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Monday, 27 April 2020

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held on **Wednesday, 6th May, 2020**, at **2.00 pm**. **The meeting will be held remotely via Microsoft Teams**

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Declarations of Interest**
3. **Statement from County Councillor Peter Fox, Leader of the Council**
4. **Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire County Council** 1 - 20

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on the outcomes of the recently published Estyn inspection report and the actions planned to address its recommendations.

Author: Will McLean

Contact Details: willmclean@monmouthshire.gov.uk
5. **Covid 19 Decision Making** 21 - 22

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: This report is submitted to update Cabinet on the impact on decision making that the Covid 19 (CV19) period has had within the Council and identify next steps.

Author: Matt Phillips

Contact Details: matthewphillips@monmouthshire.gov.uk

6. **Coronavirus Response: Strategic Aims**

23 - 26

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To provide Cabinet with an overview of the strategic aims that will be in place for the duration of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Author: Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy and Governance

Contact Details: matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

7. **Coronavirus Response: Risk Management**

27 - 34

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To provide Cabinet with an overview of the arrangements the Council has in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks in response to the Coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic.

To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current high and medium level risks the Council is managing related to the Coronavirus response.

Author: Frances O'Brien, Chief Officer for Enterprise

Contact Details: francesobrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Partnership and External Working	Ward
P.A. Fox (Leader)	<p>Whole Authority Strategy & Direction Lead Officer – Chief Executive</p> <p>CCR Joint Cabinet & Regional Development; Organisation overview; Regional working; Government relations; Public Service Board lead; WLGA lead</p>	<p>WLGA Council WLGA Coordinating Board Public Service Board</p>	Portskewett
R.J.W. Greenland (Deputy Leader)	<p>Enterprise and Land Use Planning Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien Support Officers – Mark Hand, Cath Fallon</p> <p>Local Development Plan; Strategic Development Plan; Economic Resilience and Growth; Town Centre Investment and Stewardship; Development Management and Building Control; Housing Delivery</p>	<p>WLGA Council Capital Region Tourism</p>	Devauden
P. Jordan	<p>Governance and Law Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Matthew Phillips, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Council & Executive decision making; Constitution review and implementation of change; Law, Ethics & Standards; Audit and Regulatory WAO Relations Support for Elected Members Democracy promotion & citizen engagement Whole Authority Performance; Whole Authority Service Planning & Evaluation Community Hubs and Contact Centre Community Learning Tourist Information / Museums / Theatre / Attractions</p>		Cantref
R. John	<p>Children & Young People and MonLife Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders Support Officers – Nikki Wellington, Sharon Randall-Smith, Richard Simpkins</p> <p>Early Years Education</p>	<p>Joint Education Group (EAS) WJEC</p>	Mitchel Troy

	<p>All Age Statutory Education Additional Learning Needs; School Inclusion Post 16 entitlement / offer</p> <p>School standards and Improvement; Education Achievement Service Commissioning Coleg Gwent and University liaison. Leisure / Sport Outdoor education / Duke of Edinburgh Active Travel Countryside / Biodiversity</p>		
P. Jones	<p>Social Care, Safeguarding & Health Lead Officer – Julie Boothroyd Support Officers – Eve Parkinson, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children’s Services Fostering & Adoption; Youth Offending Service; Adults Services Whole Authority Safeguarding (children & adults); Disabilities; Mental Health; Health liaison.</p>		Raglan
P. Murphy	<p>Whole Authority Resources Lead Officer – Peter Davies, Frances O’Brien Support Officers – Deb Hill-Howells, Sian Hayward, Tracey Harry, Mark Howcroft</p> <p>Finance; Information technology (SRS); Digital Programme Office Human Resources; Health & Safety; Emergency Planning; Procurement; Land & Buildings (inc. Estate, Cemeteries, Allotments, Farms); Vehicle Fleet / Passenger Transport Unit Property maintenance; Facilities Management (inc. Building Cleaning and Catering all ages)</p>	Prosiect Gwrydd	Caerwent
J. Pratt	<p>Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien Support Officers – Roger Hoggins, Carl Touhig, Nigel Leaworthy</p> <p>County Roads / Pavements South Wales Trunk Road Agency</p>	SEWTA Prosiect Gwyrdd	Goytre Fawr

	<p>Highways Maintenance, Transport, Traffic & Network Management, Car Parks / Illegal Parking Enforcement Whole Authority De-carbonisation Plastic Free Monmouthshire Waste / Recycling / Cleansing Grounds Maintenance Parks & Open Spaces/ Public Conveniences Flood Prevention / Management / SUDs</p>		
S. Jones	<p>Social Justice & Community Development Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien Support Officers – Cath Fallon, David Jones, Ian Bakewell</p> <p>Rural Deprivation / Isolation; Digital Deprivation Poverty / Disadvantage Homelessness; Supporting People Community Safety / Equality / Protected Characteristics Public Relations; / Communications / Marketing Trading Standards / Environmental Health; Licensing; Registrars</p>		Llanover

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

- Giving people the best possible start in life
- A thriving and connected county
- Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment
- Lifelong well-being
- A future focused council

Our Values

Openness. We are open and honest. People have the chance to get involved in decisions that affect them, tell us what matters and do things for themselves/their communities. If we cannot do something to help, we'll say so; if it will take a while to get the answer we'll explain why; if we can't answer immediately we'll try to connect you to the people who can help – building trust and engagement is a key foundation.

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

Flexibility. We will continue to change and be flexible to enable delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.

Teamwork. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved so we can achieve great things together. We don't see ourselves as the 'fixers' or problem-solvers, but we will make the best of the ideas, assets and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

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SUBJECT: Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire County Council

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 6th May 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All of County

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update to members on the outcomes of the recently published Estyn inspection report and the actions planned to address its recommendations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- i) Receive the report, published on the 21st April 2020.
 - ii) Note the areas of strength and recommendations contained within the report
 - iii) Agree the proposed timelines and approaches to address the report's recommendations

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Estyn is Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales. They are responsible for the inspection of all schools, colleges and local authorities in Wales on a cyclical basis. Monmouthshire was last inspected in November 2012 (published February 2013). Estyn conducted in the most recent inspection the week commencing the 10th February, concluding on the 14th February 2020. The report was published on the 21st April.
- 3.2 The new inspection framework (Local Government Education Services) has some noticeable differences to its predecessors. The inspection is broken down into three inspection areas (IA). IA1 is concerned with the standards achieved in schools, the standards of specific groups of learners and wellbeing and attitudes to learning (which includes attendance and exclusions). IA2 is a series of locally themed questions that are determined by Estyn. These are set drawing on intelligence about the situation in a local authority and what the key risks facing the authority. This evidence is drawn from termly Local Authority Link Inspector (LALI) visits, national data and findings from Estyn thematic reviews. Monmouthshire's four 'local' questions were:
- i) How effectively does the local authority work with the regional school improvement service in order to support, challenge, monitor and intervene in schools?

- ii) How well does Monmouthshire identify and support children and young people with SEN to help them achieve better outcomes?
- iii) How successful is the local authority at ensuring that pupils' eligible for free school meals make good progress in their learning?
- iv) How well does the youth service support the needs of young people, particularly those who are vulnerable?

The final area, IA3, is concerned with the quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers, self-evaluation and improvement planning, professional learning, safeguarding arrangements and the use of resources (this final part of the review is undertaken by the Wales Audit Office).

