential family members as carers for children, run skills to foster courses, support groups for foster carers and run a duty system to assist foster carers and also Social Workers when placements are needed or placements breakdown. With the plan to increase numbers of in-house foster carers this number of staff would not be able to sustain the long-term support demands effectively.
- 4.7 It is clear from the work that has been completed that Social Worker caseloads and complexity of demand are increasing. As a result we currently have 4 agency workers in Children's Services to assist with this pressure. As all work within Children's Services it is statutory and there are no tasks that can remain incomplete, therefore the Authority has no option but to provide additional staff to cover this. There is no evidence that demand will decrease and it is further evident that practice changes made to engage children appropriately takes longer than the previous approach to enable a child focussed service.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are insufficient resources within Children's Services to maintain an effective service. This coupled with the requirements from CSSIW to continue to develop the service in a short timeframe requires significant input from Monmouthshire County Council. We therefore request that the following be given consideration:

- 5.1 An additional £300k is required to meet the increasing cost of external placements (particularly high cost residential placements for children with complex needs). This would help fund the gap between the Month 9 forecasted over spend of £1.2m and the extra funding provided for 2015/16 of £900k.
- 5.2 **Four additional Social Workers on fixed term contracts-** to reduce costs to MCC and provide further stability to the service at a time of increasing demand. This will also enable a better understanding of whether demand will decrease and whether an increase in SGO placements will reduce the overall demand on the rest of the Service. These posts will be for 18 months, whilst further work and analysis of demand continues.

The cost of an agency Social Worker is £1295 per week (based on £35 per hour, working 37 hours per week), whilst the cost of a Social Worker employed by MCC is approximately £885 per week, including on costs for 37 hours per week. If we were to obtain agreement to go outside of our current establishment this would give the Council a saving of approximately £410 per worker, per week, depending on their pay grade with the Authority.

The cost of a fulltime Social Worker including on costs is £46,004, per worker based on band I SCP 41. The approximate cost of an agency worker working fulltime for 48 weeks (assuming the agency worker takes 4 weeks leave in a year) is £62,160.

Appointing 4 additional social workers for 18 months would cost £276,024 (compared to £372,960 pa for agency workers)

For the detailed business cases for the following posts please see Appendix 1

- 5.3 **Full-time Social Worker to support Special Guardians**
In some instances a Court will grant Special Guardianship Orders (SGO) to enable carers to look after children enabling a child to live outside of the care system in a suitable environment. Children's Services has seen a significant increase in the number of SGO's made. In 2011/12 there were 2, 2012/13 there were 5 and in 2013/14 there were 21. There is evidence that the number of SGO's applied for could be higher if we had a suitable support structure in place. Children placed as a result of an SGO do not require an allocated Social Worker and are not subject to the requirements of statutory visits and reviews. They can however still access services as a Child in Need should they require it. The current unit cost of a looked after child is £35,597. Breaking unit costs further, the unit cost of an in-house fostering placement is £18,171, compared to the current unit cost of an SGO placement being £8,350. Therefore, for every child entering the system via an SGO, the annual cost avoidance would be £9,821 per child. There is no capacity within the current service to support SGO carers effectively. (see appendix A for full details) The Authority is therefore unable to meet its statutory duties under The Special Guardianship (Wales) Regulations 2005.

Total cost for this post per annum is £46,004 per annum. This relates to Appendix 1, Business Case Proposal 1

- 5.4 **Two new Social Work posts in the fostering team one permanent and one for a contract of 12 months**
Currently the Fostering team has 2 FTE Social Workers who are focussed upon recruitment and assessment within the team. Along with other Social Workers in the team they also spend 1 day a week as duty officers. There needs to be a focus on recruitment in

the areas that are the hardest to provide fostering to, from an in-house perspective e.g. children 10 years and older. Without additional dedicated resource focussed upon recruitment and assessment of foster carers for this complex area there is little likelihood of changing the current pattern of placing children in Independent Fostering Agencies (IFA) placements due to a lack of other available options. Once a child is in an IFA placement for any period of time there is little option to be able to move a child as they form attachments within their placements and moving them would have a significant detrimental effect.

The total cost of the temporary contract for 12 months is £46,004

Cost for permanent post is £46,004 per annum

This relates to Appendix 1, Business Case Proposal 2

5.5 **One post for Placement and Contracts Officer**

This would increase the capacity of Social Workers to complete assessments and improve compliance with Fostering Regulations with regard to contracts with placements for children and young people who are looked after by Monmouthshire County Council.

Total cost per annum is £36,967

This relates to Appendix 1, Business Case Proposal 2

5.6 **One post Business Support Administrator**

This post holder would work closely with assessing Social Workers to increase the efficiency of the service in relation to references, DBS checks, reports etc. This can cause significant delay in progressing work through to the Fostering Panel.

Total cost per annum is £25,231

This relates to Appendix 1, Business Case Proposal 2

5.7 **Employ 0.4 FTE Clinical Psychologist**

This would enable a pilot project that would work with up to 20 new foster carers involving them in a programme of training and support, coupled with individual consultations. Current involvement of clinical psychology is on a reactive basis as opposed to underpinning the work with children and young people in a planned way.

Total cost per annum is £28,478

This relates to Appendix 1, Business Case Proposal 3

6. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix 2) are summarised below for members' consideration:

There are no adverse affects of the proposal in relation to equality. By increasing the capacity of Children's Services it will be able to deliver a more efficient and effective service.

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every 2 years and criteria for monitoring and review will include:

Review on an ongoing basis through Select as these requests link to the Service Improvement Plan and inspection recommendations as well as within Children's Services usual reporting frameworks.

Demand within Children's Service has continued to increase over the past few years. This is not just an issue in Monmouthshire but also a similar picture is evident in other areas of Wales and England. There is no evidence that this will decrease and it is forecast that LAC will continue to rise in Monmouthshire. Longer-term analysis is underway in the service that will further develop the service over the next few years. Children's Services is unable to advise what demand will be over the coming years, this is an unknown quantity. However, in the interim we need to sustain our response in relation to statutory requirements for children, young people and their families.

7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

Throughout this report consideration has been given to remain compliant with safeguarding and corporate parenting requirements. Children's Services has a statutory responsibility to remain compliant with this as well as all associated legislation and guidance.

Additional resources from Monmouthshire County Council to further develop Children's Services will enable the Authority to continue to meet these responsibilities.

8. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Director Social Care and Health
Finance
Children's Service Staff

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Business Case Reports Appendix 1

10. AUTHOR:

Tracy Jelfs, Head of Children's Services

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644601

E-mail: tracyjelfs@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Business Cases

Background/General Information

The overall purpose of each of these proposals is to make more effective use of our resources and to increase the capacity and the quality of the care our foster carers provide.

The potential outcomes that could be achieved if all of these proposals are implemented are:

- Improved placement stability for looked after children – 10.7% of Monmouthshire’s looked after children experienced three or more placements during the year 2013/14 in comparison with a Welsh average of 8.3%. Monmouthshire CC would aspire to achieve a much lower rate of placement disruption than the Welsh average.
- Improved well-being for looked after children and care leavers which consequently will result in improved educational achievement, reduction in emotional/mental health concerns, greater success in the transition to independence.
- Total investment cost over 5 year period estimated to be £919,262 (£214,685 for Proposal 1 plus £571,680 for Proposal 2 plus £132,897 for Proposal 3).
- Total cost avoidance over 5 year period estimated to be £1,747,943 (£196,420 for Proposal 1 plus £1,551,523 for Proposal 2).
- Gross cost savings (before deduction of investment costs) over 5 year period estimated to be £196,420 (for Proposal 1 only).
- Total net cost avoidance / cost savings for all 3 proposals over 5 year period estimated to be £1,025,101.

The cost avoidance and cost saving figures have been calculated by reference to the difference between the relevant unit costs - excluding staffing (in-house foster placements / SGO placements / external fostering placements - as at Month 9 of 2014/15).

Although any one of these proposals could be implemented as a stand-alone project it is my view that they will have the most effect if they are implemented as a whole system approach.

Increasing capacity within our fostering service is key but significant cost avoidance on independent fostering and residential placements will only be achieved if we are able to meet the needs of children in care with the most complex needs and this can only be achieved if we provide intensive support to our foster carers and the professional network who support them.

Team context

- Placement and Support Team (PAST) is staffed by 1 f.t.e. Team Manager, 1 f.t.e. Senior Practitioner, 5 f.t.e. Social Workers and 1.5 f.t.e. Business Support Administrators
- PAST currently support 48 approved Foster Carers of whom 7 are family and friends carers.
- During 2013-14 there were 7 new generic foster carers and 3 new family and friends carers approved. During the same year 4 generic foster carers and 7 family and friends carers ended their approval as foster carers.

PROPOSAL 1

To create a new full-time Social Worker post within the Placement and Support Team for the purpose of supporting Special Guardians.

Reasons

- The number of Special Guardianship Orders being made for children is growing at a very fast rate – 2 in 2011/12, 5 in 2012/13 and 21 in 2013/14.
- The service does not currently have any support specifically in place for these carers. There is no capacity within the Placement and Support team to meet support needs as this would be to the detriment of foster carers. The Authority is therefore not able to meet its statutory duties under [The Special Guardianship \(Wales\) Regulations 2005](#)
- There is no evidence to suggest that the children who are made subject to Special Guardianship Orders have less complex needs than those children who are long-term fostered.
- Lack of available support increases the risk of placement breakdown which would result in these children becoming looked after again.
- Some foster carers have expressed an interest in applying for Special Guardianship Orders for children in their care but are reluctant because there is no support equivalent to that they receive as foster carers. From a recent review of looked after children, it has been estimated that there are currently up to 5 foster carers caring for 8 children who would apply for a Special Guardianship Order if they were confident of on-going support from a Social Worker.
- Children who become subject to Special Guardianship Orders are no longer looked after children and therefore do not have to be allocated a Social Worker and are not subject to the statutory requirements for visits, looked after reviews, personal education plans and medicals that so many find stigmatising.
- Children subject to a Special Guardianship Order are still entitled to receive support as a Child in Need if they are assessed to require it.
- Children subject to Special Guardianship Orders benefit from the stability and security of a permanent placement and consequently the outcomes for them are improved in relation to emotional well-being, education and successful transition to adulthood.

Business case

- The overall unit cost (excluding staffing costs) for each looked after child in 2014/15 based on month 9 forecasts has been calculated at £35,597 per annum.
- The unit cost (excluding staffing costs) of an in-house fostering placement 2014/15 based on month 9 forecasts has been calculated at £18,171 per annum.
- The unit cost (excluding staffing costs) of a Special Guardianship placement 2014/15 based on month 9 forecasts has been calculated at £8,350 per annum.
- For every child entering the system via an SGO, the annual cost avoidance will be £9,821. Any foster children moving from a 'current' in-house foster placement to an SGO would produce cost savings of £9,821 per child (based on month 9 unit costs).

- Over the past two years Children’s Services has employed agency Social Workers in addition to posts within the established structure to have the capacity required to deliver the service. A reduction in the number of looked after children would help reduce capacity pressures within the Service thus eliminating the need for Social Worker posts beyond the established structure and, in turn, reducing this burden on the overspend within the Children Services Division.
- There would be additional cost avoidance for education and health if fewer children were looked after.

Cost / Cost Avoidance / Cost Savings of Proposal 1

- Annual cost of one permanent full-time Social Worker post including on costs – £46,004.
- There would be cost avoidance based on 2 children (not already in care) per annum (from Year 2) becoming cared for under a Special Guardianship Arrangement - see table below
- There would be a cost saving based on 2 children (already in in-house foster care) per annum (from Year 2) converting to a Special Guardianship Arrangement – see table below

	Year 1 – 2015/16	Year 2 – 2016/17	Year 3 – 2017/18	Year 4 – 2018/19	Year 5 – 2019/20	Total Years 1-5
Total Cost of Investment	30,669	46,004	46,004	46,004	46,004	214,685
Total COST AVOIDANCE	0	(19,642)	(39,284)	(58,926)	(78,568)	(196,420)
Total COST SAVING	0	(19,642)	(39,284)	(58,926)	(78,568)	(196,420)
Net investment cost/ (COST AVOIDANCE / COST SAVING)	30,669	6,720	(32,564)	(71,848)	(111,132)	(178,155)
Cumulative Net Investment Cost/ (COST AVOIDANCE / COST SAVING)	30,669	37,389	4,825	(67,023)	(178,155)	(178,155)

Options

- Utilise an existing Social Worker in the Placement and Support team to undertake these tasks – this would further reduce the capacity of the existing team to recruit, assess and support foster carers at a time when the Service needs to significantly increase our number of foster carers in order to meet demand.

- Do not invest in creating a Social Worker post to support Special Guardianship carers – opportunities to improve placement stability and to reduce the number of looked after children would be missed; risk of children’s placements with Special Guardians disrupting would not be minimised and opportunities to avoid expenditure would be missed.

Risks

- That foster carers would not decide to apply for Special Guardianship Orders and therefore the predicted reduction in unit cost would not be realised. This could be mitigated by careful monitoring of the number of children that foster carers sought SGO’s for and the timescale for achieving this permanency for children. If this post was not effective then consideration could be given to whether the resource could be utilised more effectively elsewhere in the Service or was not necessary.

PROPOSAL 2

To create two new Social Worker posts in the fostering team – one permanent and one for 12 months.

To create a new post of a Placement and Contracts officer within the Placement and Support team to release Social Worker capacity and improve compliance with Fostering Regulations.

To create a new Business Support Administrator post within the Placement and Support team to increase capacity to assess and support prospective foster carers.

