



**Neudd y Cyngor  
Y Rhadyr  
Brynbuga  
NP15 1GA**

**County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA**

**22 Gorffennaf 2015**

**22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015**

**Notice of meeting:  
Monmouthshire County Council**

***Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:  
Cyngor Sir Fynwy***

**Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015, at 5.00pm  
Council Chamber, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk**

***Dydd Iau 30 Gorffennaf 2015, am 5.00yp  
Siambwr y Cyngor, Neuadd y Cyngor, Y Rhadyr, Brynbuga,***

*Prayers will be said prior to the Council meeting at 4.55pm. All members are welcome to join the Chairman for prayers should they wish to do.*

**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.*

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>
<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies for absence.</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Chairman's report and receipt of petitions.</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>To receive declarations of interest.</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>To confirm and sign the minutes of the following meeting:</b>  a) Council Meeting 25 <sup>th</sup> June 2015
<b>5.</b>	<b>Public Forum items (none received).</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>Notices of motion:</b> <b>(a) Submitted by County Councillor F. Taylor</b> <i>'That this Council agree to use its influence to secure all information and</i>

*plans relevant to Welsh Government's proposals relating to the M4 relief road for the benefit of those Monmouthshire residents potentially affected by the "Black Route".*

*In addition, Monmouthshire Council will seek to ensure Welsh Government's active commitment to minimise and mitigate the environmental, social and wellbeing impact of Welsh Government's proposals on the Communities of Magor with Undy. Should the "Black Route" proceed, this Council will also seek to identify opportunities to secure benefits from Welsh Government for the communities of Magor with Undy as a means of off-setting impact.'*

**(b) Submitted by County Councillor A. Easson**

*'The public bus services serving the community of Severnside are diminishing fast. The area is now gradually becoming isolated from the conurbations both to the east and to the west. Newport Transport, the current providers, have now reduced the No 74 Newport – Chepstow service from Caldicot to Chepstow to a two hourly frequency during the daytime. I move that this Council explores all possible options to restore the previous hourly frequency; as a regular bus service between the towns will help both towns to continue to grow and be successful. We need a bus service fit for the 21st Century to serve the public who live and work in the area.'*

**(c) Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni**

*'That this Council explores sensible and practical measures to discourage or prohibit the sale of single-use plastic water bottles in Council owned buildings.'*

**7. To receive the minutes of the following meetings:**

(a) Democratic Services Committee 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015

**8. Report of the Chief Officer, Children and Young People:**

a) Children & Young People's Directorate Annual Report 2015

**9. Reports of the Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services:**

a) Timing of Council meetings

**10. Report of the Monitoring Officer:**

a) Correspondence Response Times for Members

**11. Report of the Chief Officer, Enterprise (Cabinet 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015):**

a) Schools ICT Outline Business Case Fund

b) Solar Farm Business Case Report

**12. Members' questions:**

**a) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor G. Howard:**

*'What is his assessment of the Chancellor Exchequer's summer budget (8th July 2015) on housing matters in Monmouthshire?'*

**b) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hackett Pain:**

*'In primary school schools in Monmouthshire, how many classes containing different year groups have been formed in (a) 2014-15 (b) 2013-14 (c) 2012 -13?'*

**c) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hackett  
Pain:**

*'How many children attended free school breakfast clubs in Monmouthshire in (a) 2014/15 (b) 2013/14 and (c) 2012/13.'*

**d) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hackett  
Pain:**

*'What is the total amount spent on (i) tribunal awards including pre-hearing settlements (COT3) (ii) compromise or settlement agreements (iii) redundancies across all Monmouthshire schools for the financial years (1) 2014-15, (2) 2013-14 and (3) 2012-13?'*

**e) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hackett  
Pain:**

*'What is the total amount spent on (i) tribunal awards including pre-hearing settlements (COT3) (ii) compromise or settlement agreements (ii) redundancies for each Monmouthshire comprehensive for the financial years (1) 2014-15, (2) 2013-14 and (3) 2012-13?'*

**f) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor R. Greenland:**

*'How many times has Monmouthshire's human resources department authorised a Monmouthshire school to provide an interest-free loan to secure the recruitment of (1) a teacher (2) a non-teacher in (a) 2015 to date, (b) 2014, (c) 2013, (d) 2012 and (e) 2011?'*

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive  
Prif Weithredwr**

## **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 goals.

# Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

## Cymunedau Cynaliadwy a Chryf Canlyniadau y gweithiwn i'w cyflawni

### Neb yn cael ei adael ar ôl

- Gall pobl hŷn fyw bywyd da
- Pobl â mynediad i dai addas a fforddiadwy
- Pobl â mynediad a symudedd da

### Pobl yn hyderus, galluog ac yn cymryd rhan

- Camddefnyddio alcohol a chyffuriau ddim yn effeithio ar fywydau pobl
- Teuluoedd yn cael eu cefnogi
- Pobl yn teimlo'n ddiogel

### Ein sir yn ffynnu

- Busnes a menter
- Pobl â mynediad i ddysgu ymarferol a hyblyg
- Pobl yn diogelu ac yn cyfoethogi'r amgylchedd

### Ein blaenoriaethau

- Ysgolion
- Diogelu pobl agored i niwed
- Cefnogi busnes a chreu swyddi
- Cynnal gwasanaethau sy'n hygyrch yn lleol

### Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.

**Chairman's Report to Council**  
**Chairman's Duties**  
**18<sup>th</sup> June 2015 – 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

Thursday 18 <sup>th</sup> June 12 p.m.	Royal Ascot Charity Day Chepstow Race course
Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> June 3.30 .m.	Powys County Council - Civic Service Brecon Cathedral, Brecon
<i>Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 10 a.m.</i>	<i>Fly a Flag for Armed Forces Event County Hall, Usk</i>
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> June 10 a.m.	Monmouth School for Girls - Presentation of Prizes Haberdashers' Monmouth School for Girls
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> June 1.30 p.m.	National Eisteddfod - Proclamation Ceremony Caldicot Town Centre & Caldicot Castle
Sunday 28 <sup>th</sup> June 3 p.m.	Abergavenny Town Council – Mayor's Civic Service St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> June 7 p.m.	Gwent Music Showcase Concert St David's Hall. Cardiff
Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> June 5 p.m.	Five Countries Community Learning – Celebration of Achievements and Awards Ceremony Adult Education Centre (The Settlement)
Saturday 4 <sup>th</sup> July 11 a.m.	Caerphilly County Council - Civic Service St Sannan's Church, Bedwellty, Blackwood
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> July 2 p.m.	Merthyr Tydfil Civic Service St David's Parish Church, High Street, Merthyr
Thursday 9 <sup>th</sup> July 10.30 p.m.	HRH Prince Charles & the Duchess of Cornwall - visit to Monmouthshire Humble by Nature, Upper Meend Farm, Monmouth
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> 12 p.m.	The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers Freedom of Monmouth Parade The Shire Hall, Monmouth
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 10.30 p.m.	Newport City Council - Civic Service Newport Cathedral
Sunday 12 <sup>th</sup> July 3 p.m.	Torfaen County Borough Council – Civic Service Trinity Methodist Church, Abersychan, Pontypool
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> July 7 p.m.	Grass Routes 10th Anniversary Celebration & Awards Evening Council Chamber, Usk
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> July	Royal Welsh Show Royal Welsh Agricultural Ground, Llanelwedd, Builth Wells, Powys

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** County Councillor B. Strong (Chairman)  
County Councillor R.J. Higginson (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Batrouni, D. Blakebrough, P.R. Clarke, J.E. Crook, D.L.S. Dovey, G.L. Down, A. Easson, R.M. Edwards, D.J. Evans, P.S. Farley, P.A. Fox, J. George, R. J. W. Greenland, L. Guppy, E. J. Hackett Pain, R.G. Harris, R.J.C. Hayward, M. Hickman, P.A.D. Hobson, G. Howard, S.G.M. Howarth, D.W.H. Jones, P. Jones, S. Jones, S.B. Jones, R.P. Jordan, P. Murphy, M. Powell, J.L. Prosser, V.E. Smith, B. Strong, F. Taylor, P.A. Watts, A.E. Webb, S. White and A. Wintle.

#### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr P. Matthews	Chief Executive
Mrs K. Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Ms S. McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children and Young People
Mrs J. Robson	Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer
Mr R. Hoggins	Head of Operations
Mr W. McLean	Head of Strategic Partnerships
Mrs T. Jelfs	Head of Children's Services
Mrs D. Hill Howells	Head of Community Led Delivery
Mr I. Saunders	Head of Tourism Leisure and Culture
Mrs T. Harry	Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services
Mr R. Tranter	Head of Legal/Monitoring Officer
Mrs S. King	Senior Democratic Services Officer

#### **1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors G. C. Burrows, D.L. Edwards, J.I. Marshall and K.G. Williams.

#### **2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT AND RECEIPT OF PETITIONS**

We welcomed pupils of Magor Church in Wales school, the pupils had been invited to hold a Q&A session with full Council. The pupils explained the benefits of a station in Magor and how this would impact positively on the community and residents.

During the session, members were invited to ask questions and we noted the following:

We thanked the pupils for taking part in the meeting and for their articulate and compelling representation in favour of a train station in Magor.

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Members recognised the importance of increased public transport to be provided in the area and wished the students well in future successes.

We received and noted the Chairman's report.

Councillor Howard presented a petition in relation to Bailey Close, Gilwern, this was passed to Chairman and would be forwarded to the appropriate officer.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Declarations of interest were noted under the relevant agenda item.

**4. MINUTES****a) Annual Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

We resolved that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the County Council held on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

***Apologies Councillor Easson*****b) Council Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> May 2015**

Councillor Howarth requested an update regarding the petition that had been presented at the meeting.

Officers confirmed that work had been undertaken but an update had not been reported to the appropriate committee.

**5. PUBLIC FORUM ITEMS**

There were no public forum items received.

**6. NOTICES OF MOTION****a) Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni**

*'That it is noted in the previous financial year that there were compensatory savings totalling £1.2m over and above the mandated savings set out. This Council further notes that these compensatory savings have not been subject to public scrutiny; that Councillors did not have a chance to vote for or against such proposals; and notes that to date no comprehensive breakdown of these savings have been provided to Councillors. The Labour opposition therefore asks that any*



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*compensatory savings in future financial years are brought to the attention of full Council and the public at the earliest opportunity and a detailed breakdown of these savings are provided as a matter of course at the end of the financial year.'*

We were informed that the motion was withdrawn.

#### 7. MINUTES OF MEETINGS:

We resolved that the following minutes be received:

**1) Internal Monitoring Board 25<sup>th</sup> February 2015**

We resolved that the following minutes be received:

**2) Democratic Services Committee March 2015**

#### 8. A CITY DEAL FOR SOUTH EAST WALES

We were presented with a report 'A City Deal for South East Wales', which had been agreed at Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015. The purpose was to provide and update on recent work to attract a City Deal for South East Wales and to seek authority to be a partner in progressing towards the preparation of a formal City Deal proposal.

Council were asked to endorse the decision agreed at Cabinet:

1. That Cabinet agree that Monmouthshire should become an active partner in progressing a City Deal for South East Wales and participate in preparatory work that may / will lead to the negotiation of a City Deal with UK Government, Welsh Government and surrounding authorities.
2. The Cabinet agree a sum of £30,300 to be taken from the Priority Investment Reserve as a contribution to an overall fund of £500,000 being established by the ten South East Wales Councils to take forward necessary specialist preparation of a detailed proposal over the next 18 months.
3. That Cabinet agree to this report being presented to full Council on 26 June 2015 to ensure all Members are aware of this work and have an opportunity to debate it.
4. That updates are brought to Cabinet / Council at appropriate times to enable Cabinet to decide whether they wish to remain part of this process.

We debated the following:

- Members expressed support for the decision and it was recognised that it would increase investment in Wales.

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- Clarification was requested regarding the benefits that would be achieved by the whole of Monmouthshire, particularly in relation to the transport infrastructure. In response, we were informed that schemes were being discussed and would add value and deliver significant growth opportunities, deals would be bespoke to the area and region.
- In response to a question regarding governance arrangements, this was identified as a fundamental factor to the successful deal. Regular meetings had been held between leaders of authorities, the governance arrangements would be finely cemented and governance was emerging for the city region.
- Council recognised the importance of the location of Monmouthshire and benefits that could be offered and used to maximise potential.

We resolved that the Cabinet decision be agreed:

1. That Cabinet agree that Monmouthshire should become an active partner in progressing a City Deal for South East Wales and participate in preparatory work that may / will lead to the negotiation of a City Deal with UK Government, Welsh Government and surrounding authorities.
2. The Cabinet agree a sum of £30,300 to be taken from the Priority Investment Reserve as a contribution to an overall fund of £500,000 being established by the ten South East Wales Councils to take forward necessary specialist preparation of a detailed proposal over the next 18 months.
3. That Cabinet agree to this report being presented to full Council on 26 June 2015 to ensure all Members are aware of this work and have an opportunity to debate it.
4. That updates are brought to Cabinet / Council at appropriate times to enable Cabinet to decide whether they wish to remain part of this process.

### **9. ABERGAVENNY: VIBRANT & VIABLE PLACES – TOWN CENTRE LOAN FUND**

Council were presented with a report which sought Full Council's approval to set up a budget within the capital programme to manage the Welsh Government Vibrant and Viable Places repayable funding award of £1,250,000.

The award would enable a fund to be established by the authority which would provide 'interest free' town centre loans for a period of 5 years to enable redevelopment of redundant sites and premises in Abergavenny Town Centre.

Key terms of the award included:

- Repayable funding would need to be repaid in full by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2030. If the funding repayable is less than the award (ie from loan default) then Welsh Government will share 50% of the reduction to a maximise amount of 2.5% of the funding awarded.

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- Any repayable funding not being utilised 6 months after April 2016 must be returned.
- The maximum repayable period for Town Centre Loans is 5 years (to allow recycling).
- Funding can only be used to bring back into productive use vacant, underutilised and redundant sites and premises.
- Funding must be administered by a 'Board' established in the Local Authority area, the governance arrangements for which were agreed by Individual Cabinet Member report on 20th May 2015.
- Interest accrued by holding repayable funding must be recycled into the fund.
- Funding cannot be used for management, administration or operational purposes.
- However, as allowed by the terms, a one off fee of 5% will be charged for administering the loans applied for, as agreed within Individual Cabinet Member report approved on 20th May 2015.

We resolved that recommendations within the report be agreed:

1. Full Council agree to the setting up of a capital budget of £1,250,000 within the capital programme to manage the repayable loan funding award.

**10. BUSINESS CASE: MONMOUTH POOL**

Council were presented with a report which informed of the six lane pool option for replacement of the current pool at Monmouth Comprehensive and Leisure Centre site. The report identified revised costs for a 6 lane pool make the business case more affordable than originally presented.

At Council on September 25<sup>th</sup> a preferred option for a 25m 4 lane pool was agreed on the basis that more detailed work would be completed to examine the possibility of a six lane facility. The estimated costs of providing the pools at that time was £6 million for a four lane pool and £7.73 million for a six lane pool.

The planning application for the new school and leisure facilities was submitted with a four lane option, amendments to the scheme were pending consultation prior to planning committee in July.

Previous pool costs were indicative and since the previous report a scheme has been proposed configuring the new pool inside the footprint of the new school building.

The result of the new plans have significantly reduced the cost of a six lane pool from £7.73 million to a cost of £5.168 million bringing it below the original four lane option.

