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NP15 1GA

County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 9 December 2015

## Notice of meeting / Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:

### County Council

Thursday, 17th December, 2015 at 2.00 pm,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

### AGENDA

*Prayers will be said prior to the Council meeting at 1.55pm. All members are welcome to join the Chairman for prayers should they wish to do.*

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	<b>Apologies for absence</b>	
2.	<b>Public Open Forum</b>	
3.	<b>Chairman's report and receipt of petitions</b>	1 - 2
4.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
5.	<b>To confirm and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19th November 2015</b>	3 - 14
6.	<b>Notices of Motions:</b>	
6.1.	<b>Submitted by County Councillor S. Jones:</b>  This council supports the GOYA Cooperative in its application for support from Disability Wales and the Wales Cooperative Centre to establish a Citizen-led Direct Payments Cooperative based in Monmouthshire.	
6.2.	<b>Submitted by County Councillor D. Blakebrough:</b>  This Council recognises the importance of preserving Welsh culture, traditions and the language. However, at a time when Monmouthshire County Council, in common with other local authorities across Wales, is faced with having to cut spending on important services, the Council believes that adherence to the Compliance Notice issued by the Welsh Language Commissioner is ill-timed and not a priority of the overwhelming majority of residents of the County. The Council therefore calls upon the Commissioner to withdraw the dates for	

compliance shown in the Compliance Notice, and to accept that the requirements of the Notice should be treated as aspirations to be fulfilled only as and when funding permits.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Referrals from Cabinet (October 2015):</b>	
<b>7.1.</b>	<b>Caerwent Section 106 Funding</b>	15 - 26
<b>7.2.</b>	<b>Abergavenny Town Team</b>	27 - 30
<b>8.</b>	<b>Report of the Head of Finance/S151:</b>	
<b>8.1.</b>	<b>Proposal to revise the Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for 2016/17</b>	31 - 52
<b>9.</b>	<b>Report of the Head of Operations:</b>	
<b>10.1.</b>	<b>Adjustments to the Capital budget during 2015/16</b>	53 - 56
<b>11.</b>	<b>Report of the Chief Officer, Enterprise:</b>	
<b>11.1.</b>	<b>Community Governance - Review Findings and Recommendations</b>	57 - 96
<b>12.</b>	<b>Members' Questions:</b>	
<b>12.1.</b>	<b>From County Councillor A. Easson to County Councillor G. Burrows:</b>	

Monmouthshire prides itself on being conscientious corporate parents. However I believe that we may be failing some of our most vulnerable children; by allowing them to live in what may be considered to be below acceptable housing living conditions. These are, in the main young women, with newly born, and not so young infants, that are settled in 60 year old high density flats/apartments which do not really appear to be appropriate for their circumstances.

Attempts to create environments fit for purpose by renovations of the properties have only succeeded in creating airtight boxes. The renovations carried out, and C/Heating installed is of a high standard, but by its nature is so efficient that condensation has now become a major problem for some tenants? Cost is a major factor for these parents by balancing and rationing their budgets to keep their heating running. Equally parents are fearful of having too many windows open for reasons of security. There is lack of natural ventilation, consequently walls soon drip with moisture, clothes in turn get fusty, the children get chest problems, and a vicious circle continues.

I would appreciate your response at resolving these issues which may really only be of concern for Members who have similarly "ancient " social housing in their Wards. It would be interesting to assess how many of these properties are part of the housing stock across Monmouthshire, and are these problems only associated with them, or is there a wider malaise affecting young parents which is a general social issue? I do have the facility of Flying Start working with many of these parents, but they too are frustrated with the level of support needed to sustain a pleasant way of life.

In posing these questions I am anxious for a positive direction from you as the Cabinet Member responsible for Social Care Safeguarding and Health!

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

D. Batrouni  
J. Prosser  
D. Blakebrough  
M. Powell  
V. Smith  
G. Burrows  
R. Chapman  
P. Clarke  
J. Crook  
D. Dovey  
G. Down  
A. Easson  
D. Edwards  
R. Edwards  
D. Evans  
P. Farley  
P.A. Fox  
J. George  
R.J.W. Greenland  
L. Guppy  
E. Hacket Pain  
R. Harris  
B. Hayward  
M. Hickman  
J. Higginson  
P.A.D. Hobson  
G. Howard  
S. Howarth  
D. Jones  
P. Jones  
S. Jones  
S.B. Jones  
P. Jordan  
J. Marshall  
P. Murphy  
B. Strong  
F. Taylor  
A. Watts  
P. Watts  
A. Webb  
S. White  
K. Williams  
A. Wintle

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**Welsh Language**

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# 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.

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## Chairman's Report – 12<sup>th</sup> November – 9<sup>th</sup> December

Friday 13 <sup>th</sup> November 7 p.m.	North Somerset Council Civic Evening – Winter Carnival Winter Gardens, Royal Parade, Weston-Super-Mare
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> November 7 p.m.	Gwent Police Choir's Annual Concert St Julian's School, Newport
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> November 7 for 7.30 p.m.	City of Newport Charity Event 'Fun & Fine Dining' Junction 28, Newport
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> November 7 p.m.	Gwent Music School Proms Royal Albert Hall, London
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> November 7.30 p.m.	Gwent Music Fundraising Concert Dolman Theatre, Newport
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> December 7 p.m.	St David's Hospice Care Light up a Life Service Abergavenny Methodist Church
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 7.15 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.	The City and County of Swansea The Lord Mayor's Civic Dinner The Mansion House, Ffynone Road, Swansea
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 5 p.m.	Presentation of Summer Reading Challenge Usk Library
Thursday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 7.30 p.m.	Emergency Services Christmas Carol Service Llandaff Cathedral
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2.30 p.m.	Special Carol Service for Gwent St John St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny
Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> December 6.30 p.m.	Merthyr Tydfil CBC Civic Carol Service St David's Parish Church, Merthyr Tydfil

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# Agenda Item 5

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th  
November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

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

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

### OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Kellie Beirne	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Tracey Harry	Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services
Roger Hoggins	Head of Operations
Sarah McGuinness	Chief Officer, Children & Young People
Will McLean	Head of Policy & Engagement
Robert Tranter	Head of Legal Services & Temporary Monitoring Officer
Claire Marchant	Chief Officer Social Care, Health & Housing
Sarah King	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Ian Saunders	Head of Tourism, Leisure and Culture

### APOLOGIES:

Councillors D. Blakebrough, R. Chapman, D. Edwards, P.A.D. Hobson, S. Howarth, J. Marshall, A. Watts and K. Williams

### **2. Public Open Forum**

There were no public forum items.

### **3. Chairman's report and receipt of petitions**

In opening the meeting the Chairman held a minute silence to remember those who had lost lives in recent tragedies. Council agreed that a letter would be sent to the Mayor of Paris and a copy sent to the consulate in Cardiff.

We received the Chairman's report.

There were no petitions presented.

### **4. Declarations of interest**

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

County Councillor S. Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest in relation to the motion, item 6b, due to the nature of employment. Councillor Jones left the meeting during discussion of the item.

County Councillor P. Clarke and B. Strong declared personal and prejudicial interests in relation to the motion, item 6c, regarding the Velothon. Councillors Clarke and Strong left the meeting during discussion of the item.

#### **5. To confirm and sign the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24th September 2015**

The Chairman confirmed and signed the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015, subject to the following amendments:

- **Page 4 - Motion b) Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni**  
*Delete Carried and Insert **Upon being put to the vote the motion was lost.***
- **Page 4 and 5 - Motion c) Submitted by County Councillor P. Jones**  
*Addition:*
  - **Significant debate was held in relation to whether the Velothon could start or finish in Monmouthshire, Council recognised the benefit that this would have for the area. It was suggested that this could be negotiated during discussions.**
  - **Members recognised the high profile event and it was imperative that past mistakes were not repeated.**
- **Page 6 and 7 – Corporate Parenting Annual Report**  
*Addition:*
  - **Information was requested from the Cabinet Member regarding the difficulty in securing placements.**

Council discussed draft minutes and whether it was appropriate for amendments to be made at the subsequent meeting. Officers confirmed that amendments to any minutes were approved at the meeting where minutes were agreed, however, the process for amending minutes would be considered.

#### **10. Briefing Note - Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme**

The Leader presented an update in relation to Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme:

*'Following our resolution at the Council meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> September to participate in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme officers and members have been active in planning to participate in the scheme. This has been a very positive period with internal and external partners working to ensure that we are as prepared as we can be as an organisation and a wider public service to ensure a successful transition for those individuals relocated. A part of that has been assessing the range of issues facing the authority in fully participating – in particular the ongoing lack of clarity regarding future funding of the scheme. With regards to this I am working with senior officers to determine the most appropriate response, we have two options:*

- 1) *Is start planning to take in families from Jan 2016 onwards and not wait for Home Office to confirm funding figures for yr 2-5*

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

- 2) *Is to wait for funding confirmation for year 2 – 5 before we take next steps. Waiting for confirmation does not stop us from discussing / planning the logistics in preparation for arrivals*

*Across Gwent there are a range of positions; Blaenau Gwent have yet to consider participation; Caerphilly are expecting their first arrivals prior to Christmas pending allocation of families, Torfaen are expecting their first families in December and Newport is awaiting confirmation of the future funding arrangements. A particular challenge for us is the availability of appropriate housing; we are currently working with the private rental sector and continue to have discussions with the Home Officer in terms of the profile of arrivals. To progress our arrangements. We will be having an internal meeting to identify school places, housing availability etc. to determine the number of households we can commit to on the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2015.*

*We have had numerous offers of help and support and we would look to organise this in a more structured and cohesive manner. I have identified areas where we can save on costs*

- 1) *Caldicot Food bank has offered to provide a 'Welcome' food pack for every household upon their arrival*
- 2) *iNeed community group in Monmouth has said that they would be happy to start collecting furniture etc in anticipation of the new arrivals, if MCC is able to provide storage space (a warehouse) perhaps, they are happy to organise this.*

*I anticipate that they may be some frustration around why this is taking so long but it's important for elected members to note that this is by far a more complex scheme that Home Office wants us to deliver with a much more detailed statement of requirements.*

*One key aspect is that around the provision of the potentially acute healthcare needs that some of the family members can be expected to experience. We have met with the lead Public Health Consultant and have confidence in the arrangements that are in place.*

*I will report back to the next Council the progress that has been made.*

#### **Afghan Translators**

*Our involvement in the Afghan Translators scheme has progressed positively and currently we have 12 singles and 1 family relocated to Monmouthshire - a total of 15 individuals.*

*We are still committed to relocating a further 9 singles, 5 couples and 9 families which will take us beyond the initial expected end date of the project (March 2016). We anticipate that in may take up till March 2017 to meet those commitments, and if there is capacity, we may be asked by Home Office to consider relocating more individuals e.g. shared accommodation becoming available as translators integrate into life in the UK and decide to move out of the area.*

*MCC has continued to remain in close contact with Home Office to ensure that the profile of the participants that we relocate matches our availability around housing, school spaces etc.*

*This scheme has been relatively straight forward to deliver as DPIA has been able to provide us with a comprehensive integration support package. They manage the GP registration, obtaining NI numbers, exploring leisure activities, induction to local area etc.*

*The first 6 arrivals are currently studying part time in Coleg Gwent (Advanced level English).*

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

*The new arrivals (6 singles plus family) are still going through their induction period as they have only arrived end Oct/early Nov.*

*We are currently in contact with Capt D Bell, Militia Captain, The Royal Monmouthshire Royal Engineers (Militia) to see if we can develop some initiatives for the translators to continue to engage with the military in an informal manner.'*

Councillor J. Prosser highlighted that the issue had been discussed at the military engagement session and had expressed enthusiasm to engage.

#### **6. Notices of motion**

##### **6.1. Submitted by County Councillor V.E. Smith**

*'This Council notes the human and financial cost of road traffic accidents and the risk of speed related accidents on rural roads.*

*Council resolves to write to Welsh Government to request that the policy of blanket 60mph speed limits on rural roads be reviewed in the interest of public safety and public finances.'*

Councillor R. Greenland proposed an amendment which was duly seconded:

*'Whilst it is accepted that 60mph is safe on some rural roads, there are probably others where a lower limit is appropriate. In the interests of road safety we look to the Welsh Government to review speeds on our rural roads*

*Following the debate at the last Council meeting, it is acknowledged that officers have worked extensively with WG to address the concerns of members around the organisation of the 2015 Velothon. We welcome the appointment of Run4Wales To deliver the Velothon for 2016 and have received from them assurances that the route through Monmouthshire will be amended and that extensive consultation and communication with those affected will be at the centre of their work leading up to the event. Having received these assurances Council supports the inclusion of Monmouthshire in the Wales Velothon in 2016.'*

Council recognised the importance of the issue and that there was a need to ensure roads were safe.

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

Upon being put to the vote the substantive motion was carried:

*'Whilst it is accepted that 60mph is safe on some rural roads, there are probably others where a lower limit is appropriate. In the interests of road safety we look to the Welsh Government to review speeds on our rural roads*

*Following the debate at the last Council meeting, it is acknowledged that officers have worked extensively with WG to address the concerns of members around the organisation of the 2015 Velothon. We welcome the appointment of Run4Wales To deliver the Velothon for 2016 and have received from them assurances that the route through Monmouthshire will be amended and that extensive consultation and communication with those affected will be at the centre of their work leading up to the event. Having received these assurances Council supports the inclusion of Monmouthshire in the Wales Velothon in 2016.'*

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

#### 6.2. Submitted by County Councillor V.E. Smith

*'This Council notes the effect of the 5p charge on plastic carrier bags has had on littering by these bags. Council notes there is a widespread problem with litter, especially drink bottles and cans. Council resolves to write to Welsh Government to request Welsh Government consider the application of a deposit on all drinks containers, to discourage littering and to incentivise those people who regularly pick up litter.'*

#### **County Councillor S. Jones left the meeting at 2.25pm**

In debating the motion we noted:

- Factors such as product packaging could be considered and there was a need for a review in legislation.
- It was recognised that there was a need for enforcement within the authority, prior to any correspondence with Welsh Government.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was defeated.

#### **County Councillor S. Jones returned to the meeting at 2.35pm**

#### 6.3. Velothon 2016

County Councillor R.J. Higginson took the chair.

County Councillor R.J. Greenland proposed a motion, which was duly seconded:

*'Following the debate at the last Council meeting, it is acknowledged that officers have worked extensively with WG to address the concerns of members around the organisation of the 2015 Velothon. We welcome the appointment of Run4Wales To deliver the Velothon for 2016 and have received from them assurances that the route through Monmouthshire will be amended and that extensive consultation and communication with those affected will be at the centre of their work leading up to the event. Having received these assurances Council supports the inclusion of Monmouthshire in the Wales Velothon in 2016.'*

In debating the motion we noted:

- Significant issues had occurred after the last Velothon event and an all member seminar had been held to discuss proposals for 2016.
- Members requested reassurance regarding whether costs would be incurred. Council were informed that this was early stages of discussions and that the position would be scrutinised by select committees.
- Costs would be contained within existing budgets, there would not be additional budgets to run the velothon.
- Some concerns were expressed that existing budgets would be used and loss to businesses in the county was recognised.
- Council generally supported the event. However, members were apprehensive regarding the effect on local businesses and residents.
- Members welcomed officer views in terms of the consequential financial gain which would offset investment. Council sought reassurances and concrete information. Further clarification was requested regarding whether there had been progress in a start/finish point being confirmed within Monmouthshire.
- Council requested a map for the whole of the event route.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

- In supporting the motion, members were encouraged by information received by Welsh Government at the members seminar and that residents and community councils had been engaged.
- In opposing the event, there were significant concerns due to the effect on residents in ward and restricted access. It was felt that the event would be detrimental.
- We highlighted the importance of sufficient and appropriate consultation. Council welcomed an improved and organised event.

Officers advised that members who had attended seminar would have been comforted by Run4Wales. Lessons had been learnt and if the event was to go ahead then full consultation would be undertaken.

Road closures had been an issue which would be addressed and options would be considered on how issues could be mitigated and impact on local communities minimised.

Sufficient time was available to ensure an appropriate plan was in place, so that events (i.e. Weddings) could be accommodated.