Reasons

- Currently the Fostering team has 2 f.t.e. Social Workers who are focussed upon recruitment and assessment within the team. Along with other Social Workers in the team they also spend 1 day a week as duty officers.
- During 2013/14 there were 8 new fostering families approved, 7 generic and 1 specific. Most of the assessing Social Worker’s capacity was consumed in assessing kinship carers to meet Court demands although there was rarely an outcome that resulted in the child being placed long-term in foster care.
- Between December 2013 and June 2014 all generic assessments had to be put on hold to ensure that court demands could be met.
- 52 children became looked after during 2013/14 and of these 17 were placed in IFA or residential placements.
- Of the 21 children aged 10 and over who became looked after only 5 were able to be placed in-house with 8 being placed with IFA’s. Of those placed with IFA’s 6 remain in placements which are expected to be long-term until they are able to live independently.
- The projected cost of these placements until these children reach independence is £918,242 and the projected cost of just these placements in the current year is £251,754.
- Without additional dedicated resource focussed upon recruitment and assessment of foster carers particularly for children aged 10+ there is little likelihood of changing this pattern of placing children in IFA placements and the long-term commitment to high cost placements that this entails.

- If the number of foster carers is increased then additional Social Worker capacity to support and supervise these carers will be required.
- The effectiveness of recruitment would be reviewed after 12 months to assess whether there continued to be the level of demand on the service to necessitate the continued employment of one of the Social Worker posts.
- Fostering regulations require a wide range of checks to be undertaken on prospective foster carers which is a bureaucratic process. If recruitment activity is to increase significantly increased administrative support will need to be provided.
- Currently Social Workers manage the duty desk although in other Local Authorities this role has been successfully undertaken by a skilled person without a Social Work qualification at a reduced cost.
- Having a consistent person working on the duty desk offers advantages in relation to continuity, building knowledge of the vacancies and skills amongst our foster carers, building relationships with independent agencies and ensuring that the administrative processes related to placement finding are followed consistently improving compliance with Fostering Regulations and improving financial controls (proposed new Placement and Contracts Officer).
- Recruiting such a post holder would release capacity within the fostering team equivalent to a full time Social Worker which could be more effectively used to increase capacity to assess and support foster carers.

Cost / Cost Avoidance / Cost Savings of Proposal 2

- Annual cost of one permanent full-time Social Worker post including on costs – £46,004
- Annual cost of one 12 month full-time Social Worker post including on costs – £46,004
- Annual cost of one permanent full-time Business Support Assistant including on costs - £25,231
- Annual cost of one full-time Placement and Contracts Officer post including on costs - £36,967 (estimated cost to be confirmed following development of full job description and job evaluation exercise)
- There would be cost avoidance linked to this proposal due to new children coming into care and being placed with a newly approved in-house carers rather than having to be placed in far more expensive external fostering agency placements. It is estimated that a total of 24 new children coming into care over a 5 year period could be placed with these new carers hence avoiding the higher costs of agency placements.

	Year 1 – 2015/16	Year 2 – 2016/17	Year 3 – 2017/18	Year 4 – 2018/19	Year 5 – 2019/20	Total Years 1-5
Total Cost of Investment	123,537	123,537	108,202	108,202	108,202	571,680
Total COST AVOIDANCE	0	(152,110)	(258,587)	(479,147)	(661,679)	(1,551,523)
Net investment cost/ (COST AVOIDANCE)	123,537	(28,573)	(150,385)	(370,945)	(553,477)	(979,843)
Cumulative Investment Cost/ (COST AVOIDANCE)	123,537	94,963	(55,421)	(426,366)	(979,843)	(979,843)

Options

- No additional resource invested – the current lack of capacity within the Fostering Service would continue. There is evidence to suggest that the number of children being admitted to care is likely to increase in future years and children’s needs also seem increasingly complex. Therefore any need that is not able to be met by in-house provision would have to be met from the independent sector which continues to commit the Local Authority to a high level of expenditure over a number of years as detailed in “reasons” section above.
- Current resources within the Fostering Service are re-directed into recruiting and assessing foster carers – this would reduce the level of support provided to existing foster carers resulting in an increased risk of placement break down as well as increased likelihood of foster carers choosing to leave the Service and reducing the capacity within the Service.
- Current resources within Children’s Services are re-directed to the Fostering Service – Children’s Services are already employing agency staff in excess of the staffing structure due to service demands. The work undertaken by the Service is statutory and so the only option would be to increase the number of cases allocated to Social Workers above the levels recommended for safe practice which would be likely to result in increased levels of staff stress and sickness, turnover of staff and place children at increased risk.
- Additional resource is provided for the Fostering Service but at lower level than is proposed – there would be opportunities to slowly increase the capacity within the Service but the rate of increase is likely to be slow and in the meantime the level of high and potentially avoidable expenditure will continue.

Risks

- The Service is not successfully able to recruit staff to the vacancies – this is a low risk as generally it is not difficult to recruit experienced Social Workers to our Fostering Service.
- The Service is unsuccessful in recruiting foster carers to meet the service need – progress can be carefully monitored and resource need reviewed if necessary.

- The Service does not have the capacity to implement the changes – the Service benefits from an experienced and stable management tier including Service Manager, Team Manager and Senior Practitioner. The additional resource would release some capacity within these roles to invest in supporting the larger team.

PROPOSAL 3

To employ 0.4 Clinical Psychologist to work at BASE (Therapeutic support project) to enable the delivery of a pilot project that would work with up to 20 foster carers by involving them in a detailed programme of group training and support, coupled with individualised consultations and ‘professional team consultations’ known as network consultations.

The pilot project would provide:

- The assessing Social Worker with a consultation with a Psychologist half way through the assessment process regarding attachment styles.
- Once approved each foster carer would attend over a 14 month period:
 - An 18 week therapeutic attachment group (split into three sections of 6 weeks with breaks in-between sections). The therapeutic group programme will be taken from the Kim Golding Attachment Programme, a well-respected and evaluated intervention. It has three modules – basics of attachment, the house model of parenting and getting to know your child. The groups will be run by two clinical Psychologists, with up to ten sets of carers in each group.
 - 3 ‘network consultations’ for all those working with the child or young person
 - 3 individual ‘psychological consultations’ to foster carers

The impact of the project would be evaluated with the aim of establishing an effective model to provide a basis for applying for further funding. This funding would be used to widen the availability of the project to all foster carers, adopters and Special Guardians.

Reasons

- Current therapeutic support for carers is usually reactive and activated at times of crisis and consequently although beneficial it is less effective and levels of intervention are more intensive than if therapeutic support is offered on a preventative basis.
- Children in care have often experienced abuse, neglect and trauma and so their behaviour towards those who care for them can be very challenging, abusive and confusing to understand. We should expect our foster carers to need therapeutic support if they are to sustain caring relationships and placements for these children.
- This Pilot project aims to change the current crisis approach to one of providing planned and regular therapeutic support to foster carers and their professional network of support.
- If foster carers are supported to maintain placements and meet the needs of children more effectively then children will experience more stable placements, have improved emotional well-being, learn better and make the transition to adulthood more successfully. Foster carers will be more resilient, enjoy better emotional well-being and are more likely to remain as Monmouthshire foster carers. Social Workers will also be more resilient, enjoy

positive relationships with children as well as foster carers and other professionals resulting in a more stable workforce and enduring relationships for children.

- The 10 children and young people who have experienced the highest number of placements in our Authority currently have experienced a total of 88 placements between them. Since April 2012 the Local Authority has spent a total of £998,000 supporting these children, the majority of which has directly related to the costs of their placements. Over this period all but two of these children and young people have been placed in either IFA, residential or independent supported housing provision.
- The cost of these placements in 2013/14 amounted to £401,000
- There may be future savings to the Authority due to equipping our in-house foster carers with better skills and knowledge to take on more children with challenging emotional behaviours. It is anticipated that more cases could be placed in-house rather than using external agencies as has been the case historically.

Cost / Cost Avoidance / Cost Savings of Proposal 3

- Annual cost of 0.4 Psychologist at Band 8b including on costs – £28,478 which is estimated to amount to £132,897 over a 5 year period.

Options

- No additional resource invested – the likelihood of investment in the Fostering Service achieving increased capacity within the fostering service to meet service needs for children with complex needs and children aged 10 and over would be reduced. The ability of the service to improve placement stability for children would be reduced.

Risks

- The project does not achieve its objectives of improving the confidence and competence of foster carers – the intention is to evaluate the success of the project as a pilot scheme. If the project did not achieve its objectives that could be demonstrated to result in improved outcomes for children and carers that were of financial value then the project would be ended at the conclusion of the Pilot project.

Gill Cox

Service Manager

August 2014

Updated January/February 2015

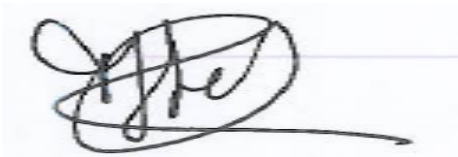
The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: Service area: Children’s Service Date completed: 23 rd February 2014		Please give a brief description of what you are aiming to do. To increase capacity within Children’s Services and develop better service delivery	
Protected characteristic	Potential Negative impact Please give details	Potential Neutral impact Please give details	Potential Positive Impact Please give details
Age			This only applies to 0-18 year old as per the legal remit of Children’s Services. This proposal will ensure better provision to children at risk
Disability			This only applies to 0-18 year old as per the legal remit of Children’s Services. This proposal will ensure better provision to children
Marriage + Civil Partnership		X	
Pregnancy and maternity		X	
Race		X	
Religion or Belief		X	
Sex (was Gender)		X	
Sexual Orientation		X	
Transgender		X	

Welsh Language		X	
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Please give details about any potential negative Impacts .	How do you propose to MITIGATE these negative impacts
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

Signed



Designation

Head of Service

Dated 23rd February 2015

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
Proposals to develop Children's Services	Children's Services
Policy author / service lead	Name of assessor and date
Tracy Jelfs	Tracy Jelfs 23 rd February 2014

1. What are you proposing to do?

Request an increase in resources to develop Children's Services:

1. Additional 4 Social Work posts across the Family Support Team and Children and Young People's Support Team
2. A Special Guardianship Social Worker
3. A 0.4 Clinical Psychologist
4. Two fostering Social Workers one permanent and one for 12 months
5. A Placement and Contracts Officer
6. A Business Support Assistant within the Placement and Support Team

2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way? If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

3. Please give details of the negative impact

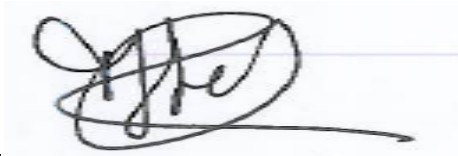
N/A

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

N/A

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Staff data, court information, trends analysis of Children's Services data

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. He', written over a horizontal line.

Signed.....

Designation...Head of Children's Services.....Dated...23rd February 2015.....

The “Sustainability Challenge”

Name of the Officer completing “the Sustainability challenge” Tracy Jelfs		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration Develop Children’s Services to provide better service delivery across a number of key areas	
Name of the Division or service area Children’s Services		Date “Challenge” form completed 23rd February 2015	
Aspect of sustainability affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		X	
Improve housing quality and provision		X	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		X	
Promote independence		X	
Encourage community participation/action and		X	

voluntary work			
Targets socially excluded		X	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		X	
Improve access to education and training		X	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		X	
PLANET			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		X	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		X	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		X	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		X	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		X	
PROFIT			

Protect local shops and services		X	
Link local production with local consumption		X	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		X	
Increase employment for local people		X	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		X	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		X	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		X	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments)
➤	➤
➤	➤

➤	➤
➤	➤

The next steps

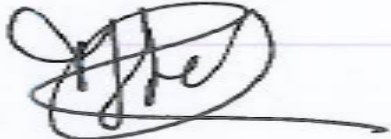
- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact please give full details** below

N/A

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

N/A

Signed



Dated

23rd February 2015



Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

Care Standards Act 2000

Inspection Report

Monmouthshire County Council Fostering Services

Innovation House
Wales 1 Business Park
Newport Road
Magor
NP26 3DG

Type of Inspection – Baseline

Dates of inspection – 15 October, 5 November 2014, 18 & 19 November 2014

Date of publication – 25 February 2015

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Summary

About the service

Monmouthshire County Council Fostering Service is located in Magor. The authority has identified a responsible person on behalf of the authority and the manager is Angela McErlane.

The fostering service provides placements for children from 0-18 years. Placements provided can be emergency and short term, long term, kinship (family or friends who are approved carers), and short breaks, including children with disabilities.

At the time of inspection the authority had 48 approved foster carers.

What type of inspection was carried out?

This was a planned baseline inspection to coincide with an inspection being undertaken of the wider authority children's services. Activities for this inspection were undertaken over four days though these were not full days.

Information for this report was gathered from:

- attendance at foster panel and an opportunity to talk with panel members at the end of the panel meeting
- attendance at the "foster carers 4 foster carers" (FC4FC) association meeting which provided an opportunity for an open discussion with 12 foster carers
- discussion with a group of three staff members
- discussion with the manager
- viewed a sample of foster carer electronic files
- viewed a sample of other records e.g. statement of purpose
- viewed the premises

What does the service do well?

- the fostering service has an experienced staff team with staff who have experience in other areas of children's social work
- mechanisms in place to elicit foster carer views and to involve them in the development of the service eg FC4FC and involvement of carers in staff recruitment and induction

What has improved since the last inspection?

Very good progress has been made on issues identified at the last two inspections. Areas of note that have improved are:

- improved assessment reports due in part to staff attendance at specialist training
- Tracking/gatekeeping has also been improved
- the sharing of information with foster carers about children and the processes for doing so
- written information for children about the fostering service
- computer monitoring system to ensure that DBS updates are completed on time

What needs to be done to improve the service?

There were no non compliance notices issued at this inspection.

Areas to improve the service:

- Letters to carers following decisions in relation to approval or ongoing approval needs to take place in a timely way and a copy placed on file.
- Develop a training strategy for foster carers and monitor to ensure that foster carers are provided opportunities to complete the core training in a timely manner. This needs to include a clear way of communicating training opportunities to carers and records of training undertaken.
- The section on carer supervision records for the manager to sign/complete needs to be completed or the format revised.
- Clear records need to be in place following placement disruption.
- Carer files need to include a record of children placed.
- Further develop the annual review of quality of service.