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The change of plan will provide a new pool however the build time will be increased to approximately two years, in line with the school building programme. The option of a four lane or six lane offer has been debated by officers, clubs and users and the opportunity to deliver a 6 lane facility is the preferred option for the service following analysis of a feasibility study and outline business case.

During debate we noted the following:

- Members supported the proposed 6 lane pool.
- Council were reassured that facilities would be designed to meet the requirements of a larger pool.
- We recognised the potential return on investment that could be introduced with a 6 lane pool.
- We thanked officers for the report and welcomed the improved pool facility.

We resolved that recommendations within the report be agreed:

1. That the Council considers the revised costs and business case associated with a 6 lane replacement pool at Monmouth, of £5.168million.
2. That Council accepts the financial risk of £50,000-£60,000 to entertain more detailed and tender work to introduce cost certainty and for this to be borne by the 21c feasibility budget.
3. And subject to that certainty  
Cabinet approves the addition of up to £1.168 million to the 2015-16 capital programme (in addition to the £4million subsumed with 21c schools initiative), to be funded by borrowing initially and ultimately by loan repayments afforded by Leisure services through cost reduction and income generation.

## 11. EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENES OF SAFEGUARDING WITHIN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Council were presented with the Evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding report, which provided members with information and analysis regarding the safeguarding of children and young people. Comprehensive strategic and operational information was provided via a suite of four cross referenced reports:

- i) **Strategic Report for Safeguarding April 2015**; this provides an evaluative overview for Members on progress, areas for further work and includes case studies.
- ii) **Safeguarding Report Card April 2015**; this provides detailed evidence and analysis for Members wishing to review safeguarding performance in more depth.
- iii) **Service Improvement Plan for Safeguarding 2015 – 2016**; this is the annual plan for the safeguarding unit and lists the priorities and actions for the year.

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- iv) **Children's Services Improvement Plan 2015 – 2016**; this contains the priorities and actions for Children's Services, including the actions in response to the CSSIW inspection.

During debate we noted the following:

- In response to a question regarding robustness of audit, Council were informed that safeguarding aligned with the process. The framework allowed issues to be identified and there was confidence in a process which had developed significantly.
- There was a need for decisions to be in the child's best interest and the Council priority surrounding safeguarding.
- It was recognised that a vacancy had been frozen for some time, however this had now been released and priorities were considered when the post was implemented
- The Chair of Children and Young People Select committee affirmed the comprehensive nature of the report and advised that the service had been subject to scrutiny, and the committee had been reassured that policies and procedures had been put in place. Thanks were conveyed to the Chief Officer.
- We discussed the requirement for DBS checks and noted that these had superseded CRB checks, which resulted in different rules and regulations. We agreed that an advisory note would be circulated to members by the Monitoring Officer.
- Council commended officers on the excellent report.

We resolved to agree recommendations within the report:

That Council receives the attached reports, noting the progress and areas for further work and using them as the basis for challenge.

## 12. LICENSING ACT 2003 POLICY STATEMENT 2015

Council considered the proposed 'Licensing Act 2003 Policy Statement 2015', as previously debated by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

We resolved that recommendations within the report be agreed:

- 1) Members approve the updated Licensing Policy statement for adoption by Monmouthshire County Council, to come into force on 1st July 2015.

## 13. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

County Councillors D. Dovey and P. Farley declared personal non-prejudicial interests, pursuant to the members' code of conduct, as school governors of Chepstow Comprehensive School.

**a) From County Councillor S. White to County Councillor B. Jones:**

*'The travellers uninvited stay in Monmouth last week, adds up to: their hygiene needs, loss of parking revenue, officers time, the huge amount of un recycled rubbish, to be picked up and dealt with out of working hours, so that Monmouth could accommodate the busy Friday market and parking, must amount to a considerable sum of money, this County can ill afford?*

*Please could you tell me and the Ratepayers of Monmouthshire, the full cost to us all?'*

In response:

*'The travellers arrived late evening on the 9<sup>th</sup> June. On the 10<sup>th</sup> June environmental health and the car park manager undertook a needs assessment to assess any welfare /educational needs which we would need to meet – none were identified.*

*A multi agency case conference was held on Thursday to discuss actions and it was agreed that we would issue a direction advising the travellers that they should leave the site by 7 pm the following day Friday 12 June.*

*The direction was served on the travellers and they left the site.*

*At 7.30 am on Friday the cleaners and sweepers cleared the site and the carpark was set up for the Friday market. By 9am the carpark and market were operating as usual.*

*The costs to the council were:*

*Loss of carpark income equating to an estimated £284.*

*The costs of dealing with the travellers and clearing up following their departure equated to £ 1,130.'*

**b) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hackett Pain:**

*'What is the current situation regarding the reorganisation taking place at Chepstow School?'*

In response:

The Cabinet Member advised that the governing body would have responsibility for staffing and reorganisation.

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL****Minutes of the meeting of Monmouthshire County Council held  
at County Hall, Usk on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 at 2.00 p.m.****c) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hacket****Pain:**

*'What is the total amount spent on redundancy payments at Chepstow school for the financial years (i) 2014-15 (ii) 2013-14?'*

In response, the Cabinet member advised that figures for all teaching staff:

- i) 2013-14 £426,502.76
- ii) 2014-15 £369,207.22

**d) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hacket****Pain:**

*'What is the present situation with the recruitment of a Headteacher at Pembroke school?'*

In response, the Cabinet Member advised that an Acting Head was in post until the Autumn term and the governing body had drawn up an advertisement with the specification for recruitment of a Headteacher

**e) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor B. Jones:**

*'What is the cross-contamination rate for recyclable waste collected by the Council?'*

In response, the Cabinet member advised that overall would be approximately 5%.

**f) From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor E. Hacket****Pain:**

*'How many SEN children were affected by the "unrealistic savings target" for SEN transport as stated in recent Cabinet papers?'*

In response, the Cabinet member advised that there were no SEN children affected as it had not been implemented.

**The meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.**

**ACTION LIST**  
**MEETING OF MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**25<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2015**

<b>MINUTE NUMBER AND SUBJECT</b>	<b>ACTION TO BE TAKEN</b>	<b>TO BE ACTIONED BY</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
<b>2. PETITION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passed to relevant officer</li> </ul>	Head of Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In progress.</li> </ul>
<b>4. MINUTES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minute amendment and action sheet required</li> </ul>	Democratic Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed.</li> </ul>
<b>11. SAFEGARDING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note to be circulated regarding CRB/DBS</li> </ul>	Monitoring Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In progress</li> </ul>



## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

**PRESENT:** County Councillor D. Blakebrough (Chairman)

County Councillors: R.J. Higginson, D. Evans, R.G. Harris, S.G.M. Howarth, P. Jones, J.L. Prosser, V.E. Smith and A. Webb.

#### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs T. Harry	-	Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services
Mr P. Davies	-	Head of Commercial and People Development
Ms E. Jackson	-	Digital Projects Manager
Miss H. Ilett	-	Scrutiny Manager
Mr R. Williams	-	Democratic Services Officer

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors D.L. Edwards and S. Jones.

#### **2. PUBLIC OPEN FORUM**

County Councillor Howarth thanked the Chairman for raising the profile of the Democratic Services Committee during her time as Chair of the Committee.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES**

We resolved that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record subject to the minutes being amended to include County Councillor D. Evans as being in attendance at this meeting.

#### **5. ACTION PLAN FEEDBACK**

We considered the report regarding action plan feedback. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- A demonstration of database management software will be provided at the next meeting.
- Meeting display board in Reception at County Hall, Usk – Investigate costing options for alternative methods to display information.
- Provide a hard copy of officer contact details to Members.
- Send the Council Diary to all Town / Community Councils.

**Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee  
Dated 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 - continued**

- Update at the next meeting regarding the Democratic Services Officer appointment.
- The Chair to provide a summary of achievements of the Committee for the next meeting.
- Investigate the installation of USB points in the Council Chamber.
- Investigate the installation of sockets in the public gallery of the Council Chamber.
- Report back to the next Democratic Services Committee meeting regarding the outcome of the meeting with the designer, contractor and Council officers regarding the heating system, air conditioning and general building issues relating to County Hall.
- Paint the wall at the rear of the Council Chamber to reduce glare.
- Youth engagement - Councillor Blakebrough, having met with representatives of the Welsh Government, would investigate a toolkit to allow Members to explain the democratic process in Wales to children in schools. This matter would be discussed further at a future meeting of the Democratic Services Committee.

We resolved to receive the update report and noted its content.

## **6. OPERATIONAL ICT**

We received a report regarding operational ICT issues with Members and employees.

It was noted that Members had requested that a 24/7 helpdesk service be provided. This would cost £25,000 for on-call and overtime for existing employees. Existing employees were not contractually obliged to work outside their normal hours, and if they were unable to provide the service, the SRS would be required to employ two people to provide cover at a cost of £55,000, including on-costs.

Having received the report, the following points were noted:

- A 'quick reference guide' to aid Members with their ICT issues was provided which could be laminated and put onto Member's laptops.
- A simple 'first aid responder' checklist was available on The Hub.
- Some Members were not receiving reminders to change their passwords. Also, concern was expressed that, on occasions, some inappropriate emails were coming through to Members which were not being blocked by the firewall. The Digital Projects Manager stated that she would raise these issues with SRS.
- Members considered that it would be inappropriate for SRS to employ two additional members of staff at a cost of £55,000 to provide a 24/7 helpdesk service.

**Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee  
Dated 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 - continued**

- Some Members have their council email account linked to their personal email account. Officers stated that this should not be encouraged as security issues would need to be investigated if this were to be rolled out to all Members.
- In response to a Member's question regarding arrangements for home visits by SRS, the Digital Projects Manager would liaise with SRS regarding this matter.
- In response to a Member's question, the Digital Projects Manager stated that Outlook Profiles had been increased to receive more data. However, she would liaise with SRS to ensure that all Members' profiles had been increased to receive additional data. It was noted that regular housekeeping of inboxes should be undertaken to help alleviate this issue.
- Agendas – a link to the website rather than receiving large PDF agendas would help to minimise Members' inboxes from exceeding their capacity limits.
- In the next three to four months the iCounty Digital Strategy will be assessed and a business case will be brought to Members in due course regarding how this will be delivered in future.
- SRS capacity regarding service provision needs to be assessed. However, a robust network was in place and it was acknowledged that there was a need to maintain the level of support and investment with regard to the SRS.
- Staff work / life balance needed to be maintained, which would be looked at via the People Development Strategy. The Member / Officer Protocol could be amended accordingly.
- Apprenticeships could be considered providing a low cost service instead of providing a 24/7 helpdesk service.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) that a further update report regarding ICT provision be presented to the next Democratic Services Committee in which feedback on the issues raised might be received.

## **7. SCRUTINY – END OF YEAR REFLECTIONS**

We received a report by the Scrutiny Manager regarding the key highlights achieved during the previous 12 months. A self-evaluation process had been undertaken with support from the Wales Audit Office and an action plan had been produced to improve the scrutiny process. In doing so, the following points were noted:

- Members noted the excellent progress being made and thanked the Scrutiny Manager for her support.

**Minutes of the Democratic Services Committee  
Dated 9<sup>th</sup> February 2015 - continued**

- Select Committee pre-meetings were an important part of the Scrutiny process and group leaders should endorse the benefits of pre-meetings to their groups.
- In response to a Member's question regarding the Strong Communities Select Committee holding meetings outside of County Hall, Usk in order to engage with the public, the Scrutiny Manager stated that formal meetings of all of the Select Committees were held within the Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk, as the meetings were live streamed and available to be viewed on line. There was also a Public Open Forum item on the agenda allowing members of the public to attend the meetings and raise issues. However, consideration could be given to holding a non-statutory meeting in which Select Committees might go out and meet the public via a 'road show' event once a year.
- Lack of attendance at Select Committee meetings was raised and it was suggested that the Select Committees might consider increasing the number of Members serving on these committees. However, it was noted that it would be a matter for Council to decide whether to increase the membership of the Select Committees. Political leaders should consider addressing the poor attendance with their respective groups.
- Concern was expressed that the Democratic Services Section had not been at full strength for some time and that this might be having a detrimental effect on the support being provided to Members. The Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services stated that the post of Democratic Services had been advertised internally and that there had been only one response. The post would likely be advertised externally with a view to filling the post as quickly as possible. It was noted that the Select Committees were Member led and were receiving good support from the Scrutiny Manager and Democratic Services Section.

We resolved:

- (i) to receive the report and noted its content;
- (ii) to receive an update at the next meeting regarding progress in appointing a Democratic Services Officer;
- (iii) that Select Committees should decide whether to hold an annual non-statutory Select Committee meeting in which the Select Committees would go out and meet the public via a 'road show' event.
- (iv) a decision was required by political groups regarding appointment of the chairs for the Select Committees.
- (v) the Chair would write a summary of the Committee's achievements during the previous 12 months to be presented to the next Committee.

**The meeting ended at 4.07pm**

**Agenda Item: 5**

**Democratic Services Actions  
May 2015**

Minute Item:	Subject	Officer	Outcome
<p><b>5. Action Plan Feedback</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ICT Update Report</li> <li>• Investigate database management software for members</li> <li>• Meeting display board and touch screen in Usk Reception. Investigate costing options for alternative methods to display information</li> <li>• Building and chamber issues:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investigate installation of USB points in the Council Chamber.</li> <li>- Investigate installation of sockets in the public gallery of the Council Chamber.</li> <li>- Report back to the next Democratic Services meeting regarding the outcome of the meeting with the designer, contractor and MCC Officers re: heating system / air conditioning / general building issues.</li> <li>- Paint the wall at the rear of the Council Chamber to reduce the glare.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>E. Jackson</p> <p>T. Harry</p> <p>T. Harry</p> <p>M. Long / R. O'Dwyer</p>	<p><b>Update report for next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Demo required at next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Ongoing</b></p> <p><b>Committee to continually monitor</b></p>

**Agenda Item: 5**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contact details</li> <li>• Council Diary</li> <li>• Appointment of Democratic Services Officer</li> <li>• Summary of Achievements</li> </ul>	<p>J. Pearson</p> <p>J. Pearson</p> <p>T. Harry</p> <p>Cllr. Blakebrough</p>	<p><b>Provide a hard copy of contact details for Members</b></p> <p><b>Send Council Diary to all Town / Community Councils</b></p> <p><b>Update at next meeting</b></p> <p><b>Prepare a summary of the Committee's achievements for the next Chair</b></p>
<p><b>Additional items from March 2015 meeting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with Welsh Government</li> <li>• Youth Engagement – investigate toolkit to allow Members to explain the democratic process in Wales to children in schools.</li> </ul>	<p>Democratic Services / Chair</p> <p>Cllr. Blakebrough</p>	<p><b>To be discussed on future agenda.</b></p> <p><b>To be discussed on future agenda.</b></p>



# MONMOUTHSHIRE'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S DIRECTORATE ANNUAL REPORT 2015



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# FOREWORD:



The last year has been one of driving forward and improvement as we have achieved a great deal of progress in aligning our procedures and practice with corporate plans. The education and learning opportunities for all our children and young people is a central part of Monmouthshire's Improvement Plan and our Single Integrated Plan (SIP). We deliver our services in accordance with Welsh Government policy, implementing their policies including, Qualified for Life; Successful Futures; The Literacy and Numeracy Framework; The National Model for School Improvement. We are driving forward better standards in the context of Wales, the UK and globally. Our statutory duties impel what we do and our local Single Integrated Plan informs how we apply these to the Monmouthshire's children and young people. Our Education Improvement Objectives have been informed directly by the Partnership Agreement and the Single Integrated Plan. The four principles of our Education Improvement Objectives which propel our activity are:

- Redesigning our Schools and making them fit for purpose
- Offering a more flexible education system that meets the needs of pupils, their families and employers
- Improving access to education for vulnerable groups
- Addressing key factors to underachievement.