- 3.3 In this round of Estyn inspections there are no summative judgements against each of the inspection areas there is only one key judgement and that is whether the authority is a cause of significant concern.
- 3.4 The inspection has three elements, the first part is a citizens' survey followed by the second, which is a preliminary visit where the lead and deputy lead inspector undertake a range of stakeholder interviews. In Monmouthshire, this included focus groups of Headteachers, Governors, Special Educational Needs (SEN) coordinators, other partners (The Police, Aneurin Bevan, housing associations and other PSB partners) and a group of young people. The final part of the inspection involves the full inspection team of ten inspectors (including two peer inspectors from other Welsh local authorities and two members of the Wales Audit Office). This week involves a series of meetings with politicians, senior officers and partners, such as the Education Achievement Service.
- 3.5 The inspection in Monmouthshire concluded that the authority's education service does not give cause for significant concern and there are a number of positives within the report and the summary of the report (p.2 of appendix 1) draws these out. In particular, it recognises the vision and focus of leaders in ensuring the 'best possible start in life' alongside high expectations for all learners. It also identifies the commitment to partnership that has resulted in a good track record of improvement. Furthermore, it recognises the distance travelled since 2012 particularly regarding safeguarding where it notes the authority's exemplar safeguarding procedures. Estyn has asked the authority produce a case study in this area, for publication, setting out its safeguarding processes and the impact these have had.
- 3.6 There are, of course, areas for development and the report clearly identifies these. The report identifies the lack of 'excellent' judgements for standards, the performance of children eligible for free school meals and a lack of clarity in how we plan to strengthen further our services for learners with special educational needs. The report identifies that at times the self-evaluation undertaken needs to be diagnostic and more detailed to help inform improvements.
- 3.7 These areas for development led Estyn to include four recommendations for the authority:
 - R1 Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals
 - R2 Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards
 - R3 Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision

R4 Strengthen the use of information gathered through self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning

3.8 These recommendations are very clear and align very well to the authority's own self-evaluation. They will be the key focus of activity through the next period and will be captured and reflected in the service improvement plans and the Chief Officer's report. There is much work ongoing in these areas but we recognise that this needs to be sharper and we need to better articulate the impact we expect changes to have. Colleagues in the directorate and in the EAS are developing further detail required by these plans.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 As specific plans are developed these will be included in future reports to Cabinet and Council.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 This is not applicable in this report.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 This is not applicable at this stage.

7. REASONS:

7.1 The formal acceptance of this report by Cabinet is a key step in the organisational acceptance of its findings and the recommendations. Officers have started to develop detailed responses to the four recommendations and these will be subject to further agreement (where necessary) by cabinet and scrutiny by the Children and Young people Select Committee. The responses to the recommendations will be incorporated into existing planning and monitoring processes and cycles.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 There are no resource implications at this time and changes are expected to remain within existing budgets. If specific changes and developments require additional funding in the future these will be brought through the normal decision making channels.

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1 Cabinet Member: Cllr. Richard John
Children and Young People directorate management team

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

10.1 The Estyn Report can be found: [here](#) and a copy is attached as appendix 1.

11. AUTHOR: Will McLean

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A report on education services in

**Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
Monmouthshire
NP15 1GA**

Date of inspection: February 2020

by

**Estyn, Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education
and Training in Wales**

About Monmouthshire County Council

Monmouthshire County Council is located in the east of Wales and has a total population of just over 94,000 people. The local authority maintains four secondary schools, 30 primary schools, one special school and one pupil referral unit. There are 12 maintained nurseries and 25 non-maintained nurseries in the authority.

The Chief Executive was appointed in 2009. The Chief Officer, Children and Young People, took up his post in 2017. The council leader has been in post since 2008 and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People took up his post in 2017. The local authority was last inspected in November 2012.

Monmouthshire is one of the five local authorities in the EAS regional consortium for school improvement.

In 2019-2020, the Council's net education budget is approximately £58 million. The delegated school budget per pupil is £4,746 per pupil, which is 19th highest of all local authorities in Wales.

Inspectors take account of a wide range of information about the local population when evaluating outcomes and the quality of education services. They consider this information alongside information about the national population. Some of the most useful information about children and young people in Monmouthshire is noted below:

- Over a three year average, 10.9% of pupils aged five to fifteen are eligible for free school meals, lower than the Wales average of 17.8%
- 1.8% of pupils aged five and over are fluent in Welsh, which is lower than the Wales average of 16.2%
- 6.7% of pupils aged five and over are from ethnic minorities, below the Wales average of 12.0%
- 17.3% of pupils have special educational needs, lower than the Wales average of 22.2%
- 98 children per 10,000 were looked after by the local authority in 2019, which is slightly lower than the Wales average of 109 children per 10,000

Summary

Leaders provide a clear vision and a strong focus on ensuring ‘the best possible start in life’ for learners. Their high expectations and a commitment to strong partnership working have contributed to a good track record of improvement. In particular, they have strengthened the challenge and support to schools and developed robust and exemplar safeguarding procedures.

Although no school in the authority has received an excellent judgement for standards from our inspections over last three years, outcomes for pupils at the authority are generally good. Standards of wellbeing are strong overall and attendance is also good in most schools. However, the performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is generally lower than that of the same group of pupils across Wales.

There is good provision to support the needs of young people in the authority. The Youth Service provides a range of worthwhile activities, and beneficial support for vulnerable young people. There is a strong commitment by leaders to supporting young people’s wellbeing through its youth support services.

There is also a strong commitment to further improve provision and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and a number of reviews over recent years have improved the authority’s ability to meet pupils’ needs. However, the authority’s evaluation of SEN services is inconsistent, which hinders their ability to plan for improvement.

Generally, the authority has clear and consistent self-evaluation processes, but evaluations are not always diagnostic enough and often lack depth in their analysis. Officers and leaders do not maximise the use of the information gleaned from the evaluation process to inform improvement planning effectively enough.

Recommendations

- R1 Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals
- R2 Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards
- R3 Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision
- R4 Strengthen the use of information gathered through self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning

What happens next

Following the publication of the inspection report, the local authority should update its plans to address the recommendations and to take account of shortcomings identified through the inspection process.

Estyn will invite the provider to prepare a case study on its work in relation to safeguarding, for dissemination on Estyn's website.

Main findings

Outcomes

Overall, pupils in Monmouthshire make good progress during their time in statutory education.

Over the last three years, Estyn has inspected two of the four secondary schools and 11 primary schools in the authority. Estyn judged that standards were good in both of the secondary schools and the proportion of primary schools judged as good is around the average for Wales. During this period, no school received an excellent judgement for standards.

Standards at the end of key stage 4 in three of the four secondary schools have generally been in line or above expectations over the last three years, although in one of these secondary schools performance shows a declining trend over this period. In one secondary school, performance has generally been below expectations.

Our evidence from school inspections shows that many pupils with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. Pupils in learning support resource bases make at least good progress and pupils in the pupil referral unit (PRU) make suitable progress. The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals is generally lower than that of the same group of pupils across Wales. Overall, vulnerable pupils make good progress in their learning in primary schools, including pupils with English as an additional language and looked after children. The progress that these pupils make is stronger in the authority's primary schools than it is in secondary schools.

Overall, pupils' standards of wellbeing in Monmouthshire are strong. Generally, pupils feel safe in schools and settings and access a wide range of support to develop as healthy, confident individuals that contribute well as valued members of their community. Outcomes from our inspection reports in non-maintained settings and primary schools show that most pupils' wellbeing in these providers is good, and that pupils feel safe and enjoy learning. In the two secondary schools inspected and the pupil referral unit, wellbeing and attitudes to learning have been judged to be adequate and in need of improvement. In these providers, many pupils feel safe. However, in a few instances a minority of pupils lack concentration and disrupt the learning of others.

Over the last three years, the proportion of Year 11 leavers known not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) has remained low and is generally in line with the average for Wales.

Participation rates in extra-curricular activity such as sport are strong. Young people use the youth support services well to develop their aspirations, self-esteem and social skills. These services support young people well to gain accredited outcomes and to develop their leadership skills, such as when a group of young people planned and arranged the two-day 'diversifest' to promote and celebrate diversity.