Cyclists would be using cycling routes prior to the event, as well as during. Information would be publicly available on the website and people would be fully informed and engaged, to deliver an event which will minimise disruption and maximise benefit.

The Cabinet member reiterated that the event was a huge opportunity. There were issues to be considered for businesses and individuals, however, there was a need to maximise the available opportunities at a minimised cost to the authority.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried:

*'Following the debate at the last Council meeting, it is acknowledged that officers have worked extensively with WG to address the concerns of members around the organisation of the 2015 Velothon. We welcome the appointment of Run4Wales To deliver the Velothon for 2016 and have received from them assurances that the route through Monmouthshire will be amended and that extensive consultation and communication with those affected will be at the centre of their work leading up to the event. Having received these assurances Council supports the inclusion of Monmouthshire in the Wales Velothon in 2016.'*

#### **7. Report of the Chief Officer, Social Care, Health and Housing:**

##### **7.1. Providing Members with an evaluation of the effectiveness of safeguarding within Monmouthshire**

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health presented the report and thanked officers for work that had been undertaken. The purpose was to provide members with information and analysis regarding the safeguarding of children and young people.

Comprehensive strategic and operational information is provided via a suite of three cross referenced reports:

- Strategic Report for Safeguarding September 2015**; this provides an evaluative overview for Members on progress, areas for further work and includes case studies. **Pages 1-5 of this report will enable Members to obtain a good summary of the current safeguarding agenda.**
- Safeguarding Report Card September 2015**; this provides detailed evidence and analysis for Members wishing to review safeguarding performance in more depth.



## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

- iii. **Service Improvement Plan for Safeguarding 2015 – 2016, Quarter 2 Review**; this is the mid-point review of the annual plan for the safeguarding unit detailing progress against identified the priorities and actions.

Council were informed that Safeguarding reports had been considered by Cabinet and Select Committees, significant contribution and progress had been made since November 2012.

We recognised the importance of Safeguarding, as a cornerstone for what the authority represented. Directorates were in receipt of training and the issue would be continually embedded in a cultural capacity across the authority.

- A member highlighted that recommendations within the report were unclear, as they referred to select.
- Council commended the report.
- Concern was expressed that there was only one reference to housing contained within the report, when it was perceived that safeguarding issues sometimes stemmed from housing related matters.
- The Cabinet member thanked Council for well made comments. We were reminded that this was an ongoing journey, however, issues related to housing would be discussed further.
- There was a need for elected members to be clear on expectations, in terms of safeguarding and the role that they have. We agreed that arrangements would be made for level one training to be provided to all elected members.

We resolved to agree the recommendation within the report.

#### **8. Reports of the Head of Democracy and Regulatory Services:**

##### **8.1. Proposals for Casinos - Gambling Act 2005**

Council were presented a report which considered the Council's existing resolution to not permit casinos within the County of Monmouthshire.

We resolved to agree recommendation within the report:

To refuse casino applications made under the Gambling Act 2005 within their Gambling Policy.

*Councillor A. Easson left 3.20pm*

##### **8.2. Adoption of Gambling Policy - Gambling Act 2005**

Council were presented with the Adoption of Gambling Policy – Gambling Act 2005, the purpose of which was to agree the Council's 'Statement of Gambling Policy 2016'.

During debate, we noted:

- Further clarification was requested regarding community resilience and impact on policy in Monmouthshire.
- Council discussed equality, officers clarified that in terms of equalities within the policy it related to the high street gambling premise and complying with central guidance.
- It was suggested that a section could be included which engaged on wider education of gambling.

We resolved to agree recommendation within the report:

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

To adopt the Gambling Act Policy for Monmouthshire County Council, provided in Appendix A.

#### **8.3. The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and Health Protection Regulations**

Council received a report which considered appointment of Proper Officers and the delegation of powers to the Head of Community Protection under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act and Regulations made there-under.

A member requested that it was clarified whether the designated consultants were members of properly regulated bodies.

We resolved to agree recommendations within the report:

1. To appoint the designated Consultants in Communicable Disease Control and Health Protection as set out in Appendix One, as Proper Officers under section 113 (1A) of Local Government Act 1972.
2. To delegate powers to the Head of Community Protection, as outlined in Appendix One, and to replace previous reference to 'Chief Officer R & C' with 'Head of Democratic and Regulatory Services'.

#### **9. Members' Questions**

##### **9.1. From County Councillor D. Batrouni to Councillor P. A. Fox:**

'What is Monmouthshire's gross schools expenditure per pupil?'

In response:

- The set of latest data provided comprehensive statistics across the whole of Wales and there had been a decline compared to last year.
- The commitment to pupil investment was unquestionable, but was not always indicative of figure outcomes.

##### **9.2. From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor P.A. Fox:**

'How many households were threatened with homelessness in Monmouthshire in 2014/15?'

In response:

- General enquiries would be directed to the housing options team, however, not all related to homelessness.
- 249 direct applications were determined in 2014/15, which was decreased from 2013/14.
- People would be signposted to the appropriate place and the authority would try not to place families and children in B&B.

As a supplementary Councillor Batrouni asked why statistics from Welsh Government identified Monmouthshire County Council as 3<sup>rd</sup> worst authority in preventing homelessness.

In response, Councillor Fox advised that the KPI was flawed and would be discontinued. The ongoing priority would be for private accommodation to be assessed.

##### **9.3. From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor P. Murphy:**

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

'How many residents in Monmouthshire benefited from the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme in (a) 2014/15 and (b) 2013/14?'

In response:

- a) 6309 in 2014/15 and b) 6503 in 2013/14
- Further information would be provided regarding benefits for the authority for additional funding on CTRS.

#### **9.4. From County Councillor D. Batrouni to County Councillor S.B. Jones:**

'How many residents have been refused blue badges in Monmouthshire in (a) 2015/16 to date and (b) 2014/15?'

In response:

*'In 2014 – 15 MCC received **2,483** blue badge applications. Of which **177** were 7.1% were refused. We issued **2,306** badges.  
Between 1<sup>st</sup> Apr – 30<sup>th</sup> Sep 2015 MCC has received **1,369** applications and has refused **157** – 11.4%. This does show that there has been a 4.3% increase in refusals to date.  
It needs to be noted that the MCC refusals are for the discretionary blue badge applications. Some people either because of certain conditions, or the benefits they receive automatically qualify.*

#### **Why are badges being refused?**

*In February 2015 MCC, following best practice and guidance from Welsh Government changed the way blue badge applications were processed.*

*Previously MCC received an application and would write to the GP who would determine whether a blue badge should be issued. In 2012 Welsh Government initiated the Blue Badge Improvement Scheme which had the following aims:*

*No. 1 reducing demands on GPs*

*No.2 reducing costs on Health Boards as they paid GPs for every blue badge assessment letter*

*No. 3 creating a system which would be fair and consistent across Wales No. 4 reducing demands on GPs*

*No.5 aligning blue badge with the process utilised by Department of Work and Pensions for the assessments on Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payment*

*The process now is:*

- *Application form is issued to resident to fill in. If a resident needs help then MCC Hub staff will sit down with them, or we can do it over the phone.*
- *Form will be checked for accuracy as certain documentation is required*
- *Form is then marked against elements provided by WG. Each element has a point allocation.*
- *To qualify for a badge an applicant must be awarded more than **15** points.*

*Of the 157 refusals to date:*

*93 are renewals*

*64 are for new applications*

*It needs to be appreciated that blue badges are not just renewed automatically now. Each application is a "new" application. It is no longer assumed that previous qualification means you are eligible as it is recognised that circumstances can change.*

*The main reason (142 out of 157) is that people have not met the 15 points needed.*

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th November, 2015 at 2.00 pm

*As this is a new system there is a process of Independent Assessment to review the Council's decision. As this is still a new process Welsh Government have recommended that we direct people to the Assessor if they believe they could qualify even though the initial assessment has not given them sufficient points. To date we have **proactively** referred 47 people and 38 of these have then been given a badge. Welsh Government are taking advice from the assessors to determine if and how the toolkit could be improved. A further version to the toolkit is due out before the end of the year.*

#### **Relationship with DWP – disability living allowance and personal independence allowance**

*To streamline the process and to reduce duplication MCC does not review applications if people are in receipt of DWP benefits. For example if they receive the higher rate of disability living allowance they automatically qualify for a badge. If they get the lower rate then they are not eligible for a badge and residents should not apply to MCC if they have been refused by DWP – hopefully the process should be consistent irrespective of evaluating organisation.*

*What we will not know though is how many are coming through to us if they have been refused completely by DWP. If they declare it we will, but we do not routinely check with DWP on the applications they have received.*

*If a resident was unhappy with the DWP decision then their first recourse of application should be to ask DWP for a review.*

#### **Moving Forward**

*MCC continues to work proactively with Welsh Government on the refinement of this guidance. For example we have recommended heart conditions should be included.*

*We do appreciate that refusals appeared to have increased this year and will continue to monitor why this appears to be happening. At the moment it appears it is the implementation of the new system and the points criteria. We do appreciate for people who have applied a refusal can be stressful and sometimes engaging with the system can add to that stress. We will work sympathetically with applicants and will help them when ever possible and explain clearly why a certain decision has been taken.'*

Councillor Jones would reply in writing regarding a question related to unsuitability through the DWP process and number of people affected.

#### **9.5. From County Councillor F. Taylor to County Councillor P. Fox:**

'Magor Post Office and the critical public services it provides to the residents of Magor with Undy is under threat as a direct result of Post Office Ltd.'s process of Network Transformation. Will the Leader of the Council and his administration actively support the campaign to Save Magor Post Office and ensure a sustainable and viable post Office service continues in Magor Square? Will the Leader agree to write to Post Office Limited and Baroness Neville-Rolf DBE CMG Parliamentary Undersecretary of State and Minister for Intellectual Property on behalf of local residents to facilitate open and transparent dialogue?'

In response:

- This was recognised as an important and urgent matter.
- Work would be undertaken with the local member and relevant people would be contacted appropriately to ensure that concerns were addressed.

**The meeting ended at 3.50 pm**

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA on Thursday, 19th  
November, 2015 at 2.00 pm**

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CAERWENT SECTION 106 FUNDING</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015</b>
<b>DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>CAERWENT</b>

**1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To recommend to Council the setting up of a Capital Budget in 2015/16 for the Caerwent (Merton Green) Off Site Recreation Funding; and
- 1.2 To decide on the allocation of grants to specific projects from the funding available.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended to Council that:

- 2.1 a capital budget of £316,988 be created in 2015/16 to carry out the projects set out in 2.2 below and that this is funded from a corresponding contribution from the Section 106 balances held by the County Council in respect of the Merton Green development site in Caerwent (Finance Code N539); and
- 2.2 that the projects set out below be approved:

<b>Project</b>	<b>Project Cost £</b>	<b>Recommended Grant £</b>
• Crick Wildlife and Environmental Group	17,420	13,260
• Old Gym Community Centre Committee	146,600	121,864
• Caerwent Playing fields Association	<u>215,897</u>	<u>181,864</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>379,917</b>	<b>316,988</b>

### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The housing development at Merton Green yielded an off site recreation contribution of £334,488 to be spent in the local area. Cabinet agreed previously that this site, together with a number of other Section 106 Agreements in the south of the county should make a contribution of £17,500 towards the cost of the new Severnside 3G pitch in Caldicot, because of the regional significance of that project. This leaves a sum of £316,988 to be used on projects of a local nature.
- 3.2 When the availability of funding was advertised, three application for funding were received from the following three groups
- Crick Wildlife & Environmental Group - to develop a wildflower meadow on a piece of land leased from the County Council by the Community Council;
  - Old Gym Community Centre – to carry out building improvements to benefit existing and future users of the centre. These include a very active youth group that meets at the centre on a regular basis and a number of recreational groups, many of which use the gymnasium that forms part of the Community Centre building;
  - Caerwent Playing Fields Association – to carry out extensions and improvements (including improved sports changing rooms) at the village hall, which is located at Caerwent Playing Field, which is registered as a QE11 protected field with Fields in Trust (formerly the National Playing Fields Association).
- 3.3 The Wildlife & Environmental Group and the Playing Fields Association both have an element of match funding to contribute towards the project costs. The scheme submitted by the Old Gym Community Centre was originally priced at just over £205,000 but this cost has been reduced significantly because the Community Centre Committee has accessed grants from other agencies to pay for different elements of the original proposal – a reduction of some £78,000.
- 3.4 Below is a summary of how the S106 funding will be utilised if the recommendations contained in this report are agreed:

Applicant	Scheme Cost	Match Funding	S106 Grant £	Grant Percentage of Scheme Cost	Shortfall £
3G Contribution	-	-	<b>17,500</b>	-	-
Crick Environmental Group	17,420	4,160	<b>13,260</b>	76%	-
Old Gym Community Centre	146,600	-	<b>121,864</b>	83%	24,736
Caerwent Playing Fields Association	215,897	10,000	<b>181,864</b>	84%	24,033
<b>Totals</b>	<b>379,917</b>	<b>14,160</b>	<b>334,488</b>	-	<b>48,769</b>



#### 4.0 REASONS

- 4.1 The Council's Capital Budget for 2014/15 has already been approved and any proposal to add to or vary the Capital Budget requires a decision to be made by full Council.
- 4.2 There was no detailed assessment process carried out in relation to this scheme, as there were only three applications received. Officers have been working with the applicants concerned and with Caerwent Community Council in an attempt to ensure that all three projects can proceed.

#### 5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The expenditure recommended in the report will be met in full from the S106 off site contributions paid to the authority by the developers of the Merton Green site – the final instalment of this amount was received in January this year.
- 5.2 The Crick Wildlife and Conservation Group already has its match funding in place and both the Old Gym Community Centre and the Playing Fields Association have been successful in obtaining external funding in recent years, so there is every expectation that if the grants recommended in this report are approved then the respective applicants will be able to source the additional funds required to bridge the funding shortfall for their projects.

#### 6.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The completed Equality Impact Assessment Form and Sustainable Development Checklist are attached at **APPENDICES A – C (inclusive)**.

The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment are summarised below:

Improvements/improved access to public open space
Advanced equality of opportunity for people with a protected characteristic
Improved access to leisure and recreation facilities

- 6.2 The actual impacts from this report's recommendations will be reviewed every three years.

## **7.0 SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING CONSIDERATIONS**

7.1 There are no negative implications for safeguarding or corporate parenting arising from this report.

The Youth Group at the Community Centre operates under an appropriately trained Leader employed by Monmouthshire Youth Service and the group operates in compliance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

The Caerwent Football Club that uses the village hall has adopted the FAW Welfare Policy and its constitution states that "the club recognises its responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults who are in membership of the club. The club will aim to provide good quality football in a safe environment by adopting the procedures and working practices of the Football Association of Wales' Welfare Policy."

## **8.0 CONSULTEES**

Cabinet Members

Local County Council Member for Caerwent – supports the recommendations

Strategic Leadership Team – Report amended to incorporate comments received

Caerwent Community Council – support the recommendations

Head of Legal Services/Acting Monitoring Officer – no comments

Lower Wye Area Committee – no objections to the recommendations

Assistant Head of Finance/Deputy S151 Officer – no comments

## **9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **10.0 AUTHOR**

Mike Moran, Community Infrastructure Coordinator

07901 854682 [mikemoran@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:mikemoran@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT FORM

What impact are you assessing	Service area
The allocation of grants from the Caerwent Section 106 Off Site Recreation Fund	Tourism, Leisure and Culture
Policy author / service lead	Name of assessor and date
Ian Saunders	Mike Moran 31/07//2015

## 1. What are you proposing to do?

The proposal is to allocate grants from the Caerwent Section 106 Off site Recreation Fund. This fund is made up of developer contributions from the Merton Green development site in Caerwent.

The Council has received 3 applications and is proposing to offer grants to all 3 projects.