Over the last three years there has been a shift from complacency, through challenge to changing practice for continuous improvement. Central to our drive in the last year is the continuing emphasis on accountability at all levels and with all partners. The Directorate has been delivering on the priorities of the previous Annual Report throughout the last year.

Our changing practice has resulted in real improvements in standards across all Key Stages where Monmouthshire secured 1st place in four indicators in all Wales. We have ended the year with a small financial surplus and made real progress in our 21st Century Schools Programme. This has been achieved against the need for fiscal prudence through embedding our performance management measures and through realistic target setting.

While the Authority remains in Special Measures we continue to work closely with the Ministerial Board and have, since the last report have had three formal monitoring visits from Estyn. The feedback from Estyn has been encouraging but we remain focused and vigilant as we continue our work to ensure that we move out of Special Measures. The final outcome will be known later in 2015 when Estyn are scheduled to make their final visit to Monmouthshire.

Our successes in the last year has been as a result of a series of factors:

- o Deeper alignment with the Single Integrated Plan (SIP)
- o Accountable partnership with the EAS
- o Greater challenge and accountability to our schools
- o Realistic target setting to deliver improved outcomes
- o Performance Management of individuals and teams
- o Setting individual targets aligned to SIP and Departmental Plan
- o Securing a funding stream for our 21st Century Schools programme

The achievements of the last year would not have been possible without the clear direction provided by the Cabinet Member, Cllr. E.J. Hackett Pain, support from colleagues in the Senior Leadership Team and the dedication of the Departmental Management Team and directorate colleagues.

The report opens with our vision for future travel with our key priorities for the coming year. This is followed by key facts relating to the CYP Directorate, and an overview of the last year following the four strands of my own performance management review; Strategic Focus; Leading Challenge; Educational Opportunity & Resilience; Partnerships and Collaboration. This is followed by a table reporting progress of our performance indicators in the last year. The final section sets out how we have progressed with the priorities set out in the last annual report.

Sarah McGuinness  
Chief Officer  
Children & Young People



# THE YEAR AHEAD 2015/16

The learning and teaching opportunities of curricula offered by digital environments requires the necessary investment to prepare our children and young people for the connected global environment in the context of pupils using their own hand-held devices in the classroom. The main stages in the delivery of are:

1. ICT Strategy Development Plan
2. Network Connectivity Enhancement
3. Equipment Refresh
4. Wireless Access
5. All school migration to the Shared Resource Service

The first phase will be complete by July 2016 with implementation of all phases in an estimated 24-30 month period.

Notwithstanding our good progress in the past year in respect of our standards and other indicators, we will remain focused on the achievement of our Educational Improvement Objectives as follows:

- Redesigning our Schools and making them fit for purpose
- Offering a more flexible education system that meets the needs of pupils, their families and employers
- Improving access to education for vulnerable groups
- Addressing key factors to underachievement.

We need to maintain and strengthen the gains we have made in our end of key stage performance over the last three years and work towards accelerating progress in the years ahead. Closing the gap in attainment and opportunity is a key theme of the year ahead as we continue to focus on improving the performance of e-FSM pupils to reduce the impact of deprivation. We are committed to develop and implement an effective funding model to maintain our collaborative alliances and extend to other identified schools. There will be monitoring of the uptake in Monmouthshire schools and impact of Excellence in Leadership Programme on outcomes for learners and overall categorization as it is implemented and embedded.

While we have improved our practice and processes regarding Safeguarding we need to continue to develop self evaluation and critical challenge in respect of the impact of safeguarding practice throughout the authority and with external partners. We will apply lessons learned from the external validation review of safeguarding practice to set direction, prioritise and improve planning.

In addition, we will analyse, learn and apply findings from the Young People's Safeguarding Survey 2015. The 2nd phase of the Safeguarding Audit Framework Evaluation (SAFE) will be implemented to develop the training programme for Monmouthshire to ensure that all staff have access to safeguarding / child protection training at a suitable level and to support the development of the Well-Being group under the partnership.

We will continue to implement the Quality Assurance Framework as a challenge to EAS in securing improved levels of achievement in our children and young people. In all our partnerships and collaborations we need to ensure that standards of practice meet our own high expectations of ourselves. While much has been achieved in the last year we are fully committed to continue our focus on the challenges facing us. As we go forward, a new challenge will be to ensure that the work we do aligns to the authority's early adopted approach on the Wellbeing and Future Generations Bill.

We have reviewed and redesigned the way we deliver our ALN service to schools through the introduction of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with schools, based on a cluster model. The SLA will be implemented in full from September 2015. This will ensure that our services work effectively together to provide an inclusion package for schools and that identification of appropriate pathways for intervention for our children and young people with special educational needs is optimum.

The Youth Service will undertake a wider service review to look at a more cost effective model of delivery that will contribute to budget savings of the LA whilst realising consistent and retained service delivery to young people in Monmouthshire.

Managing our finances and resources will remain vital to ensuring our provision and resilience. A central activity in this will be the continued development of Headteachers and Business Managers in tandem with targeted challenge and support. The impact of these actions will be thoroughly evaluated.



# KEY PRIORITIES 2015/16

1. Increased performance in the number of pupils getting five good GCSEs including Maths & English at the end of KS4 whilst maintaining a particular focus on performance at the end of KS3.

**Intended outcome:** The Authority remains the top local Authority in Wales against this measure at KS4 with performance at KS3 improving.

**Time:** August 2015

2. Closing the gap in attainment between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not.

**Intended outcome:** The gap between eFSM pupils and non-FSM pupils is less than the gap across Wales as a whole by August 2016 for all key indicators across all phases.

**Time:** August 2016

3. Continue to reduce the number of schools in financial deficit and those with a surplus budget greater than agreed limits

**Intended outcome:** Schools to become self sufficient in Financial Management

**Time:** August 2016

4. 21st century secondary schools building programme (First Phase)

**Intended outcomes:** Raglan Primary School to open in Sept 2015; Secondary Welsh Medium Provision on the Duffryn High School site in September 2016 and Monmouth and Caldicot Secondary Schools to open in September 2017.

**Time:** Sept 2015 to Sept 2017

5. Strengthen collaborative arrangements to build capacity in all schools and reduce the variation between schools across Monmouthshire.

**Intended outcome:** All schools in Monmouthshire will be good schools with the capacity to be self-improving, self-sustaining organisations.

**Time:** September 2017

6. Production of Digital learning and teaching strategic plan to include access to SIMS in every classroom

**Intended outcome:** Strategic plan for delivery of digital curriculum published

**Time:** Sept 2017

## KEY FACTS:

Number of pupils in MCC Schools*	11,546
In Post 16	926
Primary Schools	31
Secondary Schools	4
Special School	1
Pupil Referral Unit	1
Children's Centre	1
*incl Nursery	

Our Youth Service caters for 5,302 young people aged 11 – 25 (these numbers will increase over the summer period) in 4 Full Time & 7 Part Time centres plus providing support at 4 centres run by volunteers.

MCC Schools work collaboratively in four clusters around a secondary school alongside their traditional feeder schools. The table below breaks down the number of pupils in each phase in the Cluster from Foundation Phase (FP) through Key Stages (KS) 2 - 5.

Cluster	FP	KS2	KS3	KS4	KS5
Abergavenny	745	927	465	341	165
Caldicot	758	935	639	451	209
Chepstow	519	728	449	271	208
Monmouth	654	906	777	571	344

### Cabinet Member CYP:

Cllr E.J. Hackett Pain

### Departmental Management Team

Sarah McGuinness	Chief Officer
Deborah Mountfield	Head of Service: Resources
Sharon Randall Smith	Head of Service: Standards
Simon Kneafsey	Programme Manager 21st Century Schools

### WG Recovery Board:

Jonathan Morgan  
David Williams  
Steve Phillips

Accountability	Frequency
Chief Officer one to one with Cabinet Member	Every 2 Weeks
CYP activity scrutinised by Select Committee	Every 6 Weeks
MCC Senior Managers present PIAP progress to Internal Monitoring Board & WG Recovery Board	Every 6 Weeks
Chief Officer &; Head of Service Performance Management with Leader, Cabinet Members for CYP, Social Services and CEO	Annually
CYP Annual Report to Council	Annually

### **CYP Select Committee**

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



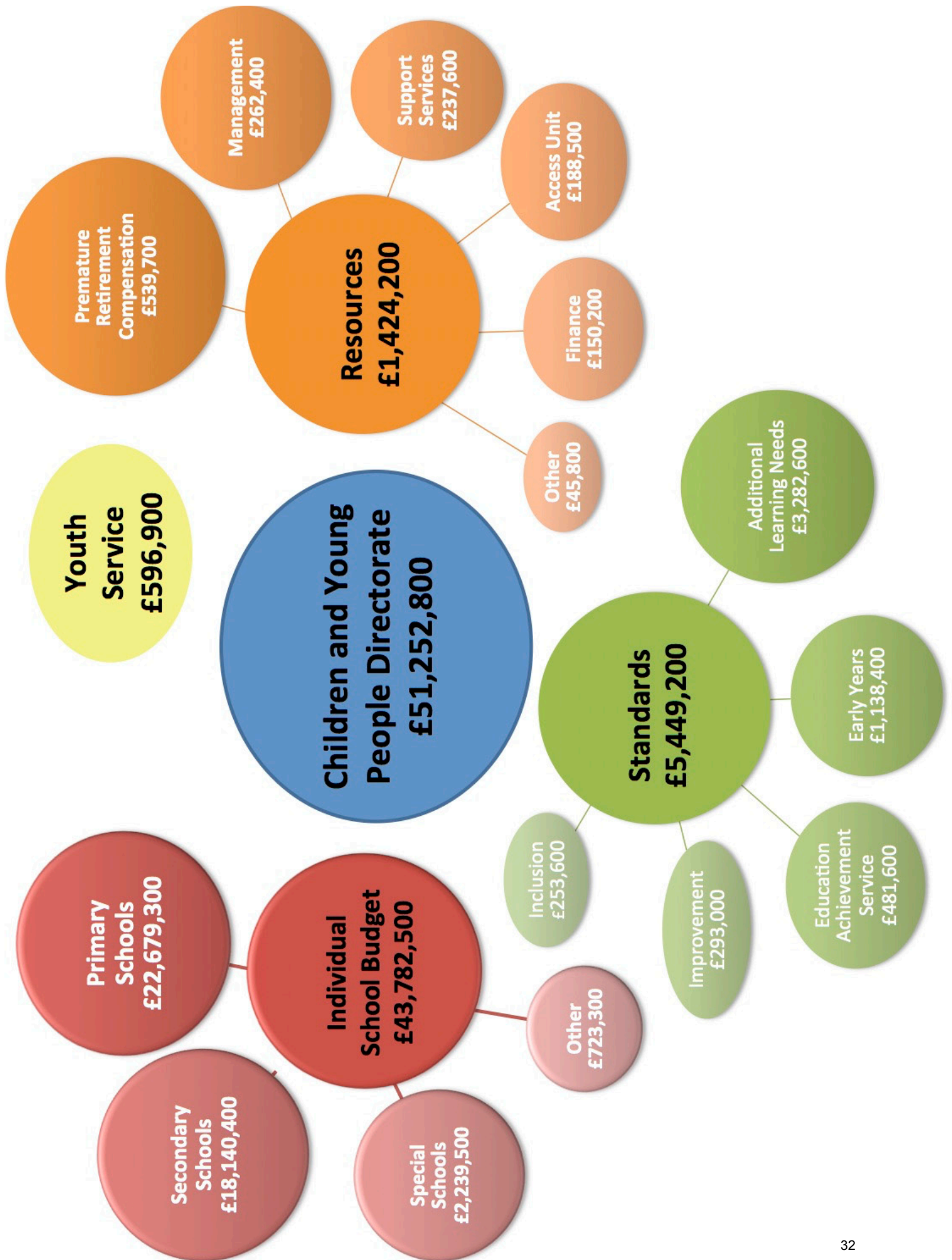
### **Added Voting Members** (Educational Issues)

- Rev. Canon. Dr. S. James (Church in Wales)
- Vacancy (Catholic Church)
- Mr. M. Fowler (Parent Governor Representative)
- Mr. C. Robertshaw (Parent Governor Representative)

### **Added Non-Voting Member**

- Mr K Plow (Monmouthshire Association of School Governors)

# FINANCE:





# STRATEGIC FOCUS:

## Summary Points

- We have refocused CYP Service Plans on learner outcomes and aligned them to priorities, targets, timescales and risks in the SIP and Monmouthshire's Improvement Plan.
- We have rationalized our data reporting and analysis to CYP Select Committee to ensure clarity and transparency.
- Training and development has been delivered to the CYP Select Committee to ensure their effectiveness in scrutiny and challenge to the Cabinet Member and Chief Officer.
- The new Employee Performance Assessment System, Check-in Check-Out, has strengthened the alignment to improved educational standards and corporate objectives as well as measuring whether targets have been achieved.
- Heads of Service in CYP have taken part in the newly formed Heads of Service Challenge in the last year which has led to greater focus in work plans.

The Directorate's strategic objectives are set and more clearly communicated to all teams. Over the last year we have become more sophisticated in measuring our achievements and our self-evaluative approach and our commitment to robust performance management has provided a much clearer sense of purpose which has improved our effectiveness. Over the last year the Directorate has delivered on the priorities of Children and Young People's Annual report presented to Council in summer 2014. These priorities have been strategically aligned to broader corporate goals and frameworks contained in Monmouthshire's Single Integrated Plan 2013-2017 and in the Council's Improvement Plan 2015-17, both of which support building sustainable and resilient communities.

Senior officers and their teams have developed their business area service plans to ensure that we have a strong and resilient service. The Directorate drives these improvement strands through the corporate improvement framework. The strategic focus since the Estyn inspection report in 2012 has been on delivering a post inspection action plan in response to the six recommendations made by Estyn to ensure that Children and Young People's services will be out of Special Measures by the end of 2015. The Directorate has continued to work with Ministerial Recovery Board which has provided high levels of challenge and the Internal Monitoring Board which has provided scrutiny and robust challenge to the Directorate. This has ensured the opportunity for earlier scrutiny and challenge.

# LEADING CHALLENGE:



## Summary Points

- Our framework for categorising schools has been reviewed in line with the National Model for School Categorisation and has been fully operational since October 2014.
- We have refined our processes for identifying schools in need of challenge in partnership with EAS, leading to a more effective focus in securing necessary improvements in standards.
- Financial challenge and to our Schools and Business Heads has been more focused and effective.
- The introduction of an Annual Stocktake of KS2 and KS4 in our primary and secondary schools from 2013 onwards contributed greatly to improved standards.
- Our approach in providing sustainable leadership in our schools is more systematic, informed and is underway.
- We have initiated collaborative alliances to provide executive leadership across schools in order to leverage excellence in leadership to deliver optimum standards in learning achievement.
- We have invoked our powers in three schools by issuing necessary warning notices and in two of these invoked our full powers in order to secure better learner outcomes for our pupils.

The CYP Directorate, after the appointment of a new management team in 2013 have thoroughly embraced changing practice in order to improve the life chances of our Children and Young People.