Young people have beneficial opportunities to contribute to decisions about issues that affect them and the local authority takes good account of their views. For example, the young carer participation group has worked effectively with the authority to promote equality of opportunity through developing a policy where all young carers that apply to work in the authority will have a guaranteed interview.

Pupils who require support to improve their mental and emotional wellbeing benefit from the valuable strategies for support that the authority provides. These include targeted youth work and counselling services. The authority's analysis shows that pupils who have taken part in counselling sessions during the past three years have improved their emotional wellbeing.

Overall, pupils' attendance rates are strong. Attendance in secondary schools is a positive feature and all four secondary schools' attendance rates have been broadly in line or above expectations for the past three years. Rates of persistent absence in both primary and secondary schools are lower than national averages. However, the rate of persistent absence has increased in a few primary schools and one secondary school over the past three years.

The rate of permanent exclusions has been consistently low over the past three years. However, the rate of fixed term exclusions for five days or less shows an increasing trend over the same time period.

Education services

Under Inspection Area 2, Estyn sets local inspection questions that are relevant to each local authority. Local inspection questions focus on education services that relate to the local authority's current strategic priorities or result from information that Estyn has about education services in the local authority.

How effectively does the local authority work with the regional school improvement service in order to support, challenge, monitor and intervene in schools?

Local authority officers and the regional school improvement service (EAS) have a sound understanding of the needs of schools in Monmouthshire. They work together effectively to provide good quality support to schools. As a result, there has been an overall improvement in many schools in recent years. The impact of support has been stronger in primary schools than the secondary sector.

Increasingly, the authority works well with the EAS to challenge school leaders and governors to raise their expectations around the quality of teaching and the standards achieved by pupils. There is a common understanding among local authority officers, schools and the EAS that expectations have been too low in the past and recognition of the need to also focus improvement work on achieving excellence.

Numerous established points of contact between the local authority and the EAS enable clear and frank lines of communication that support school improvement effectively. For example, monthly quality assurance meetings ensure that support and intervention for schools target their specific needs well.

The local authority and EAS work together effectively to monitor the progress of schools. Where schools are causing concern, the local authority works well in partnership with the EAS to intervene through additional support and intervention. For example, the authority uses warning notices and its statutory powers very effectively to address specific issues around school performance. Half-termly schools causing concern meetings direct this work successfully. Overall, intervention is timely and effective, often resulting in strong improvements. The EAS supports this work well through the work of challenge advisers and by identifying relevant additional support.

The local authority and EAS tailor professional learning opportunities to the specific needs of schools well. For example, each school has a professional learning lead that works with the school's challenge adviser to construct a plan that helps address the developmental needs of staff, the school's improvement priorities and the emerging requirements of the new curriculum.

The local authority has been particularly effective in working with schools and the EAS to address specific leadership issues as they arise. They have a good understanding of the importance of securing high-quality senior leadership appointments and work well to attract strong candidates from within the local authority, the region and further afield.

How well does Monmouthshire identify and support children and young people with SEN to help them achieve better outcomes?

Over time, local authority officers have established worthwhile and effective relationships with partner agencies and schools. They know their areas of responsibility well and share a passion and commitment to further improve provision and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). As result, a number of appropriate actions have been taken to improve the identification and provision for pupils with SEN.

The authority provides schools with clear guidance in relation to the identification of, and support available for, pupils with SEN. This guidance very usefully outlines the role of the school and the local authority in supporting SEN pupils and the procedures to be followed as part the graduated response in meeting their needs. The authority meets its statutory responsibilities for children in non-maintained settings. It has strengthened the advice, support and guidance it provides to these settings. Lead officers work well with colleagues and parents of children in the early years. Transition arrangements have been strengthened and are valued by settings, schools and parents. Despite this approach being relatively new, the authority has done a small scale evaluation of the positive impact of this work.

The authority has carried out a number of reviews of its inclusion services over recent years. These have resulted in amendments to existing provision and the establishment of new provision for pupils with a range of SEN. As a result of these improvements, the authority is generally better placed to meet the needs of these pupils.

The authority has well-established arrangements in place with all schools to discuss their provision and monitor the progress that pupils make. Local authority officers

meet with school leaders annually. Discussions include useful reflection on strategies that have worked well and those that have been less successful. The authority is beginning to develop a growing body of evidence around effective practice for supporting pupils with SEN. It is making appropriate use of this to advise schools on approaches to use and is sharing information on strategies with colleagues in the region. The Chief Officer, Children and Young People, has recently introduced a quality and assurance framework that covers all aspects of schools' work. This too is beginning to be used to highlight strengths and areas for development in schools' work around SEN.

The authority tracks the progress and attainment of pupils with statements of special educational needs, including those pupils in out of county schools, well. It also collects data for all pupils by SEN type, for example those with autism, learning and behavioural difficulties. However, it does not use this information well enough when it reports to different audiences, including senior officers and elected members.

The local authority has well-established and valuable links with other authorities in the region. These links have been used effectively to prepare schools, other settings and additional learning needs co-ordinators for the new additional learning needs (ALN) legislation. The local authority website provides a useful overview of the SEN process, including how to access independent support. However, there is limited range of information for parents in relation to the SEN services that the local authority provide and how to access them.

Despite improvements in permanent and longer fixed-term exclusion, the rate of shortterm exclusions for pupils with SEN is too high. The local authority cannot reassure itself that schools are making appropriate adjustments for pupils with SEN.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, the local authority consulted, with a small group of school professionals, on an ALN/SEN strategy for the authority. The draft strategy usefully outlines key principles but lacks detail on key actions to be taken, resource implications and timelines.

Overall, the local authority's approach to evaluating the range of SEN services is inconsistent. It does not capture well enough strengths and areas for improvement, and this hinders their ability to plan for improvement.

How successful is the local authority at ensuring that pupils' eligible for free school meals make good progress in their learning?

The performance of pupils eligible for free school meals in the authority does not compare well with that of the same group of pupils across Wales. Senior leaders have identified the need to improve outcomes for this group of pupils and this aspiration is shared by officers, elected members and school leaders across the authority. Local authority officers have a clear commitment to address this as a priority and to bring about improvements in the wellbeing and academic achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals.

The EAS regional school improvement service's Wellbeing and Equity Strategy informs the work of the challenge advisers in relation to improving the outcomes of learners eligible for free school meals. Challenge advisers provide helpful advice

and guidance to schools about the most effective ways of using the pupil development grant and they monitor how well schools apply this funding. Recently, challenge advisers have improved the first-hand evidence that they collect about the standards that pupils eligible for free school meals achieve. For example, they carried out a scrutiny of pupils' work, with a focus on monitoring how well this group of pupils are doing and identifying how teachers can help them to improve.

Officers are currently developing a strategy to provide a bespoke local authority approach to improving the performance and attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals. This strategy links well to the objectives of the Corporate Business Plan and to the regional school improvement service's strategy. It outlines the support available to schools from the authority and its partners to improve provision and outcomes for this group of pupils. However, the strategy does not focus well enough on specific activities relevant to individual schools or groups of pupils. It is not clear about the desired improvements in pupils' attainment or how officers will measure these improvements.

The early years' team work well together to help to mitigate the impact of poverty for young children across Monmouthshire to ensure that they have the best possible start in life. The team provides support for the families of vulnerable children across the authority. Flying Start officers focus well on developing children's early language skills and use a range of assessments and interventions to develop and improve young children's speaking skills. Staff at the Acorn Project provide valuable advice and guidance to parents to help them to support their children's social and emotional development as well as their learning needs. Parents can access structured group programmes, for example to learn about nutrition alongside their child or more bespoke support such as toilet training and baby care. The early years' lead officer provides good support for non-maintained settings, including advice and guidance to staff on the best use of the early years development grant. Settings make good use of this funding to support children and families. This work is a valuable part of the local authority's aim to ensure that young children are able to make positive transitions into school.