Quality of life

Children experience warmth, attachment and belonging because they are cared for by foster carers who are committed to integrating fostered children into their family lives and providing a warm and nurturing experience for them to grow and develop. This nurturing culture helps children to feel recognised and valued by others and promotes the children's wellbeing and positive self worth.

Foster carers brought the pre school age children to the meeting of "foster carers 4 foster carers" (FC4FC). The carers were attentive to the children and moved comfortably between caring for the children and actively participating in the meeting.

Carers told us that the quality of information about children at the point of placement varied with examples described of both good and poor experiences. Also, examples were given where carers were consulted about possible placements, especially if it was outside their preferred age range, and of feeling their views were listened to and the placements were able to progress very positively. Carers told us of some experiences of children's social workers who are "brilliant" and others who were very poor.

The fostering service provides the referral information to foster carers at the point of placement and a meeting is held within two weeks to provide the full information required for the foster placement agreement and to ensure that carers have the detailed information they need to care for the children. Carers told us there were still issues around having the completed delegation of authority forms provided and this could generate some tensions for children with possible time delays in obtaining consent for straightforward matters.

Generally the overriding and consistent criticism/concern from foster carers was around poor communication and lack of efficiency in relation to children's social workers and fostering support social workers. The local authority was aware of this and efforts were being made to seek greater clarity and understanding in order to address any issues. Whilst foster carers told us that these issues generated ill feeling and frustration for them, there was no indication that this impacted on the care they provided to the children. Examples provided by carers, in relation to children's social workers were:

- short notice of meetings – sometimes they had been planned well in advance but not communicated to the carer
- failure to respond to telephone messages/call back
- failure to respond/acknowledge emails
- disbelieved
- not treated as professionals

The fostering team manager and staff told us that particular efforts had been made to improve communication; carers acknowledged that staff changes/shortages have impacted on this.

Children were seen to be cared for and to experience warmth, attachment and belonging. Carers were attentive to the children/babies needs and spoke about them and their care with passion. Their motivation to provide a good quality of life and to provide children with life experiences that promoted positive outcomes for them was evident in the comments they made. An example of this was foster carers supporting children to maintain contact, where appropriate/in line with the authority plan, with their parents and siblings in a range of different arrangements to meet the specific needs of

each family. Carers spoke positively about the introduction of the contact co-ordinator post/role.

Foster carers told us about the support they provide to children in order for them to maintain good family contact. Whilst foster carers indicated that there were issues relating to contact from time to time, the appointment of the contact co-ordinator had resulted in some improvements.

Children who are old enough have a voice and are encouraged to speak up. Where appropriate they attend their Looked After Children's (LAC) review. Foster carers and the fostering support social worker usually attend children's LAC reviews – this was confirmed by carers and support social workers. Comments from the fostering social workers indicated that they felt they made positive contributions to children's reviews and promoted timely permanence planning. Fostering social workers commented that they often see the children more often than their own social worker. They described an increased focus on permanency planning for children and of these processes having been improved and greater scrutiny given e.g. long term fostering placement are subject to a matching/assessment process and are presented to foster panel. A positive example of the impact of this for a child's health was given – the child was happier and their eczema improved dramatically after the decision was made for them to remain in their foster placement long term.

All looked after children are allocated an advocate.

The authority is continuing to look at ways of positively engaging children/young people. An example of this was the involvement of young people in looking at the review process. The manager told us of the authority's plans to develop a children's panel to influence the strategic direction of services.

Comments from foster carers indicated their encouragement of children in their education and leisure pursuits. This was confirmed in carer supervision records which always commented upon children's education and health progress/matters.

Quality of staffing

Overall the quality of staff was good because all staff were qualified social workers and had experience in other areas of children's social work before coming to work in the fostering team. Foster carers and children can therefore be confident in the advice and support they receive because staff are competent, experienced and knowledgeable. All staff were registered with the Care Council for Wales and update their registration when needed.

It had been a difficult year in the team because there had been a high level of staff absence; this is especially noticeable in such a small team. One agency worker had been provided to assist in undertaking assessments but the team had been, and were still operating with effectively 1.5 staff short.

One staff recruitment file was viewed. This showed that generally good recruitment practices were in place. The record of interview was described as held in the Human Resources department and a new practice of requiring photographic identification had been introduced earlier this year, so evidence of these was not seen. All staff have photographic identify cards.

Three staff were spoken with; they spoke about their work with enthusiasm and were child focused. They presented as motivated to provide quality support to the foster carers and the children to promote positive outcomes for the children.

The local authority has agile working arrangements. This flexibility worked well given the nature of their work and the need to make visits all around the authority. Team meetings are held twice each month - one team meeting and one professional practice meeting; these provided the opportunity not only to explore relevant work issues but for them to gel as a team. They said they felt able to have the contact with managers and each other that they wanted in order for their support needs to be met.

Staff told us that they receive regular supervision. The new senior practitioner has started to fill this role and is scheduled to attend the appropriate training in this area of work. An annual appraisal system was reported as in place.

Managers were described by staff as available and approachable – they said they did not feel alone, that support was readily available from managers and colleagues.

Quality of leadership and management

Overall the service is well managed because the service is managed by a very experienced manager who is a qualified social worker. Whilst she had not attended the recommended management training, she had attended a range of short management training courses/events since being in post. The manager has been in post since October 2011 and was described by staff and carers as having promoted a range of improvements in the service.

The statement of purpose reflects the services provided. It needs some small amendments to update the correct telephone number of CSSIW and to include the address/contact details of the fostering service.

The fostering service has moved offices since the last inspection. It is located in Magor and was described by the manager and staff as being an improved environment and more suited to its purpose. Whilst not a central location in the authority, as the authority has agile working/hot desk arrangements staff can work from other locations which they described as being suitable to meet their needs.

Foster carers and children experience an improving service because core processes were found to be in place e.g. reviews were found to be up to date unless there was a reason for it not to have taken place. All examples of first reviews seen were presented to the panel within less than a year.

An annual review of the quality of service had been undertaken for the year April 2013 to April 2014. Whilst it reflects a number of the areas required to be monitored, it would benefit from being developed to reflect issues such as how staff, foster carers and children have been consulted, the number of children not in education and the support provided to tackle education issues.

Foster Panel

Monmouthshire has a well established foster panel. It meets monthly to consider foster carer assessments, care reviews and requests for changes to approval status of carers via the review process. Applicants/foster carers are invited to attend the panel when they are being presented. A written panel guide is provided to applicants/foster carers to tell them about the purpose/role of the panel.

People can be confident that foster carers are assessed using a formal process. This includes the assessing social worker completing the British Association for Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) form F documentation; with referees being identified and interviewed.

The fostering panel was composed according to regulations. The foster panel had nine members – there was one vacancy. On the day of visit to the panel the panel membership was just quorate with five panel members being in attendance. Panel members told us this was unusual and they did not usually find themselves with difficulty.

Panel members told us that papers are provided in a timely way. They had recently been provided with lap top computers to aid in communication and to avoid needing to send high volumes of papers by post. It was their first meeting since receiving the lap tops so they were at a time of adjustment to the change.

Members said they had enough time to read and prepare for panel and that they had detailed discussion/scrutiny of assessments/issues as was necessary. An example of this was evident from the minutes of the previous panel meeting. Panel members told us that assessments and other reports were generally of a good quality and they were confident to ask questions and challenge if needed. All panel members were seen to contribute and ask questions.

Time was allocated at the end of meetings to deal with any business matters as was necessary. Regular training opportunities were provided for panel members and the day of the previous panel meeting had incorporated a training session from some barristers about the PLO and Kinship care.

Quality of Foster Carers

Overall the quality of foster carers was found to be good. Listening to the group of foster carers who were met at the “FC4FC” group indicated that children are cared for by motivated foster carers who are committed to integrating the fostered children into their family lives and providing a warm and nurturing experience for them to grow and develop.

One foster carer who had been approved 18 months ago told us that the assessment had been a positive experience but panel delays had meant that the assessment was presented to the panel 5 months after the due date. Foster carers told us it was common for matters that were due to be presented to panel to be delayed – they did not always know the reason. There were also significant delays in being written to about the outcome and confirmation of approval status after being presented to panel. One carer told us that she had only recently received written confirmation of the changed approval that was agreed in April 2014. The manager told us that whilst there had been delays, improvements had been made and this was no longer a significant issue. Recent case examples viewed at inspection showed up to a two month delay. Records routinely did not have evidence of correspondence to confirm decisions in relation to ongoing approval although there was evidence of decisions having been made.

Carers told us about the very positive support networks between foster carers and of a wish to develop this further and to engage with more foster carers.

All foster carers have an allocated support social worker in the fostering team and they visit approximately every six weeks. Records were in place of these support visits.

Foster carers told us that they do not always receive consistent good quality support from the fostering service. They told us that communication and efficiency was an issue; examples were: non response to emails, months after panel before they receive written confirmation, where the support worker was unable to answer a query, foster carers were advised to email the manager or service manager directly. Carers also told us that they had not been notified in a timely way of the relocation of the office premises. The out of hour's service is only for emergency needs and carers told us that sometimes they could not get an answer. Some carers told us they did not feel respected and said they would not recommend people to foster children in Monmouthshire. Some of these comments were confirmed in comments made by staff eg the impact of staff shortages, and minutes of FC4FC recorded some of the issues around communication at a meeting where local authority managers were present. However, discussion with staff indicated that they were motivated to try hard to provide good support to children and foster carers.

On a positive note, carers told us that there had been improvements; these included the manager making some changes/improvements, the appointment of a contact co-ordinator and being involved in developing the policy, support workers visit six weekly, and reviews now happen on time. These are significant improvements. Foster carers have representation on the corporate parenting panel that provides an opportunity to discuss issues, concerns and practice development with panel members. Carers have also been involved in the recruitment and selection of staff within the fostering service.

Children can feel cared for by motivated carers who want to make a positive difference

to their lives. Foster carers told us that they loved fostering and their enthusiasm was evident in the passionate comments they made about their lives with the children in their families. One carer told us she was so pleased to have stopped work and to be able to foster “there is nothing nicer than being able to spend my time playing with the children”. Carers were proud to talk about the improvements children had made and the ongoing contact into adulthood with some of the young people who had grown up and moved on but who maintain contact as extended family members.

The FC4FC association is supported and provided some funding by the local authority. This is a very positive initiative and foster carers told us that they enjoyed the autonomy of the association and gained great pleasure from organising around five social events a year for the children - the events were described as greatly enjoyed by fostered children, foster carers, and foster carers children. The association is able to be involved and influence some policy development. The chair meets with the manager of the fostering team every two months and this enables some two way communication. There were some frustrations for foster carers who told us that there had been an occasion when they had undertaken a piece of work for the authority but did not feel that it had been used – the authority was of the view that carers had been updated on the outcome of that work.

Applicants attend the Skills to Foster training and foster carers are involved in this preparation training. The authority has updated their Skills to Foster training following training from Fostering Network. This is a positive development to improve preparation of foster carers to provide quality support to the children placed.

Carers told us that training generally for foster carers has been poor and this was confirmed by the manager. An example of this was a foster carer who told us they had been approved for 18 months but there had not been opportunity for them to complete the core training. Carers said that information is not circulated to them. We were concerned to hear that carers felt that the safeguarding and attachment training had given conflicting messages; this matter will need to be addressed. Foster carers also told us that they had been unable to access the QCF level 3 training, which on completion would enable them to receive the top level of Payment for Skills. There was a general consensus from the carers we spoke to that their current skills and experience were not recognised, and they felt that the current arrangements for Payment for Skills was divisive and generated ill feeling amongst those in receipt of the payment and those who were not. The authority had introduced the Payment for Skills policy in a positive endeavour to promote training and development for carers and was aware that the policy had generated some ill feeling with some carers but felt that overall it was beginning to promote improvements in carers attending training.

Good carer review arrangements were in place with an independent reviewing officer chairing a review meeting. Review records were in place but there was a lack of evidence of letters being sent following the review to confirm ongoing approval. Carers and the manager told us that review processes had been improved and records showed that reviews were being undertaken in a timely manner.

Some good examples of social workers recording were seen but a case example of a placement disruption was poorly recorded as it was not possible to gain the overall “story” or actions taken. Whilst the authority could identify which children had been placed with which foster carers, the foster carer electronic files did not contain this information.

Records were seen to demonstrate the authority's process for managing exemptions. The examples seen were for carers where they had been approved for two children and had a third child placed. This can be seen to be over and above what is required by regulation as regulations only require exemptions to be used where a carer exceeds the usual fostering limit. Normal processes could therefore be used to increase numbers for three placements.

How we inspect and report on services We conduct two types of inspection; baseline and focussed. Both consider the experience of people using services.

- **Baseline inspections** assess whether the registration of a service is justified and whether the conditions of registration are appropriate. For most services, we carry out these inspections every three years. Exceptions are registered child minders, out of school care, sessional care, crèches and open access provision, which are every four years.

At these inspections we check whether the service has a clear, effective Statement of Purpose and whether the service delivers on the commitments set out in its Statement of Purpose. In assessing whether registration is justified inspectors check that the service can demonstrate a history of compliance with regulations.

- **Focussed inspections** consider the experience of people using services and we will look at compliance with regulations when poor outcomes for people using services are identified. We carry out these inspections in between baseline inspections. Focussed inspections will always consider the quality of life of people using services and may look at other areas.

Baseline and focussed inspections may be scheduled or carried out in response to concerns.

Inspectors use a variety of methods to gather information during inspections. These may include;

- Talking with people who use services and their representatives
- Talking to staff and the manager
- Looking at documentation
- Observation of staff interactions with people and of the environment
- Comments made within questionnaires returned from people who use services, staff and health and social care professionals

We inspect and report our findings under 'Quality Themes'. Those relevant to each type of service are referred to within our inspection reports.

Further information about what we do can be found in our leaflet 'Improving Care and Social Services in Wales'. You can download this from our website, [Improving Care and Social Services in Wales](#) or ask us to send you a copy by telephoning your local CSSIW regional office.