As mentioned in the 2013-14 Annual Report challenge replaced complacency and our challenge to schools and to EAS has been rigorous. Our Performance Management Framework, where individual and team targets are aligned with the SIP and the Departmental Plan, has been a key part of this challenge. This change in practice has led to a greater sense of cohesion with the entire Local Authority and enhanced performance. Through the Performance Management framework we have set targets which have led to actual improvements both educational outcomes and service delivery.

# PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION:

## Summary Points

- We have in partnership with the EAS provided each school with a data pack of relevant data in order that they can identify strengths and appropriate priorities in raising standards.
- Safeguarding surveys of our children and young people have been carried out to inform us in setting further actions and direction.
- External commission of our safeguarding has been used to provide a critique to the authority as a whole on our entire process.
- A wellbeing group has been established to address issues such as bullying prevention and mental health pathways for young people.
- Over 1000 individuals have been trained in basic awareness of safeguarding alongside training designated officers to provide training in their own settings.
- We have provided group supervision for designated officers of secondary schools in MCC in respect of safeguarding.
- We have attended both Early Years and schools cluster meetings to advise on best practice in safeguarding.
- We have provided additional support for settings dealing with complex safeguarding concerns and information regarding legislation and guidance.
- We have provided guidance to organisations to help them develop their child protection operational procedures.
- We have given guidance on the inclusion of safeguarding statements in job descriptions.
- Training has been developed and implemented in all directorates regarding safer recruitment and HR practices which replaced the three yearly re-checks.

CYP's closest partner is the EAS and this relationship is central to the success we have achieved towards ensuring improved educational standards and in providing challenge to schools. Our collaboration and partnership has gone from strength to strength and has matured to such a level that both partners are clear about our leadership and delivery and what we are seeking to achieve.

Safeguarding our children and young people is at the core of our activities as they receive our services in our schools, nurseries and in our youth service. An extensive review of Monmouthshire's policy was carried out in 2012 and informs our actions now. This policy was reviewed again in 2013 to strengthen the whole Council approach to safeguarding. Evaluation of effectiveness is ongoing through a two year rolling programme. CYP works more closely with the Social Services Directorate and other parts of the Council to ensure that no child or young person is at risk in receipt of our services. The importance attached to this is evidenced by the establishment of a Whole Authority Safeguarding Group chaired by the CEO and attended by leaders of all council directorates.

We work with a range of organisations in providing services to young people under the umbrella of our Youth Service. All of these are important and valuable in ensuring that our young people receive the best possible service beyond statutory requirements.

## EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY & RESILIENCE

### Summary Points

- A new community primary school will be completed and ready to open in September 2015.
- The first phase of rebuilding our secondary schools is underway.
- Tracking systems have been developed to identify impact of interventions on those who have additional learning needs.
- Our revised ALN policy has transformed the way we meet the needs of pupils through the introduction of School Action Plus Resource Assist (SAPRA) which enables us to use our resources effectively to ensure that children and young people receive the right support at the right time rather than on statutory processes.
- We moved from an overspend of £172K in 2013/14 to a surplus of £15K in 2014/15 despite an overall reduction in our budget of £127K.
- At the end of 2013-14 schools collectively had a surplus balance of £988,000. This has increased to £1,140,000 at the end of 14-15. The number of schools in a deficit balance has fallen from 6 to 5.
- Since September 2014 All Headteachers and Business Managers have access to a Benchmarking Tool which allows them to compare costs against other schools and look to make savings.

The 21st Century schools programme is an all school strategy designed to deliver sustainable, inclusive and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Monmouthshire. Besides the schools programme it is a timely investment into our wider communities which meets the Council's Whole Place Agenda. The partnering contractor for the building programme is committed to providing local apprenticeships and the engagement of local SMEs in the supply chain. In tandem with the building programme we are committed to harnessing the digital opportunities for teaching and learning that the programme can deliver and we are working closely with our ICT service provider and other experts to research and publish our plan for the digital learning offer.





The Additional Learning Needs Service has been thoroughly reviewed and has undergone a re-focus to align it with our corporate plan. The principle shift in emphasis is towards local delivery linked to individual learning outcomes supported by the allocation of resources. We have focused on re-evaluating our services to those who have Additional Learning Needs to ensure that we deliver the optimum provision.




Beyond our statutory duties we have built upon services to our young citizens with many worthwhile initiatives being undertaken which have added value to our young people in Monmouthshire.


Our managers have received clear training on budget monitoring, and our finance team meet with all managers at least once a quarter to review all budgets in detail. Managers are much more focused on the financial challenges and are developing services around these to support our citizens while looking for efficiencies and areas of savings. Savings offered in the budget mandate process are reviewed regularly and redirected appropriately. For instance our strategic review of ALN shifted provision to within the locality so that pupils can benefit from family support. Savings in placement fees have been redirected to develop staff in school settings to meet the needs of ALN pupils. We have in place a systematic system of development, support and challenge to schools in the area of financial management and all our work in finance is led by the objective of achieving value for money. This includes challenge to the EAS. We have improved our support for better financial planning in our schools and have developed 3 year draft budgets for schools.



# HOW WELL DID WE DO IN 2014?

Indicator	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	Comments
Foundation Phase Core Indicator	86.7%	89.5%	91.2%	There has been a steady increase year on year in the Foundation Phase Indicator in line with increases across Wales. Monmouthshire has consistently been ranked first in Wales for this measure.
MCC Wales Ranking	1	1	1	
Key Stage 2 Core Indicator	86.5%	89.3%	89.5%	Performance at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved over the last three years. In 2014, the CSI only increased by 0.2% points which was slower than Wales as a whole and as a result, our ranking dropped from first to third.
MCC Wales Ranking	2	1	3	
Key Stage 3 Core Indicator	77.7%	80.5%	84.2%	There has been a significant upward trend in performance at the end of Key Stage 3 over the last three years. Whilst this is good news, there is still room for further improvement as Monmouthshire is not improving as fast as other authorities in this area. This is a focus for our work with our commissioned school improvement service in the coming year. We will be extending our stocktaking scrutiny to include Key Stage 3 in 2015.
MCC Wales Ranking	4	6	6	
Performance at the higher levels across all phases for the majority of indicators has improved significantly over the last three years.				
Key Stage 4 Level 2 Threshold including English and Mathematics	56.3%	57.3%	65.6%	There has been an upward trend in performance for this indicator over the last three years but particularly in 2014 and as a result, Monmouthshire is now ranked first in Wales. The targets we have agreed with schools for 2015 build on this improvement to ensure that we maintain our position in Wales and continue to increase the percentage of pupils achieving this measure year on year.
MCC Wales Ranking	3	5	1	

Key Stage 4 Level 2	74.1%	74.2%	87.4%	Performance for this indicator shows a significant upward trend over the last three years and our position in Wales has improved significantly. There is still room, however, for improvement as we are not within our expectations of being ranked third or above.
MCC Wales Ranking	12	16	5	
Key Stage 4 Level 1	92.2%	92.2%	96.4%	Performance for this indicator shows a steady upward trend over the last three years and our position in Wales has significantly improved significantly. There is still room for improvement, however, as we are not within our expectations of being ranked third or above.
MCC Wales Ranking	12	18	5	
Percentage of pupils not in education, employment or training (NEET)	3.8%	3.8%	2.2%	The proportion of young people becoming NEET in Monmouthshire shows an improving trend over that last three years. The implementation of the Engagement and Progression Framework and the introduction of the NEET Reduction Strategy will continue to drive this number down further so that we can achieve our ultimate goal of no young people in Monmouthshire being classed as NEET.
Percentage of pupils leaving school with no qualifications	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%	The percentage of pupils in Monmouthshire leaving school without qualifications has been low for the last three years. Our aspiration remains consistently that no pupil will leave school without a qualification.
Primary Attendance	94.7%	94.4%	95.8%	The LA have worked with schools to agree attendance targets in quartile 1 or 2 compared to similar schools and as a result we have seen a rising upward trend over the last three years. Levels of attendance in primary schools have been consistently high over the last three years with Monmouthshire being ranked first in Wales in 2014.
MCC Wales Ranking	2	2	1	

Secondary Attendance	93.2%	93.5%	94.6%	Similarly, the levels of attendance in our secondary schools has improved over the last three years and is now the best in Wales.
MCC Wales Ranking	2	2	1	
Percentage of statements of special educational needs issued within 26 weeks	42%	56%	64%	We have worked closely with Health to increase the percentage of statements we issue without exceptions. We will continue to work with our colleagues in Health to ensure that we continue to improve in this area.
The number of schools categorised as green or yellow against the Welsh Government National Categorisation System	n/a	n/a	21	This is the pilor year for the Welsh Government National Categorisation System. In this first year, 21 out of our 36 schools have been categorised overall as green or yellow. Schools in these two categories require the least support to continue to improve.
Number of schools categorised as red against the Welsh Government National Categorisation System	n/a	n/a	3	We have three schools that have been placed in red, the lowest category. These schools have been identified as requiring intensive support, challenge and intervention compared to other schools. All red category schools wil have an intervention plan in place. The progress against support and intervention plans is regularly monitored by LA and the EAS in line with our agreed Schools Causing Concern Policy 2014/15.
Number of schools above the free school meal benchmark quartile median for the Foundation Phase Indicator	17	19	21	There has been an upward trend over the past three years in the number of schools in the upper two quartiles for the Foundation Phase indicator when compared to similar schools.





Number of schools above the free school meal benchmark quartile median for the Key Stage 2 Core Subject Indicator	13	15	13	The number of schools placed above the median for the Key Stage 2 CSI has remained constant over the last three years. The number of schools in the lowest quartile, however, has fallen.
Number of schools above the free school meal benchmark quartile median for the Key Stage 3 Core Subject Indicator	1	2	1	Similarly, quartile positions for the Key Stage 3 CSI have varied each year and are now the same as in 2012.
Number of schools above the free school meal benchmark quartile median for the Key Stage 4 Level 2 threshold including English and Mathematics	1	2	3	The most significant improvement in quartile positions over the last three years has been at the end of Key Stage 4. A much higher proportion of our schools are above the median in 2014 compared to 2012 and this is consistent for all the indications below. The proportion of schools below the median at the Level 1 threshold and the CSI, however, is higher than it should be. Overall the trend is upwards and we expect that all of our schools will be above the median over the next two years.



# PROGRESS ON PRIORITY ACTIONS FROM 2014/15

## 1. Raise standards of attainment for all children especially at KS4 through persistent challenge of the commissioned service EAS. ★★★★★

The intended outcome was there would be no gap in attainment between any groups of learners; Performance at the end of KS3 & KS4 improves sufficiently to be ranked 3rd or above in line with FSM expectations when compared with other authorities in Wales; No MCC school in the lowest quarter for any key indicator.

**Time** 2014 – 2017

*We have achieved our goal of being ranked third or above at the end of KS4 for the Level 2 threshold, including English and mathematics and the Core Subject Indicator. At the end of KS3 where performance is ranked fifth in English, ninth in mathematics and sixth in science and the core subject indicator, we have not quite reached our intended outcome. This is an area of focus for the coming year with the introduction of a KS3 Stock take and further support and challenge provided from the EAS, particularly at the point of transition. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) has improved over the last three years in the Foundation Phase where the gap between eFSM pupils and non-FSM is below the all Wales average. However, the performance of eFSM pupils in the core subject indicator at the end of KS 2 has declined over the last three years and is now greater than Wales as a whole.*

*There has been a significant improvement in the performance of eFSM pupils at the end KS 3 over the last three years and as a result, the gap in performance have been below the all Wales average for the past two years. Performance of eFSM pupils in the Level 2 threshold including English and mathematics has declined slightly since 2012. During the same period the performance on non-FSM pupils increased significantly and at a much faster than Wales. This meant that the gap between the two groups also increased and was well above the Wales average for this indicator. The trend for the Level 2 Threshold and Level 1 Threshold is an improving one with the gap between eFSM pupils and non-FSM pupils reducing over the last three years. Despite this, the gap between the two groups for both indicators is greater than across Wales. We have made some progress towards reducing the number of our schools in the lowest free-school mean benchmark quartile since at the end of KS2 in for the K 4 Level 2 threshold including English and mathematics. The overall number of schools has remained the same in the Foundation Phase and for the Level 2 Level 1 Thresholds but increased for the KS3 CSI.*

## **2: Review Additional Learning Needs strategy to improve provision and support. ★★★★★**

The intended Outcomes were to:

- Reduce expenditure on out of county placements;
- All schools enabled to develop the capacity to meet the needs of the majority of ALN pupils in mainstream;
- Effective and consistent tracking of ALN pupils to evaluate pupil progress and identify targeted resources.

**Time:** Oct 2014 – Sept 2016

*Over the past three years we have reduced our Statements of Special Education Need and the number of out of county placements. We expect this trend to continue as we complete our review of provision and new processes become embedded across Monmouthshire.*

*During the last year all SENCOs in our schools received extensive training in ALN delivery. Twelve of our schools have completed the first cycle of 'Dyslexia Friendly Schools' self-evaluation and 134 teachers across three of our secondary schools and fifteen of our primary schools have been trained in ASD Friendly Schools.*

*We have piloted a pupil tracker for ALN pupils with eight of our schools. We are in the process of evaluating the outcomes to inform the final version in time for the beginning of the academic year in September 2015. We continue to work closely with our commissioned service (EAS) to ensure that processes align.*

## **3: Implement robust procedures for monitoring and reporting on the Directorate's expenditure against the budget in line with the Corporate timetable. ★★★★★**

**The Intended Outcome was to:**

*Ensure Cost Centre managers undergo training to enable effective budget and finance management; Managers enabled to review service budgets to identify savings by remodeling service provision.*

**Time:** Sept 2014

*All Cost Centre Managers in the Directorate received training from the finance team within the financial year 2014/15. All managers are now in a position to manage budgets effectively.*

## **4. Develop robust procedures for monitoring, analyzing and reporting performance to senior officers and Members that lead to corrective measures. ★★★★★**

**The intended outcome was that:**

*Performance would be regularly monitored and reviewed involving key strategic and political leadership to mandate improvements.*

*Heads of Service in CYP have completed the process for the Head of Service Challenge in September 2014.*

**5. Provide Access to SIMS (Student Management Information System) from the classroom. ★★★★★☆**

**The intended outcome was that:**

*School leaders and all school staff could identify individual pupil performance and take appropriate action to support pupil performance and outcomes.*

**Time:** March 2017

*This priority has formed part of a wider plan to provide digital access to curricula Cabinet agreement is being sought for a 'one off' investment in technology (c£700k) to bring all Monmouthshire schools up to a suitable standard for delivery of the learning and teaching tools as well as individual pupil tracking tool (SIMS).*

**6. Secure Consortium led provision for a Welsh medium Secondary School for MCC pupils. ★★★★★☆**

**The intended outcome was that:**

*There would be sustained and secure Welsh Medium education for MCC pupils for the duration of their school careers.*

**Time:** September 2016

*We have reached agreement with our consortium partners to extend capacity for secondary Welsh Medium provision across the south of the region. Good progress is being made with design plans in place and the Consultation Report and Statutory Notice have been published. It is expected that the school will open to Year 7 pupils in September 2016.*

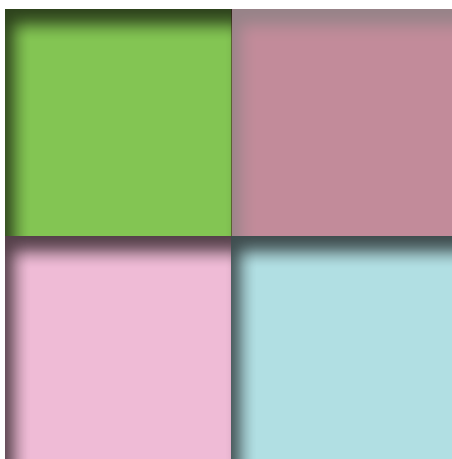
**7. Review Secondary School catchment for MCC pupils who are currently being transported out of county. ★★★★★★**

**The intended outcome was that:**

*MCC children and young people have the opportunity to be educated in county*

**Time:** August 2017

*A review of catchment areas for secondary pupils has been completed. The outcomes from this review indicated that the current arrangements should remain in place at the present time.*







## REPORT

**SUBJECT: TIMING OF COUNCIL MEETINGS**  
**MEETING: FULL COUNCIL**  
**DATE: 30<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2015**  
**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: N/A**

### 1. PURPOSE:

To update Council regarding attendance and feedback from members following Council's agreement to commence 3 council meetings at 5pm instead of the established 2pm start time.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Council consider the feedback from members and member attendance to inform their decision regarding the future timing of council meetings.