How well does the youth service support the needs of young people, particularly those who are vulnerable?

The authority recognises the added value of youth work alongside other education and youth support services, particularly in supporting vulnerable young people. The authority has committed to maintaining its investment in youth services despite budgetary pressures.

The authority and its schools value and respect the professional skills that the youth workers have in building relationships with young people and supporting them to develop their personal and social skills. Youth workers empower young people to lead activities and shape the services they receive. Youth workers engage effectively with a wide range of partners to develop their provision and support young people who are vulnerable.

The authority's Youth Enterprise team supports young people, particularly those who are vulnerable, to develop the skills and confidence to access and sustain education, employment or training. This team works well with key partners such as schools and

Careers Wales to identify and target support for young people at risk of being not in education, employment or training (NEET). The support is tailored to the young person's views and circumstances. A good example is the opportunity for young people to engage in the Inspire project. The aim of the project is to reduce the risk of young people aged between 11 and 24 years old not progressing into employment, education or training. As a result of this work, dozens of young people gain formal qualifications, including those at risk of leaving school without any recognised qualifications. For some vulnerable young people, staff support their transition successfully from school to college or a training provider. For example, they help them prepare for the change by meeting them at their house early in the morning and being with them for their walk and bus journey in order to build their confidence and provide personal support.

The authority's Youth Service provides a wide range of beneficial activities that are open to all young people. This includes, for example, access to three youth centres, six youth clubs, three Welsh-speaking clubs, the Duke of Edinburgh award, school holiday activities, outreach work in communities outside of the four main towns, and a variety of work with schools, including primary schools. While most of these activities are inclusive for vulnerable young people, the Duke of Edinburgh award, despite having the highest overall participation rate for any local authority in Wales, does not engage enough young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The service also provides targeted support for vulnerable young people, such as the Shift project, which provides valuable support for young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. For example, young people with anxiety issues who are persistently absent from school and socially isolated are supported skilfully by youth workers to access help, gradually reintegrate with their peers and re-engage with their education. The Equality Street group, initially a helpful support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender young people, and those questioning their sexuality or gender, has expanded to promote equality and diversity more widely with significant success, winning a National Youth Work Excellence Award in 2019.

Despite being well-funded, there are various reasons why services tend to struggle to meet the needs of older young people aged 16-25. For example, services tend to prioritise prevention and intervention work with young people in school and during the immediate period once they leave school. Sharing a border with England, where a considerable number of young people travel for further education, presents a challenge due to the lack of agreed data sharing protocols, which limits the effectiveness of youth services. The local authority is taking suitable action to address these and other barriers to working with older young people.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders set a clear vision for education in Monmouthshire and express this well in their improvement plans. Since the last inspection in 2012, leaders have focused on improving outcomes in schools and for ensuring 'the best possible start in life' for learners. The Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, and the Chief Officer for Children and Young People have high expectations of officers, schools, other providers and partners. They engender the trust of other stakeholders through transparent communication and they provide a sound and sustained sense of direction for the authority.

A key strength of the authority is how it works with its partners, such as the EAS in supporting its delivery of some of its key ambitions effectively. This includes the strengthening of how it supports, challenges, monitors and intervenes in schools. Senior leaders from the authority play an important strategic role in the quality assurance of the work of the EAS and contribute well to its management, governance and scrutiny. This includes maintaining a positive climate based on mutual trust, which encourages open and transparent professional discussion about challenging issues.

Senior officers and elected members understand well the challenges facing the education service. In particular, the Leader of the Council has a very strong grasp of the main issues and prompts cabinet members and senior officers to continually consider progress against education business plans. This helps to ensure a strong sense of ownership and accountability for the delivery of the education services in Monmouthshire.

Elected members and senior officers have demonstrated their willingness to take difficult decisions, for example over school closures, and staffing and financial issues.

The authority has appropriate procedures for scrutiny and is actively working to improve this function further. The Children and Young People's select committee provides timely scrutiny on a number of relevant issues facing education in the authority. Officers, and partners such as the EAS, provide suitable reports to the committee, and senior officers assist the committee further by providing clarity and relevant additional information during the meetings. Training for scrutiny members is adequate and chairs and select committee members have access to guidance on the role of pre-meetings and generic questions that members may wish to ask to scrutinise and challenge performance or policy.

The authority has a clear ambition and strategy for increasing Welsh-medium provision for learners in Monmouthshire and have steadily increased this provision over time. They consider the views of stakeholders and engage well with other partners when considering future Welsh-medium provision. The authority is considering establishing a new Welsh-medium primary school and is actively looking at the options for secondary provision as well as the implications of other revisions to their provision.

The authority has established clear and consistent self-evaluation processes that allow leaders and managers to identify an overview of strengths and areas for improvement in most areas. Where self-evaluation processes are used effectively they quality assure services well, and inform improvement planning, such as in safeguarding. Where this practice is less effective, the evaluations are not diagnostic enough and do not provide a sufficiently robust analysis of strengths and areas for improvement such as that for SEN and for considering success measures for the attainment of pupils eligible for free-school meals.

Self-evaluation processes provide senior leaders with a good overview of the performance and context of the authority's schools. This enables them to commission effective support for the schools through the regional school improvement service. This is contributing to improvements in many of the authority's schools. The annual chief officer report on children and young people, which is informed by a broad evidence base, provides a useful overview and strategic analysis of pupils' outcomes, schools' performance and contextual issues.

Although the local authority provides appropriate opportunities for children and young people to express their views on service provision, such as through the 'Make Your Mark' event, it does not always maximise the opportunities for them to share their opinions on key priority areas, such as support for learners eligible for free school meals.

Overall, improvement planning processes impact positively on addressing and refining the local authority's high-level priorities and provide a sound basis to manage and direct resources. They are reviewed regularly, allowing officers and elected members to identify and mitigate risk in a timely manner. The processes are mostly reflective and promote a valuable culture of service development and accountability, although a few of the service evaluations are too descriptive and on occasion lack enough critical analysis to inform improvements. Although improvement planning generally takes account of an appropriate range of information and data, it does not always focus sharply enough on the specific aspects of support required or what success might look like. For example, the analysis of data relating to pupils with SEN lacks the depth needed to inform service improvement planning accurately enough.

The authority's performance management processes are appropriate and focus well on supporting staff in undertaking their roles. Members of staff keep up to date with knowledge about their areas of responsibility. The professional learning opportunities offered to them generally support them well to undertake their roles successfully. Staff's performance management improvement objectives relate closely to their specific developmental needs, but they do not always align well enough to the priorities in the authority's improvement plans.

Over the last three years, leaders have consciously worked at improving communication with stakeholders and forming positive relationships with the authority's schools. The authority promotes a culture of collaboration across its departments, its schools and partner organisations.

Senior officers have benefited well from the close supporting relationships they have with senior officers in other local authorities. This has enabled them to establish effective policies and procedures and improve their practice of supporting schools and young people. There have been worthwhile opportunities for officers to benefit from professional development by working with other agencies to refine their practice. Effective examples include working with specialists in the early years sector to improve the authority's strategy for nursery provision and learning more about self-evaluation in terms of the youth service. The authority is beginning to share its good practice with other local authorities and actively encourages staff from its schools to share any effective practice that they have with other partners within the local authority area, the region and beyond.

Safeguarding in education services is good. The importance of safeguarding as a corporate responsibility is particularly strong. The establishment of strong working relationships across the local authority for the effective delivery of safeguarding means that education services and schools are supported well. In particular, the working relationship between social services and education services is especially effective. The local authority has clear corporate policies and procedures, which set out well the responsibilities of all staff as well as those with lead safeguarding roles. The role of the whole authority safeguarding group provides an effective forum within which safeguarding is monitored, managed and evaluated.

The local authority has a robust quality assurance process for safeguarding. All local authority services undertake an annual safeguarding self-evaluation, which produce red, amber, or green (RAG) ratings against set criteria. The lead officer for safeguarding in education monitors the outcomes of these self-evaluations well, and where necessary challenges red ratings and verifies green ratings, which leads to remedial action when needed.

Safe recruitment procedures are robust. The steps taken to recruit paid and unpaid staff are recorded clearly and include outcomes of all required pre-employment checks. Monthly exception reports are used to verify that all required actions have been taken, and are reported to the local authority's senior managers. Annual onsite checks are made in all schools to verify these records are complete.

All allegations against staff are taken seriously and are assessed through a professional strategy meeting, which leads to clearly concluded outcomes, with clear actions set for any succeeding stages. Where required, headteachers and governing bodies are supported well by human resources and the lead officer for safeguarding in education.

Safeguarding management reports capture well the key messages regarding safeguarding activity within education services. These reports provides senior managers and elected members a clear analysis of emerging risks or areas for development.

The authority plans its annual budgets carefully, demonstrating its commitment to education. Funding for Monmouthshire schools remains below average compared to that for other schools in Wales and the spend on other education services such as the Youth Service is above average. In 2018-2019, budget pressures, particularly around special education needs provision and schools' budgets, contributed to an overall education budget overspend.

The authority provides effective support to the school budget forum, which considers important issues that affect schools. The forum played a key role in the recent review of the funding formula used to delegate funding for schools, such as agreeing elements of the formula in need of review and considered the impact of proposed changes on individual schools.

Schools' deficits have notably increased over recent years resulting in Monmouthshire's net balance at March 2019 being amongst the lowest in Wales; a very few schools are carrying significant negative balances. Whilst there are recovery plans in place, agreed with senior managers and cabinet members, the authority is considering the use of loans for schools. It is yet to identify the wider implications for schools of holding such low levels of reserves and the impact of introducing loans.

The authority works well with a range of partners in Monmouthshire and, regionally, and has a comprehensive range of service-level-agreements that provide flexibility for schools to choose the level of their participation and access to support services. Overall, the number of schools who use these services is high.

The authority has improved its school buildings, supported by the Welsh Government 21st Century Schools programme, and has completed condition surveys to inform capital programme priorities. In developing its new Local Development Plan, the authority is also considering future pupil numbers in relation to new housing developments. This will help inform future budget and capital decisions.

Evidence base of the report

Before the inspection, inspectors:

- consult the local authority on the local inspection questions to be used during the inspection, based on the authority's self-evaluation, strategic plans and relevant data held by Estyn
- analyse the outcomes from open questionnaires, including the views of learners, parents, school staff and governors, local authority staff, regional consortium staff, elected members and general public
- carry out a preliminary visit to the local authority to meet with a range of relevant partners to education services, such as learner representatives, headteachers and governors, and leaders from statutory and third sector agencies working with children and young people

During the inspection, inspectors normally:

- meet with the leader of the council, elected members responsible for education services, elected members responsible for the scrutiny of education services, the chief executive, the director of education, other leaders and managers in education services, other relevant staff in the local authority, the managing director of the regional consortium for school improvement and other relevant staff from the regional consortium
- look closely at the local authority's self-evaluation processes
- consider the local authority's strategic and operational plans for improvement
- scrutinise a variety of documents, including information on learner outcomes, information on the performance of schools and other education settings, including information from the regional consortium for school improvement, minutes from a range of meetings, reports presented to council or scrutiny, information relating to the safeguarding of learners and any other information relevant to the local authority's education services held by Estyn

After the on-site inspection and before the publication of the report, Estyn:

- review the findings of the inspection alongside the supporting evidence from the inspection team in order to validate, moderate and ensure the quality of the inspection
- provide a draft copy of the report for the local authority to note any concerns with factual accuracy, and made amendments where necessary

Copies of the report

Copies of this report are available from the local authority and from the Estyn website (www.estyn.gov.wales)

The report was produced in accordance with Section 38 of the Education Act 1997, the Children Act 2004 and the Learning and Skills Act 2000.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

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Publication date: 21/04/2020

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SUBJECT: Covid 19 Decision Making
REPORT: Cabinet
DATE: 6 May 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is submitted to update Cabinet on the impact on decision making that the Covid 19 (CV19) period has had within the Council and identify next steps.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To note 3.4 and approve the intention set out at 3.8.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The WHO declared CV19 an international public health emergency on 30 January, non-essential travel was advised against on 16 March and the 'lockdown' was introduced on 23 March.
- 3.2 Cabinet was last held on 4 March and Full Council was last held on 5 March and all reports required to be dealt with within the Financial Year were concluded at that meeting (the Pay Policy being the final one). Audit Committee on 19 March was the last meeting to be held before all subsequent meetings were cancelled owing to the lockdown and the existing legislation that made remote meetings impossible at the time.
- 3.3 Individual Cabinet Member Decisions (ICMDs) have continued as required during the lockdown period and, as per the Constitution, it is within the Leader's gift to determine what Executive business he wishes to be dealt with at Cabinet or via ICMD within the guidance set out in Article 7, Part C and the Executive Procedure Rules within the Constitution.
- 3.4 The Constitution provides authority, in certain circumstances, for decisions that would normally require Council or Executive approval, to be made by the Chief Executive, Chief Officers or Statutory Officers. No such decisions have had to be taken during the CV19 period.
- 3.5 A variety of decisions have been taken either as part of the wider coordinated CV19 emergency response, or as mandated by the laws that have been enacted as part of the response. All of these decisions have been within the normal delegated powers of Chief Officers, and where possible taken after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.
- 3.6 These decisions include the tasking or redeployment of staff, operational decisions around waste collections and social distancing for workers, the exercise of discretion around Council Tax or Business Rate relief and of course schools-focused decisions regarding the opening and operating of hubs to support key workers.

3.7 The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 have changed the pre-existing laws to enable fully remote meetings to take place as long as those participating can hear and be heard. It also provides for the promulgation of all associated documents via electronic means only. It is this change in the law on 22 April that allowed the Investment Committee on 24 April to take place, and now this Cabinet meeting on 6 May.

3.8 MCC will continue to develop its ability to host meetings remotely with a view to holding a Full Council Meeting. Further legislative work may be required to permit the decision making bodies of the Planning Committee and Licensing and Regulatory Committees to function again and, as business finds an equilibrium in the CV19 period allowing routine work and decision making to return, the scrutiny functions of the Select Committees will return accordingly. The AGM may take place at any time in 2020 and all Members holding positions as Chairs, Vice-Chairs, appointed to bodies, joint committees and other such positions may continue to hold them until 30 April 2021.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

4.1 Changes across the organisation have been swift and in response to an emergency, which continues despite these efforts to return to a degree of normality. Legally mandated changes and decisions have not provided for alternative options, and necessity has driven the speed of adaptation elsewhere. The new legislation provides sufficient flexibility to consider alternative routes to return to full decision making as required.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.1 Not applicable.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The technological architecture required to enable a return to decision making meetings is largely in place across MCC and it is not anticipated that there are additional resource implications.

7. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

7.1 There are no identified implications.

8. CONSULTEES

Cabinet Members
Strategic Leadership Team
Democratic Services

Matt Phillips
Head of Law and Monitoring Officer
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SUBJECT: CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE: STRATEGIC AIMS

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 6 May 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the strategic aims that will be in place for the duration of the Coronavirus pandemic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet recognise that there is a trade-off between the need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus and the achievement of the goals set within the Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the strategic aims shown in paragraph 3.2.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Coronavirus pandemic has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to our way of life and the way we provide services. Officers and Councillors have been working relentlessly to meet needs in new ways creating childcare hubs for key workers, paying over £14 million, to date, in grants to businesses to help sustain local jobs and working with volunteers to distribute food and medicines to name a few. The need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus, while continuing to support communities, has meant that we have paused or re-purposed a lot of our usual work. We have lessened our focus on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan to re-direct capacity towards the emergency response effort. Throughout this, our sense of purpose has been embellished but remains undiminished.
- 3.2 To provide clarity and ensure accountability through this period, a set of strategic aims have been established. They will be in place for the duration of the emergency response effort:

	Purpose: To protect life and support sustainable resilient communities
Aims	To provide clear purposeful civic leadership
	To continue to provide childcare for children of key workers and ensure continuation of learning for all young people
	To help vulnerable young people and adults who need our support

To help local businesses survive
To keep our neighbourhoods clean and tidy whilst managing waste as sustainably as we can
To be a trusted partner for other agencies / organisations
To keep a safe, healthy and productive workforce
To ensure we remain financially sustainable as an organisation

- 3.3 These aims will be kept under continuous review and are used to direct the work of the Emergency Response Team who meet throughout the week and ensure our approach is based on the latest evidence. Each aim is supported by a number of actions with clear accountability mechanisms in place. These are evolving on a daily and weekly basis, examples include:
- Promote the financial support available to businesses and ensure grant payments are made in a timely manner;
 - Provide childcare for the children of key workers and vulnerable learners;
 - Deliver a programme of distance learning to all pupils;
 - Provide social care for vulnerable people throughout the county, training and re-deploy staff from other services where necessary to maintain service levels;
 - Contact all people who are shielded and, where assistance is required, help them access food and medical supplies when they are self-isolating;
 - Increase the number of vehicles used so that we can continue to collect waste;
 - Improve the digital accessibility of our services;
 - Review the authority's Medium Term Financial Plan in light of the consequences of the COVID-19 impact;
 - Ensure testing is rolled out into our key service areas to mitigate disruption to core delivery.
- 3.4 The virus presents a challenge to the short-term cashflow and long-term viability of many businesses. Local authorities are not immune to this. While we continue to receive revenue from taxation, many other sources of income have dried up. It is not possible to predict the long-term outcome of this virus on the public finances but it is likely that we will need to revisit some of the aspirations in the Corporate Plan as we face up to a new financial reality.
- 3.5 Despite the many challenges, the past few months have resulted in new ways of doing things. This includes rapid improvements in our digital infrastructure, remote meeting attendance and accelerating cultural change with diverse teams coming together as part of a single system. These can form part of a lasting legacy of transformation with needs being met in new ways.
- 3.6 The Council's established performance framework will continue to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management across Council services. Some services area will predominately deliver the strategic aims, manage, and mitigate risks on the Coronavirus emergency response risk register. The actions that are continuing to deliver the Corporate Plan will be embedded in the service or business plans of individual teams and progress can be tracked through regular service updates on The Hub. The

intention remains to produce an annual report of progress on the Corporate Plan by October 2020.

4 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The strategic aims have been developed, informed by the latest available evidence and government guidance, to guide the Council's ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic. They have taken equality and the components of well-being into account. The legislation and the council's responsibilities in all these areas will remain an important part in our response as it continues to develop.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The strategic aims have been developed, informed by the latest available evidence and government guidance, to guide the Council's ongoing response to the Coronavirus pandemic. While a number of arrangements have now been established to support these aims, the Council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and delivery of each aim is not without challenges and risks. The delivery of the aims will continue to be monitored and they will need to be flexible in timescale and content as circumstances and guidance changes.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Each of the actions that underpinned the strategic aims has a corresponding measure or milestone. These will be used to evaluate the success. Nonetheless, it needs to be recognised that in a changing external environment it is likely that actions, and therefore the corresponding measures of progress will need to be continuously reviewed.
- 6.2 The Council's established performance framework will continue to facilitate service planning, performance management and risk management across Council services.

7 REASONS:

- 7.1 To put in place a set of objectives which are focused on protect life, stopping the spread of the coronavirus in our communities, supporting sustainable resilient communities while preserving the health and well-being of our workforce.
- 7.1 There are significant challenges that must be responded to, clearly specifying the council's purpose and strategic aims in response to the Coronavirus pandemic will guide the Council's continuing response ensuring clarity and accountability.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Delivery of the strategic aims will continue to have significant resource implications to the Council, including increased costs to maintain current service delivery and demands in

setting up new or amended services. A number of the Council's income streams have also ceased and savings planned as part of the 2020/21 budget have been delayed.

- 8.2 At time of writing the detailed financial implications of the response have yet to be fully modelled though an early and initial forecast submitted to WLGA for the purposes of extending dialogue and negotiations with Welsh Government highlighted a net loss for the Council of £3.4m for the period to 30th June 2020.
- 8.3 The significant factor that determines the level of impact on the Council's finances is the level of funding received from the UK Government and Welsh Government to compensate for the losses, additional costs and delayed savings. And that results from the COVID-19 response and impact. The other determined factor of course being the length of time that these impacts are felt.
- 8.4 A specific strategic aim has been identified to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable as an organisation. Alongside the recovery plan that will be developed a specific risk on the financial impacts to the Council has been identified as part of the whole authority strategic risk template and continues to be managed.

9 CONSULTTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

The strategic aims have been informed by informal discussions between SLT and Cabinet.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire Corporate Plan 2017/22

11 AUTHORS:

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SUBJECT:	Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response – Risk Management
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	6 May 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the arrangements the Council has in place to identify, manage and mitigate risks in response to the Coronavirus (COVID -19) pandemic.
- 1.2 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current high and medium level risks the Council is managing related to the Coronavirus response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorse the arrangements the Council has in place and risks that are being managed in response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has posed a significant and unprecedented challenge to how the Council continues to provide a range of vital services. The need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus, while continuing to support communities, has meant that a lot of our usual work has been re-purposed or paused. The Council has continued to rise to the challenge by adapting, innovating and establishing service delivery that supports residents and business, assists community activity and supports council staff well-being.
- 3.2 The Council has enacted its Emergency Management Plan and business continuity arrangements to deliver and coordinate the response, working across Council services along with our external partners such as the emergency services, neighbouring local authorities and Welsh Government. These continue to operate in a dynamic and challenging environment, evolving and adapting to manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks to Council service delivery and the well-being of our staff and residents.
- 3.3 The Council has established internal response structures that link into wider formal Gwent structures and directly into regional, Welsh and Central Government. A diagram of the structure and arrangements in place can be seen in Annex 1 of the report.

- 3.4 To help guide the Council's continuing response a revised purpose and set of strategic aims have been established that will be in place for the duration of the Council's emergency response to the Coronavirus pandemic, as set out in the separate report on the Cabinet agenda. Our focus on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan has been lessened to re-direct capacity towards the emergency response effort.

Internal Arrangements

- 3.5 The main element of the council's response is via the Emergency Response Team (ERT). The ERT chair is rotated between Strategic Leadership Team members. All directorates and COVID-19 specific sub groups established to support the response are represented on the group.
- 3.6 The ERT continue to monitor progress on agreed actions, identified risks and co-ordinate the Council's overall response to the emergency. The group can quickly be convened if situation arises, that needs to be urgently addressed and continues to meet regularly.
- 3.7 The Council's Emergency Response Team (ERT) is guided by an established risk register, which identifies specific risks related to the COVID-19 response. This identifies a range of risks that are owned across a variety of council's services and directorates that are regularly reviewed a part of the ERT's operations and updated accordingly. The risks currently assessed as High and Medium level post mitigation are provided in annex 2. The risk assessment is continually being reviewed and updated. Therefore, this overview provides the latest position at the point the Cabinet agenda was circulated. The potential High and Medium level risks are:
- Due to staff absence and reduced numbers the Council's capabilities and capacity to deliver service will be reduced and restricted in the following priority areas: i. Emergency response ii. Social care, particularly in adult services and iii. Operational capacity to maintain essential services
 - Limited supplies of PPE will impact on the ability of staff to safely deliver services, particularly in Social Care roles
 - That the Council becomes financially unsustainable, in whole or in part, due to increasing financial demands resulting from increased spending and decreased income generation as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response
 - A prolonged period of social distancing restrictions could cause unrest and the potential for some members of the public to ignore the rules and engage in non-compliant activities
 - An increase in the need for funeral and burial services will affect capacity and lead to a delay in delivery of services
- 3.8 In support of the ERT, specific COVID-19 groups have been established to deliver on various processes and specific outputs as directed by the ERT. These groups and their remit are:

Business Resilience (Chair: Head of Enterprise and Community Animation)

- Develop and deliver a grant mechanism to expedite payments to businesses, coordinate and respond to business enquiries and update MCC business advice pages with all the latest information and self-help advice.

Community Action (Chair: Head of Enterprise and Community Animation)

- Support community led response groups, scale up the Volunteering for Wellbeing programme and implementation of the 'Our Monmouthshire' digital platform

Communications (Chair: Communication, Marketing and Engagement Manager)

- Deliver on-going MCC COVID19 communications via our various channels.

Logistics (Chair: Head of Commercial, Property, Fleet and Facilities)

- Ensure that staff and resources are allocated to priority services and that staff being re-deployed have the necessary training, equipment and guidance for them to undertake their new roles in a safe manner.

Digital (Chair: Head of Digital)

- Responsible for aiding business continuity through the use of digital tools and remote working facilities for both schools and the corporate core.

Health, Welfare & Information (Chair: HR Manager)

- Support the ongoing wellbeing of all colleagues during the global Pandemic. The main aim is to publicise relevant and factual material on the Coronavirus Communications Hub which will inform, educate and link to practical support for colleagues throughout the organisation.

- 3.9 The ERT also directs issues to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) who make strategic decisions on behalf of the authority. SLT keep Elected Members informed through individual and specific briefings and via the daily updates from the Chief Executive that are sent via email and can also be found on the Council's internal Coronavirus communications hub.

External Arrangements

- 3.10 Monmouthshire links with external responding organisations via the Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating group (SCG). The SCG is chaired by Gwent Police and covers their geographic footprint. Representatives from the Emergency Services, local authorities, health organisations, military, Natural Resources Wales, utilities and Welsh Government sit on this group. Monmouthshire's representative is the Head of People Services. The SCG are responsible for setting the strategic objectives and coordination of the partner agency response to COVID-19.
- 3.11 There are specific sub groups that sit beneath the SCG that support this strategic group. Monmouthshire CC are represented on these groups as necessary. Monmouthshire CC provides a daily situation report to the SCG and these are collated and sent daily to the Emergency Coordination Centre Wales (ECCW). The ECCW reports to Welsh Government (WG) who then report to COBR – the Cabinet Office Briefing Room. The

SCG can also escalate concerns directly to WG through the formal meetings in addition to the daily situation reporting mechanism.

- 3.12 In addition to the above, the Leader of the Council also meets with other council leaders and Welsh Government ministers to discuss the response three times a week.

Activity so far

- 3.13 There has been an incredible amount of urgent output from both SCG and ERT in response to COVID-19. In addition to the establishment and agreement of strategic intentions, identification and mitigation of risks and the over-arching response structures put in place, a phenomenal amount of work has been and continues to be achieved.

Next steps include

- 3.14 The Council continues to operate in a dynamic environment. Response arrangements are continually under review to evolve and adapt to changing circumstances, the latest evidence, learning gathered and changes to legislation and guidance. The risks identified are regularly reviewed as part of these arrangements and updated based on the latest evidence available.
- 3.15 To help guide the Council's continuing response a revised purpose and set of strategic aims have been established that will be in place for the duration of the Council's emergency response to Coronavirus pandemic, as set out in the separate report of the Cabinet agenda. Delivery will continue to be monitored and will need to be flexible in timescale and content as circumstances and guidance changes. The plans being undertaken to deliver the strategic aims will further identify activity that is being undertaken to manage and mitigate identified risks.
- 3.16 The Council also has an established risk management policy that sets out the Council's policy and approach to strategic risk management across all service areas. The Council's strategic risk assessment will continue to be updated based on the latest evidence.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The risk management arrangements aim to identify and assess risks robustly, drawing on a range of evidence across all service areas. These arrangements form part of the emergency response and the aim is to put in place risk controls that are appropriate and proportionate to the issues they are mitigating. The legislation and the council's responsibilities in all these areas will remain an important part in our response now and as it continues to develop.
- 4.2 The Council's other established risk management arrangements continue to manage a range of strategic risks across service areas.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 This is not seeking a Cabinet decision and no detailed option appraisal is necessary.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Actions in the risk register set timescales and responsibility holders for delivery. The risk environment and risk assessment is subject to continuous review, as part of the ERT arrangements.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure delivery of the Council's strategic purpose to protect life and support sustainable resilient communities and strategic aims.
- 7.2 There are significant challenges that must be responded to. The arrangements ensure that risks are identified and assessed robustly by the authority and that risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate, and supported by effective operational activity to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 Specific activity to mitigate/manage risks has resource implications that includes:
- Increased costs to maintain current service delivery and demands in setting up new or amended services.
 - Significant reduction in income generation as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response and where services have been reduced or closed entirely.
 - An inevitable delay in budget savings plans in some areas and that adds to the financial challenges that were already being faced by the Council before the COVID-19 pandemic impacted.
- 8.2 A specific risk on the financial impacts to the Council has been identified and continues to be managed. A specific strategic aim has been identified to ensure the Council remains financially sustainable as an organisation

9. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

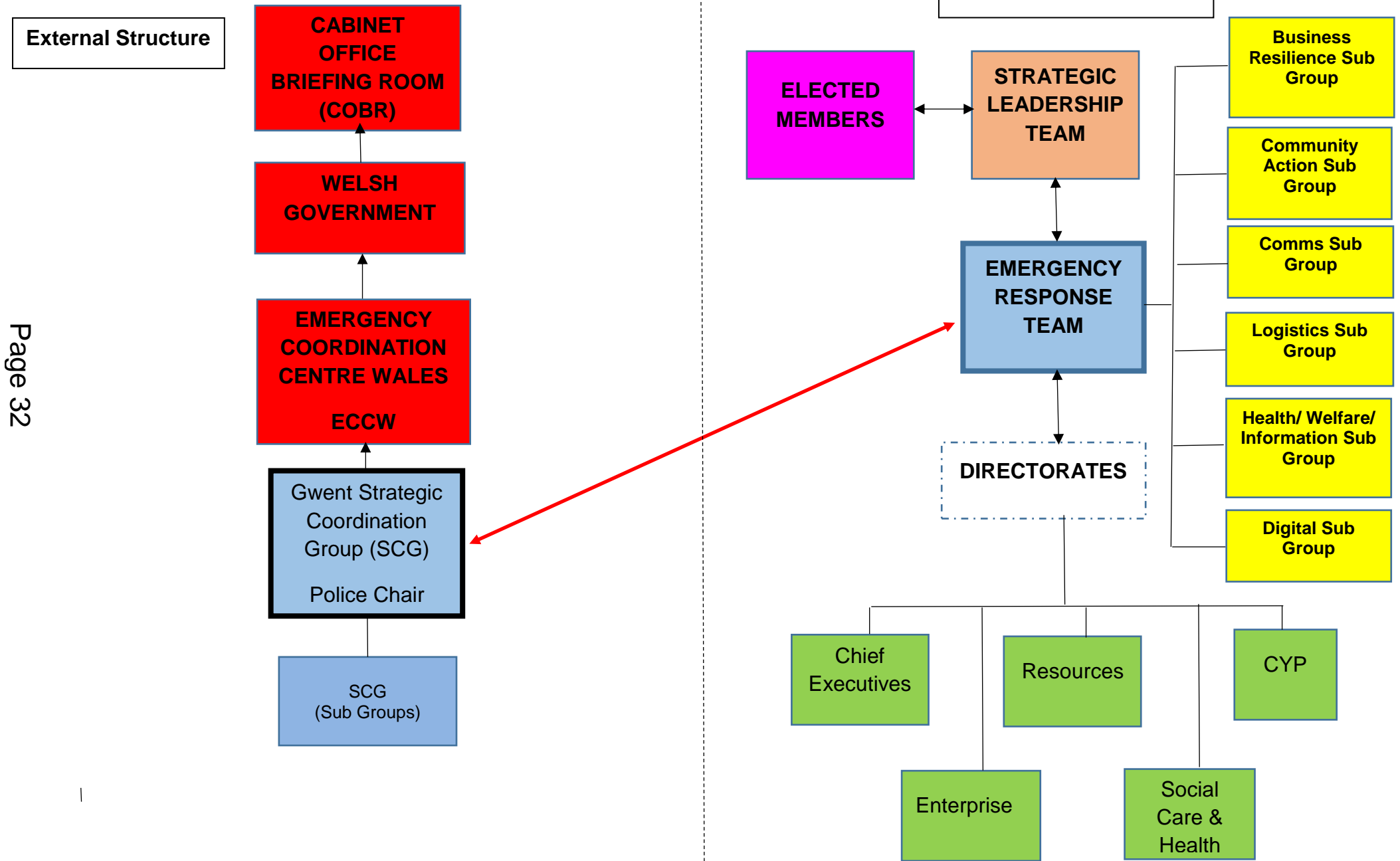
11. AUTHOR:

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ANNEX 1: CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RESPONSE STRUCTURE



Annex 2: Emergency Response Team (ERT) COVID-19 risk register

Risk	Reason why identified	Risk Level (Pre-Mitigation)			Mitigating actions	Timescale & responsibility holder	Mitigation action progress	Risk Level (Post-mitigation)			Risk owner
		Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level				Likelihood	Impact	Risk level	
1. Potential risk that: Due to staff absence and reduced numbers the Council's capabilities and capacity to deliver service will be reduced and restricted in the following priority areas: i. Emergency response ii. Social care particularly in adult services and iii. Operational capacity to maintain essential services	<p>The impact of the coronavirus pandemic could lead to an increase in staff absence due to illness or self-isolation.</p> <p>This could result in a lack of capacity to respond to other major incidents, should they occur.</p> <p>The delivery of social care services is essential and achieved through a dedicated service model, which could be impacted by the reduction in staff numbers. The impact would be most significant in Adult services</p> <p>This could result in a lack of capacity to respond in agreed priority services.</p>	Likely	Major	HIGH	<p>Monitor Staff absence rates</p> <p>Maintaining 'Service status' positions on Priority services</p> <p>Redeploying staff, where possible, to ensure service delivery is at acceptable levels.</p> <p>Continue to implement the robust protocol for testing to facilitate staff to return to work.</p>	Daily Emergency Response Team (ERT)	<p>Service status is being monitored by each directorate and reporting any issues, risks or escalations to the ERT. Emergency Response Team meetings are identifying and monitoring pinch points.</p> <p>Testing is now available for all priority service staff and their family members who are symptomatic.</p>	Possible	Major	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service
2. Potential risk that: Limited supplies of PPE will impact on the ability of staff to safely deliver services, particularly in Social Care roles	<p>Since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, access to PPE has been challenging and if supplies should decrease, this will impact on our ability to deliver services, particularly in Social Care. National guidance has been issued regarding the use of PPE, which further increases the demand for supplies. Concerns remain over national availability, national procurement and regional supply chain.</p>	Likely	Major	HIGH	<p>Develop MCC guidance on the correct usage of available PPE</p> <p>Stock availability is limited nationally so utilise all existing stocks as best as possible.</p> <p>Work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities and ABUHB to share resources, and ensure WG are aware of our position to escalate concerns regarding PPE as they arise.</p>	Daily ERT	<p>Guidance has been developed and is now available for each department to utilise.</p> <p>Continue to monitor the supply chain and use current resources as efficiently as possible.</p> <p>Collaboration is now underway amongst neighbouring authorities and ABUHB to share resources where available.</p>	Possible	Major	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service
3. Potential risk that: That the Council becomes financially unsustainable, in whole or in part, due to increasing financial demands resulting from increased spending and decreased income generation as a result of the Covid-19 emergency response	<p>The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in an increase in costs in maintaining services, in addition to the increasing demands from Central and Welsh Government to deliver new services and provide additional grants. This has resulted in a steep increase in our financial expenditure. In addition to this, some services have been reduced or closed entirely, resulting in a reduction of income.</p> <p>Budget savings plans will also inevitably be delayed in their</p>	Almost certain	Major	HIGH	<p>Implement the process for reclaiming costs via agreed avenues, and identify alternative grant funding offers available via Welsh Government.</p> <p>Complete a financial impact survey.</p> <p>Following the completion of an initial high level assessment to undertake a comprehensive financial sustainability assessment and draft recovery plan for consideration.</p>	Daily ERT	<p>It is a complex and evolving situation that is ongoing and is currently being considered at a regional and national level.</p> <p>A process has been established to identify Covid-19 costs in order to make a claim from Welsh Government.</p> <p>Ongoing discussion and dialogue is taking place with Welsh Government directly and through WLGA and with Welsh Treasurers to ensure that the financial</p>	Likely	Major	HIGH	Chief Officer – Resources

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	delivery in some areas. This adds to the challenges that were already being faced by the Council before the COVID-19 pandemic impacted.				To review the MTFP and budget assumptions with a view to assessing medium term implications.		challenges are understood and responded to.				
4. Potential risk that: A prolonged period of social distancing restrictions could cause unrest and the potential for some members of the public to ignore the rules and engage in non-compliant activities	As lock-down and social distancing continues, there is a risk that a small minority of people will start to defy the restrictions. This could impose a risk to community safety, and could also negatively impact on social cohesion should frustration occur amongst those adhering to the restrictions.	Possible	Substantial	MEDIUM	Provide accurate and frequent updates to the public, both national and local, utilising all communications mechanisms available. Continue to liaise with Gwent Police and Community Cohesion officers to pick up on early indications, and continue to monitor and escalate situations, as necessary, to address them.	Ongoing ERT	The situation will continue to be dynamic and is being monitored. Mitigation measures will depend on impacts and any developing situations within individual communities.	Possible	Substantial	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service
5. Potential risk that: An increase in the need for funeral and burial services will affect capacity and lead to a delay in delivery of services	The current pandemic could cause capacity constraints on the Registrar and Burial services, resulting in disruption to the funeral process chain and causing additional undue distress to members of the public	Almost certain	Major	HIGH	Continue to monitor the capacity of the Registrars and Burial services and implement the Emergency Response Team action plan, and continue to liaise with the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG). Consider alternative ways of working for the Registrar service, such as during weekends. Relaxation of some registration legislation, where appropriate, such as utilising telephone contact to register deaths. Increase the availability of resources for Registrars, where necessary.	Ongoing ERT	Registrars have now implemented new processes, for example, proactive contact is now being made with bereaved families to offer assistance. The situation is being monitored for demand levels and responded to accordingly. ABUHB have also implemented new process to help alleviate the funeral and burial process. We are working closely with funeral directors to help mitigate the risk.	Possible	Substantial	MEDIUM	SLT / ERT / Heads of Service