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. **NO**

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

3. Please give details of the negative impact

N/A

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

N/A

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

**2011 Census data relating to population statistics for Caerwent plus participation data provided by various applicants**

Signed: *Mike Moran*

Designation: Community Infrastructure Coordinator

Dated: 31/07/2015

## The “Equality Initial Challenge”

Name: <b>Mike Moran</b> Service area: <b>Tourism, Leisure and Culture</b> Date completed: <b>31/07/2015</b>		Please give a <b>brief description</b> of what you are aiming to do.  Allocate grants to local open space and recreation projects in the Caerwent area from Section 106 funding provided by the developers of the Merton Green residential development in the village	
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			✓
Disability			✓
Marriage + Civil Partnership		✓	
Pregnancy and maternity		✓	
Race		✓	
Religion or Belief		✓	
Sex (was Gender)			✓
Sexual Orientation		✓	
Transgender		✓	
Welsh Language	✓		

For details regarding positive and negative impacts please see over

Please give details about any potential <b>positive Impacts</b> .	How will these <b>positive impacts</b> be achieved
➤ <i>All three projects will benefit children and young people. The wildflower meadow and the Old Gym projects will have positive benefits for older people in the <b>50+ age range</b></i>	➤ Continue to work with the successful applicants to ensure that the needs of older people are taken into account when activities or further improvements are planned
➤ <i>All three projects recommended for approval have been designed to be easily accessible by <b>disabled people and people with support needs</b></i>	➤ Continue to work with and encourage successful applicants to pay particular attention to the needs of disabled people and people with support needs
➤ <i>All of the projects recommended for approval will be accessible to both male and female gender.</i>	➤ Encourage all applicants to encourage female participation and ask for female participation in activities to be encouraged and recorded in the end of scheme reports and in periodic monitoring reports for the next three years until the EQIA is reviewed in 2017 (para 6.2 refers)

Please give details about any potential <b>negative Impacts</b> .	How do you propose to <b>MITIGATE</b> these <b>negative impacts</b>
➤ <i>There was no section on the grant application form to record how applicants intended to promote the <b>Welsh Language</b> in their projects if approved</i>	➤ Ask applicants to record in their periodic monitoring & end of scheme reports their efforts to encourage use of the Welsh Language ➤ Include a question on the Welsh Language in future grant application forms

Signed: *Mike Moran*

Designation: Community Infrastructure Coordinator

Dated: 31/07/2015

## The “Sustainability Challenge”

Name of the Officer completing “the Sustainability Challenge” <b>Mike Moran</b>		Please give a <b>brief description</b> of the <b>aims</b> proposed policy or service reconfiguration <b>To provide new or improved open space &amp; recreation facilities and to encourage improved access/use of those assets</b>	
Name of the Division or service area <b>Tourism, Leisure and Culture</b>		Date “Challenge” form completed <b>31/07/2015</b>	
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>			
Ensure that more people have access to healthy food		✓	
Improve housing quality & provision		✓	
Reduce ill health and improve healthcare provision			✓ Participation in sport and healthy exercise improves health and reduces dependence on healthcare provision
Promote independence		✓	
Encourage community participation/action & voluntary work			✓ Each of the projects recommended for approval involve high levels of community participation and are run by volunteers
Targets socially excluded		✓	
Help reduce crime and fear of crime		✓	
Improve access to education and training			✓ All of the projects recommended for approval involve some training and the attainment of some additional skills
Have a positive impact on people and places in other countries		✓	

<b>PLANET</b>			
Reduce, reuse and recycle waste and water		✓	
Reduce carbon dioxide emissions			✓ Access to local facilities reduces reliance on car journeys, thus reducing carbon emissions
Prevent or reduce pollution of the air, land and water		✓	
Protect or enhance wildlife habitats (e.g. trees, hedgerows, open spaces)			✓ One of the projects recommended for approval will protect wildlife habitats
Protect or enhance visual appearance of environment			✓ All of the projects recommended for approval will enhance the visual appearance of the environment
<b>PROFIT</b>			
Protect local shops and services		✓	
Link local production with local consumption		✓	
Improve environmental awareness of local businesses		✓	
Increase employment for local people		✓	
Preserve and enhance local identity and culture			✓ All of the projects are promoted by local people and “fit” with the local identity and culture of the area
Consider ethical purchasing issues, such as Fairtrade, sustainable timber (FSC logo) etc		✓	
Increase and improve access to leisure, recreation or cultural facilities			✓ All of the projects recommended for approval will increase and/or improve access to leisure and recreation facilities



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)
➤ <b>N/A</b>	➤ <b>N/A</b>

### The next steps

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

The projects recommended in this report for a grant award will, if approved:

- provide better access to a range of improved open space and recreation facilities in Caerwent, primarily for the benefit of local people;
- provide investment in facilities that are sustainable in the longer term & that reduce reliance on car journeys to access good quality facilities;
- provide improved access to and participation by people living in Caerwent that have one or more protected characteristic(s);
- help to promote local identity and culture through the involvement of a large number of local people acting in a voluntary capacity.

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

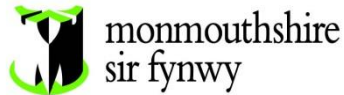
**N/A**

Signed: *Mike Moran*

Designation: Community Infrastructure Coordinator

Dated: 31/07/2015

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**SUBJECT:** Proposed Funding for Team Abergavenny

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 7<sup>th</sup> October 2015

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:** Grofield & Priory Wards

**1. PURPOSE:**

To recommend to members that £30,000 is allocated to Abergavenny Town Team to undertake capital projects to enhance Abergavenny town centre in preparation for the National Eisteddfod in 2016.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**2.1** That Cabinet agrees to recommend to Council that the sum of £30,000 is allocated to the Capital Programme to support the work of Abergavenny Town Team in improving and enhancing the town centre environment and offer in preparation for the National Eisteddfod in 2016.

**2.2** The £30,000 is allocated to the development of activities within the following themes:

- To promote local food & drink produce.
- To encourage repeat visitors by enhancing the visitor experience.
- Promote Abergavenny as an events town.

**2.3** The allocation of the £30,000 funding to support specific projects and activities be delegated to Bryn y Cwm Programme Board, who will be required to ensure that the projects are viable, meet deliverable outcomes and have been market tested. The Programme Board will be responsible for monitoring agreed projects both in terms of outcomes and financial prudence.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

**3.1** Council took the decision in February of this year to rescind the decision to build a new library in Abergavenny. In addition they agreed *that Cabinet recommend to Council specific capital budgets to develop a Community Hub along with projects to improve the public realm that supports regeneration of the town centre (the Better Bryn Y Cwm Plan) from the funding released.*

- 3.2 The decision released a sum of £3.433 million back into the capital programme for capital projects. The Community Hub project is being developed and will be reported back to members by the end of the calendar year.
- 3.3 As members will be aware the Council has been working with community stakeholders on the implementation of the Better Bryn y Cwm plan through the Whole Place team and the Bryn y Cwm Programme Board. Team Abergavenny has been formed by the community to work on the development of the Town Centre regeneration theme contained with the aforementioned plan.
- 3.4 Team Abergavenny is made up of volunteers who have a breadth of experience working within both the private and public sectors. Whilst they are committed to improving the town centre, they do not have any funding to commence their activities. They have therefore requested an allocation of £30,000 to support the development of three themes of activities:
- To promote local food & drink produce.
  - To encourage repeat visitors by enhancing the visitor experience.
  - Promote Abergavenny as an events town.
- 3.5 Team Abergavenny have developed an action plan to support these themes which identifies the capital projects and indicative spend. At this stage however, these are provisional figures as the projects will need to be finalised and tenders sought. The projects currently proposed are:
- Purchase of stalls, marquees, staging and technical equipment to facilitate events to support the foodie destination offer.
  - Undertake a refurbishment of the existing street scene to enhance the visitor experience. This will focus on street furniture, planters etc. to supplement the public realm work being undertaken by Highways.
  - Develop an events programme and acquire the necessary equipment which will then become a shared resource for all community groups to access, reducing their costs and developing a shared knowledge base.
- 3.6 Given that these are at this stage fledgling ideas, it is proposed that the Council agrees to the allocation of the £30,000 to Team Abergavenny to support the three themes outlined in 3.4. The allocation of the £30,000 to specific projects be delegated to the Bryn y Cwm Programme Board, who will be required to ensure that the projects are viable, meet deliverable outcomes and have been market tested. The Programme Board will be responsible for monitoring agreed projects both in terms of outcomes and financial prudence. This will align with the proposals of the community governance review and support local decision making and accountability.

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

- 4.1 The town centre regeneration strand was identified as a key priority by the local community and forms one of the four strands within the Better Bryn y Cwm document. Team Abergavenny is a community initiative established to work with businesses and the community to improve the town centre offer for both residents and visitors.
- 4.2 The loss of the Business Improvement District vote has removed the potential for businesses to develop their own projects to enhance the town centre, as a result there is now even more need for Team Abergavenny to undertake this role. They however, do not currently have access to funding streams and unlike Caldicot Town Team; they do not have the benefit of S106 contributions to support their work. The Town Teams proposals are fully in accord with Councils February decision to invite “*projects to improve the public realm that supports regeneration of the town centre.*”
- 4.3 The Whole Place team will work with Team Abergavenny to prepare their proposals and develop agreed projects to ensure that they are financially and legally compliant as well as developing the knowledge base within the local community.
- 4.4 The National Eisteddfod will provide an opportunity to showcase Abergavenny through the extensive media coverage associated with the event. Team Abergavenny have stepped forward to lead specific projects designed to improve both the appearance and the offer which will improve the visitors experience and encourage return visits.
- 4.5 Delegating the approval of decisions on the projects selected will enable transparent local governance, streamline the decision making process and align with our Whole Place and proposed Community Governance strategy.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 It is proposed that a £30,000 capital fund be established from the £3,433,000 set aside as a result of the decision to not proceed with the new library building in Abergavenny. This £30,000 would be set aside for Team Abergavenny to undertake capital projects as approved by the Bryn y Cwm Programme Board.

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

- 6.1 The significant equality impacts identified in the assessment (Appendix B) are summarised below for members’ consideration:

**7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising from this report.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

All Cabinet Members  
Leadership team  
Head of Legal Services

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

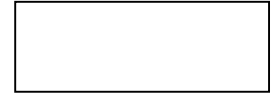
None

**10. AUTHORS:**

Debra Hill-Howells Head of Community Delivery

**11. CONTACT DETAILS**

[debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.gov.uk)



**SUBJECT: Proposal to revise the Policy on Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) for 2016/17**

**MEETING: Full Council**

**DATE: 17th December 2015**

## **1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To provide Full Council with a proposal to revise the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2016/17.
- 1.2 To outline the budget consequences of the proposed changes.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that Full Council approve:

- 2.1 The revised MRP Policy Statement attached as Appendix 2, which changes the approach concerning the Minimum Revenue Provision on Unsupported Borrowing moving it from an equal instalment basis to an annuity basis.
- 2.2 That work on reviewing the approach adopted concerning the Minimum Revenue Provision for supported borrowing is undertaken, and further proposals on the options available are brought back to Council.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

### **Legislative framework and guidance**

- 3.1 The concept on the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was introduced when the Local Government Capital Finance System was changed on 1 April 1990. This required local authorities to assess their outstanding debt and to make an annual charge to the General Fund of 4% of the General Fund Debt (capital financing requirement CFR).
- 3.2 The arrangements were further endorsed in Wales, under regulation 22 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (Wales) Regulations 2003 , which required local authorities to charge to their revenue account for each financial year MRP to account for the cost of their unfinanced capital expenditure i.e their borrowings.

- 3.3 The 2008 Regulations revised the former regulation 22, in favour of replacing detailed rules with a simple duty for an authority each year to make an amount of MRP which it considers to be “**prudent**”. The regulation does not itself define “prudent provision”. However, the MRP guidance makes recommendations to authorities on the interpretation of that term.
- 3.4 The broad aim of a prudent provision was to ensure that debt is repaid over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits or in case of borrowing supported by government, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of the grant, although Councils retain a discretion to pay more than the minimum calculated sum.
- 3.5 The issue of statutory MRP guidance has been made possible by section 238(2) of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which amends section 21 of the Local Government Act 2003. Section 21 already allowed regulations to be made on accounting practices and is the power under which the existing MRP regulations were made. The amendment inserts a new section 21(1A) into the 2003 Act, enabling Welsh Ministers also to issue guidance on accounting practices and thus on MRP. Authorities are obliged by new section 21(1B) to “have regard” to such guidance – which is exactly the same duty as applies to other pieces of statutory guidance including, for example, the CIPFA Prudential Code, the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.
- 3.6 Welsh government has issued statutory guidance that councils are required to “take account of” in deciding what is “prudent”. Authorities are also asked to prepare an annual statement of their policy on making MRP for submission to their full council. In Monmouthshire this is included with the Treasury Strategy report to full Council before the start of each financial year.

### **Options for Prudent Provision in the statutory guidance**

- 3.7 The guidance envisages that authorities can distinguish between borrowing that is “supported” (through the RSG system) and other borrowing. The guidance also sets out four options for making MRP;

**Option 1 - the regulatory method** – this is basically the “old” system for determining MRP as though the 2003 regulations had not been revoked in 2008. So it involves making a 4% of outstanding debt provision, amended by a calculation on the credit ceiling and capital finance requirement on 1 April 2004, and the “commutation adjustment” which arises because authorities incurred losses when the Government commuted annual grant related an adjustment to home improvement grants in 1992.

**Option 2 - the CFR method** - this is a simplification of the above and involves simply setting MRP equal to 4% of the non housing CFR at the end of the preceding financial year.

Note: Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is a measure of the underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. When capital expenditure is not paid for immediately, by resources such as capital receipts, capital grants or other contributions, then the CFR increases.



**Option 3 - the asset life method** – this method requires MRP to be charged over the asset life using either an equal instalment method or annuity method, and permits an additional voluntary provision in any year which may be matched by an appropriate reduction in a subsequent year’s MRP. Equal instalment involves paying the same amount each year. Annuity method involves smaller payments in the early years and larger payments in the latter years. The asset life is determined in the year MRP commences and is not subsequently revised. The guidance suggests freehold land should be treated as having a 50 year life, but that where a building or other structure is constructed the life may be treated as matching the structure where this would exceed 50 years. Commencement of MRP can be made in the financial year following the one in which the asset becomes operational.

**Option 4 - the depreciation method** – this requires depreciation accounting to be followed, including impairment should assets last for a shorter period than originally envisaged, until the element of the asset funded by borrowing has been paid in full.

### **Conditions for using the options**

- 3.8 The guidance suggests the options 1 regulatory and options 2 CFR methods are to be used for expenditure prior to 2008/09, or that which is “supported”. It goes on to observe that the options 3 asset life methods and option 4 depreciation methods are prudent approaches for capital expenditure which does not form part of the authority’s Supported Capital Expenditure. However options 3 and 4 can also be used for all capital expenditure at the authority’s discretion. In some technical cases (including expenditure capitalised by direction, software and purchase of shares), the asset life method is suggested with assumed lives.
- 3.9 The guidance makes some assumptions; firstly that we can easily distinguish between schemes funded by “supported” borrowing and other borrowing (sometimes referred to as “prudential borrowing”).
- 3.10 In addition it appears to assume that where there is borrowing on a scheme it is either “supported” or not. Neither of these assumptions are necessarily true, although the guidance does recognize that it is conventional where depreciation approaches have been used not to start depreciation until the asset comes into use. (We have used this convention (which has also been included within MRP regulations) to delay the commencement of MRP on the borrowing funded costs of any capital development.
- 3.11 It is important to highlight that whilst Authorities must always have regard to the guidance, having done so, they may in some cases consider that a more individually designed MRP approach is justified. That could involve taking account of detailed local circumstances, including specific project timetables and revenue-earning profiles.

### **Current Policy**

- 3.12 Currently the Authority uses Option 2 the CFR method in respect of supported capital expenditure funded from borrowing. Under this option, MRP is calculated at 4% on a reducing balance basis. MRP amounts repaid are recalculated each year on the revised balance so it can take a long time to pay any liability in full.

Option 3, the Asset Life method based on equal instalments, is used for unsupported borrowing.

### **Revised Approach**

- 3.13 Increasingly Local authorities are relooking at their MRP calculation to reduce the pressure on the revenue budget whilst still ensuring that a prudent level of provision is set aside. It should be stressed the change to MRP calculation should not be regarded as a saving, it is more accurately just a beneficial change in cash flows in the front half of any annuity and results in larger costs to be incurred in latter years.
- 3.14 The Council has a series of choices concerning its MRP calculation.