### 3. KEY ISSUES:

- At their meeting of 26<sup>th</sup> March, Council considered a report from the DSC regarding the timing of full council meetings.
- Council considered the findings and recommendations outlined in the report from Democratic Services Committee and agreed that 3 council meetings, in May, June and July would commence at 5pm.
- The timing of council meetings would be reviewed again at the July meeting taking into consideration attendance and feedback from members. This information is outlined in the attached appendix including information on attendance, video views and comments from members.

### 4. REASONS:

Members agreed to hold 3 council meetings with a start time of 5pm instead of the established 2pm following which they would make a decision regarding the future timings of meetings.

### 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

No resource implications

### 6. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

There are no sustainability implications of the timing of meetings.<sup>Agenda Item 9a</sup>  
However working members may be adversely affected by a council meeting start time between the normal office working hours of 9 am to 5 pm.

**7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

Where members have governor responsibilities meetings which start at 5pm may interfere with their ability to attend meetings of their governing body.

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Council report: Timing of Council meeting 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**9. CONSULTEES:**

All Members

**10. AUTHOR:**

Tracey Harry, Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services  
Email: [traceyharry@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:traceyharry@monmouthshire.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 01633 644602



#### **Has full Council starting at 5pm rather than 2pm made it easier or more difficult for you to attend Full Council Meetings?**

- More Difficult x9
- Neither x2
- Much more difficult and missed governors meetings
- Not an issue for me unless I get compromised by some local/town council activities but in any case the Full Council Meetings would take precedence.
- It has made it more difficult as being also a Town Council, it has clashed. Also I am a Governor on two schools and these meetings are held in the evenings.
- Easier x1
- I'm happy to attend either 2pm or 5pm meetings, but I think that we should be mindful that officers should be considered when deciding this, as many have young families and the 5pm meeting could interfere with their family life.

#### **Have you received any feedback from residents in terms of Full Council being more accessible at 5pm rather than 2pm?**

- None x16
- No one has ever asked me about Council, only when the LDP meetings were taking place!

#### **In your opinion, has the level of debate improved or decreased due to the later start time?**

- Decreased x5
- Neither x2
- Decreased as members are clock watching
- Fewer Councillors seem to be present
- I do notice people are more tired but, quality of debate changes with the topic any time.
- Difficult to Quantify
- It may have been marginally improved because we are more conscious of time management but the quality of the agenda and our general conduct, particularly with regard to motions and questions are more important considerations.
- Maybe members are conscious of time and want to get home .Considering that at the end last week at least 15 had left.
- I would say decreased as most people are anxious for the meeting to finish so they can get home.
- Decreased in quantity, but has quality improved? Difficult to judge in a short trial period, this may be down to the nature of the business at the time. The later start time might help to persuade members to be to the point, and less 'agreeing with the last speaker' type of contributions or filibustering!
- Improved - more concise and efficient
- The level of debate is virtually unchanged.

## **Feedback from Members/Attendance and You Tube Hits**

### **Would you prefer to retain a start time of 5pm or revert back to 2pm?**

- revert to 2pm or even 10am
- Revert to 2pm or even 9:30am / 10am
- Revert to 2pm x8
- Much prefer 2pm, I can plan my diary better, and not let my “outside bodies” down.
- I would prefer the meeting to revert back to 2.00 pm as it appears to be a more effective use of councillor and officers time particularly as people in my ward have expressed absolutely no preference
- I could live with 5.00 p.m. but to avoid conflicts with other commitments I would on balance prefer to revert to 2.00 p.m.
- 4pm at the latest with the hope that the agendas were brief.
- Keep 5pm
- Prefer 5pm to help working people to attend full council
- Either

### **Please provide any other comments or observations you have in relation to the trial period.**

- I am sure that attendance is lower and many members have left before the last items
- Couldn't see the point in starting at 5pm
- Worth a try
- As I have said, I have found it very difficult, when I joined the Council ( all those years ago) I knew the times of meetings and with Town Council and “outside bodies”, made it work, I have been told “County Council must always come first”, so why am I, and other members willing to be put on them? It would be easier, just come to County Meetings! Some meetings such as Schools rely on us to “turn Up”, why would we not? I am not sure they truly understand but, have been gracious in their acceptance of my apology.
- I can understand if the change of time works better for elected members who have parental issues involving young children.
- We have invested a fortune in it equipment to enable the council meetings to be watched by the public at any time on u tube. We all know that very few of the public ever attend meetings so the timing should be to suit members and officers only.
- The extra time gained during the day waiting for the 5pm meeting to start, cannot be used usefully as you can't attend other meetings if there is any likelihood of them over running, it seems much better to have group in the morning with a view to Full Council at 2pm
- Members leaving during the late meeting is considerable.
- Luckily the agendas at the trial Councils have been reasonable light, but should we have a long agenda, it would prove difficult not just for us but for the officers and support staff.
- The public have not attended to increase attendance since the change. We have other ways for the public to access via the recording system.
- If the majority would prefer a return to 2pm, we should seriously consider an alternating time.
- It would be interesting to compare the attendance of Councillors at both 2 and 5pm meetings.

## **Feedback from Members/Attendance and You Tube Hits**

### **Attendance**

#### **25<sup>th</sup> June – 5pm**

Attended: 37

Apologies & Absent: 6

Left: 6

Most views while live streaming was 12, total of 192 views.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> May 2015 – 5pm**

Attended: 36

Apologies & Absent: 7

Left: 0

Error recording but 12<sup>th</sup> May stats are 6 while streaming, 90 total views.

**There was a special Council in April but I havnt included that.**

#### **26<sup>th</sup> March 2015 – 2pm**

Attended: 37

Apologies & Absent: 6

Left: 0

Most views while live streaming 8, total views 86.

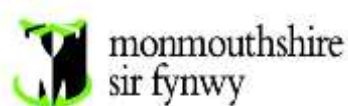
#### **26<sup>th</sup> February 2015 – 2pm**

Attended: 36

Apologies & Absent: 7

Left: 3

Most views while live streaming 9, total views 175.



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Correspondence Response Times for Members</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>31<sup>st</sup> July 2015</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

### 1. PURPOSE:

To recommend to Council that members adhere to the Council's Corporate Customer Care Standards in respect of emails/letters received from the members of the public.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That full Council resolves that members adhere to the Council's Corporate Customer Care Standards in respect of emails/letters received from the members of the public.

### 3. KEY ISSUES:

- a) At a recent meeting of Standards Committee it was noted that elected members are not subject to the Council's Corporate Customer Care Standards in respect of response times to letter/emails received from the members of the public.
- b) The Corporate Customer Care Standards which are attached as an appendix to this report state that members of the public can expect a response from officers of the council within 5 working days or that the letter/email is acknowledged within 5 working days and a full reply is given within 15 working days.
- c) Standards Committee is of the view that elected members should be subject to the same response times although it acknowledges that this must be a decision for a meeting of the full council.
- d) It is anticipated that members of the public will benefit from knowing these response times. A failure to meet the response times may result in a complaint being made to the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales for a breach of paragraph 6(1)(a) of the members' code of conduct – *you must not conduct yourself in a manner which could reasonably be regarded as bringing your office or authority into disrepute.*

### 4. REASONS:

That elected members have known and agreed response times for any correspondence received from members of the public.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:** None
6. **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:** None
7. **SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS:** NONE
8. **CONSULTEES:** None
9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None
10. **AUTHOR:** Robert Tranter, Temporary Monitoring Officer
11. **CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Tel:** 01633 644064

**E-mail:** roberttranter@monmouthshire.gov.uk

## **Our Customer Care Standards**

### **When you write to / Email us ...**

- We will reply to you within 5 working days, or acknowledge your letter / email within 5 working days and give a full reply within 15 working days.
- We will let you know if we need to take longer to give you a full reply.
- We will reply to you in English or Welsh according to your preference.
- We will use language that is clear and easy to understand.
- We will use large print size in your reply, and arrange for the use of Braille in a letter at your request.
- We will provide you with up to date information on our website.

### **When you 'phone us ...**

- We will answer at least 85 per cent of calls within six rings during normal office hours and provide a messaging service in and out of office hours.
- We will respond to all calls in a clear and polite manner, and give our name and service so that you know who you are talking to.
- We will normally greet you in English and Welsh, and arrange for someone to speak to you in Welsh if you prefer.
- We will put you in contact with someone who can help you if we cannot directly help you.
- If you have to leave a telephone message, the responsible person or someone on their behalf, will respond to you within 2 working days following receipt of your message.

### **When you visit a Council office ...**

- We will keep a pre-arranged appointment with you, but if a meeting has to be cancelled or postponed, we will let you know in advance, the reason why, and offer an alternative date and time.
- We will accept a meeting without an appointment at any of our One Stop shops.
- We will provide you with the information you need or put you in touch with someone who can help you with your enquiry.

- We will arrange in advance for someone to speak with you in Welsh if you prefer.
- We will treat you fairly whatever your age, disability, ethnic origin, nationality, gender, marital status, sexuality, culture or religion.
- We will be responsible for your safety while on our premises.

#### **When you complain to us ...**

- We will value your complaint as an opportunity for us to listen, learn from our mistakes and continuously try to improve our services.
- We will always try to resolve any mistakes or misunderstandings straight away.
- We will handle your complaint in line with the Council's "Whole Authority Customer Feedback policy", a copy of which is available at all County Council facilities and on our website.
- Wherever a customer is involved in an enquiry that spans the remit of more than one department, the departments should agree a point of contact and advise the customer who the officer is.
- We will deal with complaints about Social Services in line with the Social Services complaints procedure

#### **When we make home visits ...**

- We will always provide you with our Council proof of identification.
- We will behave in a polite and respectful manner.
- We will respect your home.



## REPORT

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Cabinet Report Schools ICT Outline Business Case</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> July 2015</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

### 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Council to agree the Outline Business Case and funding mechanisms for an investment in the upgrade and renewal of the ICT infrastructure in schools, enhancing the teaching and learning experience and bringing schools up to a common standard in line with WG and 21<sup>st</sup> century schools aspirations.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Council -

- a) Adopt Option 3 of the Outline Business Case for the provision of ICT in Schools and
- b) That Council agree to fund the proposed investment of £885,775 via:
- £50,000 of funding released through a reduction in the County Farms capital maintenance budget;
  - £80,000 of Authority funding being released from the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme, and specifically the Raglan primary school scheme;
  - A £250,000 contribution from the ICT Transformation reserve;
  - The remaining balance of £505,775 being funded through prudential borrowing and the ongoing revenue impact of £46,700 being incorporated into the MTFP.

### 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 On 15<sup>th</sup> July Cabinet agreed the Schools ICT Outline Business Case and recommended that Council agree the funding mechanisms outlined in 2.1 above and detailed in the Resource implications in section 5 below.
- 3.2 The Authority's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools programme sets out a vision for ICT where ICT 'contributes sustainable and meaningful change to teaching and learning in Monmouthshire schools that will prepare students for further education, training and to live and work in a digital world'.



- 3.3 In order to achieve this vision the Authority's schools need a sustainable, resilient and robust ICT platform that meets the needs of the 21st teaching and learning environment.
- 3.4 There needs to be a more coherent, structured and strategic approach to ICT provision in Monmouthshire schools. Schools in the primary sector particularly have spread in different directions in terms of kit, support, knowledge, aspiration, expertise and understanding.
- 3.5 There has been varying investment in ICT improvements in schools in recent years, with some schools using their delegated budgets to benefit from improved infrastructure, together with enhanced connectivity and peripherals. However, primary schools in particular are suffering from a lack of investment in ICT. This is impacting on how technology can be used to effectively delivery teaching and learning in schools, and ultimately on the level of digital expertise and knowledge when children move up into secondary education and careers.
- 3.6 An outline business case has been prepared that proposes a single model and specification for ICT provision that will enable a consistent and adequate standard of technology and support, with all the efficiencies that this brings.
- 3.7 The proposed investment looks to address the following issues currently being faced by schools:
  - (a) Migrating all schools up to the state of the art and secure SRS data centre in Blaenavon, such as to remove the reliance that schools have currently on their local server infrastructures. This removes the risk of data or information loss should schools servers fail, whilst offering a robust and resilient school ICT network. The SIMS system (School Information Management System), the curriculum network and the administrative network are currently located on ageing servers. Migration to newer and more powerful servers would significantly improve performance and accessibility.
  - (b) To put in place a baseline standard of connectivity for primary schools of 100MB, in line with WG aspirations. The level of connectivity in many schools does not adequately support the effective delivery of teaching and learning in the school environment. Whilst a handful of schools have 100 MB PSBA (Public Sector Broadband) lines, the majority of primary schools are still connected via 10 MB PSBA lines, with a small number receiving even poorer connectivity. Upgrading these to 100 MB PSBA lines would significantly improve speed and resilience of internet and network access to those schools.
  - (c) To provide a secure and consistent wireless infrastructure in each school. There is currently considerable variability in coverage of wireless connectivity in our schools and rolling out wireless infrastructure across schools to achieve optimum saturation throughout the school estate would give secure on-line access to more teachers

and children, more areas of the school and for a wider range of purposes.

- (d) To rollout SIMS in the classroom, together with associated training. Teachers are suffering from not having SIMS in the classroom. The aspiration is to have SIMS from anywhere via MCC security enabled equipment. It will improve efficiency and effectiveness tenfold and is an essential requirement in 21st century education.
  - (e) To undertake a baseline refresh of core ICT hardware in schools. ICT devices in schools are not standardised and are of variable age and quality. Some are so old that they cannot be supported and are a significant number of PC's which are running on the out-dated Windows XP operating system. The SRS are gathering an inventory of equipment across schools currently to determine the investment required to bring equipment up to date.
- 3.8 The single model and specification for ICT provision proposed will enable a consistent and adequate standard of technology and support, with all the efficiencies that this brings.
- 3.9 The investment proposed is predicated on all schools signing up to SLAs which would ensure that the SRS ICT support model is adequately funding such as to ensure the provision of the necessary high levels of support. A draft SLA, provided in appendix 2, has been revised and updated to ensure that performance standards are maintained, with appropriate escalation procedures to address any performance issues.
- 3.10 Implementation is proposed to be undertaken in two phases. The first phase, which upgrade the existing ICT infrastructure (Wi-Fi, networks, equipment, servers and internet connections) and ensures all schools have an equal baseline ICT provision would be completed in a 6-9 month period following agreement being secured from all schools and resources being put in place by the SRS. The second phase consists of the migration of schools up to the SRS in Blaenavon. It is anticipated that this second phase will be completed by late 2017.
- 3.11 The level of ICT connectivity in schools and the need to use ICT to raise standards in education has been raised in a number of the councils plans and strategies including the Improvement Plan, The CYP Chief Officer report, the iCounty strategy, the Authority's strategic risk register and it is also an integral part of the delivery of 21<sup>st</sup> century schools capital programme.