REPORT

SUBJECT	CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 MONTH 9 OUTTURN FORECAST STATEMENT
DIRECTORATE	Chief Executive's Unit
MEETING	Children & Young People Select Committee
DATE	25th March 2015
DIVISIONS/WARD AFFECTED	All Authority

1. PURPOSE

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the capital forecast outturn position of the Authority at the end of month 9 for the 2014/15 financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Members consider the position concerning 3rd quarter capital monitoring with a revised budget of £16.1 million, month 9 spending of £8.2 million and forecast spend of a further £7.7million in last 3 months of financial year, to derive an outturn underspend of £187,000.

2.2 That in light of previous concerns about the level of progress with capital projects that Cabinet considers the slippage levels of £9.1 million identified in Appendix 1, and

- accepts slippage proposals totalling £8,159,000 subject to final outturn position being confirmed
- de-prioritises schemes totalling £771,000 whose funding is of a general nature subject to final outturn position being confirmed:

Property Maintenance Schemes	£185k
Infrastructure Schemes	£218k
ESR Access for All	£136k
General Access for All	£200k
RDP	£ 16k
Cemeteries	£ 15k

- Refers ICT schemes totalling £195,000 whose funding is from the IT transformation reserve to the Digital Board for them to consider whether the scheme should be decommitted or slipped as appropriate in the light of other pressures on the IT transformation Reserve

2.3 That Cabinet seek confirmation that practice designed to mitigate the level of slippage going forward in future years will be improved such as:

- Ensuring that capital schemes are planned before the beginning of the financial year so that spend can take place in the better weather rather than risk being deferred due to inclement weather later in the year
- Ensuring that there is clear agreement of interested parties as to what is being delivered, that any other funding streams brought to the project by third parties is confirmed, and that the project can progress significantly in the year the budget is requested to be profiled.
- Ensuring that project managers more carefully consider the plans to complete their schemes and estimate realistic timescales for completion so that budgets can be more accurately profiled

2.4 Utilises in part the £771,000 scheme decommitment above to fund the £395,000 new capital priorities of the 2015-16 budget report as per para 3.2.9 and unfinanced additional expenditure of £87,000 manifest at month 9 as per para 3.4.3 subject to final outturn position.

3. MONITORING ANALYSIS

3.1 Capital Position

3.1.1 The summary Capital position as at month 9 is as follows

Select Portfolio	Annual Forecast £'000	Slippage B/F plus Budget 14-15 £'000	Budget Virements & Revisions since last quarter £'000	Total Approved Budget £'000	Provisional Budget Slippage C/F to 2015-16 £'000	Revised Budget 2014-15 £'000	Annual Overspend / (Underspend) Month 9 £'000	Annual Overspend / (Underspend) Month 6 £'000
Children and Young people	7,006	13,084	6	13,089	6,082	7,008	(2)	(55)
Adult	274	259	14	273		273	1	29
Economy & Development	280	814		814	517	297	(18)	(92)
Stronger Communities	8,319	14,326	(3,313)	11,013	2,527	8,487	(168)	(140)
Grand Total	15,878	28,483	(3,293)	25,190	9,125	16,065	(187)	(258)

3.1.2 Revisions to the capital programme during the last quarter reflect combined property maintenance virements of £20,000 in CYP and Adult Select with a compensatory reduction in Stronger Communities select area, and a £106,000 addition to Sc106 Monmouth Development scheme and £34,000 additional Road Traffic Capital Grant scheme and the anticipated realignment of Abergavenny Library budget into alternate scheme in future year, subject to a separate report to Council on 26th February 2015.

3.1.3 The extent of progress and level of spend incurred has been questioned in each of the quarterly monitoring reports. Managers report collectively that they will spend £7.7m in the last 3 months of year, when they only spent slightly more than this over the first 9 months (net £8.2m). There is a risk that this will not materialise as only £3.8 m was spent between month 6 and 9 and the commonly inclement January to March weather is likely to introduce further risk that schemes have to be delayed.

3.2 Proposed Slippage to 2015-16

3.2.1 The forecast outturn presumes £9.1 m slippage, an increase of £3.5m since month 6 and whilst 21c schools initiative remain more significant aspects of it, there are a number of

schemes that evidence limited activity for in excess of 12 months and appear pretty historic in nature.

- 3.2.2 Examination of requested slippage proposals has focussed on schemes where,
- there has been little or no progress in 12 month,
 - the level of expenditure incurred this year has been less than in year budget and slippage brought forward, to consider any opportunity to realign the budget to more realistic levels or reprofile budget more accurately over multiple years,
 - or where there are identified problems/barriers to progress e.g. no agreement over scheme, archaeological considerations, planning considerations not yet satisfied or where little or no explanation of the reason for the slippage is given.
- 3.2.3 Appendix 1 indicates slippage requested by managers, alongside progress narratives, spending activity over the year, whether the budget has slipped forward from previous years and an indication of how the particular capital project is financed to recommend whether the slippage should be approved
- 3.2.4 The analysis indicates £9.1 million slippage proposed by managers, on presumption that Abergavenny Library situation has been confirmed and agreed by Council in the intervening period.
- 3.2.5 Of this £8.1million reflects schemes of an active nature, and where a use of slippage is recommended.
- 3.2.6 Conversely £771,000 worth of schemes exhibit limited progress.

In summary this is represented by the following breakdown:

Property Maintenance Schemes	£185k
Infrastructure Schemes	£218k
ESR Access for All	£136k
General Access for All	£200k
RDP	£ 16k
Cemeteries	£ 15k

- 3.2.7 It is recommended to de-commit these schemes. This will effectively create an underspend on the budget and subject to confirmation at outturn will be used as follows:
- to offset any emerging overspends forecast as £87,000 and subject to confirmation at the year end
 - to fund the additional priorities for the 2015-16 capital programme as recently highlighted in the capital budget report,

“These schemes are assessed as being of a higher priority than schemes currently included in the programme. This relates to the following schemes:

- *Community Hubs – £300k capital investment required to achieve revenue budget savings and create the Hubs in Caldicot by creating the Hub in the existing Library, in Chepstow by creating the Hub in the existing building, in Monmouth by creating the Hub in the Market Hall or Rolls Hall and in Usk by creating the Hub in the building with the Youth service. It is assumed that the proposal in Abergavenny will be funded from the capital already allocated to the Library.*
- *Rights of way issues – current allocation of £40k to be increased by £30k to enable some mitigation measures to be undertaken*
- *Monmouth sports ground - £25k required to ensure the drainage meets all statutory requirements*

- *Caldicot castle kitchen - £40k to bring kitchen up to date and comply with environmental health requirements to enable income targets to be met*

The schemes above are considered of sufficient priority that they need to be funded, however they are not self-financing. All possible sources of external funding will be explored, however if this is not forthcoming it is proposed that any underspends in 2014/15 are carried forward and used for these priority schemes. In the absence of both of these funding streams it is proposed that the following budgets in 2015/16 are reduced to provide the required funding in order for these schemes to go ahead:

*£136k from Property maintenance
£159k from Infrastructure maintenance
£100k from County farms maintenance*

The impact on these capital budgets means that refurbishment and maintenance works to highway infrastructure, property and county farms will be curtailed.”

3.2.8 The remaining possible headroom created could present a number of options to Members as follows:

- to bank as an underspend, reducing the pressure on the revenue budget.
- to be held as a source of headroom to facilitate any capital investment required to deliver further revenue savings in the MTFP
- to reconsider the issues and pressures previously presented in the attached Appendix 2

3.2.9 There is a further category of de-commitment proposed, which due to the specialist IT nature of funding, isn't readily transferrable to alternate schemes. These schemes need to be reconsidered by the Digital Board once timely spending can be guaranteed, that the nature of the works/costs is explicit, that impediments to progress have been resolved, and agreement confirmed with interested parties. The category of de-commitment totals £194,000 IT transformation reserve funded.

3.3 Outturn

3.3.1 The capital programme for 2014-15 evidences a forecast underspend of £187,000, largely the consequence of,

Children and Young People – **underspend** in SIMS development costs (£5,000) compensating for overspend in Property Maintenance costs (£3,000)

Adult – **overspend** in Property Maintenance cost at Mardy Park (£1,000)

Economy & Development – net **underspend** (£18,000) in development schemes compensating for legal costs incurred in successfully defending the Council practice in Abergavenny regeneration project. Colleagues are exploring whether and to what extent the Council could reclaim our legal expenses.

Stronger Communities – net **underspend** of £168,000, predominantly the effect of an underspend of £207,000 against an abortive highways scheme which ultimately isn't a net underspend as it's financing will need to be returned to Welsh government, underspends on IT projects totalling £36,000, net savings of £4,000 in property maintenance costs (compensating for property maintenance cost overspends in CYP and E&D), £17,000 underspend on maintenance to County Farm portfolio, which mitigate an overspend to the 3g pitch project and surrounding ground condition issues of combined £83,000 (subject to a separate report to March Cabinet meeting), miscellaneous overspends of circa £9,000, and

an overspend of £5,000 in respect of old” County Hall which would be funded 50:50 funded with Torfaen County Borough Council.

Given the return of transport grant and part funding of old County Hall costs by TCBC, Stronger Communities capital schemes more transparently indicate a £37,000 overspend for the reasons described above.

Whilst there are forecast over and underspends in respect of Property maintenance across Select areas, traditionally property maintenance have been viewed collectively and overall exhibits a balanced position.

3.4 Capital Financing and Receipts

3.4.1 Given the anticipated capital spending profile reported in para 3.1.1, the following financing mechanisms are expected to be utilised.

Financing Stream	Annual Forecast Financing	Approved Slippage B/F	Original Budget	Budget Virements & Revisions	Total Approved Budget	Provisional Budget Slippage C/F to 2015-16	2014-15 Adjusted Budget	Increased / (Reduced) Financing	Comments
Supported Borrowing	2,420		2,420		2,420		2,420	0	
General Capital Grant	1,473		1,473		1,473		1,473	0	
Grants and Contributions	2,481	53	1,246	4,348	5,647	2,962	2,685	-204	An underspend on specific grant funded schemes of £207,000 offset by an increased contribution due from TCBC in the event that the forecast overspend on County Hall demolition
S106 Contributions	422	556		527	1,083	661	422	0	
Unsupported borrowing	5,036	6,710	3,492	91	10,294	5,257	5,037	-1	
Earmarked reserve & Revenue Funding	407	656	0	231	887	439	448	-41	Underspends on ICT schemes
Capital Receipts	4,400	2,957	1,707	2,095	6,759	2,260	4,499	-99	County Farms maintenance and reinvestment & RDP schemes are forecast to underspend by £17,000 and £75,000 reducing the need to call on capital receipts.
Low cost home ownership receipts	52	60			60	8	52	0	
Unfinanced	158				0		0	158	Overspends on the 3G pitch Caldicot (£71,000), Abergavenny Regeneration (£57,000), Caldicot School Drainage (£11,000), County Hall replacement (£7,000), County Hall demolition (£2,500) and other small scheme variances (£10,000)
Grand Total	16,849	10,992	10,338	7,292	28,623	11,587	17,036	-187	

3.4.2 The effect of slippage and underspends identified above are anticipated to predominantly delay the need to access unsupported borrowing and capital receipts.

3.4.3 There will be a need to identify funding for £158,000 worth of overspends that are currently unfinanced. The sc106 aspect element on 3g pitch will be subject to a separate report for funding consideration, and whilst the remaining balance (£87,000) would normally involve a recommendation about additional capital receipts usage or borrowing. There would still be an anticipated net surplus resource created by the decommitment of historic schemes identified in para 3.2.6 despite proposing in the first instance to use this capacity to support the new priorities in the 2015-16 totalling £395,000.

3.5 Useable Capital Receipts Available

3.5.1 In the table below, the effect of the changes to the forecast capital receipts on the useable capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments is shown. This is also compared to the balances forecast within the 2014/18 MTFP capital budget proposals.

Movement in Available Useable Capital Receipts Forecast

TOTAL RECEIPTS	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance b/f 1 st April	7,854	15,423	11,782	21,205
Receipts forecast to be received	21,165	13,556	4,000	2,000

in year as 2014/18 MTFP

Increase / (decrease) in forecast receipts forecast at month 9	(10,170)	(2,881)	21,200	0
Deferred Capital Receipts	4	4	4	4
Less: Set aside Capital Receipts	0	0	(10,452)	0
Less: Receipts to be applied	(3,429)	(1,930)	(76)	(538)
Less :21C Schools programme	(0)	(12,391)	(5,252)	(11,207)
TOTAL Actual / Estimated balance c/f 31st March	15,423	11,782	21,205	11,464
TOTAL Estimated balance reported in 2014/18 MTFP Capital Budget proposals	14,062	26,923	30,851	32,317
Increase / (Decrease) compared to MTFP Capital Receipts Forecast	1,361	(15,141)	(9,645)	(20,853)

3.5.2 The Council has agreed to the inclusion of 21c schools initiative within the capital programme. This relies on utilising £29 million receipts during this next 4 year MTFP window, and a further £600,000 in 2018-19. Consequently the balance of capital receipts available during this MTFP window has reduced compared to the original 2014/18 MTFP predictions due to the anticipated resourcing of the 21st Century Schools programme.

3.5.3 Despite changes in the timing of individual receipts, which remains a risk to the Council to ensure it has sufficient receipts to fund its expenditure aspirations in the years necessary and avoid temporary borrowing costs, the balance of capital receipts available to fund capital expenditure, at the end of this next MTFP window has been revised to circa £11 million, as a consequence of additional receipts predominantly LDP related.

4 REASONS

4.1 To identify the progress with capital projects and improve the timely utilisation of resources.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 As contained in the report.

6 EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The decisions highlighted in this report are reviewed in the attached EQIA.