### **Options for Unsupported Borrowing**

- 3.15 The Council has adopted Option 3 of the Welsh Government's MRP Guidance for unsupported capital expenditure. Within option 3, two methods are identified. The first of these is the equal instalment method where MRP is charged on a straight line basis over the estimated life of the asset. The method allows an authority to make voluntary extra provision in any year. The Council has adopted the equal instalment method in its MRP Statement.
- 3.16 The alternative under Option 3 is the annuity method, which tends to evidence a trend of smaller payments in early years and larger payments on later years and has the advantage of linking MRP to the flow of benefits from an asset where the benefits are expected to increase in later years. An annuity can be structured to pay out funds for a fixed amount of time so like straight line this approach is designed to pay off a liability in a set period. Cipfa's Guidance states *'the informal commentary on the statutory guidance suggests that the annuity method may be particularly attractive in projects where revenues will increase over time. However, it is arguably the case that the annuity method provides a fairer charge than equal instalments as it takes account of the time value of money, whereby paying £100 in 10 years' time is less of a burden than paying £100 now. The schedule of charges produced by the annuity method thus results in a consistent charge over an asset's life, taking into account the real value of the amounts when they fall due. The annuity method would then be a prudent basis for providing for assets that provided a steady flow of benefits over their useful life'*
- 3.17 Given the above, consideration has been given to assessing the impact of adopting the annuity method for the council since the new regulations came into force. Calculations have been undertaken on the Council's unsupported borrowing using average PWLB Annuity Rates for each year since 2008/09 with the asset life linked to the appropriate PWLB loan period. MRP has commenced in line with the Welsh Government's MRP Guidance i.e. in the year following that in which the asset became operational in all cases (in a few specific cases the Council has commenced MRP in the year capital expenditure was incurred and also adopted an annuity approach).
- 3.18 Under the revised calculations £1.832 million less would have been set aside as MRP. This represents the combination of using the Annuity Method along with

commencing MRP in line with the Welsh Government's MRP Guidance. The Council's accounting policy on MRP is simply to set aside a prudent level of resources, and the method for achieving this is through the use of an accounting estimate. Changing the basis of the MRP calculation represents a change to the estimation technique employed within the options provided in the Guidance. As with any provision, calculations can be reviewed on a cumulative basis and any over-provisions made in previous years can be corrected in the year that they were identified. This revision would not lead to a prior period adjustment in the Statement of Accounts, but provides a benefit in the year the change takes place. In relation to the historic unsupported capital financing requirement, the Council would also gain a positive cash flow in MRP payments against current approach until 2025-26, as shown in Appendix 1.

- 3.19 Going forward any projections of new unsupported borrowing would also be calculated on an annuity basis and therefore alter the amounts set aside in the revenue MTFP. For 2016/17 the positive cashflow benefit would be £304k. The table in the resource implications section of this report outlines the adjustments that would be made.
- 3.20 An MRP Statement for 2016/17 based on the alternative options contained in this report is attached as Appendix 2

### **Options for supported borrowing**

- 3.21 The Council has adopted Option 2 of the Welsh Government's MRP Guidance for its supported capital expenditure. Under this Option MRP has historically been calculated at 4% on a reducing balance basis.
- 3.22 The percentage charge i.e 4% for supported borrowing could be reviewed. Ignoring any reducing balance aspect to the calculation, this 4% could be simplistically attributed to a useful economic life of circa 25 years. A review of the asset register is required to assess an average asset life in order to consider if 4% could be reduced based on a longer average asset life. Also consideration can be given to adopting an Annuity based calculation for MRP on the supported capital expenditure element of the CFR, whilst also amending the percentage charged. Further work is required on this aspect and will be brought back before the Committee at a future meeting.

### **External Audit view**

- 3.23 Given that the external auditor will need to sign off the accounts as "presenting fairly" the authority's financial position, the proposed approach will need to demonstrate that it is prudent, complies with Statute and takes into account implications in relation to the future generations. The WAO are currently considering the report and will provide a response in due course.

## 5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Based on the options explored above the Council could derive the following beneficial cash flow implications.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
<b>Option C: Move to annuity based on asset life on unsupported borrowing - retrospective</b>	<b>(1,832)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,832)</b>
<b>Option D: Move to Annuity based on asset life on unsupported new capital expenditure</b>	<b>(304)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(334)</b>	<b>(372)</b>	<b>(1,320)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>(2,136)</b>	<b>(310)</b>	<b>(334)</b>	<b>(372)</b>	<b>(3,152)</b>

## 6. FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Whilst the adoption of the revision to the MRP Policy could have a favourable effect on the Council's 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Plan, it needs to be stressed that these cash flow adjustments should not be considered as savings, the change merely pushes expenses towards the latter half of repayment schedule. However it can be argued that the annuity method takes account of the time value of money, whereby paying £100 in 10 years' time is less of a burden than paying £100 now. It therefore provides a consistent charge over an asset's life.

6.2 In addition reducing payments now means we can continue to keep services open now for the benefit of future generations rather than have to cut services now that may never get reinstated. The Future Generations Evaluation is contained in Appendix 3.

## 7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

None

## **8. CONSULTTEES:**

Head of Finance  
Chief Executive  
Executive Member for Resources  
Audit committee

8.1 The Audit committee considered this report on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015 where the balance of opinion was to recommend the proposal to Council. A summary of the issues raised at Audit Committee are included below:

8.2 *It would be useful to have WAOs response before advocating the approach to Council.* WAO were in attendance at the meeting and reported they are aware that increasing number of Councils are considering similar refinements to their Treasury Strategy, and that there is a letter on its way to Council's from the Auditor General on the subject. WAO confirmed that irrespective of this letter, it was a decision for individual Councils to take rather than them, and that their advice would involve reminding Councils of the considerations to take into account as follows,

1. Have regard for legislative regulations and guidance
2. Remain prudent
3. Considers Future generations implications.

8.3 In response to this it can be noted that the proposal does accord with the legislative framework and guidance as evidenced in section 3 above. The proposal is prudent and appropriate in that it introduces no additional net cost for the Council, being a refinement to cashflow profile. In terms of the Future generations implications these are covered in Section 6 of the report and Appendix 3 where it is explained that as the new method takes account of the time value of money, future generations are not being expected to pay disproportionately more than current Council Tax contributors.

8.4 *This is a budget saving exercise and more time should be taken to consider the change in policy.* In response, the proposal should not be viewed as providing a saving per se, the annuity basis reflects a fairer methodology for Council Tax payers and an examination of the MRP charges made from 2007/08 reveals that the Council has overprovided during the period 2007/08 to 2015/16. This over-provision could be released back to revenue to ensure the total provision to the end of 2016/17 is in line with the reprofiled MRP schedule, which has a benefit in mitigating further cost savings and service decline necessary to achieve a balanced budget which would be beneficial to both current and future taxpayers.

## **9 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 Annual Forecast of Existing and Modelled MRP changes  
Appendix 2 proposed MRP Statement for 2016/17  
Appendix 3 Future Generations Evaluation form

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**APPENDIX 1**

INDICATIVE CASHFLOW MOVEMENTS UNSUPPORTED BORROWING MRP CALCULATION

		Historic Capital Financing Requirement				Historic Capital Financing Requirement			Changes	
		Equal Instalment Method				Annuity Method				
Year	Year ending 31st March	CFR b/fwd	Equal instalment Method MRP	Set aside adjustment	CFR c/fwd	CFR b/fwd	Annuity Method MRP	CFR c/fwd	Gross Difference in MRP	Net MRP Difference
Prior		44,641,453	(4,137,712)		40,503,742	44,641,453	(3,041,975)	41,599,478		
0	2015	40,503,742	(2,236,744)		38,266,998	41,599,478	(1,877,432)	39,722,046	(1,455,049)	
1	2016	38,266,998	(2,522,530)	262,902	35,744,468	39,722,046	(1,882,810)	37,839,236	(376,818)	(1,831,866)
2	2017	35,744,468	(2,505,014)	262,902	33,221,938	37,839,236	(1,937,978)	35,901,258	(304,134)	(304,134)
3	2018	33,221,938	(2,504,071)	263,358	30,717,867	35,901,258	(1,945,429)	33,955,829	(295,285)	(295,285)
4	2019	30,717,867	(2,188,806)	263,358	28,529,060	33,955,829	(1,687,476)	32,268,353	(237,972)	(237,972)
5	2020	28,529,060	(1,730,464)	263,358	26,798,596	32,268,353	(1,380,658)	30,887,695	(86,448)	(86,448)
6	2021	26,798,596	(1,669,099)		25,129,497	30,887,695	(1,429,324)	29,458,371	(239,775)	(239,775)
7	2022	25,129,497	(1,669,099)		23,460,398	29,458,371	(1,479,891)	27,978,480	(189,208)	(189,208)
8	2023	23,460,398	(1,596,197)		21,864,201	27,978,480	(1,453,658)	26,524,822	(142,539)	(142,539)
9	2024	21,864,201	(1,596,197)		20,268,003	26,524,822	(1,506,702)	25,018,120	(89,495)	(89,495)
10	2025	20,268,003	(1,596,197)		18,671,806	25,018,120	(1,561,852)	23,456,268	(34,345)	(34,345)
11	2026	18,671,806	(1,596,197)		17,075,609	23,456,268	(1,619,195)	21,837,073	22,998	22,998
12	2027	17,075,609	(1,596,197)		15,479,412	21,837,073	(1,678,818)	20,158,255	82,621	82,621
13	2028	15,479,412	(1,596,197)		13,883,215	20,158,255	(1,740,814)	18,417,441	144,617	144,617
14	2029	13,883,215	(1,596,197)		12,287,018	18,417,441	(1,805,278)	16,612,163	209,081	209,081
15	2030	12,287,018	(1,596,197)		10,690,820	16,612,163	(1,872,311)	14,739,852	276,114	276,114
16	2031	10,690,820	(1,596,197)		9,094,623	14,739,852	(1,942,015)	12,797,837	345,818	345,818
17	2032	9,094,623	(1,596,197)		7,498,426	12,797,837	(2,014,500)	10,783,337	418,302	418,302
18	2033	7,498,426	(1,596,197)		5,902,229	10,783,337	(2,089,876)	8,693,461	493,679	493,679
19	2034	5,902,229	(1,408,485)		4,493,744	8,693,461	(1,949,719)	6,743,742	541,234	541,234
20	2035	4,493,744	(1,256,911)		3,236,832	6,743,742	(1,798,792)	4,944,950	541,880	541,880
21	2036	3,236,832	(1,084,104)		2,152,728	4,944,950	(1,585,334)	3,359,616	501,230	501,230
22	2037	2,152,728	(979,104)		1,173,623	3,359,616	(1,470,166)	1,889,450	491,062	491,062
23	2038	1,173,623	(639,335)		534,288	1,889,450	(977,722)	911,728	338,386	338,386
24	2039	534,288	(435,932)		98,356	911,728	(705,088)	206,640	269,156	269,156
25	2040	98,356	(98,356)		(0)	206,640	(206,640)	0	108,284	108,284
26	2041	(0)	(0)		(0)	0	0	0	0	0
27	2042	(0)	(0)		(0)	0	0	0	0	0
28	2043	(0)	(0)		(0)	0	0	0	0	0
29	2044	(0)	(0)		(0)	0	0	0	0	0
30	2045	(0)	(0)		(0)	0	0	0	0	0



		Historic Capital Financing Requirement plus Anticipated Unsupported Borrowing (next 4 year MTFP)					Historic Capital Financing Requirement plus Anticipated Unsupported Borrowing (next 4 year MTFP)					Changes	
		Equal Instalment Method					Annuity Method						
Year	Year ending 31st March	CFR b/fwd	Additional Unsupported Borrowing	Equal instalment Method MRP	Set aside	CFR c/fwd	CFR b/fwd	Additional Unsupported Borrowing	Annuity Method MRP	CFR c/fwd	Gross Difference in MRP	Net MRP Difference	
Prior													
0	2015	40,503,742		(2,236,744)		38,266,998	41,599,478		(1,877,432)	39,722,046	(1,455,049)		
1	2016	38,266,998		(2,522,530)	262,902	35,744,468	39,722,046		(1,882,810)	37,839,236	(376,818)	(1,831,866)	
2	2017	35,744,468	19,596,415	(2,505,014)	262,902	52,835,869	37,839,236	19,596,415	(1,937,978)	55,497,673	(304,134)	(304,134)	
3	2018	52,835,869	1,000,000	(2,545,637)	263,358	51,290,232	55,497,673	1,000,000	(1,972,432)	54,525,241	(309,847)	(309,847)	
4	2019	51,290,232	0	(2,430,605)	263,358	48,859,627	54,525,241	0	(1,833,556)	52,691,684	(333,691)	(333,691)	
6	2020	48,859,627	1,000,000	(2,430,605)	263,358	47,429,022	52,691,684	1,000,000	(1,795,504)	51,896,180	(371,743)	(371,743)	

Option	2015/16			2016/17			2017/18			2018/19			2019/20		
	Supported Borrowing	Unsupported Borrowing	Total MRP	Supported Borrowing	Unsupported Borrowing	Total MRP	Supported Borrowing	Unsupported Borrowing	Total MRP	Supported Borrowing	Unsupported Borrowing	Total MRP	Supported Borrowing	Unsupported Borrowing	Total MRP
2015/16 MTFP	£3,128,189	£2,403,095	£5,531,284	£3,101,833	£2,385,578	£5,487,411	£3,159,694	£2,426,201	£5,585,895	£3,225,640	£2,360,255	£5,585,895	£3,225,640	£2,360,255	£5,585,895
Budget Virements 2015/16 (Vehicles)		£119,435	£119,435		£119,435	£119,435		£119,435	£119,435		£70,350	£70,350		£70,350	£70,350
Budget Virements (Vehicles)					£53,072	£53,072		£93,966	£93,966		£293,941	£293,941		£190,208	£190,208
Set aside against ACM expenditure 2015/16		-£262,902	-£262,902	-£0	-£262,902	-£262,902	£39,774	-£263,358	-£223,584	£71,487	-£263,358	-£191,871	£169,169	-£263,358	-£94,189
<b>New options:</b>															
Option C: Move to Annuity based on asset life on Unsupported - Retrospective			£0		-£1,831,866	-£1,831,866			£0			£0			£0
Option D: Move to Annuity based on asset life on Unsupported new capex			£0		-£304,134	-£304,134		-£309,847	-£309,847		-£333,691	-£333,691		-£371,743	-£371,743
<b>Adjusted MRP budget</b>	£3,128,189	£2,259,628	£5,387,817	£3,101,833	£159,183.21	£3,261,016	£3,199,468	£2,066,398.37	£5,265,867	£3,297,127	£2,127,496.89	£5,424,624	£3,394,809	£1,985,711.92	£5,380,521
Increase/(Decrease) from existing MTFP			-£262,902			-£2,226,395			-£320,029			-£161,271			-£205,374

## **Appendix 2 - MRP Statement 2016/17**

The Welsh Government's Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision (issued in 2010) places a duty on local authorities to make a prudent provision for debt redemption. Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision has been issued by the Welsh Ministers and local authorities are required to "have regard" to such Guidance under section 21(1A) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The four MRP options available are:

- Option 1: Regulatory Method
- Option 2: CFR Method
- Option 3: Asset Life Method
- Option 4: Depreciation Method

*Note: This does not preclude other prudent methods.*

### **MRP in 2016/17:**

Options 1 and 2 may be used only for supported (i.e. financing costs deemed to be supported through Revenue Support Grant from Central Government) Non-HRA capital expenditure funded from borrowing. Methods of making prudent provision for unsupported Non-HRA capital expenditure include Options 3 and 4 (which may also be used for supported Non-HRA capital expenditure if the Authority chooses).

The MRP Statement will be submitted to Council before the start of the 2016/17 financial year. If it is ever proposed to vary the terms of the original MRP Statement during the year, a revised statement should be put to Authority at that time.

The Authority will apply Option 2 in respect of supported capital expenditure funded from borrowing and Option 3 in respect of unsupported capital expenditure funded from borrowing. There are 2 calculation methods which are available within option 3.

- The equal instalment method and
- The annuity method – whereby the MRP is the principal element for the year of the annuity required to repay the capital expenditure over the life of the asset

The annuity method will be used for unsupported borrowing. This is a change to previous policy, which was to use an equal instalment method.

MRP in respect of leases and Private Finance Initiative schemes brought on Balance Sheet under the CIPFA Accounting Code of Practice will match the annual principal repayment for the associated deferred liability.

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<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation Mark Howcroft</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b>01633 644740 <b>E-mail:</b>markhowcroft@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>To review the treasury strategy with regard to minimum revenue provision calculation</p>
<p><b>Name of Service Chief Executives Business Support</b></p>	<p><b>Date Future Generations Evaluation</b> form completed</p>





1. **Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal.


Page 45

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The existing method of calculation (equal installment basis) takes no account of time value of money and so could easily be construed as disproportionately affecting existing service users through their Council tax contributions towards the sustaining of services.</p> <p>Reducing payments now means we can continue to keep services now for the benefit of future generations rather than cut services now that may never get reinstated.</p>	<p>The proposal alters the cashflow of minimum revenue provision payments involved in the unsupported costs of borrowing to an annuity method. This provides a cashflow benefit in early years and an increased cost in latter, but overall the cost is the same. The revision to an annuity method from equal installment basis better reflects the time value of money over the indicative life of the asset.</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b></p>	<p>N/A</p>	

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)		
<b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	N/A	
<b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	The viable aspect is consider in the efficient use of resources above	
<b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	N/A	
<b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	N/A	
<b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	<i>This includes the protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or beliefs, gender, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership</i>	

2. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Long-term Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal provides a positive cashflow effect until 2027-28 after which the cashflows effect becomes negative against the equal installment approach. The existing approach ignores the time value of money and could be viewed as disproportionately affecting current tax payers. The revised proposal provides a payment approach that avoids that inequality.</p>	
 <p>Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
 <p>Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>N/A</p>	
 <p>Prevention Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>N/A</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p data-bbox="327 213 510 400">Positively impacting on people, economy and environment</p> <p data-bbox="125 405 510 440">and trying to benefit all three</p>	<p data-bbox="546 213 1305 347"><i>There is space to describe impacts on people, economy and environment under the Wellbeing Goals above, so instead focus here on how you will better integrate them and balance any competing impacts</i></p>	



**3. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The proposal does not seek to treat any individual with a protected characteristic any differently. The consequence of the proposal in providing a cash flow benefit to the organization up to 2027-28 will allow services to be maintained where the alternative in providing a balanced annual budget could be a reduction in service offering which would affect any number of service users.		
Disability	As above		
Gender reassignment	As above		
Marriage or civil partnership	As above		
Race	As above		
Religion or Belief	As above		
Sex	As above		
Sexual Orientation	As above		
Welsh Language	As above.		

D99049

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on important responsibilities of Corporate Parenting and safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect either of these responsibilities? For more information please see the guidance <http://hub/corporatedocs/Democratic%20Services/Safeguarding%20Guidance.docx> and for more on Monmouthshire's Corporate Parenting Strategy see <http://hub/corporatedocs/SitePages/Corporate%20Parenting%20Strategy.aspx>

	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting</b>	<b>What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
Safeguarding	The proposal does not seek to treat any individual with a safeguarding aspect differently. The consequence of the proposal in providing a cash flow benefit to the organization up to 2027-28 will allow services to be maintained where the alternative in providing a balanced annual budget could be a reduction in service offering which would affect any number of service users.		
Corporate Parenting	The proposal does not seek to treat any individual with a corporate parenting consideration any differently. The consequence of the proposal in providing a cash flow benefit to the organization up to 2027-28 will allow services to be maintained where the alternative in providing a balanced annual budget could be a reduction in service offering which would affect any number of service users.		

5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

- Baseline examination of unsupported borrowing schemes, with payments modelled on an equal installment and annuity basis for comparison.
- Consideration of similar developments in other local authorities.
- Regard for capital financing regulations
- Services of Treasury advisers
- Feedback from WAO

**6. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

The change in approach provides a neutral cashflow consideration overall, but will introduce a positive cashflow up to and including 2027-28 with a complementary negative cashflow thereafter. The change in approach better reflects the time value of money and avoids current tax payers contributing disproportionately to the repayment of debt..

**7. Actions. As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.**

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
None			

**8. Monitoring: The impacts of this proposal will need to be monitored and reviewed. Please specify the date at which you will evaluate the impact, and where you will report the results of the review.**

<b>The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:</b>	Half yearly Treasury Strategy to Audit Committee (Sept-Oct 2016)
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## REPORT

**SUBJECT: Adjustments to the Capital budget during 2015/16**

**MEETING: Council**

**DATE: 17th December 2015**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Abergavenny, Monmouth, Rogiet**

### 1. PURPOSE

For Council to receive recommendations from Cabinet and if thought fit to approve adjustments to the capital budget in 2015/16.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council approve the following recommendations arising from Cabinet decisions taken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015:

**2.1** That Council approve the creation of a capital budget of £1,050,000 in 2015/16 for improvements to the public realm in Abergavenny Town Centre, the budget to be taken from the £3,433,000 capital released when the decision was taken not to build a new library in Abergavenny (Council, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2015). The funding of which is proposed to be capital receipts.

**2.2** That Council approve the creation of a capital budget of £275,000 in 2015/16 for the development of a car park off Rockfield Road, Monmouth. The budget to be created by prudential borrowing funded from car park income over a period of 10 or 20 years – to be agreed with finance colleagues.

**2.3** That Council approve the creation of a capital budget of £45,000 in 2015/16 for the development of a car park at Rogiet Playing field (adjacent to Severn Tunnel Junction. The budget to be created by prudential borrowing funded from car park income over a period of 10 or 20 years – to be agreed with finance colleagues.

### 3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December Cabinet considered recommendations to create capital budgets in support of various projects:

Detail surrounding each project may be found in the Cabinet report (see link below).

<http://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/g238/Public%20reports%20pack%2002nd-Dec-2015%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

In summary the schemes are:

3.2 Works to improve the public realm in Abergavenny Town centre and for this work to commence in January 2016 to allow completion prior to the Eisteddfod in July 2016.

3.3 The development of a new car park off Rockfield Road Monmouth (adjacent to the skate park) in response to the need for additional car parking within the town.

3.4 The development of additional car parking on Rogiet Playing Field (predominantly to assist parking congestion created by rail users at Severn Tunnel Junction). The scheme to be developed jointly with Rogiet CC and prior to the road bridge crossing the rails at Severn Tunnel Junction being replaced (commencing sometime in 2016).

*Note: The Cabinet report contained a further recommendation to create a capital budget to undertake works at the Usk HQ site to create additional office accommodation. This recommendation was withdrawn in order that officers might provide a report to a future Cabinet meeting giving further information and options surrounding office accommodation and budget implications.*

#### **4. REASONS**

4.1 The three projects summarised above represent amendments to the Council's approved capital budget. To approve additional capital expenditure and hence a change to the capital budget, requires a decision of council.

Cabinet is recommending to Council that the budget adjustments be made.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 The capital budget for the Abergavenny Public realm project (£1,050,000) is taken from the budget released when the decision was taken in February 2015 to no longer build a new library in Abergavenny (£3,433,000). The expenditure will be split over 2015/16 and 2016/17 at this time officers estimate that the split of funding between these years is £450,000 and £600,000 respectively.

5.2 The funding assessments for both the Wyebridge street car park and Rockfield Road car park were included within the report to Cabinet in September 2014 (see link below to the relevant appendix)

<http://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/20140903/Agenda/Full%20Cabinet%20Agenda.pdf>

However the costs need to be revised from £250,000 (as reported in September 2014) to £275,000 for the Rockfield Road development (based upon the detailed design and estimates). The higher capital budget remains affordable by extending the prudential borrowing period (say from 10 years

to 15 years) or by absorbing the increased revenue spend from the assumed increased surplus of £37,788 (as reported in September 2014).

The expenditure will be incurred in 2015/16 assuming progress with the new car park order.

5.3 The Rogiet Playing field car park can be developed for £45,000. It will generate income estimated at £22,000 per annum. Whilst custom will be affected when the bridge is replaced the cost of parking at Rogiet playing field coupled with the growing number of passengers travelling by rail from Severn Tunnel Junction suggests that custom levels will remain sufficient to fund the investment and thereafter offer revenue sufficient to justify the car park being created.

The £45,000 budget will be funded by prudential borrowing although the period of borrowing (and hence revenue implication) will be ascertained by accountancy staff.

It is anticipated that all works will be completed in 2015/16 assuming no delay in relation to authority to proceed and the adoption of the new car park order.

**6. FUTURE GENERATIONS and EQUALITY ASSESSMENT**  
As described in the FGEA attached to the Cabinet report.

Link below:

<http://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/g238/Public%20reports%20pack%202nd-Dec-2015%2014.00%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

**SAFEGUARDING ASSESSMENT:**

There are no safeguarding implications associated with the recommendations within this report.

**7. CONSULTEES:**

SLT

Cabinet members

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS: Report to cabinet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 titled 'Adjustments to the Capital budget within 2015/16'**

Link provided above.

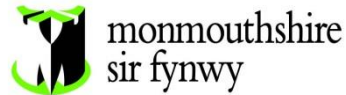
**9. AUTHORS**

Roger Hoggins, Head of Operations

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Community Governance –Review Findings &amp; Recommendations</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Council</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> October 2015</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

To update Members on the findings of the Community Governance Review and the proposed recommendations to develop a more coherent and partnership approach with communities.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Council agrees to adopt the actions and recommendations proposed within the Community Governance review, in particular that Area Committees are disbanded forthwith.

2.2 A cross party Member working group is established which equally represents the four administrative areas. This group will

- be responsible for developing a revised framework which preserves the leadership role of elected members, supports and encourages community participation and oversees the delivery of the local Whole Place plan.
- Recommends a revised framework to County Council no later than 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

2.3 Whole Place Programme Boards will continue to meet until County Council has agreed a revised framework.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 As members will be aware Community governance within Monmouthshire has been delivered through four Area Committees which were designed as an opportunity for communities to be involved in local democracy. No decision making is delegated to the Area Committees but it does provide an opportunity for issues of local concern to be raised and debated.

- 3.2 The implementation of Whole Place has resulted in another tier of local governance which sits outside the Area Committee process. Programme Boards have been established in Severnside and Bryn y Cwm and they manage the delivery of the local plan. They are made up of elected county, community and Town councillors and representatives from community organisations.
- 3.3 The overlapping and complicated structures have led to dissatisfaction amongst community stakeholders .In addition the loss of the Area Manager roles and the implementation of the Whole Place team has resulted in a disconnect between the process and delivery frameworks set up to support community governance.
- 3.4 Recognising these concerns a Community Governance Review was commissioned. Following a tender exercise Keith Edwards was appointed to undertake this review in March of this year. The purpose of the review was to reflect on the experience of the dual processes to date and identify opportunities for a more streamlined and effective approach to delivery. The conclusions of this review have now been documented in a report entitled *Whole Place and Community Governance in Monmouthshire* (see appendix 1). The report outlines twelve recommendations around reducing complexity, having more clearly defined roles and responsibilities and streamlining local governance structures. There is also an associated action plan entitled *Key Challenges and Potential Responses* (see appendix 2).
- 3.5 The twelve recommendations are summarised as follows:
- Monmouthshire County Council will implement the recommendations of the report to enable a simpler local governance framework with clear lines of accountability and responsibility and provide access to funds to support local priorities.
  - Terms of reference for each group integral to Whole Place will be developed in partnership and outlined in a single document.
  - Monmouthshire re-align Whole Place internally, developing streamlined decision processes, inter department working and embedding corporate responsibility for the delivery of this agenda.
  - Elected Members to undertake a local leadership role in engaging communities to deliver Whole Place. This involves replacing Area Committees with an annual joint Member/Programme Board summit, surgeries and the

appointment of an Elected Member as a Whole Place Champion in each area who will sit on the Programme Board and updating Council.

- Review of Programme Boards, their memberships, remits and how they relate to the Council and their community.
- Re-inforce the importance of Town and Community Councils in the delivery of Whole Place through Programme Board membership.
- Town and Community Councils should build on existing networks and share resources.
- Re-inforce the independence of Community Forums and help build self-reliance.
- Programme Boards need to audit the engagement with excluded groups and produce an action plan to address deficits.
- Process for identifying new initiative and fast tracking their consideration and approval should be considered, whilst ensuring that it still meets all the legal and financial accountability tests.
- The Council should review Whole Place support and resources and ensure it aligns with community hubs and developing more area based services.
- The Whole Place team should work with communities to co-design the service.

3.6 A member seminar was held on 12<sup>th</sup> November, when Keith Edwards attended and provided a synopsis of the study including how the recommendations were determined. Amongst the 8 members that attended, there was broad support for the removal of the Area Committees, however there was no general consensus on the replacement delivery vehicle. A number of proposals were made which include;

- An area scrutiny committee
- A committee made up of local members who would be the decision making process for community projects or funding requests.
- The need to retain public forums
- A process that enables cross boundary issues to be picked up and discussed at a more strategic level.

- Whatever process is adopted effective communications need to be at the heart.

3.7 To progress this work it is proposed that a cross party Member working group is established which equally represents the four administrative areas. This group will be responsible for developing a revised framework which preserves the leadership role of elected members, supports and encourages community participation and oversees the delivery of the local Whole Place plan. Given the need to maintain momentum within the community, the Whole Place Programme Boards will continue until the new framework has been agreed and implemented.

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

4.1 The report followed a series of interviews and workshops with Elected Members (County, Town and Community), representatives of the Community Forum, Town Teams, Community Leaders and Officers. The key issues raised were then used to determine the actions and recommendations contained with the report.

4.2 The key areas of concerns were outlined as follows:

- Improving communication and dialogue at all levels within the Council.
- Speeding up decision making
- Ensuring buy in across all service departments
- Providing adequate resources to enable effective transition, e.g. investing in capital assets before transfer
- Not enough engagement in Whole Place with Community Councils and their populations.
- Area Committees, mixed responses as some support them and others suggest that they are anachronistic and create confusion.
- Capacity within local communities, Town Teams and Town / Community Councils.
- The need to extend the range and quantity of activists
- The Council needs to allocate resources to the Programme Board.
- Better flow of appropriate information.

4.3 The implementation of the Localism Act, impending changes to Local Government, the Councils vision to create sustainable and resilient communities and the increasing constrained financial position require the Council to develop stronger, robust and viable partnerships with local communities to help deliver local priorities. The Whole Place agenda has set

this direction within Monmouthshire, however there is significantly more work to do to embed this as evidenced by the findings in the report.

- 4.4 It is inevitable that the restrictions imposed on local government as regards decision making and accountability will impact on our ability to respond to proposals put forward by Programme Boards and local communities. It is essential therefore to develop a decision framework that is as streamlined as possible but still meets all the threshold tests.
- 4.5 The proposed removal of Area Committees will undoubtedly be met with some opposition. The Programme Boards represent a new way of interacting with our local communities, broadening the membership beyond Elected Members and using the priorities as determined by the local communities in their Whole Place Plan to shape action plans and deliver outcomes.
- 4.6 It is recognised that Whole Place has not yet been implemented in Central Monmouthshire and has only recently been commenced in Lower Wye. There will therefore be a transition period if the recommendations are approved, where the processes are developed and agreed prior to commencing a new governance framework.
- 4.7 Given the complexities of community governance and the increasing significance of community participation in the delivery of local services, further consideration needs to be given to the governance framework. It is evident that members remain concerned that any changes do not diminish their leadership and accountability roles. It is proposed therefore that a cross party task and finish member working group is established which will be tasked with developing a framework which preserves the leadership role of elected members, supports and encourages community participation and oversees the delivery of the local Whole Place plan. This group should be required to agree and recommend to Council a revised structure no later than 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016.

## **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 The proposed MTFP recommends the removal of the current £5k per annum allocation to the Area Committees.

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

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

**7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications arising from this report.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

All Cabinet Members  
Leadership team  
Head of Legal Services  
Member Seminar  
Strong Communities Seminar

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Whole Place and Community Governance Review (Appendix 1 & 2)

**10. AUTHORS:**

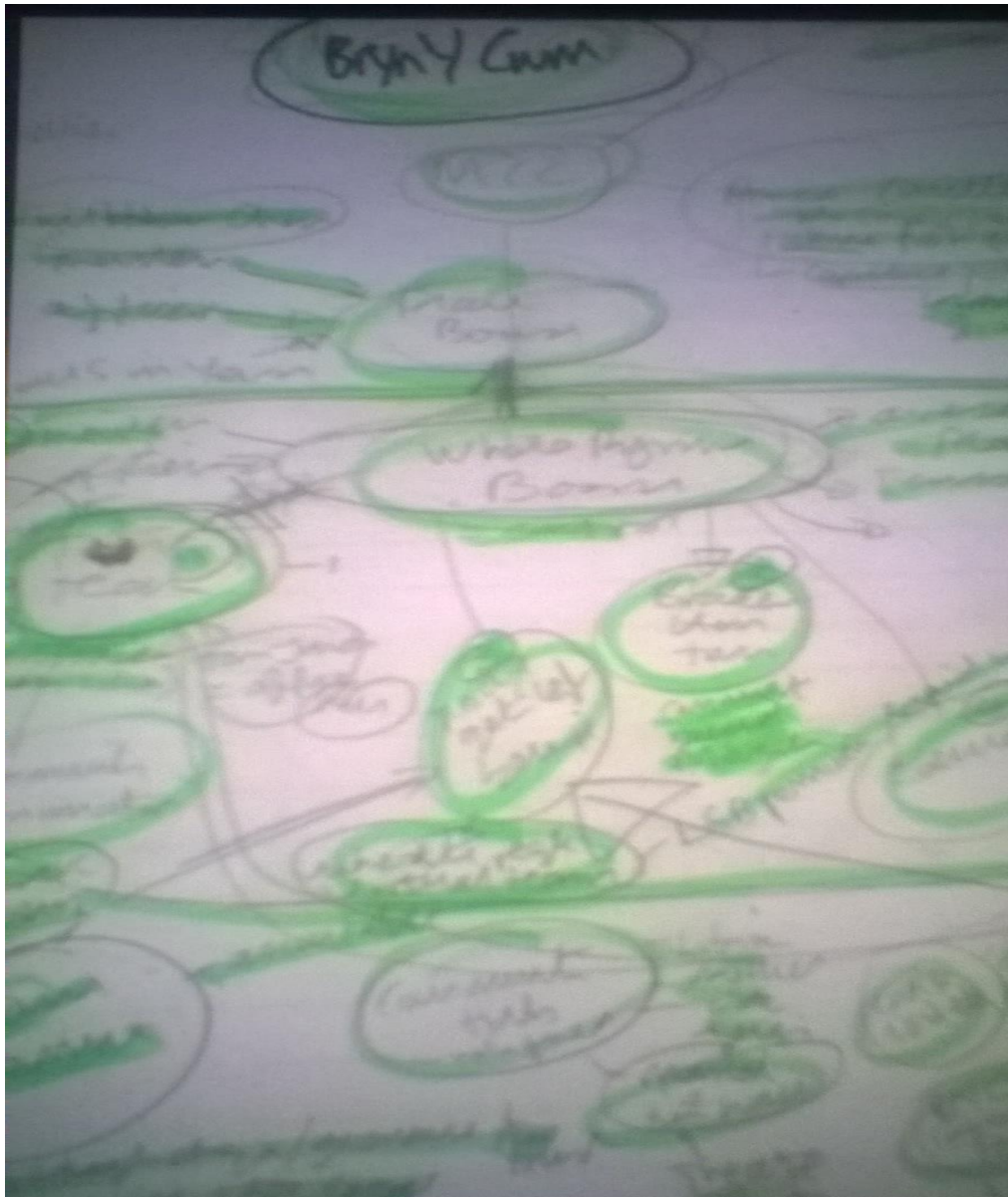
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Appendix 1

# **Whole Place and Community Governance in Monmouthshire**



## A Review by Keith Edwards

### Contents

1. Introduction
2. Executive Summary



### **3. Background & Context**

### **4. The Four Settlements**

**Bryn Y Cwm**

**Sevenside**

**Central Monmouthshire and Lower Wye**

### **5. Key Issues**

**Complexity**

**Inclusivity**

**Accountability**

**Whole Place Governance**

**Community and Voluntary Sector**

**Resources**

**Social Capital**

**Communication**

**Supporting Innovation**

**Measuring Outcomes**

**A Question of Balance**

### **6. The Way Forward**

### **7. Recommendations**

### **8. Acknowledgements**

# 1. Introduction

This project and report were commissioned in March 2015 by Monmouthshire County Council (MCC). The focus was a review of current community governance arrangements centred on the key settlements as part of the councils Whole Place programme. It included the two settlement areas that have pioneered the approach:

**Bryn Y Cwm** centered on Abergavenny and including the rural communities of north Monmouthshire; and

**Severnside** centered on Caldicot and also including Magor and other surrounding communities;

and two which are scheduled to implement Whole Place over the next three to twelve months:

**Central Monmouthshire** centered on Monmouth Town and including Raglan and Usk and the surrounding areas: and

**Lower Wye** centered on Chepstow and its hinterland.

The twin aims were to take stock of the experience to date and identify opportunities to enable a more streamlined approach to delivery. From the councils perspective this will help its wider long term strategy to support resilient communities and ensure more efficient, effective and convenient delivery of local services. That said it is important to stress that a review of strategic priorities and activities - outlined in for example *Seven for Severnside* and *A Better Bryn Y Cwm* – although constantly referred to by stakeholders were outside of the remit of this project. Never the less a significant number of initiatives were flagged up and although not included in this report will be fed into MCC and Programme Boards.

Central to the project methodology was engaging with community leaders and stakeholder groups through a series of interviews and consultative workshops in Abergavenny and Caldicot with:

- County Councillors;
- Community Forum Representatives;
- Town and Community Councillors and Officers;
- Town Teams in Abergavenny and Caldicot;
- Community Leaders and their organisations; and
- Strategic and operational Officers of the Council.

This report is the result of that work. It considers the key issues that have arisen so far from the council's perspective and those of stakeholders' and poses a number of challenges and suggests potential responses. It is hoped this report will help those areas where Whole Place has been introduced, review the experience to date and

plan for the future as well as informing the introduction of this approach in areas where it is yet to be introduced.

A series of recommendations are included at section 7.

## 2. Executive Summary

‘The pursuit of viable, sustainable models of delivery that put citizen power and democratic accountability at their heart are now the essential rather than optional way forward in Wales’

### Background & Context

Whole Place is an approach developed by MCC that is essentially moving from a prescriptive *top down* model to a *bottom up* approach designed and driven by citizens and communities.

The impetus for change comes from within MCC and is proactive, predating other drivers such as the need to deal with unprecedented cuts to government support for local authorities.

The position of MCC at the cutting edge of this agenda is acknowledged by Ministers and other local authorities.

Devolution of power to communities needs to be complimented by robust means of accountability particularly as public funding is involved.

### The Four Settlements

In each of the four main settlements devolution of responsibilities is at different stages and the social, economic and cultural drivers vary.

Bryn-y-Cwm is a construct of MCC with little association by local people with the term. Centred on Abergavenny, the area appears outwardly prosperous and vibrant.

Following an extensive community engagement exercise in 2012 / 2013 the Whole Place plan *Better Bryn-y-Cwm* was produced which identified four main priorities.

- Abergavenny Town Centre and the wider business environment;
- Making sure no one get left further behind;
- Strengthening education and business skills; and
- Creating a sustainable settlement.

*Severnside* is also a construct of MCC although there is more association with the term by local people than was evident in *Bryn-y-Cwm*.

A comprehensive community planning exercise in partnership with the local community resulted in 2013 in *Seven for Severnside: the Plan for a Better Severnside* which identified key areas for action focussing on:

- Severnside Community Campus;
- Caldicot Town regeneration;
- Capitalising on Severnside's 'gateway' location and assets;
- Better Homes;
- Enterprise;
- Strategic Opportunities; and
- Making it Happen.

*Central Monmouthshire* has a strong and active Community Forum. As well as Monmouth itself, the area also contains two other substantial communities at Raglan and Usk. The plan is to start work on Whole Place in September 2015

*Lower Wye* is also an administrative construct, centred on Chepstow. It is a unique community which also has a large Army based population and it is also seen as the central community for significant numbers of people living across the border in England. The plan is to commence Whole Place work in April 2016.

## **Key Issues**

The principles underpinning Whole Place have been broadly embraced and there is widespread recognition that MCC and partners are in the early stages of a long transformational journey.

There is unanimity that a simpler governance model is needed for both 'active' areas and in the roll-out to the other two areas.

The Whole Place focus on 'nobody gets left behind' is welcome but needs constant monitoring.

MCC bears final responsibility for Whole Place and is accountable to Welsh Government, regulators and ultimately to local people through the ballot box.

Devolution of Whole Place needs to be balanced with recognition of the democratic legitimacy of the council as a whole and of individual elected members.

Without exception all stakeholders recognise the dilemma facing MCC: it has significantly less resources yet demand for services continues to increase.

There is a perception that although new community governance arrangements have been established that MCC has not aligned internal processes and decision making to ensure delivery.

There are number of specific 'asks' of MCC including:

- improving communication and dialogue at all levels;
- speeding up decision making;
- ensuring corporate buy-in across all service departments; and
- providing adequate resources to enable effective transition by, for example, investing in capital assets before transfer.

A particular issue concerns the role of Area Committees. There is some support for the continuation of Area Committees but an alternative view that they are anachronistic and by standing alongside the new community governance structures are the source of potential confusion.

There is however a need to embed the role of members in Whole Place to strike the balance between legitimate democratic involvement and community control of setting priorities.

There is increasing expectation that Town and Community Councils (T&CCs) will have a greater role in setting local priorities and even delivering services going forward. However there is a mixed view of the capacity of them to 'step up' particularly in relation to smaller councils.

There are also concerns that there is not enough engagement in Whole Place with outlying Community Councils and their populations.

Programme Boards are at the centre of Whole Place and their structure and activities should be reviewed.

The ability of Town Teams in Caldicot and Abergavenny to marshal additional resources is seen as a positive but extending the base of volunteers is a key challenge.

Across the county there are hundreds of voluntary groups who play a critical role in community life – from representing views of particular groups to running facilities and services.

MCC has recently moved away from providing administrative and financial support to Community Forums. Whilst budget pressures undoubtedly played a role in this

decision there is also a desire by the council to empower forums to act independently and develop their own capacity.

Many stakeholders have highlighted the need to genuinely set local priorities and recognise that delivery will depend on aligning resources to deliver.

There are opportunities to streamline and simplify processes to generate savings that could then be invested elsewhere. For example replacing Area Committees with an annual Programme Board / Elected Member Summit.

Consideration should be given to centrally developed yet local adaptable resources including toolkits and step by step guides.

Social capital is unevenly spread and is more prevalent in prosperous areas.

It is imperative to extend the range and quantity of activists and MCC in partnership with Programme Boards need to adopt a proactive strategy including allocating resources to this.

Key to the success of Whole Place will be the regular flow of appropriate information between MCC and the Programme Board and between both and the wider community.

Consideration should be given to having relatively small pots of money available to carry out preliminary work pre full feasibility study to help projects gain initial momentum and get them on to MCC 'radar'.

There are many examples of activities that have delivered on the ground – from small community focussed initiatives through to establishing companies to pursue specific, long term projects.

As well as being able to evidence impact to MCC, WG and regulators, a clear sense of what has been achieved will be essential in maintaining momentum and attracting wider support and involvement. There needs to be a range of outcome measures to help achieve this.

There are a number of apparent and potential tensions that arose during the project associated with the transition from traditional governance arrangements to Whole Place that need to be resolved.

## **The Way Forward**

Whilst there are very many positive aspects of the Whole Place experience to date, this project has clearly identified areas that could be improved.

Many specific ideas on how to move forward have emerged during the course of this work and are contained in the *Key Challenges and Potential Responses* action plan that accompanies this report.

The biggest challenge of all is to ensure that Whole Place delivers modern and efficient services that meet the needs of all the citizens of Monmouthshire.

### 3. Background & Context

‘Standing still is not an option, indeed inaction could result in the worst outcome of all – disappearing services leading to large scale redundancies, citizens unable to meet their essential needs and increasing community frustration and anger’

Whole Place is an approach developed by MCC that is innovative, and recognised as such by government and peer authorities; and transformative, based on a fundamental shift in power and responsibility. This is essentially moving from a prescriptive *top down* model to a *bottom up* approach designed and driven by citizens and communities. It involves:

- developing mechanisms through which statutory and voluntary agencies, community groups and local people themselves are engaged, listened to and able to influence decisions that affect them;
- designing and delivering services that are based on what matters to local people and their communities; and
- establishing an effective and sustainable collaborative community governance framework connecting citizens, communities, MCC and other partners.

The impetus for change comes from within MCC and is proactive, predating other drivers such as the need to deal with unprecedented cuts to government support for local authorities (with Monmouthshire fairing worse relative to most other authorities in Wales) and the imperative for public service transformation outlined in the white paper *Reforming Local Government: Power to Local People*. The position of MCC at the cutting edge of this agenda is acknowledged by Ministers and other local authorities.

Whilst the direction of travel is clearly towards devolution of power to communities, the authority is mindful of the need to have in place a robust means of ensuring

accountability particularly as public funding is involved. Indeed following a Wales Audit Office report in 2014, MCC identified a number of issues to address including:

- balancing consistency with diversity;
- variations in social capital;
- targeting sufficient resources;
- avoiding duplication;
- balancing short term actions with a long term vision;
- aligning service delivery; and
- monitoring outcomes.

## 4. The Four Settlements

‘Whole Place is a way of reinvigorating  
our communities in tough times’

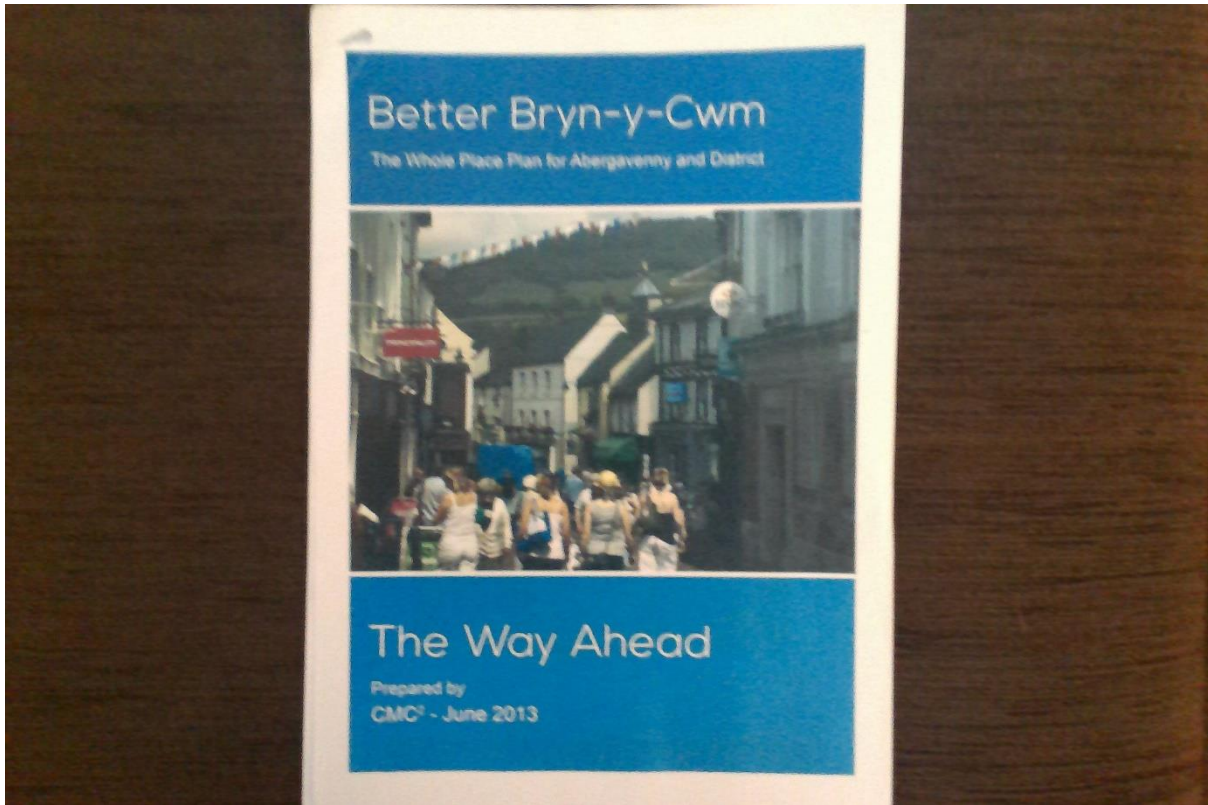
Whole Place focuses on the four main settlements which, whilst similar, have different ‘speeds and needs’ – devolution of responsibilities will be at different stages and the social, economic and cultural drivers will vary.

### **Bryn-y-Cwm**

A number of respondents remarked that the idea of *Bryn-y-Cwm* is a construct of MCC with little association by local people with the term. Centred on Abergavenny, the area appears outwardly prosperous and vibrant. A previous community audit identified nearly 200 local groups and initiatives, and Whole Place activities have underlined it is ‘social capital’ rich.

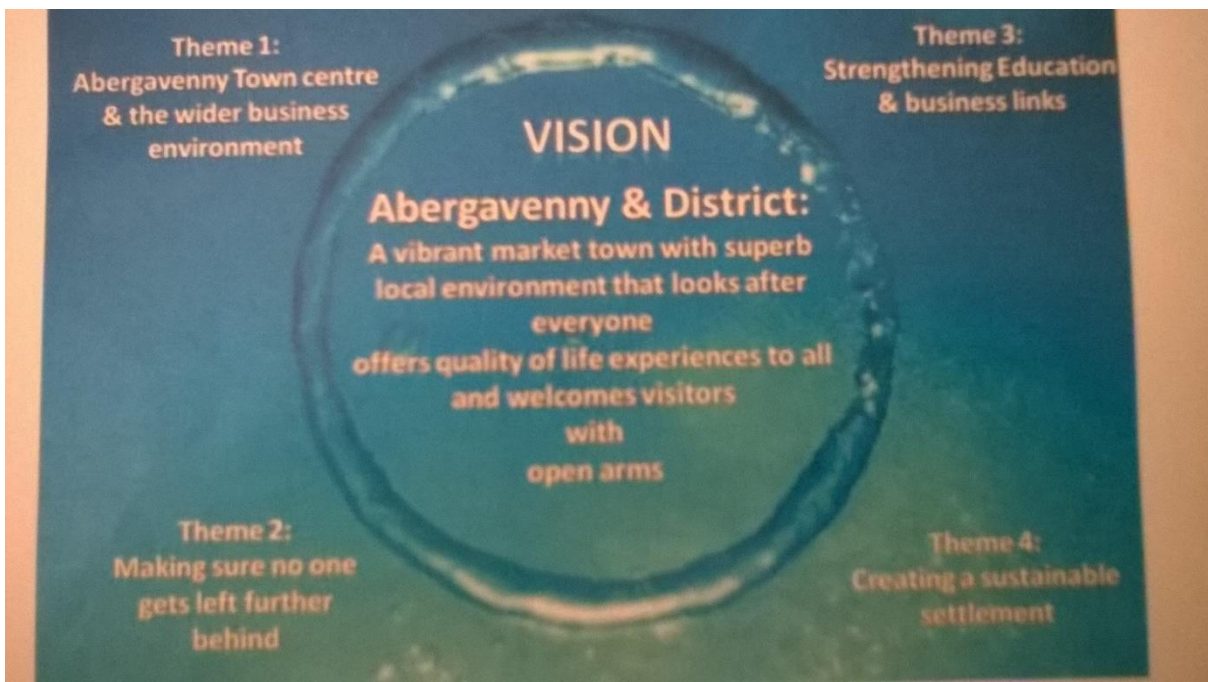
Following an extensive community engagement exercise in 2012 / 2013 the Whole Place plan *Better Bryn-y-Cwm* was produced.





Four key themes were identified:

- Abergavenny Town Centre and the wider business environment;
- Making sure no one get left further behind;
- Strengthening education and business skills; and
- Creating a sustainable settlement.



In the past few years there have been tensions between MCC and the community over the Cattle Market site development. More recently a sense that community leaders want to move on has emerged and Area Committees are seen as an important forum by a number of community representatives.

Building a strong relationship between the Town Council and Team Abergavenny is essential. There is growing momentum around initiatives to develop income earning ideas e.g. around food and local produce with surpluses reinvested in the community.

There is however concern that 'hard to reach' groups are not fully participating and recognition that efforts have to be made to improve this. One respondent flagged up the fact that there are no disabled people on the Town Team Abergavenny Board.

### **Severnside**

<p>'Severnside is a place that could potentially do very, very good things'</p>
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*Severnside* is also a construct of MCC although there is more association with the term by local people than was evident in *Bryn-y-Cwm*.

In 2012 MCC commissioned consultants to draw up a comprehensive community plan in partnership with the local community. The resultant report – *Seven for Severnside: the Plan for a Better Severnside* – identified key areas for action:



### Severnside Community Campus

- A new campus in Caldicot for secondary education, lifelong learning, community facilities and services



### Caldicot Town Centre Regeneration

- Integration of the new Superstore and a Partnership to revitalize the Town Centre



### Welcome to Severnside

- Capitalise on Severnside's position as a Gateway to Wales and build on its environmental and heritage assets



### Better Homes in Severnside

- Estate regeneration, environmental improvement and estate remodelling



### Enterprising Severnside

- Building on the area's economic strengths and creating the conditions for new enterprise



### Strategic Opportunities in Severnside

- Assuring sustainable development of key strategic sites in the area



### Making it Happen

- Partnership Structures and approach to deliver the plan

Caldicot is at the centre of Whole Place although one consultee said it was a 'made up town' and may be the aspiration should be 'to be a great commuter town'. There is a strong feeling by community leaders in Magor that their town is a poor relation to Caldicot when it comes to services although it has roughly two thirds the population of its neighbour. There have been calls to ensure that Whole Place strategies recognise that facilities have to be developed and supported elsewhere and that there needs to be a 'second wave' of subsidiarity.

A number of business ideas are being actively developed including plans for community control of Caldicot Castle. Caldicot Town Council has stepped up in relation to taking on limited responsibility for community facilities and already has experience of running the local cemetery. There is a local perception that the Town Council and Town Team do not always work well together and that it may be time to

'recalibrate' the relationship. One councillor however cited a good example of the Town Council, MCC and local social landlords pooling resources and expertise to develop a local play area.

### **Central Monmouthshire and Lower Wye**

The plan is to introduce Whole Place to the remaining two areas over the next 12 months. *Central Monmouthshire* has a strong and active Community forum that has a good relationship with MCC members and officers. As well as the county town of Monmouth, the area also contains two other substantial communities at Raglan and Usk. The plan is to start work on Whole Place in September 2015

There is also an excellent example of a community led initiative in the Two Rivers Meadow community orchard, driven by community activists and harnessing the support of the private sector and MCC.

*Lower Wye* is also an administrative construct, centred on Chepstow. It is a unique community which also has a large Army based population (include although located in England?) and it is also seen as the central community for significant numbers of people living across the border in England. The plan is to commence Whole Place work in April 2016.

## **5. Key Issues**

<p>'Current arrangements are not fit for purpose – not the right people, not the right agenda'</p>
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The principles underpinning Whole Place - variously referred to as community empowerment, devolution and subsidiarity – were very broadly embraced and everyone acknowledged that MCC and partners are in the early stages of a long transformational journey. Opinions on how things were working in practice varied and would often depend on 'where the camera was' e.g. the effectiveness of Town Teams to date elicited a range of views from very positive to mildly sceptical. However there were a number of issues of common concern even if ideas on how to address them varied.

### **Complexity**

<p>'In an ideal world we could do with a fresh start'</p>
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The current community governance infrastructure falls into four broad categories:

- *Democratic structures* including Area Committees, Scrutiny Committees, Town and Community Councils;
- *Whole Place structures* including Programme Boards, Town Teams, Nobody Left Behind groups;
- *Voluntary Structures* including Community Forums, Civic Societies, Church groups, Business Groups; and
- *Project specific and partnership Initiatives* including improvement programmes, community asset transfers, E Commerce initiatives;

Although the degree of complexity is greater in *Bryn-y-Cwm* than *Severnside*, there is unanimity that simpler governance model for both ‘active’ areas and in the roll-out to *Central Monmouthshire* and *Lower Wye* was needed. There is also a view that too many committees and sub committees currently exist for Whole Place to be either efficient or effective.

Key concerns where the lack of clarity over powers, roles and responsibilities which could lead to duplication or, if no one took responsibility, inaction on important matters.

### **Inclusivity**

‘the interface between representative and participative democracy is critical’

Whole Place is predicated on equality of opportunity for everyone to participate and recognition that certain individuals and groups will need additional support to do so. The focus on ‘nobody gets left behind’ is welcome but there needs constant monitoring to ensure no individuals and groups do not become marginalised.

This includes:

- *People with Disabilities*: Contact Action Inform Represent (CAIR) as well as being a voice for people with disabilities, has identified a number of issues that need to be ever present in designing and delivering local services including:

- access to public and commercial buildings and the public realm;
  - disproportionate effect of cuts to welfare benefits on disabled people and the need to mitigate the impact wherever possible;
  - disproportionate reliance on public transport by disabled people and susceptibility to cuts; and
  - the need to make additional resources to empower people with disabilities to fully participate.
- *Secondary Settlements:* Whole Place structures focus on the four main settlements but there are other substantial communities within the county. In the case of *Severnside*, whilst Caldicot is at the centre, Magor has a population two thirds that of close neighbour. The Town of Monmouth is the centre of Whole Place in *Central Monmouthshire*, but Raglan and Usk also have sizeable populations. Perceptions that ‘everything happens at the centre’ certainly exist and all activities need to be proofed to ensure that this is not being reinforced even if subconsciously.
  - *Rural Communities:* Similarly smaller rural communities can feel excluded if activities are solely centred on main settlements. Engagement strategies should be developed and the impact monitored;
  - *Socially Excluded People and Communities:* In areas that are considered relatively prosperous, poverty can often be hidden and when linked to rural isolation, digital and financial exclusion can be even more severe than that encountered in towns and cities. Although far from exclusively applying to social and privately renting tenants these groups are more likely to suffer poverty and related deprivation. The role of partners such as registered social landlords who have track records of working with disadvantaged groups should be fully harnessed.
  - *Young People:* The need to engage young people is paramount. The age profile of those currently engaged in Whole Place tends to be skewed towards people over 50 and there is almost a complete absence of under 25 year olds.

### **Accountability**

‘There are two problems – decisions are slow in coming and when they are made they don’t tell anyone’

MCC bears final responsibility for Whole Place and is accountable to Welsh Government, regulators and, most importantly, to local people through the ballot box.

There is widespread support for the direction of travel but there are concerns that the strategy needs to be clear, comprehensive and not done in a piecemeal way.

Without exception all stakeholders recognise the dilemma facing MCC: it has significantly less resources yet demand for services continues to increase. There is also acceptance that in tight times the council needs to concentrate on delivering 'core' statutory services such as education and social services. There is implicit backing for MCC to become an enabling authority in other service areas, commissioning rather than directly providing and where possible devolving powers and responsibilities to local communities. As one stakeholder expressed it, the message from MCC should be that, provided there are clear lines of accountability 'we will support you to get on with it'.

There is a perception that although new community governance arrangements have been established that MCC has not aligned internal processes and decision making to ensure delivery. There needs to be a consistent message from top to bottom to avoid the perception that the council no longer has resources but still wants to be in control. This has led to frustration that progress with Whole Place is being slowed down and impeded. This of course needs to be balanced with recognition of the democratic legitimacy of the council as a whole and of individual elected members.

There are number of specific 'asks' of MCC including:

- improving communication and dialogue at all levels;
- speeding up decision making;
- ensuring corporate buy-in across all service departments; and
- providing adequate resources to enable effective transition by, for example, investing in capital assets before transfer.

A particular issue concerns the role of Area Committees. There is some support for their continuation but an alternative view that they are anachronistic and by standing alongside the new community governance structures are the source of potential confusion. Running two systems side by side is reminiscent of the analogue and digital TV transition and it begs the question: when will the new way be fully adopted and the old way 'turned off'?

Yet the role of elected member is critical to the success of Whole Place. This reinforces the point that neither maintaining the status quo, nor removing an area dimension to member involvement is a viable and sustainable option and that a 'third way' needs to be found. One idea would be to embed the role of members in Whole Place by appointing one local member as a council *Champion* who would be a member of the Programme Board ex officio and report back to the appropriate MCC committee quarterly or six monthly. They would also lead for the council at the proposed Programme Board / Elected Member Annual Summit to review progress and inform new priorities. Changes to the governance of Whole Place (see below)

would help strike the balance between legitimate democratic involvement and community control of setting priorities.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>‘community groups move on – town and community councils stay’</b></p>
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There is increasing expectation that Town and Community Councils (T&CCs) will have a greater role in setting local priorities and even delivering services going forward. It has been pointed out that a number of Town Councils in particular have access to modest but significant resources as well as direct experience of running services.

There are also concerns that although Town Councils are involved in Whole Place there is not enough engagement with outlying Community Councils and their populations. There is a mixed view of the capacity of them to ‘step up’ particularly in relation to smaller councils. Further development of council clusters has been suggested as a way forward as well as exploring opportunities to share resources such as when employing council clerks for example.

There is frustration that the Charter between MCC and T&CCs is not being adhered to with meetings cancelled at short notice, undermining confidence that the council is genuinely committed to engagement

The ‘analogue versus digital’ issue potentially arises also in relation to T&CCs and Whole Place structures. One good example of how both can work in harmony was cited in relation to Devauden where the Community Council and Village Hall Committee had worked very well together to the benefit of the community.

### **Whole Place Governance**

Programme Boards are at the centre of Whole Place and a key issue is how to clarify their role and improve their effectiveness. They should be seen as the pivotal local body in determining community priorities, commissioning projects and overseeing service delivery. However Board members have expressed frustration with the speed with which decisions are endorsed and resources are made available by MCC.

The structure of Programme Boards should also be reviewed. One option is to embed but limit elected representation (MCC and T&Cs) to a third of the board and select the remaining two thirds from the wider community on the basis of transparent criteria (skills, experience, diversity)

There is support for moving towards a simpler model of board business. One suggestion is to limit administrative functions (minutes, project updates) to 45 minutes to an hour and use the remaining time for themed discussions which could



be opened out to the community and potentially broaden involvement and increase social capital. One stakeholder suggested that sessions might focus on issues such as Mental Health or Drug and Alcohol Abuse with a view to taking 'joined' up approach to finding sustainable solutions.

Town Teams currently operate in Caldicot and Abergavenny. In the eyes of some stakeholders they are 'doers' although the impact they have had is not universally recognised. Their ability to marshal additional resources is seen as a positive. However, extending the base of volunteers is seen as a key challenge.

The fact that these activities are concentrated by definition in the major settlements has led to concerns that they risk isolating more remote, often rural areas

### **Community and Voluntary Sector**

It is important to recognise that Whole Place is not an attempt to subjugate existing voluntary activity to a central strategy but rather aims to harness energies in common endeavour for the good of the community. Across the county there are literally hundreds of groups bringing together thousands of volunteers who already play a critical role in community life – from representing views of particular groups to running facilities and services.

Community Forums exist in *Bryn-y-Cwm* and *Central Monmouthshire* and are valued by active members. Set up with MCC support under the *Making Connections* agenda MCC has recently moved away from providing limited administrative and financial support. Whilst budget pressures undoubtedly played a role in this decision there is also a desire by the council to empower forums to act independently and develop their own capacity. The potential to extend a Community Forum model as an umbrella for local groups into other areas exists although this will need to be driven by communities themselves rather than MCC.

### **Resources**

**'You can't just will the ends –  
you have to will the means too'**

In one sense Whole Place turned the accepted dictum 'form follows function' on its head in the two areas it has been introduced so far. Structures have been created arguably before there was a clear understanding by the community of local priorities.

Many stakeholders have highlighted the need to genuinely set local priorities and recognise that delivery will depend on aligning resources to deliver. There are a number of aspects to this:

- MCC needs to ensure that the entire organisation is on board with Whole Place. This requires not just a cultural change programme but continuous reinforcement of the values that underpin it and the fact that this is not a fad but a long term and fundamental change of direction;
- There is a case for reviewing area based service delivery and better aligning this with Whole Place in each settlement. Having access to local staff resources that would shorten the time between setting priorities and delivery can only enhance and validate the strategy and encourage wider buy in from the community;
- The specialist support provided by the Whole Place team needs augmenting and also needs to be fully integrated into the Community Hub programme. A review of the 'ask' and 'offer' of the team and the communities they work to support would be a useful starting point. The strategy could falter and possibly fail if insufficient support from MCC is secured particularly in the move from previous delivery models to the new approach;
- Supporting the transition from MCC to community service delivery by ensuring capital investment before Asset Transfer, tapering revenue funding and secondment of staff;
- There needs to be transparency around Community Infrastructure Levy monies and how they will be applied; and
- Supporting a community empowerment and ambassadorial training programme to build local capacity.

There are opportunities to streamline and simplify processes that could generate savings that could then be invested elsewhere. For example replacing Area Committees with an annual Programme Board / Elected Member Summit could cut costs and also allow redirection of some grant funding.

Building up other Whole Place resources should also be a priority that will have to be driven initially by MCC. Developing toolkits that can be adapted in each locality, collating easy to use information packs on how the council works and who to contact, as well as step by step guides on community asset transfers are examples of initiatives that once developed can be shared and enhanced through experience.

### **Social Capital**

Whole Place was not year zero for local community activism. Historically very many people have stepped up to lead or support a wide range of initiatives, giving freely of their time and expertise. Social Capital may vary between settlements but there are many examples of experience and skills being put to very effective use

There are however a number of concerns with the present situation:

- Social capital is unevenly spread i.e. it is more prevalent in prosperous areas;
- People can be put off participating if they feel they do not possess the same levels of skills and experience as current community animators; and
- Conversely, existing active participants are quite often themselves over stretched and in danger of 'burn out'

It is imperative therefore to extend the range and quantity of activists. MCC in partnership with Programme Boards need to adopt a proactive strategy including allocating resources to this. Lessons could be learned from the recent Waitrose 'Give and Gain' initiative in Caldicot which attracted a new layer of interest from people who had not previously been active in Whole Place.

### **Communication**

**'The council needs to  
join the dots up better'**

Key to the success of Whole Place will be the regular flow of appropriate information between MCC and the Programme Board and between both and the wider community. Again simplicity is the watchword – there has been feedback that sometimes information is pitched too high and difficult even for people in the know to understand the jargon. Clear communication lines need to be nurtured and maintained.

Whilst there are some good examples of using social media, MCC should consider providing support to the Programme Board to 'skill up' in its use.

### **Supporting Innovation**

A notable success has been the way in which Programme Boards have encouraged and supported new initiatives albeit that there is frustration with the speed of decision making in a number of instances. Consideration should be given to having relatively small pots of money available to carry out preliminary work pre full feasibility study. This would help projects gain initial momentum and get them on to MCC 'radar' in advance of firm proposals so that communication lines can be cleared to facilitate speedy decisions.

There are many examples of activities that have delivered on the ground – from small community focussed initiatives through to establishing companies to pursue specific, long term projects.

## **Measuring Outcomes**

As well as being able to evidence impact to MCC, WG and regulators, a clear sense of what has been achieved will be essential in maintaining momentum and attracting wider support and involvement. It will also offer learning points across the county area and how information is shared between Programme Boards is a matter for further consideration.

There needs to be a range of outcome measures to help achieve this including:

- Community impact in terms of economic, social and environmental improvements;
- Individual progress e.g. a long term unemployed person gets work, a person with little confidence interacts with the community;
- Added value in terms of additional resources levered in;
- Customer satisfaction with services improvements; and
- MCC achieves greater efficiencies and is able to redirect funding to priority areas.

## **A Question of Balance**

There are a number of apparent and potential tensions that rose during the project. These include:

- The transition from traditional governance arrangements to Whole Place systems;
- The desire to be enterprising and innovative against the need to have robust audit systems and formal accountability mechanisms;
- Integrating high level strategy with delivery at a community level;
- Determining what should be the core standards (anywhere in Monmouthshire) and the discretionary ones (locally determined and delivered); and
- Acknowledging the value of long standing community animators whilst encouraging new volunteers from diverse backgrounds to become involved.

## **6. The Way Forward**

‘we look at this as something new – 100 years ago people didn’t have the national lottery – they built chapels, workers institutes, health societies and libraries – there’s no reason why it can’t happen again’

MCC has been at the forefront in understanding the scale and long term nature of the challenges to public services and concluded some time ago that ‘business as usual’ is not an option. Central to this has been the Whole Place approach to community governance. Community leaders across sectors have been very willing to embrace the concept and to engage with the council in exploring a new way of working together that captures the ideas, energy and enthusiasm of local people.

Whilst there are very many positive aspects of the experience to date, this project has clearly identified areas that could be improved. Some are universally accepted – the need to reduce complexity and more clearly define roles and responsibilities for example; others are potentially more controversial including resolving tensions between current and emerging governance structures.

Many specific ideas on how to move forward have emerged during the course of this work and are contained in the *Key Challenges and Potential Responses* action plan that accompanies this report. The biggest challenge of all is to ensure that the efforts of MCC and all partners deliver through Whole Place modern and efficient services that meet the needs of all the citizens of Monmouthshire.

## 7. Recommendations

1. MCC will implement the recommendations within this report to enable a local governance framework that is simpler; roles; responsibilities and accountability are clearer and provide access to a small pot of funding to be allocated locally to support local priorities.
2. MCC in partnership with local Elected Members, Programme Boards and civic organisations will develop a simple set of terms of reference for each group integral to Whole Place collected in one document showing linkages and relationships and made bespoke to each area.
3. MCC lead a review of internal alignment with delivering Whole Place including:
  - appointing / reaffirming a senior officer Whole Place Champion with authority to speed up decision making;
  - streamlining internal processes;

- improving cross departmental connectivity and communication;
  - embedding corporate responsibility from executive level to the front line and;
  - maximising resources to deliver e.g. augmenting the Whole Place Team;
4. MCC and community leaders to reinforce the point that councillors are the legitimate democratic representatives of the community but that their role is evolving into a leadership role to facilitate the active engagement of citizens in delivering Whole Place. Quarterly Area Committees should be replaced by a combination of:
- appointing an Elected Member Whole Place Champion in each area (and develop a job description) who sits on the Programme Board with responsibility for making quarterly / half yearly reports to Council;
  - encouraging local members to co-ordinate surgeries and constituency days to better link into Whole Place;
  - exploring opportunities for and identifying good practice examples of member interaction and involvement with initiatives and activities and;
  - remove area committee structure replacing it with a joint Elected Member / Programme Board annual summit to review progress and consult on priorities.
5. There needs to be clarification and review of Programme Board remits and how they relate to MCC and the community. This review should consider membership changes in particular changes e.g. a limited number of ex-officio members (an MCC local member 'Champion', plus two to three representatives of Town and Community Councils) with the remaining members being matched to a competency / expertise criteria with due regard for diversity. Assuming a Board of in the region of twelve members this would mean around a third reserved for democratically elected councillors and two thirds allocated to local animators and experts.
6. Re-enforce the importance of Town and Community Councils in Whole Place. One option might be to reserve ex officio on the Programme Board:
- one place per Town Council and;
  - two to three places per Community Council 'cluster'.

7. Town and Community Councils should be encouraged to explore further opportunities to build on existing networks and share resources.
8. There is a need to reinforce the independence of Community Forums and help build self-reliance. MCC could develop guidance to support building relationships with wider community and civic organisations.
9. MCC should support Programme Boards to audit the engagement with excluded groups in Whole Place and produce an action plan to address any 'deficits'. Particular (but not exclusively) reference needs to be made to engaging with disability groups, youth clubs and tenant associations.
10. A process for identifying new initiatives and fast tracking their consideration and approval should be considered by MCC in partnership with Programme Boards, ensuring that all legal and financial audit and accountability tests can be met.
11. MCC should review Whole Place support and resources requirements as well as ensuring alignment with community hubs and developing more area based services. This could in part be funded through savings accrued through changes to the process e.g. replacing quarterly Area Committees with an annual summit and reallocating discretionary area funding to Programme Boards to administer.
12. The Whole Place team and the communities they work to support should engage in a process to define roles, responsibilities and expectations as part of a process to 'co-design' the service.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

The project received the support of MCC members and staff, community leaders and Whole Place animators from the outset and throughout and I am extremely grateful for the time and energies committed by everyone. Special mention should be given to the Whole Place Team who were a constant support of knowledge and support from start to finish.

**Keith Edwards**

August 2015

## Appendix B

### Community Governance Review: Key Challenges and Potential Responses

A key objective of the project was to focus on practical actions to improve community governance as an integral part of the Whole Place strategy. This paper focusses on a series of 'how to' challenges and potential responses to achieve this.

The suggested prioritisation captured in the final column is:

**Green** – within 3 months

**Amber** – between 3 to 6 months

challenge	context and response	lead	priority
How to <b>reduce complexity</b>	<p>Although the degree of complexity is greater in <i>Bryn-y-Cwm</i> than <i>Severnside</i>, there is unanimity that we need a simpler governance model for both 'active' areas and in the roll-out to <i>Central Monmouthshire</i> and <i>Lower Wye</i>.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC sends clear message that structures, roles and responsibilities will be clarified, simplified and better integrated. This includes addressing the suggested responses in the Whole Place community governance review carried out by KE</p>	MCC Enterprise	Green
How to clarify <b>functions</b>	<p>The current community governance infrastructure falls into four broad categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing democratic structures – Area Committees, Scrutiny Committees, Town and Community Councils etc</li> </ul>		



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole Place structures – Programme Boards, Town Teams, Nobody Left Behind groups etc</li> <li>• Civic Structures – Community Forums, Civic Societies, Church groups, Business Groups etc</li> <li>• Project specific and partnership Initiatives – eg Business Improvement Districts, E Commerce initiatives etc</li> </ul> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC in partnership with local elected members, Programme Boards and civic organisations develop a simple set of terms of reference for each group collected in one document showing linkages and relationships and made bespoke to each area.</p>	MCC Whole Place	Green
How to strengthen <b>MCC corporate buy in</b> to whole place	<p>There is a perception that although new structures have been established that MCC has not aligned internal processes and decision making to support subsidiarity and devolution. This has led to frustration and perceptions that the delivery of Whole Place is being slowed down and impeded.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC Leader and CEO lead and sponsor a review of internal alignment with delivering whole place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appointing / reaffirming a senior officer ‘Champion’ with authority to speed up decision making</li> <li>• streamlining internal processes</li> <li>• improving cross departmental connectivity and communication</li> <li>• embedding corporate responsibility from executive level to the front line and</li> <li>• maximising resources to deliver eg augmenting the Whole Place Team.</li> </ul>	MCC Leader & CEO	Green
How do we	Area Committees appear anachronistic within the new community governance		

<p>redefine the roles of <b>Area Committees?</b></p>	<p>structures yet the role of elected member is critical to the success of Whole Place. There is some support for them beyond members and a suspicion that their abolition is the end destination. This reinforces the point that neither the status quo nor complete negation of an area dimension to member involvement is a viable and sustainable option and a ‘third way’ needs to be found.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC and community leaders need to reinforce the point that councillors are the legitimate democratic representatives of the community but that their role is developing to lead and facilitate the active engagement of citizens in delivering Whole Place. Quarterly Area Committees could be replaced by a combination of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointing an elected member ‘Champion’ in each area (and develop a job description) who sits on the Programme Board with responsibility for making quarterly / half yearly reports to Council</li> <li>• Encouraging local members to co-ordinate surgeries and constituency days to better link into Whole Place</li> <li>• Exploring opportunities for and identifying good practice examples of member interaction and involvement with initiatives and activities</li> <li>• Doing away with quarterly meetings and instead holding a joint elected member / Programme Board annual summit to review progress and consult on priorities</li> </ul>	<p>MCC Cabinet</p>	<p>Amber</p>
<p>How do we improve the effectiveness of <b>Programme Boards?</b></p>	<p>There is disagreement over the role of Programme Boards – are they there to give direction or ensure delivery? There is also concern that they become dominated by interests and repeat the same discussions taken elsewhere. That said they are the central hub of Whole Place and the issue is how to clarify their central role and improve their effectiveness</p> <p><b>Response:</b> there needs to be clarification of Board remits and how they relate to MCC and the community. There should be consideration of constitutional changes eg a limited number of ex-officio members (an MCC local member ‘Champion’, one</p>	<p>MCC Whole Place</p>	<p>Amber</p>

	representative per Town Council, two or three Community Council ‘cluster’ representatives?) with the remaining members are matched to a competency / expertise criteria with due regard for diversity.		
How do we ensure <b>Town and Community Councils</b> are fully engaged?	<p>There is increasing expectation that Town and Community Councils will have a greater role in setting local priorities and even delivering services going forward. There is however a mixed view of the capacity of T&amp;CCs to step up. There are also concerns that although Town Councils are involved in Whole Place there is not enough engagement with outlying Community Councils and their communities.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> It is important to embed Town and Community Council engagement in Whole Place. One option might be to reserve ex officio on the Programme Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One place per Town Council</li> <li>• Two to three places per Community Council ‘cluster’</li> </ul> <p>Town and Community Councils should be encouraged to explore further opportunities to build on existing networks and share resources.</p>	MCC Enterprise	Amber
How do we improve engagement with <b>Community Partners</b> ?	<p>Community Forums are valued by active members but seen as a hangover from the past when Area Working Teams existed and the Making Connections agenda was in place. There is concern about viability and sustainability now that some resource support has been withdrawn by MCC.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> There is a need to reinforce the independence of Forums and help build self-reliance. MCC could give help and guidance to support building relationships with wider community and civic organisations.</p>	MCC Whole Place	Amber
How do we	Young people, people with disabilities, socially excluded communities have all been		

improve <b>inclusivity?</b>	<p>cited as parts of the community that are either under-represented or have not been fully engaged in general and not just in Whole Place. The focus on 'nobody gets left behind' offers opportunities to improve inclusivity.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC should support Programme Boards to audit the engagement with excluded groups in Whole Place and produce an action plan to address any 'deficits'. Particular (but not exclusive) reference needs to be made to engaging with disability groups, youth clubs and tenant associations.</p>	MCC Whole Place	Amber
How do we empower and resource the <b>Whole Place Team?</b>	<p>The Whole Place Team is central to delivering transformation and need to be at the heart of the overarching MCC strategy. Although there are immense challenges in terms of budgets and bringing the community along, the strategy could falter and possibly fail if insufficient support from MCC is secured particularly in the move from previous models to the new approach.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC to determine specialist support requirements, alignment with community hubs and developing more area based services. This could in part be funded through Identify savings e.g. replacing quarterly Area Committees with annual summit, reallocating discretionary area funding reduction in Area committee meetings etc.</p> <p>A review of the 'ask' and 'offer' of the team and the communities they work to support would be a useful starting point.</p>	MCC Enterprise	Green
How do we capture an support <b>innovation</b>	<p>A notable success has been the way in which Programme Boards have encouraged and supported new initiatives albeit that there is frustration with the speed of decision making in a number of instances.</p> <p><b>Response:</b> A process for identifying new initiatives and fast tracking their</p>	MCC	Green

	consideration and where appropriate approval should be developed by MCC in partnership with Programme Boards.	Enterprise	
<b>Other Key Questions</b>	<p>There are a number of other questions that need to be considered in details and effective responses developed. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to ensure there are adequate checks and balances in place?</li> <li>• How to ensure robust audit trails?</li> <li>• How does MCC (and regulator) know that community governance is strong and will be sustained?</li> <li>• How far can this go – what are the limits?</li> <li>• How to ensure a shared vision?</li> <li>• How to make sure all work is evidenced based and able to show where a difference has been made?</li> <li>• How to determine what should be the core standards (anywhere in Monmouthshire) and the discretionary ones (locally determined and delivered)?</li> <li>• How far should subsidiarity go and what is the role of the community in determining this?</li> <li>• How to ensure resilience and sustainability?</li> </ul> <p><b>Response:</b> MCC to review all <i>Key Challenges and Potential Responses</i> and the</p>	MCC Enterprise	Green

	outstanding issues above.		
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