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

- 4.1 Primary schools currently have a disparate selection of equipment and connectivity and it's not possible to provide a common standard of service provision. This business case outlines proposed investment that would deliver a sustainable, resilient and robust ICT platform that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> teaching and learning environment.

- 4.2 The issues outlines in this report have been identified within the Improvement Plan and also highlighted at the Digital Programme Board who requested an Outline Business Case be developed showing the options and costs to remedy the situation.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 Total investment of £885,775 is being proposed to allow the upgrade and installation of infrastructure, equipment and connectivity in schools and at the SRS. A full breakdown of the one-off costs is provided in the Outline Business Case in appendix 1.

- 5.2 A range of potential funding options have been identified that includes:

- Prudentially borrow and to manage the resultant revenue budget impact as part of forward MTFP process. As an indication £900,000 borrowed over 15 years at 2.65% would cost the Authority £1.246million, or circa £83,000 per annum for 15 years.
- Review the capital programme to identify and displace other items and use the funding released. No general underspends were identified within the month 2 financial monitoring that would allow an easy choice. There were £217,000 worth of IT capital projects that slipped forward from 2014-15 for progress during 2015-16. There is limited spend evident on these projects yet, but all managers still support the benefit that incurring this spend as originally approved is anticipated to bring.

Highways Asset Management & Road	37,913
Land Charges - M3 System	13,500
Purchase of Sharepoint and Active Directory Licences	30,000
Upgrade to the Agresso system	23,788
Provision of online facilities Revenue's section	13,000
SWIFT Replacement System	35,000
Imp. Physical & Virtual Access-Museums Collections	28,365
Internet / Intranet Functionality	35,104
<b>Total</b>	<b>216,617</b>

- There were proposals to reduce the 2015-16 capital budgets in the following areas to afford the additional capital commitments identified when the budget was proposed to Members.

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

It is anticipated that the reduction in County Farm maintenance would be the easiest to accommodate now that 2015-16 schemes have started, but early indication is that this will be limited to **£50,000**, and this provides no contingency for any additional maintenance caused by inclement winter weather.

- Utilise underspends that result from the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools capital budget  
The 21c school project manager has identified a potential underspend of £150,000 in the Raglan element. It is understood CYP would like to utilize this resource to effect some classroom changes in the north of County to facilitate additional learning needs provision. Costs have been identified as being circa £70,000, which (subject to Welsh Government approving an alternate use for their element of the resourcing) may allow **£80,000** to be directed to IT refresh, especially as a vital cornerstone of 21c school provision would seem to be to have robust IT provision.
- Fund from existing earmarked reserves – notably IT reserve.. The uncommitted reserve is predicted to total £537,000 at the end of 2015-16. Officers have identified the following future aspects that may require funding through IT reserve,
  - Investment in implementation of systems replacements, whether through a collaborative solution or otherwise (e.g. Finance, Payroll/HR etc).
  - Investment in channel shift which would focus investment around CRM and the website etc.
  - Top up capital investment into the SRS – however the SRC account is there to accommodate this.

To date these aspects haven't been quantified or secured Member consideration. So it is proposed to utilize **£250,000** from this reserve, and for these subsequent aspects to be considered by members once costs and intentions are better understood.

- 5.3 These anticipated sources total £380,000 and would reduce net borrowing to £506,000. This will minimise the additional cost pressure on the medium term financial plan. Illustratively this equates to circa £46.7k per annum, to be afforded from within the future CYP budgets.
- 5.5 Schools would be required to sign up to the legal contract for the economic life of the equipment to ensure that income is secured to allow the SRS to provide the required level of ICT support services. Schools would also be required to fund their ongoing hardware replacement and refresh programmes and commit to providing the necessary training for teachers to ensure that the maximum benefit is derived from the investment in driving up standards in schools.

## 6. **CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet  
Corporate Management Team  
Senior Management Team  
Economy and Development Select Committee  
Children and Young People Select Committee  
School Head Teachers  
School governors

## 7. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

The Business case for ICT in education

8. **SUSTAINABILITY AND EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

9. **AUTHOR:** Sian Hayward – Digital and Technology Manager

10. **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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## The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: Sian Hayward Service area: Digital and Technology Date completed: 16/06/15		Please give a <b>brief description</b> of what you are aiming to do.  Make an investment in school ICT in order to bring it up to a suitable standard for delivery of 21 <sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning.	
Protected characteristic	Potential <b>Negative</b> impact Please give details	Potential <b>Neutral</b> impact Please give details	Potential <b>Positive</b> Impact Please give details
Age			This will benefit young people, particularly in primary education who will be able to learn digital skills in the classroom
Disability		No impact on protected characteristics	
Marriage + Civil Partnership		No impact on protected characteristics	
Pregnancy and maternity		No impact on protected characteristics	
Race		No impact on protected characteristics	
Religion or Belief		No impact on protected characteristics	
Sex (was Gender)		No impact on protected characteristics	
Sexual Orientation		No impact on protected characteristics	
Transgender		No impact on protected characteristics	
Welsh Language		No impact on protected characteristics	

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

**Signed Sian Hayward**  
**Dated 16/06/15**

**Designation Digital and Technology Manager**

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

<b>What are you impact assessing</b>	<b>Service area</b>
The setting up of a capital replacement fund	Digital and Technology
<b>Policy author / service lead</b>	<b>Name of assessor and date</b>
Sian Hayward	Sian Hayward

### 1. What are you proposing to do?

I'm proposing to make a one-off investment in schools ICT in order to bring all schools up to a common standard of ICT provision, enabling them to deliver 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning.



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	N	Race	N
Disability	N	Religion or Belief	N
Gender reassignment	N	Sex	N
Marriage or civil partnership	N	Sexual Orientation	N
Pregnancy and maternity	N	Welsh Language	<b>N</b>

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? e.g. Household survey data, Welsh Govt data, ONS data, MCC service user data, Staff personnel data etc...

The following evidence was collected –

Equipment audits, Schools broadband utilization stats, evidence collected from school based technicians on support and maintenance levels, Service delivery stats from the SRS, School head teacher consultations, school governor consultations

**Signed**.....Sian Hayward.....**Designation**...**Digital and Technology**  
**Manager**.....**Dated**.....

### The “Sustainability Challenge”

<b>Name of the Officer</b> completing “the Sustainability challenge” <b>Sian Hayward</b>		Please give a <b>brief description</b> of the <b>aims</b> proposed policy or service reconfiguration  Set up a capital replacement fund from the existing ICT reserve in order to replace essential infrastructure and network equipment	
<b>Name</b> of the Division or service area  Digital and Technology		<b>Date</b> “Challenge” form completed	
Aspect of sustainability affected	<b>Negative impact</b>  Please give details	Neutral impact  Please give details	<b>Positive Impact</b>  Please give details
<b>PEOPLE</b>		y	
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		y	
Improve housing quality and provision		y	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision		y	
Promote independence		y	
Encourage community participation/action and		y	

voluntary work			
Targets socially excluded			This should enable better communication with parents and schoolchildren via electronic comms.
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		y	
Improve access to education and training			This proposal will enable more effective and efficient delivery of teaching and learning.
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		y	
<b>PLANET</b>			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		y	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions		y	
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		y	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)		y	
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment		y	

<b>PROFIT</b>			
Protect local shops and services		y	
Link local production with local consumption			
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses			
Increase employment for local people			Enabling digital and coding skills for young people will increase their employment prospects. Digital and coding skills are in very short supply in the market, and addressing this problem will enhance the economy as well as career prospects.
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture		y	
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc.		y	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities		y	

What are the potential negative Impacts	Ideas as to how we can look to <b>MITIGATE</b> the <b>negative impacts</b>
---	--

	(include any reasonable adjustments)
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤
➤	➤

### The next steps

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

- 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:

**Signed Sian Hayward**

**Dated 16/06/2015**

## **Monmouthshire County Council**

### **Outline Business Case for an Investment in Schools ICT**

#### **1. The Vision for ICT and Digital in Schools**

Monmouthshire has launched the vision for ICT through the iCounty strategy which looks at how we can generate a healthy economy through ICT provision in businesses and the community.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century schools programme links into the iCounty strategy as we recognise that we can't ignore digital in education. We know that in order to prepare our young people for future careers they must be digitally skilled and enabled to find employment, particularly in the digital industries. This in turn will stimulate the local economy. There is a drive for a technology rich learning offer in Monmouthshire's Improvement Plan, and the CYP Chief Officer report explicitly mentions the need for SIMS in the classroom.

In order to achieve the vision we need a sustainable, resilient and robust ICT platform that meets the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> teaching and learning environment. Having a school without proper digital capacity would be like trying to teach using candles, slate and chalk.

##### **1.1. What is the problem facing us?**

There hasn't been a coherent, structured and strategic approach to ICT provision in Monmouthshire education. As a result, schools in the primary sector particularly have spread in 32 different directions in terms of kit, support, knowledge, aspiration, expertise and understanding. This makes it almost impossible for the SRS or external suppliers to operate efficient and effective support mechanisms and to ensure a common standard of ICT provision for all of our children to move up to secondary education.

A single model and specification for ICT provision will enable a consistent and adequate standard of technology and support, with all the efficiencies that this brings. More importantly it will mean that teachers won't need to worry about back-office wires and kit; they can instead spend their time and effort making sure that children aren't disadvantaged by a lack of ICT knowledge and can keep up to pace with technology rather than running to catch up.

The lack of a basic standard of ICT across schools has been highlighted in Monmouthshire risk register and is related to Estyns recommendations in relation to school standards.

Welsh Government aspire to us having 100MB broadband lines in all schools (many primary schools currently have less than 10MB) in order to cope with future ICT demands. We believe that all schools must have a standard level of connectivity to

meet the aspiration of WG, the Local Authority and schools as well as to future proof the demands for digital learning.

## **1.2. Where are we falling short of this standard?**

We are currently falling short of the basic ICT standard across primary education. There are several contributory factors to the decline in ICT capability and capacity in schools, including –

- A lack of strategic direction for ICT in education, with schools having disparate and uncoordinated approaches to ICT provision.
- A lack of clarity between the investment responsibilities of the Local Authority and schools delegated budgets.
- Budget squeezes leading schools to juggle their investment priorities within delegated budgets.

All of the above have resulted in the overall ICT provision and support at risk of failure with the following specific issues being experienced -

- Many schools have local servers, and there isn't sufficient resilience in place to ensure that if a server broke down they would have any form of ICT service at all. There is a distinct possibility for loss of data and information should the servers fail. Though information is manually backed up at school level it is a world away from the level of security operated by the SRS data centre.
- Many schools are not connected to corporate e-mail and the security that comes with it, so data can be compromised. Teachers don't have access to networked e-mail so are unable to communicate safely and effectively with their colleagues across Monmouthshire schools. Teachers are using personal email accounts to transfer school related data to one another.
- Broadband capacity is too small in many schools – It's like trying to get to Cardiff in the rush hour using a country lane because the motorway is closed.
- The internet connection isn't fast enough to support the number of people using it, so we will need to upgrade it further to make it future proof and fit for purpose.
- There are a vast variety of PC's, laptops and tablets being used in schools – some of which are nearing obsolescence. It's almost impossible to support this equipment, and a disproportionate amount of time is spent at schools bandaging up equipment instead of providing support to teaching in the classroom.
- There is inconsistent, inefficient and ineffective ICT support to schools. The SRS technician and support model is significantly under-funded, and without investment schools cannot be adequately supported in the classroom day-to-day. It's the same story at the engine room in the SRS which is also under-funded and under-resourced with insufficient technicians to provide adequate support.
- Teachers are suffering from not having SIMS in the classroom. The aspiration is to have SIMS from anywhere via MCC security enabled equipment. It will improve efficiency and effectiveness tenfold and is an essential requirement in 21<sup>st</sup> century education

## **2. What are the options available for us?**

### ***Option 1 - Do nothing***



We could keep things as they are, but schools, and notably primaries, will continue to fall further and further behind as they struggle to upgrade and support their ICT infrastructure and networks using their existing delegated budgets.

The variety of equipment and connectivity means that children are arriving in secondary education with different experiences of ICT, and not all are on a level playing field in terms of skills and abilities. The transition from primary to secondary education will remain problematic.

There will be a direct impact on the ability to raise standards of teaching and education without the associated ICT enablement. ICT is the 4<sup>th</sup> utility, and we wouldn't be expecting any variance in the electricity supply between schools, with some using candles to teach, so why would we allow it to happen for ICT?

The security and data risks would continue to be an issue with the potential for a loss of data and reputation as well as financial penalties.

Schools will incur costs (often as an emergency outlay) as their kit fails and needs replacing, and it will impact upon education standards as well as budgets. Schools will be unable to take advantage of economies of scale for procurement, and they may have to pay a premium to have equipment replaced at short notice.

*Funding implications* – This option will require schools to find both capital and revenue funding to increase their level of ICT provision at individual schools and support and maintain it in the future. Some schools have already upgraded their provision and have equipment refresh programmes in place, setting aside funds from delegated budgets to do so. Other schools don't have the same arrangements and there will be a need for them to fund the on-off capital investment else they will be at risk of losing their ICT connections and data. No one-off central capital funding from the Local Authority is available under option 1.

### ***Option 2 – Fully outsource schools ICT provision***

This option would require schools to enter into individual or collective procurement exercise to externalise ICT provision. A full specification would be required to ensure that all requirements are covered for infrastructure, functionality and security. It is likely that a full tender exercise would be needed to meet procurement requirements.

This option would provide all the benefits within a tender specification, which as a minimum must include –

- A reliable baseline 21<sup>st</sup> C ICT infrastructure and connectivity to facilitate more effective and efficient use of ICT in teaching and learning allowing teachers to concentrate on their jobs and have peace of mind about the ICT that runs in the background
- Technician support in the classroom.
- Baseline of hardware and software provision within all schools which supports digital development within the educational settings
- Risk mitigation around IT security, downtime and speed
- Access to SIMS in the classroom for teachers
- Staff training

This option would not provide the following –

- Access to the curriculum and admin (including MCC intranet) to support the daily management of schools from the same laptop without having to switch to another network.
- Access to a secure networked MCC e-mail accounts
- Locally based technician support
- The costs of server and network replacements
- The costs of OVS licences
- Contract performance monitoring from within central education
- The same level of data security and resilience as per the SRS option
- PSBA line installation and rental

Outsourced schools would still require some services from the SRS e.g. internet line, internet security and networks. This will incur an additional charge to the external contractor fees.

*Funding implications* – This option will require a specification and tender exercise to be undertaken and is likely to be costly even with a successful competitive tender exercise. Further expenditure will still be required for server replacement at individual schools and services from the SRS such as internet provision and security.