7 CONSULTEES

Strategic Leadership Team
 All Cabinet Members
 All Select Committee Chairman
 Head of Legal Services
 Head of Finance

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 Month 9 monitoring reports, as per the hyperlinks provided in the Select Appendices

9 AUTHORS

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Appendices

Appendix 1	Slippage analysis
Appendix 2a	Major capital pressures
Appendix 2b	Issues List
Appendix 3	Strong Communities Select Committee portfolio position statement
Appendix 4	Economy and Development Select Committee portfolio position statement
Appendix 5	Adult Select Committee portfolio position statement
Appendix 6	Children and Young People Select Committee portfolio position statement

- 1.1 Managers combined advocate the following budgets to be carried forward into 2015-16.
- 1.2 The majority of which is sensible to slip forward as it is an extension of existing work that is demonstrable, however there are a minority of schemes, where
 - there has been little or no progress in 12 month, and the budget has slipped forward from a previous year
 - the level of expenditure incurred this year has been less than in year budget and slippage b/fwd., so I'd propose taking the opportunity to realign the budget to more realistic level,
 - or where there are identified problems/barriers to progress e.g. no agreement over scheme, archaeological considerations, planning considerations not yet satisfied or where the manager hasn't evidenced in the progress narrative why this should be slippage rather than an underspend.
- 1.3 Officers of the Capital Working Group, who act as representatives for their Directorates and services, have been engaged with intentions. To date no adverse feedback has been volunteered to specific proposals and the general reaction is it would be sensible to review historic schemes to consider whether they still exhibit a strategic relevance for the authority, particularly in an environment where new schemes have to demonstrate that they are either self-funding or that new priorities displace existing schemes within the programme.

	Annual Forecast	Approved Slippage B/F	Total Approved Budget	Provisional Slippage identified by managers	Recommended Slippage	Budgets proposed to be de-committed to provide headroom for Cabinet to consider alternate priorities	Budgets proposed to be de-committed, where financing usage is restrictive and not recyclable to alternate general schemes, to be brought back for Cabinet endorsement once scheme, need and cost has been reviewed	Funding aspect
Children & Young People Select Portfolio								
New Monmouth Comp – 21c Schools	511,000	0	2,740,000	2,229,000	2,229,000			
New Caldicot Comp – 21c Schools	478,000	0	3,211,000	2,733,000	2,733,000			
ESR: Access For All	27,380	127,380	177,380	150,000	14,000	136,000		£14k of ESR receipts. General element recyclable
New School Caldicot Green Lane Site	25,000	50,000	50,000	25,000	25,000			
New Thomwell Primary	656,782	598,037	690,037	33,255	33,255			
Monmouth Comp – 21C Feasibility	426,133	839,133	839,133	413,000	413,000			
Caldicot Comp – 21C feasibility	463,063	863,063	863,063	400,000	400,000			
Economy & Development Select Portfolio								
Brewery Yard Development	10,000	12,500	12,500	2,500	2,500			
Replacement Cattle Market	28,325	226,325	226,325	198,000	198,000			
Caerwent House, Major Repairs	0	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000	0		Self financing CPO
Rural Development Plan for Wales	0	6,430	6,430	16,181		16,181		This usage of slippage is not strictly in the conditions of the RDP grants but is MCC funded so could be recycled

	Annual Forecast	Approved Slippage B/F	Total Approved Budget	Provisional Slippage identified by managers	Recommended Slippage	Budgets proposed to be de-committed to provide headroom for Cabinet to consider alternate priorities	Budgets proposed to be de-committed, where financing usage is restrictive and not recyclable to alternate general schemes, to be brought back for Cabinet endorsement once scheme, need and cost has been reviewed	Funding aspect
Stronger Communities Select Portfolio								
Proposed New Abergavenny Library	0	3,433,302	3,433,302	0	0			
County Farms Fixed Asset Disposal Costs	7,600	20,899	20,899	7,000	7,000			
Non County Farms Fixed Asset Disposal Costs	60,781	224,116	394,116	335,335	335,335			
Access For All	203,605	223,619	473,619	270,014	70,014	200,000		MCC funding
lfton Common Sewerage Treatment Plant	0	10,070	10,070	10,070	10,070			
Area Management (Combined)	15,000	15,725	35,725	20,725	20,725			
Cemeteries Investigations	953	15,907	15,907	14,954		14,954		MCC funding
PV Scheme - Usk Primary	0	29,334	29,334	29,334	29,334	0		This is borrowing taken out for specific schemes. Interest/mrp on borrowing is paid for by service from income from panels when in use. Can not be taken for other scheme. If scheme could not go ahead this would have to be removed from program and budget vired back to service.
Car Park Granville St & Wyebridge St	0	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	0		This comes from Invest to redesign reserve - as Cabinet report 27/9/2012 so would have to go back to that reserve if not spent. (Although could then reuse reserve)
Signing Upgrades And Disabled Facilities	0	51,250	91,738	91,738		91,738		MCC funding
Implementation & Review Of TRO's	0	10,250	18,348	18,348		18,348		MCC funding
Parking Studies	0	31,779	39,877	39,877		39,877		MCC funding
Structural Repairs - PROW	24,755	52,336	92,820	68,065	68,065			
Accessibility Enhancements	3,729	72,643	72,643	68,914		68,914		MCC funding
CRM	40,000	146,652	146,652	106,652		0	106,652	IT reserve funded
Highways Asset Management & Road	12,176	50,089	50,089	37,913	37,913			
Replace MCC Central Storage Devices(Net App Servers)	0	49,299	49,299	49,299		0	49,299	IT reserve funded
Purchase of Sharepoint and Active Directory Licences	0	38,737	38,737	38,737		0	38,737	IT reserve funded
Imp. Physical & Virtual Access-Museums Collections	20,125	44,480	44,480	24,355	24,355			
Internet / Intranet Functionality	680	40,104	40,104	39,424	39,424			
Low Cost Home Ownership	52,000	60,000	60,000	8,000	8,000			
County Farms Maintenance & Reinvestment	324,445	236,877	441,603	100,000	100,000			
				10				

	Annual Forecast	Approved Slippage B/F	Total Approved Budget	Provisional Slippage identified by managers	Recommended Slippage	Budgets proposed to be de-committed to provide headroom for Cabinet to consider alternate priorities	Budgets proposed to be de-committed, where financing usage is restrictive and not recyclable to alternate general schemes, to be brought back for Cabinet endorsement once scheme, need and cost has been reviewed	Funding aspect
Magor & Undy Community Hall	0	49,846	32,346	32,346	32,346	0	0	S106
Multi Use Games Area Bayfield Open Space	0	70,470	70,470	70,470	70,470	0	0	S106
S106 – Recreation Croesonen	0	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	0	S106
S106 - Llanfoist and Llanwenarth Ultra	23,000	141,052	141,052	118,052	118,052			
S106 – Church Road Caldicot – Offsite Rec	32,494	70,619	70,619	38,125	38,125			
S106 - Pedestrian Improvement RE Land off Sudbrook Road	0	28,334	28,334	28,334	28,334			
S106 - Croesonen Infants Site, Abergavenny	0	23,374	23,374	23,374	23,374	0	0	S106
S106 – Combined 3 Monmouth Developments	129,250	0	439,574	310,324	310,324			
Slippage excluding Property Services	3,576,276	8,504,031	15,760,999	8,739,715	7,959,015	586,012	194,688	
Property Services Maintenance								
Stronger Communities Select Portfolio								
Penyrhiw - improvements to treatment plant	0	62,335	62,335	62,335		62,335		MCC funding
Passenger Transport - Repair path & resurface yard	0	0	6,810	6,810		6,810		MCC funding
Various - Safety Glazing film works	23,876	0	28,375	4,499	4,499			
Chepstow LC - repair/repl timber cladding to sports hall	0	0	11,350	11,350		11,350		MCC funding
Slaughterhouse Arches - Continue Stonework repairs & repointing	350	0	28,375	28,025	28,025			
Abergavenny LC - Replace CHP Plant	0	0	79,450	79,450		79,450		MCC funding
Chepstow LC - Replace CHP plant, Flues. Heat curtain to entrance	2,153	0	96,475	94,322	94,322			
Property Services								
Thornwell Primary - Re-render panels	188	25,000	25,000	24,812		24,812		MCC funding
Trellech Primary - install biomass boiler	5,970	0	79,450	73,480	73,480	0		MCC funding
Property Services explicit slippage	32,537	87,335	417,620	385,083	200,326	184,757	0	
TOTAL	3,608,813	8,591,366	16,178,619	9,124,798	8,159,341	770,769	194,688	

Appendix 2a - Major Capital Pressures

Description of Pressure	Forecast Cost
<p>The major review of the waste Mgt and recycling service is ongoing and will report in late Winter 2014 to Members with a proposal to delay revisions to the service until further analysis has been done. Proposals are likely to include consideration of receptacles rather than bags (anticipated cost of between £0.3-1.3m) To accommodate the change at kerbside, developments will be needed at our transfer stations at an indicative cost of £800k depending on the scale of works required. Options may be limited if WG insist on certain scheme components. The quoted capital costs exclude new vehicle costs which are modelled as being leased currently.</p>	2,100,000
<p>Monmouth Community Amenity site upgrade - indicative costs are £1.5-2m if built and run by the Council. The transfer station and CA capital costs could be avoided if the Council decided it was best value to procure a build, finance, operate contract for its sites in future. The work to evaluate these options will follow on after kerbside collection.</p>	2,000,000
<p>Bringing County highways to the level of a safe road network. This backlog calculation figure has been provided by Welsh Government. The Authorities Capital Programme is not addressing the backlog significantly as the annual level of funding available is not of sufficient magnitude to address this. The annual programme is set in relation to the approved budget and this programme is shared with all members. Routes are selected on the basis of their significance within the overall highway network and their condition. Programmes are reviewed annually around December and then distributed to members.</p>	80,000,000
<p>Investing in infrastructure projects needed to arrest road closures due to whole or partial bank slips. Without additional expenditure there is the potential for deterioration, increased scheme costs, disruption to communities and the travelling public and road closures.</p>	5,000,000
<p>Backlog on highways structures including old culverts, bridges and retaining walls. With existing budget this backlog will take 23 years to cover and there will be increased likelihood of loss of network availability.</p>	12,700,000
<p>Reprovision or repair of Chain Bridge - Cost prediction is indicative at present. Detailed estimates will be available Jan 2015. The bridge is currently under special management measures and inspection. Repair/ reprovision will remove / minimise the need for these measures. Without remedial work, the structure will continue to deteriorate. The current 40T maximum limit will have to be further reduced restricting access to the Lancayo area especially for heavy vehicles.</p>	2,500,000
<p>Property Maintenance requirements for both schools & non-schools as valued by condition surveys carried out some years ago. The existing £2m annual budget mainly targets urgent maintenance e.g. health & safety, maintaining buildings wind & watertight, etc., and is insufficient to address the maintenance backlog. A lack of funding means maintenance costs will rise; that our ability to sell buildings at maximum market rates will be affected ; Our ability to deliver effective services will be affected and a Loss of revenue and poor public image.</p>	25,000,000
<p>Disabled adaptation works to public buildings required under disability discrimination legislation.</p>	7,600,000

Maintenance and H&S works to historic buildings. Little progress has been made to date as the only budget available is the already overstretched capital maintenance programme. Without remedial works, Health and Safety risks become higher, long term maintenance costs become higher and potential revenue is lost from e.g. tourism, bookings, exhibitions, use of the locations for large events i.e. Food festival. CADW and landlords could force authority to carry out emergency repairs.	4,000,000
School Traffic Management Improvements at Castle Park and Durand Primary Schools - based on works carried out on similar buildings.	450,000
Refurbishment of all Public Toilets	250,000
Modification works to school kitchens to comply with Environmental Health Standards. Without additional funding school kitchens may have to be closed and additional costs for transporting meals incurred, possibly causing disruption to the education process.	400,000
Remedial works to deal with Radon gas issues. Once the surveys are completed, where high levels of radon gas are established action has to be taken. Without this action, buildings will need to be closed and costs may be incurred for moving and relocating staff or schools.	250,000
Removal of Asbestos containing materials (ACM's) from buildings	2,000,000
Caldicot Castle remedial works - longer term pressures given the condition of the curtain walls / towers etc. The £2-3m estimate is a ball park figure ranging from just the backlog of maintenance to also including improvements to bring the visitor facilities up to modern standards. An RDP grant is paying for a condition survey / outline conservation plan. The current condition of buildings constrains current operations and will impact on future management options including the assessment of viability of potential Cultural Services Trust. Heritage Lottery Funding is possible (but very competitive) Substantial match funding would still be required.	3,000,000
Countryside Rights of Way work needed to bring network up to statutorily required and safe standard. This should be taken as a provisional figure as surveys and assessments of bridges and structures are on-going and the rights of way prioritisation system which includes risk assessment will more accurately define and rank the backlog. Bridge management report on 787 bridges completed in October 2013 identifies 254 known bridge issues of which 77 need repair, 31 replacement & 80 are missing. 68 have 'other' issues including 51 bridges which require full inspection to further ascertain requirements/costs. 13 bridges are 10m+ and require replacement or repair. It is not possible to cost all of these currently but a ball park figure of £288k has been identified for the first tranche of issues.	2,200,000
Transportation/safety strategy –Air Quality Management, 20 mph legislation and DDA (car parks)	1,200,000
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) - The DFG's budget has remained unchanged for the last ten years. Each year the fully committed/spent date falls earlier in the financial year. This year we expect the budget to be fully committed by end October.	500,000
Sub Total Major Pressures	151,150,000

Appendix 2b - Issues List			
Area	Background	Forecast Cost if known	Recommendation
Community Hub	The revenue budget proposal to create community hubs will require capital investment to ensure the Hubs have appropriate accommodation in Caldicot by creating the Hub in the Library, in Chepstow by creating the Hub in the existing building, in Monmouth by creating the Hub in the Market Hall or Rolls Hall and in Usk by creating a Hub in the building with the Youth Service. It is assumed that the proposal in Abergavenny will be funded from the capital already allocated to the library.	300,000	Being included in Capital Budget for 2015/16
Monmouth Pool	Monmouth Pool – Recent report indicated options for members. Preference was to replace the pool, with a 4 lane 25 metre pool , subject to finalisation of budget costs and funding streams linked to 21st century schools	4,000,000	Requires business case to establish funding
Cycle track	The site at Gilwern wasn't suitable due to ecology issues in the national park and the need to use flood lights etc. Alternative sites will be considered if appropriate. Gilwern report 6/11/13 - was for £150k from Sports Wales, £120k S106 funding, £50k from Leisure budget and £150k Invest to save.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
Energy Efficiency schemes	Solar farm project requires member and Planning support - estimate Nov 14 Cabinet – proposal to be funded initially from borrowing (£5.7m cost), but ultimately self-financing from feed in tariff to provide net saving in time.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
Accommodation rationalisation including J block	Rationalisation of property portfolio to include remodelling of J Block, Usk - Lease extension to Coleg Gwent until Dec 2016. Once building empty, 9 month refurbishment before move in (Sept 17) which will require capital investment.	0	Need to establish cost for consideration in 2016/17 capital budget
Car parking strategy – Rockfield road £250k	Cabinet report 3/9/14 - proposed that a report go to Council to invest capital budget to include Rockfield Road £250,000 subject to final agreement of charging policy	250,000	Subject to final agreement on charging policy
Outdoor education strategy	A review of the service is ongoing looking at increasing revenue opportunities and also if the current three site approach is suitable for future delivery. If the conclusion of the report is close a facility, capital money will be required to develop facilities on remaining sites. The review is at an early stage. If combined 3 buildings into one, could free up a site and maybe generate a capital receipt; Will have completed review by Dec 14 ;	0	Review to take place
ALN strategy	Mandate 35 of the MTFP 14/15 outlines a review of current ALN service to ensure integration and streamlining the current service offer and may require capital investment	0	Review to take place

Depot rationalisation – transport	As it currently stands – Transport will not be requiring any capital monies. Transport Manager is working on a report to rent premises and bring PTU buses in house for servicing which will help cover the additional cost of the premises. A new fitting shop is becoming essential for Caldicot. Presently considering a site which would need around £25k capital set up costs	25,000	To be covered within existing budgets
Cultural services strategy	Currently the service is exploring future delivery options including trust status. Part of the work will involve conditions surveys which may lead to capital works being required. Included:- e.g. museums, Shire hall, Abergavenny castle, Old station Tintern, Caldicot castle; Have requested £30k from Cabinet to undertake the review (15/10/14);	1,000,000	Review to take place
Cemeteries	Monmouth Cemetery closed; A new north of county cemetery is regarded as low priority. Cabinet recommended that SCOMM Select look into this further.	0	Select to consider
Business Growth & Enterprise Strategy	The ‘draft’ strategy is currently out for consultation and we will be looking to bring the final report back through Cabinet. There are potential capital expenditure requirements in the following areas. Investment in digital and web presence – some of this is being secured through existing budget provision. However, there are likely to be business cases put through that will request additional funding. This will ultimately feed through Digital Board. Monmouthshire Crowd funding platform / lottery – a piece of research being done by the University of South Wales. Whether we move forward with a lottery concept and/or a crowdfunding platform there is potential for a request for MCC loan finance to: (a) Provide the initial capital (early estimate of £50k) for an independent organisation to run it; and (b) To provide initial capital (estimate of £1m) to allow loan finance to allow businesses to access low-interest or interest free	1,050,000	Requires business case to establish funding
Business Growth & Enterprise Strategy	Loan finance, potentially as match funding alongside crowdfunding. Business Hubs – working with Estates to identify appropriate space that would allow the Authority to develop Business hubs in our key towns. This will require a business case to come through.	5,000	Requires business case to establish funding
SRS	Similarly there is work ongoing with the SRS. We are putting a commissioning document in place that outlines what we require from the SRS going forward. This is being informed by a market testing exercise that is being done. This will then result in SRS providing clarity on what this means, not just in ongoing revenue terms, but also in terms of medium term capital implications.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
People Strategy	A revised People and Organisational Development Strategy has been taken through Cabinet. There is some work to do on our HR systems and processes. From this it is envisaged that there may well be investment needs that are required which of course would feed through Digital Board.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
Children's Services Contact centres	Capital required for adaptation of buildings for occupation.	0	Being completed in 2014/15

Sewerage treatment plan	Shirenewton sewerage treatment plant - Estimate increased from £50k to £75k. Last service /inspection report received in Sept 2014 stated 'very poor general condition and system in desperate need of replacement'.	75,000	To be managed within the current allocation in the budget
Sewerage treatment plan	Penyrhiw, Llanwenarth Citra sewerage treatment plant – is being reactively managed and remedially repaired, but is well past economic repair.	75,000	
Sewerage treatment plan	Itton Common Sewerage treatment plant - There is currently £10k in the capital programme but anticipated cost of works suggests a requirement for an additional £15k due to the need to acquire an additional area of land.	25,000	
Countryside	Llanfoist Bridge - The failure of the stone blockwork on the River Usk by Llanfoist bridge in Castle Meadows, Abergavenny – This continues to get worse and whilst we occasionally fill the resulting voids as it slumps it will eventually fail more fundamentally probably associated with a major flooding event. Given it's the likely site for the Eisteddfod this is becoming a much higher corporate risk.	50,000	Capital allocation for countryside to be increased from £40k to £70k. An additional £30k included in 2015/16 capital budget
Countryside	Current Rights of Way issues (Whitebrook byway) - Engineering assessments have been completed on landslip / collapse of byway at Whitebrook, estimated cost of repairs in the region of £70-£80k.	75,000	
Countryside	Current Rights of Way issues (Wye and Usk Valley Walks) - Engineering assessments have been completed on river erosion / landslips on the Wye and Usk Valley Walks. [Monmouth Viaduct] (Wye Valley Walk) £23,925, [Clytha] (Usk Valley Walk) £46,725, [Coed Y Prior] (Usk Valley Walk) £9,900, site investigations/design £5,500	86,000	
Countryside	Current Rights of Way issues (Closed Dangerous Bridges) - part of the wider rights of way bridges pressure (see major pressures) but specifically relating to those bridges in such poor condition that they have been legally closed on health and safety grounds	29,000	
Leisure	Monmouth Sportsground - The Monmouth Sports Pavilion is part of the land leased to the Monmouth Sports Association. The drain was diverted direct into the River Monnow when the second Monnow Bridge was constructed. However this needs to be reviewed to ensure it complies with all requirements. Capital costs are likely to be £10,000 for the sewer re-routing and connection works plus fees, the cost of a Section 104 Agreement with Welsh Water (DCWW) and the cost of adopting the sewer connection once the work is completed.	25,000	
Property services	Radon Gas Surveys	30,000	Revenue cost
Property services	Tree Risk Assessments	30,000	Revenue cost
Countryside	Caldicot Castle - Kitchen Modifications (£40k) to bring up to date and comply with environmental health requirements and to allow banquets to take place and provide additional income to the castle. Consolidation of fire and security alarms (£20k)	60,000	£40k capital investment being included in 2015/16 to achieve the increase income targets in the revenue budget
Property services	School Kitchen H&S Works - Gas safe interlock valves are now required to all school kitchens to comply with Gas safe regulations. Also required to these kitchens are replacement cookers as some of the units present do not have gas flame safety devices	36,000	Being funded through property planned maintenance allocation

Leisure	Caldicot 3G pitch - Unanticipated ground conditions, electrical connection capacity and retention of original pitch by school are anticipated to increase costs.	55,000	Being addressed in 2014/15

1. Capital Outturn Forecast

- 1.1 The capital budget has been revised to £8,487,000 from £10,037,000. This was made up of £6,235,000 2014-15 allocation, £7,192,000 slippage from 2013-14 (although £3,433,000 relates to the new library provision and is anticipated to slip again into 2015-16). The budget has been increased between October and December by £120,000 on the previous revisions reported of £899,000 but does also reflect the proposed realignment (subject to separate report) of Abergavenny Library resource to future years. These latest revisions comprise

	£'000
Monmouth Development Sc106	106
Additional Road Traffic Capital Grant to supplement works	34
Reduction in property maintenance (virements to other Select areas, nil effect overall)	(20)
Total	120

- 1.2 The budget exhibits a net reduction since month 6 due to the net increase in slippage being higher than increase in revisions. Slippage is proposed to increase by £1,671,000 to £5,960,000 and comprises

	Month 9 £'000	Month 6 £'000
Abergavenny Library (subject to separate report concerning decommitment)	0	3,433
Fixed asset disposal	342	146
Access for all scheme	270	120
Infrastructure repairs	287	30
IT systems	297	92
Section 106 schemes	661	468
Development Schemes	75	
Granville St & Weybridge St Car Parks	200	
County Farms maintenance	100	
Low cost home ownership	8	
Property maintenance	287	
Total	2,527	4,289

- 1.3 At the start of 2014-15 the Council accrued for £890,000 worth of work completed but not invoiced, as at the end of month 9 it had incurred only £4,493,000. As communicated previously during quarterly monitoring this wouldn't normally be a profile that would indicate full spending by the end of the year, a symptom of which being the need to report increasing slippage as the year progresses.
- 1.4 The outturn forecast exhibits a net underspend of £168,000, however £207,000 of this relates to a transport grant scheme not progressing which was highlighted at month 6 and for which we will need to repay WG grant so there isn't a saving that can be offset against other schemes in reality. So the more transparent position is an overspend of £39,000, predominantly the effect of overspends to 3g project and related drainage works in vicinity

which exhibits a combined pressure of £83,000, which will be subject to a separate report to March Cabinet committee. There are some other minor overspends caused largely by retentions being larger than remaining budget for a minority of schemes which have been offset by savings in IT scheme spend (£34,000), fixed asset disposal costs (£4,000), county farms maintenance (£17,000) and property maintenance (£4,000).

2. **Supporting Financial Monitoring Workbooks (ctrl click to access)**

[Month 9 Capital Monitoring \(please don't check out document\)](#)

1. Capital Outturn Forecast

- 1.1 The capital budget for the year is £297,000, a reduction on £732,000 budget reported at month 6, caused by £517,000 slippage reported by managers which wasn't evident at month 6. The original budget was made up predominantly from slippage brought forward from 2013-14 and £82,000 worth of in year revisions reported previously in respect legal costs incurred in relation to Abergavenny regeneration. These costs have increased by a further £57,000 since month 6. The Council has successfully defended the claim and officers are considering whether, and to what extent such costs could be transferrable to the plaintiff.
- 1.2 At the start of 2014-15 the Council accrued for £232,000 worth of work completed but not invoiced in respect of cattle market commissioning. As at the end of month 9 it had incurred only £195,000, and only £2,000 related to the cattle market. As communicated previously during quarterly monitoring this wouldn't normally be a profile that would indicate full spending by the end of the year, a symptom of which being the need for managers to report increasing slippage as the year progresses.

The £517,000 slippage relates to

	Month 9 £'000	Month 6 £'000
Cattle market	198	
Brewery Yard retentions	3	
Caerwent House	300	
Regional development plan work	16	
Total	517	

2. Supporting Financial Monitoring Workbooks (ctrl click to access)

[Month 9 Capital Monitoring \(please don't check out document\)](#)

1. Capital Outturn Forecast

- 1.1 The capital budget for the year is £273,000. There was no slippage from 2013-14, and is predominantly relates to upfront funding of Swift software replacement of £200,000 which will ultimately be funded from IT licence revenue savings within SCH.
- 1.2 At the start of 2014-15 the Council accrued for £3,000 worth of work completed but not invoiced. As at the end of month 9 it has incurred £155,000 cost. Managers forecast an outturn spend that exhibits negligible variance to the budget.

2. Supporting Financial Monitoring Workbooks (ctrl click to access)

[Month 9 Capital Monitoring \(please don't check out document\)](#)

1. Capital Outturn Forecast

- 1.1 The capital budget for the year is £7,008,000, a reduction on £12,252,000 reported at month 6. This was made up of £4,044,000 2014/15 allocation and £3,067,000 slippage from 2013/14 and revisions of £5,978,000 (an increase of £6,000 on month 6 levels and due to property maintenance virements).
- 1.2 The budget exhibits a net reduction since month 6 due to the net increase in slippage being higher than increase in revisions. Slippage is proposed to increase by £1,299,000 to £6,081,000 and comprises

	Month 9 £'000	Month 6 £'000
21 c schools feasibility	813	751
21 c schools build	4,962	3,951
Access for all scheme	150	80
Thornwell school works	33	
Green Lane school works	25	
Property maintenance	98	
Total	6,081	4,782

- 1.3 At the start of 2014/15 the Council accrued for £509,000 worth of work completed but not invoiced. As at the end of month 9 it had incurred only net £3,571,000. This wouldn't normally be a profile that would indicate full spending by the end of the year but project officers are confident to predict a forecast outturn that accords with reduced budget but this still necessitates a spend of £3,435,000 in the last 3 months of the year.

2. Supporting Financial Monitoring Workbooks (ctrl click to access)

[Month 9 Capital monitoring \(please don't check out document\)](#)

Appendix 2a - Major Capital Pressures

Description of Pressure	Forecast Cost
<p>The major review of the waste Mgt and recycling service is ongoing and will report in late Winter 2014 to Members with a proposal to delay revisions to the service until further analysis has been done. Proposals are likely to include consideration of receptacles rather than bags (anticipated cost of between £0.3-1.3m) To accommodate the change at kerbside, developments will be needed at our transfer stations at an indicative cost of £800k depending on the scale of works required. Options may be limited if WG insist on certain scheme components. The quoted capital costs exclude new vehicle costs which are modelled as being leased currently.</p>	2,100,000
<p>Monmouth Community Amenity site upgrade - indicative costs are £1.5-2m if built and run by the Council. The transfer station and CA capital costs could be avoided if the Council decided it was best value to procure a build, finance, operate contract for its sites in future. The work to evaluate these options will follow on after kerbside collection.</p>	2,000,000
<p>Bringing County highways to the level of a safe road network. This backlog calculation figure has been provided by Welsh Government. The Authorities Capital Programme is not addressing the backlog significantly as the annual level of funding available is not of sufficient magnitude to address this. The annual programme is set in relation to the approved budget and this programme is shared with all members. Routes are selected on the basis of their significance within the overall highway network and their condition. Programmes are reviewed annually around December and then distributed to members.</p>	80,000,000
<p>Investing in infrastructure projects needed to arrest road closures due to whole or partial bank slips. Without additional expenditure there is the potential for deterioration, increased scheme costs, disruption to communities and the travelling public and road closures.</p>	5,000,000
<p>Backlog on highways structures including old culverts, bridges and retaining walls. With existing budget this backlog will take 23 years to cover and there will be increased likelihood of loss of network availability.</p>	12,700,000
<p>Reprovision or repair of Chain Bridge - Cost prediction is indicative at present. Detailed estimates will be available Jan 2015. The bridge is currently under special management measures and inspection. Repair/ reprovision will remove / minimise the need for these measures. Without remedial work, the structure will continue to deteriorate. The current 40T maximum limit will have to be further reduced restricting access to the Lancayo area especially for heavy vehicles.</p>	2,500,000
<p>Property Maintenance requirements for both schools & non-schools as valued by condition surveys carried out some years ago. The existing £2m annual budget mainly targets urgent maintenance e.g. health & safety, maintaining buildings wind & watertight, etc., and is insufficient to address the maintenance backlog. A lack of funding means maintenance costs will rise; that our ability to sell buildings at maximum market rates will be affected ; Our ability to deliver effective services will be affected and a Loss of revenue and poor public image.</p>	25,000,000
<p>Disabled adaptation works to public buildings required under disability discrimination legislation.</p>	7,600,000
<p>Maintenance and H&S works to historic buildings. Little progress has been made to date as the only budget available is the already overstretched capital maintenance programme. Without remedial works, Health and Safety risks become higher, long term maintenance costs become higher and potential revenue is lost from e.g. tourism, bookings, exhibitions, use of the locations for large events i.e. Food festival. CADW and landlords could force authority to carry out emergency repairs.</p>	4,000,000

School Traffic Management Improvements at Castle Park and Durand Primary Schools - based on works carried out on similar buildings.	450,000
Refurbishment of all Public Toilets	250,000
Modification works to school kitchens to comply with Environmental Health Standards. Without additional funding school kitchens may have to be closed and additional costs for transporting meals incurred, possibly causing disruption to the education process.	400,000
Remedial works to deal with Radon gas issues. Once the surveys are completed, where high levels of radon gas are established action has to be taken. Without this action, buildings will need to be closed and costs may be incurred for moving and relocating staff or schools.	250,000
Removal of Asbestos containing materials (ACM's) from buildings	2,000,000
Caldicot Castle remedial works - longer term pressures given the condition of the curtain walls / towers etc. The £2-3m estimate is a ball part figure ranging from just the backlog of maintenance to also including improvements to bring the visitor facilities up to modern standards. An RDP grant is paying for a condition survey / outline conservation plan. The current condition of buildings constrains current operations and will impact on future management options including the assessment of viability of potential Cultural Services Trust. Heritage Lottery Funding is possible (but very competitive) Substantial match funding would still be required.	3,000,000
Countryside Rights of Way work needed to bring network up to statutorily required and safe standard. This should be taken as a provisional figure as surveys and assessments of bridges and structures are on-going and the rights of way prioritisation system which includes risk assessment will more accurately define and rank the backlog. Bridge management report on 787 bridges completed in October 2013 identifies 254 known bridge issues of which 77 need repair, 31 replacement & 80 are missing. 68 have 'other' issues including 51 bridges which require full inspection to further ascertain requirements/costs. 13 bridges are 10m+ and require replacement or repair. It is not possible to cost all of these currently but a ball park figure of £288k has been identified for the first tranche of issues.	2,200,000
Transportation/safety strategy –Air Quality Management, 20 m.p.h legislation and DDA (car parks)	1,200,000
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) - The DFG's budget has remained unchanged for the last ten years. Each year the fully committed/spent date falls earlier in the financial year. This year we expect the budget to be fully committed by end October.	500,000
Sub Total Major Pressures	151,150,000

Appendix 2b - Issues List			
Area	Background	Forecast Cost if known	Recommendation
Community Hub	The revenue budget proposal to create community hubs will require capital investment to ensure the Hubs have appropriate accommodation in Caldicot by creating the Hub in the Library, in Chepstow by creating the Hub in the existing building, in Monmouth by creating the Hub in the Market Hall or Rolls Hall and in Usk by creating a Hub in the building with the Youth Service. It is assumed that the proposal in Abergavenny will be funded from the capital already allocated to the library.	300,000	Being included in Capital Budget for 2015/16
Monmouth Pool	Monmouth Pool – Recent report indicated options for members. Preference was to replace the pool, with a 4 lane 25 metre pool, subject to finalisation of budget costs and funding streams linked to 21st century schools	4,000,000	Requires business case to establish funding
Cycle track	The site at Gilwern wasn't suitable due to ecology issues in the national park and the need to use flood lights etc. Alternative sites will be considered if appropriate. Gilwern report 6/11/13 - was for £150k from Sports Wales, £120k S106 funding, £50k from Leisure budget and £150k Invest to save.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
Energy Efficiency schemes	Solar farm project requires member and Planning support - estimate Nov 14 Cabinet – proposal to be funded initially from borrowing (£5.7m cost), but ultimately self financing from feed in tariff to provide net saving in time.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
Accommodation rationalisation including J block	Rationalisation of property portfolio to include remodelling of J Block, Usk - Lease extension to Coleg Gwent until Dec 2016. Once building empty, 9 month refurbishment before move in (sep 17) which will require capital investment.	0	Need to establish cost for consideration in 2016/17 capital budget
Car parking strategy – Rockfield road £250k	Cabinet report 3/9/14 - proposed that a report go to Council to invest capital budget to include Rockfield Road £250,000 subject to final agreement of charging policy	250,000	Subject to final agreement on charging policy
Outdoor education strategy	A review of the service is ongoing looking at increasing revenue opportunities and also if the current three site approach is suitable for future delivery. If the conclusion of the report is close a facility, capital money will be required to develop facilities on remaining sites. The review is at an early stage. If combined 3 buildings into one, could free up a site and maybe generate a capital receipt; Will have completed review by Dec 14 ;	0	Review to take place

ALN strategy	Mandate 35 of the MTFP 14/15 outlines a review of current ALN service to ensure integration and streamlining the current service offer and may require capital investment	0	Review to take place
Depot rationalisation – transport	As it currently stands – Transport will not be requiring any capital monies. Transport Manager is working on a report to rent premises and bring PTU buses in house for servicing which will help cover the additional cost of the premises. A new fitting shop is becoming essential for Caldicot. Presently considering a site which would need around £25k capital set up costs	25,000	To be covered within existing budgets
Cultural services strategy	Currently the service is exploring future delivery options including trust status. Part of the work will involve conditions surveys which may lead to capital works being required. Included:- e.g. museums, Shire hall, Abergavenny castle, Old station Tintern, Caldicot castle; Have requested £30k from Cabinet to undertake the review (15/10/14);	1,000,000	Review to take place
Cemeteries	Monmouth Cemetery closed; A new north of county cemetery is regarded as low priority. Cabinet recommended that SCOMM Select look into this further.	0	Select to consider
Business Growth & Enterprise Strategy	The 'draft' strategy is currently out for consultation and we will be looking to bring the final report back through Cabinet. There are potential capital expenditure requirements in the following areas. Investment in digital and web presence – some of this is being secured through existing budget provision. However, there are likely to be business cases put through that will request additional funding. This will ultimately feed through Digital Board. Monmouthshire Crowd funding platform / lottery – a piece of research being done by the University of South Wales. Whether we move forward with a lottery concept and/or a crowdfunding platform there is potential for a request for MCC loan finance to: (a) Provide the initial capital (early estimate of £50k) for an independent organisation to run it; and (b) To provide initial capital (estimate of £1m) to allow loan finance to allow businesses to access low-interest or interest free	1,050,000	Requires business case to establish funding
Business Growth & Enterprise Strategy	Loan finance, potentially as match funding alongside crowdfunding. Business Hubs – working with Estates to identify appropriate space that would allow the Authority to develop Business hubs in our key towns. This will require a business case to come through.	5,000	Requires business case to establish funding
SRS	Similarly there is work ongoing with the SRS. We are putting a commissioning document in place that outlines what we require from the SRS going forward. This is being informed by a market testing exercise that is being done. This will then result in SRS providing clarity on what this means, not just in ongoing revenue terms, but also in terms of medium term capital implications.	0	Requires business case to establish funding

People Strategy	A revised People and Organisational Development Strategy has been taken through Cabinet. There is some work to do on our HR systems and processes. From this it is envisaged that there may well be investment needs that are required which of course would feed through Digital Board.	0	Requires business case to establish funding
Children's Services Contact centres	Capital required for adaptation of buildings for occupation.	0	Being completed in 2014/15
Sewerage treatment plan	Shirenewton sewerage treatment plant - Estimate increased from £50k to £75k. Last service /inspection report received in Sept 2014 stated 'very poor general condition and system in desperate need of replacement'.	75,000	To be managed within the current allocation in the budget
Sewerage treatment plan	Penyrhiw, Llanwenarth Citra sewerage treatment plant – is being reactively managed and remedially repaired, but is well past economic repair.	75,000	
Sewerage treatment plan	Itton Common Sewerage treatment plant - There is currently £10k in the capital programme but anticipated cost of works suggests a requirement for an additional £15k due to the need to acquire an additional area of land.	25,000	
Countryside	Llanfoist Bridge - The failure of the stone blockwork on the River Usk by Llanfoist bridge in Castle Meadows, Abergavenny – This continues to get worse and whilst we occasionally fill the resulting voids as it slumps it will eventually fail more fundamentally probably associated with a major flooding event. Given its the likely site for the Eisteddfod this is becoming a much higher corporate risk.	50,000	Capital allocation for countryside to be increased from ££40k to £70k. An additional £30k included in 2015/16 capital budget
Countryside	Current Rights of Way issues (Whitebrook byway) - Engineering assessments have been completed on landslip / collapse of byway at Whitebrook, estimated cost of repairs in the region of £70-£80k.	75,000	
Countryside	Current Rights of Way issues (Wye and Usk Valley Walks) - Engineering assessments have been completed on river erosion / landslips on the Wye and Usk Valley Walks. [Monmouth Viaduct] (Wye Valley Walk) £23,925, [Clytha] (Usk Valley Walk) £46,725, [Coed Y Prior] (Usk Valley Walk) £9,900, site investigations/design £5,500	86,000	
Countryside	Current Rights of Way issues (Closed Dangerous Bridges) - part of the wider rights of way bridges pressure (see major pressures) but specifically relating to those bridges in such poor condition that they have been legally closed on health and safety grounds	29,000	
Leisure	Monmouth Sportsground - The Monmouth Sports Pavilion is part of the land leased to the Monmouth Sports Association. The drain was diverted direct into the River Monnow when the second Monnow Bridge was constructed. However this needs to be reviewed to ensure it complies with all requirements. Capital costs are likely to be £10,000 for the sewer re-routing and connection works plus fees, the cost of a Section 104 Agreement with Welsh Water (DCWW) and the cost of adopting the sewer	25,000	£25k capital funding being included in 2015/16 to comply with all requirements

	connection once the work is completed.		
Property services	Radon Gas Surveys	30,000	Revenue cost
Property services	Tree Risk Assessments	30,000	Revenue cost
Countryside	Caldicot Castle - Kitchen Modifications (£40k) to bring up to date and comply with environmental health requirements and to allow banquets to take place and provide additional income to the castle. Consolidation of fire and security alarms (£20k)	60,000	£40k capital investment being included in 2015/16 to achieve the increase income targets in the revenue budget
Property services	School Kitchen H&S Works - Gas safe interlock valves are now required to all school kitchens to comply with Gas safe regulations. Also required to these kitchens are replacement cookers as some of the units present do not have gas flame safety devices	36,000	Being funded through property planned maintenance allocation
Leisure	Caldicot 3G pitch - Unanticipated ground conditions, electrical connection capacity and retention of original pitch by school are anticipated to increase costs.	55,000	Being addressed in 2014/15

The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: Mark Howcroft Service area: Central Finance Date completed: 12 th February 2015		Please give a brief description of what you are aiming to do. This proposal seeks to evaluate the effect of decommitting slippage sums totaling £771,000, and reversions to IT funds of £195,000	
Protected characteristic	Potential Negative impact Please give details	Potential Neutral impact Please give details	Potential Positive Impact Please give details
Age		Neutral	
Disability		<p>Certain schemes pertain to accessibility initiatives. These schemes tend to be generic in nature to be available during the year as the need arises.</p> <p>There is no perceived disadvantage as the resources have remained unused, and where there was activity it has been insufficient even to utilize the in year allocation, so slippage at the end of the year is actually greater than brought forward.</p> <p>Undertaking this housekeeping will allow the capital programme projects to remain at realistic levels and encourage timely spending.</p> <p>The proposal is designed to allow Members a degree of flexibility to consider evolving capital priorities, and it may be that these have a protected characteristic to it, but there is nothing precluding schemes from being refreshed and volunteered for re-introduction by</p>	

		service managers.	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		Neutral	
Pregnancy and maternity		Neutral	
Race		Neutral	
Religion or Belief		Neutral	
Sex (was Gender)		Neutral	
Sexual Orientation		Neutral	
Transgender		Neutral	
Welsh Language		Neutral	

Please give details about any potential negative Impacts .	How do you propose to MITIGATE these negative impacts
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

Signed Mark Howcroft Designation Assistant Head of Finance (Deputy S151 Officer)

Dated 12th February 2015

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What are you impact assessing	Service area
Consideration of 2014-15 slippage	Central Finance
Policy author / service lead	Name of assessor and date
Mark Howcroft	M. Howcroft, 12/2/15

1. What are you proposing to do?

To review slippage levels volunteered by service managers

2. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics in a **negative** way? If **YES** please tick appropriate boxes below.

Age		Race	
Disability		Religion or Belief	
Gender reassignment		Sex	
Marriage or civil partnership		Sexual Orientation	
Pregnancy and maternity		Welsh Language	

3. Please give details of the negative impact

4. Did you take any actions to mitigate your proposal? Please give details below including any consultation or engagement.

5. Please list the data that has been used to develop this proposal? eg Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc..

Signed **M Howcroft...** **Designation...Asst Head of Finance (Deputy S151 officer)** **Dated** **12/2/15**

The “Sustainability Challenge”

Name of the Officer completing “the Sustainability challenge” Mark Howcroft		Please give a brief description of the aims proposed policy or service reconfiguration Review of slippage proposed by service managers at mth 9.	
Name of the Division or service area Central Finance		Date “Challenge” form completed 12/2/15	
Aspect of sustainability affected	Negative impact Please give details	Neutral impact Please give details	Positive Impact Please give details
PEOPLE			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		No effect	
Improve housing quality and provision		No effect	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		No effect	
Promote independence		No effect	
Encourage community participation/action and voluntary work		No effect	
Targets socially excluded		No effect	

Help reduce crime and fear of crime		No effect	
Improve access to education and training		No effect	
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		No effect	
PLANET		No effect	
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		No effect	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		No effect	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		No effect	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		No effect	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		No effect	
PROFIT			
Protect local shops and services		No effect	
Link local production with local consumption		No effect	

Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		No effect	
Increase employment for local people		No effect	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		No effect	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		No effect	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		No effect	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to MITIGATE the negative impacts (include any reasonable adjustments)
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

The next steps

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **positive impact** please give full details below

N/A

- If you have assessed the proposal/s as having a **Negative Impact** could you please provide us with details of what you propose to do to mitigate the negative impact:

N/A

Signed

M. Howcroft

Dated

12/2/15

Children and Young People's Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
Special Meeting 25 th March 2015	Welsh Medium Education	Scrutiny of the strategy and action plan.	Debbie Morgan	Performance Monitoring
	Additional Learning Needs	Pre-decision of a change in service provision - Change to Service Level Agreement.	Stephanie Hawkins	Performance Monitoring
Special Meeting April 2015 TBC	Home to School Transport Policy	Cross party advisory panel established, recommendations to be considered by select and their feedback incorporated into the consultation process.	Richard Cope	Policy Development
16 th April 2015	Estyn Inspection Letter	Update on improvements so far and key areas for future focus.	Clive Phillips, Estyn	Performance Monitoring
	Education Achievement Service (EAS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Quarters 3 and 4 - Foundation Phase Key Stage 4 and 5 outcomes Report ▪ Specific Groups of Pupils Performance Report ▪ Education Target Setting (single report of these 2 issues presented jointly) 	Matthew Gatehouse Sharon Randall Smith and Nicola Allan, EAS	Performance Monitoring
	CSSIW Report on Fostering Inspection	Report on the Fostering Inspection 2014	Tracy Jelfs Ann Ferris	Statutory Reporting
	CSSIW Report on Children's Services together with Children's Services Position Report	Report on the November 2014 inspection of Children's Services from CSSIW together with a position update from the department.	Tracy Jelfs Bobbie Jones	Statutory Reporting
	Month 9 Capital Budget Monitoring	Review of finance position for directorates and schools, identifying risks/trends in underspends and overspends.	Mark Howcroft	Budget Monitoring

Children and Young People's Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
21 st May 2015	Youth Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outline of the service and performance update of income generating projects ▪ MCC NEET Strategy ▪ European Social Fund monies for Pre and post 16 support, intervention and employment opportunities. 	Tracey Thomas	Performance Monitoring
	Gwent Music Service	Detail TBC	Emma -Gwent Music	
	Annual Council Reporting Framework (ACRF) Report	ACRF report on Social Services to be discussed jointly with Adults and CYP Select Committees. Out of the 8 key areas, officers to identify those relevant for further scrutiny.	Simon Burch	Statutory Reporting
Special June 2015 (before June Council) TBC	Performance on Safeguarding Children	Scrutiny of performance via following reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary Report - Strategic Overview - Performance Scorecard - Service Improvement Plan 	Jane Rodgers	Performance Monitoring
	Improvement Plan 2014-2017	Full year 2014-15 scrutiny of performance against the Improvement Objectives and the statutory 'all Wales performance indicators'.	Richard Jones	Performance Monitoring
	Revenue and Capital Budget Monitoring - Outturn Reports	To review the financial situation for the directorate, identifying trends, risks and issues on the horizon with overspends/underspends).	Mark Howcroft	Budget Monitoring
9 th July 2015	Improvement Plan 2014-2017 and Outcome Agreements	Full year 2014-15 scrutiny of performance against the Improvement Objectives and the statutory 'all Wales performance indicators'.	Teresa Norris	Statutory Reporting

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2015

Children and Young People's Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
17 th Sep 2015	Integrated Youth Offer (delivers Partnership Youth Support Service)	<u>Partnership Scrutiny:</u> Single Integrated Plan Theme 2 - Improving Attainment Youth Service to lead, scrutiny of Action Plan	Tracey Thomas Nicola Bowen	Performance Monitoring
	Links to Estyn Recovery	<u>Partnership Scrutiny:</u> Single Integrated Plan Theme 2 - Improving Attainment CYP directorate to lead, scrutiny of Action Plan	Deb Mountfield Nicola Bowen	Performance Monitoring
12 th Nov 2015	TBC			
Joint Special Meeting with Adults Select Committee November 2015 TBC	Anti-poverty Families First Programme Various Family Support Programmes Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF)	<u>Partnership Scrutiny:</u> Single Integrated Plan Theme 3 - Anti-poverty (Children's Services and partnership team)	Tracey Jelfs Nicola Bowen Will Mclean	Performance Monitoring
Special Dec	TBC			

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2015

Meeting Dates to be confirmed for:

- × **ICT in Schools** - Report on supporting future needs and requirements. POSTPONED from 25th March 2015.
- × **Corporate Parenting Report** - Annual scrutiny together with discussion on the issues, actions proposed and strategies in place to manage placements and reduce MCC's dependency upon external agencies.
- × **School Meals** - Pre-decision scrutiny.
- × **Categorisation of schools and results of target setting process**
- × **Review of Collaborative Arrangements** - proposed reduction in spending on 16-17 and 17-18.
- × **Schools Funding Formula** - discussed 27th January 2015, to return in 6 months to discuss implications of the change.
- × **Adoption Process (pan Gwent)** - Progress of the joint process.

Items to be emailed to Committee:

- × **Youth Offer Annual Report**
- × **Early Years Offer Policy Revision**
- × **Youth Offending Service Annual Report**
- × **Post Estyn Inspection Plan (PIAP) and minutes of the Internal Monitoring Board**



Council and Cabinet Business – Forward Plan

Monmouthshire County Council is required to publish a Forward Plan of all key decisions to be taken in the following four months in advance and to update quarterly. The Council has decided to extend the plan to twelve months in advance, and to update it on a monthly basis.

Council and Cabinet agendas will only consider decisions that have been placed on the planner by the beginning of the preceding month, unless the item can be demonstrated to be urgent business

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
26TH MARCH 2015 – COUNCIL			
Corporate Strategy		SLT Cabinet	Matt Gatehouse/ Will McLean
Self Evaluation Draft		Cabinet SLT	Sarah McGuinness
Engagement framework evaluation report		Cabinet SLT	Will McLean
Senior Officer Pay award and corporate pay policy		SLT Cabinet	Sally Thomas Peter Davies
Monmouthshire engages		Cabinet SLT	Will McLean / Abby Barton
Council diary		Cabinet SLT	Tracey Harry
Presentation from Jonathon Morgan IMB			Will McLean/IMB
8TH APRIL 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISION			
Extension to the 30mph speed limit Chepstow			Paul Keeble

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
15TH APRIL 2015 – CABINET			
Taking Forward Service Transformation in Adult Social Care and Health	A review of Community Coordination and Small Local Enterprise		Nicola Needle
Invest to redesign funding S106 Chepstow Area			Kellie Beirne
MOU Housing Solutions			Cath Sheen
Schools disciplinary policy		Cabinet SLT	Ian Bakewell
Education performance framework			Sally Thomas
ALN report			Matt Gatehouse
Strategic Equality Plan	3 rd annual monitoring report		Stephanie Hawkins / Sharon Randall Smith
			Alan Burkitt
22ND APRIL 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Funding of Major Play area and open space maintenance		SLT Cabinet	Tim Bradfield
Recreational and public open space developer contributions			Tim Bradfield
23RD APRIL 2015 – SPECIAL COUNCIL			
White paper – power to local people	Response to the white paper		Paul Matthews
Improvement Plan 2015/16 and feedback from Wales Audit Office	To approve the improvement plan for 2015/16		Matt Gatehouse
Official inspection letter			Paul Matthews
MAY 2015 – CABINET			
Council Tax Reduction Fraud Prosecution Policy	To provide Monmouthshire with a policy that will prevent, deter and/or detect Benefit Fraud		Ruth Donovan
Raglan – Proposed	To inform members of the progress that the	Cabinet	Deb Hill Howells

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
Community Hall	Raglan Village Hall Association has made in developing plans for a new village hall within the Raglan Community	SLT	
Y Prentis			Cath Fallon
Developing a Business Improvement District in Abergavenny	To seek endorsement of a new BID in Abergavenny town centre	SLT Cabinet	Deb Hill Howells
CMC ² Strategic Review and Year 4 Business Plan	To endorse the review of CMC ² and future business strategy and approve year ahead business plan	Cabinet SLT	Peter Davies Sian Hayward
Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2014/15, meeting 7 held on the 26 th March 2015		Dave Jarrett
Chief Officer Report			Kellie Beirne
Supporting Monmouthshire Businesses' competitiveness	To assist Monmouthshire businesses to improve their competitiveness and online trade	SLT Cabinet	Peter Davies
Schools Pay Policy		Cabinet SLT	Sally Thomas
ICT in schools			Peter Davies
People and Organisational Development Strategy (Final)			Peter Davies
Children services update			Tracey Jelfs
Adoption of LA policy on use of reasonable force			Richard Austin
Caldicot Town Team Funding requests			Colin Phillips
Merton Green, Caerwent S106 Funding			Mike Moran
Vibrant and viable places loan scheme			Rachel Rawlings
Croesonen S106 funding			Mike Moran

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
MAY 2015 – COUNCIL			
WAO Stage 2 Improvement Plan		Cabinet SLT	Will McLean/ Matt Gatehouse
Partnership Agreement		Cabinet SLT	
Chief Officer Report			Simon Burch
MAY 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Draft supplementary planning guidance (SPG) Primary Retail Frontages	To endorse draft SPG to issue for consultation	SLT Planning Cabinet	Jane Coppock
Vibrant and viable places loan applications	To determine applications as they are received (ongoing ICMD)		Ian Bakewell
Modernising trade waste services			Rachel Jowitt
Proposed waiting restrictions Magor			Paul Keeble
Leasing of land at Burnt Barn Road, Bulwark to Chepstow			Gareth King
Establishment of LA nursery at Ysgol Gymraeg y fenni			Sue Hall
JUNE 2015 – CABINET			
Income Generation Strategy	To provide a strategy for maximising the income opportunities available to the Council		Joy Robson
Revenue Outturn report	To provide Members with information on the revenue outturn position of the Authority at the end of the 2014/15 financial year.		Mark Howcroft
Capital Outturn report	To present the draft capital outturn expenditure for 2014/15 compared to the total budget for the year.		Mark Howcroft
Local development strategy RDP			Cath Fallon
Major Events Strategy	To set out a Major Events Strategy through	SLT	Ian Saunders

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
	which to co-ordinate all local community and organised events in the county	Cabinet	
Play sufficiency audit report			Nicola Bowen / Ian Saunders
Programme board update			Kellie Beirne
JUNE 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
Draft supplementary planning guidance (SPG) Landscape	To endorse draft SPG to issue for consultation	SLT Planning Cabinet	Jane Coppock
Access fund for music	To set up a fund to support pupils within our schools to have access to music provision via the Gwent Music Service		Nikki Wellington
JUNE 2015 – COUNCIL			
Chief Officer Report			Sarah McGuinness
Monmouth Pool			Kellie Beirne / Simon Kneafsey
Safeguarding report			Jane Rodgers
Solar Farm Business Case	To secure financial approval for the construction of an Authority owned solar farm at Oak Grove Farm, Crick		Ben Winstanley / Ian Hoccom
The Future Food Waste Treatment Strategy: Outline Business Case & Inter Authority Agreement	for the Council to consider the inclusion of MCC in the Heads of the Valleys Anaerobic Digestion Procurement. To agree the Outline Business Case and the Inter Authority Agreement which commits the Council to the procurement and partnership and a 15-20 year contract.	SLT Cabinet	Rachel Jowitt
JULY 2015 – CABINET			
Effectiveness of Council Services: quarterly update			Matt Gatehouse
Evaluation of community Coordination			Matt Gatehouse
Monmouthshire Crowdfunding platform	To seek approval for the development of a crowdfunding platform that together with Authority loan finance will support business growth and job creation	Cabinet SLT Member Seminar Pre-scrutiny	Peter Davies

Subject	Purpose	Consultees	Author
30th JULY 2015 – COUNCIL			
Cultural Service Review			Ian Saunders
SEPTEMBER 2015 – INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS			
SPG Programme annual review	To endorse draft SPG programme for 2015/16	SLT Planning Cabinet	Jane Coppock
SEPTEMBER 2015 – CABINET			
Local Development Plan – annual monitoring report	To seek approval to submit the first AMR on the LDP to the Welsh Government	SLT Planning Cabinet	Jane Coppock
Review of allocation policy		Cabinet Members Leadership Team Appropriate Officers	Ian Bakewell
SEPTEMBER 2015 - COUNCIL			
Local Development Plan – annual monitoring report	To seek approval to submit the first AMR on the LDP to the Welsh Government	SLT Planning Cabinet	Jane Coppock
NOVEMBER 2015 – CABINET			
Effectiveness of Council Services: quarterly update			Matt Gatehouse