The ongoing revenue costs of externalised service provision will vary from school to school depending upon the specification of service required. Indicative costs for outsourcing based on the 5 schools who currently operate under this arrangement are an average of £6,050 per school, however in practice the costs vary wildly between the schools depending on their existing contractual arrangements with suppliers. In addition to the contract costs, schools will have to fund their own server capital replacement programme, OVS licences and PSBA line rentals.

The full costs of an externalised service would need to be sourced from individual school delegated budgets.

### ***Option 3 – One-off capital investment and migration to the SRS.***

Monmouthshire recognises that the current state of play with ICT is not enhancing the learning and teaching environment. Our children are reaching secondary education with different experiences of ICT within their primary school. The digital board has recognised that bringing all schools into the non-profit making SRS would enable the current infrastructure to be upgraded and with comprehensive support.

This option will have some compelling benefits, bringing a consistent standard level of ICT provision along with some central funding to bring the infrastructure up to a base line standard. Monmouthshire recognises that investment will be necessary to bring schools up to a standard level of infrastructure and connectivity and is prepared to pay for this initial investment centrally, with schools paying an annual SLA in order to bolster the technician support and licencing/line rentals.

This option would provide the following –

- A reliable baseline 21<sup>st</sup> C ICT infrastructure and connectivity to facilitate more effective and efficient use of ICT in teaching and learning allowing teachers to

concentrate on their jobs and have peace of mind about the ICT that runs in the background

- The ability for ICT technicians to concentrate on providing support to teachers and classrooms rather than on repairing failing kit
- A baseline of hardware and software provision within all schools which supports digital development within the educational settings
- Risk mitigation around IT security, downtime and speed
- Access to SIMS in the classroom for teachers
- Access to a secure networked e-mail accounts
- Provide staff with necessary training around ICT
- Access to the curriculum and admin (including MCC intranet) to support the daily management of schools from the same laptop without having to switch to another network.
- Capacity and reliability will enable the introduction of new technologies and initiatives to enhance teaching and learning.

Taking this option will bring benefits in two phases as follows-

**Phase 1** - A one-off capital investment to upgrade the existing ICT infrastructure (Wi-Fi, networks, equipment, servers and internet connections) and ensure all schools have an equal baseline ICT provision.

This will give each school –

- A 100mb connection in the primary sector and 1GB for secondary schools. For non-technical people this is a 'dual carriageway' connection which will be big enough to cope with any level of demand for the foreseeable future.
- Internet Connectivity – to be monitored and upgraded as required
- A one-off upgrade & refresh programme to ensure a consistent standard across schools, following an equipment audit.
- A standard quality for network access, systems and equipment
- A standardised approach to the delivery platforms for both education and management of the pupils and of the school estates.
- System to enable secure and robust access by tablet and mobile devices to education systems ICT Strategy development across schools

**Phase 2** – Migration of schools up to the SRS in Blaenavon

All schools will be migrated up to the SRS data centre. This will mean schools will be connected to, hosted and supported by the SRS data centre, increasing resilience and data security.

Resource Implications –

This option requires a one-off capital investment of £890,000 to bring existing equipment and infrastructure up to a common standard. Monmouthshire's Digital Programme Board has recognised the need for an investment in schools ICT in order to enable 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning to link in with the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools building programme. The Board has recommended that central capital

funding be applied for from reserves or through borrowing to meet this cost. We need to be clear that no matter where individual schools are on their ICT journey, or how creative they have been with their delegated budgets, the aspired baseline is for every school. Digital enablement applies across all schools and the current discrepancies in provision cannot be allowed to continue. The one-off funding will therefore be applied only if all schools sign up to a SLA providing for ongoing ICT support and maintenance with the SRS, ensuring that standards are maintained. The table below shows the detail of the investment required for one-off funding.

<b>One –off capital investment costs for Option 3</b>	
<b>Item</b>	<b>Cost</b>
VRF	£6,000
Router	£36,000
Cabling	£1,550
Wireless AP's (including installation)	£60,875
Estimated cost of in-stock wireless AP following check	(£41,700)
Wireless AP installation	£8,750
Network Cabinet	£16,500
PSBA Upgrade – Installation one-off fee	£160,890
PSBA excess installation charge*	£100,000
PC/Laptop Refresh/Upgrade	£143,700
PC/Laptop Allowance (up to £5k)	£55,810
Deployment Server	£22,400
Airwatch	£15,000
Implementation technicians (2 year)	£300,000
<b>Total estimated cost of one off investment</b>	<b>£885,775</b>

\*Excess charges may apply for PSBA installation costs where the premises are more than a standard distance from the exchange. An initial estimate based on previous installations is in the region of £100k.

### **Capital funding for the one-off costs**

Cabinet approval will be required for funding through the following funding options-

<b>Funding Option</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Review the capital programme to identify	Will require a review of capital programme and

and displace other items and use the funding released	the re-prioritisation of available capital.
Utilise underspends from 21 <sup>st</sup> century schools capital budget	Identified underspends have been allocated to King Henry School and would need to be re-prioritised for use by the ICT project.
Fund from existing reserves – IT reserve/Priority investment reserve	The available reserves are insufficient to cover the full investment requirement. Utilisation of these reserves will bring the accompanying risk of the inability to manage essential ICT infrastructure and project investments overall for MCC in the future
Prudentially borrow and manage revenue budget impact as part of forward MTFP process	Will necessitate the borrowing and repayment of the investment from revenue budgets, with an estimated annual repayment of £50k. Revenue funding of this will need to be managed through the MTFP process

### **Ongoing Funding of SRS Support and Maintenance via a Comprehensive SLA**

This option requires an upgrade to the level of resource and service provided under the SLA agreement. There is absolutely no point in upgrading the infrastructure if there are insufficient technicians in the engine room and in the classroom to provide support. Schools will be required to pay into an SLA each year to secure and retain sufficient investment into the SRS to recruit the right levels of support, experience and expertise to meet the specific requirements of the schools through the SLA.

The new SLA under option 3 will have more in it, including items previously paid for by the school –

- OVS licences (providing the full Microsoft Office suite, antivirus and email services)
- A centrally hosted and managed service where the school won't have to worry about failing servers
- A full backup and security service and remote access to school based systems
- Increased technician support in the classroom which can be enhanced by using the cluster model of service delivery if required.

A robust SLA agreement has been written which will ensure the delivery of quality support and service, with clear performance standards.

The table below shows indicative all-inclusive annual costs for schools. These costs below will need some fine tuning as we are waiting for some external costs to be confirmed (e.g. PSBA)

Category	Current Technician SLA	Current Hosting SLA	Proposed Totally Inclusive (Technician SLA	Difference (includes OVS and PSBA line rental)
Group 1 Primary	£2,400	£1,000	£5,200	£1,800
Group 2 Primary	£4,950	£2,500	£10,050	£2,600
Group 3 Primary	£7,000	£3,500	£14,000	£3,500
Secondary	£32,000	N/A	£53,750	£21,750
Special School	Group 3			
Pupil Referral Unit	Group 1			

For simplicity and fairness the SLA will be split into 3 simple charges for a Small (Band 1), Medium (Band 2), or Large (Band 3) school. This banding mechanism will even out the varying costs of e.g. PSBA line rental and ensure a simple and easy charge mechanism across bandings.

*\*\*\*N.B. Schools will need to develop their own internal equipment refresh strategy as this isn't covered in the SLA. The SRS will provide support to build the strategy, but equipment purchases must be managed within existing budgets\*\*\**

### **3. How would we monitor performance within the SLA under option 3?**

**3.1.** It is essential that arrangements are made for a consistent qualitative level of response and support via a SLA. In order to achieve this the SRS will agree an SLA with schools and ensure that -

- SLA performance is regularly reviewed
- There are appropriate resources, skills and expertise within the SRS to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> Century ICT enriched teaching and learning environment
- The SLA has clear, formalised annual costs
- There is appropriate scope for recourse to address lack of performance or delivery
- There is a continual refresh and renewal programme for back office equipment

**3.2.** Strategic monitoring will be undertaken through the following routes -

- The SRS will hold regular reviews with schools, and will clearly outline an escalation process in order to monitor performance.
- The Local Authority will have a role in monitoring overall performance, from within the Central Education service
- Through the SRS/MCC account management function at local authority level.
- Schools themselves will need to monitor the performance against the core SLA

The SRS is committed to this service provision, and the SLA will outline the performance standards they need to adhere to. It is difficult for the SRS to work with the current mix of connectivity and dying kit in schools. The new arrangements with secure, robust, infrastructure will enable them to provide a

more effective service as they won't be fire-fighting with infrastructure that fails suddenly or can't cope with the demand.

Schools may require additional functionality over and above that provided through the SLA, and an additional charge will need to be made for this.

#### **4. Option Appraisal**

The pros and cons of the three options have been listed below. Based on this information the recommended option to deliver the outcomes of an enhanced 21<sup>st</sup> century ICT provision is option 3. This is also the option preferred by ICT Programme Board, CYP DMT and CYP/Economic Development Select committees.

##### **Option 1 –**

###### *Pros*

No requirement for up-front investment from the local authority

###### *Cons*

Schools will be unable to bring their technology provision up to the level required to enable 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning, disadvantaging children and leaving them unprepared for secondary education.

Schools will be unable to provide the necessary investment to procure ICT services and will fail to provide an ICT infrastructure and network.

Loss of data which could effectively close the operation of the school.

##### **Option 2 –**

###### *Pros*

Schools have absolute control over costs and quality according to their own specification

Schools could undertake a joint procurement exercise to lever in economies of scale for a fully externalised contract.

###### *Cons*

Requirement to undertake a comprehensive tender process, and manage the contract at school level

High cost in comparison with SRS as a 'not for profit' organisation

No provision for overall connectivity across schools on a common platform with MCC admin accounts

Risk of loss of data and security of local school based servers

Will require a contribution to the SRS for the provision of the internet line and security in addition to the external contract fees

### **Option 3 –**

#### *Pros*

Complete data security

Completely managed, fully comprehensive and all-inclusive service

Compatibility across all communications networks

Provision of full support and maintenance for ICT in 21<sup>st</sup> century schools

Implementation of a robust ICT infrastructure across the schools estate

#### *Cons*

High initial capital investment required

Based on the above information and support from

### **5. Project risks**

There are associated risks with implementing a project of this size, and the following outline risks will need to be mitigated should the project go ahead.

- Insufficient project and programme management resource and skills within MCC and the SRS to drive the project through to completion
- Inability to recruit sufficient and skilled technicians to implement the project and maintain it going forward into the SLA
- That schools fail to sign up to the SLA giving insufficient revenue streams to the SRS
- That funding cannot be secured for the one off capital investment

### **6. The Outline Plan for implementing option 3**

#### **Tasks**

#### **Target Completion Dates**

#### **Building the foundations –**

Finalising the SLA	04/06/15
Outline Business case for the investment	05/06/15
Costs, SLA, Draft OBC to schools	12/06/15
Pre-decision scrutiny	23/06/15
Gaining formal collective approval from schools	24/07/15
Gaining cabinet approval from MCC	15/07/15
Establish the project Board / User & Comms	30/09/15

#### **Implementing phase 1 -**

Equipment Refresh	30/03/16
PSBA order/install	30/03/16
Prioritisation list	17/07/15



Recruitment of technicians	18/09/15
Airwatch install	30/03/16
Wi-Fi refresh	30/03/16
Folder install	30/09/15
SIMS in the classroom (training)	30/03/16
SIMS in the classroom rollout	30/03/15
OVS Licences	31/12/15
Charging regimes start	01/04/16

**Implementing phase 2 -**

Internet upgrade	
Migration phased rollout start	30/09/15
Migration phased rollout complete	30/09/17

Outline Business Case author – Sian Hayward digital and Technology Manager

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Appendix 1 - Service Level Agreement



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>SOLAR FARM BUSINESS CASE REPORT</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Full Council</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>30<sup>th</sup> JULY 2015</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

1.1 To secure financial approval for the construction of an Authority owned solar farm at Oak Grove Farm, Crick.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 To construct a 5MW solar farm at Oak Grove Farm, on the basis of the information outlined in the Business Plan.

2.2 That the project cost is funded by prudential borrowing and added to the Authority's capital programme, and revenue budgets are created for the operating and maintenance costs.

2.3 To authorise an initial payment of £350,000 to commence work on the electricity grid connection as soon as possible, thereby confirming completion timescales allowing preferential FIT rates to be secured.

### 3. KEY ISSUES:

#### **Why develop a solar farm?**

- 3.1 The Council needs to identify new revenue funding streams that do not impact on front line service provision, but do maximise the value of the Council's land holdings. As part of the budget setting process an income target of £175,575 was allocated to renewable technologies. The Estates team has now installed PV systems on roofs where it is financially prudent to do so. This amounts to a total of 21 retrofit schemes and 5 new build schemes, generating 381,135 kWh in 2014/15, with a further 61,951 kWh from the new build schemes. Gross income and savings from the 21 installations was £101,992 in 2014/15 (£78,714 income, £23,278 savings) with a further £13,735 (£10,257 income and £3,478 savings) from new build schemes.
- 3.2 In order to meet the income, other renewable schemes were explored which has resulted in the identification of the solar farm proposal. The proposal is to site the solar farm on 25 acres of a Council owned agricultural holding and the tenant of the holding has been involved in the discussions from the start of the process. The technology proposed is a tried and tested and once the solar farm is up and running the FIT income stream is guaranteed.
- 3.3 The 5MWp solar farm proposed is projected to generate 4,990 MWh of electricity p.a. This is the equivalent of providing electricity for approximately 4,000 homes and saves 2,395 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions every year. It is also more than 4 times the capacity of all renewable energy technologies installed by the Authority to date.

#### **Risks**

#### 3.4 Income Streams

Renewable energy installations accredited with the UK Government Feed In Tariff (FIT) scheme receive quarterly a FIT payment for all electricity generated and an export payment for the electricity exported into the grid network. Once accredited, the FIT rate and a standard export rate are guaranteed for a 20-year-period, increasing annually with RPI. It is also possible to negotiate a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) directly with energy suppliers for a higher export rate, although negotiations cannot begin until grid connection works are commenced.

The solar farm could be pre-accredited with the FIT scheme 6 months before completion following planning approval and commencement of the grid connection process, thereby securing FIT rates at that time and protecting the project from potential reductions in FIT rates for new projects. Existing FIT rates are fixed to the end of September 2015 and rates for October to December 2015 will be published at the end of July 2015. Although the business case has been based on existing FIT rates, sensitivity analysis has been conducted on potential reductions in rates to confirm the viability of the scheme under those scenarios, as illustrated below:

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>FIT</b>	<b>RPI</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Average Net Income p.a.</b>	<b>20-Year Net Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Yield</b>	<b>Simple Net Return p.a.</b>
Existing FIT rates to end September 2015	4.44	2.88	4.85	£117,692	£2,353,834	52.0%	2.6%
3.5% FIT reduction	4.28	2.88	4.85	£108,217	£2,164,349	47.8%	2.4%
7% FIT reduction	4.13	2.88	4.85	£98,743	£1,974,863	43.6%	2.2%
14% FIT reduction	3.82	2.88	4.85	£79,795	£1,595,893	35.2%	1.8%
28% FIT reduction	3.20	2.88	4.85	£41,898	£837,951	18.5%	0.9%

### 3.5 Operating Costs

Operating and maintenance costs, including the replacement of inverters, have been included in the business case based on the feasibility study undertaken by experts and analysis of historic project costs. However, updated expert advice cited examples of operating and maintenance contracts at £15,000 p.a. less than original estimates and extended inverter warranties available to reduce the cost of replacement by £215,000 (these reductions have not been factored into the conservative case).

### 3.6 Expert Advice

Independent experts have to date produced reports to confirm the planning, technical and financial feasibility of the project, and to secure a confirmed grid connection quotation and submit a planning application. This advice has been regularly updated to ensure the assumptions made in the business case reflect latest market information. The business case includes further costs for procuring a project management service with a proven track record in successfully delivering solar farm projects to manage the procurement, construction and accreditation of the solar farm, and to monitor and evaluate operation in the first year.

### 3.7 Other Authorities

Wrexham are the first LA in Wales to own and operate a solar farm on council-owned land, a 2.64MWp installation completed in May 2015 and accredited with the FIT scheme. It appears that the business case made by Wrexham was less conservative than the Oak Grove Farm proposal, if we applied comparable assumptions we would add a further £1,000,000 to the 'conservative' scenario used for the business case.

Telford & Wrekin completed a 4MWp solar farm towards the end of 2014 funded by PWLB borrowing. To date, it has generated 2.94 GWh of electricity, equivalent to £273,126 income based on current FIT and standard export rates. Although FIT rates and construction costs have reduced considerably since, the general assumptions made in the Telford business case were far less conservative than the Oak Grove Farm business case and more in line with the 'realistic' scenario quoted. As a comparison our conservative estimate for a 5MWp installation over 6 months has estimated £225,000 gross income. Their 4MWp installation has generated £273,000 over the same period.

At the end of March 2015, there were 97 FIT accredited stand-alone systems of 1MW or larger installed throughout the UK. 28 of these are 4-5MW sites, similar in size to the solar farm proposed, with the majority of these having negotiated PPA for the electricity exported.

To the end of March 2015, MCC has installed 21 solar PV systems funded by prudential borrowing and approved using a similar finance model as that used to produce the solar farm business case. The total FIT income and energy savings achieved across all these installations has exceeded that predicted.

At a recent CLAW meeting, it was reported that 8 other LAs in Wales are at various stages of potential solar farm projects. 86

### 3.8 WPD Connections

A confirmed grid connection timescale cannot be obtained from the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) until the next payment of £350,000 is made to pre-order switchgear. Expert advice based on projects undertaken by others, however, indicates the works could potentially be undertaken within 7-8 months, allowing pre-accreditation within the published FIT tariff period. Although it is not possible to confirm the exact amount, it is likely that much of this could be recoverable if the Authority did not proceed with the project through refund of the remaining £150,000 and resale of the switchgear. Alternatively, all costs to date and a rental income for 20 years could potentially be recovered by selling the rights to the scheme to a private developer if the Authority deems any risk too high to fund the project itself...

#### **Oak Grove Farm**

3.9 The Estates team worked with a planning expert to determine the potential for solar development at a number of sites. From the sites investigated during the pre-feasibility stage Oak Grove Farm was considered the most suitable site based on the various planning considerations. The site is not within a protected landscape and lies outside of the nearest designation being the Historic Landscape Area 1.4km to the east. There are no ecological designations that would preclude development and the soil quality is not considered to be of best and most versatile land. Further work has been undertaken by a PV specialist that confirmed the viability of the site.

### 3.10 Landscape

This site was chosen as the fields were determined to be reasonably well hidden in respect of the vistas/visual impacts from neighbouring land, other property and the highway. While the landscape character of the site itself will change significantly, it is considered that the overall effect on the surrounding landscape will not be significant. The arrays will be effectively temporary structures; the site could revert to its original landscape state at the end of the operational life of the development. In order to reduce visibility further the existing boundary and internal hedgerows are all to be retained and promoted where necessary, and supplementary hedgerow planting will take place on the eastern boundary of the development site.

### 3.11 Ecology

An extensive phase 1 habitat survey has been undertaken which concluded that the site was suitable for development in the manner proposed and would be unlikely to entail any significant loss of wildlife features, or adverse impacts to habitats or species of

ecological value in the vicinity. Habitats within the site boundary, although subject to high levels of disturbance during construction, are assessed as being of no greater than high local value to wildlife and any adverse impacts therefore of relatively minor significance. It is considered the proposed development of this site is not unacceptably constrained by biodiversity issues. Hedgerows will not be damaged throughout the construction and a new hedgerow will be planted to maintain and enhance the value of existing and newly created habitats within the site. A 5m buffer between the panels and the hedgerows has been incorporated into the design as a precautionary approach to ensure habitats are protected throughout construction and operation of the development.

### 3.12 Agricultural Grade

An agricultural land classification report was produced to determine the grade of the land at Oak Grove Farm. The majority of the site has been graded as Subgrade 3a (94.7%) with the remainder of the site graded as Subgrade 3b (5.3%). It was the opinion of the agricultural expert that the development of a solar farm does not involve irreversible loss of that land to agriculture and therefore there is no need for significant weight to be afforded to agricultural land quality. This conclusion was also reached by an Inspector considering an appeal regarding installation of a solar farm on agricultural land in Monmouthshire where the inspector concluded that “the development (23.5ha of Grade 2 agricultural land) would temporarily change the use of the land rather than its quality and would not affect its long-term potential for resumed agricultural use” (Ref: APP/E6840/A/14/2212987).

### 3.13 The tenant

While the existing tenant will retain limited use of the grazing land within the curtilage of the solar farm, an amended tenancy agreement will provide him with an increased holding size to compensate for the effective loss of land. The new farm business tenancy (149 acres) will come into effect should planning consent be granted. The new tenancy will be a fixed term 16 year farm business tenancy which will replace the tenants existing lifetime tenancy. The Estates team have liaised with the tenant throughout the design process to determine how best to maintain the farm’s current level of productivity alongside the solar farm.

### 3.14 Power Connection

A crucial consideration is the ability to access a grid connection. The site was confirmed as a viable option by Utility Management & Energy Consultants (UPL) following the undertaking of an electricity connection study. UPL determined that the site was within 160m of the required three-phase 33kV overhead line and was therefore an appropriate site for connection, subject to grid connection works. UPL were able to determine that the site was feasible and, following this feedback, the Estates team submitted a request to make a new electricity connection. The local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) have provided a formal offer to carry out the connection works and will commence work on the electricity grid connection following payment of the initial instalment of non-contestable works.

## **COSTINGS**



### 3.15 Evidence

The 'Conservative' Business Case Assumptions as outlined in the Business Case have been built up as follows:

- The construction, operation, and maintenance costs and generation of the solar farm have been based on the feasibility study undertaken by independent experts, figures having been confirmed and updated regularly.
- The FIT rate of 4.44 p/kWh and export rate of 4.85 p/kwh is based on rates published to the end of September 2015.
- Interest rates and annuity loan repayments are based on PWLB rates current at the time of writing the business case in July 2015.
- An average RPI figure over 20 years of 1.40% has been applied. 1.6% RPI was applied to FIT and standard export rates in April 2015. (Although we are currently in a state of deflation, it is unlikely RPI will remain at or below 0% for 20 years and so the average RPI applied has been based conservatively at 50% of the average RPI over the last 20 years.)

Telford & Wrekin submitted a cabinet report for their now completed solar farm project in September 2014. The business case was based on PWLB rates at the time, an assumed 2.5% RPI, a contingency of 5% of income, a FIT rate of 6.38 p/kWh, and a negotiated PPA higher than the standard export rate. Although FIT rates and construction costs have reduced considerably since then, the other assumptions made are less conservative than the Oak Grove Farm business case and more in line with the 'realistic' scenario quoted.

### 3.17 Sensitivity Analysis

A sensitivity analysis has been conducted to demonstrate the effect of realistic variations to RPI, operation and maintenance costs, PPA export rates and FIT reductions. PPA export rates have been based on initial discussions with energy suppliers and expert advice on rates achieved by others. Reductions in FIT rates have been based on the potential reductions allowable under current OFGEM guidance.

Results of a range of scenarios are included in item 6.4 of the exempt report and Appendix B. An additional analysis on the effect of reductions in the FIT on a scenario using an average RPI of 2.88% and standard export rate of 4.85 p/kWh demonstrate that the project could still remain viable despite delays, for example, in completing planning or grid connection.

Scenario	FIT	RPI	Export	Average Net Income p.a.	20-Year Net Income Total
Existing FIT rates to end September 2015	4.44	2.88	4.85	£117,692	£2,353,834
3.5% FIT reduction	4.28	2.88	4.85	£108,217	£2,164,349
7% FIT reduction	4.13	2.88	4.85	£98,743	£1,974,863
14% FIT reduction	3.82	2.88	4.85	£79,795	£1,595,893
28% FIT reduction	3.20	2.88	4.85	£41,898	£837,951

### 3.18 Income Range & Commentary

The business case presented has been based on conservative assumptions. However, comparison with similar projects quoted and the result of the sensitivity analysis would indicate that the returns are likely to be much greater. A brief summary of the range of potential net income achievable as indicated in the report is as follows:

Scenario	RPI	Export	Average Net Income p.a	20-Year Net Income Total	20-Year Gross Income Total	20-Year Yield	Simple Net Return p.a.
<b>Low (as per business case):</b> - Half average RPI over last 20 years  - Original operation & maintenance cost estimate  - Standard export rate	1.40	4.85	£59,531	£1,190,610	£9,808,815	26.3%	1.3%

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>RPI</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Average Net Income p.a</b>	<b>20-Year Net Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Gross Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Yield</b>	<b>Simple Net Return p.a.</b>
<b>Medium:</b> - As Low scenario, but with average RPI over last 20 years	2.88	4.85	£117,692	£2,353,834	£11,327,663	52.0%	2.6%
<b>High:</b> - Average RPI over last 20 years - Operating and maintenance costs reduced according to updated expert advice - PPA export rate based on recent supplier and expert advice	2.88	5.50	£177,229	£3,544,576	£12,120,233	78.2%	3.9%

### 3.19 Community Fund

An expenditure of £5,000 p.a. has been built into the business case to establish a fund for local community projects, totalling £100,000 over the 20-year project. The fund will be available 6 months from completion of the solar farm, once the system is generating and the first generation payments have been received.

The Department for Energy and Climate Change support the provision of community benefits to communities hosting renewable energy developments, and the figure of £1,000 per MWp per annum is consistent with industry good practice. Both Cornwall and Wrexham are examples of authorities who have offered such funds to local community councils. However, the amount proposed by MCC is considerably larger than that contributed by other authorities and will be made available for wider ranging projects.

## **INCOME OPTIONS**

- 3.20 Self-ownership and management of the solar farm will generate an estimated gross income of between £9.8M and £12.1M over 20 years. Subtracting loan repayments and all operating costs, the projected net income is between £1.2M and £3.5M over 20 years, equivalent to an average net income of between £60,000 and £177,000 p.a. The main risk to the actual income achievable relates to initial delays to completion.
- 3.21 The Council could lease the land with the benefit of a planning consent (if achieved) to a private developer who could then build out the scheme. This is likely to achieve a total rental income of between £500,000 and £750,000 over 20 years, equivalent to between £25,000 to £37,500 p.a. There would also be a small capital income to at least cover all costs incurred to date. Although the potential income is greatly reduced, the risk to the Authority and further commitment of resources is minimal and the option does provide a fall-back position if self-ownership and management becomes unviable.
- 3.22 The other alternative would be for the Council to construct the solar farm and then sell the completed development as an investment opportunity. This would yield a capital receipt as opposed to a revenue stream and the value achieved would be dependent on the FIT and export rates.

## **4. REASONS:**

- 4.1 The Councils adopted Asset Management Plan highlights the need to maximise both the revenue and capital income streams of its property portfolio. The ability to generate revenue through renewable technology is a key consideration when reviewing options. The proposal involves the temporary (20 years) re-allocation of the land from agricultural purposes, albeit that sheep will still graze underneath the panels. The average County Farms rental charge per acre is £62 per annum. The prudent proposal yields a net annual income of £59,531 providing an annual uplift of £57,981. Best case scenario would result in an annual uplift of £175,679.
- 4.2 Oak Grove Farm was selected on the basis that it has a limited impact on the landscape, thereby mitigating the impact of the proposal on other competing priorities particularly around the promotion of tourism.

4.3 The site forms part of the proposed Mount Ballan settlement that was submitted as a candidate site to the recent Local Development Plan (LDP) call for sites process. The site was not allocated in the current LDP and given the temporary use of a solar farm we do not consider that it will impact on any future development opportunities.

4.4 As with all technologies it is acknowledged that over the 20 year period the productivity of the panels will diminish and this has been factored into the business plan. We will also have regard to the changes in the market, particularly technologies and will review their potential for any future opportunities.

**6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 The proposal involves the prudential borrowing of capital to fund the construction costs of the solar farm as detailed in the Business Plan. Revenue income will be dependent on the FIT and export rates, RPI as well operating and maintenance costs. The rate of return based on the initial capital value ranges for 1.3% per annum to 3.9% dependent on the above variables. The cost of borrowing and all revenue expenditure will be funded from the gross income generated by the solar farm.

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>RPI</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Average Net Income p.a</b>	<b>20-Year Net Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Gross Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Yield</b>	<b>Simple Net Return p.a.</b>
<b>Low (as per business case):</b> - Half average RPI over last 20 years - Original operation & maintenance cost estimate - Standard export rate	1.40	4.85	£59,531	£1,190,610	£9,808,815	26.3%	1.3%

<b>Scenario</b>	<b>RPI</b>	<b>Export</b>	<b>Average Net Income p.a</b>	<b>20-Year Net Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Gross Income Total</b>	<b>20-Year Yield</b>	<b>Simple Net Return p.a.</b>
<b>Medium:</b> - As Low scenario, but with average RPI over last 20 years	2.88	4.85	£117,692	£2,353,834	£11,327,663	52.0%	2.6%
<b>High:</b> - Average RPI over last 20 years - Operating and maintenance costs reduced according to updated expert advice - PPA export rate based on recent supplier and expert advice	2.88	5.50	£177,229	£3,544,576	£12,120,233	78.2%	3.9%

## 8. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The significant equality and sustainable development impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix D) are summarised below for members' consideration:

8.1.1 There are no equality impacts.

8.1.2 UK Carbon dioxide emissions will be reduced by approximately 2,395 tonnes p.a. or 47,900 tonnes over 20 years by the generation of electricity from a renewable source.

8.1.3 Community participation/action and voluntary work will be encouraged by the creation of a £5,000 p.a. community fund, totalling £100,000 over 20 years, and a community lead group to identify projects to be funded locally.

8.2 Project plans and feedback to the appropriate select committee for monitoring will be arranged.

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

There are no Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting implications

## **10. CONSULTEES:**

Estates

Finance

Procurement

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Exempt Business Case – Solar Farm at Oak Grove, Crick

## **12. AUTHOR:**

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**SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972  
EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS**

**Meeting and Date of Meeting: Full Council, 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015**  
**Report: Solar Farm Business Case**  
**Author: Ben Winstanley, Ian Hoccom**

I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the background paper for the report referred to above and make the following recommendation to the Proper Officer:-

**Exemptions applying to the report:**

Information relating to a particular individual as described in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**Factors in favour of disclosure:**

Openness & transparency in matters concerned with the public

**Prejudice which would result if the information were disclosed:**

Future commercial negotiations.

**My view on the public interest test is as follows:**

Factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by those against.

**Recommended decision on exemption from disclosure:**

Maintain exemption from publication in relation to report

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015

Signed:

Post: Energy Manager

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I accept/I do not accept the recommendation made above

Signed: 22/7/2015

Date: