

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 15 January 2020

## Notice of meeting

### Strong Communities Select Committee

Thursday, 23rd January, 2020 at 10.00 am,

*Please note that a pre meeting will be held 30 minutes before the start of the meeting for members of the committee.*

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
<b>PART A – SCRUTINY AND CRIME DISORDER MATTERS</b>		
No matters to discuss		
<b>PART B – STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE</b>		
1.	Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Open Public Forum	
4.	<b>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b>  Pre-decision scrutiny on the final plan - following the assessment stage there will be formal review, preparation of a draft plan, formal application prior to decision	1 - 138
5.	<b>Wye Valley AONB Management Plan</b>  Scrutiny of the draft plan prior to adoption.	139 - 154
6.	<b>Budget Monitoring Report - Month 7</b>  Budget monitoring report for quarterly scrutiny.	155 - 188
7.	<b>Scrutiny of the 2020/21 draft budget proposals</b>  Scrutiny of the 2020/21 draft Capital and Revenue proposals for 2020/21	189 - 268

within the context of the 4-year Medium Term Financial Plan.

Refer to the link below for details – Cabinet Agenda 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019:

- Draft Capital Budget Proposals 2020/21 to 2023/24.
- Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2020/21.

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&MIId=4192>

<b>8.</b>	<b>Action list</b>	
<b>9.</b>	<b>To confirm minutes of the previous meeting</b>	269 - 274
<b>10.</b>	<b>Strong Communities forward work programme</b>	275 - 276
<b>11.</b>	<b>Cabinet &amp; Council forward work programme</b>	277 - 292
<b>12.</b>	<b>Date and time of next meeting</b>	

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

P. Clarke  
L.Dymock  
D. Dovey  
A. Easson  
L. Guppy  
R. Harris  
V. Smith  
J.Treharne  
A. Webb

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### Welsh Language

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

# 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.

## Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Guide

### Role of the Pre-meeting

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
  - Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
  - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

### Questions for the Meeting

#### Scrutinising Performance

1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?
2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?
3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?
4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?
5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?
6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?
7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?
8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?

#### Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? Do they believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works?
6. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan?
7. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications been taken into consideration? For example, what are *the procedures that need to be in place to protect children*?
8. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?
9. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated.

### Questions for the Committee to conclude...

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...
- (iii) Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

### General Questions....

#### Empowering Communities

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?

### *Service Demands*

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?

### *Financial Planning*

- Do we have robust medium and long-term financial plans in place?
- Are we linking budgets to plans and outcomes and reporting effectively on these?

### *Making savings and generating income*

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?
- How are we maximising income? Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the actual versus desired workforce?

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Strong Communities Select</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>23 January 2019</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To enable pre decision scrutiny of the Countryside Access Improvement Plan (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) following the completion of public consultation and prior to consideration by cabinet.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 The committee is invited to scrutinise the
- the results of consultations on the draft plan
  - the content of the finalised Countryside Access Improvement Plan and the Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 There is a statutory requirement to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) and undertake a review of it. This committee considered the proposed timetable and assessment stages in November 2016. Subsequently substantial research and consultations have been undertaken and consultation carried out on a Draft RoWIP.
- 3.2 The RoWIP is required by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 to cover the management, development, integration and promotion of local rights of way and countryside access networks. Welsh Government published guidance on the review of RoWIPs in July 2016.
- 3.2 There are strong links between the RoWIP, Active Travel and the GI Strategy promoting opportunities for sustainable access and recreation that encourage healthy lifestyles and improve well-being for communities. The maintenance and improvement of the rights of way network, which includes many routes in urban and rural areas used for purposeful journeys as well as recreational use, will help deliver active travel embracing multifunctional benefits, including creating and improving safe and pleasant off-road active travel / multipurpose routes and well-connected, multifunctional greenspaces.
- 3.3 The first Monmouthshire RoWIP was approved in 2007 (and can be viewed at <http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2013/09/ROWIP-final-doc.pdf>). The review requirements and a proposed timetable were published in November 2016. Public

consultations were carried out in 2017/18 to inform the assessments. A formal decision was made, by Individual Cabinet Member Decision in May 2019, to undertake the next statutory consultation stage on a draft plan with the results of the consultation and the final plan being reported to Select Committee and Cabinet.

- 3.4 The public consultation on the Draft ROWIP and its 5 assessments has run for 14 weeks to December 16<sup>th</sup> 2019. All documents including a Well-Being Assessment have been available to download <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/countryside-access/rights-of-way-improvement-plan/> . Large print copies were sent out as requested. The consultation was advertised at the Usk Show and 300+ individuals and organisations were directly notified by email regarding the consultation. Advertisements were placed in the press and social media and posters and postcards were handed out and displayed in museums, leisure centres, libraries etc. Other people/organisations also promoted the consultation on their websites and through social media.
- 3.5 In total 35 responses were received to the Draft RoWIP consultation and as required by statute the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum and Brecon Beacons National Park Local Access Forum have been consulted on the responses received. .
- 3.6 A summary of the consultation responses is provided in Appendix 2. The responses can be summarised as follows:
- 1) The majority of respondents are currently users of the Public Rights of Way network.
  - 2) Some new partnerships and projects were offered for inclusion in the RoWIP. For example, the Disabled Ramblers have offered to work with us to test new routes and to review our furniture guide.
  - 3) There is strong support for the plan, the themes, the way it is presented and that it is comprehensive and clearly sets out aims and objectives. There were no objections to any priorities. Hannah Blythn, Minister for Housing and Local Government says *"...Crucially, having an up-to-date ROWIP will also assist with any future funding schemes made available by the Welsh Government or third Sector. Thank you for putting together the new ROWIP, it will put MCC in good stead for supporting the economy, encouraging active lifestyles and contributing to making Monmouthshire a great place to work, live and visit."*
  - 4) There is concern about lack of funding *"I wish the funding for the Countryside and ROW service would be increased to ensure their vital work is continued and those maintenance statistics really could improve. Our health, mental and physical depends on it!"*
- 3.7 While it is a statutory obligation to produce a RoWIP there is no obligation to deliver the improvements identified in the plan. This was to encourage authorities to produce plans that were ambitious rather than simply seeking to match the scale of ambition with the resource available.
- 3.8 Many successful projects delivering improvements to the network were delivered through the life span of the first RoWIP as a result of amending policies, our approach, partnership working, securing external funding and developer contribution. Improving our partnership approach as outlined in the draft RoWIP will continue to help deliver improvements.



3.9 Detailed responses were received from many respondents. These had similar topics

- 1) **Public Rights of Way network issues.** Not surprisingly some respondents took the opportunity to raise matters relating to current issues on the network, for instance overgrown or obstructed paths. In these cases the responses are being captured in our management system (if they are not already) and will/are being actioned in line with our stated policies and available resources.
- 2) **Requests for specific schemes:** Some responses related to specific requests for improvements or commitment to very specific programmes of work. There is a list of these in chapter 16 of the Draft RoWIP. These requests will be added here unless they are already on the list.
- 3) **Policy and delivery plan amendments:** Some respondents endorsed existing policies such as the Least Restrictive Access Policy. But some sought amendments to policies and/or the delivery plan to strengthen them to address specific issues or provide support for specific actions. These responses have been carefully considered and where appropriate the Plan has been amended to reflect them. In some cases, however, it is felt that the Plan does not need amendment but that these points can be better addressed through incorporating these comments into existing service policies. For example Canoe Wales requirement is addressed already in 6.1 of our Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Report (Appendix 4). This policy review is an integral element of the ROWIP. It focusses directly on how the service delivers statutory elements of its work, manages the resources available to it and operational priorities. It will be an active document being amended as required when procedures and legislation change.
- 4) Several respondents raised concerns about the impact of **Welsh Government's proposed legislation** for allowing cyclists and horse riders use footpaths. They suggest the RoWIP should include more information about this, but as this proposal is in very early stages with Welsh Government it is not felt that the RoWIP is the best place to pre-empt what may or may not occur.
- 5) **General changes:** Some respondents made useful comments about rewording or adding links to more information and the necessary corrections/additions have been made to the RoWIP as necessary.
- 6) **Rights with responsibilities:** There was an interest by a few respondents and also the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum for greater policy support for the management or prohibition of motor vehicles on rights of way and county unclassified roads. Also to ensure the public and landowners were aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- 7) **Priorities and Statements of Action:** A few respondents wanted the Statements of Action in Chapter 17 to include more detailed costs, timescales and priorities. However the Guidance from Welsh Government is that such things should be contained in "Delivery Plans" which will be produced annually to show progress being made on the RoWIP.

3.10 Two themes received specific comments:

- a) **Active Healthy Lifestyles:** Reducing speed and better managing county unclassified roads was welcomed by cyclists and walkers. Several responses expressed the view that public transport should feature more positively in the RoWIP. It is suggested that

a collaborative approach with improved promotion on bus services should be added and this was endorsed by Monmouthshire Local Access Forum.

- b) **Well maintained network:** This particular theme drew feedback. There is no doubt that users particularly feel that if the plan is to provide positive outcomes, then the PROW network must be well maintained and accessible. The frequency and amount of vegetation clearance and signage was seen as important. Respondents also agreed with stakeholder’s views on pages 25 and 26 re cropping and enforcement and making more use of volunteers and partnership with town and community councils to maintain and fund improvements.

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

- 4.1 The assessments show that a new Plan will maintain long-term planning and management arrangements to ensure that outcomes are sustainable in the future. It will support continued efforts to create a walking and riding tourism product enhancing Monmouthshire as a tourism destination, deliver economic, social and environmental regeneration outcomes to Monmouthshire and provide improved physical access, volunteering opportunities and activity.

#### 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Comments
Not proceed to drafting a new ROWIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No access to future grant</li> <li>Undermine partnerships</li> <li>Makes it difficult to update policies and strategies for countryside access management.</li> <li>WG expects all local authorities to redraft their ROWIPs to cover next ten year period and cover new issues such as active travel which does not appear in old ROWIP</li> </ul>	Welsh Government Guidance says that we would need to publish any reasons why we do not consider there is a need to redraft the ROWIP.
Draft a new ROWIP & consult	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports appropriate management of countryside access provision within Monmouthshire</li> <li>Supports existing relationships and partnership work</li> <li>Maintains potential access to future funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None identified</li> </ul>	Meets Welsh Government Guidance.

#### 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Progress will be monitored against the approved RoWIP and the annual RoWIP “Delivery Plan” and the monitoring and evaluation arrangements in place for specific programmes and projects

## **7. REASONS:**

- 7.1 A review of the RoWIP is required by s60 (3) of the CROW Act 2000. Statutory Guidance for RoWIP Reviews has been published by Welsh Government which includes the need to carry out consultation on the Draft RoWIP. The consultation shows support for the plan. The draft plan has been amended in light of the consultation responses received and will be considered by Cabinet on 19 February 2020. If then adopted it will shape the work of the service over the coming decade.
- 7.2 Appropriately managed and promoted public rights of way, countryside and coastal access support the tourism economy and locally accessible services by developing the county's walking product. The countryside access network provides opportunities for residents and visitors to enjoy active and healthy lifestyles and provides direct and indirect volunteering and community involvement opportunities to contribute to healthy and fulfilled lives.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 The delivery of programmes and projects set out in the plan will be dependent on identifying resource from within existing budgets or securing the necessary resource either through the County Council's normal budgetary processes or external funding sources, including specific grants or developer contributions.

## **9. CONSULTEES:**

Chief Operating Officer MonLife  
Chief Officer Enterprise

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1: Equality and Future Generations Evaluation (attached)  
Appendix 2: Final ROWIP Consultation Report December 2019 (attached)  
Appendix 3: Countryside Access Improvement Plan (showing changes from consultation draft) (attached)  
Appendix 4: Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide  
<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2019/09/Draft-Policy-and-Protocol-Appendix-5.pdf>

## **11. AUTHORS & CONTACT DETAILS:**

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# Countryside Access Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Final Consultation Report 20/12/2019

ID	Name	Response
1	Gloucestershire County Council	<p>A very detailed and superb report!</p> <p>I don't believe we'll ever have the time to create such a masterpiece, firefighting all the issues that come our way. Well done.</p>
2	Monmouthshire LAF Chair Lady	<p>I have just received your email and attachments regarding the ROWIP. I have had a quick look through and it looks good, you have been very thorough and obviously spent a lot of time on it.</p> <p>I thought I would send you this message from BHS HQ about a new agreement with NRW, in case you are not aware of it.</p>
3	Canal & River Trust	<p>Thanks for the kind comments with regard to the Canal. I have spoken to Jenny Rogers who is our new Partnerships and Engagement Manager. She has suggested that the Trust may wish to be shown as a partners for some additional sections.</p> <p>Please would you consider adding us as a key partner to;</p> <p>WM1 (page 48) ALH1 (page 52) ALH2 (page 53) linked to WHS KWOT4 (page 57)</p> <p>Please note that the Reference to the Trust on Page 59 should read Canal &amp; River Trust (or Glandwr Cymru) without the 's'.</p> <p>With regard to WM3 – we do not need to be a full partner but have schemes such as Share the space, Drop the Pace which may be relevant/helpful.</p>

ID	Name	Response
4	Canoe Wales	<p>WM5 Green infrastructure- We believe the canal is a perfect example of multi- functional GI. We will of course expect the canal to be treated as such in any planning applications or wider policy and will always promote this in any responses. The Trust would be happy to attend stakeholder meetings on this matter, as we do with several other LPAs.</p> <p>This is just a reminder to those of you whose ROWIP review processes are still underway (with apologies that I don't have the resources to engage individually with each of your individual consultations, where these are still ongoing): I should be grateful if you could all ensure that your ROWIPs include reference to a requirement along the lines that "Rights of Way and Access Land that are / is, or could be, used to gain recreational access to waterways for canoes and similar waterborne craft should be identified and maintained so as to promote and improve their use for this purpose".</p> <p>Also, for those of you who haven't yet responded (with thanks to those who have), we are keen that all LAFs in Wales have access to paddlers who can advise them on paddle sport issues and developments in their area. If you already have this expertise within your membership, I would be interested to know this – and if not, I would be pleased to arrange for someone to attend one of your meetings and / or to suggest new members who could represent paddle sport interests and views.</p> <p>I believe you will all have seen the message from the Powys LAF Secretary that, following advice from NRW, they have amended their terms of reference to include "access on the water", as well as "access to the water"; and I should be grateful if you would all consider taking the same approach.</p> <p>Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further advice around paddle sport access to waterways in your area.</p>
5	Disabled Ramblers	<p>Thank you for producing this comprehensive ROWIP – which will be challenging to deliver so the best of luck with funding!</p>

ID	Name	Response
6	Wye Valley AONB	<p>I've a couple of comments which don't affect the ROWIP itself:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The on-line definitive map seems only to have the RoW and no background (OS) map. <a href="https://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx">https://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx</a></li> <li>2) Any idea of when the, very useful, Countryside Access Design Guide will be updated?</li> </ol> <p>Sadly, our charity is too small to be of help in Monmouthshire in the same way that the Ramblers and others are. Please let us know if you would like any interesting accessible, preferably circular, routes of 5 to 8 miles checked and promoted and we will do our best to help. Hopefully we will then run a ramble there for our members.</p> <p>The following comments are made on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Partnership. Broadly we are supportive of the policies and strategy outlined in the ROWIP. Specific comments are as follows: - Page 4: 2. Replace "their" in the 2nd Vision sentence to read "the", as it currently seems to imply or refer to "the local rights of way and countryside sites" possessing "physical and mental well-being". Page 5. We welcome the ambitions of this Draft Plan and note the pragmatic approach outlined in section 3. PAGE 6: 4 Themes. Insert "the" before "network". 3. change "an" to "and". Page 7 What is Monmouthshire Like? End of 2nd para Insert "Natural" between "Outstanding" and "Beauty" and add "(AONB)" at end, to read...and the picturesque river gorge of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)." Page 9:6.1 Current access provision. This paragraph neglects to mention the National Trail. 2nd sentence "Monmouthshire is the gateway to the Brecon Beacons National Park and has canals, rivers..." Insert the word "county" after "National Park and "otherwise this subsequent long list can appear to refer to the BBNP rather than the county as a whole.</p>

Page 12: 6.5 Countryside Sites, Green and Blue Spaces. 3rd Bullet point Cadw is a name not an acronym, so does not need to be all in capitals.

4th Bullet: We welcome the inclusion of the Wye Valley AONB here.

Page 15: 6.14 Other types of Existing Access. 3rd bullet: 4 Fiddlers Elbow NNR, Also add, "near Monmouth".

Page 22:9 Policy context. 1st sentence "The importance of the prow network" "prow" is an acronym so should be in capitals.

Page 23: diagram of policies and strategies that share common objectives to the ROWIP. We welcome the inclusion of the WV AONB Management Plan in this diagram.

Page 24 10.1 3rd paragraph last sentence: 2Partnership working with these organisations and services is key to delivery of this plan." We fully endorse this statement and welcome the inclusion of the Wye Valley AONB in the subsequent box of "key partners".

Page 27 10:4 Public Rights Of Way Asset - The final two bullets only partially mitigate the fact that the "current capital budget for maintaining the network" is more than 10x too small. Despite the success of partnership initiatives, the on-going short fall should be a serious concern to all interested parties.

Page 33:12.3 Promotion - 2nd sentence, replace "Wye Valley AONB" with "[www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk)"  
3rd bullet: 2 Stronger Invigorated Regional partnerships along the whole of these trails..." On behalf of the Wye Valley Walk Partnership we fully endorse this point.

Page 36: 13 Community Involvement 3rd bullet? "volunteers often do more than one task, or work across departments and sometimes even different authorities". This statement seriously underplays the dedication and dynamism of volunteers, despite the previous bullet point. Suggest replacing with "Volunteers are often dynamic and skilled workers/contributors that may volunteer across departments, authorities and organisations."

13.2 Volunteer Resource: - The Wye Valley AONB Volunteers have tended to avoid working on PROW, instead concentrating their efforts on permissive paths and wider landscape & nature conservation and enhancement (including invasive non-native species control). We would be prepared to review this in line with the revised ROWIP if appropriate.

Page 39: 13.5 ROWIP Actions for Community Involvement. - 1st bullet: "Work with the Wye Valley AONB



ID	Name	Response
		<p>Partnership Group to establish a "Friends of" Group to assist with the promotion and path caring of the Wye Valley Walk." We support this but replace "Wye Valley AONB Partnership Group..." with "the Wye Valley AONB Partnership and Wye Valley Walk Partnership."</p> <p>Page 42: 15.3 Development Pressures para, last sentence: "Otherwise the number of obstructions (266) on rights of way continuing to expand" Should read "...on rights of way will continue to expand."</p> <p>Page 43: 15.5 Quality of Life/connection to landscape and biodiversity: - 1st paragraph I am not sure where the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan has "evidenced the loss of connection with people and the natural environment". It certainly references and alludes to it, but any evidence is either national or anecdotal. Suggest rewording this sentence to read "However, the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan and the development of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership scheme have both recognised the national trend of the loss of connection between people and the natural environment."</p> <p>15.6 Partnership Working- 2nd paragraph insert "Management" between "AONB" AND "Plan". Page 44 3rd paragraph suggest amending to read: "Such partnership project work requires significant amount of staff time, some times over many years, both to create the partnerships, deliver the projects themselves and then manage their legacy."</p> <p>PAGE 49: wm1 Better network/sites for leisure &amp; daily use. We welcome the inclusion of "natural flood management"</p> <p>Page53: Action 7.9 ROW should be in capitals.</p> <p>Page 54: Action 8.3 "Provide motorised traffic free, safe walking, cycling and equestrian routes linking towns, villages and rural areas." This seems an unachievable Action given the considerable constraints on resources, especially as it does not quantify between how many "towns, villages" etc. The Action would be more achievable if it was prefixed with "Pursue the provision of motorised..." &amp;/or suffixed with "where appropriate" or "where possible".</p>
7	Forest of Dean District Council	<p>Many thanks for consulting us on this Countryside Access Improvement Plan. The Local Plans Team at the Forest of Dean District Council does not have any comments to make on the issues within it. However, I will also pass it onto our Sustainability Team, as they may wish to have some input.</p>

ID	Name	Response
8	Minister for Housing and Local Government	<p>Thank you for your email of 17 September, regarding Monmouthshire County Council’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). I am eager to see that every authority fulfils its statutory duty to review its ROWIP within the statutory timeframe. The plans are a way for the public to express their priorities for how the network should be looked after, which in turn allows authorities to focus their resources. Since their original publication, ROWIPs have been a useful tool for rights of way teams in identifying, planning and prioritising improvements to the path network. Over the next ten years and beyond they will help authorities to co-ordinate and implement other key statutory priorities, including active travel and responsibilities under the Well-being and Future Generations Act 2016. Crucially, having an up to date ROWIP will also assist with any future funding schemes made available by the Welsh Government or third sector.</p> <p>I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for putting together the new ROWIP, it will put Monmouthshire CC in good stead for supporting the economy, encouraging active lifestyles and contributing to making Monmouthshire a great place to work, live and visit.</p>
9	Natural Resources Wales	<p>It is evident that the Monmouthshire ROWIP is based on very comprehensive and thorough assessments. These have been skilfully condensed into a focussed, well written and presented document which we think will provide an excellent basis for access management for the next ten years.</p> <p>The themes from the statement of action identified early in the plan help provide context and continuity. The statement of action is clearly presented, and it’s helpful that you include the benefits of actions that demonstrate the value of undertaking them, alongside resources and key partners. The level of detail for the objectives and actions is appropriate for the statement of action and lends itself to guiding the development of more specific actions or commitments in the delivery plan. Further, it was good to see a ‘Future Focussed’ section within the Statement of Action.</p>

Making all the reports available and highlighting opportunities for further information in the relevant sections of the draft ROWIP enhances understanding of the points being made and emphasises the open and transparent approach you have taken.

Whilst noting the reference to Brecon Beacons National Park Authority maintaining public rights of way in Monmouthshire on page 9 of the ROWIP, for clarity, and in line with section 2.5 of Welsh Government Guidance, it would be helpful to state the arrangements in place with regard to the ROWIP for the area of Monmouthshire in the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Matters within NRW's remit:

Relevant sections of the draft ROWIP are referenced and shown in italics with our response below:

P12 6.4 Horse riding and carriage drivers *There is opportunity to make more use of county unclassified roads as "quiet lanes" which would benefit more recreational users by looking at how these routes are signed, managed and promoted. There is also opportunity to increase riding routes in some of the public forests managed by Natural Resources Wales.*

Large sections of the Welsh Government woodland estate are subject to a concordat between Natural Resources Wales as the managing agency, and the British Horse Society, which provides permissive access for horse riders. NRW and the BHS have a mutually agreed concordat, setting out our collaborative approach to horse-riding. To clarify, this applies to permissive access on forest roads and tracks on NRW managed freehold estate and not generally to leasehold estate, which includes Welsh Water land.

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NRW would welcome the opportunity to support priorities identified in the ROWIP statement of action by engagement with Monmouthshire to look at opportunities to deliver improvements to the network.

We have developed position statements to support activities on the land we manage. The position statement for equestrian access is available on our website.

Theme Active Healthy Lifestyles 9.1 *Work with NRW to improve connectivity between the bridleway network and areas of Welsh Government woodland estate where permissive access by horse riders exists.*

The concordat between the BHS and NRW referred to above makes a commitment for NRW and the BHS to "*Consider opportunities to manage, improve and enhance equestrian access, especially in linking existing networks of PROW, promoted routes and forest roads. Work together to identify and prioritise development and source funding to carry out the work.*" NRW will now be looking at the detail of how we do this in a consistent manner across Wales.

We are happy to work with you to look at opportunities to improve connectivity to better meet the needs of the public and reflect the relevant outcomes in Woodlands for Wales, the WG strategy for woodlands and trees.<sup>3</sup> Maps showing the location of Forest Roads are available on the Lle portal. This could provide a useful starting point to look at opportunities to improve connectivity where a partnership approach could bring wider benefits. Alternatively, you may already have some priorities you would like to share with us.

P16 6.15 WHERE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS PROVISION IS NOT MET *There is a need to work with landowners of woodlands, in particular, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to extend access for a wider range of users.*

We welcome this suggestion and with reference to our position statements which we discuss in detail below, we would welcome discussion to see how we can best support this.

P21 3 Woodlands for Wales, the WG strategy for woodlands and trees

8.4 EVOLUTION OF THE NETWORK. *Through stakeholder engagement the following were identified as key ways in which countryside access needs to evolve to meet future demands:*

- *Commitment from Natural Resources Wales & other landowners to the maintenance and provision of waymarked walks/rides* We acknowledge that the historical legacy of forest management practices has resulted in anomalies where the route shown on the definitive map does not correspond with a route on the ground. Uncertainty about routes is not desirable from a user or land manager perspective. In managing the WG forest estate, NRW must balance a range of issues and legislative demands.

We would welcome the opportunity to help you review the rights of way network in light of the emerging priorities from the ROWIP. This would help us target our limited budgets in the most effective way where the needs for improvement works has been established through this strategic process and where a partnership approach could bring wider benefits.

We are currently piloting an innovative approach to develop routes and circuits using traditional and modern technology in order to address the needs of the widest range of existing and future users.

P35 *Seek clarity from NRW on access rights (particularly for group activities)* The land we manage is a significant public asset and it is our priority to make this asset available, attractive and welcoming to people. To help develop understanding of the way we manage activities on the land and water we look after, we are creating a series of statements that outline our position on a range of recreation, access, community and regeneration activities. These set out our position and where in addition to access rights we make clear the additional permissive access we provide and also when those participating in activities need to ask for permission. Further information is available on our website here.

<https://naturalresources.wales/days-out/recreation-and-access-policy-advice-and-guidance/using-the-land-we-manage-foryour-activities-position-statements/?lang=en>

We hope this helps to clarify the situation but would be happy to discuss these and any comments or further clarifications with you.

P38 13.4 *The ability to carry out Volunteer work with Natural Resources Wales on permissive routes on their land and to take account of the Equality Act and Monmouthshire's Least Restrictive Access Policy.* We are actively reviewing our volunteering policy and recognise the importance of volunteering on the land we manage in terms of benefit to access and recreation, biodiversity, sustainable management of natural resources and wellbeing. We are aware that

Monmouthshire have a well-established volunteer resource which offers potential in this area and we would welcome the opportunity to explore with Monmouthshire how we might facilitate this which in turn could help inform our policy review.

Theme Knowing what's out there 13.4 *Work with NRW & other woodland partners to provide better information about what access is available in woodlands.* 13.5 *To encourage NRW to provide and share an easily accessible map showing the extent of Welsh Government woodland estate that is subject to permissive access by horse riders.* We recognise the limitations of our current mapped (spatial) provision for access and recreational opportunities available to the public. We understand that clarity about freehold and leasehold forest is important to enable equestrians to understand where the access arrangements under the BHS concordat apply. Whilst we would point out that Public Rights of Way are available through our 'Days Out' map (<https://naturalresources.wales/days-out/places-to-visit/?lang=en> click on the map banner at top of page). Our intention remains to provide an external map that does allow the areas of the NRW estate that is freehold to be selected (displayed) – which would then indicate to potential visitors the areas in which they are able to access in addition to PRoW and/or permissive routes specifically provided by us. We would further state that we recognise that this will benefit all areas of Wales, not just the Monmouthshire geographic area. Our current position is that we continue to work with colleagues in ICT and Communications (who lead on our Digital Strategy) to develop our mapping capability for all access and recreational opportunities on land managed by NRW. We would be happy to keep Monmouthshire, and other ROWIP authorities, abreast of developments in this area and would welcome suggestions for the best way to do this.

P30 11.3 THE ACCESSIBILITY OF RIGHTS OF WAY TO BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED PERSONS AND OTHERS WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS. *The opportunities provided by designated access land within Monmouthshire and the land managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are particularly valued given their suitability for all ability access. (Also appreciated is the provision of car parking, toilets, waymarked routes and information posted on NRW's website).* We welcome the recognition in the Draft ROWIP that the land we manage in Monmouthshire has a role in meeting public access needs and particularly the role it plays in providing all ability access.

We recognise that different levels of development and facilitation of access are appropriate in different zones, as referenced in 'By All Reasonable Means' especially the section in Appendix 1 on Access Standards for different management zones. These zones have been aligned as far as possible with those used in the BT Countryside for All standards.

There may be opportunities for future joint working on inclusive access on routes and sites which cross NRW managed land within Monmouthshire. In this context, we share a desire to work together to achieve these benefits in a strategic way that reflects the needs and opportunity within Monmouthshire and the region as a whole.

Lack of information. The RoWIP identifies lack of information as a key barrier to particularly for people with disabilities (section 8.2, 8.3) and the importance of information to enable decision making about route choice (8.4). The inclusion of specific consideration of how to improve information for people with disabilities complements an area of work that we are looking at with regard to visual information. We are currently working on a pilot project using NRW sites to consider alternative visual information formats; for example, videos showing disabled users negotiating a trail to enable users to decide whether a route or site is suitable for them and their equipment. We are happy to share the findings from this pilot with partners. 'Photo trail' information could also be considered as a lower cost visual format.

Other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 Section 16.1 *Engage with relevant organisations to ensure hard copy material is made available to meet the needs of those other minorities' e.g. visual impairment and those from ethnic groups.* We welcome the strong focus on mobility issues/disability within the RoWIP. There should be increased consideration of other protected characteristics. Appendix 3 outlines the positive impact on other Protected Characteristics and the fact that in most cases this is 'none' shows the need for more consideration of inclusivity in relation to other Protected Characteristics. We recognise that increasing participation and removal of barriers for Protected Characteristics other than age and disability is less tangible and less focused on physical infrastructure and therefore more of a challenge to address. Equally we welcome the assessment report referenced in the appendix with its focus on disability but the impact of interventions on other protected characteristics should be also considered.

P15 6.13 AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES With reference to the point made in your ROWIP under Agri-Environment Schemes, you may find the following information useful: Under the Glastir agreements, landowners must 'Comply with legal duties relating to existing Public Rights of Way (PRoW) and public access such as open access. You must demonstrate compliance with the legal requirements relating to existing Public

Rights of Way (PRoW) and Public Access such as open access that are on Contract Land, including not obstructing them, and reinstating them after ploughing'. Local Authorities must be contacted if there are any issues concerning the Public Rights of Way on land under Contract. Written consent must be obtained from Local Authorities or National Park Authorities for each Management Option that obstructs a Public Right of Way and made available on request. The land under Contract must be kept free of rubbish such as derelict vehicles, discarded fencing, plastic wrap and disused domestic appliances. Any existing rubbish should be cleared from the premises before the outset of the Contract.

Responsible Recreation P42 15.4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR *Littering and fly-tipping is now becoming a problem in Countryside sites and rights of way. There is a need for promoting widely responsible behaviour and for continued partnership working with Keep Wales Tidy and our volunteers.* The position statements that we have produced in consultation with stakeholders support this approach. These are



available on the NRW website here for information and include statements on Equestrian Access, Recreational Motor Vehicle Driving, Mountain Biking and Cycling and Dogs on our Land. We would support the objectives in 3.1 – 3.4 to promoting responsible recreation, whether it be on publicly managed land or that under private ownership. We promote the family of Countryside Codes which are available on our website should you wish to reference these.

Protected Sites We note that you reference internationally and nationally designated landscapes in section 5. We wonder if it would be useful to include reference to European protected sites and the need to balance requirements under the habitats directives with the benefits these sites bring to public in terms of access and wellbeing. As we know you are aware, where European protected sites (Special Areas of Conservation - SACs) are involved, any such project to increase visitors or re-route paths etc. that had potential to affect a site, would need assessing under the Habitat Regulations. The Authority should also consider impacts of such plans on other protected sites and the wider environment. From this perspective we also see that value that the ROWIP can bring in developing and promoting routes that can direct people away from sensitive areas. We are happy to provide advice to support you in doing this.

Flood risk management – assets managed by NRW

Policy FF4 The statement of action references two specific actions relating to flood risk and management in relation to Rights of Way: *24.2 Identify flood risk areas and likely impact on PROW. Put in place mitigation measures. Seek alternative routes for those parts of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and regional routes prone to flooding; and 24.4 Explore natural flood management potential as part of wider landscape initiatives to address ROW issues and secure future access.*

General comments. It should be noted that there can be implications in management of rights of way on the operation and maintenance of flood risk assets that we may undertake. This needs to be considered by the authority, for example, when you come to develop site specific projects. In developing projects and considering management and promotion of rights of way near main rivers you should be aware of the potential impact rights of way can have on the management of flood risk assets such as embankments or berm areas and ensure that appropriate measures are taken to ensure flood risk assets are not compromised as a result.

Further information about this and the areas where any measures may need a flood risk activity permit (FRAP) are available on our website. We would encourage you to get in touch with us if you have any queries relating to this. We would also make you aware that should there be any proposals to create new rights of way over or along existing flood risk assets, the local authority should be aware that although we may operate or maintain these assets, we do not own the asset or the land on which they are located and are not in a position to grant permission for use of the land. The permission of the landowner will have to be sought as part of any process to create the right of way.

Site-specific comments, though possibly not an issue to be covered by the ROWIP, we take the opportunity to raise the matter of inappropriate and in some instances illegal, activities along the Gwent foreshore. Of particular concern is illegal vehicular access; the use of vehicles has the potential to impact on the integrity of the sea defence embankments and vandalised gates/barriers may pose a risk to public safety. We recommend that all access structures such as gates and barriers managed by your authority both on ROW permitting access to the foreshore and along the Wales Coast Path (where the path runs along or adjacent to sea defences) are suitably robust and maintained with a view to preventing inappropriate vehicle access (that also have potential to affect the safety of legitimate users of the area).

When considering rights of way near managed watercourses (reens) within the Gwent Inland Drainage District (IDD) you should be aware of the desire of the IDD to maintain a minimum 7m exclusion zone bordering IDD managed watercourses to permit maintenance and plant activities. We would encourage you to get in touch with the Gwent IDD if you have any queries relating to works in the vicinity of any reen.

Minor points and clarifications:

6.7 OPEN ACCESS LAND We picked up the following very minor observations whilst considering the draft plan:

- For clarification, Open Access land is shown on Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 scale maps.
- It is Welsh Government Woodland Estate has been dedicated.

ID	Name	Response
10	CADW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The WG is looking at increasing the rights of access to include the coast (i.e. it's not definite.) Section 15.7 is correct that it's a proposal.</li> <li>• National should be Natural</li> <li>• For clarity, it might be best to refer to freehold public forest.</li> </ul> <p>6.14 OTHER TYPES OF EXISTING ACCESS Natural Resources Wales manages four National Nature Reserves in Monmouthshire: 2. Cym Clydach, in the Clydach Gorge - should be Cwm 3. Lady Park Wood NNR, near Monmouth - although in Wales, this site is managed under agreement by Natural England</p> <p>3. Summary</p> <p>We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Monmouthshire draft ROWIP. This is a good forward-thinking plan which is progressive in its actions, mindful of future considerations in Wales. We consider that it provides a sound basis for future management and collaborative working to deliver benefits to the public and contribute to multiple national policies PROW and Networks</p> <p>Thank you for this; a very interesting document with a lot of useful information. Some thoughts and a proposal as much as comments.</p> <p>The main thing that strikes me is that apart from a few references to Monmouthshire CC owned or managed scheduled monuments, the historic environment is almost entirely overlooked. This misses a wide range of potential opportunities for the collaborative working and joint funding applications set out throughout the document and which I'd like to make a few suggestions about below.</p> <p>To correct the figures presented in 6.1.4 the current number of scheduled monuments in Monmouthshire is 201 (including several dozen rather than 8 castles). Cadw has 15 monuments in its guardianship (the National Trust own Skenfrith but it is in our guardianship), most of which are located rural or semi-rural areas and all lie either on or within a few hundred metres of public rights of way.</p>

Some of these, including the Roman City of Caerwent and Grosmont Castle form part of substantial landholdings with multiple routes crossing them; all of them form outdoor visitor destinations or amenities.

6.1.4 also points out that rights of way offer the only public access to or views of many scheduled monuments, listed buildings or registered landscapes and many more undesignated assets, which provide potential points of interest if not destinations along routes. This has already been successfully explored on the Offa's Dyke National Trail, which provides finger post interpretation for historic sites it that it crosses or passes by i.e. Grace Dieu Abbey.

The outlined capital works funding deficit for rights of way of £38,000 against a £4 million backlog is alarming but as set out in 15.5 there is great potential for this to be addressed by identifying partner organisations with common objectives and through collaborative projects, ranging from more ambitious landscape partnership schemes noted in Section 10.4 (Blaenaforon World Heritage Site Forgotten Landscapes, Living levels, Wye Valley) or on a very local scale outlined in 13.5 on RoWIP Community involvement.

There have been a number of other successful cross-disciplinary landscape partnership schemes such as Heather and Hillforts (Denbs CC, Clwydian Range AONB) and Blue Remembered Hills (Shropshire CC / AONB) which have obtained very substantial funding for a combination of land management, ambitious natural and historic environment conservation, interpretation, public access and engagement and another is underway on the Carneddau (Cadw, Gwynedd CC, Snowdonia National Park). Cadw, Historic England and the Offa's Dyke Association are presently exploring this on a larger scale as part of the implementation of the Offa's Dyke Conservation Management Plan. A key element of this is the conservation and holistic management of the Dyke itself, the National Trail and the numerous other rights of way that run along or across it as a single entity or outdoor amenity, which will hopefully be able to draw on a much wider range of funding sources (health, wellbeing, tourism, heritage) than they would normally do alone by addressing a broader range of interests. In addition to numerous individual projects I have been overseeing a joint-funded, rolling programme of conservation, access (inc right of way enhancement) and interpretation works to publically or privately owned monuments and listed buildings in collaboration with the Clwydian Range AONB, Denbighshire CC and Wrexham CBC under a regional heritage forum. This has worked very well because of the dense clustering of proactive officers (heritage, countryside, rights of way, AONB rangers) spread across several authorities, the relatively dense regional

ID	Name	Response
10	CADW continued	<p>population and therefore public interest /range of local groups and funding sources.</p> <p>To this end, there is great potential to implement either individual smaller, local schemes or a more ambitious conservation and access project in Monmouthshire. As the Plan rightly points out there is a strong interest and volunteer base in the county, a range of potential partner organisations, a range of specialist in house officers and a great density of historic assets accessible or potentially linked by newly created or enhanced trails formed from the existing right of way network. We've already tentatively discussed Sudbrook Chapel and Camp and there are potentially dozens of publically accessible assets located on rights of way.</p> <p>In short it would be very useful to see a reference or a policy in the Plan to projects combining the conservation of historic assets with access schemes and right of way enhancement and I would very much like to set some time aside to explore making this happen in a more systematic manner, perhaps using some lists and maps as a starting point. As discussed previously we are happy to lead on, act as partners or potentially offer grant aid, match funding and other assistance in developing schemes and identifying sources of funding. Perhaps we could have a chat about this at the Offa's Dyke meeting tomorrow / today or by phone?</p>
11	Usk Trail Access Group UTAG	<p>The Draft ROWIP appears to be a policy document with overarching objectives. Similar to your UDP, there are general statements of improving the network and increasing sustainable transport options.</p> <p>What we need to see is the specific projects that have been requested through consultation and access forums that MCC aims to deliver within a timely manner.</p> <p>What distance of paths will be upgraded to allow for disabled access?  What distance of new safe cycle tracks or bridleways will be created?</p>

ID	Name	Response
11	Usk Trail Access Group UTAG Continued	<p>This should be set out clearly within the plan (or linked action plan) and MCC should be measured against it.</p> <p>As you know, UTAG has been trying to create a new cycle track for years and has also requested that the riverside path is improved between Usk town bridge and the cricket ground to allow access for all. UTAG would also like to see other improved cycle links from Usk to local communities (eg. along A472 verge East out of Usk to link to lanes to Gwernesney / Llandenny) Are these requests logged in the ROWIP? If not, where are the local requests recorded?</p> <p>I have attached copies of letters previously sent to MCC in 2008 and 2018 – both request that this local need is recorded in your plans. Our objective to create a cycle track entirely meets the objectives set out in your ROWIP and UDP.</p> <p>Could MCC confirm whether the requests are being considered and provide a list of projects to be delivered over the next 5 years? Thanks for your reply.</p> <p>The idea for a target was that it would give the public an idea of what MCC aims to achieve within set timescales. I appreciate that there are variables but how else can we measure MCCs commitments to improving access. I suppose one way would be to state what length of new upgraded ‘access for all’ routes (i.e. barrier free and surfaced) were provided during each of the last 5 years? What length of new cycle tracks were created by MCC? Our concern with statements of intent is that of course we all sign up to improving access, but this needs to be backed up by resources from MCC to enable this to happen or it is meaningless!</p>
12	Byways & Bridleways Trust	Due to the number of notices received, we will not necessarily respond.

ID	Name	Response
13	Caldicot U3A	<p>In response to the consultation you cannot fault the plan as something that everybody involved in the countryside, and walking can aspire to. However, it is essential that whilst looking to the next 10 years that our present problems are not overlooked. As a walking group we consider it essential that paths are kept clear and good signage is in place. If not, then we risk losing some of the walkers we have and not being able to attract more. The people we need to reach out to are those who see only problems when they think of a walk in the countryside. The way to combat this is to produce easy to follow leaflets. Also regular conducted walks are needed particularly in towns and villages. We want to see more stiles replaced with gates and good response to reporting of blocked paths which should include some indication of when work will be carried out.</p> <p>We look forward to continuing work with the countryside team. We all have the same objective - to get more people walking.</p>
14	MOD	<p>Many thanks for giving me the opportunity to look over your ROWIP.</p> <p>I have one very small comment on what is a very positive document. I note in you Glossary you have MOD – Ministry of Defence. I’ve had a good look through and can’t actually find the MOD anywhere in the document other than in the glossary. Am I missing it or can this come out?</p>
15	Abergavenny Town Council	<p>Specific Comments</p> <p>Section 2 Vision for Monmouthshire – suggested different wording as currently it doesn’t make sense. “To maintain and improve local rights of way and countryside sites in order to promote and encourage greater use and contribute to the physical and mental well-being of all of Monmouthshire’s residents and visitors” Or “To maintain and improve local rights of way and countryside sites in order to promote and encourage their use and enjoyment for their the physical and mental well-being of all of Monmouthshire’s residents and visitors”</p>

ID	Name	Response
15	Abergavenny Town Council continued	<p>Pages 5, 22 &amp; 42 (and probably other pages) reference to Wellbeing and Future Generations Act – this should be Wellbeing of Future Generations Act</p> <p>Page 41 - There is reference to publishing a set of 4x4 trails. This is not supported by Abergavenny Town Council as it would be contrary to a number of other policies around climate change and active travel as well as being a potentially damaging activity in the countryside.</p> <p>There is inconsistency to how the abbreviation ROWIP is presented throughout the document alternating between ROWIP and RoWIP.</p> <p>General Comments</p> <p>Page 22 – There is reference to Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2015 and the duty of public authorities. Community &amp; Town Councils come within the definition of public authorities so have a duty to maintain and enhance biodiversity so this is probably worth acknowledging somewhere in the document. Community &amp; Town Councils, under this duty, will be required to prepare a plan setting out how they will meet this duty.</p> <p>Throughout the document there are very few references to community &amp; town councils (C&amp;TCs), yet they feature heavily in the action table. We would like to see a specific section on the role that community &amp; town councils can play in delivering ROWIP and how the relationship will C&amp;TCs will be strengthened. The four larger Town Councils – Abergavenny, Chepstow, Caldicot and Monmouth – have a duty under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to contribute to the Monmouthshire PSB wellbeing objectives and to prepare an annual report setting out what has been achieved. All Community &amp; Town Councils can raise a precept and there may be merit in requesting a contribution from all (or some) to enable maintenance and improvement works to be carried out. The current 2019 budget of £38,000 is considered woefully inadequate and there needs to be a clear way forward on the action to be taken to increase this.</p>



ID	Name	Response
		<p>One Voice Wales, the umbrella organisation for community &amp; town councils arranges a quarterly meeting for community &amp; town councils in Newport and Monmouthshire. It may be worth considering a presentation to this meeting to have further discussions with the sector on their role. The contact is Shan Bowden, shan.bowden@onevoicewales.org.uk, Tel 01269 595400.</p> <p>Community &amp; Town Councils already deliver or are involved in many activities which directly impact on the use and enjoyment of the rights of way network such as litter picking, dog waste bin emptying, financial support to local volunteer groups, promotion of tourism, arranging walks. It is suggested that this should be acknowledged.</p> <p>The action table is comprehensive, however some indication of the priority attached to the actions and associated cost would be useful. As it stands, without categorisation into short, medium and long-term actions the proposals are more aspirational than deliverable.</p>
16	Usk Town Council	<p>Please could you send a JPEG of the poster and I will circulate on our Facebook page.</p>
17	Goytre Fawr	<p>This item was discussed by Community Councillors at their meeting on Tuesday night. The general viewpoint was that the members agreed with the majority of the proposals in the plan and as a result a resolution was passed that the Community Council should support it.</p>
18	Llanbadoc CC	<p>Thank you Ruth, this has been promoted on the Llanbadoc Community Council Facebook Page and Website.</p> <p>On another matter, can I ask if MCC are pursuing the complaints of barbed wire along the footpath at Yew Tree Farm, Glascoed along the Reservoir Trail. The Community Council have written to the landowners, however as yet have not received a response.</p>

ID	Name	Response
19	Trellech United CC	<p>Thank you for circulating this to the community council. At its meeting this week TUCC welcomed the report, but regretted that MCC simply does not have the resources to enforce rights of way, or to improve them as laid out in your plan.</p> <p>They are aware of the important contribution made by voluntary groups such as the North Footpaths Group, which has received a grant this year from TUCC towards equipment. They are considering actively encouraging the formation of more such groups in the other villages included within TUCC.</p>
20	Chepstow U3A	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the latest version of the Draft ROWIP.</p> <p>We are a charitable organisation based at Chepstow. We have nearly 950 members who are mainly within the age range from 60 to 90 years and are retired or work part time. We work to provide facilities for leisure time and recreational activities for our members with the objective of improving the conditions of life in the interests of their social welfare. Our activities include a strong representation of walking groups.</p> <p>We offer a wide range of opportunities to suit all abilities from "Easy Walkers" to "Strollers", "Wanderers", "Striders" and "Hill Walkers" with most groups meeting weekly throughout the year.</p> <p>Easy Walkers walk for up to 2 miles on good terrain with no stiles, whilst Hill Walkers will tackle anything that the Brecon Beacons has to offer and will usually walk ten miles or more. We also have a cycling group who make use of both on and off-road opportunities.</p> <p>Monmouthshire is very much our home territory and our members make full use of the opportunities that its countryside and access network offer. We have more than 200 members in our walking groups who between them walk over 20,000 miles in a typical year, much of it on Monmouthshire's public rights of way network and access land. Our leaders make use of all parts of the network in devising their routes. We have a keen interest in the ROWIP and can see that it will have a significant bearing on our members and activities. Our ability to continue to expand the delivery of our charitable objectives and the health, wellbeing and enjoyment of our members depends on the review having a positive and constructive outcome which secures a sustainable future for all the rights of way network and designated Access Land</p>

ID	Name	Response
	Chepstow U3A continued	<p>within our county.</p> <p>We have responded to both of the earlier consultation opportunities and are pleased to see the latest version of the ROWIP has taken on board many of our comments, including in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inclusion of "Access Land" and in particular the importance of land owned and managed by Natural Resources Wales.</li> <li>• Commitments to give greater prominence and visibility to Unclassified County Roads and to improve their maintenance and use.</li> <li>• A commitment to improving access for the less able and continuation of the "Least Restrictive Access" Policy.</li> <li>• Recognition of the importance of a well-maintained PROW network. In our view this must comprise a network that is fully fit for purpose - i.e. it is not obstructed, appropriately signed with a user friendly surface and with furniture that is well- maintained, safe to use and in good order.</li> <li>• Confirmation that: "a dedicated and properly resourced countryside access service with a strong public service ethic and commitment to the network and its use for residents and visitors is essential".</li> </ul> <p>We were disappointed that our comment on the value and importance of public transport in our questionnaire response was not included in the draft ROWIP. We said "We would like to see a strong connection between countryside access and public transport. Our groups do use public transport wherever possible - principally scheduled bus services. In the last year we have made use of the 43, 65, 69, x3 and x74. We would do this more often if there was better information available about the opportunities afforded by making use of bus services and if we could be sure that buses would reliably run on time and with sufficient capacity to accommodate a walking group of 10-20 people with their rucksacks. As both public transport and the PROW network lie within the responsibilities of MCC we would like to see a strong joining up of these two MCC services to promote the opportunities to gain</p>

access to the countryside by bus service. We would like to see the final ROWIP take a much more positive view of the role of public transport, and in particular scheduled bus services, in gaining access to PROW, Countryside Sites and the wider countryside. We believe there are many positive opportunities ready to be grasped and that increased use by walkers and tourists can help build passenger use for the benefit of all.

We have the following additional comments on the content of the draft ROWIP: Whilst we understand that limited resources require choices to be made, we are concerned that the plan will lead to the creation of a two-tier PROW network with certain routes maintained to an adequate standard and others left to decline. The plan should set out positive ideas as to how the maintenance of the whole network can be improved – e.g. through partnerships with communities. As we use all parts of the network, one of our principal concerns is about routes becoming impassable or unsafe because of encroaching vegetation or problems with recreational furniture or surfaces. As an example of one of recent walks we were faced with crossing a field into woodland. The stile was rotten and severely unstable and the ground around the stile had been paddled into deep liquid mud by livestock. Our challenge was the slow process of seeing twenty walkers through these obstacles while holding back a herd of inquisitive bullocks. We suggest that the plan could be much stronger in encouraging landowners to fulfil their responsibilities for public rights of way, particularly in relation for maintaining and replacing stiles and gates - many of which are in disrepair.

We particularly value the opportunity to use Natural Resources Wales "Access Land" especially for our less able members. We would like to see a clear statement from NRW about their commitment to delivering and maintaining high quality, all ability countryside access provision on their land.

Monmouthshire has significant number of walking groups who represent an important "user group" for public rights of way within the County. These groups make very regular use of the network and hold a great deal of knowledge about its condition and use. We would like to see the ROWIP explore how walking groups might become more involved in supporting the network and the work of MCC. We are concerned about the proposed legislative change to "allow horse riders and cyclists to use footpaths", given the acknowledged current condition of the network. If this is a proposal that is realistically expected to become reality then it would seem to us to have such a major impact that the implications should be set out more fully in the current ROWIP. We hope these additional comments on the Draft ROWIP are helpful.

We look forward to seeing the final version and please do let us know if we can be of further

assistance.

ID	Name	Response
21	Resident	<p>When styles are upgraded or replaced they should where possible be replaced with dog friendly ones. Recognised routes such as the Usk circular routes should be regularly maintained to ensure access for all groups of walkers</p>
22	Resident	<p>A thorough and comprehensive document. I wish the funding for the Countryside and RoW Services would be increased to ensure their vital work is continued, and those maintenance statistics really could improve. Our health, mental and physical, depends upon it!</p> <p>I echo those stakeholders requests to have access improved for dogs/dog-walkers. Having to lift heavy, mucky dogs over fences and styles is definitely a barrier to enjoyment.</p> <p>I would also like to put in an appeal as a local stakeholder / Llandogo resident / ex-B&amp;B owner / trail-runner and dog-walker, an appeal for manpower and funding to ensure that Llandogo is linked up, off-road, with our neighbouring communities. I'm not sure this is the right document to raise this, but I hope it can be included in a relevant section so that Llandogo is not overlooked in the upcoming review.</p> <p>We're an 800+ strong community but, for most of us, walking/running/cycling/riding any distance around Llandogo is difficult and reaching our nearby neighbouring communities without using the car is impossible. This is so frustrating when the solution is simple and stares us in the face every day - access along the riverbank to the north and south of the village so we can safely reach neighbouring communities without having to use the car. The key barriers are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Llandogo is overlooked as a visitor destination. Current, clear examples are, the Sustrans Peregrine route extension aims to reach Redbrook (one village away from Llandogo to the north). The Chepstow to Tintern Shared Path aims to reach Tintern (one village away to the South). Llandogo = the void in the middle. It's also clear that Llandogo is the poor relation when it comes to marketing from MCC and partners. Sadly, Llandogo has lost 6 of its 7 B&amp;B's (including mine) in the past few years, and it is possible that this has something to do with it.</li></ul>

- Lack of 'doorstep opportunities' in Llandogo due to:
  1. The geography. The steep hillsides around and above Llandogo provide a network of footpaths and a couple of promoted routes, but the steep, muddy and often overgrown nature of these paths means they are the domain of the fit and able, and adventurous. Most people would find these routes a struggle and they're certainly not a realistic, regular means of reaching our neighbouring communities. 80% of visitors to my B&B asked for advice on walking to Tintern or Brockweir, but when the current walking route from Llandogo was described to them, 99% of those elected to drive instead as it was deemed too far or too strenuous.
  2. The A466. The main A road in the lower Wye Valley is too dangerous to walk, run or ride along, and most locals avoid cycling on it. Vehicle speeds of over 70mph have been recorded, even within the village 30mph zone! This road acts as a barrier to recreational activity and significantly isolates Llandogo. One reason car travel is the norm is because it's the safest way to get about. The village is working hard, campaigning to slow speeds down in the village, but there's nothing it can do regarding the rest of the A466.
  3. The fishery estates. Bigsweir and Coedithel estates curtail the riverside footpath to both the north and south of the village with No Trespassing signs. General public enjoyment of the river is prohibited by the signs saying 'no boating or bathing' and even 'no picnicking'. Bigsweir Estate prohibits access to a local historic landmark, Llandogo Holt, and access to the iconic Bigsweir Bridge is directed via the busy A road, despite there being a highly visible, safe off-road track leading past the Holt and straight to the bridge. We're all aware of the benefits of the fishing industry to the economy and environment, but the restrictions imposed upon the local community, and through all 12 months of the year, are deemed very unfair and are very unpopular. In addition, the story goes, the previous owner of Bigsweir House no longer wanted to see the 'local riff' bathing in the river opposite his house and so denied public access along the old railway track. And so the healthy, social swimming activities enjoyed by local residents for many years were brought swiftly to an end. So it's no surprise that all these restrictions are seen as

ID Name  
22 continued

Response

archaic and to benefit only the elite and privileged few versus 800+ local residents. This barrier is the one that could be changed and could change everything. Brokering discussions with residents and the estates needs to happen and, at the very least, seasonal access along the riverbank should be granted.

It's a pretty unforgiving situation we have here - the numerous negative signs from the estates and the perception of what would happen if we did trespass(!), the A road that's a very real danger to pedestrians, cyclists and riders, the very strenuous hillside footpaths. It's easy to understand why many feel isolated. A safe off-road riverside trail linking Llandogo with Brockweir and Tintern to the south and Whitebrook and Redbrook to the north, would improve the quality of life for Llandogo's residents and visitors exponentially and undoubtedly lead to greater business opportunity. Also the option of a Wye footbridge providing villagers and visitors with access to the Gloucestershire side and Brockweir village has serious merit.

I do hope this can be included in the relevant plans and strategies going forward

Hi Ruth,

Many thanks for your prompt response, that's kind. I have been wondering how it would be best to get across the isolation issue that we face here in Llandogo, because a long impassioned email can be off-putting for many. I've been out this morning with my dogs and mapped and photographed my walk along the riverbank on Relive and have included the link below – hopefully you're able to open it.

Check out Nickie's Llandogo River Walk on Relive! <https://www.relive.cc/view/v26M82zJ4EO>

22 continued

ID	Name	Response
		<p>The very short video clip aims to demonstrate firstly, how lovely the river walk is, but secondly, how hemmed-in we are by the Coedithel and Bigsweir Estates' signage and restrictions – all year, every year. Downstream we are stopped at a barbed-wire gate and can only gaze along the lovely old railway line, knowing that it follows the river to our neighbouring communities at Brockweir and Tintern. You can tell how unpopular this restriction is by the amount of times the no access sign at this gate has been vandalised and smeared in mud (hence the new additional CCTV signs). At the upstream extent we are directed away from the river, over two styles to walk along a busy A-road, away from a perfect-looking trail that would provide safe, off-road access to two local historic landmarks (Llandogo Holt and Bigsweir Bridge). Again, a very unpopular restriction, especially when the river there was a very popular local wild-swimming spot. We'd love to understand <i>why</i> we are restricted in this way and through the full 12 months of the year.</p> <p>Hopefully you can add this video clip to my initial comments?</p>
23	Head of Mon Life Finance	I read the rowip and just wanted to say that it was a pleasure to read – job really well done!
24	Member of Public	<p>I have been interested to read the above report – it brings back memories of my time on the LAF! Congratulations on a comprehensive well-written document. The following personal observations may be of some help.</p> <p>While recognising that the plan is primarily about PRowS, the main means of access to the enclosed countryside, the document rightly includes references to the relevance of unclassified roads, countryside sites, open access land and accessible woodland as other means of enjoying the countryside.</p> <p>Thus section 6.10 deals with on- and off-road cycling with a link to <a href="http://visitmonmouthshire.com">visitmonmouthshire.com</a> (which does not give details of all the NCN routes in the county, shown indistinctly in 6.10). Reference is made to</p>



ID  
24 continued

Name

Response

Active Travel but it is surprising that there is no reference to the main result of the Active Travel Act – the Existing Route and Integrated Network Maps at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/the-active-travel-act/>. I realise that these maps are primarily about moving around urban areas, but the routes often give access to suitable countryside roads. The plan makes several references to routes to schools (eg Action 7.8); most will be in urban areas, as are some PRowS. I also realise that the Integrated Network Maps are very aspirational and need some explanation; page 22 does not do this either.

The second bullet point in 6.15 refers to the inhibiting effect of the reduced maintenance of minor roads and verges. As I am sure you know, the management of verges and hedges is increasingly wildlife friendly, a tendency that most walkers surely welcome, even if a few brambles must be avoided. Speeding traffic is a much greater inhibition.

References in 8.1 to average walking distances prompt me to ask whether these are off-road. Gwehelog has a dense PRow network, but most walkers choose to be on the lanes and byways.

With reference to section 16, there is a long-standing ambition among Abergavenny groups to enhance the Gavenny valley in terms of water quality, green infrastructure, wildlife resources and public access. Unfortunately, a change of NRW staffing meant that a partnership project failed to get under way, but I believe there are signs of life again.

In section 17 Actions 4.3 and 6.3 are welcome. Some cycling interests favour a 40mph limit on all rural roads as well as 20mph in urban areas, but there would be enforcement problems and the character of rural roads is so variable that a 40mph limit would be often be irrelevantly excessive. Speed reduction measures may be more effective but costly, suitable only where danger is greatest. There may be lessons from elsewhere. A particular problem arises at Gwehelog where a local stable exercises horses on quite busy lanes. It would be interesting to learn from their experience and views.

ID	Name	Response
25	Member of Public	<p>Please find below my views and comments in respect of the above mentioned.</p> <p>Firstly, I wish to say that the Plan is well written, comprehensive, inclusive and commend you for it. It has a strong vision and clearly sets out the aims and objectives for the next ten years.</p> <p>Your Plan states that there are issues with funding and lack of resources and targets have to be prioritised. The ROWs form an important outlet to me and some of my friends for allowing us to access the countryside. On most Tuesdays since I retired 12 years ago and before then as often as possible, time permitting, I have personally logged up several thousand miles of walking within a general radius of some 25 miles of home. The average mileage for Tuesday would cover a circular route of about 7 miles and each time aims to cover a different area.</p> <p>I think it is fair to say that I have a great deal of experience of the ROWs within Monmouthshire alone and can boast that I have walked, where possible, probably within every square mile of the area. Clearly, there are problems with the state of the ROWS which consultations and the Draft Plan has identified. I have reported quite a number of these to the Countryside Section over the years and could spend a lot of my time reporting many more. However, on one point, I would be interested to know how you assess and qualify the statistics. In my experience, I feel that the figure of '89% of stiles and 96% of gates are in good condition' is somewhat high! While I have found that there are decent styles and gates in several places, if my friends and I did not carry pruning shears and walking poles, it would be impossible to complete a route. It is no exaggeration to say that hardly a week goes by without spending time clearing vegetation and obstructions and encountering unsafe/dangerous stiles, gates and sometimes bridges. It has taken us up to 25 minutes to clear a stile and there are times we have to plan a diversion from our intended path owing to a problem encountered. Also, frequently we have had to climb over five bar gates owing to them being locked, tied very securely or jammed.</p> <p>On another general point, when we meet farmers and landowners they welcome our presence and are quite friendly. However, we have met the odd person who clearly does not like us on their land, despite the ROW status. A Mr X of "xxxxxxx", Llantrisant Fawr, has been the most aggressive and threatening in manner in this respect (I have not yet had a reply to my correspondence dated 9 August 2016 &amp; 27 October 2016, despite enforcement action being promised by staff).</p>

ID Name

Response

25 continued

The Plan mentions the need for updating the O.S mapping. I cannot agree more. While I am aware that the OS revises maps for larger areas of development in open countryside the mapping is generally well out of date. For example, many field boundaries such as hedges and walls have disappeared. Farm buildings have changed by demolition or new build. Wooded areas have perhaps been cleared and new areas of woodland have been planted. Rivers and drainage patterns have changed. Such incidents present a challenge to navigation and keeping to the legal routes. In particular, it would be helpful if direction arrows are implemented through farm yards where the alteration and construction of new buildings often obstruct the ROW.

There are also the clear arguments for economic, social and health benefits. ROWs I consider a valuable asset and can address such benefits. I find it is regrettable that resources allocated do not match these benefits accordingly. I think that there must be an emphasis on achieving greater financial support as I believe that the amount of benefit from a ROW system in better shape, which the Plan sets out to achieve, can improve the outputs of economic, social and health benefits for all concerned. Tourism and businesses have a lot to gain if more people have the opportunity to use a well maintained ROW network, which is the overall objective of the Plan. It would be nice if the private sector could chip in with some funding contribution/sponsorship!) I and my friends would certainly benefit from a more accessible and important resource when out in the countryside.

Otherwise my overall views are in line with those found on pages 25 and 26 of the Plan, which have been highlighted by 'Stakeholders' following the consultations carried out.

ID	Name	Response
26	Usk Civic Society	<p>I read the article on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan in the Usk and Raglan Diary with interest. I have also looked at a hard copy of the plan at the library. You invite comments, so I would like to tell you about a neglected footpath that has come to my attention.</p> <p>Earlier this year Usk Civic Society hosted an excellent talk about the Cefn Ila estate which is now run by the Woodland Trust. As a result of that talk I became aware of a footpath which runs directly from the town to this recreational area.</p> <p>The usual approach to Cefn Ila from Usk is by car, driving down to Llanbadoc church and turning right up the lane to the Cefn Ila's car park. The lane has no footpath. However, there is a direct footpath from the Usk Bridge (opposite the old Britannia Pub) to Cefn Ila. It is little used because the footpath sign is indistinct and labelled Coed Duon. I have walked this path which is shown on the Definite Map. Starting in Usk one walks 362/49/1, then 362/48/1, and 362/50/1. The path divides here. 362/51/1 leads to an entrance to Cefn Ila near the walled garden, and 362/52/3 leads to the car park.</p> <p>The footpath is poorly waymarked along the route and I reported the problem in February using a facility on the MCC definitive map. I can see that the Ramblers also reported this problem in 1915.</p> <p>It occurs to me that the Woodland Trust and other interested bodies such as the local Ramblers, Usk Civic Society and possibly Usk U3A walking group, may be interested in working with Monmouthshire County Council to improve the signage and waymarks.</p> <p>'Coed Duon' would not be recognised by many people living in Usk town, but Cefn Ila is a popular, increasingly well-known destination, and the access routes deserve to be promoted. The direct footpath is also shorter, and traffic free.</p>

ID Name  
26 Usk Civic Society Continued

Response

Our speaker at the Civic Society talk had spoken to people who worked at Cefn Ila when it was a Maternity hospital. They had told him there was a short cut to the hospital that expectant mothers from Usk used. If it was this footpath they were certainly very fit considering their condition because the initial part of the path rises steeply in a zig zag from the town!

I hope you will bear these observations in mind when considering how best to improve the rights of way in the Usk area.

27 Member of Public

My elderly partially blind neighbour has informed me about this plan. I am a little sad that it hasn't been publicised well enough amongst the rural community.

Please could you send two copies, one with large print for my neighbour who is keen to read the plan as well as one for us. We walk the pathways around here which are becoming harder to access partly due to poor maintenance and deliberate obstruction due to electric fencing and barbed wire. I have had several injuries due to these obstructions but still walk my dog regularly.

I live in Llanybi and would appreciate identifying these issues with yourselves. I appreciate that some people neglect to take due care and consideration of farmers and their property in the area but generally, a minority of people spoil it for the majority. When I was at school in West Wales our Head teacher taught us the Country Code by taking us for a walk in the country every Friday afternoon, I value the countryside and every aspect of it but I do feel sad that we have a few hostile farmers who are aggressive and unreasonable in our vicinity.

I value your recognition of the need to encourage a greater development of public access in such a beautiful area as this.

ID	Name	Response
28	Llanhennock CC	<p>I am writing in response to the email I received containing the policy from the council's website: <a href="https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/rights-of-way-improvement-plan-rowip/">https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/rights-of-way-improvement-plan-rowip/</a> .</p> <p>In our community council meeting this month this draft policy from MCC was discussed and the concerns they expressed were as follows:</p> <p>The councillors expressed concerns that the wording of the policy suggested that existing footpaths might be extended to use of cyclists and/or horses and the right of way could extend across the fields rather than being restricted to designated paths; this may have a detrimental effect on the farmers land, such as rutting and damage to crops and livestock.</p> <p>In addition, the costs incurred for such changes to stiles etc. could be huge and for what purpose? How many extra people would it actually attract in this area? The existing footpaths in our ward are not even well maintained, so why doesn't MCC concentrate on updating these instead of creating new paths?</p> <p>Hopefully these concerns will be considered and I look forward to hearing a response on the matter in due course.</p>
29	Friends of the 65 Bus	<p>We think that, somehow, the submission that we prepared for the initial consultation did not get through to you, so apologies for that.</p> <p>However, we have now seen the Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan and we think its content still very much applies, so it is attached as part of our response to the draft document.</p>

ID Name  
29 continued

Response

We have the following additional comments on what we have seen in the draft ROWIP:

1. We were surprised and depressed to find only two references to public transport in the Draft ROWIP and associated documents and that they were both negative, when there is in fact a great opportunity to link public transport to access to the countryside and PROW network:

a. In Chapter 5 of the ROWIP it states: “There is a reliance on car ownership due to the rural nature of the county. Public transport remains a problem with travel times on public transport considerably longer in parts of Monmouthshire, than in other parts of Wales. Poor public transport was highlighted as an issue by the Countryside Access and Disability Assessment Report.”

b. The Countryside Access and Disability Statement report in section 5E “Issues with Transport” talks about problems with the Grass Routes “on demand” bus service and then goes on to say: “More generally, on the transport topic, we raised the possibility of setting up a public transport forum to evaluate the scope for some integration of local bus routes to offer improved access to walking opportunities. However, it was concluded that success would be unlikely given that previous attempts in this direction fell down on operational cost grounds, the impact of waning public support generally and frequent changes of bus operators.”

2. We think that both of these statements take an erroneous and unnecessarily negative view of the role of public transport in the ROWIP – and particularly of scheduled bus services. Looking forward, there are a number of reasons why we believe that public transport should feature strongly and positively in the ROWIP, not least that Monmouthshire County Council has declared a “Climate Emergency” and acceptance of continuing and increasing private car usage cannot continue through the ten-year life of the ROWIP.

ID  
29 continued

Name

Response

3. Monmouthshire is actually reasonably well-provided with scheduled bus services, compared to many other rural counties. There are significant gaps in provision in some parts of the county (egg north of Monmouth) where other means of public transport are needed, but where scheduled bus services are available:

a. Scheduled bus routes connect well with the public rights of way network, access land, promoted routes and link them to surrounding towns and villages.

b. These connections provide very many options for both circular and linear walks using the PROW network and Access Land. c. Scheduled bus services are currently very poorly promoted, have poor availability of information about timetables and “things to do” and can lack reliability and consistency. Resolving these issues provides significant opportunities for walking and general access to the countryside using public transport.

c. There is significant underused capacity – empty seats that need filling - in existing bus services that, with appropriate promotion and availability of information, can be utilised to support the aims and objectives of the ROWIP in getting people out into the countryside for all the benefits that brings. The resulting increase in passenger numbers makes the bus services more sustainable – a real “win-win”.

d. Buses integrate well with “Active Travel” plans. There is significant scope for journeys that incorporate both use of the bus and walking on the PROW network as a mode of “Active Travel”.

e. Buses are generally accessible, fares are modest and they are free to use for bus pass holders.

f Bus services are available to residents, visitors and tourists.

4. As a Case Study, we have set below out our own experience from the 65 Bus Route operated by Monmouthshire County Council. The 65 Bus service was proposed for closure in summer 2018, but was retained following a public campaign. We subsequently formed “Friends of the 65 Bus” (F65B) which works in partnership with MCC to bring together passengers, communities, our bus drivers, local businesses and all who have an interest in the bus service to work together to increase not only usage, but also impact. Using the sub-paragraph letters from Para 3 above, our experience is:



Along its 14-mile route, with between four and seven journeys each way on Monday to Saturday, the 65 Bus connects 2 towns (Monmouth and Chepstow) and six significant villages (Penallt, The Narth, Trellech, Llanishen, Devauden and Itton).

Its route touches:

- 51 Public Footpaths
- 7 Public Bridleways, 7 Restricted Byways
- 4 Unclassified County Roads
- 2 Permissive Paths
- 2 NRW Waymarked Trails
- 9 areas of "Access Land"
- Offa's Dyke Path and Wye Valley Walk at Chepstow and Monmouth

This represents significant, readily available, potential for connecting people with the countryside and PROW network. b. Using the above connections there are many available options for linear and circular walking routes, particularly starting and finishing in the towns and villages. F65B have recognised a significant opportunity to devise and promote routes based on the 65 Bus and have this in our programme.

Since becoming involved with the 65 Bus we have developed more comprehensive and accessible information about bus times, fares and things to do. The route has its own website, Facebook group and Twitter account for sharing information and ideas. Recently, we have developed timetables and information specific to accommodation providers to encourage their guests to use the Bus, including for walks. This is proving very successful. We have worked hard with MCC to improve reliability and consistency of the service. This has resulted in a new bus with improved capacity, full accessibility and two dedicated drivers who know their route and are able to pass on information to passengers. We are working with "Walkers are Welcome" to designate the 65 as a "Walkers are Welcome Bus", and this only

awaits a response from MCC on the details of a launch event. d. We have discovered that bus services in Monmouthshire are generally not promoted and this means that both residents and visitors are unaware of the many opportunities that they offer. This results in buses running with empty seats, not because of “waning public support” but rather a lack of knowledge, information and advocacy. As a vivid example, “Visit Monmouthshire” does not even have a section for public transport on its website. Its listing for public transport for Tintern Old Railway Station states “Chepstow Station 5 miles” when the 69 Bus stops outside the entrance!

For the 65 Bus we have developed a network of “Village Champions” who are able to advocate and gain support for the Bus within their communities. Walking Groups will make use of buses if they can be confident about capacity and reliability. The 65 and 69 services are regularly used by Chepstow U3A Walking Groups for linear walks. Chepstow Walking Festival promotes use of public transport to access its walks and in the 2019 Festival we ran a specific “65 Bus Walk” which brought walkers from Chepstow to The Narth for a three-hour circular walk using PROW and Access Land. “Wye Valley Women” also make use of the Bus to include linear walks in their “Walk and Talk” programme which is aimed at tackling isolation and improving mental and physical health through social walking. e. For rural residents there is an important “Active Travel” opportunity which combines using the Bus with walking on the PROW network. In our example, residents regularly take the Bus from The Narth to Trellech to visit “the Lion” or “Trellech Teas” and then walk back home over the fields and through the NRW woodlands. The alternative would be a round trip by car. We know of other people who walk into Monmouth from Penallt and get the Bus back. There are lots of “Bus out and walk back” options to develop and explore and which can bring a wide range of personal, social and economic benefits. f. Promoted in a positive way, there are many good reasons that can be demonstrated for using the Bus g. We have found excellent examples of people using the 65 Bus to gain access to the countryside. We have two elderly gentlemen who regularly travel from Cwmbran by bus to pick up the 65 at Chepstow. They get off at one of the villages, walk for a couple of hours, and then get the bus back, perhaps fitting in a stop at one of the local pubs. We recently had a couple from America who had decided to take a 16 night “car-free” holiday in the Wye Valley, staying in a self-catering cottage in Whitebrook. They were keen walkers, but also wanted to travel further afield. I have attached the feedback they sent after their visit. The combination of using the scheduled bus service and walking gave them a very successful

holiday and is, we think, a model that could easily be replicated – again demonstrating an approach to “Active Travel” that brings real benefits to our communities.

We hope that our comments and Case Study from the 65 Bus, showing what is possible, will persuade you to include a much more positive approach to public transport, and particularly scheduled bus services, in the final version of the ROWIP. A collaborative approach, together with improved promotion and information on bus services can ensure that they play a significant and very positive role in meeting the ROWIP’s vision.

We are happy to discuss this further with you if that would be helpful.

Member of Public

Having looked at your document I would personally make some comments.

I do not consider Open Access through farmland should be encouraged for consideration of the farmer and animals/crops. However, I do think that footpaths through farms should be well maintained and there should be a robust policy from Mon CC to ensure this. Cropping over footpaths does cause problems which should be rectified asap as the problem persists though out the growing season causing frustration and damage to crops.

Recently on 14th September 2019 I completed walking around Wales. In about 1042 miles I have never felt so unsafe as the last few miles in Flintshire. This is because it is Cycle Route 5. It is a well maintained cycle path which was busy on the Saturday we completed the whole walk. Cyclists and walkers do not cohabit well especially if cyclists move at speed. It was difficult to chat to fellow walkers without constantly looking over one’s shoulder to ensure not being in collision. It spoilt my walk on that day especially. Cyclists should not be allowed on dual use paths unless they have a way of warning

ID  
30 continued

Name

Response

walkers of their presence. A bell would be useful but anything that works would be fine.

Some white roads are not appropriate for 4x4s and motor bikes. They should be restricted as the route is being destroyed. The Rocky Road used by Coleridge in late 1700s is in a terrible state leading down to Tintern from Porth Casseg direction. A robust policy is needed in Mon CC to protect ancient routes.

Countryside and Highways need to work together and not pass the buck. Promoted Route 24 has a white road behind Dingle Cottage between Ninewells and Cleddon. It is a lovely ancient route but prone to flooding as part of Cleddon Bog really. Together a solution could be found if 2 departments worked together for the benefit of those who could enjoy it. This route is also used by motorbikes which does not help the state of the surface.

Reporting footpath problems is not easy and I cannot afford the time to go through the computer route which seems to have problems recorded but not kept up-to-date when resolved. It is easy for me now as I have found a way which works having informed a reliable person in Countryside who then passes the problem onto the person who needs to deal with it.

Many thanks for all the work done in the countryside on our behalf. Monmouthshire is a beautiful county for many to enjoy in different ways but it is also precious and needs to be protected. Although these comments are personal I am sure many who love to be in Monmouthshire exploring and especially walking will relate to the difficulties and observations mentioned. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter.

ID	Name	Response
31	Member of Public	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment on your draft ROWIP. I should perhaps declare that I used to audit improvement plans when I worked for the WAO.</p> <p>My feedback is as follows:</p> <p>The Improvement Plan is very long and detailed which makes it very difficult for the public to read, understand and therefore engage with the Councils improvement plans. I personally found it quite difficult to understand what the Council is actually aiming to achieve and the timescales for achieving it. It is more of an internal document for professionals. I suggest to address this a summary (no more than 2 sides of A4) is produced to aid public engagement and understanding. Perhaps in a table which lists against each key theme what the key improvement outcomes are, the current position, key actions ( these need to be measurable activities), measures of success and timescales.</p> <p>Under each key theme, there should be a short paragraph that articulates clearly what success will look like to a member of the public. E.g. xx more circular routes, 90% accurate definitive map i.e. an 8% improvement. I could not understand this in the current draft plan. There should also be clear /measurable actions outlining how this will be achieved.</p> <p>Many of the actions are vague and things that the council should be doing anyway so should not be classified as improvement actions. They should be specific, focused on improvement and measurable e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7.0 Target priority areas..... what are these, what does target mean, should you do this any way?</li> <li>• 7.1 Prioritises maintenance....., this is strategic rather than an action.</li> <li>• 7.2 Support volunteers ..... how can this be measured and what does it achieve?</li> <li>• 13.3 Seek to improve circular route. What does seek mean, how many additional routes, how many improvements and by when?</li> <li>• 13.5 Encourage NRW ..... how do you measure the effect of encouraging, what is the outcome of this?</li> </ul>

ID Name

Response

31 Continued

I feel that the plan should be more honest about the current situation. For example, how accurate is the definitive map. From my experience it is quite inaccurate but this was not clear in the improvement plan. Many of the bridleways marked on the current definitive map are completely non-existent today so any reference to miles /KM of bridleways is incorrect. The plan should identify honestly identify many are accessible, how many are not, how many ROW are reported as incorrectly classified. Actions and improvements measures should be identified against this information. I notified the Council of a number of inaccessible bridleways over two years ago. There has been no action taken, the map has not been revised and I do not know what the Council plans to do about this. This is the sort of information that would be helpful to me and enable me to evaluate the success in delivering the improvement plan.

Llanvapley Walking Group

**Introduction** Llanvapley Walking Group is a community-based venture that was set up in early 2019 to encourage people to utilise and help maintain the Public Rights of Way (PROW) in our local area. We have been very successful in attracting local residents and some visitors to join our monthly walks (twice a month in the summer). Our walks have attracted between 10 and 20 people over the past ten months, with numbers continuing to grow.

Based on discussion, mainly while walking of course, as convenor of the group, I have prepared the following response to Monmouthshire’s Countryside Access Draft Improvement Plan 2019-2029 Public Consultation.

I have not commented on all sections of the plan but have instead concentrated on areas I consider to be strengths and weaknesses. This is a personal response for which I bear sole responsibility, although I have shared it amongst the walking group and have adjusted it in the light of comments made by group members.

ID	Name	Response
32	Continued	<p><b>Section 3. About this Plan</b> I very much welcome the plan’s stated aim, which is to provide a “bold and visionary approach to providing and managing access to Monmouthshire’s countryside for the benefit of all Monmouthshire’s residents and visitors.”<sup>1</sup></p> <p>After recognising some of the benefits of ensuring access to public rights of way, the plan then goes on to say “The assessments show the countryside access service must prioritise where it focuses resources and standards to accurately reflect the areas of most demand...The plan sets out some bold ambitions, not necessarily constrained by the resources available, or by our legal duties, but focussed on meeting the needs of customers.”<sup>2</sup> As convenor of a community walking group, I do feel that the use of the word “customers” in this sentence is incorrect, as we are not, by any normal use of the word, customers. However, I am very pleased to read the vision is based on bold ambitions and not constrained by resources.</p> <p>The report goes on to say that “reduction in funding levels are likely to continue for some years to come, and will create new challenges for service delivery.”<sup>3</sup> This sentence is unfortunate, firstly because it appears to suggest that funding the ambition of the plan should not be taken for granted, and secondly because it is by no means certain it will be the case that there will be further reductions in funding levels. The 2019 election, which was on-going at the time of writing, may well change the situation as all the main parties are committed to increasing public funds. Given that, I feel that the plan needs to be both ambitious and have an expectation of delivery. After all, a bold, ambitious plan needs to be</p> <p>Monmouthshire’s Countryside Access Draft Improvement Plan 2019-2029 Public Consultation, p.4 2</p>

ID  
32 continued

Name

Response

p.5 argued for and I feel the case for improvement of the PROW network is a very important one, with many potential benefits (as your plan points out) for the local communities, the health of local people and the local economy.

**Section 5. What is Monmouthshire Like?** This section refers to several factors of importance, including Monmouthshire's "breath taking natural scenery", an ageing population, the growing importance of tourism to the local economy and includes comments about the strong sense of community and volunteering base. I agree with all of this.

Llanvapley walking group is community-led and has members from, and walking routes encompassing, the villages of Llanvapley/Llanfable, Llantilio Crossenny/Llandeilo Gresynni and Llanddewi Rhydderch. We walk once or twice a month both as a social activity and to ensure that there is access to the footpath network in our area. At least two of our group are 'pathcare volunteers' with Monmouthshire County Council's Countryside Service, while some of our members are also actively involved in CPRW and Gwent Wildlife Trust amongst other voluntary organisations. Our walks are advertised in the local parish magazine monthly and through an email group. We have sometimes had younger walkers with us, and are open to all, but the local demographic tends towards the over 50s. The health and social benefits for everyone has seen the numbers joining our walks grow monthly, even in the difficult weather conditions experienced this autumn.

**Section 7. Reflection on the delivery of the ROWIP 2007-2017** I feel the bullet points in this section are all well made. In our local area, we see some improvement to the footpath network, largely through the efforts of volunteers, but there is a long, long way to go, unfortunately.

Recently, the Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales (CPRW) has obtained funds to provide gates instead of stiles in ten locations around Llanvapley. This is, at the time of writing, still in the hands of MCC who are consulting with landowners about the scheme, which we hope to see in place by summer 2020. I would like to see such partnership schemes publicised and encouraged across the county as a way to help achieve the goals set out in the proposal.



ID	Name	Response
32 continued		<p><b>Section 8. Extent to which rights of way and other access provision meets present and potential future use.</b> I can identify with all of the bullet points in section 8.2 regarding barriers which currently exist and therefore, need to be overcome.</p> <p>Walking together as a group, removes some of the barriers we feel, but clearly even when doing so, overgrown vegetation and unclear routes still prevail. In the area around our villages, these problems are manifest. In some cases, the barriers to accessing public rights of way are insurmountable.</p> <p>Although, in my experience, some local landowners are co-operative with the aims of our group and can be seen as potential partners in achieving the plan, others are not. Unfortunately, walkers in our area do occasionally have bad experiences. Members of our group have reported being shouted at and even threatened by landowners, sometimes when trying to follow a badly waymarked path and wanting advice on the correct route, sometimes even when clearly on a right of way as shown using a GPS device. Such experiences are serious barriers to people feeling confident to use the PROW network locally.</p> <p>More often the footpaths are simply not kept accessible, due to crops being grown across a PROW without any attempt to provide an access route for walkers. We have also found (and reported) stiles which have been removed, signs damaged by design or accident and totally inaccessible footpaths. I have included a 1:25000 OS map extract that shows some of the issues regarding accessibility (in most cases rendering the PROW actually unusable) reported by members of our group from first-hand experience.</p> <p>Clearly anyone who visits Monmouthshire with an OS map, and following the marked public rights of way, should expect to be able to find those rights of way accessible. When they do not, they will no doubt conclude that Monmouthshire is not welcome to visitors, a very damaging conclusion for unlocking the potential of our area.</p>

**10.3 What is the condition of the network?** As a local walking group, we clearly do not have experience of accessing the whole PROW network in Monmouthshire and we appreciate its extensive nature. I am aware of the restrictions in public funding and availability of resources that have taken place over a number of years. I also very much welcome, as I have said, the bold vision encompassed by the draft report and believe it is necessary to overcome the visible recent lack of investment in the PROW network.

Having said that, I do feel this section grossly underestimates the number of outstanding issues in the PROW network, particularly in our local area. Issues regarding access to the PROW network locally have been reported over many years but complainants have seen little or no progress made to resolve them. Seeing such a lack of progress, the attitude of many is, not surprisingly, "it's not worth reporting it. Nothing is ever done." This clearly leads to under-reporting of the issues faced trying to access the PROW network.

In particular, the figure of 89% of stiles in good condition would appear to be a serious overestimate. On our walks the number of stiles in good condition and accessible is estimated to be around 10-20%. Members of our group have attempted to cut back seasonal bramble and nettle growth in order to maintain the stiles that are useable, but I have numerous pictures showing evidence of stiles that are dangerous or simply unusable (and can provide them should this be of use to the consultation).

**Conclusion** In conclusion, I very much welcome the report and the consultation. I feel that the report makes good and sensible statements regarding the importance of the PROW network. I welcome the bold ambition within the report and hope that Monmouthshire pursues this ambition with much needed investment to enable the vision we share with regard to countryside access to be achieved.

Years of underinvestment are very apparent. Despite the excellent work of volunteers and the staff at Monmouthshire Countryside Service, walking in our area of Monmouthshire is problematic and barriers are too common. Anyone visiting the area with the intention of walking and experiencing the countryside would often find it difficult or impossible to do so if they venture off the well-maintained Offa's Dyke or Three Castle Walk footpaths.

ID  
32 continued

Name

Response

I feel it would be good to get more feedback on how problems accessing public rights of way which are reported are being resolved.

I also feel that more needs to be done to bring local landowners on board with the plan and insist that all landowners know of, and adhere to, the access requirements of the Countryside Act.6

I have, while reporting problems with PROW on the definitive map via the website, briefly related some of the conversations I have had with landowners. To give a couple of examples, one landowner I met and asked for directions (showing him the map I had) claimed that 'the council had closed that path in the 70's and there hasn't been a way through there for years' (there wasn't – leaving me stranded in a field with no obvious way to complete my walk) and another landowner who, after at first denying any knowledge of a public right of way, then agreed he knew of one but said 'oh no, you won't get through there. You can't get through the crops for one thing and then there's no way through the hedge.'" These comments were reported via the council's website.

Sadly, there seems to be too little enforcement of PROW in our local area. It may be that there are real problems enforcing the rights of way under the Countryside Act, but those who report blockages to them often receive no feedback about what those problems are. I think this needs to be addressed by the Countryside Service and be a part of the plan going forward.

I have often felt a sense of despair that so much of the countryside is inaccessible to us as local residents, let alone the many visitors such a beautiful part of the UK could attract. I hope the bold vision encompassed within the draft report can address many of these issues and I look forward to working with Monmouthshire County Council to help improve access to the countryside locally and county-wide.

ID	Name	Response
33	Learning Manager MonLife	<p>Thanks for this – I’ve only had a chance for a brief read but wondered if we could have a conversation at some point about Dementia and opportunities in that area. It may not need ‘spelling out’ in the ROWIP but I would be interested to see how we can increase opportunities and therefore benefits for people living with this condition and their carers as part of a wider strategy.</p> <p>As a horse rider I’m really pleased to see the work going on around improved access for riders - as a vulnerable group any improvement to safety is welcome and I’m glad to see the BHS is involved and that my membership fee is being spent wisely!!</p>
34	The Narth & District Footpath Group	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to provide further comment on the Draft ROWIP. We understand that the consultation has been extended to 16th December. As you know our Group works in support of Monmouthshire County Council on the management and maintenance of almost 50km of public rights of way in and around our community.</p> <p>Thank you for taking account of many of our earlier comments in preparing the latest version of the draft ROWIP. We are pleased they were of help. After reading through the latest draft, we have the following additional comments, which we hope you will be able to consider in preparing the next version: a) We support the "Vision" but, just as a thought, wondered if the first element of it is a bit passive. Are we perhaps looking to "increase the level of recognition", "see it more widely recognised"...?</p> <p>B) We also support the choice of themes. However, we think there needs to be an additional bullet point under "Well Maintained Network" to cover the improvement and maintenance of the rest of the network not covered by the first bullet point, and to fit with the commitment in Point 2 of the Vision. As stated at present it looks like this part of the network could be abandoned.</p> <p>C) We are pleased to see the inclusion of "Access Land". In our area we have a particular interest in land owned and managed by Natural Resources Wales. We would like to see NRW becoming a true partner in the plan through the inclusion of a clear statement from them about their commitment to delivering and maintaining high quality, all-ability countryside access provision on their land. We have in mind particular issues such as:</p>

ID  
34 continued

Name

Response

- High quality provision and maintenance of recreation facilities such as car parks, toilets, picnic sites and waymarked walks.
- Minimising closures of PROW for operational reasons and always providing safe alternative diversions.
- Providing easy access around entrance barriers and ensuring forest road and track surfaces are suitable for use for pedestrians, cyclists and wheel chair users.

We welcome the commitments to give greater prominence and visibility to Unclassified County Roads and improve their maintenance, role and use. However, many of these routes are deteriorating very badly due to a combination of motorcycle and vehicle access and erosion by surface runoff. The plan should have a clearer vision as to how this might be tackled and an appropriately resourced joining up of the management of UCR's and PROW network under the responsibility of the Countryside Team. We would also like to see UCR's included on the on-line "Definitive Map".

We support the continuation of the "Least Restrictive Access Policy".

We are pleased to see the recognition of the importance of a well-maintained PROW network. In our view this must comprise a network that is fully fit for purpose – i.e. unobstructed, appropriately signed, with a user-friendly surface and with furniture that is well-maintained, safe to use and in good order. Our particular concerns are:

- Improved road signage – fingerposts with destination names to support Active Travel
- Dealing with the fact that much of the current recreational furniture (especially waymarks, stiles and fingerposts) is reaching the end of its life and in poor condition.

We support the recognition of the role that volunteers can play in supporting the PROW network and commitment to develop this further. In our view, this covers both management and maintenance and encouraging use of the network for Active Travel and to improve health and wellbeing. We are happy to help in any way we can.

ID  
34 continued

Name

Response

We are pleased to see the inclusion of “a dedicated and properly resourced countryside access service with a strong public ethic and commitment to the network and its use by residents and visitors” as essential. Any expansion of volunteering will require a further investment in MCC staff and IT systems to support and coordinate the efforts of volunteers – the two go together.

We are disappointed to see that the draft ROWIP and associated documents take such a negative view of the value and importance of public transport in gaining access to the PROW network, countryside sites and wider countryside. We would like to see the final ROWIP take a much more positive view of the role of public transport and particularly scheduled bus services. We are fortunate in having the 65 Bus pass through our village and have been working successfully to encourage both local residents and visitors to the area to make use of it as part of both Active Travel and leisure walking.

It is of course disappointing that the amount of MCC resources expected to be available during the life of the ROWIP is likely to only be sufficient to scratch the surface of the works required to see real improvements across the network. Whilst we understand that limited resources requires choices to be made, we are concerned that the Plan will lead to a creation of a two-tier PROW network with certain routes maintained to an adequate standard and others left to decline. We see a number of opportunities:

- “Conventional” funding bids to public bodies, charitable trusts, Lottery etc.
- Partnerships with communities, their representative bodies and other interest groups to become involved in managing and maintaining the network
- A high profile initiative to encourage farming enterprises and other landowners to better understand and fulfil their responsibilities towards public rights of way.

This approach has the potential to bring a significant additional resource to tasks such as repairing and replacing stiles and gates and dealing with vegetation. We believe that landowners already have this responsibility, but it is most often not exercised even though it is expected if they are in receipt of agricultural subsidies.

ID Name  
34 continued

Response

Given the current condition of the Footpath network, the proposed legislative change “to allow horse riders and cyclists to use footpaths” is a very significant concern to us. This proposal would have such a major impact on the ROWIP that we would like to see a more detailed exploration of its implications and impacts included in the Plan.

We think that section 15.4 needs to contain a stronger commitment to bringing together the relevant organisations to develop a clear strategy to tackle the problem of illegal use of routes and Access Land, particularly by motorcycles and quads.

We think it would be beneficial to have explicit reference to a commitment to interdepartmental working within MCC to deliver the ROWIP – Countryside/Highways/Passenger Transport/Tourism.

We strongly support the intention to produce an Annual Delivery Plan to review progress.

We hope these additional comments on the draft ROWIP are helpful. We look forward to seeing the final version and please do let us know if we can be of any further assistance.

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# Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan

## 2020 – 2030

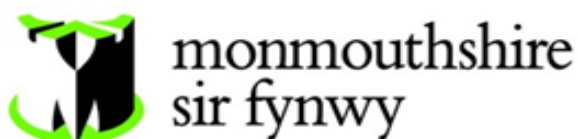
Traditionally known as Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)

PHOTO TO BE ADDED before translation

[Showing changes from the consultation draft](#)

*Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael hefyd yn y Gymraeg, mewn print bras, ac ar wefan Sir Fynwy*

*This document is also available in Welsh, large print and on Monmouthshire County Council's website.*



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## 2 VISION FOR MONMOUTHSHIRE

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1. To recognise the economic, social and heritage value of our public rights of way network and countryside sites as an important investment in the future for residents and visitors of Monmouthshire.
2. To maintain and improve local rights of way and countryside sites in order to promote and encourage ~~greater~~ ~~there~~ use and enjoyment of them, for the physical and mental well-being of all of Monmouthshire's residents and visitors.
3. To sustain the quality and diversity of Monmouthshire's countryside and to promote responsible countryside access for all.

## 3 ABOUT THIS PLAN

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This plan sets out a bold and visionary approach to providing and managing access to Monmouthshire's countryside for the benefit of all Monmouthshire's residents and visitors.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Monmouthshire (RoWIP) was first published in 2007. It has since guided the work of the countryside access service, giving direction and focus. Legislation requires that the plan is reviewed every 10 years and this plan is the product of the review carried out in 2017/18.

The review required the following assessments to be undertaken along with extensive consultation:

- Review of the ROWIP 2007 -2017 (Appendix 1)
- Review of current policy, legislation, strategies, academic studies, market research (Appendix 3 & 5)
- Analysis of current provision and likely future demand (Appendix 2 & 3)
- The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the County. (Appendix 2 & 3)
- The accessibility of rights of way (row) to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems (Appendix 2)
- The condition of the row network and its record (Definitive Map and Statement), Publicity and ~~management~~ ~~(management~~ (Appendix 3)
- Resources available to meet people's needs (Appendix 3)
- Opportunities to contribute to Active Travel objectives, Well-Being objectives, The Equality Act 2010 (Appendix 3)
- Opportunities to deliver other plans and objectives. (Appendix 3)

**This plan is structured around the outcomes of the above assessments and consultation results** (Appendix 4), which have given us insight into the needs and priorities of Monmouthshire's users and those who do not currently use the network, but might be encouraged to do so. These assessments are available on request.

The scope of this plan includes all rights of way shown on the Definitive Map, all other footpaths, bridleways and all cycle tracks not on the side of carriageways. We are also able to extend the scope of the plan to include Access Land, Countryside Sites and other provision which is important

in our area. Hence the title of this plan is “Monmouthshire’s Countryside Access Improvement Plan” (MCAIP), unlike the 2007 version which was primarily about rights of way.

The Well-Being ~~of~~and Future Generations Act requires that the service must think about the long-term, work better with people, communities and other services to look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach.

Health walks and using rights of way to improve health, improving access in and to open spaces, improving the network available to horse riders, runners and cyclists, better promotion to targeted audiences, development of bite sized doorstep opportunities, connecting people with wildlife and landscapes are some of the identified issues that are addressed within this plan.

The assessments show the countryside access service must prioritise where it focuses resources and standards to accurately reflect areas of most demand. It must also be able to be adaptable to cover such things as bad weather events. The A-Z Procedures, and Policies has therefore been revised to help deliver this plan.

This plan sets out some bold ambitions, not necessarily constrained by the resources available, or by our legal duties, but focussed on meeting the needs of residents and visitors. It is undeniable that changes in the availability of resources for local government delivery has, and will continue to have an impact. Reductions in funding levels are likely to continue for some years to come, and will create new challenges for service delivery. Therefore the statements of action within this plan are not fully resourced; it recognises the need to work with partners and stakeholders to deliver many of its elements.

~~However~~However, this is a plan that aims to secure the best possible outcomes with the resource that is available and the assessments recognise that the countryside access service must explore other ways of raising funds, involving the community, large scale partnerships and relating the service to the general public.

**This plan was prepared with the assistance of Monmouthshire’s Local Access Forum, and informed by various consultations and responses from a wide range of organisations and individuals (Stakeholders). The Council wishes to thank everyone who participated.**

## 4 THEMES

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Six broad themes have emerged from the assessments and previous ROWIP. The plan is structured around these themes. The first three themes are our top priorities. Each has a main objective and a number of actions and benefits which are detailed in the Statement of Action.

1. **Well Maintained Network**
  - To target improvements on rights of way to ensure greatest public benefit is obtained
2. **Active Healthy Lifestyles**
  - To improve the accessibility of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate walking, riding and cycling into their everyday lives
  - To promote and support the use of network for purposeful journeys.
3. **Knowing what's out there**
  - To achieve an up-to-date and accessible Definitive Map and Statement and to promote the network
4. **Community Involvement**
  - To support and enable volunteer groups to be actively involved with countryside projects, contributing to wellbeing and creating sustainable and resilient communities.
5. **A prosperous Wales**
  - To maximise the economic benefits of countryside access
6. **Future Focused**
  - Working for a resilient and future focused service in partnership with others, to provide wider benefits to residents and visitors to Monmouthshire

A delivery plan will be published separately to monitor improvements made from the plan.



## 5 WHAT IS MONMOUTHSHIRE LIKE?

The County has a distinctive identity arising from its location in the borderlands between England and Wales. It is a large rural county, covering 850 square kilometres of countryside with an estimated population of 92,476, half of which live in the main towns of Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, Caldicot and Chepstow.



Monmouthshire's greatest asset is its landscape and natural environment. The County is home to internationally and nationally designated landscapes. These stretch from the flat open coast line of the Gwent Levels to the Black Mountains and World Heritage Site in the Brecon Beacons National Park and the picturesque river gorge of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

The breath-taking natural scenery here has enthralled visitors for centuries, including painters and poets from Turner to Wordsworth. The work undertaken to inform Monmouthshire's Well-Being Assessment and the consultation for this document, shows the "pull"

people feel to the county and the unparalleled access it can offer to awe-inspiring environments.

With many historic market towns dotted across the county, you can always be assured of finding something exciting to do, tasty to eat or interesting to explore. This is aided by the extensive network of footpaths throughout the County and lots of other opportunities to canoe, ride, cycle, climb or carry out other recreational activities.

Overall people in Monmouthshire live longer than elsewhere in Wales and are healthier.

~~However~~ However, Monmouthshire has an increasingly aged population. Daffodl Cymru projects an 87% increase in Monmouthshire's population aged 65 and over with dementia by 2035. This is above the increase projected across Wales of 72% and the second highest in Wales. There is also an increase in the number of children recorded as obese. These are trends which could put significant pressures on the local authority and health board.

In 2018 2.24 million visitors came to Monmouthshire, generating £219 million to Monmouthshire's economy<sup>1</sup>. Tourism spend supports the most employment in the accommodation and food & drink

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/tourism-business-support.aspx>



sectors. In addition, a significant number of self-employed people in Monmouthshire earned a living from tourism<sup>2</sup>.

There is a reliance on car ownership due to the rural nature of the county. Public transport remains a problem with travel times on public transport considerably longer in parts of Monmouthshire than elsewhere in Wales. Poor public transport was highlighted as an issue by the Countryside Access and Disability Assessment report.



Monmouthshire has a strong sense of community and volunteering base. This is particularly seen within Countryside work and an expressed wish for volunteering opportunities to be expanded and supported. Estimates show Monmouthshire has the highest rates of volunteering in Wales.

Monmouthshire saw a rise in Welsh language speaking population to 9.9% in 2011. It is a generally prosperous area offering a high quality of life for its residents, but deprivation still exists within this setting.

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<sup>2</sup> STEAM Survey 2018



## 6 What countryside access provision is there and what opportunities does it provide?

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This section describes the opportunities available from local rights of way and other types of access provision to Monmouthshire's residents and visitors, for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and enjoyment of the countryside.

### 6.1 CURRENT ACCESS PROVISION

The Countryside Access provision in Monmouthshire is extensive and provided not only by Monmouthshire County Council but by a wide range of other organisations. Monmouthshire is the gateway to the Brecon Beacons National Park and the county has canals, rivers, market towns, food festivals, castles, dark sky discovery sites, walks, horse riding routes, walking festivals, vineyards, mountains, gorges, caves, hills, public forest, priories & abbeys, Wales Coast Path, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, paragliding, museums, paddle boarding experiences and more traditional past time sites like golf courses. There is therefore no shortage of opportunity to access the countryside in Monmouthshire for exercise, well-being and enjoyment. Information for visitors and residents can now be found on Monmouthshire's tourism website: [www.visitmonmouthshire.com](http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com)

### 6.2 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The Definitive Map records minor highways known as public rights of way (PROW). These minor highways are protected by the same highway legislation as the wider highway network.

~~However~~ ~~However~~, they are distinguished from other all-purpose highways in the way they are recorded and can be used. This is dependent on what their status is. PROW are broken down into four levels of status:

- Footpath, a highway over which the public has a right of way on foot only.
- Bridleway, a highway over which the public have a right of way on foot as well as equestrian and cycling rights.
- Byway open to all traffic (BOAT), a PROW open to all types of users, including use by horse drawn and motor vehicles, but which is mainly used for the purposes for which footpaths and bridleways are used.
- Restricted byway (RB), a new category of highway introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW), over which the public have a right of way on foot, horseback, bicycle and horse-drawn vehicle. Under the CROW Act, all PROW which were designated as a Road Used as Public Path (often denoted as CRB's or CRF's on Monmouthshire's Definitive Map) were re-designated as Restricted Byways (unless one of the provisions in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act applies).

There are 2,164.83 kms of rights of way in the County of Monmouthshire and 1609.6kms<sup>3</sup> of other public highways (roads). However an agreement is in place for the 505.78kms of public rights of way in the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) to be maintained by that Authority.

Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) pays an annual sum to the National Park Authority for this work. Should this agreement ever be rescinded then the rights of way in the BBNP would be

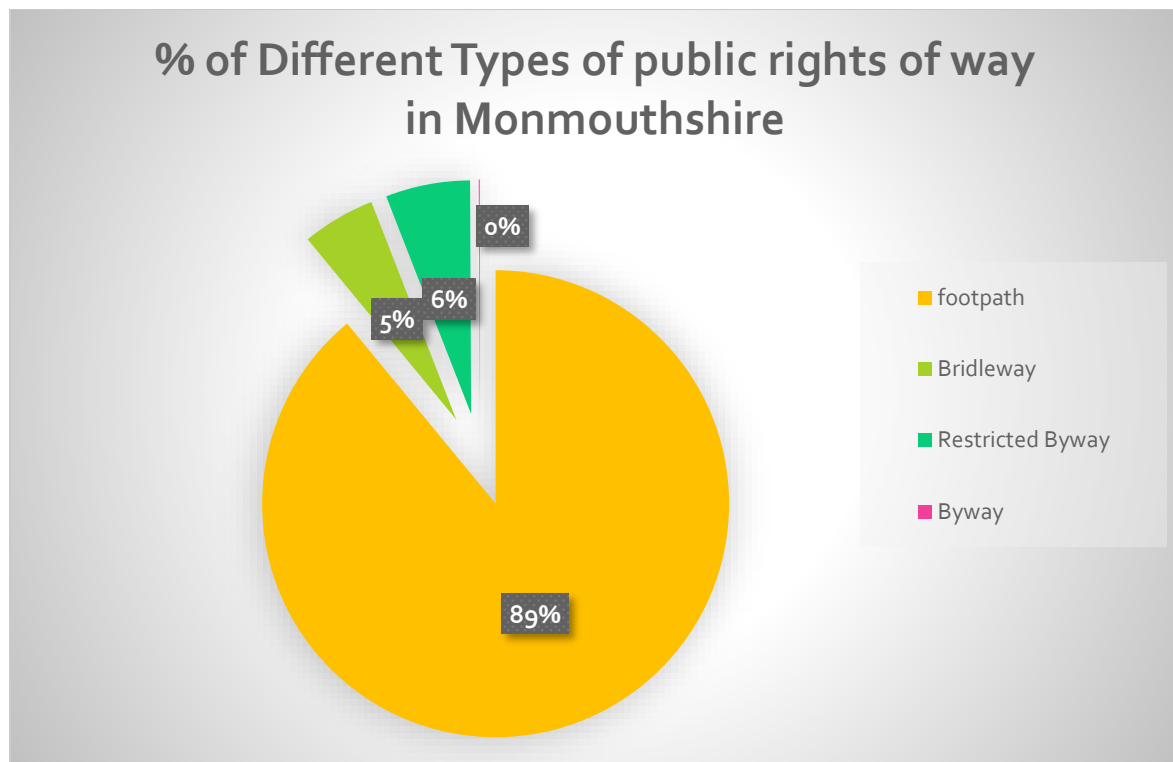
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<sup>3</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Transport/Roads/Lengths-and-Conditions/roadlength-by-typeofroad-year>

covered by the procedures and policies that apply to the rest of Monmouthshire including this plan ROWIP. MCC and BBNP have worked closely to develop their improvement plans ROWIP's. The MCAIP on Monmouthshire ROWIP was produced to include the whole of Monmouthshire including that part within the park in case the Maintenance Agreement with the BBNP is ever rescinded and to ensure all parts of Monmouthshire are treated equally. ~~ing views of the whole of the authority and in conjunction with BBNP.~~ With agreement the BBNP have also produced their own ROWIP and both have similar statements of action. - Fresh arrangements will be made to review both plans in ten ~~years time~~ years' time.

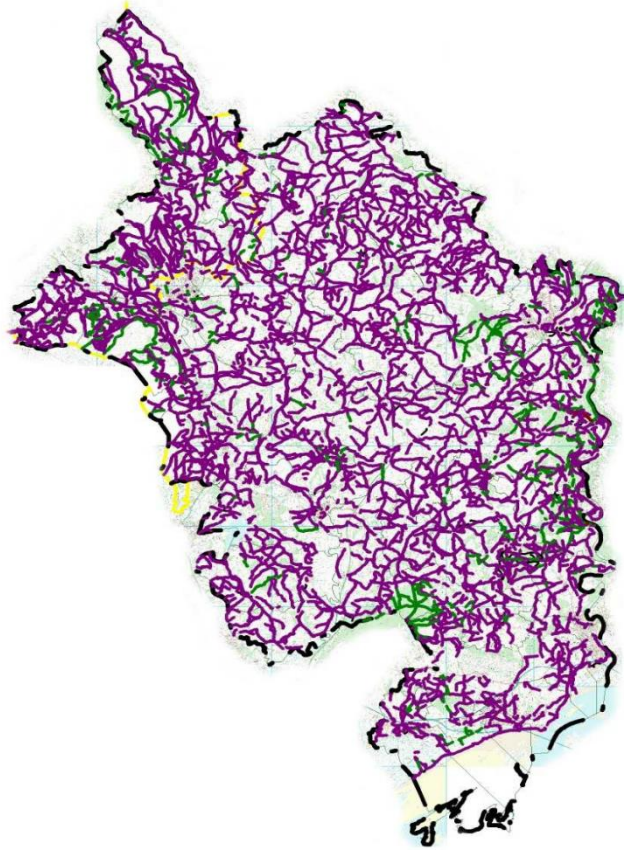
**Table 1 Extent of highway network in Monmouthshire (including BBNP) 2018**

Status of Path	Km in Mon	Km in BBNP	Total km in all of Monmouthshire	Percentage of total type of PROW
Footpath	1490.12	437.19	1927.30	89%
Bridleway	82.45	26.86	109.31	5%
Restricted Byway	84.95	41.73	126.68	6%
Byway	1.528	0	1.528	0%
Total km	<b>1,659.05</b>	<b>505.78</b>	<b>2164.83</b>	
Total km of other Highways (A, B, and other roads shown on list of streets)			1609.6	
Total PROW in Wales			33,200km	6%



The amount of Bridleways has increased from 71km in 2007, to 82.45 km in 2017. This is probably because of legal changes to the Definitive Map and the Tread and Trot bridleway project which created some new bridleways.

The map here and Table 1 shows the high density of rights of way that exist in Monmouthshire, particularly footpaths. It also shows the highly fragmented and limited bridleway, restricted byway



and bridleway network. Footpaths are shown as purple lines and other routes in green.

There are however 459.3km of County Unclassified Roads "C" roads (many of which are not surfaced) which provide access to all types of users and are essential links to the rights of way network. They are particularly useful for cyclists, carriage drivers and horse riders.

Monmouthshire has many promoted routes but the most well-known are the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, both of which attract grant funding because of their status and importance to the regional and national economy of Wales.

The Wales Coast Path was opened in 2012. It is 870 miles long in all and a total of 2.8 million visitors walked the route in 12 months to June 2013. 14 miles, or 22km, of the Wales Coast Path runs from

Chepstow to Magor. It is maintained by Monmouthshire County Council in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales, other local authorities and Welsh Government. The path is promoted by Welsh Government internationally and was voted by Lonely Planet as the top destination to visit in Wales.

The 870 miles of coast path links with Offa's Dyke Path National Trail to create a 1030 mile continuous walking route around the whole of Wales. The Wales Coast Path also links to other routes in Monmouthshire such as the Wye Valley Walk, Tewdrick's Trail and a whole host of smaller local circular routes. Soon it will also link to the England Coast Path.

The county is also well covered with five other promoted long distance routes, all with the exception of the Monnow Valley Walk are promoted by Monmouthshire County Council and or the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

1. The Wye Valley Walk
2. The Usk Valley Walk
3. Three Castles Walk
4. St Tewdricks Trail
5. The Beacons Way
6. The Monnow Valley Walk

256.4km of PROW are promoted routes. We also have a series of health walks and 30 pathcare walks which are locally promoted routes.

There is opportunity for other walks to be developed. The Cambrian Way and Monmouthshire Way are routes where discussion is underway with individuals and the Ramblers Association to promote and manage the routes in the future. Local Groups are developing and maintaining circular walks.

### 6.3 PERMISSIVE WALKING AND HORSE RIDING ROUTES

Permissive paths are where the landowner allows, by his consent, certain users to use a route on his land either as a footpath or bridleway. These are not that common and are not usually recorded but we are aware of 4,174m of permissive footpaths and 3,381m of permissive bridleways. Significant parts of the Usk Valley Walk and Wye Valley Walk are on permissive routes. The disadvantage of permissive routes is that they can be closed at any time and they are usually not maintainable at public expense.

### 6.4 HORSE RIDING AND CARRIAGE DRIVERS

Despite the lack of bridleways, byways and restricted byways the county has some superb facilities for horse riders at the Broome Event Centre, Chepstow Race course and Coleg Gwent. There is also now a series of promoted bridleway routes known as the Tread and Trot Trails and a concentration of riding routes in Wentwood Forest.

[Large sections of the Welsh Government woodland estate are subject to a concordat between Natural Resources Wales and the British Horse Society, which provides permissive access for horse riders. NRW and the BHS have a mutually agreed concordat, setting out the collaborative approach to horse riding. This applies to permissive access on forest roads and tracks on NRW managed freehold estate and not which includes Welsh Water land.](#)

Horse drawn carriages are permitted on restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. Carriage drivers in Monmouthshire advise that they principally use quiet roads.

There is opportunity to make more use of county unclassified roads as “quiet lanes” which would benefit more recreational users by looking at how these routes are signed, managed and promoted. There is also opportunity to increase riding routes in some of the public forests managed by Natural Resources Wales.

### 6.5 COUNTRYSIDE SITES, GREEN AND BLUE SPACES

Research shows that access to green space is important for the mental and physical health of residents and has a positive effect on longevity of life. There are:

- 11 Countryside access sites including one country park (Caldicot Castle) which provides access for walkers to picnic, kite fly etc. Other county council land holdings also allow further countryside access opportunities.
- 44 Historic Parks and Gardens, which have been identified as having a Special Historic Interest, covering 1,910 hectares.
- 3 landscapes of “Outstanding Historic Interest” (namely parts of Blaenavon, the Gwent Levels and the Lower Wye Valley) –and one landscape of Special Historic Interest, (the Clydach Gorge) within the Monmouthshire area identified by Cadw ADW in the Registers of Outstanding and Special Historic Interest In Wales.

- The Wye Valley AONB is a popular tourist destination which attracts significant numbers of walkers, cyclists and day trippers for its scenic beauty, ecological, geological, historic and cultural attributes.

Opportunities exist to improve provision in country parks/ countryside sites to encourage more people to use them through better signage, promotion and enhancing routes to and from the sites.

## 6.6 COMMON LAND AND VILLAGE GREENS

There is an estimated 3,853.587 hectares of mainly rural commons in Monmouthshire. Common land is owned, e.g. by a local council, privately or by the National Trust. There is normally a right to roam on foot over it. However some common land has different rights, so for example the commons in Glascoed can also be used for horse riding.

~~Additionally~~ Additionally, there are 24 village greens which can be used for sports and recreation, e.g. playing football or walking your dog. Many greens are maintained by local community councils, but some may be privately owned.

## 6.7 OPEN ACCESS LAND

The public can walk on Open Access Land. It is mapped on Access Maps produced by Natural Resources Wales and is shown on their website. Access Land is also shown on ~~1:25,000~~ some scale Ordnance Survey maps. It is defined as mountain, moor, heath, down land and common.

In Monmouthshire (outside of BBNP) there is about 150 hectares of mainly rural commons which are designated as Open Access. In addition ~~National Resources Wales (NRW) have dedicated~~ 3,550ha of freehold Welsh Government Woodland Estate public forest ~~as has been dedicated as~~ open access in Monmouthshire. ~~The Welsh Government has recently announced that it intends in the future to extend open access land to the coast.~~

## 6.8 WOODLANDS

Walking in woodlands is very popular with Monmouthshire residents. The Woods for People project created a UK wide inventory of accessible woodland and it is known from this, that in 2014, 43% of woods in Wales were publicly accessible. The Woodland Trust has undertaken a major analysis of woodland access provision and deficit across the UK. The project, named "Space for People" suggests that in 2016 23.6 % of the Welsh population live within 500 metres of a wood of 2 hectares or more and 80.6% live within 4 kilometres of a larger wood of 20 hectares or more<sup>4</sup>. The main activity undertaken in woodlands according to the Wales Outdoors Study is walking.

There is scope to extend other activities such as horse riding or cycling more formally over woodlands in Monmouthshire if landowners agree.

## 6.9 OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Monmouthshire has an outdoor education service with two sites at Gilwern and Hilston Park. Gilwern Outdoor Centre can accommodate large groups of around 80 people and is set in 15 acres

<sup>4</sup> Forestry Statistics 2017

<https://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forstats2017.nsf/0e01ca232ca463ed802570a60054c205!CreateDocument>



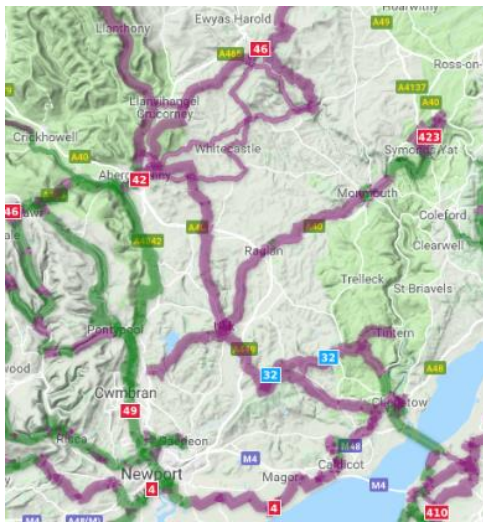
of grounds. There is a bouldering wall, climbing tower, woodland and large meadow for camping. As it is not far from Clydach Gorge it can also provide caving experiences.

Hilston Park in Monmouth is a listed country house, just 10 minutes from the River Wye It is ideal for people who like to canoe, fish or walk parts of the Wye Valley Walk. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail is also not far away.

Other private companies also offer opportunities to participate in caving, climbing, canoeing, kayaking, hill walking, camping, raft building, fishing and other adventure pursuits.

## 6.10 CYCLING

Cycling in Monmouthshire is increasingly popular with lots of quiet lanes to follow. We have two of the long distance routes of the National Cycle Network starting in Chepstow: the Celtic Trail (220miles traversing the southern edge of Wales heading west across the Newport Transporter Bridge), and Lon Las Cymru (185 miles heading north through Brecon Beacons to Snowdonia). The map<sup>5</sup> below shows the National Cycle routes available in Monmouthshire.



We are home to the prestigious Abergavenny Festival of cycling<sup>6</sup>, which includes on its programme family rides as well as events which provide the opportunity to watch professional riders, including the annual Velothon giving all the chance to ride the route of champions.

Monmouthshire is also home to “the Tumble” – a legendary 6km 10% gradient climb (listed as one of the greatest cycling climbs in Britain). In addition Sustrans have and are developing routes through Monmouthshire. The Peregrine Way between Wyesham (Monmouth) and Symonds Yat is popular and they are looking to extend this route to Redbrook. The cycle way from Llanfoist to Clydach extends to the Heads of The valley cycleway at

Brynmawr. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal also provides a cycle route from Llanfoist to Goytre.

In 2014 a series of “Tread and Trot” routes were made available. These are multi-purpose mainly off road routes suitable for cyclists, horse riders and walkers.

All of the cycle routes in Monmouthshire can be downloaded at

<https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/things-to-do/cycling-routes-in-monmouthshire.aspx>

Monmouthshire has developed a set of Integrated Network Maps which set out the Council's plans for improving active travel routes in and around key settlements over the next 15 years. The maps can be found [here](#).

Currently the county has a limited and fragmented bridleway network for off road cycling.

HoweverHowever, the Council recognises that there are opportunities to expand cycling in Monmouthshire and is developing a Cycling Strategy to take advantage of the opportunities Active

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/ncn/map>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/things-to-do/cycling-in-monmouthshire.aspx>

Travel brings, as well as extending the network of routes out of major towns to connect to other villages and places of interest.

### **6.11 RUNNING**

There are plenty of places where it is possible to run such as Country parks, village greens and commons, open access land, footpaths, bridleways and byways, woodlands and nature reserves.

There are many organised running events in Monmouthshire but these all require permission from the landowners involved. Parkrun has a popular run at Rogiet Countryside Park that runs every weekend and the Severn Bridge parkrun has also recently started. More parkrun's are desirable if suitable locations with parking can be found.

### **6.12 WATER SPORTS**

Llandegfedd Reservoir operates a brand new water sports centre. It offers land and water based activities from team building, windsurfing, dinghy sailing, paddle boarding, kayaking, raft building and environmental studies.

Canoeing is available on the river Wye.

Close to Monmouthshire is the National Diving and Activity Centre at Tidenham Quarry in Chepstow<sup>7</sup>. Here you can experience a complete SCUBA diving package for beginners through to professionals with speciality diving courses for both the sport diver and recreational diver. Depths range from 1-82m making this the deepest inland dive site in the UK.

A favourite for walkers, cyclists and nature lovers is the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. The navigable section is 35 miles long. This is managed by The Canal and Rivers Trust who promote the canal towpath as part of the Natural Health Service, as an outdoor gym, a perfect place for free recreation. The towpath also forms part of the National cycle network (NCN 49).

### **6.13 AGRI-ENVIRONMENTAL SCHEMES**

63 farms in Monmouthshire were within the Tir Gofal agri-environmental scheme, which in many cases included additional permissive access. This scheme has now been replaced with Glastir which also includes the provision of permissive access. However it is not known how extensive this additional access is in Monmouthshire. Many permissive routes under Tir Gofal are known to still exist but these are not mapped. The Welsh Government promotes Glastir access on its website through a mapping system called Lle Map. This also shows the Wales Coast Path, National Trails and Open Access Land.

### **6.14 OTHER TYPES OF EXISTING ACCESS**

- There are 201 scheduled ancient monuments in Monmouthshire including several dozen castles, some of which are only accessible by public rights of way.
- Cadw has 15 monuments in its guardianship most of which are located in rural or semi-rural areas and all lie either on or within a few hundred metres of public rights of way. Some of these, including the Roman City of Caerwent and Grosmont Castle form part of substantial

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<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/thedms.aspx?dms=3&venue=1291730&rgn=Monmouthshire&catid=28&feature=1000>

landholdings with multiple routes crossing them; all of them form outdoor visitor destinations or amenities.

- The National Trust look after mountains (Sugar Loaf & Skirrid), meadows, woodlands (St Marys Vale), waterfalls and traditional hill farms across Monmouthshire as well as a medieval castle (Skenfrith Castle – in guardianship of Cadw), Clytha Park Estate and a naval temple (The Kymin). This not only allows for a diverse range of landscapes to be accessible but it also provides opportunities to understand and enjoy Monmouthshire’s biodiversity, stories, heritage and culture. It also gives opportunities to volunteer.
- Natural Resources Wales manages four National Nature Reserves in Monmouthshire:-
  1. Coed y Cerrig National Nature Reserve near Abergavenny
  2. Cym Clydach, in the Clydach Gorge
  3. Lady Park Wood NNR, near Monmouth
  4. Fiddlers Elbow NNR, near Monmouth

Natural Resources Wales have a free app “PlacesToGo” which can be downloaded on smart phones and shows all the walking routes on their managed land along with information on their recreation facilities.

- Other accessible countryside sites are managed by Gwent Wildlife Trust (including Beacon Hill, Magor Marsh, New Grove Meadows, Pentywn Farm and Wyeswood Common), Woodland Trust (including Beaulieu Wood and large parts of Wentwood) and other public and voluntary sector land managers.
- Geocaching is a treasure hunting game using maps and global positioning system (GPS) enabled devices. The aim is to navigate to a specific set of GPS co-ordinates and then attempt to find the Geocache hidden at that location. If you find a cache you can record your visit and swop treasures. Some of Monmouthshire’s sites and promoted routes like Offa’s Dyke National Trail also offer geocache sites. The Geocaching Association of Great Britain has links to websites that list geocache sites.

### 6.15 WHERE COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS PROVISION IS NOT MET



- The bridleway, byway and restricted byway network are limited and fragmented, leaving little provision for horse riders, off road cyclists, carriage drivers and vehicular users. There is also limited access for those with mobility or health issues.
- There is a lack of maintenance on verges and minor road routes which provide connectivity to the rights of way network, inhibiting active lifestyles.
- There is a gap in the rights of way network

at the Hendre Estate where no public rights of way were registered at all. Llangdeffedd reservoir has recently opened up a permissive footpath around the reservoir which is extremely popular but it is not available all year round.



- There is a need to work with landowners of woodlands in particular Natural Resources Wales (NRW) to extend access for a wider range of users. There is also opportunity to improve access to routes through Cadw sites.
- The Monmouthshire Greenspace study which examined access to green space, suggests that there needs to be a focus on addressing blockages to footpaths close to settlements and on circular routes beginning and ending within settlements, in order to benefit urban populations. It also suggests creating more circular routes around settlements.

## 7 REFLECTION OF THE DELIVERY OF THE ROWIP 2007 -2017

See "Appendix 1 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Summary of Delivery of ROWIP 2007 – 2017" for further details of achievements over last decade which forms evidence base and is available on line or on request.



The first phase of the production of this document consisted of an assessment of what had and had not been delivered through the first ROWIP for Monmouthshire which ran from 2007 to 2017.

range of other grants.

- The ROWIP was successful in being used as a bidding document for additional resources with funding received from HLF, RDP and a range of other grants.
- Monmouthshire was the first authority in Wales (if not the UK) to produce a Public Rights of Way Biodiversity Action Plan and Technical Guidance which is used daily.
- The adoption of a Least Restrictive Access Policy has seen the removal of large numbers of stiles. Monmouthshire was the first authority to make our stretch of the Offa's Dyke stile free. The Usk Valley Walk, Wye Valley Walk and many other paths are now also stile free. A Countryside Furniture Guide was produced for contractors, landowners & others to use which continues to assist in making the network more accessible to all. This needs updating to reflect new standards and needs to be more widely promoted.
- The countryside access service was instrumental in setting up GP referral Walks from the Leisure Centres, but in terms of securing health benefits activity needs to be targeted at, and communicated in a way that encourages use by the public/schools and by health and other providers.
- The creation of coherent networks of higher status routes for horse riders and cyclists remains a significant challenge. Greater consideration needs to be given to using existing roads and verges to reduce the fragmentation of the network of bridleways, cycle tracks and byways.

- We have increased access to the Definitive Map by provided an on line version for public use. <https://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>
- The service will continue to need to embrace new technology and improve existing systems if it is to improve levels of customer service.
- After extensive consultation a prioritisation system was introduced for maintenance & enforcement issues. As a ~~result~~result, a significant number of new bridges have been installed and many repaired, but there is still a significant backlog of work and inspections remain a problem.

## 8 EXTENT TO WHICH RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER ACCESS PROVISION MEETS PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE USE

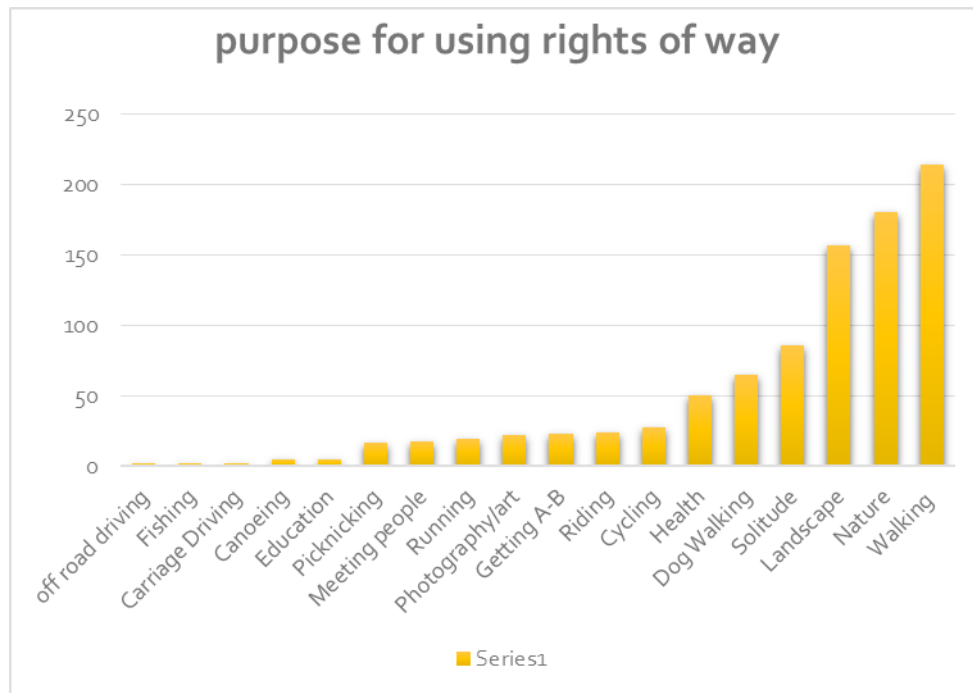
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Information was gathered from our customer/stakeholders and those that do not use the outdoors, to understand their priorities and needs and how the network currently meets demands. This and national survey research also helped determine how the network must evolve to meet future requirements for residents and visitors, providing services accessible to all people within the community. Through analysis of the information gathered common themes emerged which have been used to guide the delivery of this plan and Statements of Action.

*See the Rights of Way Review assessment reports which provide the detailed evidence base, available on line or on request.*

### 8.1 KEY FINDINGS

- The top two most popular reasons for using the PROW in Monmouthshire is "Walking" and "Nature", closely followed by "Landscape".
- 78% of customers/stakeholders in Monmouthshire were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with public rights of way they used.



- The majority of customers/stakeholders daily use public rights of way in Monmouthshire
- The percentage of adults with a demand to do more sport ranged from 41% in Gwynedd to 70% in Monmouthshire.
- The types of activity in most demand include indoor and outdoor swimming, walking, any cycling (including BMX & mountain biking) climbing/mountaineering/rock climbing, canoeing, horse riding and gym or fitness classes.
- In general, there was greater chance adults were satisfied with life, felt that things done in life were worthwhile, were happy, and were not anxious if they participate in sport three or more times a week.
- Adults who are lonely are more likely to want to do more sport or physical recreation.
- People enjoy a diversity of places. The residents of Monmouthshire favour using rights of way, woods, permissive paths (many of these are in woods), rivers and historic features.
- Walking Groups within Monmouthshire enjoy routes of 5-10miles on a weekly basis. But the average walker enjoys 2-5 miles and has travelled less than a mile from home, with 30% of visits being to a local park. This suggests that access to “doorstep opportunities” is an important factor for engagement in outdoor recreation for many people.
- Social recreation activities are still popular with people enjoying a picnic, taking children to playground, or taking part in informal games such as playing Frisbee. The popularity of these activities reflects the importance of “easy to do” pursuits that require little if any specialist equipment, skills or facilities.
- Wildlife watching and engaging with the environment is popular in Monmouthshire.

There were significant gender differences in the types of activities that people take part in, with women more likely than men to say they had taken children to playgrounds, or been for a picnic. In contrast men were much more likely to have taken part in virtually all active outdoor pursuits, particularly road cycling, mountain biking and fishing.

## 8.2 WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS PREVENTING CURRENT USE OR MORE USE OF PATHS AND TRAILS IN THE FUTURE.

- The top two issues that were stopping PROW use were: overgrown vegetation (grass & crops) and unclear routes. Overgrowth was a particular issue for the elderly and disabled.
- Lack of information acted as a greater barrier for the younger age groups than the older demographic who relied more on “word of mouth” to find routes. Lack of information was also a deterrent to the disabled
- There is a lower frequency of PROW use for those who had a disability compared to those who do not.
- The lack of toilets particularly in small villages along walking routes.
- Fragmentation of the network for higher status routes and problems using roads/verges that link paths was also an identified barrier to some.
- Negative perceptions- fears and concerns can exist which determine people’s willingness to access the natural environment and or public green spaces.
- Motivation is an identified barrier – There are easier, less challenging things to do in which case there can be a lack of motivation to engage with the natural environment.
- Lack of physical fitness - This can deter people from wishing to engage with the natural environment, particularly if the activity involved is perceived to require a degree of fitness.
- A key barrier and potential inequality is the availability of good accessible green spaces near where people live with the appropriate facilities.

### 8.2.1 Under represented groups

- Disabled people, younger age groups and those from ethnic minorities visit the countryside less frequently.
- Younger age groups were less likely to be interested in using the PROW network.

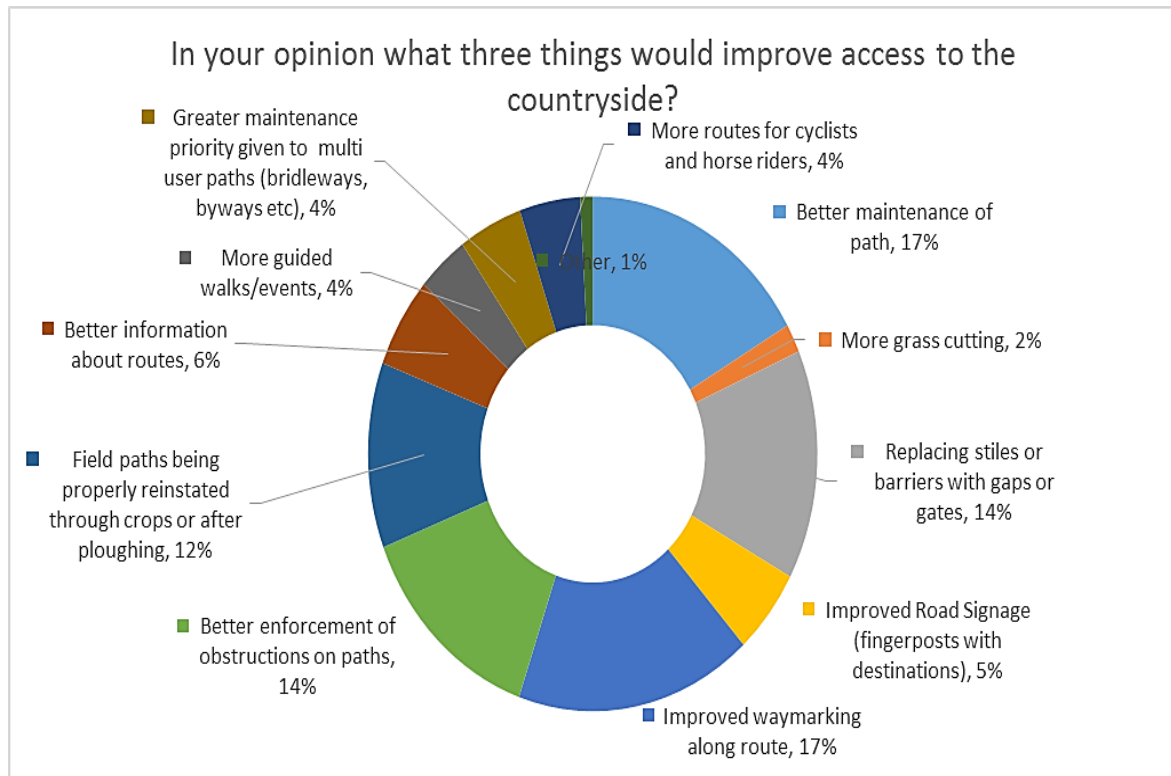
Among those young people who said they did not engage in outdoor walking the main reasons identified were:

1. The activities were viewed as something for adults and not a young person’s thing.
2. It is not clear what is involved and what is available
3. Time is limited if you have school and a weekend job.

## 8.3 ENCOURAGING PROW USE

- PROW non users were less confident in their knowledge of PROW. Increased knowledge improves confidence and encourages use. “knowing where routes are” and “where will it take me” is important.
- The top three answers to what would encourage people to use public rights of way more were “ if they were confident that the paths were in a good condition”, “confidence in not getting lost”, “complimentary activities i.e. bird watching”.
- Design – Issues such as signage, information sheets, navigation aids and labels are important in addressing the complexity that begins to act as a barrier to people, particularly those with a disability. Familiarity with a place can be important to some groups (like those with dementia) as can Way-finding aids in some green spaces (such as dementia friendly signage) could overcome some of their concerns about getting lost.
- Improvements to reporting system. Older groups preferred to complete a form or email, whilst younger people preferred the on-line mapping facility. Options for reporting need to be made clearer as many people thought there was only one facility.

- Physical accessibility – Access to cheap, reliable transport and parking facilities.
- Expense- This is a particular issue for people of lower socio-economic groups where cost is cited in some research as a primary reason for not accessing the natural environment.



#### 8.4 EVOLUTION OF THE NETWORK

Through stakeholder engagement the following were identified as key ways in which countryside access needs to evolve to meet future demands:

- Commitment from Natural Resources Wales & other landowners to the maintenance and provision of waymarked walks/rides
- Improved waymarking/signage along routes, and more localised display boards available from points within villages.
- Innovative solutions to encourage younger people to use the outdoors.
- Better maintenance & enforcement of paths
- Remove barriers and replace stiles with gaps or gates.
- Improve areas around entrances to paths
- Provide good short circular promoted routes for health, leisure and tourism
- Provide links or connect routes to schools and places of interest
- Link activities
- Families are looking for multi-purpose routes to undertake leisure activities together, such as cycling in a safe environment.
- Better communication on the condition of paths & rights of way & promote how to report issues.
- Visitor friendly sites – more picnic benches, toilets and information
- Improve verge maintenance along roads to provide safe access to connecting rights of way

- Safe parking
- Improve local transport & toilet provision

In ~~addition~~addition, stakeholders who were blind, partially sighted and had mobility or health problems identified the following actions:

- Improvements to the physical network specifically removing barriers where feasible
- Consider surfacing, gradients and camber on surfaces and provide where possible smooth, wide all weather surfaced routes.
- Improve information to enable decision making about route choice.
- Improve or identify areas of no mobile phone coverage which would be an issue should emergency services or help be required.
- More easy access routes



## 9 POLICY CONTEXT

The importance of the ~~PROW~~pro network, countryside, riverside, forests, coast and publicly accessible green spaces is recognised in many national and local strategies and is afforded strong protection in law. An estimated 4000 individual statutes, regulations and judgements have a direct relevance to its protection, use and development.

Recently there have been specific Welsh Acts which have a direct and long term change both in the management and direction of countryside access in Wales and specific access legislative changes are expected within the life of this plan.

More detail is available in the RoWIP Assessment Reports which are available on line. In ~~particular~~particular, the *Monmouthshire Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management ROWIP Assessment Report* outlines all Countryside Access Policies.

**Well Being of  
Future  
Generations Act**

- The Act requires that the service must think about the long-term, work better with people, communities and other services to look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Public Service Board agreed <a href="#">The Well- Being Plan</a> for Monmouthshire in April 2018.</li> <li>➤ From this plan a set of Actions has been produced. The aims of The Well- Being Plan covers areas which the <a href="#">Monmouthshire Countryside Access Improvement Plan (MCAIP)</a>, <a href="#">Rights of Way Improvement Plan</a> is also involved with, such as health, climate change, protecting landscapes &amp; biodiversity, reducing levels of inactivity, working with communities etc.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Active Travel Wales Act</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 is a landmark Welsh law to make it easier for people to walk and cycle in Wales. The Act requires local authorities to continuously improve facilities and routes for pedestrians and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. This aims to enable positive behavioural change in our daily routines to reduce the need for car usage, to connect us with access to sustainable transport modes (such as buses and trains) and which also provides opportunities to strengthen community cohesion. The <a href="#">MCAIPReWIP</a> contributes to these objectives. See Chapter 11 Active Healthy Lifestyles.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Environment Act</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act- puts in place a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty for public authorities (including the Welsh Ministers) who must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity, and in so doing promote the resilience of ecosystems, so far as is consistent with the exercise of their functions in Wales. Natural Resources Wales is developing Area Statements to assist with this and the <a href="#">MCAIPROWIP</a> will link into these.</li> </ul>

Due to the wide-reaching work of the PROW and Access Service, the MCAIP-ROWIP not only directly contributes to many legislative Acts, but also the delivery of many of Monmouthshire's policies and strategies. Some of these are Monmouthshire County Council's and others are those of partner organisations. The diagram below shows the policies and strategies that share common objectives to the MCAIP-ROWIP.



There are many policies and strategies both nationally, regionally and locally with similar aims and objectives, which gives opportunities to expand partnerships to achieve the public benefits that access can bring. This will be reflected in the Statements of Action in this plan.



## 10 WELL MAINTAINED PROW NETWORK & COUNTRYSIDE SITES

### 10.1 COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS RESOURCE

There are a range of resources that the ~~C~~ountryside ~~A~~ccess ~~T~~eam has at its disposal including staff, allocated budget, volunteers, PROW & countryside site asset and funding raised through external sources.

The Countryside Access Team [based in MonLife<sup>8</sup>, part of Monmouthshire County Council](#), consists of 143 staff, only 7 of which are full time. The team are assisted by various volunteers and volunteer groups.

*See "Appendix 3 Rights of Way Improvement Plan Condition of the Network and Opportunities Assessment Report 2017/18" which provides detailed evidence base and is available on line or on request.*

There are a wide range of organisations and services that are active in the management of Monmouthshire's countryside and have much to contribute towards the improvement of the public right of way network and countryside sites. Partnership working with these organisations and services is key to the delivery of this plan.

Some of our key partners include:- Landowners, Cadw, Natural Resources Wales, National Trust, Woodland Trust, Wildlife Trust, Wye Valley AONB, Brecon Beacons National Park and other neighbouring authorities, NHS, Ramblers Cymru, NFU, Monmouthshire Highways, Leisure Services.

### 10.2 RIGHTS WITH RESPONSIBILITIES



The ~~Countryside Access Team~~PROW and access service has a statutory duty to ensure the network is recorded, protected and maintained. It is important that we work with the landowning community in ensuring statutory compliance and in delivering improvements to the network. We advise on and where appropriate, progress applications to amend the PROW network in the interest of the public and/or the landowner. Monmouthshire's ~~C~~ountryside ~~A~~ccess ~~T~~eam service will continue to promote responsible use by the public when exercising their rights. This includes responsible dog ownership.

### 10.3 WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF THE NETWORK?

From March 2012 to March 2018 the ~~C~~ountryside ~~A~~ccess ~~T~~eam have received 2800 enforcement and 9400 maintenance issues.

The ~~countryside~~Countryside ~~A~~ccess ~~T~~eam service are resolving approximately 55% of enforcement issues and 66% of maintenance issues per year.

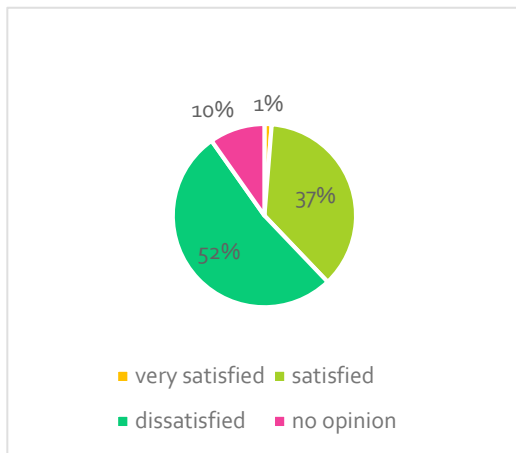
The current network is historic in origin, but in order to make it fit for future use this means the countryside access service must prioritise where it focuses resources to reflect areas of most

<sup>8</sup> More information available at <https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/countryside-access/>

demand and benefit. It may also mean moving away from the traditional wooden gate to metal ones which last longer.

**Table 4: Types of outstanding maintenance and enforcement issues**

Issue	Number outstanding	Issue	Number Outstanding
Fingerposts/signage	1160	Improvement	70
Obstacle	1005	Slope	60
Surface vegetation	846	Behaviour	35
Stiles	475	Order implementation	30
Waymarking	440	Deposit	30
Bridge/culvert	273	Crops	28
Obstruction buildings	265	Drainage	27
Alignment	253	Notices/signs	24
Other	190	Animal	22
Surface	161	Information	21
Gate	159	Enforcement surface	15
Obstruction landscaping	98	Hazard abutting	12
Overhead/side vegetation	95	CROW section 130 Notice	5
Tree	79	Section 56 repair notice	3



- There is currently a backlog of 1585 enforcement issues. 37% of users are satisfied with the general enforcement of issues such as obstructions on routes. But 52% were dissatisfied.
- Obstacles are the most recorded type of enforcement. These usually consist of some type of gate or fence obstruction, but can also be things like a ~~builders~~builder's skip.

## Maintenance Requirements

To keep the rights of way network in good condition there is a need to replace:-

4 Fingerposts per week (not including the backlog of 1160 signage issues)

One new bridge every 2-3 weeks.

10 stiles & gates per week (not including the backlog of 1005 issues).

Also for safety & maintenance reasons there is a need to:

- Undertake 15 bridge inspections per week

- Better resourcing of legal orders is required to divert footpaths around permanent building obstructions and more planning application checks to ensure there are no further building obstructions.



- The Public are concerned about cropping. This is increasing due to climate change and changes within agriculture, which make more crops in Monmouthshire viable.
- ⇔ Signage (waymarking and fingerposts), surface vegetation, stiles and bridges are the highest reported maintenance issues
- ⇔ Surface vegetation is a growing problem, partly due to the weather in recent years which has meant more than the usual two cuts have been required.
- ⇔ There are 3848 stiles and 4004 gates known to be on the rights of way network. 89% of stiles and 96% of gates are in a good condition.
- ⇔ Any new gates, stiles or other furniture needs to be authorised before it can be installed. All aspects of the countryside access service take account of the Equality Act and the "Least Restrictive Access Policy" (LRA), which has proved beneficial in removing many stiles and making routes more accessible to all. The policy and procedure for LRA & authorising structures will continue. See Active Healthy Lifestyles page 31 to view this policy.
- ⇔ The Countryside Access Design Guide was produced to ensure a high standard of furniture is used by staff, contractors and landowners. It needs to be updated to reflect recent changes in British Standards and be more widely promoted.
- ⇔ In 2018 we now have a total of 1326 bridges recorded on the rights of way network of which 9% are now recorded as "unsatisfactory".
- ⇔ There are 273 bridge issues. 85 need repair, 67 bridges need replacement and a further 81 are recorded as missing bridges. 88 bridges have "other" issues on them, including 51 bridges which require full inspection to further ascertain what the bridge issue is. Of particular issue are the bridges which are 10m and over and require replacement or repair.

**Consultations for this plan show that there are particular things Stakeholders do not like, or would like to see being done differently regarding rights of way maintenance and enforcement.**

- Improved signage.
- Improving structures for those less able and for dogs.
- More enforcement on rights of way
- Enforcement against illegal off-roading.
- Improved communication
- More use of volunteers and community councils to maintain and fund improvements.

#### 10.4 PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY ASSET

Some parts of the PROW network are the responsibility of the County Council, such as surface maintenance, fingerposts, safety barriers and many bridges. Other elements are the responsibility of landowners. Funding shortfalls remain a serious concern to all interested parties.

- The current capital budget for maintaining the network in 2019 is £38,000 and 10x too small. There is no specific budget for volunteers, legal orders, modification orders, enforcement or promotion.
- The backlog of known maintenance issues is estimated at £4 million +
- The backlog of building obstructions will cost £532,000+ if dealt with by legal order.
- Annually there is a need for £452,151+ to be spent on maintaining the network to replace signage, bridges, gates & some ~~surfacing~~ (surfacing (not including backlog of issues & revenue costs like staff, or cutting programmes) to keep the asset in optimum condition.
- The 2007-2017 Ro~~o~~WIP provided opportunity for significant grant income, from a number of sources, which has provided the means to make improvements. In the last 5 years this has totalled £623,095 of grant from Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Heritage Lottery Fund and European Funding (£1,060,705 since 2011).
- £4m has been secured through collaborative landscape partnership schemes in the Wye Valley, Blaenavon World Heritage Site and recently for Living Levels for improving (amongst other things) access infrastructure and visitor experience.

**The top 3 things Stakeholders would like are:**

Better maintenance of paths,  
Better enforcement of obstructions,  
Field paths reinstated after cropping



Field Warden installing a counter to monitor usage and inform grants.

### 10.5 COUNTRYSIDE SITES CONDITION

Countryside Sites provide important opportunities for sport, recreation and tourism and can also act as a visual amenity and may have conservation importance.

- There are 9 countryside sites which are directly managed by the [Countryside Access Team](#) service. These are Castle Meadows, Clydach Ironworks, Goytre Hall Wood, Llanfoist Crossing, Abbey Tintern Furnace, Lower Wireworks car park, Black Rock picnic site, Rogiet Countryside Park and Warren Slade.
- Caldicot Castle Country Park and Tintern Old Station are much larger sites and are managed as part of MonLife's attractions portfolio.

There is one Warden who looks after the sites in conjunction with "Friends of" Groups, volunteers and partners such as Keep Wales Tidy.



- Each of the sites provide different challenges according to their location and use. For example: Black Rock picnic site suffers from erosion and maintaining coastal defences are a problem, whilst the scheduled ancient monuments at Abbey Tintern Furnace and Clydach require specialist management and present significant maintenance challenges.





- There is an ongoing requirement to keep boundary fences and structures maintained particularly where there is stock involved.

Management Plans for each site are being developed as it is necessary to work in partnership and find creative ways in which to fund identified improvements. As of May 2019 there is an estimated list of project works that will cost £419,000



## 10.6 WHAT WOULD ENCOURAGE MORE USE OF COUNTRYSIDE SITES

- Improved publicity and promotion
- Car parking improvements
- Increased biodiversity value, through additional tree planting, or the creation of less intensively managed natural areas, restoration of ponds and other appropriate measures.
- Cycle way surface improvements at Castle Meadows.
- Improved path surfaces at Rogiet Countryside Park to provide extension to parkrun routes.
- Refresh and improve signage, promotion and enhancing routes to and from sites.
- Picnic areas
- Benches/seats/resting areas
- Good surfaced paths accessible all year round

## 11 Active Healthy lifestyles

### 11.1 SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL ENCOURAGING ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

- Walking and cycling as a means of transport to reach a destination, termed “active travel” allows people to be physically active as part of their daily lives.
- Active travel brings a range of health and wellbeing benefits reducing traffic congestion and air pollution.
- Physical activity is essential for healthy growth and development, it increases cognitive outcomes and school attainment and improves social interaction and confidence.
- In March 2018 the National Institute for Health and CARE Excellence (NICE) published new guidance relating to the importance of physical activity in ~~the local~~ the local environment and how the PROW and cycle network and public open space can help facilitate active lifestyles.
- A lack of routes, poor availability of information about routes and concerns over safety can all act as barriers to people choosing active travel.

## 11.2 HEALTH & WELL BEING

- The cost of physical inactivity to Wales is around £650 million per year.
- Physical inactivity is the fourth leading cause of ill health in the UK and spending on the NHS is recorded at £1,000 per second on dealing with preventable ill health
- Over half of adults in Monmouthshire are classed as overweight or obese and Monmouthshire has an estimated 100 classrooms of obese children with 2.1% of 4 and 5 year olds in the county classified as overweight or obese.
- Public Health Wales warn of a Type 2 diabetes epidemic, across Wales with rates of diabetes increasing.
- Daffodil Cymru projects an 87% increase in Monmouthshire's population aged 65 and over with dementia by 2035
- Being active can help towards the prevention of at least 20 different chronic health conditions, including coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, type 2 diabetes and mental health problems.
- Increasing evidence suggests that one of the most efficient ways to manage mental health issues is through physical activity, especially in the natural environment which gives feelings of revitalisation, increased energy and decreases in tension, confusion, anger and depression.
- Benefits of exercise in the natural environment happen almost immediately: only 5 minutes of exposure improves self-esteem and mood irrespective of gender, age and health status.
- Health & wellbeing is also improved through regular horse riding. It is particularly relevant to the under 16s and women over the age of 45 who would otherwise be sedentary.

An additional 10 minutes walking per day is likely to be seen as achievable by those people who are currently classified as "inactive" and could lead to lifting them out of the inactive category at which the greatest risks to health persist. Public Health England state that *"if 1 in 10 people aged between 40-60, or from lower social economic groups, started to do 10 minutes walking per day, it is estimated it would prevent 251 deaths per year and achieve an economic saving of £310 million per year"*.

The [MCAIPROWIP](#) has significant role to play in helping to deliver health and wellbeing benefits.

## 11.3 THE ACCESSIBILITY OF RIGHTS OF WAY TO BLIND OR PARTIALLY SIGHTED PERSONS AND OTHERS WITH MOBILITY PROBLEMS.

- The opportunities provided by designated access land within Monmouthshire and the land managed by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are particularly valued given their suitability for all ability access. (Also appreciated is the provision of car parking, toilets, waymarked routes and information posted on NRW's website.
- There was recognition amongst some stakeholders that good work had been done to make certain paths accessible to disabled people and there was a wide range of resources available within the County.

**However** ~~However~~, an overarching conclusion drawn from stakeholder evidence is that Monmouthshire is far from being joined up in terms of addressing the barriers to and maximising the potential of its outdoor walking opportunities, notably to help combat declining physical ability among its population and poor health through obesity. There are worthy individual initiatives in operation but there is no central structure, or finance, to promote cohesion in terms of plans and priorities that could lead to more effective outcomes.

#### **11.4 FIT4LIFE WALKING GROUPS**

The above represent well established outdoor walking opportunities, formed under the previous ROWIP and County's Exercise Referral Scheme and part of the Lets Walk Cymru programme for those wishing to improve their health and wellbeing through outdoor exercise with regular walking groups. These groups have their own trained volunteer leaders who carry out risk assessments and safety measures generally. This includes matching the suitability of the walk programmes in terms of member's capabilities and factors such as the condition of furniture along paths, surface and the weather.

There are 4 Fit4Life Groups one of each in Chepstow, Abergavenny, Monmouth and Caldicot, with leisure centres acting as a base. Recently insurance has become an issue and has stopped GP referrals to these groups and this is an issue of great concern.

##### **11.4.1 Benefits of Walking Groups**

The fact that exercise can reduce illnesses and lower the risk of early death by up to 30% has a strong bearing on the sustainability of the groups. In addition of particular value to members of the groups is the companionship and social interaction that they develop within their groups.

#### **11.5 EQUALITIES ACT & LEAST RESTRICTIVE ACCESS POLICY**

Monmouthshire countryside access service is mindful of the Equality Act and other legislation. In delivering work the countryside access service undertakes assessments of the likely impact on the diverse communities and individuals who access our services. Where potential adverse impacts are identified we seek to mitigate them and ensure that discrimination is prevented. Where opportunities to improve the service provided or the accessibility of the public rights of way network are identified we will do our best to bring about those improvements within resources available; for example the practical implementation of the least restrictive access policy.

Monmouthshire was the first Council in Wales to adopt (in 2004) a policy of least restrictive access. The policy seeks to limit the introduction of further structures on the rights of way network and actively seeks the removal of existing stiles. It is one way in which the authority actively tackles disadvantage within communities. Where stiles remain they prevent use of paths by many in the



community, particularly the elderly, young and those who suffer from some form of ambulant disability.

The Offa's Dyke Path National Trail within Monmouthshire, the Usk and Wye Valley Walk have had all their stiles removed or replaced with gates. There is now only one stile remaining on the Wales Coast Path. The policy of Least Restrictive Access has clear benefits to the public and will continue to be supported and widely promoted.

### 11.6 DISABILITY STAKEHOLDER MEASURES TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT

There appears to be scope for wider measures to support greater interest and participation in walking if pursued with partnerships.

- A regular flow of new members is needed for sustainability and potentially the formation of additional FIT4Life walking groups or other social prescribing schemes.
- Signpost people to outdoor fitness groups and ramp up the promotion of available opportunities
- Remove barriers on paths such as narrow kissing gates and stiles.
- A rolling marketing campaign perhaps using radio, press and TV to try sell the benefits of outdoor exercise through local features and case studies.
- Better signage for disabled people and in particular the partially sighted
- Improve limited transport services to the countryside, [promoting where possible bus services to access the countryside and promoted routes.](#)
- A number of suggestions were also made regarding promotion. See Chapter 12.

### 11.7 HOW THE **MCARIPRoWIP** WILL ENCOURAGE HEALTHY & ACTIVE LIFESTYLES

The RoWIP will aim to encourage active lifestyles through:

- Addressing barriers that prevent use;
- Working in partnership with planning, developers and others to create well-designed, accessible environments that encourage active travel and walking, cycling and horse riding as recreational pursuits.
- Resolve issue of insurance, improve publicity and promotion from GP Referral Scheme to Fit4life and seek to expand this and other forms of social prescribing schemes.
- Use partnerships more successfully to promote countryside access opportunities and their benefits for improving health and well-being.

## Least Restrictive Access Policy

The County Council operates a "minimum barrier" policy, with respect to Public Rights of Way. Wherever maintenance issues arise to replace, repair or install new items of furniture on Public Rights of Way the opportunity will be taken to place the least restrictive barrier possible on site. Each case will be individually assessed by a Rights of Way Officer and any necessary furniture installed taking into account:

1. the paths status
2. current historical furniture on site
3. topography
4. nature of farming and land use
5. what would be the least restrictive access in that particular location.
6. the landowners wishes.

Gaps are preferred to stiles unless farm animals need to be restricted, in which case either a gate, self-closing gate, gates with boxes or kissing gates will be used in preference to stiles.

See also Monmouthshire Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Report

## 12 KNOWING WHAT'S OUT THERE

Results from research showed that the most common barrier preventing use of the network is lack of information. People want to know where routes are and where they will take them.

We will continue to encourage new users to the network as well as increasing current use, through targeting information, improving signage and improving provision around key leisure and recreational facilities.

See Assessment Reports which provide detailed evidence base and are available on request.

### 12.1 THE DEFINITIVE MAP & STATEMENT

monmouthshire  
sir fynyw

View Path Problems and Structures >  
Report a Problem >  
My Reported Problems >  
Track a Problem >  
Manage My Account >  
Logout >

**Public Rights of Way Map**

The map shows all Public Rights of Way in Monmouthshire. The map will also display path furniture once the map is zoomed in. Use the Search options on the left of the map to quickly find a location. Click the Rights of Way map objects for information.

**Search Map**

Select the type of search you require and enter the search text below.

- Towns/Village
- Street Name
- Postcode
- Route Code e.g. 123 2-1
- Grid Reference

Search

Go to My Saved Location  
Set My Saved Location

© Crown copyright. All rights reserved (100023415) (2012)  
This map is intended as a guide only and may not be legally accurate. Due to the changing nature of the countryside, actual conditions encountered may differ from some of the information shown.

Telephone: 01633 644644 Email: [contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:contact@monmouthshire.gov.uk) Address: County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk

monmouthshire  
sir fynyw

The Definitive Map & Statement defines the legal status and alignment of public rights of way. An up-to-date and accessible Definitive Map is crucial to landowners & to the public knowing what is out there to use and to delivering improvements on the ground.

94% of Organisations in Monmouthshire are aware of the Definitive Map and 81% of them have used it. 81% of Landowners said they were aware of the Definitive Map, but only 62% of these have used it.

The Definitive Map records are also essential for the delivery of front line maintenance,

enforcement and for dealing with:

- Daily Property Searches
- Applications (also known as "claims") to add unrecorded rights or amend recorded rights on the Definitive Map & Statement (backlog of 41 cases). These can be viewed on-line.
- Recording statutory declarations to protect land from future claims. These can be viewed on-line [here](#).
- Applications to divert, create or extinguish existing PROW in the landowner or public interest (backlog of 80 cases)
- ~~Anomalies~~ [Anomalies](#) (backlog of 253) and width enquiries

A "working" copy of the Definitive Map can be viewed on-line at <https://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk>

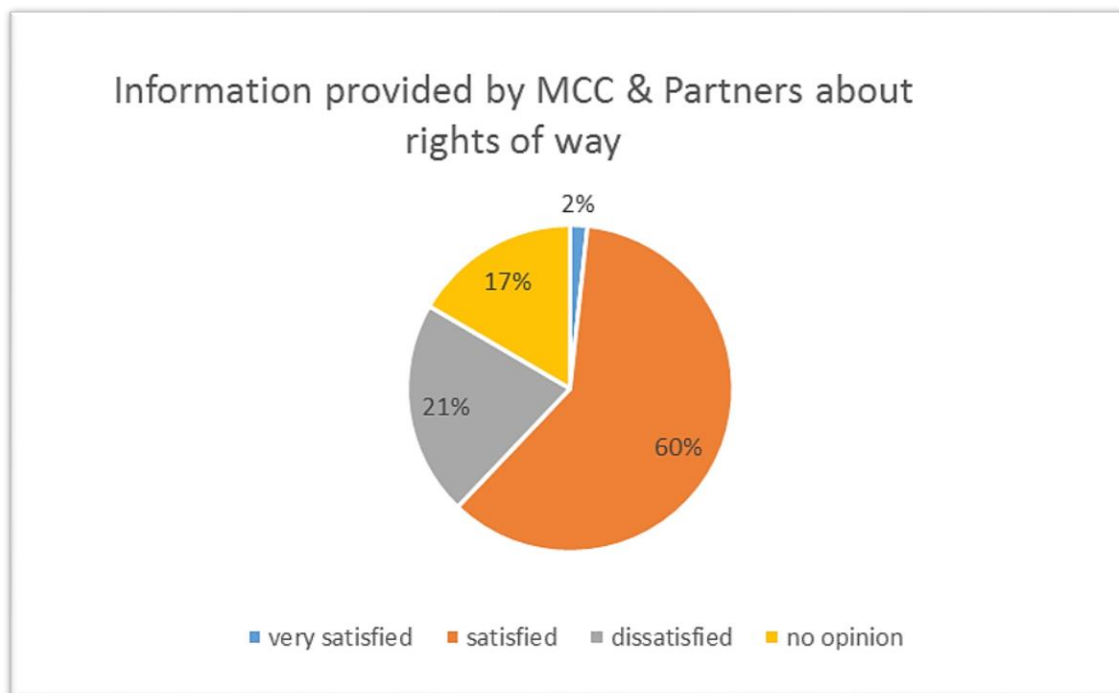
It is expected that the Welsh Government will legislate within the lifetime of this plan to allow for an “All Wales” digitised version of the Definitive Map. Until then Monmouthshire County Council is still required to bring the Definitive Map up to date in paper format.

### 12.2 STAKEHOLDERS ACTION FOR THE DEFINITIVE MAP

- An up to date and accessible Definitive Map and Statement
- A review of the Prioritisation for dealing with “claims” and more resources to complete the backlog of such work.
- Work with NRW to produce access management plans and reduce number of claims on their land to prioritise most public benefit
- A register of orders (diversions & closures) on-line.
- Seek more resources to tackle backlog of legal orders
- Temporary orders for long closures should come with conditions that paths should have an alternative route and be re-opened sooner rather than later.

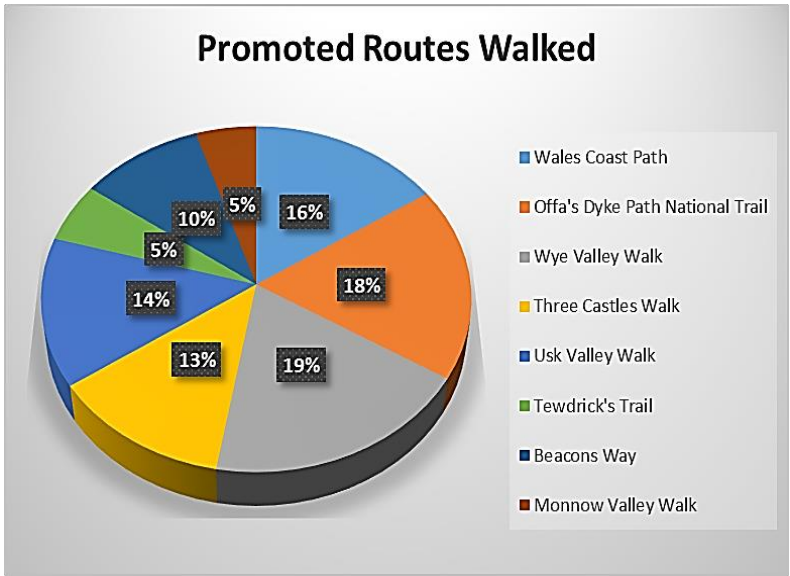
### 12.3 PROMOTION

Monmouthshire was one of the first tourist destinations and the extensive network of rights of way and varied special landscapes provides great potential to market the County to a wide audience.



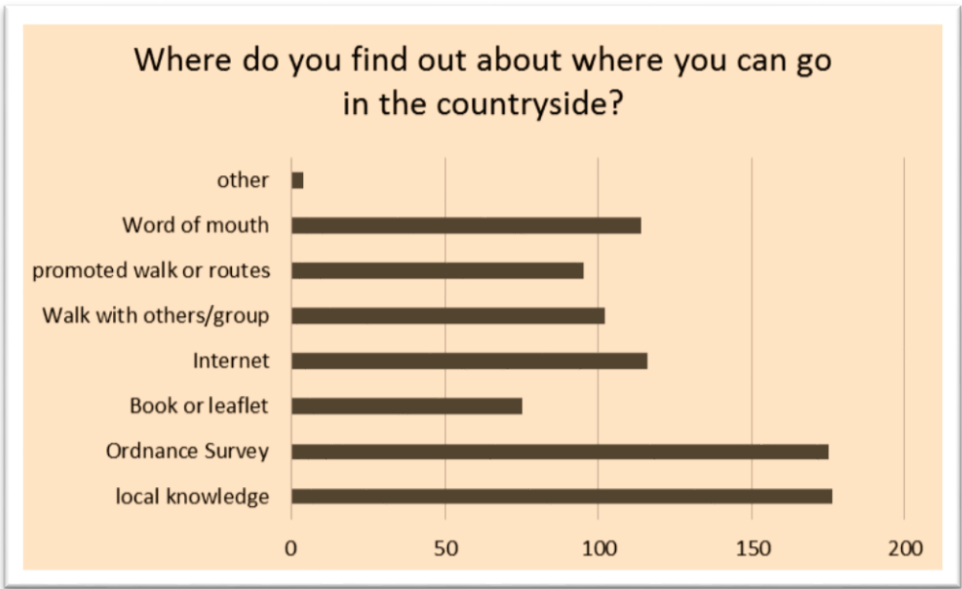
60% of Stakeholders say that they are satisfied with the information provided by the Council and its partners, whilst only 21% were dissatisfied.

Information on walking and other activities is principally available through official long distance route websites, [www.visitmonmouthshire.com](http://www.visitmonmouthshire.com), ~~Wye Valley AONB~~ [www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk) and other organisation websites and national websites like [www.walk4life.com](http://www.walk4life.com) or [www.go4awalk.com](http://www.go4awalk.com)



- Stakeholders say that the Wye Valley Walk followed by the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail are the most used promoted routes in Monmouthshire.
- The ambition still remains from the last ROWIP to have stronger invigorated regional partnerships along the whole lengths of these trails to ensure maximum promotion, economic and social benefits.

- Research and stakeholders have said that there is still a need for some printed material as not everyone uses the Internet.
- Stakeholders find out about where you can go in the countryside predominately through "local knowledge" and Ordnance Survey (OS), but there is a need for OS Maps to be updated.
- Word of Mouth and the Internet are also popular methods of getting information and suggest there is opportunity to work with local walking groups, community councils and other partners to disseminate information more widely.



Monmouthshire has developed a Walking Product Development Strategy which says that:

- More can be made of existing routes

- New products need to be developed to appeal to targeted audiences
- There needs to be co-ordination between maintenance and marketing
- New products should be developed around a range of identified themes.

#### 12.4 DISABILITY & OTHER STAKEHOLDER IMPROVEMENTS FOR PROMOTION

- Consider a forum to clarify the extent of information sources and consider options and access to generally raise the profile of the County's outdoor walks product.
- Develop a focused set of paper-based media for those not using on-line services and seek community partnerships to help ensure that this material reaches the intended client groups.
- Engage with relevant organisations to ensure that hard copy material is made available to meet the needs of those of other minorities e.g. those with visual impairment and those from ethnic groups.
- Better promotion of health walks – distribute leaflets to GP surgeries/chemists etc.
- Identify and promote technology driven measures that would appeal to younger age groups. (sponsored Onesie walk, Pokémon Go Walks, regular Geocaching events etc.)
- More guided walks and events
- Hold a walking conference
- Signpost walkers to local walking or other outdoor user groups and also make better use of these groups and local publications to disseminate information.
- Promote responsible access
- Seek clarity from NRW on access rights (particularly for group activities)
- Connect people with wildlife and landscapes
- Better information about what access is available in woodlands.
- Ambassadors are underutilised –they should be the “go to people”.
- Provision of and updating Information Boards in all communities
- Improve the User Face of the Countryside Access Management System (CAMS)
- Produce library of resources
- [Link to Visit Monmouthshire all types of walks](#)
- [Update the Countryside Access Design Guide](#)
- [Promote opportunities to use scheduled bus services](#)



## 13 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

There are at least 1600 volunteers supporting MCC, from Tourism Ambassadors to Community Bus drivers, Sports Ambassadors and Countryside volunteers. Volunteer input is high! We have a long and healthy history of volunteering and local action in Monmouthshire.

- The Countryside Access Service is supported by 150 volunteers and 17 volunteer groups who undertake a wide range of countryside tasks.
- Volunteers are active and effective in many activities and communities.
- Volunteers are often dynamic do more than one task, or work across departments and sometimes even different authorities and skilled workers/contributors that may volunteer across departments and sometimes different authorities and organisations.-

### 13.1 VOLUNTEERING BENEFITS

- Volunteering in Wales has an estimated value of £757 million.
- 1 in 10 GP appointments are attributable to loneliness, costing the NHS £1.53bn per annum<sup>9</sup>. Volunteering can help combat loneliness, providing opportunities for social interaction and combatting the feeling of isolation.
- Volunteering is positively linked with mental wellbeing.
- Volunteering can improve skills, provide valuable experience and lead to employment
- Volunteering is positively linked with individual and community development. People who volunteered reported higher levels compared to those who did not volunteer, of
  - Feeling able to meet the goals they set themselves
  - Continuing to try when they find things difficult,
  - Feeling that people in their local area can be trusted.

### 13.2 VOLUNTEER RESOURCE

There are a wide range of organisations, services, charities and local groups that are active in providing volunteering activities that contribute to improvements to local paths or the monitoring

Some of our key partners include:- Sustrans, The Canals & Rivers Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Brecon Beacons National Park, Cadw, Town & Community Councils, U3A Groups, Walkers Are Welcome Groups, Friends Groups, Local Ramblers Association Groups

#### Volunteer Vision

Monmouthshire County Council wish to become a local authority capable of working with our citizens, helping people do things for themselves and creating the conditions that enable people to help each other.

The Authority wants to create a movement that mobilises people across Monmouthshire, to respond to the priorities within their communities.

<sup>9</sup> Extract from Public Policy Exchange.co.uk Training Flyer 14062017



of them. Partnership working with these organisations and services is key to the delivery of this plan.

The level of interest of organisations in being <b>more actively</b> involved in maintaining or improving the network of paths in their local area			
	Very interested	Moderately interested	Not interested
<b>Maintenance</b>	Sustrans, Canals & Rivers Trust, Llanbadoc CC, Pontypool & District RA, Trellech United CC, The Narth & District Footpath Group, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome	St Arvans CC, Llangwm CC	Caldicot U3A
<b>Promotion</b>	Sustrans, St Arvans CC, Llanbadoc CC, Pontypool & District RA, The Narth & District Footpath Group, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome	Caldicot U3A, Llangwm CC, Trellech United CC	
<b>Improvements</b>	Sustrans, Llanbadoc CC, Trellech United CC, The Narth & District Footpath Group, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome	St Arvans, Caldicot U3A, Llangwm CC, Pontypool & District RA	
<b>Other (specify)</b>	Sustrans: Construction promotion and maintenance of national cycle network CLA Cymru: representing landowners The Narth: Survey and monitoring. Events village walks etc. Waters of Wales: We are particularly interested in RoW leading to/alongside water. Friends of Castle Meadows are also interested in encouraging groups and individuals in the enhancement and conservation of Castle Meadows <del>C</del> -countryside <del>access</del> sSite.		

The above table was compiled from the responses received to the questionnaire for organisations carried out in the assessments helping to inform this plan. However there are a large number of other groups (~~including some Community Councils~~) known to be interested in maintenance and promotion. Many already make valuable contributions. An overwhelming number of Stakeholders said that enabling volunteer groups to be active could be expanded if simple processes, tools and staffing resources were available.

Community and Town Councils can and often do play a significant role in supporting local volunteer groups and improving their local countryside sites or rights of way in other ways. There is a need to improve relationships and knowledge about the benefits of access improvements with Community Councils so that they are aware of their present powers, duties and the opportunities that access

improvements can bring to their locality. Resources need to be found to enable these important relationships to be formed and maintained.

### **13.3 IDENTIFIED NEW VOLUNTEER IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

The research and consultation for this plan has shown a number of new projects that community and volunteer groups are well placed to help with.

- Work in partnership with appropriate organisations and with volunteers to eradicate invasive species.
- Identifying new Health Routes
- Providing information on path improvements (to increase use and make routes more accessible), such as identifying barriers that could be removed like stiles.
- Identify annual overgrowth issues around furniture and arrange for clearance by either trained volunteer with strimmer/brush cutter (ideal if several volunteers in adjoining communities got together) or a contractor
- Fund and download monitor information
- Provide and maintain benches/seats to enable people to walk further
- Provide more guided walks/events

### **13.4 STAKEHOLDER MEASURES TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN VOLUNTEERING AND IMPROVE THE EXPERIENCE**





- Access to grants or other funding
- “Availability of workforce or volunteer group”, was cited by Canals & Rivers Trust, Sustrans, Caldicot U3A, Pontypool & District Ramblers, St Arvan’s, Llangybi and Trellech Community Councils.
- The ability to carry out Volunteer work with Natural Resources Wales on permissive routes on their land and to take account of the Equality Act and Monmouthshire’s Least Restrictive Access Policy.
- Greater use of Community Councils and Volunteer Groups to maintain & fund improvements
- Improved communication
- More field officers to support volunteers
- Investigate opportunities to encourage younger people to volunteer, perhaps via other agencies such as The Scout Association, Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, Outdoor Education Services and schools.
- Develop and publish guidance on responsibilities for groups and insurance requirements

### ~~13.4~~13.5 **MCAIPRoWIP** ACTIONS FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Seek additional resources to expand and maintain community and volunteer group involvement with countryside sites and rights of way.
- Seek appropriate training and funding for volunteer groups with adjacent authorities and other organisations.
- Improve and update publicity and information on the opportunities that are available for countryside volunteer groups and community councils.
- Reinstate volunteer walking website to include toolkits, ambassador training & other relevant information. It should also provide means of sharing activities/events/experiences.
- Work with the Wye Valley AONB Partnership ~~Group~~ and Wye Valley Walk Partnership to establish a “Friends of” Group to assist with the promotion and pathcaring of the Wye Valley Walk. Other regional routes like the Usk Valley Walk could also benefit from this approach.
- Improve information technology and mapping interface to be more useful for volunteer projects and enable the service to respond more effectively.
- Include the benefits of access and improvements, including establishing local volunteer groups in local community plans.
- Provide information to Community and Town Councils on how they can be involved, their powers etc.

## Llanbadoc Volunteers Bridge Building



## 14 A PROSPEROUS WALES

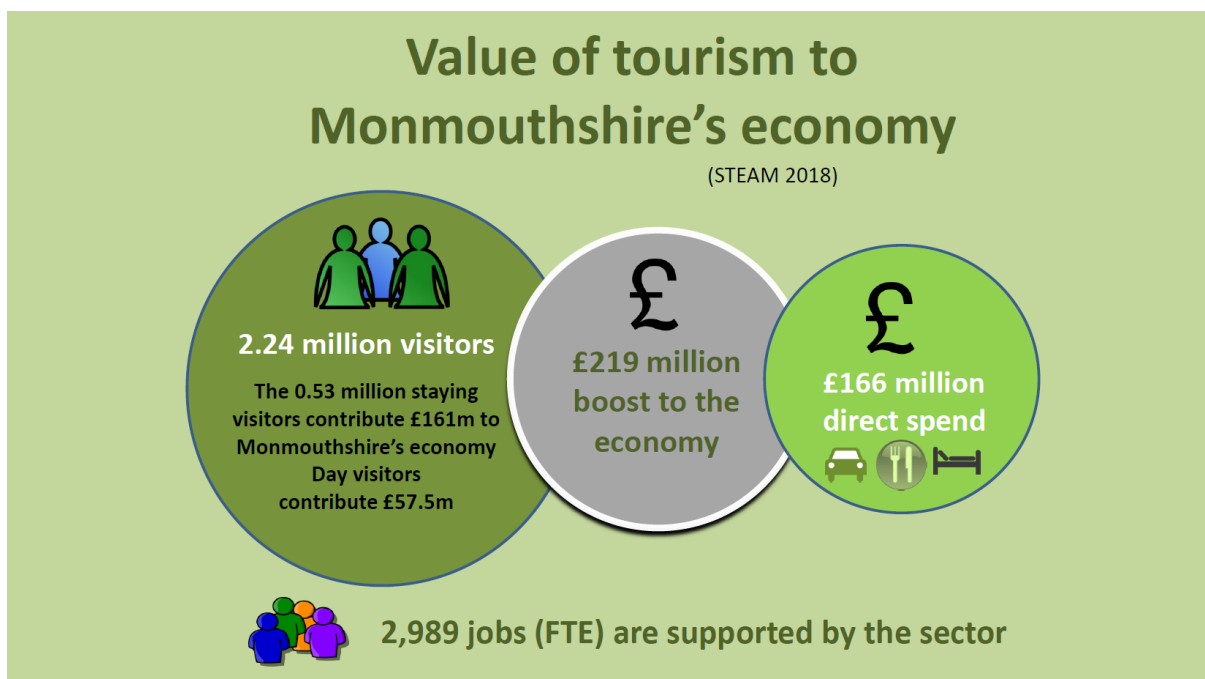
This [planROWIP](#) can help contribute towards a robust infrastructure that enables development and encourages economic growth leading to regeneration and attraction of new businesses. It has a significant role in supporting sustainable economic growth, directly contributing towards transport, green infrastructure and open spaces.

The [MCAIPROWIP](#) as a statutory document can also inform, support and add weight to policies within Monmouthshire's Local Plan and community plans to help achieve economic benefits.

### 14.1 SUPPORTING RURAL ECONOMY AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

- A well planned green infrastructure which promotes and encourages sustainable active travel and economic development is required and the PROW network is a significant element of this.
- Working with partners both locally and regionally on schemes like Blaenavon World Heritage Site Management Plan, will not only provide jobs and training opportunities but deliver landscape, interpretation and access improvements leading to sustainable economic growth in the region.
- Monmouthshire's landscape is a key tourist attractor. It offers the Wales Coast Path with links to the England Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, 5 regional routes, Blaenavon World Heritage Site, Brecon Beacons National Park and the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
- The Rights of Way Network is not just a recreational facility but an important tourism product which if better maintained could expand upon the number of visitors to the county.

### 14.2 ECONOMIC VALUE OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS



- In 2018 2.24 million visitors came to Monmouthshire, generating £219 million to Monmouthshire's economy<sup>10</sup>.
- A study by the Welsh Economy Research Unit published in 2011 revealed that in 2009 there were 28m walking related trips to the Welsh coast and countryside. Expenditure associated with these walking and hill walking trips was around £632m. Walking accounts for around 16% of Welsh tourism.
- The economic value of the equestrian sector in 2015 was £4.3 billion across a wide range of goods and services. There is a significant growth in the number of young riders aged between 16 and 24 and there is recognised demand for longer off road rides and accommodation for horses and riders.
- Every £1 of public spend on green spaces (like parks) levers in £4.20 of private sector investment, boosting regeneration.
- Statistics from Visit Britain in 2015 show that road or mountain biking generated £520 million in spend.
- A significant number of jobs are generated from walking and cycling in Monmouthshire

### 14.3 STAKEHOLDERS VIEWS:

- Long distance cycle track/bridleway/multi-purpose routes required
- Promote Goytre Wharf as a walking hub. The Usk Valley Walk includes a stretch of towpath and several walks which include the canal are promoted within the World Heritage site.
- Publish a set of sustainable 4x4 promoted routes

### 14.4 **MCAIPROWIP** IMPROVEMENTS FOR PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

Sustainable rural leisure and tourism is a key way to support the socio-economic well-being of rural areas, providing jobs and supporting community services. The PROW network and the **MCAIPROWIP** has a critical role in this.

- There is a need to improve social media presence
- Contribute to delivery of the Destination Plan to develop walking, cycling and riding products
- Use Ambassadors to promote countryside access provision and ensure they are kept up to date with improvements in their area.
- Make use of Volunteer Groups to promote appropriately targeted circular walks and events

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/tourism-business-support.aspx>

## 15 FUTURE FOCUSED

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The [Countryside AccessPROW](#) service is under several pressures, some constant, others variable. Legislation requires that this plan is for a ~~10-year~~10-year period. Additionally the Well-Being ~~of and~~ Future Generations Act requires that the service must think about the long-term.

There are several identified issues which are, or will have, an increasing effect on access.

### 15.1 CLIMATE CHANGE

- Climate change could accelerate the introduction of invasive species, pests and diseases leading to adverse impacts on native biodiversity and the landscape. Winter flooding and summer drought are likely to increase.
- Widespread snow events have occurred in 2009, 2010, 2013 and 2018.
- The most recent decade 2008 – 2017 saw 8% more rainfall than in 1961-1990.
- 2012 was the wettest year in 100 years and had a significant impact on the amount of work that could be delivered on the ground and the usability of the network particularly on stretches of the Wales Coast Path.
- An increase in storm events has resulted in greater tree fall and landslips and in 2017 we had to increase the amount of grass cuts on promoted routes as the warm wet weather promotes the grass/crops to grow more quickly.
- There is an increase in the introduction of new crops and increased viability for new crops i.e. vineyards, along with new animals like wild boar, ostrich and Llamas.
- Changes in patterns of visitor numbers with increased usage throughout the year, particularly during spring and autumn have also occurred.

Monmouthshire has many strategies and policies, including the Green Infrastructure Strategy, to tackle Climate Change and the Statements of Action in this plan will link in with these.

### 15.2 AGRICULTURE

Anything that changes the economics of farming may lead to land use change which can have significant environmental and social impacts. The opportunity must be taken to work better with land managers in Monmouthshire to provide long-term benefits for all.

### 15.3 DEVELOPMENT PRESSURES

One of the main public reasons for not getting out into the countryside is poor design and obstructions. There is a need for better technology for monitoring, working with planners and developers before building occurs and more resources to take immediate enforcement. Otherwise the number of obstructions (266) on rights of way will ~~continue~~ing to expand.

The current average cost for a diversion is £2000. It will therefore cost £532,000+ to resolve the backlog of building obstructions.

### 15.4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Littering and fly-tipping is now becoming a problem in Countryside sites and rights of way. There is a need for promoting widely responsible behaviour and for continued partnership working with Keep Wales Tidy and our volunteers.



There are an extensive number of county unclassified roads which are important links in the rights of way network. Many of these routes are only maintained to a “green lane” standard and this can cause conflict between vehicular users and walkers/horse riders when these are not adequately signed or maintained to a suitable standard.

Conflict also arises when vehicles use footpaths, bridleways, commons and woodlands where they should not be. To avoid this there needs to be more work to signpost such users to suitable and legal routes using county unclassified roads in Monmouthshire, as there are only 2 Byways in the County.

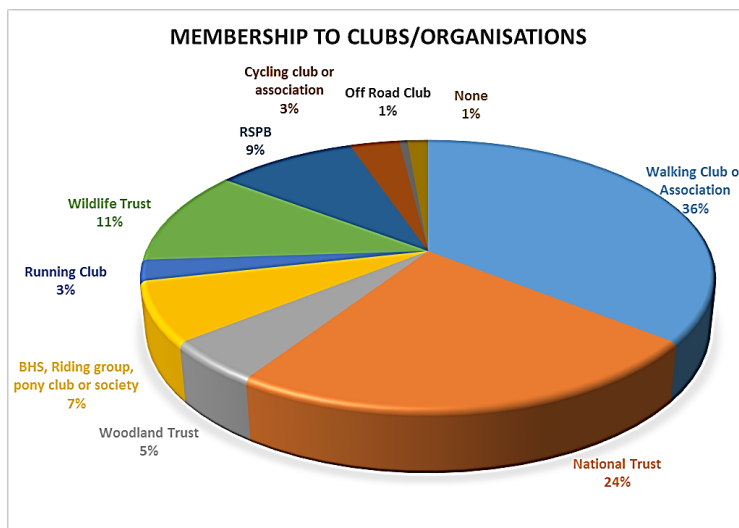
Nuisance use of PROW network is an issue raised by many Users and generally reflects wider issues in society. There is a role for Monmouthshire’s Local Access Forum in promoting understanding between different stakeholders and responsible use of PROW network by the public.

### 15.5 QUALITY OF LIFE/CONNECTION TO LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY

Residents of Monmouthshire value the landscape and nature. However, the Wye Valley AONB ~~area of Outstanding Natural Beauty~~ Management Plan and the development of the Living Levels Landscape Partnership scheme have both ~~recognised the national trend of~~ recognised the national trend of the loss of connection evidenced the loss of connection between with people and the natural environment.

- More effective information is therefore required to increase the overall appreciation of the landscape and the designations in it to encourage more people in understanding, contributing and benefiting from Monmouthshire’s landscapes.
- It should be noted that Monmouthshire has developed and is delivering a clear mechanism (Green Infrastructure) that delivers ecosystem services in which landscapes, biodiversity, rights of way/accessibility and quality of life benefits are supported through sustainable communities.

### 15.6 PARTNERSHIP WORKING



Our customers belong to many organisations which provide similar aims and objectives regarding access opportunities.

36% of our customers belong to a Walking Club or Association. More can therefore be made of using local groups and other organisations to disseminate information.

Only with considered and strategic direction of resources, especially through working with the Local Health Board, Natural Resources

Wales, Green Infrastructure colleagues, and Highways colleagues, the Strategic Places Plans, Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, Active Travel Plan and the Well-Being Act, can the PROW network be further utilised to address local wellbeing issues within local communities.

Partnership working is therefore now key in delivering large scale improvements and accessing grants to deliver them.

An example is the £4 million Living Levels Project, which is led by RSPB Cymru, but Monmouthshire and adjoining authorities are key partners, as are local communities. The landscape partnership scheme covers the Gwent Levels south of the M4 from the River Wye to the River Rhymney. It is delivering landscape, interpretation, and access improvements to less visited part of the county but one that is a “gateway” to Wales. Joint working and projects such as this enable improvements to happen that the countryside access service could not do alone.

There is particular potential expressed by Cadw, to implement either smaller local schemes or a more ambitious conservation and access project in Monmouthshire where it is possible to combine the conservation of historic assets with access schemes and rights of way enhancements.

Such pPartnership project work requires significant amount of staff time, sometimes over many years, both to create the partnerships, deliver the projects themselves and the projects themselves and then manage their legacy.

## 15.7 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

It is expected that within the life of this plan that there will be substantial changes in Wales to access legislation. Some of the proposals include:

- Allowing\_ for horse riders and cyclists to use footpaths
- Extend access land to coast & cliffs
- A single digital Wales Definitive Map including open access land and designated National Trails.
- Creating a new type of public right of way, cycle paths
- Improve access to inland water

The countryside access service will have to adapt current management procedures as legislation changes occur.

## 15.8 VALUE OF COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS

The Countryside Access Team ~~PROW and access service~~ often uses “counters” as a measure of the use of a route. Other tools are now coming into existence and need to be used (such as the Outdoor Recreation Valuation Tool, ORVal), or created, to evidence the value and benefits that are derived from publicly accessible space and PROW network within Monmouthshire including that part within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

Improved mapping and data tools can be used to prioritise areas for future action and investment based on levels of population needs. This can support strategic decision making with regard to service provision and to identify projects which focus on preventative action giving greatest value in health and well-being benefits. However there needs to be investment into adequate Geographical Information Mapping and Technology.

An asset management approach to maintenance is being developed, which has helped to ascertain the resources required to maintain the rights of way network, but this does not include variables (such as increasing material costs, project management etc.) or the improvement work such as increasing the number of orders dealt with, promotion, volunteer management, required to maximise the benefits of this plan. Improvements in the Countryside Access Management System

(CAMS) Database to allow simpler easier recording and reporting of all costs and improvement projects is essential.

### 15.9 MCAIPROWIP FUTURE FOCUSED IMPROVEMENT ACTIONS

- The service must explore and exploit further ways of promoting how it works, what it does, and the importance of that work.
- The Countryside AccessPROW service is under several pressures, some constant, others variable. The service requires greater resources than present to help overcome these pressures.
- The service must be able to adapt and implement any new changes in legislation
- A dedicated and properly resourced countryside access service with a strong public service ethic and commitment to the network and its use by residents and visitors is essential. This lies at the heart of the MCAIPROWIP and was recognised by many Stakeholders. Staff are front-facing, customer focused, dealing with often very complex issues and need to be highly adaptable to a variety of pressures. Appropriate training and continual professional development is essential to maintain and improve the service into the future.
- The service should adopt an asset management approach in order to establish financial on-going costs of the service.
- The service should consider and where possible, look to work with other local authorities and partners to deliver maintenance and purchase materials/equipment. This should include looking at new technologies and more sustainable products like plastic boardwalks, metal gates and finger posts, recycled surfacing products.
- The service should look to establish a research project in conjunction with Brecon Beacons National Park and others to establish the true value of the local walking and riding product.
- The service should seek ways in which to better provide relevant information on rights of way to landowners.
- The Authority and Monmouthshire's Local Access Forum should promote understanding between different stakeholders and responsible use of PROW network by the public





## 16 SPECIFIC PATH IMPROVEMENTS REQUESTED BY STAKEHOLDERS

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During the consultation process for this plan various specific projects for new access or access improvements were requested. The outline of these projects are listed below and they will be actioned only when additional resources and opportunities arise and in accordance with any maintenance prioritisation, or requirement to gain appropriate consents is achieved.

- Creation of multi-purpose path along old railway line running to Caerwent
- Upgrading of furniture and route improvements on the Piercefield House Circular Walk in Chepstow
- Improvement of towpaths on Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal and routes to and from it.
- Tintern to Wentwood off road cycling route
- Wheelchair access from Wye Bridge to Dixton Church
- Replace 3 stiles at Cowlings Lane, Monmouth, to gates and fill in depressions.
- New housing Estate, Wonastow, Monmouth, - increasing need for walking routes. Upgrade stiles in area to gates/gaps. Put up signs around edges of estate to show where access is, in conjunction with Monmouth Walkers Welcome.
- Add destination and distance to fingerposts near tourist destinations.
- The inclusion of a ramp from Usk Island up onto the railway.
- The railway track from Usk to Lt Mill be developed as a cycle track.
- Creation of cycle track/footpath from Little Mill to Usk Primary School along old railway line adjacent to BAE, over river bridge through tunnel to the old Monmouth Road.
- Creation of surfaced footpath along riverbank path running South from road bridge to the cricket ground on the East side of the River Usk.
- Upgrading of footpath to a cycle track or bridleway running from the south side of A472 (opposite Halfway Inn) to the railway line.
- Llanvair Kilgeddin to Nantyderry improvements to structures and clearance. Route identified by Volunteers as beneficial to local economy in connecting Pont Kemys caravan park, Swanmeadow Cottages, Glanusk farm bed & breakfast, the new glamping site and the former school.
- Improvement to the surfaces of paths in Usk which currently act as a barrier to use by the disabled and limit available access.
- Review of access at Chepstow Park Wood to improve access opportunities currently available to all and provide access management plan to enable any future cutting to take account of access at earliest opportunity.
- Improvement to the marketing of Llandogo as tourist destination and link along river bank so that there is access other than the car to adjoining villages or footbridge across Wye to Brockweir village.
- Abergavenny Groups wish to enhance the Gavenny valley in terms of water quality, green infrastructure, wildlife resources and public access.
- Improve signage and waymarks to Cefn Ila
- Improvements to paths in Llanybi

Other specific route improvement requests are stated within the Green Infrastructure Strategy Delivery Plan.

## 17 DELIVERY PLAN/STATEMENT OF ACTION

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This plan provides an insight into the needs and priorities of Monmouthshire's residents and visitors, what they would like from the service and how we can improve walking, riding and cycling opportunities in Monmouthshire. The key themes which have emerged sit well with the previous ROWIP and meet requirements of new legislation. This ensures a continuity of service and the assurance that the previous ROWIP was well directed.

The key themes are not in order of priority and each has a main objective and set of actions that form the basis of the countryside access service's 10- year delivery plan and statement of actions.

With budgets under increasing pressure decisions will need to be made on how best to allocate resources to meet statutory obligations and to meet the improvements that user's desire. There is a need to ensure that each programme or project delivers the greatest public benefit and aligns closely with Monmouthshire's relevant strategies and policies.

Evaluation of this plan's effectiveness is crucial and will be delivered through an annual delivery plan and through a ten-year review.

### Key for Benefits

 Supports Active Travel

 Increasing levels of activity leading to physical and mental well-being

£ Supporting Monmouthshire's economy

★ Improved customer experience

### Key for Resource/Limitation

£✓ Deliverable with existing resource levels







£+ Additional resource required

£😊 Potential for income generation or budget savings



 Additional staff time required

## Well Maintained PRow Network and Countryside Sites












To target improvements to ensure greatest public benefit is obtained.

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
WM1	Better network/sites for leisure & daily use	<p>1.0 Seek ways in which to extend cutting contracts or to manage vegetation in conjunction with Community Councils/Partners and volunteers</p> <p>1.1 Work with NFU / FUW / CLA &amp; Landowners to reduce cropping issues</p> <p>1.2 Seek ways in which to reduce the number of obstacles on the rights of way network.</p> <p>1.3 Improve general fingerpost &amp; waymarking maintenance to encourage use and build confidence, prioritising areas within and near communities with high use.</p> <p>1.4 Prioritise and undertake bridge repairs and replacements.</p> <p>1.5 Improve maintenance on restricted byways to particularly enable carriage drivers &amp; cyclists to use the PROW network.</p> <p>1.6 Promote and provide better signed circular routes to increase confidence in wider use.</p> <p>1.7 Work with Community Councils and Volunteer Groups to target activity to improve the amenity of routes &amp; identify barriers for removal enabling more</p>	   	  	<p>Landowners &amp; Land Managers, NFU</p> <p>Community &amp; Town Councils</p> <p>Volunteer &amp; User Groups</p> <p>Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>Brecon Beacons National Park</p> <p>Contractors</p> <p>Highways</p> <p>Mon Life, Countryside Access &amp; GI Staff</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Canal &amp; Rivers Trust</p>

		<p>people to use and enjoy routes and sites.</p> <p>1.8 To target surface maintenance programmes and natural flood management to encourage the use of PROW &amp; Sites for daily walking, cycling, riding especially in urban areas and for short journeys. Prioritise those routes which are suited to wider use of network.</p> <p>1.9 Annually review the delegation agreement with BBNPA</p> <p>1.10 Maintain Offa's Dyke Path National Trail &amp; Welsh Coast Path to their agreed quality standards.</p> <p>1.11 Maintain regionally promoted routes to a high standard, seeking stronger invigorated regional partnerships along the whole lengths to ensure maximum public benefits.</p> <p><u>1.12 Maintain countryside sites and prepare management plans for each site.</u></p>			
WM2	Compliance	<p>2.0 Work with landowners to ensure higher levels of compliance with their obligations in respect of PROW <u>and sites</u>. Take enforcement action where required to ensure PROW <u>is are</u> open and available to the public.</p>	<p>♥</p> <p>£</p> <p>★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>✎</p>	<p>CLA, NFU, Landowners, Land managers, Gwent Police</p>
WM3	Promote responsible use	<p>3.0 <u>Promote the Countryside Code and responsible use by the</u></p>	★	£✓	All partners

		<p><u>public particularly dog ownership and England/Wales Dog Walking Code. Where possible link into other organisations existing schemes such as Canal &amp; Rivers Trust Share the Space and Drop the Pace and NRW's position statements.</u></p> <p><u>3.1</u> Provide advice and guidance to landowners regarding <u>PROW responsibilities.</u></p> <p><del>3.2</del> Work with key partners to prevent conflict between different user groups</p> <p><del>3.3</del> Work with Stakeholders/Partners to minimise impact of use on sensitive and protected sites, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments.</p> <p><del>3.4</del> Support responsible use of the network and sites to address local issues such as anti-social behaviour, working in partnership with the Police where necessary.</p> <p><del>3.5</del> Support measures to prevent or reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour while preserving public access.</p> <p><del>3.5 Promote responsible use by the public particularly dog ownership and England/Wales Dog Walking Code., Where possible link into other organisations existing schemes such as Canal &amp; Rivers Trust Share the Space and Drop the Pace.</del></p>	 		
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WM4	<p>Evolution of the network</p> <p>Increase Accessibility of PROW network</p>	<p>4.0 Continue to uphold our policy of Least Restrictive access and seek to remove other barriers to use such as steps and narrow gates.</p> <p>4.1 Utilise data on CAMS to target removal of stiles where greatest impact is shown.</p> <p>4.2 Provide more, short, circular promoted routes, for health, leisure and tourism.</p> <p>4.3 Work with Highways colleagues to find resources and ways in which we can better manage county unclassified roads to provide multi- purpose routes. This would also encourage safe walking, horse riding and cycling particularly where rights of way only connect by vehicular roads.</p> <p>4.4 Signpost carriage drivers &amp; other vehicular users to suitable and legal country unclassified roads and work with Volunteer Groups such as Treadlightly to assist with maintenance and contribute to responsible use.</p> <p><u><a href="#">4.5 Update the Countryside Access Design Guide</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">4.5.4.6 In conjunction with Cadw seek to establish a project combining the conservation of historic assets with access improvement schemes.</a></u></p>	<p>★ ♥</p> <p>🚲 £</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p>	<p>User Groups &amp; volunteers</p> <p>Highways &amp; Green Infrastructure &amp; Countryside staff</p> <p>Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Gwent Police</p> <p><u><a href="#">Disabled Ramblers</a></u></p> <p><u><a href="#">Cadw</a></u></p>
WM5	<p>Improve Green Infrastructure</p>	<p>5.0 Work with planners/developers to</p>	<p>★</p>	<p>£✓</p>	<p>Planning &amp; Developers</p>

		<p>create planned strategic green infrastructure which incorporates the PROW network to promote and encourage sustainable, active travel and provide opportunities for recreation &amp; leisure.</p> <p>5.1 Work with Stakeholders to create places where people are not impeded in undertaking physical activity, accessing nature and having low pollution levels.</p> <p>5.2 Maintenance &amp; Improvements will be designed to be in keeping with surrounding habitat. For example a tarmac path would not be a suitable choice through a woodland habitat.</p>	 	 	<p>Green Infrastructure &amp; Countryside Access Team</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Canal &amp; Rivers Trust</p> <p>Landowners</p>
WM6	Safe Travel	<p>6.0 Look to improve safety of road and railway crossings where possible, working with Highways, Welsh Government Network Rail and PROW Partners.</p> <p>6.1 Work in partnership to provide new and upgraded routes in areas of evidenced need and to encourage use through well designed safe routes.</p> <p>6.2 Maintain highway verges and unsealed highways to improve connectivity to ROW network and provide safer routes for walkers, horse riders and cyclists</p> <p>6.3 Identify and support measures that will reduce traffic speed and volume where this will preserve or</p>	   	  	<p>Network Rail</p> <p>Welsh Government Transport Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>MCC Highways &amp; Planning</p> <p>Community &amp; Town Councils</p> <p>Landowners &amp; User Groups</p>








		improve network connectivity for non-motor vehicle users.			
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## Active Healthy Lifestyles




To improve the accessibility of the network and make it easier for people to incorporate walking, riding and cycling into their everyday lives. To support the rights of way network for purposeful journeys.

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
AHL1	Increase Health & Well Being Benefits	<p>7.0 Target priority areas and deliver improvements to the network and sites addressing health inequalities through increasing active travel and recreational activity.</p> <p>7.1 Prioritise maintenance on those PROW providing access to natural greenspace and public open space or where providing an accessible resource for community based activities such as health walks.</p> <p>7.2 Support Volunteering on sites and rights of way &amp; seek opportunities for specific groups to also enhance access on permissive paths on NRW land.</p> <p>7.3 Work with partners to support implementation of health improvement initiatives, such as Fit4Life Groups, Walking for Health, cycling and walking initiatives and GP referral.</p> <p>7.4 Ensure insurance for Fit4Life Groups is reviewed and resolved.</p> <p>7.5 Improve connectivity &amp; consider equestrian and other parking where reasonable to encourage recreational and leisure</p>	<p>£ </p> <p> ★</p>	<p>£ </p> <p>£ </p> <p>£ </p> <p></p>	<p>Health care providers &amp; professionals</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>User &amp; Interest Groups</p> <p>Canal &amp; Rivers Trust</p> <p>Disabled Ramblers</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales (NRW)</p> <p>Active Travel Steering Group</p> <p>Monmouthshire Highways</p>





		<p>activity; including access to countryside sites/parks, other facilities of high leisure use, the National Trail, Wales Coast Path, Regional Routes and routes leading to World Heritage Site and other significant features/places.</p> <p>7.6 Tackle health disadvantage by promoting access to the natural environment and green space beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to the landscape and nature.</p> <p>7.7 Identify partners in schools, outdoor education and colleges to promote the health benefits of countryside access to pupils and students in innovative ways.</p> <p>7.8 Encourage active travel to schools through promoting and enhancing PROW &amp; cycle routes, thus educating responsible lifestyles and reducing obesity.</p> <p>7.9 In conjunction with partners look at installing &amp; maintaining picnic benches/seats to enable more use of sites/<del>PROW</del> for those with disability or health issues.</p>			Mon Life Staff
AHL2	Active Travel	<p>8.0 Work with colleagues in the Council and MonLife to raise the profile of the contribution of rights of way for purposeful journeys</p> <p>8.1 Remove barriers to active travel and recreation and promote routes and opportunities.</p> <p>8.2 Work with Green Infrastructure and planning colleagues to ensure active travel routes are incorporated and link to PROW/cycle networks, transport hubs, <del>and</del> greenspaces <u>and countryside sites</u>.</p>	   	  	<p>Active Travel Steering Group<sub>2</sub></p> <p>Developers/Planners<sub>2</sub></p> <p>Highways<sub>2</sub></p> <p>Disabled Ramblers<sub>2</sub></p> <p>Monmouthshire Local Access Forum</p>





		<p>8.3 <u>Pursue the provision of Provide</u> motorised traffic free, safe walking, cycling and equestrian routes linking towns, villages and rural areas <u>where possible</u>.</p> <p>8.4 Support &amp; influence the authorities and other strategies &amp; policies to ensure that active travel is firmly integrated into work programmes.</p>			<p>Local Schools/colleges<sub>2</sub></p> <p>Community Councils<sub>2</sub></p> <p>User &amp; Interest Groups<sub>2</sub></p> <p>Canal &amp; Rivers Trust</p>
AHL3	Modal shift to walking & cycling	<p>9.0 Provide PROW routes that can provide realistic alternative to driving, especially for short journeys.</p> <p>9.1 Work with NRW to improve connectivity between the bridleway network and areas of Welsh Government woodland estate where permissive access by horse riders exists.</p> <p>9.2 Work with all landowners to create new and extend higher status routes (bridleway or restricted byway) to provide access for greatest range of people.</p> <p>9.32 Work with Planning and Green Infrastructure colleagues to secure PROW within green corridors and green space.</p> <p>9.43 Improve &amp; upgrade the PROW network where it links with amenities, public transport nodes, work and education to increase the attractiveness of walking, cycling and riding as an alternative to driving.</p> <p>9.54 Seek improved accommodation for vulnerable users where Rights of Way link via roads, for instance protecting and cutting verges to make horse riders and other users feel safer.</p>	<p></p> <p>£</p> <p>★</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p> <p></p>	<p>Active Travel Steering Group</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Highways, Planning, GI &amp; Countryside</p> <p>Monmouthshire Local Access Forum</p> <p>Local Schools</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>User &amp; Interest Groups</p>



		9.65 Work with interest groups and partners to provide a network of county unclassified roads for vehicular and other users to prevent illegal use of non-vehicular paths and expand the network available to cyclists, walkers and riders.			
AHL4	Tackling deprivation and disadvantage	<p><u>10.09.1</u> Remove barriers for those economically disadvantaged by encouraging the use of countryside sites and proW network as a free-at-the-point-of-use resource for active travel, recreation &amp; leisure use</p> <p><u>10.19.2</u> Tackle health disadvantage by promoting access to the natural environment and green space, beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to nature and heritage.</p> <p><u>10.29.3</u> Encourage active travel to schools through promotion and enhancing PROW &amp; cycle networks.</p>	 £  ★	£✓ £+ £😊 	Monmouthshire Local Access Forum, Developers, Health Care Providers and Professionals. Wye Valley AONB Schools/colleges, Leisure Services, Community Councils, User & Interest groups

## Knowing What's Out There




To achieve an up-to-date and accessible Definitive Map and Statement and to promote Countryside Sites and the PROW network

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
KWOT1	Maintain and make more accessible records	<p><del>11.00.0</del> Maintain and update the county's Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way &amp; Statement.</p> <p><u>110.1</u> Ensure the Definitive Map &amp; Statement is easily accessible</p> <p><u>110.2</u> Maintain public registers on line and add list of all section 147 authorisations and legal orders (diversions/closures).</p>	  £ ★	£✓ £+	Ordnance Survey, Highways, Legal Services and SRS.

		<p><del>11.0.3</del> Continue to process claims according to prioritisation and seek additional resources to clear backlog of applications.</p> <p><del>11.4.0-3</del> Seek to ensure Ordnance Survey Maps are corrected and updated.</p>			
KWOT 2	Provide advice on PROW network <u>and countryside sites</u>	<p><del>12.1.0</del> Provide advice and guidance to landowners <u>and users</u>.</p> <p><del>12.1.1</del> Liaise with Planning and Development Management to provide advice on Local Development Plan and planning applications.</p> <p><del>12.1.2</del> Respond to and give appropriate advice to Land Charge Searches.</p> <p><del>12.1.3</del> Advise on and where appropriate, progress orders to amend the PROW network in the interest of the public and or the landowner.</p> <p><del>12.1.4</del> Provide advice and where appropriate progress orders for temporary closures but with conditions as per policy</p> <p><u>12.5 Consider developing policy for requests to plant trees, install seats/plaques etc in country parks/sites.</u></p>	<p> </p> <p>£ ★</p>	<p>£✓</p>	Developers, NFU, Landowners, Land managers, Community Councils, User & Interest Groups. Legal Services, Planning, GI & Countryside Access
KWOT 3	Negotiate Improvements	<p><del>13.2.0-1</del> Work with landowners to deliver improvements to the PROW network <u>and countryside sites</u>, to increase accessibility and encourage active travel and recreation, leisure use and support local economy.</p> <p><del>13.12-2</del> Work with NRW to review access on their sites,</p>	<p></p> <p> ★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	Landowners and agents, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales

		<p>reduce Modification claims and produce management plans that can help inform future tree clearance programmes, reducing access closures and assisting with aims in <u>13.02-1</u>.</p> <p><del>12.3</del><u>13.2</u> Secure any opportunities that arise from changes to the regime of agricultural and land management subsidies.</p> <p><u>13.3 Consult on proposed improvements in management plans for countryside sites as they are developed.</u></p> <p><u>13,4 Develop partnerships such as the "Friends of the 65 Bus" and work with Highways and other partners to develop and promote scheduled bus services to help people access the countryside, reducing traffic, benefiting people's health, local economy and the environment.</u></p>			
<p>KWOT 4</p>	<p>More accessible information /increasing Knowledge and confidence</p>	<p><del>14.3</del>.0 Working with key partners, increase the range of information on and about countryside access and its benefits. Consider using walking &amp; other organisations publications to do this and disseminating information through local publications.</p> <p><del>13</del><u>14</u>.1 Tailor information to reach widest range of customers (online, phone apps, maps and guides), including specific groups, young to old age groups and visually impaired and disabled user groups.</p> <p><del>13</del><u>14</u>.2 Target approach to reach PROW &amp; Countryside site non users, improving accessibility of information to spark interest in walking or cycling or horse</p>	<p></p> <p> £</p> <p>★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Active Travel Strategy &amp; cycling Steering Group, Countryside Access Officers, Health Care Providers and Professionals, MCC Highways Transportation and Waste, Monmouthshire Countryside Access Forum, Wye Valley AONB Libraries Local Schools Community and Town Councils</p>

		<p>riding, increase knowledge and confidence to encourage use.</p> <p><del>13-14</del>.3 Seek to promote circular routes (as per walking development plan) with specific themes to improve benefits and target audiences better.</p> <p><del>13-14</del>.4 Work with NRW &amp; other woodland partners to provide better information about what access is available in woodlands.</p> <p><del>14</del>.5 To encourage NRW to provide and share an easily accessible map showing the extent of Welsh Government woodland estate that is subject to permissive access by horse riders.</p> <p><u>14.6 Promote Bus Services where possible, to access promoted routes and the countryside.</u></p>			User and Interest Groups Mon Life Leisure services Canal & Rivers Trust
KWOT 5	Promotion of Wales Coast Path, NT & promoted routes	<p><del>15</del>.1 Maintain primary promoted routes to a high standard to safeguard economic benefits and tourism product.</p> <p><del>15</del>.2 Help to keep spend by visitors (e.g. walkers and cyclists) in the local and rural areas through linkages with local businesses, thereby supporting Monmouthshire's small business sector.</p>	£ ♥	£✓	Tourism, Natural Resources Wales, Wales Coast Path Regional Management Group, ODPNT management Group, Other local authorities, Wye Valley AONB
KWOT 6	Sustainable Tourism	<p><del>16</del>.0 Provide information to help support community led tourism.</p> <p><del>16</del>.1 Increase length of stay through packaging, linking and developing new products (e.g. new routes or new promoted routes). Promote the resource.</p>	<p>🚲</p> <p>♥</p> <p>£</p> <p>★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>✍️</p>	Tourism, MCC Countryside Access Forum, Local Businesses, Community Councils, GI & Countryside Access, Leisure Services, User

		<p>165.2 Refresh &amp; improve signage to <u>and in</u> countryside sites</p> <p>165.3 More guided walks &amp; events</p> <p>165.4 Utilise Ambassadors more so they can be the "go to people".</p>			& Interest Groups
KWOT7	Disability promotion improvements	<p>176.1 Engage with relevant organisations to ensure hard copy material is made available to meet the needs of those other minorities' e.g. visual impairment and those from ethnic groups.</p> <p>176.2 Better promotion of health walks, distributing to GP Surgeries/chemists etc.</p>	 	<p>£✓</p>  <p>£+</p>	<p>Health organisations and professionals</p> <p>Tourism, GI &amp; Countryside Access</p> <p>User Groups</p>

## Community Involvement

To support and enable volunteer groups to be actively involved with countryside projects, contributing to wellbeing and creating sustainable and resilient communities.

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
Cl1	Volunteer Involvement	<p>187.0 Continue to develop volunteer programmes that support the delivery of the objectives of the RoWIP and seek funding to do so.</p> <p>187.1 Support existing groups and the development of new Community Groups to improve and maintain their local rights of way and countryside sites.</p> <p>187.2 Develop guidance, training and promotional material to help educate and attract volunteers.</p>	<p>★ ♥</p> <p>£ 🚲</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Mon Life (Leisure Services, Outdoor Education etc.)</p> <p>User &amp; Interest Groups</p> <p>Community &amp; Town Councils</p> <p>Canal &amp; Rivers Trust</p>

		<p><u>187.3</u> Develop focused paper &amp; other media promotional material with volunteer groups to help ensure material reaches intended client groups.</p> <p><u>187.4</u> Work with community &amp; town councils to deal with annual overgrowth &amp; identify funding/priorities for improvement schemes</p> <p><u>187.5</u> Signpost walkers/riders to local walking &amp; riding groups</p>			<p>Keep Wales Tidy</p> <p>Ramblers Association, BHS</p> <p>BBNP Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>Appropriate Organisations</p>
Cl2	Assisting volunteers	<p><u>198.0</u> Improve information technology and mapping interface to be more useful for volunteer projects.</p> <p><u>198.1</u> Develop &amp; publish guidance on responsibilities for groups &amp; insurance requirements</p> <p><u>198.2</u> Identify method of collating &amp; giving information on grants to community and other groups.</p> <p><u>19.3</u> <u>Develop and promote guidance to Community and Town Councils to identify their powers, responsibilities and duties regarding access and show how they can identify local needs and opportunities and be able to act upon them to best advantage in ways that mean most to their communities.</u></p>	£ ★	£✓	Mon Life, Ordnance Survey, GI & Countryside Access
Cl3	New volunteer programmes to improve health and well-being, improve environment /biodiversity and get young people	<p><u>2019.0</u> Identify route improvements &amp; new health walks</p> <p><u>2019.1</u> Work in partnership with appropriate organisations and with volunteers to eradicate invasive species.</p> <p><u>2019.2</u> Encourage local volunteer groups to provide information boards/events/information which</p>	£ ★ ♥	£✓ £+ £😊	<p>Volunteers and User Groups</p> <p>Landowners Appropriate organisations like NRW, Wye Valley AONB, BBNP</p> <p>Tourism, Youth &amp; outdoor</p>



volunteering	<p>increases the publics overall appreciation and connectivity to landscape &amp; nature.</p> <p><del>2019</del>.3 Investigate opportunities to encourage younger people to volunteer.</p> <p><del>2019</del>.4 With partners establish “Friends of “groups along regional routes to promote and look for funding opportunities along regional routes.</p>			<p>Education, Leisure Services</p> <p>Health care providers and professionals</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>Businesses</p>
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## A prosperous Wales



To maximise the economic benefits of countryside access

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
PW1	<p>Maximise economic benefits</p> <p>Improve product and grow new markets</p>	<p><del>210</del>.0 Highlight the economic benefits of countryside access in Monmouthshire</p> <p><del>210</del>.1 Continue to work in partnership with other coastal authorities, NRW, WG and others to secure improvements to the Wales Coast Path and maintain it to Wales Quality Standard.</p> <p><del>2101</del>.2 Maximise economic opportunities on regional routes by establishing Friends of Groups and working in partnership with other local authorities to promote and maintain routes to a high standard.</p> <p>20.3 Improve social media presence</p> <p><del>210</del>.4 Work closely to develop walking/riding products with tourism officers</p>	<p>★ £</p> <p>♥</p>	£✓	All partners

		<p><del>21.0</del>.5 Use ambassadors to promote countryside access provision and ensure they are kept up to date with improvements/projects in their area.</p> <p><del>21</del>0.6 Develop where possible long distance, multi-purpose routes, cycle or bridleway routes.</p> <p><del>21</del>0.7 Make use of partners/businesses and volunteers to promote targeted circular walks and events.</p> <p><del>21</del>0.7 Identify &amp; promote technology driven measures that would appeal to younger age groups</p>			
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### Future Focused

Working for a resilient and future focused service in partnership with others, to provide wider benefits to residents and visitors to Monmouthshire

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
FF1	Increase Awareness of ROWIP	<del>22</del> 1.0 Raise awareness of the ROWIP to customers, non-users of the network and stakeholders	 ★	£✓	All partners
FF2	<p>Links to other strategies &amp; plans</p> <p>To deliver objectives in plan</p> <p>Partnership Working</p>	<p><del>23</del>0 Promote the wider benefits of countryside access, improve and maintain partnerships to implement key aims of this plan.</p> <p><del>23</del>1 Promote the rights of way network as a mechanism for helping achieve other appropriate internal and external aims described in this plan.</p> <p>23.0 Strengthen partnership working with key Stakeholders to make better sense of the network and</p>	<p>♥</p> <p></p> <p>£★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	All partners

		provide well-maintained safe attractive environments.			
FF4	Environmental Impact & Mitigation Measures	<p>24.0 To work with external partners to ensure the development of the rights of way network maximises its contribution to wider landscape, biodiversity, visitor interpretation and educational objectives.</p> <p>24.1 Update and continue to promote use of Countryside Access Biodiversity Technical guidance.</p> <p>24.2 Identify flood risk areas and likely impact on PROW. Put in place mitigation measures. Seek alternative routes for those parts of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and regional routes prone to flooding.</p> <p>24.3 Undertake an assessment of those paths around villages which are not surfaced and could become dangerous in wet weather (to disabled/elderly) and seek resources &amp; materials to improve them in conjunction with local communities.</p> <p>24.4 Explore natural flood management potential as part of wider landscape initiatives to address ROW issues and secure future access.</p>	<p>♥</p> <p>★</p> <p>£</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>✎</p>	All Partners
Ff5	Resourcing	25.0 Ensure adequate resources for the implementation of this plan by securing additional resources from internal and external sources that help achieve the objectives within this plan.	<p>£ ★</p> <p>🚲</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Active travel Group, Development Control</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>GI &amp; Countryside Access,</p>

		<p>25.1 Continue to develop asset management approach, particularly with bridges, to inform costs of maintaining the network and to make improvements</p> <p>25.2 Establish research, with partners like BBNP, to establish true value of walking and riding product within Monmouthshire.</p> <p>25.3 Seek to maintain and improve the delivery of the countryside access service through charging for activity where admissible.</p>			<p>Highways, Mon Life</p> <p>Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>Local Businesses</p> <p>Community Councils</p>
Ff6	Improved Customer Service	<p>26.0 Provide the customer with a range of methods of reporting an issue.</p> <p>26.1 Improve communications with service users, volunteers, community and Town Council's</p> <p>26.2 Provide updates about specific improvements to user groups.</p>	<p>😊</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£✓</p>	<p>GI &amp; Countryside staff</p> <p>Monmouthshire LAF</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>User &amp; Interest Groups</p>
FF7	Legislative changes & operational management	<p>27.0 Looking at the available PROW network and the barriers preventing use, take a strategic overview to provide relevant shared use routes and better links and access facilities where needed.</p> <p>27.1 Review operational policies and priorities in light of the policies and objectives in this plan.</p> <p>27.2 Periodically review operational policies in response to legislative change</p>	<p>🚲</p> <p>♥</p> <p>£★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	

		27.3 Provide PROW officers and volunteers with the training necessary to ensure effective delivery of PROW operations.			
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## 18 GLOSSARY

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AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
<u>BBNP</u>	<u>Brecon Beacons National Park</u>
BHS	British Horse Society
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic
CAMS	Countryside Access Management System
GI	Green Infrastructure
LAF	Local Access Forum
MCC	Monmouthshire County Council
<u>MCAIP</u>	<u>Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan</u>
<del>MOD</del>	<del>Ministry of Defence</del>
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
OrVAL	Outdoor Recreation Valuation tool
PROW	Public Rights of Way
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
<u>WG</u>	<u>Welsh Government</u>

## 19 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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The preparation of the ROWIP falls within the scope of Article 2(a) of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive. The Directive states that its objective is "to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development". The Directive recognises, however, that an SEA need only be undertaken if a plan is likely to lead to significant environmental effects. After screening the ROWIP using the information contained in "A Practical Guide to the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive" it is the Authority's judgement that the actions and policies contained within the ROWIP are not likely to lead to any significant environmental effects and that a SAE is not required.



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<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation Ruth Rourke Countryside Access Manager</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 01633 644860 <b>E-mail:</b> ruthrourke@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2020 – 2030)</p>
<p><b>Name of Service area</b></p> <p>MonLife</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>19/12/2019</p>

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**4 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	Positive through improved physical and intellectual access, volunteering and activity	None	
Disability	Positive through improved physical and intellectual access	None	
Gender reassignment	None	None	
Marriage or civil partnership	None	None	

<b>Protected Characteristics</b>	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
Pregnancy or maternity	None	None	
Race	None	None	
Religion or Belief	None	None	
Sex	None	None	
Sexual Orientation	None	None	
Welsh Language	Positive through supporting further interpretation and information provision	None	
Poverty	Positive as access to the countryside is free of charge and provides the opportunity to tackle health disadvantage by promoting access to the natural environment and green space beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to the landscape and nature.	None	





**2. 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. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!


<b>Well Being Goal</b>	<b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b>	<b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<b>A prosperous Wales</b>	The assessments show that rights of way contribute towards jobs and the economy.	Maximise positive opportunities by continuing to work with partners as well as other key

<b>Well Being Goal</b>	<b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b>	<b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<p>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>They also show that there is opportunity for working with others, sustainable transport benefits by improving walking and cycling opportunities, social and health benefits by working more proactively with communities and volunteers. Improvement works on paths can be prioritised to improve tourism and benefits to local businesses.</p>	<p>organisations including the local community, volunteer groups and local businesses.</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>Appendix 3 shows that a new ROWIP will promote and support the sustainable management of the rich and varied cultural landscape of Monmouthshire. Policies and actions will enhance and maintain biodiversity locally and help contribute to a resilient Wales.</p>	
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b> People’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Appendix 2 shows what is required to get inactive people outdoors and to improve the health of residents and those with disabilities. The new ROWIP sets out policies and actions for the management of rights of way and countryside sites to reduce barriers to residents using the outdoors and to achieve a network of well promoted, useable paths, to help residents improve their health and well-being.</p> <p>Volunteering opportunities will also be further encouraged especially working with community and other volunteer groups who can play an important part in identifying improvements, leading health walks, helping with maintenance and promotion of the network.</p>	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>The new ROWIP will holistically address the present and future needs of the communities within Monmouthshire by setting out clear policies and actions that address the economic, social and environmental issues facing the area.</p>	<p>Maximise opportunities for engagement with a range of key stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>n/a</p>	
<p><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</p>	<p>Assessments show that rights of way play an important role in heritage and culture for local communities and tourists. The new plan reflects this and will importantly provide the means for which access to the countryside for various recreational activities can be undertaken..</p>	<p>Promote countryside access to others so that they can maximise opportunities for volunteering and participation a wide range of outdoor activities.</p>
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Preparation and development of assessments in order to draft a new ROWIP has included full up front community, partner and stakeholder engagement. The results of which were published alongside the Draft ROWIP and a further 14-week consultation on the Draft and its assessments has followed.</p>	

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>Assessments for a revised plan establish the need for long-term planning and management arrangements to ensure that outcomes in the plan if made are sustainable in the future.</p>	<p>The assessments &amp; subsequent draft plan present actions to protect maintain and improve access to the countryside both now and for future generations. The plan recognises the long-term challenges of social, economic and environmental regeneration within Monmouthshire.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The assessments and consultations identified that it is important to work in partnership with others both locally on a community basis and with volunteers, but also regionally and nationally with organisations such as Natural Resources Wales, Cadw and neighbouring authorities. Several new partners were identified.</p>	<p>The assessments have been widely promoted in social media and the press. There has been three consultations, one workshop and a set of questionnaires. The assessments have been prepared in collaboration with partner organisations, the local community and other key stakeholders including the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum. The resulting ROWIP includes the results of the public consultations. Furthermore, the draft plan has been subject to a further 3-month public consultation and will be amended again before being published..</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The extensive consultations undertaken before and during the writing of the assessments has ensured that the local community and wider partners have been fully involved in the delivery of the assessment reports and the draft ROWIP</p>	
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Assessment three identifies resources, issues and looks at opportunities to maintain and improve countryside access. Appendix 1 &amp; 3 show how the last ROWIP has been instrumental in accessing substantial grant funding and improving the management of rights of way. Rights of way are severely under resourced, but a new ROWIP would give opportunities to work with others and look at ways of addressing resource issues.</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The primary focus of the assessments is identifying the needs of the people now and in the future, using rights of way to benefit the economy, the environment and to provide the means for which the public can access our rich cultural heritage.</p>	<p>The new ROWIP ensures contribution to all 7 of the national well-being goals.</p>

**4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

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	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Social Justice	Positive through improved physical and intellectual access, volunteering and activity for all	None	
Safeguarding	None	None	
Corporate Parenting	None	None	

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

Numerous documents and plans such as Monmouthshire's Well Being Assessment and Wye Valley AONB Plan, BBNP assessment and draft ROWIP, consultations with Monmouthshire Local Access Forum and others. The appendices 2 & 3 contain details of documents/links to data used in the assessments.

**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 Assessments show the need to maintain long-term planning and management arrangements, it considers the benefits of supporting a tourism product, and providing economic, social and environmental improvements to provide improved physical and intellectual access, volunteering opportunities and activity. This supports the need for a revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Monmouthshire.

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

<b>What are you going to do</b>	<b>When are you going to do it?</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>
Take to Strong Communities to review consultation Take to Cabinet for ratification  Publish and promote	January 2020  February 2020  February 2020	Countryside Access Manager

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**VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Decision making stage</b>	<b>Date considered</b>	<b>Brief description of any amendments made following consideration</b>
1.	Scrutiny	23 January 2020	

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**SUBJECT: WYE VALLEY AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2025**

**MEETING: Strong Communities Select Committee**

**DATE: 23 January 2020**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL**

**1. PURPOSE:**

1.1 To inform the review of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Management Plan 2020-2025.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

2.1 The committee is invited to consider the review of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and identify any issues they wish the review to consider further.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

3.1 Section 89 of CROW Act 2000 places a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce, jointly if appropriate, a management plan for any AONBs lying within their boundaries and to review them every five years.

3.2 The first statutory management plan for the Wye Valley AONB was produced in 2004 and covered the period 2004 to 2009. Its first review covered the period 2009 to 2014 and second review 2015 – 2020.

3.3 A third review has now commenced managed by the Wye Valley AONB Unit and overseen by the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee. The revised plan will cover the period 2020 - 2025.

3.4 The Joint Advisory Committee previously determined that the existing Management Plan remains a sound foundation on which to base the next Plan. A proportionate and balanced review, which modifies, updates and simplifies the existing Plan, but retains tried and tested policies and content, was seen as appropriate.

3.5 The Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-25 was published in October 2019 with a 10 weeks public consultation period. In addition, two public 'drop-in' sessions were held in December 2019 alongside meetings with key stakeholders to provide further opportunities for everybody to inspect and

comment on the new AONB Management Plan. By January 2020 a total of 21 organisations and individuals had submitted comments on the Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan. The consultation responses received to date are being assessed and will be reported to a future meeting of the Joint Advisory Committee.

3.6 Any comments this committee has at this stage would be welcome.

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

4.1 The review of the plan will be subject to formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA) and will provide a framework within which the primary purposes of AONB designation can be maintained sustainably.

4.2 Positive impacts identified through conserved and enhanced landscape and well-being of current and future generations through access to that landscape.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

<b>Option</b>	<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Risks</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Not to contribute to the review of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	None	Reviewing the AONB management plan every five years is a statutory duty under Section 89 of CROW Act 2000.	Whilst the AONB unit undertakes the review jointly on behalf of the partner authorities, the responsibility to adopt the resulting plan rests with the Council.
Contribute to the review of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025	Will ensure the management plan review reflects on the issues pertinent to the Monmouthshire part of the AONB	None	

#### **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

6.1 Progress will be monitored against the finalised Management Plan Objectives and the Wye Valley AONB Unit's annual work programme / funding agreements reported to, and scrutinised by, the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

## **7. REASONS:**

- 7.1 To inform members of the review of the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 and identify any issues they wish the review to consider further.
- 7.2 The preparation of a management plan for the Wye Valley AONB and its periodic review is a statutory requirement as set out on the main report. The CROW Act also requires that the County Council, as with all relevant authorities, should have regard to the purposes of the AONB in executing any of its functions which could affect the AONB.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 There are no additional resource implications. The AONB unit is funded through local authority contributions from Monmouthshire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Forest of Dean Councils and grant aid from Natural Resources Wales, Welsh Government and Defra.

## **9. CONSULTEES:**

Chief Operating Officer MonLife  
Chief Officer Enterprise

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1: Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

Appendix 2: Draft Management Plan: <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Public-Consultation-Draft-Wye-Valley-AONB-Management-Plan-2020-25.pdf>

Also available version showing proposed modifications from 2015-2020 plan: (<https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Public-consultation-DRAFT-Wye-Valley-AONB-Management-Plan-2020-25-changes-v2015-20.pdf> )

## **AUTHORS & CONTACT DETAILS:**

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Tel: 01633 644855

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<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation Andrew Blake, Wye Valley AONB Manager</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 01600 713 977 <b>E-mail:</b> aonb.officer@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b> The Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, under Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, formulates local authority policy and action in relation to the management of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). NB. All references in [square brackets] relate to the Wye Valley AONB Public Consultation Draft Management Plan 2020-2025 (September 2019)</p>
<p><b>Name of Service area</b> Wye Valley AONB Partnership MonLife</p>	<p><b>Date</b> 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2019</p>

**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	<p>Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs [WV-R4]</p> <p>Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB [WV-P6]</p>	<p>If access enhancements are not developed in a joined-up or strategic context then benefits can be lost.</p>	<p>Suggest inserting into WV-R4 'joined-up or strategic' after "promote" to read: "Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote joined-up or strategic access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs"</p>

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?
Disability	<p>Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs [WV-R4]</p> <p>Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness [WV-A1]</p>	ditto	ditto
Gender reassignment	neutral	neutral	n/a
Marriage or civil partnership	neutral	neutral	n/a
Pregnancy or maternity	neutral	neutral	n/a
Race	neutral	neutral	n/a

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?
Religion or Belief	neutral	neutral	n/a
Sex	neutral	neutral	n/a
Sexual Orientation	neutral	neutral	n/a
Welsh Language	<p>AONB Special Quality [SQ21] 'Welsh language &amp; accent; Forest of Dean &amp; South Herefordshire dialects &amp; accents'</p> <p>Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness [WV-A1]</p>	neutral	Support of local & cultural distinctiveness, the Welsh language and local accents and dialects, through AONB events, interpretation and information, including in the Wye Valley River Festival.
Poverty	Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 [WV-C1]	neutral	<p>Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas [WV-P5]</p> <p>Support the development of affordable housing appropriate to local need in the AONB, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 [WV-C3]</p>

2. **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. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Page 146</p> <p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The AONB landscape and the designation itself are an economic asset which can yield returns many times higher than the cost of its conservation and enhancement. The vitality of the AONB is dependent on the contribution of a vast range of businesses beyond the obvious land uses of agriculture, horticulture, forestry and mineral extraction. There is also employment in leisure and tourism, retail, energy production, light industrial, offices and storage plus other providers such as nursing homes, schools, art galleries etc. [10.2.1]</p>	<p>Support initiatives that improve the market for products which conserve or enhance the AONB's distinctive landscape, Special Qualities and strengthens the sense of place of the AONB [WV-E1]</p> <p>Raise awareness of good practice and encourage local businesses in the AONB to take opportunities to become more environmentally, socially and economically sustainable, particularly in ways that sustain the natural beauty of the area [WV-E2]</p> <p>Support the delivery of local co-operative schemes, advice and training programmes that support the development and expansion of rural micro-businesses, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 [WV-E3]</p> <p>Raise awareness of the value of the AONB and the importance of retaining a high quality environment in attracting and retaining entrepreneurs, relocating businesses, inward investment and skilled personnel [WV-E4]</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and</p>	<p>The Wye Valley is particularly important for its rich wildlife habitats. The Wye Valley woodlands are renowned as one of the largest remaining areas of</p>	<p>Promote the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and recover the characteristic biodiversity of the AONB, and that enable ecological</p>



<b>Well Being Goal</b>	<b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b>	<b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	ancient semi-natural woodland in the country. [2.1.3] The aim is to conserve, and where appropriate enhance and restore, the biodiversity of the AONB in robust ecological networks. [8.2]	systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity [WV-B3]
<b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Recreation is a major activity in the AONB and the health and economic benefits of access and recreation are important. Recreation in the AONB also helps to reconnect people and nature, restoring lost connections with the natural environment and ensuring fairer access to its goods and services. Recreation helps our well-being through its positive impact on mental and physical health, and it improves education, encourages social activity and reduces crime. [11.2.5]	Encourage and promote recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the AONB purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities [WV-R1] Suggest amending last phrase to read: "particularly through active travel and public transport linking rural, village and town facilities"
<b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	There are 7 Town or Community Councils wholly or partially in the Wye Valley AONB on the Welsh side (and 33 Parish and Town Councils on the English side). However, individuals usually belong to a multitude of 'communities', for example by being members of the local church, on the Parish Council, users of the local pub and/or shop, local business people, parents at the local school, part of a neighbourhood watch scheme, sports club etc. [10.1.1]	Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people [WV-C1]  Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape [WV-C2]
<b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local	A Charter for Residents and Visitors is included in this Management Plan [12.2] with actions that all residents, visitors and businesses can take to help care for this internationally important protected	Suggest simplifying to "5 actions for nature, people and landscape: Take the pledge" 1. Get outside and enjoy your natural health service




Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
social, economic and environmental wellbeing	<p>landscape. There are a range of opportunities that can be progressed for a more sustainable quality of life in the AONB.</p> <p>Charter for Residents and Visitors:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take pride in the Wye Valley – promote its Special Qualities, Features and places to family, friends and visitors</li> <li>• Don't delay in addressing Climate Change</li> <li>• Buy local products and services from farmers and woodland managers who actively manage their land to benefit the environment</li> <li>• Get out there and enjoy it</li> <li>• Respect other users – follow the Countryside Code</li> <li>• Slow down for people, horses and wildlife</li> <li>• Manage your land for wildlife</li> <li>• Maintain the rural nature of your property</li> <li>• Help prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant and animal species</li> <li>• Avoid using the car where possible and consider using renewable energy in your home</li> <li>• Reduce, reuse and recycle, and dispose of all litter responsibly</li> <li>• Use less water</li> <li>• Get involved – support local conservation organisations</li> <li>• Have a say</li> </ul>	<p>Take a natural prescription and get outside into the landscape - every day.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Become an active ecological citizen Tread lightly and make your footprint(s) count.</li> <li>3. Take pride in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Champion the Wye Valley landscape and discover more about why it is so special.</li> <li>4. Help nature to recover and flourish across the whole landscape Improve your local environment for nature.</li> <li>5. Get involved and make your voice heard Act now do not delay</li> </ol> <p>Intention is for this to be combined with PR campaign linked to Wye Valley River Festival and AONB website.</p>
<p><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</p>	<p>Communities need to actively identify what they value in their locality and participate in setting priorities for its sustainable management. This may include supporting local / cultural distinctiveness and the Welsh language or local accents and dialects. [10.1.6] There is a rich legacy of cultural and</p>	<p>Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities</p>



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	landscape associations from artists, writers and musicians that can be explored and enjoyed by local people and visitors to gain a strong sense of the landscape and their role in it. The Special Qualities of the AONB continue to inspire artists, crafts people, writers, musicians, performers and other creative practitioners. [11.3.2]	into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness [WV-A1]
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	As a predominantly rural area people in the Wye Valley AONB encounter many of the problems familiar throughout rural Britain. [10.1.3] Involvement of young people, schools, and the elderly and less vociferous members of local communities needs to be included in these processes as well as the participation of the Town, Parish and Community Councils and other local representative and resident organisations. [10.1.6]	<p>Encourage community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment, decarbonisation and retain or improve facilities and services for local people [WV-C1]</p> <p>Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB [WV-P6]</p>

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>The Vision for the Wye Valley AONB was developed for the 2009-14 AONB Management Plan as a 20 year vision and remains a true encapsulation of how we want the AONB to be in 15 years' time and beyond. [2.2]</p>	<p>The guiding principles that underpin the approach to managing the AONB are sustainable development, natural resource management, the ecosystem approach and the landscape approach. [4.0]</p> <p>Encourage and enhance appropriate landscape scale and green infrastructure action by all particularly on consolidating ecosystem services and positively contributing to habitat connectivity that allows wildlife to adapt to the effects of climate change [WV-L2]</p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>The AONB Partnership is recognised as one of the very few organisations locally with a true cross-border remit. Consequently the AONB Unit and its partnerships have a considerable amount of experience and expertise in cross-border working and project development and delivery at both local and landscape scales. [12.1.1]</p>	<p>Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan [WV-P3]</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan 2020-25 was published in October 2019 with a 10 weeks public consultation period. In addition two public 'drop-in' sessions were held in December 2019 alongside meetings with key stakeholders to provide further opportunities for everybody to inspect and comment on the new AONB Management Plan. By January 2020 a total of 21 organisations and individuals had submitted comments on the Consultation Draft AONB Management Plan.</p>	<p>Inform and engage all relevant interests, especially local communities, in issues and decisions affecting the AONB [WV-P6]</p> <p>Increase the profile of the Wye Valley AONB, promoting awareness and understanding of the designation and the Special Qualities of the AONB, through communication with, and interpretation for, residents, visitors, organisations and businesses, including embedding cultural and artistic activities into the conservation and enhancement of the AONB and measure effectiveness [WV-A1]</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>This Management Plan provides guidance and strategic objectives, giving support and direction to help steer positive landscape change, particularly to those bodies that make up the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee and the wider AONB Partnership. It also provides guidance to the local communities and many landowners, residents and visitors in the area. The Management Plan is thus for all the bodies and individuals whose actions affect the AONB and who can play an important part in helping to conserve and, where appropriate, enhance the outstanding landscape of the lower Wye Valley, for the benefit of both current and future generations. [1.1.2]</p>	<p>Encourage and assist partners with initiatives that deliver the Management Plan, or other initiatives where the objectives are consistent with the purposes of the AONB designation, and utilise existing resources and seek new resources to implement the AONB Management Plan [WV-P3]</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The AONB Management Plan is a place-based plan derived through local consensus. It seeks to define the approach to conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB through the application of local solutions to local challenges that also respect the national and international importance of the AONB. It is a plan for the AONB, the landscape and the people who live in, work in and visit it [1.1.2]</p>	<p>Promote awareness, appreciation of, and pride in the lower Wye Valley, the Special Qualities and features of the Wye Valley AONB and the beneficial aspects for local people of living and working in a nationally protected landscape [WV-C2]</p> <p>Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas [WV-P5]</p>

**4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has</b>	<b>What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
Social Justice	There are huge benefits that we all get through contact with nature. Recreation in the AONB also helps people to reconnect with nature, recreating a relationship with the natural environment and ensuring fairer access to its goods and services. Recreation also helps our well-being through its positive impact on mental and physical health, and it improves education, encourages social activity and reduces crime. [11.2.5]	neutral	Develop and promote the AONB as a model of sustainable development, landscape management, transportation, access and rural regeneration through exemplary initiatives setting standards for other areas [WV-P5]  Support the development of affordable housing appropriate to local need in the AONB, subject to WV-D2 and WV-D3 [WV-C3]
Safeguarding	neutral	neutral	Integrated MCC Safeguarding policies into operation of the AONB Partnership.
Corporate Parenting	neutral	neutral	n/a

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

2001 & 2011 Census data, DEFRA land use census data and other national data-sets,  
 UK Climate Change Risk Assessment  
 Planning Policy Wales  
 Prosperity for all: a Low Carbon Wales  
 'Marsden' Review of Designated Landscapes in Wales (2015) and Valued and Resilient: Welsh Government's Priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks (2018).  
 South East Wales Area Statement – preparatory evidence & workshops  
 Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.  
 Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-Being Plan  
 Monmouthshire Destination Plan  
 Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Draft Improvement Plan 2019–2029  
 various local AONB surveys and research on land use and visitor experience.

**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?**

Potential negative impacts, or loss of benefits, identified if access enhancements are not developed in a joined-up or strategic context.  
 Suggested insertion into WV-R4 of 'joined-up or strategic' after "promote".  
 Minor modification recommended to WV-R1: amending last phrase to read: "particularly through active travel and public transport linking rural, village and town facilities"  
 Positive impacts identified through conserved and enhanced landscape and well-being of current and future generations through access to that landscape.

**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
Suggested insertion into WV-R4 of 'joined-up or strategic' after "promote" to read: "Assist in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote joined-up or strategic access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the AONB and the SACs"	Amend for Post consultation version of AONB Management Plan 2020-25	Wye Valley AONB Manager
Minor modification recommended to WV-R1: amending last phrase to read: "particularly through active travel and public transport linking rural, village and town facilities"	Amend for Post consultation version of AONB Management Plan 2020-25	Wye Valley AONB Manager
Suggested simplification of the Charter for Residents and Visitors to "5 actions for nature, people and landscape"	Amend for Post consultation version of AONB Management Plan 2020-25	Wye Valley AONB Manager

**8. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this**

**process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Decision making stage</b>	<b>Date considered</b>	<b>Brief description of any amendments made following consideration</b>
1	Scrutiny	23 January 2020	



## REPORT

<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>REVENUE &amp; CAPITAL MONITORING 2019/20 FORECAST OUTTURN STATEMENT – MONTH 7</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE</b>	<b>Resources</b>
<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Strong Communities Select Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>23rd January 2020</b>
<b>DIVISIONS/ WARD AFFECTED</b>	<b>All Authority</b>

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Strong Communities Select Members with information on the revenue and capital outturn position of the Authority, accommodating capital slippage and approved reserve usage.
- 1.2 This report will also be considered by Select Committees as part of their responsibility to,
  - assess whether effective budget monitoring is taking place,
  - monitor the extent to which budgets are spent in accordance with agreed budget and policy framework,
  - challenge the reasonableness of projected over or underspends, and
  - monitor the achievement of predicted efficiency gains or progress in relation to savings proposals.

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS PROPOSED TO CABINET

- 2.1 That Members consider a net revenue forecast of £3.99m deficit, and the one off adjustments designed to return a balanced position (£245k surplus) prior to the end of March 2020.
- 2.2 That Members note the 85% delivery of the budget setting savings agreed by full Council previously and a need for remedial action/savings in respect of circa 15% savings (£994k) reported as delayed or unachievable by service managers.
- 2.3 That Members consider the capital outturn spend of £39.38m, introducing a £384k anticipated underspend, and the presumptions made around net financing consequences as per para 4.4.
- 2.4 Members note the extent of movements in reserve usage, including individual budgeted draws on school balances, and their effect on current prudent financial planning assumptions (para 5.2 onwards).

### 3. REVENUE MONITORING ANALYSIS

3.1 Increasingly Scrutiny Committee feedback is that monitoring reports are getting more involved, detailed and as a result more difficult to follow. This isn't particularly unusual in periods of increasing service overspends and pressures and the consequential need for remedial savings to compensate for agreed savings not likely to be made. Further clarification has been requested to understand how best monitoring could be enhanced, but as an interim step, the ordering of the report has been altered in an attempt to provide a clearer holistic revenue and overall savings position and better organise Scrutiny Committee portfolio matters within the commentary for each Committee.

### 3.2 Overall Revenue Position

Table 1: Council Fund 2019/20 Outturn Forecast Summary Statement at Month 7 (Period 2)

Service Area	Initial 2019-20 Annual Budget	Virements to budget Mth2	Virements to budget Mth 3-7	Revised Annual Budget	Revised Forecast Outturn	Forecast Over/ (Under) @ Outturn based on Month 7 Activity	Forecast Over/ (Under) @ Outturn based on Month 2 Activity
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	(+ net exp,-net income)	(+ net exp, -net income)	(+ net exp, -net income)	(+ net exp, - net income)	(+ net exp, -net income)	(+ deficit, - surplus)	(+ deficit, - surplus)
Adult Services	7,644	0	17	7,661	7,872	211	186
Children Services	11,937	0	22	11,959	14,733	2,774	2,296
Community Care	22,610	0	32	22,642	23,318	676	2
Commissioning	1,604	0	74	1,678	1,626	-52	1
Partnerships	418	0	0	418	418	0	0
Public Protection	1,458	0	0	1,458	1,482	24	6
Resources & Performance	573	0	-42	531	532	1	-3
<b>Total Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>46,244</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>46,347</b>	<b>49,981</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>2,488</b>
Individual School Budget	44,508	0	125	44,633	44,495	-138	0
Resources	1,252	0	0	1,252	894	-358	-359
Standards	5,429	0	0	5,429	6,796	1,367	701
<b>Total Children &amp; Young People</b>	<b>51,189</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>51,314</b>	<b>52,185</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>342</b>
Business Growth & Enterprise	1,590	0	126	1,716	1,659	-57	-7
Operations	15,498	0	999	16,497	16,745	248	77
Planning & Housing	2,193	0	-244	1,949	2,262	313	4
Tourism Life & Culture (Monlife)	3,324	0	141	3,465	3,574	109	260

<b>Total Enterprise</b>	<b>22,605</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,022</b>	<b>23,627</b>	<b>24,240</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>334</b>
Legal & Land Charges	701		0	701	763	62	20
Governance, Democracy and Support	3,952	0	-16	3,936	3,984	48	10
<b>Total Chief Executives Unit</b>	<b>4,653</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-16</b>	<b>4,637</b>	<b>4,747</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>30</b>
Finance	2,630	0	-73	2,557	2,510	-47	-123
Information Communication Technology	2,640		185	2,825	2,780	-45	-68
People	1,647	0	60	1,707	1,713	6	2
Future Monmouthshire	-14		-20	-34	145	179	207
Commercial and Corporate Landlord Services	622	0	187	809	811	2	-124
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>7,525</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>7,864</b>	<b>7,959</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>-106</b>
Precepts and Levies	19,240	0	0	19,240	19,060	-180	-181
Coroners Service	117			117	145	28	29
Archives Service	182			182	182	0	0
Corporate Management (CM)	158	0		158	162	4	54
Non Distributed Costs (NDC)	595	0	0	595	675	80	62
Strategic Initiatives	442	0	0	442	0	-442	-442
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	-1,455		1,455	0	0	0	0
Insurance	1,400	0	-17	1,383	1,432	49	0
<b>Total Corporate Costs &amp; Levies</b>	<b>20,679</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,438</b>	<b>22,117</b>	<b>21,656</b>	<b>-461</b>	<b>-478</b>
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>152,895</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,011</b>	<b>155,906</b>	<b>160,768</b>	<b>4,862</b>	<b>2,610</b>
Fixed Asset disposal costs	119	0	-28	91	91	0	0
Interest and Investment Income	-206	0	0	-206	-318	-112	-34
Interest payable & Similar Charges	4,130	0	84	4,214	4,062	-152	-153
Charges required under regulation	5,202	0	512	5,714	5,687	-27	49
Borrowing Cost Recoupment			-3,425	-3,425	-3,425	0	
Contributions to Reserves	444	0	-103	341	341	0	0
Contributions from Reserves	-789	0	-51	-840	-840	0	0
<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>8,900</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-3,011</b>	<b>5,889</b>	<b>5,598</b>	<b>-291</b>	<b>-138</b>
General Government Grants	-62,548		0	-62,548	-62,548	0	0
Non Domestic rates	-30,682		0	-30,682	-30,682	0	0

Council Tax	-75,124	0	0	-75,124	-75,591	-467	0
Council Tax Benefits Support	6,559		0	6,559	6,442	-117	-58
<b>Financing</b>	<b>-161,795</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-161,795</b>	<b>-162,379</b>	<b>-584</b>	<b>-58</b>
<b>Net Council Fund (Surplus) / Deficit</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,987</b>	<b>3,987</b>	<b>2,414</b>

3.3 This outturn forecast presents a significant and increased overspend. The pressure areas remain those that have been highlighted in previous reports e.g. additional learning needs, social care generally and children's services specifically, passenger transport, car parking, Monlife and authority wide savings held against Future Monmouthshire no longer anticipated to be apportioned to services to deliver.

3.4 A comparison of the Net Council fund line against previous years' activity indicates the significance of the variance,

Net Council Fund Surplus	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Period 1	2,414 deficit	379 deficit	164 deficit	1,511 deficit	867 deficit	219 deficit
Period 2	3,987 deficit	766 surplus	62 deficit	839 deficit	1,066 deficit	116 deficit
Period 3				79 surplus	162 deficit	144 deficit
Outturn		49 surplus	652 surplus	884 Surplus	579 surplus	327 surplus

3.5 Discussion amongst SLT has identified a limited opportunity for immediate in year recovery action and any such action is already factored into the forecast, so their focus has been upon mitigating the bottom line effect. The Council anticipates one off windfalls in respect of vat receipt from HMRC, an in year grant contribution from WG, and has received guidance from WG concerning a capitalisation directive and the ability to have flexible use of capital receipts to meet the costs associated with service reform.

### Explanation of Capitalisation Directive eligibility

3.6 The direction correspondence reminds that local authorities cannot borrow to finance the revenue costs of service reform. Local authorities can only use capital receipts from the disposal of property plant and equipment assets received in the years in which this flexibility is offered.

3.7 Welsh Ministers believe that individual authorities and groups of authorities are best placed to decide which projects will be most effective for their areas. The key criterion to use when deciding whether expenditure can be funded by the capital receipts flexibility is that it is forecast to generate ongoing savings or reduce revenue costs or pressures over the longer term to an authority, or several authorities, and/or to another public body.

3.8 Welsh Government guidance indicates a wide range of projects that could generate qualifying expenditure and the list below is not prescriptive. Examples of projects include:

- Preparatory work necessary to support local authority mergers as part of the programme to reform local government in Wales;
- Sharing back-office and administrative services with one or more other council or public sector body;
- Investment in service reform feasibility work, e.g. setting up pilot schemes;
- Collaboration between local authorities and central government to free up land for economic use;
- Funding the cost of service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation (staff or non-staff), where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation;
- Sharing Chief Executives, management teams or staffing structures;
- Driving a digital approach to the delivery of more efficient public services and how the public interacts with constituent authorities where possible;
- Aggregating procurement on common goods and services where possible, either as part of local arrangements or using the National Procurement Service, Crown Commercial Services or other central purchasing bodies which operate in accordance with the Wales Procurement Policy Statement;
- Improving systems and processes to tackle fraud and corruption in line with the Local Government Fraud and Corruption Strategy – this could include an element of staff training;
- Setting up alternative delivery models to deliver services more efficiently and bring in revenue (for example, through selling services to others); and
- Integrating public facing services across two or more public sector bodies (for example children’s social care, trading standards) to generate savings or to transform service delivery.
- Investment which supports economic growth projects which are also designed to reduce revenue costs or pressures over the longer term, across one or more local authorities and/or other public sector bodies.

3.9 Officers have drawn up the following draft list of expenditure that accords with Welsh government guidance

		£'000	Justification
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>			
Mounton House Recoupment	Income reduction caused by reduced demand for service following anticipated closure	300	Service reconfiguration
Preparing for new ALN bill		121	Service reform
Revision to Education Psychology service to cover early years and wellbeing in schools		40	Service reconfiguration
SEND ALN portal costs		17	Driving a digital approach
<b>Social Care &amp; Health</b>			
Joint Local authority working (GWICES, Sc. 33, Frailty, regional safeguarding board, Gwent foster fee		113	Integrated services

harmonisation & care home pooling			
IT scheme costs		50	Driving a digital approach
“Turning World Upside Down” on boarding		183	Service reconfiguration
<b>Chief Executives and Resources</b>			
Redundancy costs associated with Council Tax service redesign and merger with TCBC provision		26	Service restructuring
Atebion Procurement Review		16	Investment in service reform feasibility work
Digital programme office – recharge time to facilitate new Wales wide Social Care IT system		38	Driving a digital approach
Market Hall Income loss whilst facility being renovated		56	Service/facility transformation
Shared Chief internal Auditor provision		36	Shared staffing structure
Provision of My Mon app, chat bot and contact Centre refinements		25	Driving a digital approach
Digital programme office recharge in respect of improving efficiency of local authority services		305	Driving a digital approach
<b>Enterprise</b>			
City Deal 10 authority collaboration, annual revenue contribution		62	Integrated services
Project Gwrdd residual waste partnership contribution		35	Integrated services
Facilitating waste polypropylene bag roll out		10	Service reconfiguration
Apprentice, graduate, intern coordinator post		14	Service reconfiguration
Highways restructure redundancy cost		39	Service restructuring
Car parking redundancy cost		30	Service restructuring
Waste recycling review – agency, vehicle hire, additional staff costs		249	Service reconfiguration
Waste – HWRC permit introduction facilitation		40	Service reconfiguration

Introduction of Waste re-use shop		30	Service reconfiguration
Waste officer recharge in respect of facilitating above		80	Service reconfiguration
Shared PTU management with Newport bus		38	Shared staffing structure
Staff costs of PTU core strategic board		69	Service reconfiguration
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,022</b>	

3.10 The addition of such costs to the capital programme still requires full Council approval. This approval will be requested as part of the revenue outturn and accounts closure process. Their effect together with other use of one off funding to mitigate the bottom line position would illustratively provide the following revised forecast outturn.

		£'000
Net Council Fund forecast in year deficit		3,987
<b>Less</b> WG ad hoc contribution to afford pay, already provided for in full.		(310)
<b>Less</b> one off VAT receipt – Ealing judgement, decision to exempt Leisure services income, claims cover period Jan 07 – Mar 19 and total £2.1m, and settlement range is anticipated to be between £1.7m -£2.1m		(1,900)
<b>Less</b> capitalisation directive		(2,022)
Revised Surplus		(245)

### 3.11 Overall 2019/20 Budget Savings Progress

This section monitors the specific savings initiatives and the progress made in delivering them during 2019-20 as part of the MTFP budgeting process.

In summary they are as follows,

<b>Disinvestment by Directorate 2019-20</b>	<b>2019/20 Budgeted Savings</b>	<b>Value of Saving forecast at Month 7</b>	<b>Delayed Savings</b>	<b>Savings deemed Unachievable YTD</b>
<b>REVENUE MONITORING 2019-20</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>	<b>(1,234)</b>	<b>(1,208)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(26)</b>
<b>Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>(1,246)</b>	<b>(1,115)</b>	<b>(90)</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>(1,480)</b>	<b>(930)</b>	<b>(152)</b>	<b>(399)</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>(1,342)</b>	<b>(1,236)</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Chief Executives Units</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>(46)</b>	<b>(60)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Corporate Costs &amp; Levies</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>(282)</b>	<b>(162)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(120)</b>
<b>Financing</b>	<b>(756)</b>	<b>(756)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE Totals</b>	<b>(6,446)</b>	<b>(5,453)</b>	<b>(408)</b>	<b>(586)</b>

3.12 Anticipated mandated saving performance has changed materiality from month 2 and is running at 85% of budgeted levels (down 3%), largely the consequence of anticipated delayed savings £408k (was £39k at month 2), being more significant than the favourable movement in those savings deemed unachievable, month 7 indicates £586k being deemed potentially unachievable (was £709k at month 2).

3.13 The emphasis of reporting savings is based on whether saving is forecast to be achieved, even if not manifest in Directorate management reports yet. Consequently, the savings appendix (Appendix 2) also has a traffic light system to indicate whether savings are likely to be achieved or have justifiable reasons explaining delayed implementation.

3.14 In a new attempt to give practical effect to an aspiration of Scrutiny Committee members to derive a simpler presentation that only captures their portfolio area, Appendix 1 provides a more detailed commentary of the main pressures and underspends.

#### Appendix 1 Stronger Communities Select Revenue Monitoring

However, the situation is by definition complicated and will not be balanced within Select portfolios appreciating the overall budget is managed holistically, and it is necessary to give Select members the same quality of information as Cabinet to be able for them to take an informed view on the robustness of Cabinet budget management activities which remains a fundamental purpose of the report.

## 4 CAPITAL POSITION

4.1 The summary forecast Capital position at outturn is as follows,



<b>MCC CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2019-20 at Month 7 by SELECT COMMITTEE</b>						
<b>SELECT PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>Forecast Spend at Outturn</b>	<b>Slippage Brought Forward</b>	<b>Total Approved Budget 2019/20</b>	<b>Forecast Capital Slippage to 2020/21</b>	<b>Revised Capital Budget 2019/20</b>	<b>Capital Expenditure Variance</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>	3,267	2,219	3,852	201	3,651	(384)
<b>Economy &amp; Development</b>	18,495	465	18,495	0	18,495	0
<b>Adult</b>	319	0	490	171	319	0
<b>Strong Communities</b>	17,297	7,165	18,697	1,400	17,297	0
<b>Capital Schemes Total 2019-20</b>	<b>39,378</b>	<b>9,849</b>	<b>41,534</b>	<b>1,772</b>	<b>39,762</b>	<b>(384)</b>

4.2 Capital expenditure at month 7 is forecast to underspend by £384k at month 7 primarily at Caldicot (£208k) and Monmouth (£176k) 21c Schools due to Asbestos environmental removal costs being lower than expected as well as reduced snagging expenditure.

#### **Slippage to 2020/21**

4.3 Total Provisional Slippage at Month 7 is £1,772k (an increase of £633k since month 2). This comprises,

- Car Park redevelopment costs of £1,000k including the County Hall car park £688k; Granville Street Car Park £162k and £150k for general car park upgrades delayed due to a County wide car park review.
- Crick Road Care Home project exhibits £171k slippage following a review of the construction timescales
- £365k slippage is evident in S106 schemes due to £164k worth of contract delays in the Clydach Gorge, Environmental surveys and Planning considerations
- The deferral of new ALN Provision at Overmonnow School (£201k) due to the schemes' project costs being under review.
- It is anticipated that costs in respect of following schemes will also fall into 2020-21; Abergavenny Community Hub (£124k), Property Maintenance schemes (£99k) and £13k for an IT improvement scheme within financial systems.

## Capital Financing and Receipts

4.4 Given the anticipated capital spending profile reported in para 4.1, the following financing mechanisms are expected to be utilised.

<b>MCC CAPITAL FINANCING BUDGET MONITORING 2019-20 at Month 7 by FINANCING CATEGORY</b>						
<b>CAPITAL FINANCING SCHEME</b>	<b>Annual Financing</b>	<b>Slippage Brought Forward</b>	<b>Total Approved Financing Budget 2019/20</b>	<b>Provisional Budget Slippage to 2020/21</b>	<b>Revised Financing Budget 2019/20</b>	<b>Forecast Capital Financing Variance 2019/20</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Supported Borrowing	2,403	0	2,403	(0)	2,403	0
General Capital Grant	3,681	0	3,681	0	3,681	0
Grants and Contributions	2,169	0	2,194	(25)	2,169	0
S106 Contributions	1,321	1,316	1,662	(341)	1,321	0
Unsupported borrowing	24,784	6,956	26,299	(1,131)	25,168	(384)
Earmarked reserve & Revenue Funding	343	169	447	(104)	343	0
Capital Receipts	3,010	1,409	3,181	(171)	3,010	0
Interest Free Financing	1,667	0	1,667	0	1,667	0
<b>Capital Financing Total 2019-20</b>	<b>39,378</b>	<b>9,850</b>	<b>41,534</b>	<b>(1,772)</b>	<b>39,762</b>	<b>(384)</b>

## Useable Capital Receipts Available

- 4.5 In the table below, the effect of the changes to the forecast capital receipts on the useable capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments is shown. The table also models the anticipated use of capitalisation directive in current year and next year (captured from 2020-21 capital budget proposals). Both of which still require endorsement by Members.

Movement in Available Useable Capital Receipts Forecast at outturn

<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Balance b/f 1 <sup>st</sup> April	4,581	6,531	10,224	10,865
<b>Add:</b>				
Receipts received in year	1,468			
Receipts forecast received	5,416	6,713	1,098	1,300
Deferred capital receipts	98	100	102	104
<b>Less:</b>				
Receipts to be applied	(3,010)	(1,704)	(559)	(559)
Anticipated capitalisation directive application	(2,022)	(1,416)		
Set aside	0	0	0	0
<b>Predicted Year end receipts balance</b>	<b>6,531</b>	<b>10,224</b>	<b>10,865</b>	<b>10,710</b>

- 4.6 At Month 7, a total of £171k of Capital receipts will be slipped which relates to the new Crick Road Care Home project due to the contractors starting later in this financial year due to a delay in awarding the contract. This project has a 3-year project timeframe ending 2020-21, and condenses a very significant build programme into last financial year. Much of the project spend is underpinned by grant funding which disappears if not drawn down in full by end of next financial year. This places additional significance upon the quality and extent of project management within the Social Care Directorate to ensure sufficient eligible expenditure is incurred within necessary timescales.

## 5 RESERVES

- 5.1 The Council has unallocated reserves in the form of Council fund balance and school reserves. Realistically the level of surplus/deficit affecting Council Fund will commonly fluctuate before the end of the year, but for estimating purposes we will commonly presume services' activities will be influenced to avoid material adverse effect. It also has earmarked reserves that are created for a specific purpose.
- 5.2 Revenue and Capital monitoring reflects an approved use of reserves. A specific analysis is undertaken at every formal periodic monitoring exercise to establish whether reserve cover conveyed to services by members will be fully utilised within the financial year. Where it is apparent this is not the case, both the reserve movement budget in appropriations budget and the expenditure within service directorate is adjusted. This is to prevent any imbalance in the bottom line position for net cost of services.

The table overleaf provides summary analysis of reserve balances based on approvals and progress anticipated through the revenue and capital monitoring exercise.

Account	Balance brought forward	Slippage usage from 2018-19	2019-20 anticipated net movements	Balance carried forward
	(-surplus)/ deficit			(-surplus)/ deficit
Council Fund (Authority)	-7,111,078		0	-7,111,078
School Balances	232,404		650,241	882,645
<b>Sub Total Council Fund</b>	<b>-6,878,674</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>650,241</b>	<b>-6,228,433</b>
<b><i>Earmarked Reserves:</i></b>				
Sub-Total Invest to Redesign	-1,083,167	0	-73,113	-1,156,280
Sub-Total IT Transformation	-479,139	129,675	62143	-287,321
Sub-Total Insurance and Risk Management	-1,018,744	0	0	-1,018,744
Sub-Total Capital Receipt Generation	-278,880	24,735	118,566	-135,579
Sub Total Treasury Equalisation	-990,024	0	0	-990,024
Sub-Total Redundancy and Pensions	-332,835	0	88,038	-244,797
Sub-Total Capital Investment	-643,337	0	15999	-627,338
Sub-Total Priority Investment	-405,000	0	300,000	-105,000
	<b>-5,231,127</b>	<b>154,410</b>	<b>511,633</b>	<b>-4,565,083</b>
<b><i>Other Earmarked Reserves:</i></b>				
Museums Acquisitions Reserve	-52,885		0	-52,885
Elections Reserve	-83,183		-35,000	-118,183
Grass Routes Buses Reserve	-151,084		-5,000	-156,084
Youth Offending Team	-150,000		0	-150,000
Building Control trading reserve	-14,490		0	-14,490
Outdoor Education Centres Trading Reserve	0		0	0
CYP maternity	-135,795		135795	0
Plant & Equipment reserve (Highways)	-33,541		0	-33,541
Homeless Prevention Reserve Fund	-49,803		0	-49,803
Solar Farm Maintenance & Community Fund	-41,000		-23,000	-64,000
Newport Leisure Park Reserve	-61,899		0	-61,899
Castlegate Reserve	-79,500		0	-79,500
Local Resilience Forum Reserve (Gwent PCC Tfr)	-115,090		0	-115,090
Rural Development Plan Reserve	-413,190		0	-413,190
<b>Sub-Total Other Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>-1,381,460</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>72,795</b>	<b>-1,308,665</b>
<b>Total Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>-6,612,587</b>	<b>154,410</b>	<b>584,428</b>	<b>-5,873,748</b>
<b>Total useable revenue reserves</b>	<b>-13,491,261</b>	<b>154,410</b>	<b>1,234,669</b>	<b>-12,102,182</b>

## Schools Reserves

- 5.3 Each of the Authority's Schools is directly governed by a Board of Governors, which is responsible for managing their school's finances. However, the Authority also holds a key responsibility for monitoring the overall financial performance of schools.

The net effect of an individual school's annual surplus or deficit is shown in a ring-fence reserve for the particular school. Details of which for each school are included in Appendix 6 based on their latest anticipation supplementing their statutory section 52 budget submissions at end May 2019.

- 5.4 In summary form the anticipated outturn school balances are predicted to be,

	<b>Opening Reserves 2019-20 (surplus)/deficit</b>	<b>Forecast in year usage 2019-20</b>	<b>Forecast outturn position 2019-20</b>
<b>Combined balance</b>	<b>£232,404</b>	<b>£650,241</b>	<b>£882,645</b>

In the last forecasting period (month 2) the use of reserves was £618,034, the current forecast indicates that this will increase to £650,241, leaving a deficit balance of £882,645.

- 5.5 15 schools started 2019-20 year in deficit. 14 were anticipated to end the year in deficit at month 2. Indications are 16 schools will end the year in deficit based on month 7 forecasts, with Pembroke Primary and Overmonnow Primary schools no longer anticipating coming out of deficit. The deficit position remains particularly acute for the 4 secondary schools. Monmouth Comprehensive is particularly significant at forecast £480k, however there is an agreed recovery plan in place and the school is following this. King Henry is currently developing a sustainable recovery plan and this will be agreed in the New Year. Chepstow School had a recovery plan previously, and this saw the school return to a surplus budget. The school is currently in a deficit budget, but has recently agreed a further recovery plan. Caldicot School also has agreed a recovery plan and are meeting the balances agreed.
- 5.6 The local authority has funded teachers' pay award for last 2 years and recent teachers' pensions fund rate changes has been afforded by WG grant. School balances have been declining over a number of years and for the year end 2018-19, balances were in a collective deficit. This forecast deficit has increased in the current financial year which is a concern. Schools are working closely with the Local Authority to minimise any overspends and agree recovery plans. Details of any individual school's movements are provided in the movement on reserve shown in Appendix 3. The current arrangement allows for deficit budget planning irrespective of the collective position where an appropriate recovery plan was provided and agreed at the same time as a deficit budget. Five schools are in the process of agreeing recovery plans, in the majority of cases a slightly extended period of time has been allowed for this due to changes in the leadership or where the deficit is not material or improving.
- 5.7 This position is a concern to the Local Authority, if the deficit balances for schools continue to increase this could over time have an impact on the overall reserves for MCC. To help manage this situation Cabinet is considering the offer of a loan to schools as part of the draft budget proposals for 2020-21. Should it be approved there will be strict criteria around the offer, including the criteria that schools who take a loan cannot enter a deficit

position and must be able to manage the repayments from the funding delegated to the school.

- 5.8 Members should maintain a heightened focus around those schools exhibiting red in the traffic light assessment in Appendix 3. Irrespective of the actions of the Executive, Scrutiny functions (CYP Select and Audit) to ensure that school maintain balances which are within the tolerance agreed in a recovery plan.

## **6 REASONS**

- 6.1 To improve budget monitoring and forecasting information being provided to Senior Officers and Members.

## **7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council's operating model particularly around social care isn't a sustainable model. That isn't unique to Monmouthshire, but is perhaps more acute given poor annual settlement awards. Management have addressed such pressures and un-achievability of savings through their 2020-21 budget proposals, and accommodation of circa £9.7m pressures.
- 7.2 In the short term to avoid the Council fund balance falling below acceptable financial planning parameters (4-6% of net expenditure), the Council is intent to utilise one-off funding to assist with its bottom line outturn position in the form of additional WG grant, use of capital receipts and VAT recovery from HMRC from the implementation of Ealing ruling to treat previously standard rated services as an exempt supply.
- 7.3 It will be increasingly difficult to find additional remedial savings through the year in addition to those required to allow a balanced budget to be established every February. This volatility risk would be traditionally mitigated by a heightened accountability culture whereby service managers are reminded of the need to comply within the budget control totals established by members, and are more responsible for any variances to SLT and Cabinet and equally for Select Committees to exhibit a more focussed reflection upon the adequacy of budget monitoring being applied. Members may wish to re-enforce such accountabilities and review any remedial action proposed by service managers to resolve adverse situations.

## **8 EQUALITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The decisions highlighted in this report have no equality and sustainability implications.

## **9 CONSULTEES**

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

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **11 AUTHOR**

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### **Appendices (attached below)**

Appendix 1 Stronger Communities Select Revenue Monitoring

Appendix 2 Mandated Savings Progress Report

Appendix 3 School Reserves

## **Stronger Communities Select Portfolio Revenue Monitoring Commentary**

**(£1,131k net underspend, an improvement of £381k since month 2)**

### 1.1 Chief Executives Unit (£110k overspend)

**Legal division** exhibit a £62k overspend, the increase on previous shortfall in land charges income, and unanticipated software costs has been caused by anticipation of extra Social care legal costs. **Governance, democracy and support** estimate an increased net £48k deficit due to additional staff costs at Contact centre to resolve teething issues with revised waste arrangements.

### 2.1 Resources Directorate (£95k overspend)

**Finance Division predict an underspend of £47k**, predominantly net predicted savings in Revenues and Exchequer sub division caused by vacancies and merchant card and cash fees being less than anticipated. **IT predicts an £45k underspend**, due to laptop purchases being capitalised being more significant than the deficit introduced by the shortfall in annual SRS contribution and the social care system replacement project costs needing to be met. **People services predicts £6k deficit**, the net effect of an under recovery in Raglan Training external income (there are extra costs associated with HR/payroll system being retendered which are currently compensated by underspends in corporate training and extra capacity introduced by Resources Directorate restructure that evidence an underspend as posts haven't yet been filled). **Corporate Landlord division** exhibited a net **£2k deficit** which hides large variances within monitoring, savings accrue from delay in staffing restructure, extra income from solar farm, and capitalisation of building maintenance costs, which compensate for pressures in cemeteries, industrial units, and county farms. Also income from commercial investments is less than budgeted due to void levels currently. **Future Monmouthshire** exhibits a **£179k deficit**, being the proportion of digitisation, travel and agency cost savings not yet attributable to particular services.

### 2.2 The 2019-20 budget process assigned £1.34m savings to Resources Directorate. All are anticipated to be achieved, other than the following exceptions.

- A shortfall (£56k) in the extent of income from Commercial investments returns against the amount presumed in revenue budget.
- The 2019-20 budget process attributed a further 10% saving in travel costs (£50k) to be facilitated and apportioned by Future Monmouthshire colleagues. This hasn't been achieved to date.

### 2.3 Resources Director's Perspective

Whilst the directorate has endeavoured to contain and reduce expenditure to support the overall Authority's overspend position a number of in-year challenges are being faced and that has seen a forecast £106k under spend at month 2 adversely swing to a forecast £95k over spend at month 7.

The main variances are outlined in 2.1 above. The transparency of the forecast has not been aided by the implementation of the directorate restructure that was approved by Cabinet in September. With regards to the restructure a delay in additional income and fee generation has only been partially offset by vacancy savings from new posts not being filled. Work is continuing to reduce a forecast income shortfall resulting from void lettings at Innovation House of £144k.



The solar farm has seen previously reported and forecast increased income over budget of £100k reduced to £25k as a result of one-off in-year issues with productivity and performance that have now been resolved.

In terms of commercial income, Newport Leisure Park is outperforming the £400k saving target by £48k. However, Castlegate is reporting a shortfall against budget income of £56k as a result of vacant units. However, this should be seen as part of a balance portfolio that is already contributing in excess of £600k of net income to the Authority.

An income shortfall at Raglan Training Centre of £51k results from reduced external course income. Work is being undertaken to mitigate this loss and a review is currently being undertaken to put the centre on a profitable footing going forward.

Services across the directorate continue to press down on cost and non-essential spend and it is hoped that the over spend can be managed down by the end of the financial year. However, at this stage it not prudent to offer a more optimistic outlook and the in-year position remains challenging.

### 3.1 Corporate (£461k underspend)

The net effect of the unutilised redundancy budget (£442k) and additional Fire pension costs being borne by central government (£180k) compensating for addition pension strain costs, extra coroners staffing, loan brokerage fees and 2019-20 uplift in insurance premia costs caused by 2018-19 activity. Please note the cost of redundancies unless subject to the traditional 2 stage approval process agreed with members show as overspends within service budgets.

### 4.1 Appropriations (£291k underspend)

Reserve usage is traditionally adjusted in both Appropriations and service Directorates to avoid any artificial variances. This tends to be the main source of adjustment since the previous monitoring period. The Treasury budget underspend is a mixture of circumstances, interest returns and related cash balances being greater than anticipated, delays in capital projects resulting in reduced minimum revenue provision costs which accrue generally from the year after assets become operational, and reduced net interest costs due to recurrent short term borrowing rates being less than longer rates.

### 4.2 With regards to budget savings performance








- The interest receivable saving has been outperformed
- But as part of 2019-20 budget deliberations, it was also planned to set aside sufficient receipts to reduce minimum revenue provision payments by £120k. However, the Crick Road element of the receipts balance (£2.7m) is effectively fettered from use by a negotiated condition that compels, upon request, the Council to repay the receipt back to Melin should it not be in a position to facilitate a workable and affordable drainage solution for the site. Consequently, it would be imprudent to set aside that balance or use it to afford capital expenditure until that condition has fallen away. As a result, the related net saving of £120k from receipts being used to replacing borrowing in affording purchase of short life assets and avoid resulting minimum revenue provision is no longer appropriate.














## 5.1 Financing (£584k underspend)



This results from an anticipation of an increased Council tax base due to new housing above budget (£467k), together with an estimate that Council tax benefit budget will be undersubscribed (£117k benefit) based on 7 month's activity payments.









**Savings Matrix**






<b>Disinvestment by Directorate 2019-20</b>	<b>2019/20 Budgeted Savings</b>	<b>Value of Saving forecast at Month 7</b>	<b>Delayed Savings</b>	<b>Savings deemed Unachievable YTD</b>
<b>REVENUE MONITORING 2019-20</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>	<b>(1,234)</b>	<b>(1,208)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(26)</b>
<b>Social Care &amp; Health</b>	<b>(1,246)</b>	<b>(1,115)</b>	<b>(90)</b>	<b>(41)</b>
<b>Enterprise</b>	<b>(1,480)</b>	<b>(930)</b>	<b>(152)</b>	<b>(399)</b>
<b>Resources</b>	<b>(1,342)</b>	<b>(1,236)</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Chief Executives Units</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>(46)</b>	<b>(60)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Corporate Costs &amp; Levies</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Appropriations</b>	<b>(282)</b>	<b>(162)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(120)</b>
<b>Financing</b>	<b>(756)</b>	<b>(756)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE Totals</b>	<b>(6,446)</b>	<b>(5,453)</b>	<b>(408)</b>	<b>(586)</b>

<b>Children &amp; Young People</b>		<b>2019/20 Budgeted Savings</b>	<b>Value of Saving forecast at Month 7</b>	<b>Delayed Savings</b>	<b>Savings deemed Unachievable</b>	<b>Traffic Light based Risk Assessment</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT of Progress</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	
CYP 1	Federated school model	<b>(23)</b>	<b>(23)</b>				Saving achieved
CYP 3	Investigate options to revise running and budgeting of Gwent Music - Schools	<b>(40)</b>	<b>(40)</b>				Close working with Gwent Music has identified where the savings can be achieved
CYP 4	Fees and charges - Before School Club - Schools. Residual effect of 2018-19 budget proposal, reflecting 5 months activity at £1 pd	<b>(72)</b>	<b>(46)</b>		<b>(26)</b>		Lower take up of paid childcare element has resulted in a shortfall on the income
CYP 6	Continuation of inclusion review (incl Mounton Hse)	<b>(275)</b>	<b>(275)</b>				Full savings have been achieved
CYP 7	Nursery Provision, double counting topped up schools Jan 19 - March, already provided every Sept	<b>(40)</b>	<b>(40)</b>				Full savings have been achieved
CYP 11	Teachers Pension Scheme - increased rates - prudent assumption of funding from WG at 60%	<b>(475)</b>	<b>(475)</b>				Grant income has been received to offset this
CYP 11	Teachers Pension Scheme - increased rates - prudent assumption of funding from WG at 40%	<b>(309)</b>	<b>(309)</b>				Grant income has been received to offset this
<b>CHILDREN &amp; YOUNG PEOPLE Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		<b>(1,234)</b>	<b>(1,208)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(26)</b>		

<b>Social Care &amp; Health</b>		<b>2019/20 Budgeted Savings</b>	<b>Value of Saving forecast at Month 7</b>	<b>Delayed Savings</b>	<b>Savings deemed Unachievable</b>	<b>Traffic Light based Risk Assessment</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT of Progress</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	
SCH 1	Practice change- continue the transformation of practice. Early help, reablement, better life planning and realigning provision to meet personal outcomes .	(536)	(536)				
SCH 2	Fairer charging weekly threshold increases from £70 to £80 generating income following means test	(129)	(129)				
SCH 3	Respite Care - income generation from Fairer charging threshold.	(9)	(9)				
SCH 4	Increase income budget for Mardy Park to reflect additional income from new sc33 agreement	(36)	(36)				
SCH 5	Adults transport budget realignment as people use own transport solutions	(15)	(15)				
SCH 6	Realign Drybridge Gardens budget , based on M5 underspend position	(11)	(11)				
SCH 7	Reduce Individual support service (ISS) staffing costs following end of current two year detriment	(6)	(6)				
SCH 8	Efficient rota management @Budden Crescent following recent review	(20)	(20)				
SCH 9	Continuing Health Care (CHC) Adult - Health recoupment	(100)	(100)				
SCH 10	Budget to represent care home fee income from property sales	(160)	(160)				
SCH 11	Additional charges recovered from property	(90)	0	(90)			Awaiting Counsel direction
SCH 12	Children, Welsh government (WG) additional grant funding for Looked after children (LAC)	(41)	0		(41)		Due to extra demand and the cost involved £41K goes very little way if any to
SCH 13	Discretionary fees & charges uplift	(93)	(93)				
<b>SOCIAL CARE &amp; HEALTH Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		<b>(1,246)</b>	<b>(1,115)</b>	<b>(90)</b>	<b>(41)</b>		

Enterprise		2019/20 Budgeted Savings	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7	Delayed Savings	Savings deemed Unachievable	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment	ASSESSMENT of Progress
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
18-19	OPS Grounds/waste - 1 year freeze of Head of waste p	40	40				Achieved
18-19	OPS Highways - displace core costs with grant	200	200				Achieved
ENT001	PLANHOUS – Development Mgt – Increased income from discretionary services	(13)	(13)				Achieved
ENT002	PLANHOUS - Development Mgt Press notice savings	(5)	(5)				Achieved
ENT003	OPS - Waste - Move to Re-usable bags for recycling. V	(45)	0	(45)			Cabinet decision to phase in this change so this saving is not achievable this year.
ENT004	OPS - Waste - Move to plastic bags instead of starch for food waste £30k per annum. Bags are going into Energy from Waste (EfW) regardless and contractor wants us to use plastic as easier to reprocess	(30)	(30)				Achieved
ENT005	Household waste recycling centre Day closures – Usk 2 days, Troy 2 days, Llanfoist 1 day, Five Lanes 1 day, circa £72k consequence	(72)	(60)	(12)			Only 10 out of 12 mths savings achieved due to delays
ENT008	OPS - Waste - Issue “Tax Disc” style permits to all residents with council tax to reduce cross border traffic of waste	(24)	(20)	(4)			Only 10 out of 12 mths savings achieved due to delays
ENT009	OPS Grounds/waste - Head of waste post, permanent removal from base.	(40)	(40)				Achieved
ENT010	OPS - Car Parks - Increase in charges - 10%	(90)	(30)	(60)			Only 3 months of savings currently achievable due to the length of consultation processes.
ENT014	OPS - Car Parks - Identifying additional car parking sites. Severn Tunnel Junction (requires investment)	(15)	0	(15)			The plans for Severn Tunnel Junction have changed dramatically so this income will not be achievable this year.






Enterprise		2019/20 Budgeted Savings	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7	Delayed Savings	Savings deemed Unachievable	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment	ASSESSMENT of Progress
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
ENT015	OPS - Car Parks - changing charging times 08.00-18:00	(3)	(1)	(2)			Only 3 months of savings currently achievable due to the length of consultation processes.
ENT016	OPS - Car Parks - Charging On a Sunday	(20)	(6)	(14)			Only 3 months of savings currently achievable due to the length of consultation processes.
ENT010-017	First year implementation costs of car parking proposals	106	106				Achieved
ENT018	OPS - Releasing spare budget funding from 18-19 Pay	(30)	(30)				Achieved
ENT019	OPS - Highways - Generate additional turnover through expansion of workforce to undertake more private/grant work. Would require additional investment.	(50)	(50)				Achievable
ENT020	OPS – Highways – Review of disposal of Highways arisings	(25)	(25)				Still undertaking review into proposal to achieve this. Delay could affect ability to fully meet target, although Highways will look at other means to manage shortfall.
ENT021	OPS - Streetlighting - rearranging of the funding of previous LED SALIX Loans	(38)	(38)				Achieved
ENT022	OPS - PTU Dynamic purchasing system (DPS) Retendering Savings.	(194)	0		(194)		Early indications are that the changes required to make this saving will happen too late in the year to have any benefit in 19/20



<b>Enterprise</b>		<b>2019/20 Budgeted Savings</b>	<b>Value of Saving forecast at Month 7</b>	<b>Delayed Savings</b>	<b>Savings deemed Unachievable</b>	<b>Traffic Light based Risk Assessment</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT of Progress</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	
ENT023	ECO - Community & Pships - Staff and Supplies & servi	(30)	(30)				Achieved
ENT024	ADM/MONLIFE savings	(205)	0		(205)		Net saving based on benefits gained by Mon Life moving into charity status (NNDR/Gift Aid/Vat), as this is no longer going ahead the savings are unachievable.
ENT025	ADM/MONLIFE fees & charges uplift	(59)	(59)		0		Achieved
ENT025	Discretionary fees & charges uplift	(27)	(27)				Achieved
ENT026	Headroom to capitalise Highways expenditure	(812)	(812)				Achieved
<b>ENTERPRISE Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		<b>(1,480)</b>	<b>(930)</b>	<b>(152)</b>	<b>(399)</b>		










Chief Executive's Unit		2019/20 Budgeted Savings	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7	Delayed Savings	Savings deemed Unachievable	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment	ASSESSMENT of Progress
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
CEO001	GOVDEMSUP - Releasing budget saving on Wales local government association (WLGA) Subscription	(3)	(3)				Achieved
CEO002	GOVDEMSUP - Reduction in annual grant provided to Monmouth CAB (1k), releasing budget saving (3k)	(1)	(1)				Achieved
CEO003	GOVDEMSUP - Additional Income from Caldicot Hub - Desk Leasing Scheme	(2)	(2)				Achieved
CEO004	GOVDEMSUP - Policy - Net Staff Savings from not filling admin post	(3)	(3)				Achieved
CEO005	GOVDEMSUP - Community Hubs - Cross-subsidy with new income from Com Ed external	(25)	(25)				Achieved
CEO006	GOVDEMSUP – Contact Centre – Integrated Customer Communications	(60)	0	(60)			Delays in restructuring the service and increases in calls have meant that any potential savings have been negated by the requirement to bring in agency staff to cover staff sickness and vacant posts. This saving will not be made this financial year
CEO007	GOVDEMSUP - Members - Chairman's charity - Reduce/remove MCC Subsidy	(8)	(8)				Achieved
CEO008	GOVDEMSUP – Make wider use of Chairmans car to enable a release of a pool car within MCC	(3)	(3)				Achieved
CEO009	Discretionary fees & charges uplift	(1)	(1)				Achieved
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVES' UNIT Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		<b>(106)</b>	<b>(46)</b>	<b>(60)</b>	<b>0</b>		

Resources		2019/20 Budgeted Savings	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7	Delayed Savings	Savings deemed Unachievable	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment	ASSESSMENT of Progress
		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
RES001	CORPLLORD Estates RE-FIT Energy Savings (net after funding repayments)	(25)	(25)				Achieved
18-19	RES (Procurement - supplementary duplicate payment review) - one off saving in 18-19 - needs to come back out	25	25				Achieved
RES002	Central Services Recharge to Monlife (gross, £143k pressure accomodated in 2018-19 budget)	(704)	(704)				As MonLife is now staying in-house this has been offset with an opposite pressure so nil effect.
RES003	Commercial property income - additional acquisitions - rental income above borrowing and other costs	(400)	(400)				Achieved
RES004	Commercial property income - Castlegate - create sinking fund through wider reserve replenishment from one-off VAT savings to afford release of annual net income to revenue account	(170)	(114)	(56)			Saving assumed 100% rental, currently we have some vacant units that are not producing any income so an element of saving will be delayed until we fill all our units.

Resources		2019/20 Budgeted Savings £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7 £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings deemed Unachievable £000	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment £000	ASSESSMENT of Progress
RES005	Further Travel cost reduction (10%) to be allocated via Future Mon	(50)	0	(50)	0		Total saving forecast be achieved by 31st March 2020.  Measures currently being implemented to reduce travel expenses across the authority comprise: Accommodation Review including reallocation of Social Care from Magor to Usk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accommodation rationalisation</li> <li>• Area based working</li> <li>• Route optimisation</li> <li>• Pool car review</li> <li>• Digital enabling for members and officers, including, Skype, laptops, smart phones, tablets, mobile apps etc.</li> <li>• Refocus on agile working and the ability to work seamlessly from any location.</li> </ul>
RES006	Discretionary fees & charges uplift	(18)	(18)				Achievable
<b>RESOURCES Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		<b>(1,342)</b>	<b>(1,236)</b>	<b>(106)</b>	<b>0</b>		

Corporate Costs & Levies		2019/20 Budgeted Savings £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7 £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings deemed Unachievable £000	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment £000	ASSESSMENT of Progress
		0					
<b>CORPORATE COSTS Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		0	0	0	0		
Appropriations		2019/20 Budgeted Savings £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7 £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings deemed Unachievable £000	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment £000	ASSESSMENT of Progress
APP001	Interest Receivable	(162)	(162)				
APP002	Minimum revenue provision (MRP) savings from capital receipts set aside - to be confirmed	(120)	0		(120)		The proposal involved use of Crick Road receipt, however legal agreement fetters its use until drainage solution secured
<b>APPROPRIATIONS Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		(282)	(162)	0	(120)		
Financing		2019/20 Budgeted Savings £000	Value of Saving forecast at Month 7 £000	Delayed Savings £000	Savings deemed Unachievable £000	Traffic Light based Risk Assessment £000	ASSESSMENT of Progress
FIN001	Council tax base increase - further increase anticipated beyond CT1 taxbase	(40)	(40)				
FIN001	Council Tax Reduction Scheme activity saving	(110)	(110)				
FIN002	Anticipated "floor" change to Aggregate external funding (AEF) (0.5% improvement)	(468)	(468)				
FIN003	Final "floor" change to 0.3%	(138)	(138)				
<b>FINANCING Budgeted Savings Total 2019-20</b>		(756)	(756)	0	0		

Appendix 3

Individual Schools Reserves

	Opening Balance 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit	Estimated usage based on Month 7 (surplus)/ deficit	Forecast Closing Balance 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit	Recovery Plan Yr end Target 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit
<b>Abergavenny cluster</b>				
E003 King Henry VIII Comprehensive	82,797	136,804	219,601	71,901
E073 Cantref Primary School	(88,391)	(412)	(88,803)	
E072 Deri View Primary School	(80,000)	7,056	(72,944)	
E035 Gilwern Primary School	(55,251)	(9,228)	(64,479)	
E037 Goytre Fawr Primary School	(2,737)	(24,932)	(27,669)	
E093 Llanfoist Fawr Primary School	(14,342)	(7,522)	(21,864)	
E044 Llantillio Pertholey CiW Primary School (VC)	9,643	15,542	25,185	25,185
E045 Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School	(34,341)	(2,003)	(36,344)	
E090 Our Lady and St Michael's RC Primary School (VA)	14,170	(28,628)	(14,458)	
E067 Ysgol Cymraeg Y Fenni	(51,306)	48,616	(2,690)	

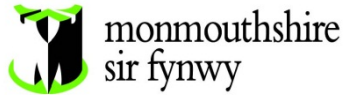
	Opening	Estimated	Forecast		Recovery
	Balance	usage	Closing		Plan
	2019-20	based on	Balance		Yr end
	(surplus)/	Month 7	2019-20		Target
	deficit	(surplus)/	(surplus)/		2019-20
	deficit	deficit	deficit		(surplus)/
	deficit	deficit	deficit		deficit
<b>Caldicot cluster</b>					
E001 Caldicot School	65,013	120,372	185,385		188,407
E068 Archbishop Rowan Williams CiW Primary School (VA)	(73,406)	(10,903)	(84,309)		
E094 Castle Park Primary School	23,772	(26,923)	(3,150)		(1,422)
E075 Dewstow Primary School	(108,642)	20,258	(88,384)		
E034 Durand Primary School	(29,087)	16,493	(12,594)		
E048 Magor CiW Primary School (VA)	54,651	(15,949)	38,702		13,348
E056 Rogiet Primary School	(20,015)	19,982	(33)		
E063 Undy Primary School	129,534	3,008	132,542		126,424
E069 Ysgol Cymraeg Y Ffin	32,979	30,280	63,259		Pending

		Opening	Estimated	Forecast		Recovery	
		Balance	usage	Closing		Plan	
		2019-20	based on	Balance		Yr end	
		(surplus)/	Month 7	2019-20		Target	
		deficit	(surplus)/	(surplus)/		2019-20	
		deficit	deficit	deficit		(surplus)/	
						deficit	
<b><u>Chepstow cluster</u></b>							
E002	Chepstow School	(50,661)	216,054	165,393		165,393	
E091	Pembroke Primary School	13,239	(989)	12,250		(209)	
E057	Shirenewton Primary School	(132,093)	41,810	(90,283)			
E058	St Mary's Chepstow RC Primary School (VA)	63,593	(6,463)	57,130		Pending	
E060	The Dell Primary School	(16,389)	(3,560)	(19,949)			
E061	Thornwell Primary School	53,722	(48,779)	4,943		(645)	



	Opening Balance 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit	Estimated usage based on Month 7 (surplus)/ deficit	Forecast Closing Balance 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit	Recovery Plan Yr end Target 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit
<b>Monmouth cluster</b>				
E004 Monmouth Comprehensive	538,326	(58,749)	479,577	487,767
E032 Cross Ash Primary School	(54,150)	11,616	(42,534)	
E092 Kymin View Primary School	(5,607)	(23,245)	(28,852)	
E039 Llandogo Primary School	83,516	94,142	177,658	(1,141)
E074 Osbaston CiW Primary School (VC)	(6)	27,411	27,405	Pending
E051 Overmonnow Primary School	18,473	602	19,075	Pending
E055 Raglan CiW Primary School (VC)	108,451	(59,955)	48,496	64,622
E062 Trellech Primary School	(71,983)	29,864	(42,119)	
E064 Usk CiW Primary School (VC)	(9,911)	(22,096)	(32,007)	

		Opening Balance 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit	Estimated usage based on Month 7 (surplus)/ deficit	Forecast Closing Balance 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit		Recovery Plan Yr end Target 2019-20 (surplus)/ deficit	
<b>Special Schools</b>							
E020 Mouton House Special School		(141,505)	66,950	(74,555)		4,947	
E095 PRU		(19,652)	93,717	74,065		Pending	



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>21<sup>ST</sup> January 2020</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To present the draft revenue budget proposals for financial year 2020/21 for scrutiny and for the Select Committees to offer their views on the proposals during the consultation period which extends to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

## 2. RECOMMENDATION FOR SELECT COMMITTEES:

- 2.1 To request the select committees scrutinise the 2020/21 draft budget proposals within the context of the 4 year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the Corporate Plan and offer their recommendations on the proposals to Cabinet for their consideration.

## 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CABINET:

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the release of its draft budget proposals for 2020/21 for consultation purposes.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approves that the consultation period, including the opportunity to present alternative proposals that have been assessed for Future Generations and equality implications, ends on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.
- 3.3 That Cabinet receives a verbal update at the meeting on the provisional settlement from Welsh Government, noting that the draft budget proposals are predicated on a 1% increase in Aggregate External Financing (AEF) together with teachers pay and pension increases fully funded by Welsh Government.
- 3.4 That Cabinet recognises unavoidable pressures of some £9.742 million that need to be provided for within the 2020/21 budget.
- 3.5 That Cabinet confirms its intention to fully fund all pay related pressures insofar as they impact schools and to accommodate significant demand pressures caused in particular by increasing numbers of looked after children and pupils with additional learning needs.
- 3.6 That Cabinet proposes a Council Tax rise of 4.95% for financial year 2020/21.
- 3.7 That Cabinet recognises that the budget proposal remains un-balanced at this stage. There is a remaining savings gap of £1.178m to address.

## 4. KEY ISSUES:

- 4.1 It is well trailed nationally that local government funding has been challenged for a number of years. Monmouthshire, in keeping with all other Councils in Wales has had to make significant adjustments year on year to its cost base to ensure that the service offer has remained relevant and appropriate for the citizens of the county. Members of all parties are nonetheless familiar with having to take decisions that they would prefer not to but with this as a context a reasonable and pragmatic approach has been taken. Financial year 2020/21 will continue this approach.
- 4.2 For some years now the Council has successfully accomodated the ongoing and significant financial, demographic and demand-led pressures. This alongside its commitments to deliver the goals and objectives set out in its Corporate Plan. The Corporate Plan outlines the priorities of the Administration and these, in summary, are illustrated later in the report.
- 4.3 This budget proposals continue to support the priorities of the Administration. Specifically it seeks to recognise:
- a) All pay and pension related spending pressures in our schooling system
  - b) The increasing demand on schools and the Local Education Authority of pupils with additional learning needs
  - c) The increasing demand being placed on our children's social services in respect of looked after children and for whom the Council acts as corporate parent
  - d) The growing impact of an ageing population and adults with disabilities on our adult social services

The budget proposals see a continuation of our preparedness to challenge all services to sustain themselves rather than to see the closure of services that matter to citizens. There is an acknowledgement that when things close they never return and it is better to scale back rather than absolutely withdraw. This is a feature of a number of proposals for change that make up these proposals.

- 4.4 The challenges facing the authority now and into the future should not be under estimated. The 2019/20 in-year forecast exhibits significant pressures within and across services. A recovery plan is in place and that will look to arrest the current over spend on services through significant one-off recovery of VAT, additional in-year grant and funding received and flexible use of capital receipts to fund revenue costs associated with service reform.
- 4.5 For 2020/21 and in overall terms there are some £9.742 million of new unavoidable pressures that need to be accommodated as part of the 2020/21 budget and these are detailed in appendices 1 and 2. The pressures significantly present themselves in:
- a) Adult and children's social care (£5.5m)
  - b) Children with additional learning needs (£1.5m)
  - c) Teachers pay and pension increases - £1.2m over and above the 1% pay award assumption modelled

- 4.6 It is never popular to charge for services but the reality is that we need to do so. We are proposing increases in a number of areas. Likewise increasing Council Tax is never popular but with national funding not keeping pace with demands on local authorities, local taxation is by default having to shoulder a greater proportion of our overall funding.

4.7 This budget proposal assumes a council tax rise of 4.95% for 2020/21 (1% higher than the original modelling assumption signalled in our report of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019), and a Council Tax rise of 3.95% for the remaining years of this Council. For a current Band D property of £1,316 (Council only element excluding community council or Police levy), this would illustratively be an additional £65.12 a year or £1.25 a week for 2020/21.

### **Purpose and Priorities**

4.8 Monmouthshire County Council’s Corporate Plan sets out the things we will be working on in the medium term. The plan sets out our five Organisational Goals (also our well-being objectives) supported by the 22 commitments to action we will make and the ways in which they will be measured in the run-up to 2022. This plan has been developed and aligned to the direction set in the Public Service Board objectives. The Plan is underpinned by a clear policy framework that sets out in more detail our work to enable the delivery of the plan. The aspiration and objectives set for Monmouthshire by the PSB and Council are:

<b>Purpose: Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities</b>	
<b><i>Public Service Board Well-being Objectives</i></b>	<b><i>Monmouthshire County Council Goals &amp; Well-being Objectives</i></b>
<b>Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life</b>	The best possible start in life
<b>Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change</b>	Lifelong well-being
<b>Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change</b>	Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment
<b>Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.</b>	Thriving and well-connected county
	Future - focussed Council

4.9 The budget proposals contained within this report have sought to ensure these key outcomes and priorities can continue to be pursued as far as possible within a restricting resource base. This does not, however, mean that these areas will not contribute to meeting the financial challenges. The aim is to make sure everything is efficient so that as broad a range of service offer, in line with those functions that matter most to our communities, can be maintained. Chief Officers in considering the proposals and strategy above have also been mindful of the whole authority risk assessment.

4.10 In assessing the affordability considerations of the corporate plan, an exercise which is iterative and ongoing, confirmation has been received at this stage that commitments to delivering the Corporate Plan for 2020-21 will either be met from existing budgets or are contained within the draft budget proposals. This work will continue as programmes of work develop and affordability considerations are more clearly understood and considered.

4.11 The following table demonstrates the links at a summary level that have been made with the 5 priorities, Corporate Plan and the strategic risks:

<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Link to Goals and Well Being Objectives in the Corporate Plan</b>	<b>Link to Whole Authority Risk assessment</b>
<p>Schools budgets will see a cash increase and with all pay and pension increases being fully funded.</p> <p>Education and school budgets will see additional resources going into the budget for children with additional learning needs.</p>	<p>Best possible start in life Thriving and well connected County</p>	<p>Budget proposals are mindful of the risk in the register around children not achieving their full potential</p>
<p>Social care budgets will see additional resources going into the budget for Children's and adults social services to meet the pressures in these areas.</p>	<p>Lifelong well being</p>	<p>These proposals seeks to address the risks around more people becoming vulnerable and in need and the needs of children with additional learning needs not being met</p>
<p>The drive for service efficiencies savings has continued and a few focused service reviews have enabled saving to be identified e.g. Household recycling and waste collection review, Myst project and practice change in social care.</p>	<p>Further reviews have enabled frontline services to transform the way they do things whilst still delivering the goals of the Corporate plan and therefore contributing to the creation of sustainable and resilient communities.</p>	<p>Addresses risks around the ability to sustain our priorities within the current financial climate</p>
<p>The need to think differently about what income can be generated has been a clear imperative in working up the proposals. Clear examples are the income opportunities from implementing the Commercial Strategy and the business plans within Tourism, Leisure and Culture.</p>	<p>Being able to generate further income streams responds to the consultation responses in previous years regarding a preference for this compared to services cuts and contributes to the aims of creating a sustainable and resilient communities.</p>	

4.12 A mid-term review of the commitments in the Corporate Plan is being undertaken to ensure that the aspirations and activity set remain relevant, that they are deliverable with the resources we have available and ensure they reflect the latest thinking on issues of importance to our communities. The mid-term review of the Corporate Plan will be presented to Council in the New Year and ahead of the final budget proposals and the council tax resolution being approved in March. With the need for budget to be policy led, this will afford a further opportunity to assess the affordability considerations of the Corporate Plan for the remaining two years of the administration.

### **Budget Process so far**

4.13 Cabinet received a report on the MTFP and budget process at their meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019. The report outlined the assumptions that were being used in the construction of the budget for 2020/21 and the MTFP.

4.14 As a reminder the following assumptions had been used initially for the 2020/21 budget:

- Council Tax – 3.95% for 2020/21, 3.95% for rest of MTFP
- Other external income – 0%, individual services to determine price increases
- Pay inflation – 1% for 2020/21 and the rest of MTFP
- Non pay inflation – 0%
- Vacancy factor – 2% (except schools)
- Superannuation – 24.1% rising 1% for each year of the MTFP
- Teachers superannuation – 23.6%
- Aggregate External Finance – 1% reduction and full funding of teachers pay and pension increases

4.15 The above assumptions and modelling at that time led to a gap of £5.39 million in 2020/21 rising to a gap of £21.07 million over the medium term. Further work was then being undertaken to assess service based pressures both in the current year budget and any new pressures arising. Savings and income generation proposals were also being worked up and reviewed in order to close the gap between available resources and demand for resources.

4.16 It should be acknowledged this year that receipt of the provisional settlement announcement from Welsh Government is delayed until 16<sup>th</sup> December 2019 with the final settlement now due in early March 2020. This has adversely impacted on financial planning arrangements and where levels of comfort or certainty are needed around core funding from Welsh Government. However, following advice and analysis provided by WLGA subsequent to UK Government’s one year spending review announcement, and discussions with other local authorities in Wales, the AEF assumption has been improved from a -1% to +1% which it is felt is prudent based on information received. A verbal update will be provided to Cabinet on the outcome of the provisional settlement when this paper is considered.

4.17 A high level summary of the draft proposals and the resultant budget shortfall of £1.178m still to be addressed is shown below. Pressures of £9.742m and savings of £7.981m are summarised in appendix 1 and each is supported by a detailed mandate in appendix 2.

BUDGET PROGRESS TO DATE	£'000	£'000
Gross Expenditure		231,533
Inflationary Pressures	1,554	

Specific Pressures	9,742	
	11,296	11,296
Sub Total Expenditure		242,829
Gross Income		(231,533)
<u>Inflationary Savings</u>		
Council tax additionality (3.95% original)	(2,136)	
<u>Savings Proposals</u>		
Service efficiencies	(3,832)	
Welsh Government settlement funding implications	(2,080)	
Income generation increase	(1,034)	
Council tax additionality (extra + 1%)	(831)	
Full cost treasury adjustment	(204)	
	(7,981)	(10,117)
Sub Total Income		(241,651)
Savings still to be identified		<u>1,178</u>

## Pressures

4.18 The work on pressures has highlighted that a number of significant pressures (£9.74m) need to be taken into account in next year's budget. A summary table of pressures is provided below and further information on the individual pressures is provided in summary in Appendix 1 and in detail in appendix 2. The main pressures principally relate to areas outside of the control of the Authority, and most notably:

- Funding Children's Services looked after children pressures (LAC) – £2.89m
- Sustaining the model of delivery within adult social care, including recent demand pressures with adults with disabilities – £2.47m
- Children with additional learning needs demand pressures – £1.47m
- Teachers pay and pension increases - £1.18m over and above the 1% pay award assumption modelled

4.19 It is noticeable that there are a limited number of pressures identified for years 2 to 4 of the MTFP against service directorates, however it is common for them to be recognised closer to the year in question and this needs to be borne in mind when considering the remaining gap in the MTFP. However, as part of the report presented to Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2019 the provision made for "unidentified pressures" has been increased from £2.5m to £5m per annum and to recognise the level of pressures having to be accommodated as part of the budget process and following a review of such historic pressures.

Pressures by Directorate	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Children & Young People	2,650	0	0	0
Social Care & Health	5,505	141	40	0
Enterprise	764	204	0	0
Resources	245	8	6	5
Chief Executives Unit	221	0	0	0
Corporate Costs & Levies	313	4,666	4,807	5,000
Appropriations	44	381	113	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>9,742</b>	<b>5,400</b>	<b>4,966</b>	<b>5,005</b>



4.20 Previously agreed savings that have been identified as not achievable have also been recognised as pressures in the model together with significant current year budget overspends that look set to continue into 2020/21 and to the extent that they can't be mitigated. In previous budgets directorates have been asked to manage these pressures within services, however given the level of savings already being delivered by some service areas a decision has been taken to recognise these significant demand-led pressures in the budget for 2020/21 to mitigate this risk.

### **Saving Proposals for 2020/21**

4.21 After several years of taking significant resource out of the budget the means of achieving further savings becomes increasingly more challenging. The significant in-year over spend, whilst being managed via a recovery plan, sees significant pressures carried through into 20/21 and with this already challenging backdrop has made the budget challenge even more acute.

4.22 The draft proposals in total bring forward savings of £7.98m. The notable savings proposals include:

- Assumptions around the increase in core funding (AEF) from Welsh Government, including full funding of teachers pay and pension increases (£2.08m)
- Opportunity taken from revised guidance from Welsh Government that allows the Authority to make flexible use of capital receipts to capitalise revenue costs relating to service reform (£1.15m)
- Income generation resulting from new charges and increases in existing fees and charges (£1.03m)
- A 2% (£830k) saving against Individual Schools budgets, alongside full funding of pay and pension pressures. A loan facility is also being offered to schools to more effectively repay deficit school balances. Schools will still receive a year-on-year cash increase in their school budgets. Support will however continue to be provided to schools to identify opportunities to generate savings.
- An increase in the increase in council tax for modelling purposes of 1% to 4.95% (£509k)
- Resulting from a review of earmarked reserves a planned reduction and release from the Treasury Equalisation reserve (£400k)
- A freeze in the employer pension contribution for the next two years (£370k)
- An increase in council tax income resulting from an increase in the number of housing completions forecast (£322k)
- A reduction in treasury budgets as a result of updates to the MTFP (£204k)
- Savings within Children's Services through reduced legal costs brought about by investment in in-house childcare solicitors (£100k) and resulting from increased and ongoing investment in the Myst project (£250k).

4.23 Work continues to develop ideas and proposals such that they can be brought into the budget once they are sufficiently progressed. The mid-term review of the Corporate Plan being presented to Council in the New Year will also need consider any policy changes needing to be considered to put services on a more sustainable footing for the future.

4.24 All proposals have been considered and tested through an initial process of independent challenge by officers and Cabinet Members. A summary of all the proposals are shown in the table below. The savings proposals are contained in summary in appendix 1 and in detail in appendix 2.

Savings by Directorate	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000
Children & Young People	(830)	0	0	0
Social Care & Health	(1,013)	(105)	0	0
Enterprise	(579)	0	0	0
Resources	(321)	(24)	(23)	0
Chief Executives Units	(163)	(1)	0	0
Corporate Costs & Levies	(370)	0	0	0
Appropriations	(1,758)	453	(2)	(241)
Financing	(2,948)	0	0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>(7,981)</b>	<b>323</b>	<b>(25)</b>	<b>(241)</b>

### Treasury Impact

- 4.25 The draft capital budget proposals and MTFP are being considered as a separate report on this agenda and for the purposes of establishing the revenue impact of the capital MTFP, the current summary position in the capital report has been taken.
- 4.26 The Treasury budgets continue to be closely monitored throughout the year, and any changes in the following will be considered at final budget stage: a review of the current year underspend, the profile of capital expenditure and potential slippage, a review of maturing debt over the medium term and the balance between the level of fixed and variable rate debt in the Council's portfolio. The balance of risk is an important consideration in this review as are the principles of security, liquidity and yield when considering any investment strategies.

### Council Tax

- 4.27 The Council Tax increase in the budget has been modelled as 4.95% for 2020/21 (3.95% original MTFP modelling assumption + 1%) and 3.95% per annum across the MTFP as a planning assumption. The Council tax base report was approved via Individual Cabinet Member decision on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and concluded an assessment of collection rates and growth in properties. Overall, the Council Tax base calculated for 2020/21 has risen by 0.51% compared to 2019/20. This increase takes into account the anticipated changes in dwellings. The estimated additional income of £322k derived from this and changes to CTRS (Council Tax Reduction Scheme) projections has been incorporated within the MTFP as part of the budget process.

### Summary position

- 4.28 In summary, the 2020/21 budget gap is now **£1.178m**, if all the savings proposals contained in the Appendix 2 are approved. Clearly there is a gap still to meet and further work is progressing to bring forward measures and further savings proposals to balance to budget if further funding is not made available through the provisional and final settlement.

Services	Adjusted Base 2019/20 £000	Indicative Base 2020/21 £000	Indicative Base 2021/22 £000	Indicative Base 2022/23 £000	Indicative Base 2023/24 £000
Children & Young People	51,215	53,389	53,837	54,338	54,795
Social Care & Health	46,334	51,132	51,546	51,969	52,357
Enterprise	19,881	20,501	20,929	21,323	21,721
Resources	7,648	7,732	7,828	7,956	8,108
Chief Executive's Unit	4,637	4,757	4,824	4,893	4,963
ADM	3,465	3,566	3,677	3,790	3,905
Corporate Costs & Levies	22,112	22,092	26,713	31,485	36,485
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>155,292</b>	<b>163,169</b>	<b>169,353</b>	<b>175,753</b>	<b>182,334</b>
Transfers to reserves	341	143	195	188	63
Transfers from reserves	(275)	(347)	(302)	(164)	(139)
Treasury	6,436	5,092	5,678	6,032	6,141
<b>Appropriations Total</b>	<b>6,502</b>	<b>4,888</b>	<b>5,572</b>	<b>6,056</b>	<b>6,065</b>
<b>Total Expenditure Budget</b>	<b>161,794</b>	<b>168,057</b>	<b>174,925</b>	<b>181,809</b>	<b>188,398</b>
Aggregate External Financing (AEF)	(93,229)	(93,229)	(93,229)	(93,229)	(93,229)
Council Tax (MCC)	(54,087)	(56,223)	(58,444)	(60,753)	(63,153)
Council Tax (Gwent Police)	(11,779)	(11,779)	(11,779)	(11,779)	(11,779)
Council Tax (Community Councils)	(2,699)	(2,699)	(2,699)	(2,699)	(2,699)
Contribution to/(from) Council Fund	0	0	0	0	0
EBP		0	0	0	0
Disinvestment		(2,948)	(2,948)	(2,948)	(2,948)
<b>Sub Total Financing</b>	<b>(161,794)</b>	<b>(166,879)</b>	<b>(169,099)</b>	<b>(171,408)</b>	<b>(173,808)</b>
<b>(Headroom)/Shortfall</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>5,826</b>	<b>10,401</b>	<b>14,590</b>

## Reserves strategy

- 4.29 Earmarked reserve usage over the MTFP period is projected to decrease the balance on earmarked reserves from £5.48 million in 2019/20 to £5.28 million at the end of 2021/22. Taking into account that some of these reserves are specific, for example relating to joint arrangements or to fund capital projects, this brings the usable balance down to £4.5 million. The general fund reserve is sustained at its current level of £7 million. Separate to this locally managed school budgets carry a net deficit balance of £0.23 million.
- 4.30 The previously approved Reserves strategy sought to ensure that earmarked reserves are not used to balance the budget for ongoing expenditure and that they are instead used to the best effect and impact on one off areas of spend to help the authority transform itself within the new resource levels available to it. The final budget report will contain an assessment of the adequacy of reserves, however, at this stage limited use is being made of reserves.

## Next Steps

- 4.31 The information contained in this report constitutes the draft budget proposals that are now made available for formal consultation. Cabinet are interested in consultation views on the proposals and how the remaining gap may be closed. This is the opportunity for Members, the public and community groups to consider the budget proposals and make comments on them. Cabinet will not however, be prepared to recommend anything to Council that has not been subject to a Future Generations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment and therefore a deadline to receive alternative proposals has been set as 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

- 4.32 Public consultation (to include the formal requirement to consult businesses) and Select Committee Scrutiny of Budget proposals, will take place between the 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019 and the 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.
- 4.33 In the past extensive community engagement had been undertaken around the budget. However, such a large scale public engagement will not be undertaken as budget proposals that see substantive or material service developments will have undergone their own consultation process.
- 4.34 There will however be an opportunity for the community to provide consultation responses via meetings with various consultative fora outlined below and via the website and social media where details of the proposals and consultation events will be published.

School Budget forum – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Head Teachers conference – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Unions Joint Advisory Group (JAG) – 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Youth Conference – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Abergavenny 50+/Access for All group – date to be confirmed  
Evening events in north and south of the county – dates to be confirmed

Town and community council cluster meetings:

Chepstow– 15th January 2020  
Monmouth – 21st January 2020  
Caldicot –23rd January 2020  
Usk – 28th January 2020

North Monmouthshire Area Committee – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2020

- 4.35 The scrutiny of the budget proposals are key areas of this part of the budget process. The following dates have been set for Select committees:

Adults – 21<sup>st</sup> January 2020  
Strong Communities – 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020  
Children and Young People – 28<sup>th</sup> January 2020  
Economy and Development – 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020

- 4.36 Final budget proposals following consultation and receipt of the final settlement will go to a special Cabinet on 19<sup>th</sup> Feb 2020 and approval of Council Tax and final budget proposals will then take place at Full council on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

## **4 OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 4.1 Directorates are required to consider and outline the options that have been considered for each of the budget savings proposals and pressures identified in this report. The detail is contained in the Appendices.

## **5 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- 5.1 The means of assessing whether the final budget put in place for 2020/21 has been successfully implemented is undertaken throughout the year via regular budget monitoring and periodic reports to Cabinet and then to Select committees for scrutiny. In

addition regular monitoring of the performance of the Council against service business plans and the Corporate Plan takes place. Taken together these arrangements enable the Council to evaluate its success and progress against its longer term plans within the resources available.

## **6 REASONS:**

6.1 To agree budget proposals for 2020/21 for consultation purposes

## **7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

7.1 As identified in the report and appendices

## **8. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING and CORPORATE PARENTING):**

8.1 The future generation and equality impacts of the savings proposals have been initially assessed per budget saving mandate in appendix 3. An overall future generation and equality impact evaluation of the all the proposals has also been undertaken and is contained in appendix 4. This overall evaluation is an early one, applying to budget proposals only at this pre-consultation, pre-decision stage. This analysis will continue to evolve and be updated throughout public consultation and scrutiny.

8.2 The impact on services has been kept to a minimum. Some negative impacts have been identified and a number of mitigating actions are in place or have been identified. Consultation requirements have been identified and are ongoing.

8.3 The actual future generations and equality impacts from the final budget report's recommendations will also be reviewed and monitored during and after implementation.

## **9. CONSULTEES:**

SLT  
Cabinet  
Head of Legal Services

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1: Summary of budget savings and pressures  
Appendix 2: Directorate savings and pressure proposals  
Appendix 3: Future Generations Evaluations  
Appendix 4: Future Generations Evaluation for the overall budget

## **11. AUTHOR:**

Peter Davies  
Chief Officer for Resources (acting S151 officer)

## **12. CONTACT DETAILS:**

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## Strong Communities Select Committee: Individual mandates for Pressures and Savings

Pressure Title:	Future Legal Department	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Matt Phillips
Your Ref No:	CCEO001	Directorate:	Chief Executive's
Version No:	1	Section:	Legal
Date:	6 Nov 18		

### Why is this pressure required?

This form is used to convey a net pressure in the Legal Department following a process of identification of both pressures and savings. That net pressure is ...

#### Pressure

The approval of the 19/20 pressure proposal has allowed considerable transformation of the legal department to far better position it to provide the service that the organisation requires. Confidence should certainly be taken in the improvement that this budgetary change has brought; for example, the legal work conducted on AMS or other project related work alone between 1 Sep 18 and 21 Oct 19 would have cost £146,398 using the MCC commercial rate that we apply, which is still below the market rate which would have likely placed the cost in excess of £200,000.

This pressure relates to 2 issues:

1. Recruitment of an Employment Lawyer.
2. Cost and risk reduction in Children Services/Family Law.

#### Employment Lawyer

MCC spends approximately £65,000 a year on external legal advice for employment matters. In the last 5 years it has dealt with 17 settlement agreements with an annual payment of £146,000. In 5 of these 17 cases (the only available data), the person subject to the settlement agreement spent an average of 11 months absent during the process. Extrapolating that at an average of 3.8 settlements a year that's almost 42 months a year lost to absence during these proceedings.

Outwith these legal matters, there is a swathe of policy that falls to People Services to draft, coordinate and implement, as well as the day-to-day advice that is sought from them and the business partnering structure that is in place. Further, MCC is currently increasing resource in People Services as part of the 4 Sep 19 Resources Directorate Restructure in recognition of the need to increase capacity therein to support the organisation.

It is estimated that an in house employment lawyer could reduce the annual legal spend by 2/3s (recognising that an element of the spend will be advocacy costs at Employment Tribunal) – approx. £44,000pa if the trend of the last 3 years continues. However, it is anticipated that there is a significant additional benefit that will be achieved during the kind of drawn out, high-absence matters that result in settlement agreements, let alone those matters that are not caught by the figures above.

Broadly, the ability for People Services, and Managers across the organisation, to get direct, free access to an in house employment lawyer should have a significant impact on the way business is conducted when it comes to HR matters to the benefit of the organisation and colleagues. It is anticipated that significant hidden demand would be exposed by such access that is not currently captured. It is an addition strongly supported by People Services and with support from CEx/SLT also.

#### Children Services/Family Law

The additional resource provided in the 19/20 budget has seen an approximate uplift in capacity in this area of the legal department of 30%. In the same time period, demand measured purely in terms of cases in proceedings in Court (there is a considerable amount of work beyond this calculation), has risen by over 50%. Given the starting position was one of under provision, despite the considerable improvements in the electronic working practices and new joiners have brought to the team, it is still unable to meet demand.

The Deputy Head of Law, who has been with MCC for over 40 years and represents a phenomenal amount of knowledge, skill and experience, will retire in Dec 19, as will another long standing member of the team, while a recently employed paralegal has succeeded in securing a training contract at another LA (a success story) and a Solicitor has decided to return to the private sector for a better work/life balance – in itself a measure of the workload currently being experienced.

As such, a full review of task and resource has been completed, resulting in this proposed pressure.

Experience and engagement with other LAs suggests that a lawyer should be capable of dealing with 7-8 cases at any one time, plus all of the other responsibilities of supporting the CS teams outside of Court proceedings. Currently, they are dealing with up to 13 each which is dangerous in terms of potential for error and work/life balance for our colleagues.

When cases reach an unsustainable number, despite action taken within the department to make use of temps and locums to smooth pinch points like Summer leave (resulting in an IY pressure), recourse is to send cases to an external Solicitor such as Hugh James. The average cost of doing so is approx. £22,000 per case (over typically around 9 months).

Therefore, if an in-house lawyer, with suitable support, can deal with an average of 8 cases at any one time, with an average duration of 9 months per case, then the equivalent cost of sending a single Solicitor's case load to Hugh James for a year is in the region of £200,000 (which of course discounts all of the other work carried out in pre-proceedings matters).

That suitable support is based on the recent experience of recruiting 2 paralegals into the department for the first time. While turnover is anticipate to be frequent (in itself a positive message to potential recruits), the considerable benefit of creating these new roles has allowed, within the constraints of the considerable demand growth, is the ability for the Solicitors to add value in areas that they specialise, rather than being swamped by administrative and routine legal tasks.

The CS budget for legal spend is £260,000. In 18/19 the final spend was just shy of £500,000 and the same is forecast for 19/20. More than 55% of this cost is Counsel and 16% Solicitor (mostly the Hugh James work referred to above). While the budget sits in CS, responsibility for reducing this overspend must sit with legal and so the additional resource will aim to reduce these costs by first, avoiding cases being sent to Hugh James, and second, reducing use of Counsel from capacity based to complexity based (ie. Solicitors will conduct hearings of up to 3 days in duration).

Therefore the proposal is to delete the Deputy Head of Law and Admin posts that are retiring IY and instead recruit one additional Lawyer and 2 additional paralegals.

### **Saving**

The work being conducted in the Commercial team to expand a client base means the income target will be increased as an aspiration to continue to broaden this work.

Further, the commercial ambition of the organisation via the Asset Management Strategy has meant that advice provided internally has and will increase as a result and, while that results in a considerable saving when compared with the cost of seeking external advice, it is still appropriate to apply an internal/external recharge on these services provided (depending on the nature of the project) so that the full cost of such activity is properly articulated to the Investment Committee. This income level has been set at 10% of the income target allocated within the Resources Directorate.



**How much pressure is there and over what period?**

Pressure - £180,000 for 20/21 and impacting thereafter taking into account pay awards and increments.  
 Saving - an income saving of £10,000 and a projects recharge value of 10% of the revenue target of £400,000 of £40,000.

**Net Pressure £130,000**

**Have you undertaken any initial consultation on the need for this pressure to be included in the MTFP?**

Name	Organisation/department	Date
Paul Matthews	Chief Exec	18 Oct
Paul Jordan	Cabinet Member Governance et al	10 Oct
Peter Davies		15 Oct onwards
SLT/Cabinet		Throughout

**Will any further consultation be needed?**

Name	Organisation/ department	Date

**1. Vision and Outcomes of the Pressure Proposal**

Give a business context for the budget pressure. This must pick up on the vision and what the new / improved / reduced service will look like in the future including the anticipated experience of users. It must also consider any impact on the Council's key priorities and strategic outcomes. Similarly, does it affect service performance within the immediate service area or any impact on other services provided by the authority / any other providers? In doing so, the pressure proposal must be tested against the Future Generations Evaluation and consider the impact in relation to the new Future Generations Bill.

**What are the outcomes of investing in the identified pressure?**

The pressure is purely a result of the personnel restructure/recruitment identified above.

**Employment Lawyer**

- reduce external legal spend by £44,000 a year across all directorates;
- reduce risk of HR matters;
- reduce cost of HR matters – potentially in terms of settlements, probably in terms of speed and efficiency leading to a reduction in absence costs;
- improve HR policies and robustness;
- better provide for PS and Managers to expose hidden demand currently not articulated.

**Family Roles**

- prevent further spend on external legal provision;
- reduce CS spend in Counsel costs by a target of £100,000;
- improve resilience in the department for pinch points in the year;
- reduce risk to children and others in our care and MCC reputation thereafter;

**Expected positive impacts****Employment Lawyer**

Mostly covered above but this would allow a fundamental shift in how MCC frames its policies and reacts to HR matters which will have a tangible cost benefit but a considerable cultural and capability benefit.

**Family Legal Recruitment**

We've got to swiftly address the IY overspends that are happening as a result of being understaffed and thereafter establish a system that is capable of not just meeting demand, but surging to meet future increased demand, reduce risk in CS work and then go onto address the crippling overspend in CS.

**Expected negative impacts**

**2. Pressure proposed**

Show how the budget pressure has been evidenced and will increase the current service budget. This must cover each year implicated. This section must also cover any other efficiency that will arise from the pressure.

**What is the evidence for the pressure? How has it been estimated?**

Detailed discussion with department accountant Sarah Pugh to calculate saving of removal of 2 posts and introduction of 4 new posts.  
Further discussion at SLT and S151 officer around the savings targets and calculation.

Service area	Current Budget £	Proposed Cash Pressure £	Proposed non cash efficiencies – non £	Target year				Total pressure proposed
				19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	
Legal	£726,024	130000			130000			130000

**3. Actions required to minimise the pressure**

Describe the key activities that will be undertaken to minimise the investment required and the action holders. This includes any actions contributed to by other services. Give the timescales to complete the work. This must also factor in any business activities that will need to be done differently or cease in order to achieve the proposal.

Action	Officer/ Service responsible	Timescale

**4. Additional skills/ business needs**

Describe any additional skills, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposed successfully. For example new expertise and knowledge etc.

Any additional capability required	Where will this come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)

**5. Measuring performance on the proposal**

How do you intend to measure the impact of the investing in the pressure identified? This will include budget measures and further possible measures that cover process, staff and customers. Targets need to be set over the duration of the proposal where appropriate.

Focus - Budget/Process/Staff/Customer	Indicator	Target 2019/20	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23
Reduce cost to directorates for HR matters	Feedback from HR				
Meeting demand in CS	No cases needing to be sent externally				
Reducing Cost in CS	CS Budget				

## 6. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the outcomes expected from investing in the pressure identified, including any negative impacts identified in section 1 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low) Based on a score assessing the probability & impact	Mitigating Actions
Demand in CS	Strategic	Yet another year of demand increase higher than all forecasts	Med/Med	Continued efficiencies of the new electronic working combined with greater scale, and so resilience, should assist
Supply/Demand	Strategic	Demand for CS lawyers is oustripping supply and so recruitment in the market is very difficult	Med/Med	Being better at recruiting than anyone else

## 7. Assumptions

Describe any assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker
We will have suitable applicants for advertised roles	We have proven success in recruiting through novel techniques and sheer hard work.	

## 8. Options

Prior to the pressure proposal being prepared, an options appraisal will have taken place. Summarise here the outcome of the Options considered and detail the rationale on why they were disregarded.

Options	Reason why Option was not progressed	Decision Maker
Do nothing	CS demand is too great resulting in the need to send work externally at vastly inflated costs. To do nothing would cost MCC considerably more than the proposed pressure financially, as well as increasing risk unacceptably	
Approve £125,000 for the CS recruitment alone	As per above, to not do this would invite additional cost and risk. However, there is a middle ground whereby the status quo remains as regards an employment lawyer thus saving on some of the proposed pressure. This is not recommended for the reasons set out.	

## **9. Monitoring the pressure proposal**

The pressure proposal will be monitored through directorate budget monitoring. This will lead into corporate budget monitoring. In addition, the action plan, performance measures and the risk assessment must be transferred into the service plans for the business area in order to monitor and challenge the delivery of the pressure proposal, including the performance being achieved and the level of impact.

Proposal Title	Community Hubs and Contact Centre: ICT and Automation Pressures and Community Learning Income	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Matthew Gatehouse
Your Ref No:	CCEO002	Directorate:	CEOs
Version No:	0.2	Section:	Policy and Governance
Date:	4/12/19		

**1. Proposal Description** Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored and the core objectives. Please also include supporting evidence for the identified saving and/or pressure

Unbudgeted costs associated with automation in the community hubs and contact centre.

- i) Uplift in budget to secure budget for My Council Services App and Chatbot. These enable increased channel choice and increased self-service functionality which will improve customer service and create the conditions for future efficiencies and improved responsiveness.
- ii) Recurring license costs from upgrade of public access PCs and laptops in community hubs. This provision enables ongoing delivery of core customer service offer in hubs as well as digital skills and provision of courses through Coleg Gwent franchise and Skills at Work Offer which aims to raise the skill level of lower paid workers across the county. Costs have been minimised by reviewing demand data and upgrading only 75% of existing machines as more service users have taken the opportunity to use their own devices in these settings we have been able to decommission approx. 25% of existing machines

**2. Budget Impact** In this section please include the savings and pressures identified and the overall budget impact resulting from this proposal. This must cover each year implicated.

Service area	Current Budget £	Proposed Cash Pressure £	Proposed Cash Efficiencies £	Target year				Total Budget Change Proposed
				20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	
Contact Centre	£1,365,847	£24,000	-	£24,000				+£24,000
Community Hubs	£323,365	£17,000		£17,000				+£17,000
Community Learning	(£4,000)		(£45,000)	(£30K)	(£10K)	(£5K)		-£45,000 (over MTFP)

**3. External Funding:** Has this proposal considered the opportunities for external funding? If yes, what funding avenues have been identified?

Funding Identified	Source	Current status (i.e. confirmed, in application, etc)
Skills at Work	Wales European Funding Office	Confirmed. The targeting of learners for the skills at work programme will open up opportunities to market additional courses outside of the scheme to new learners.

**4. Corporate Alignment:** How does this proposal contribute and align with the current Corporate Plan objectives and have the relevant evaluations been considered and completed? Please consider any implications this proposal may have on our current policies.

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
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Does this proposal align with the MCC <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a> ?	Yes	Yes – Future Focused Council. A) Council enables and provides good sustainable local services whilst delivering excellent customer experience across all channels and B) Exploring and embed new ways of working – Artificial Intelligence, automation and collaborative technology
Has this proposal been included in your current Service/Business Improvement Plans?	No	No
Has a Future Generation Evaluation been commenced?	No	
How will this proposal address MCC's Climate Emergency commitment.?	Yes	By increasing opportunities for people to access services digitally, it is feasible that avoidable car journeys will be reduced
Is an Option Appraisal required? (Please refer to MCC Standard Option Appraisal Process/Template)	No	
Will this proposal require any amendments to MCC policy?	No	

5. **Additional Impacts** What are the expected impacts of implementing this proposal? Please include the potential impact on other service areas

Description	Who is effected?	Is this impact positive or negative?
Positive impact on Community Learning through enhanced ICT provision	Those accessing courses in community hubs	Positive

6. **Additional Considerations:**

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal have any staffing implications?	N	
Will this project have any legal implication for the authority?	N	

7. **Key actions required to deliver this proposal**

Describe the key activities that will be undertaken to deliver the proposal and the responsible action holders. This includes any actions contributed to by other services (i.e. Finance/HR/DPO/Procurement/Legal etc.). Give the timescales to complete the work. This must also factor in any business activities that will need to be done differently or cease in order to achieve the proposal.

Action	Officer/ Service responsible	Timescale
Effective targeting of opportunities at new learners	Richard Drinkwater	September 2020
Production of marketing material and digital communications including close liaison with the council's communication, engagement and marketing team	Helena Williams	July 2020
Upgrade of ICT equipment to enable technology-based courses to meet learner expectations and ensure courses are booked	Helena Williams	January 2020

8. **Additional skills/ business needs**

Describe any additional skills, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposal successfully. For example new expertise that will require additional investment etc.

Any additional capability required	Where will this come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)
Expertise from revenue's and Benefits Team and Civica Ltd to ensure effective operation of chip	Revenue's and Benefits Civica	SRS Input – already delivered

and pin payment facilities in hubs following technology upgrade		

**9. Consultation** Describe any initial consultation that has been undertaken in order to inform this proposal and any further consultation that will be required throughout proposal delivery

Consultee	Description	Date (delivered/planned)
n/a		

### 10. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the outcomes expected from investing in the pressure identified, including any negative impacts identified in section 3 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low) Based on a score assessing the probability & impact	Mitigating Actions
Potential failure to ensure timely upgrade of software for chip and pin facilities to enable ongoing provision of card payment facilities in hubs	operational	Need for external activity identified following completion of testing by SRS	Medium	Work with colleagues in revenues and benefits team to identify alternative payment solutions that can be deployed in the event of delay
Potential failure to attract new learners to chargeable courses which could be impacted upon by wider economic conditions	operational	Raising additional income is dependent upon the courses being affordable to potential learners	Medium	Effective marketing and use of external funding sources to ensure courses are appropriately targeted at areas and demand and priced at an affordable level

### 11. Assumptions

Describe any assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker

### 12. Measuring and monitoring performance

How do you intend to measure the impact of this proposal? This will include budget measures and further possible measures that cover process, staff and customers. Targets need to be set over the duration of the proposal where appropriate.

Focus - Budget/Process/Staff/Customer	Indicator	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Target 2023/24
Budget	Amount of income generated from community learning courses	+30K	+10K	+5K	

The proposal will be monitored through directorate budget monitoring. This will lead into corporate budget monitoring. In addition, the action plan, performance measures and the risk assessment must be transferred into the service plans for the business area in order to monitor and challenge the delivery of the pressure proposal, including the performance being achieved and the level of impact.

**13. Additional considerations:**

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal require procurement of goods, services or works?	Y	Software upgrade
Will this proposal impact on the authorities built assets?	N	
Will this proposal present any collaboration opportunities?	N	However, will maintain quality of existing collaborative arrangements with Coleg Gwent
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	Y	Ongoing use of My Monmouthshire and Monty the Chatbot



Proposal Title	Staffing Re-alignment: Policy and Governance Section	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Matthew Gatehouse
Your Ref No:	CEO007	Directorate:	CEOs
Version No:	0.2	Section:	Policy and Governance
Date:	4/12/19		

- 1. Proposal Description** Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored and the core objectives. Please also include supporting evidence for the identified saving and/or pressure

To re-align staffing in the contact centre and across the community hubs to deliver economies of scale and realise efficiencies. This includes delivery of a £60K saving which has already been removed from the 19-20 budget for the contact centre (R032) but which it has not been possible to deliver in 2019-20.

The proposal will involve the deletion of a number of posts which have been held vacant and filled with fixed term or agency staff and will also result in some staff bases moving to other bases and changes in contracted hours. There will be one compulsory redundancy which will incur severance costs. The members of staff has been consulted and has been engaged in discussions. The proposal also involves the deletion of one Business Support position located at County Hall which is presently vacant.

The proposals will see the loss of 4.0 FTE.

- 2. Budget Impact** In this section please include the savings and pressures identified and the overall budget impact resulting from this proposal. This must cover each year implicated.

Service area	Current Budget £	Proposed Cash Pressure £	Proposed Cash Efficiencies £	Target year				Total Budget Change Proposed
				20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	
Community Hubs and Contact Centre	1,689,212		139,000 (includes 2019-20 savings target of £60K)	£79,000				-£79,000

- 3. External Funding:** Has this proposal considered the opportunities for external funding? If yes, what funding avenues have been identified?

Funding Identified	Source	Current status (i.e. confirmed, in application, etc)

- 4. Corporate Alignment:** How does this proposal contribute and align with the current Corporate Plan objectives and have the relevant evaluations been considered and completed? Please consider any implications this proposal may have on our current policies.

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Does this proposal align with the MCC <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a> ?	Yes	Yes – Future Focused Council.

		19) The Council enables and provides good sustainable local services whilst delivering an excellent customer experience across all channels.
Has this proposal been included in your current Service/Business Improvement Plans?	No	No
Has a Future Generation Evaluation been commenced?	No	
How will this proposal address MCC's Climate Emergency commitment.?	Yes	By increasing opportunities for people to access services digitally, it is feasible that avoidable car journeys will be reduced
Is an Option Appraisal required? (Please refer to MCC Standard Option Appraisal Process/Template)	Yes	
Will this proposal require any amendments to MCC policy?	No	

**5. Additional Impacts** What are the expected impacts of implementing this proposal? Please include the potential impact on other service areas

Description	Who is effected?	Is this impact positive or negative?
Reduction in the numbers of staff responding to queries from customers may reduce responsiveness. These are handled for all departments. This will be partially offset by the growing use of digital channels such as the app and chatbot and greater resilience by embedding contact centre staff within community hubs to enable peaks and troughs in demand between the different customer channels to be ironed out through greater economies of scale	All departments who have services accessed via hubs and contact centres	Negative

**6. Additional Considerations:**

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal have any staffing implications?	Y	This will involve one compulsory redundancy, the deletion of posts that have been held vacant while this work has been developed. There will also be a requirement for some staff to relocate from Chepstow to Abergavenny.
Will this project have any legal implication for the authority?	N	

**7. Key actions required to deliver this proposal**

Describe the key activities that will be undertaken to deliver the proposal and the responsible action holders. This includes any actions contributed to by other services (i.e. Finance/HR/DPO/Procurement/Legal etc.). Give the timescales to complete the work. This must also factor in any business activities that will need to be done differently or cease in order to achieve the proposal.

Action	Officer/ Service responsible	Timescale
Develop proposals in more detail	Matthew Gatehouse	Dec 2019

Commence informal consultation with staff who could be made redundant or relocated under the proposals.	Matthew Gatehouse	Dec 2019

### 8. Additional skills/ business needs

Describe any additional skills, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposal successfully. For example new expertise that will require additional investment etc.

Any additional capability required	Where will this come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)
n/a		

### 9. Consultation

Describe any initial consultation that has been undertaken in order to inform this proposal and any further consultation that will be required throughout proposal delivery

Consultee	Description	Date (delivered/planned)
Staff	Early discussions who would be subject to redundancy and those who will assume additional responsibilities or be relocated under these proposals. No engagement with wider staff group undertaken at this stage	November 2019

### 10. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the outcomes expected from investing in the pressure identified, including any negative impacts identified in section 3 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/ Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low) Based on a score assessing the probability & impact	Mitigating Actions

### 11. Assumptions

Describe any assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker
There is a growing ability to meet demand using digital channels	While demand for services has increased the authority has seen an increase in the proportion of customer interactions which are taking place over digital channels such as the council's app and chatbot.	

### 12. Measuring and monitoring performance

How do you intend to measure the impact of this proposal? This will include budget measures and further possible measures that cover process, staff and customers. Targets need to be set over the duration of the proposal where appropriate.

Focus - Budget/Process/Staff/Customer	Indicator	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Target 2023/24
Customer	Percentage of incoming phone calls that are missed	<15%	<10%	<7.5%	
Customer	Proportion of interactions which are digital	63%	65%	70%	

The proposal will be monitored through directorate budget monitoring. This will lead into corporate budget monitoring. In addition, the action plan, performance measures and the risk assessment must be transferred into the service plans for the business area in order to monitor and challenge the delivery of the pressure proposal, including the performance being achieved and the level of impact.

**13. Additional considerations:**

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal require procurement of goods, services or works?	N	
Will this proposal impact on the authorities built assets?	N	
Will this proposal present any collaboration opportunities?	N	
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	Y	Ongoing use of My Monmouthshire and Monty the Chatbot

Pressure Title:	CORPLORD Estates CCL Increases (Elec,Gas,etc)	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Debra Hill-Howells
Your Ref No:	PRES001	Directorate:	Resources
Version No:	1	Section:	Landlord Services
Date:	12.12.2019		

#### Why is this pressure required?

We have been advised by market advisors and the CCS that energy costs are set to rise in the next financial year. Our energy costs are in the region of £1,900,000 pa, so any uplift will create an unfunded revenue pressure. The authorities energy bill includes a charge relating to Change Climate Levy (CCL), CCL pressure will increase by 5% in 2020-21 with further increases expected in 21-22 and 22-23.

Refit has been used as an option to reduce energy costs and control the potential impact of large energy price increase, in 19-20 base budget a saving of £30,000 was identified from introducing Refit, due to changing timescales this saving has been partly delayed leading to a one off pressure in 20-21, the new profile of savings indicates that this will only be an issue for one financial year with increased savings being delivered in 21-22 and 22-23.

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
CCL CHARGES	£ 98,703	£ 151,115	£ 158,810	£ 165,126	£ 169,817
INCREASE ON 2018/19		£ 52,412	£ 60,107	£ 66,423	£ 71,114
INCREASE ON PREVIOUS YEAR			£ 7,695	£ 6,316	£ 4,691

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Net Re:fit saving	£ -	£ 15,651	£ 40,219	£ 63,775
Additional saving above £30k target	£ -	£ -	£ 10,219	£ 33,775

#### How much pressure is there and over what period?

Energy costs rise annually, we are currently securing our energy through CCS, but we are also exploring additional options including direct procurement

#### Have you undertaken any initial consultation on the need for this pressure to be included in the MTFP?

Name	Organisation/department	Date
Mark Howcroft, Peter Davies, Stacey Jones, Dave Loder, Nicola Wellington	Finance	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2018

Will any further consultation be needed?		
Name	Organisation/ department	Date

### 1. Vision and Outcomes of the Pressure Proposal

Give a business context for the budget pressure. This must pick up on the vision and what the new / improved / reduced service will look like in the future including the anticipated experience of users. It must also consider any impact on the Council's key priorities and strategic outcomes. Similarly, does it affect service performance within the immediate service area or any impact on other services provided by the authority / any other providers? In doing so, the pressure proposal must be tested against the Future Generations Evaluation and consider the impact in relation to the new Future Generations Bill.

What are the outcomes of investing in the identified pressure?
<p>The pressure has arisen as a result of increasing energy costs and CCL rates, if we do not increase the available revenue budget then the increased costs will need to be met from existing budgets which will have a negative impact on services.</p> <p>Increased pressure on Refit savings due to delayed implementation and changes to the delivery timescale, if we do not reduce this saving expectation then the increased cost will need to be met from existing budgets which will have a negative impact on services.</p>
Expected positive impacts
If the pressure is funded there will be a neutral impact to service providers and users
Expected negative impacts
If the pressure is not funded there will be additional costs to services that will reduce their available resources for service provision

### 2. Pressure proposed

Show how the budget pressure has been evidenced and will increase the current service budget. This must cover each year implicated. This section must also cover any other efficiency that will arise from the pressure.

What is the evidence for the pressure? How has it been estimated?								
<p>The pressure has been identified through conversations with Crown Commercial Services who have identified a significant uplift in costs for wholesale gas and electricity. They are now acquiring next year's supplies and will continue to do so until April next year as the market fluctuates on a daily basis – conservative estimates are that there will be a 30% uplift in the fuel costs for CCS customers</p>								
Service area	Current Budget £	Proposed Cash Pressure 20-21 £	Proposed cash savings £	Target year				Total pressure/saving proposed
				19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	
All	Total £1,900,000	7,695		52,412	7,695	6,316	4,691	116,114
Estates/All		14,349		- 30,000	14,349	- 24,568	- 23,556	-63,775

### 3. Actions required to minimise the pressure

Describe the key activities that will be undertaken to minimise the investment required and the action holders. This includes any actions contributed to by other services. Give the timescales to complete the work. This must also factor in any business activities that will need to be done differently or cease in order to achieve the proposal.

Action	Officer/ Service responsible	Timescale
We are investing in energy efficiency through the Re-Fit scheme that will be rolled out in the next financial year	Debra Hill-Howells/ Landlord Services	19/20
Alternative procurement options are being investigated	Ian Hoccom/ Mark Howcroft	18/19

### 4. Additional skills/ business needs

Describe any additional skills, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposed successfully. For example new expertise and knowledge etc.

Any additional capability required	Where will this come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)
Within the energy team	Landlord Services restructure	

### 5. Measuring performance on the proposal

How do you intend to measure the impact of the investing in the pressure identified? This will include budget measures and further possible measures that cover process, staff and customers. Targets need to be set over the duration of the proposal where appropriate.

Focus - Budget/Process/Staff/Customer	Indicator	Target 2019/20	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23
Budget	The energy costs of MCC are met within the allocated budget	100%			

### 6. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the outcomes expected from investing in the pressure identified, including any negative impacts identified in section 1 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/ Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low) Based on a score assessing the probability & impact	Mitigating Actions
Potential that energy costs will rise higher than planned due to Brexit etc	Strategic	Uncertainty in wholesale market	Medium	Continue to monitor market and identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption
Increased demand for energy	operational	Services have direct control over the management of buildings and best practices not always adhered to	Medium	Re-fit and identifying areas of concern to provide support. Effective monitoring of bills and consumption to identify variances in demand as could be problems

				with the supply as well as working practices

## 7. Assumptions

Describe any assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker
The CCS forecasts are correct	Current procurement framework provider and provider of wholesale evidence	

## 8. Options

Prior to the pressure proposal being prepared, an options appraisal will have taken place. Summarise here the outcome of the Options considered and detail the rationale on why they were disregarded.

Options	Reason why Option was not progressed	Decision Maker
Do nothing	Not an option as we are not in control of the energy supply costs, therefore if we do nothing the increased costs will be pushed back to service areas which will have a negative impact on services	Debra Hill-Howells
Mitigate consumption	Already being progressed as a saving through the Re-Fit scheme	Debra Hill-Howells

## 9. Monitoring the pressure proposal

The pressure proposal will be monitored through directorate budget monitoring. This will lead into corporate budget monitoring. In addition, the action plan, performance measures and the risk assessment must be transferred into the service plans for the business area in order to monitor and challenge the delivery of the pressure proposal, including the performance being achieved and the level of impact.



Proposal Title	BUDGET PRESSURES FOR THE SRS AND DIGITAL PROGRAMME OFFICE COMBINED	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Sian Hayward
Your Ref No:	PRES006	Directorate:	Resources
Version No:	1	Section:	Digital Programme Office &SRS
Date:	01/12/19		

1. **Proposal Description** Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored and the core objectives. Please also include supporting evidence for the identified saving and/or pressure

**This proposal is to detail the budget pressures arising within the SRS and the Digital Programme Office as a result of increases/decreases in budget provision.**

**THE SRS -**

The control total for the SRS budget for 20/21 is £2,136,204 and the confirmation of the cost from the SRS next year is £2,275,353 representing a shortfall of £139,149. This includes a shortfall currently being experienced in 2019/20 of £32,725

Increase in shared admin costs with other SRS partners	9774
Contract savings	-18762
MTFP increase in the SRS for pay awards etc	86684
Additional staff for project management and security	50918
Controllable budget savings	-22189
<b>TOTAL INCREASE IN THE SRS BUDGET</b>	<b>£139,149</b>

**THE DIGITAL PROGRAMME OFFICE -**

Data Protection registration fee increase	2,900
Increase of £4969 increase in GIS contract cost	4,969
<b><u>TOTAL INCREASE IN THE DPO BUDGET</u></b>	<b>7,869</b>

2. **Budget Impact** In this section please include the savings and pressures identified and the overall budget impact resulting from this proposal. This must cover each year implicated.

Service area	Current Budget £	Proposed Cash Pressure £	Proposed Cash Efficiencies £	Target year				Total Budget Change Proposed
				20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	
SRS	2,136,204	£139,149	0	£139,149				

<b>DIGITAL PROGRAMME OFFICE</b>	<b>£724,268</b>	<b>£7,869</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>£7,869</b>				

**3. External Funding:** Has this proposal considered the opportunities for external funding? If yes, what funding avenues have been identified?

<b>Funding Identified</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Current status (i.e. confirmed, in application, etc)</b>
Not applicable		

**4. Corporate Alignment:** How does this proposal contribute and align with the current Corporate Plan objectives and have the relevant evaluations been considered and completed? Please consider any implications this proposal may have on our current policies.

<b>Question</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Comments/Impact</b>
Does this proposal align with the MCC <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a> ?		<b>As it is an investment in digitisation yes it aligns with the corporate plan</b>
Has this proposal been included in your current Service/Business Improvement Plans?	N	<b>It isnt a proposal or project as such, it is an increase in operating costs as a result of of price and cost of living prices.</b>
Has a Future Generation Evaluation been commenced?		<b>YES</b>
How will this proposal address MCC's Climate Emergency commitment.?		<b>It will increase the digitisation of the councils services with a resultant decrease in travel, paper consumables and customer transacton costs.</b>
Is an Option Appraisal required? (Please refer to MCC Standard Option Appraisal Process/Template)		<b>No</b>
Will this proposal require any amendments to MCC policy?		<b>No</b>

**5. Additional Impacts** What are the expected impacts of implementing this proposal? Please include the potential impact on other service areas

<b>Description</b>	<b>Who is effected?</b>	<b>Is this impact positive or negative?</b>
POSSIBLE IMPACTS ON THE ABILITY TO DELIVER AN AMBITIOUS PROPOSAL FOR DIGITISATION IN THE COUNCIL	All services	No impact

**6. Additional Considerations:**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Y/N</b>	<b>Comments/Impact</b>
Will this proposal have any staffing implications?	N	
Will this project have any legal implication for the authority?	N	

### 7. Key actions required to deliver this proposal

Describe the key activities that will be undertaken to deliver the proposal and the responsible action holders. This includes any actions contributed to by other services (i.e. Finance/HR/DPO/Procurement/Legal etc.). Give the timescales to complete the work. This must also factor in any business activities that will need to be done differently or cease in order to achieve the proposal.

Action	Officer/ Service responsible	Timescale
NONE	Sian Hayward	

### 8. Additional skills/ business needs

Describe any additional skills, resource and capability needed in order to carry out the proposal successfully. For example new expertise that will require additional investment etc.

Any additional capability required	Where will this come from	Any other resource/ business need (non-financial)
NO		

### 9. Consultation

Describe any initial consultation that has been undertaken in order to inform this proposal and any further consultation that will be required throughout proposal delivery

Consultee	Description	Date (delivered/planned)
SRS BOARD	NEW BUDGET PROPOSALS PRESENTED TO SRS F&G BOARD	28/11/19
DPO		

### 10. Key Risks and Issues

Are there any potential barriers and risks that will need to be managed in delivering the outcomes expected from investing in the pressure identified, including any negative impacts identified in section 3 that need to be accounted for. Also, set out the steps that will be taken to mitigate these risks.

Barrier or Risk	Strategic/ Operational	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low) Based on a score assessing the probability & impact	Mitigating Actions
RISK OF NOT BEING ABLE TO SOURCE THE FINANCIAL INVESTMENT WITH A CONSEQUENTIAL DROP IN SERVICE OR THE ABILITY TO DELIVER THE DIGITAL PROGRAMME	STRATEGIC	IF FUNDING ISNT SOURCED THERE WILL BE A NEED TO CUT THE LEVEL OF SERVICE.	MEDIUM	SEEK TO IDENTIFY OFFSETTING SAVINGS IN THE SRS AT AN EARLY STAGE. SEEK TO REALISE SAVINGS IN THE GIS FUNCTIN BY SHARING SOFTWARE AND DEVELOPING CLOUD BASED SERVICES

### 11. Assumptions

Describe any assumptions made that underpin the justification for the option.

Assumption	Reason why assumption is being made (evidence)	Decision Maker

### 12. Measuring and monitoring performance

How do you intend to measure the impact of this proposal? This will include budget measures and further possible measures that cover process, staff and customers. Targets need to be set over the duration of the proposal where appropriate.

Focus - Budget/Process/Staff/Customer	Indicator	Target 2020/21	Target 2021/22	Target 2022/23	Target 2023/24
MONITORING OF OFFSETTING SAVINGS AND ANY INCREASE IN PERFORMANCE ALLOWED BY THE INVESTMENT	LEVEL OF OFFSETTING SAVINGS	3%	3%		

The proposal will be monitored through directorate budget monitoring. This will lead into corporate budget monitoring. In addition, the action plan, performance measures and the risk assessment must be transferred into the service plans for the business area in order to monitor and challenge the delivery of the pressure proposal, including the performance being achieved and the level of impact.

### 13. Additional considerations:

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Will this proposal require procurement of goods, services or works?	N	
Will this proposal impact on the authorities built assets?	N	
Will this proposal present any collaboration opportunities?	N	
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	N	<b>IT IS IN ITSELF A SUPPORT COST OF DIGITAL INTERVENTION</b>

Proposal Title	Senior Officer reduction	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Peter Davies, Chief Officer for Resources
Your Ref No:	RES001	Directorate:	Resources
Version No:	001	Section:	Various
Date:	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2019		

Version	Date	Changes Made
1	12th December 2019	
2		
3		
4		

**Brief Summary** (Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored)

The budget mandate brings forwards total savings of £100k relating to:

1. Secondment of the Head of Transformation to the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal – £90,000 staff saving including on-costs.
2. Approval of flexible retirement request for the Customer Relations Manager – reduction in hours equivalent to 1 day per week – £10,000 staff saving including on-cost.

Please answer the following questions and provide as much information as you have available at this stage of the proposals development. It is appreciated that further information will be developed prior to final approval of submitted proposals.

Question	Y/ N	Comments/Impact
Does this proposal align with the MCC <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a> ?	Y	Aligned to the objective to be a future focussed council to take the opportunity to drive service efficiencies without detrimental impact and to ensure any service impact is suitably mitigated.
Has this proposal been included in your current Service/Business Improvement Plans?	N	To be reflected in 2020/21 Services Business Plans
Has a Future Generation Evaluation been commenced?	Y	No negative impacts identified
How will this proposal address MCC's Climate Emergency commitment.?	N	Reduction in staffing complement has a natural consequence of a reduced carbon footprint.
Is an Option Appraisal required?  (Please refer to <a href="#">MCC Standard Option Appraisal Process/Template</a> )	N	

What is the impact of this proposal on other services?	N	Limited impact and any service pressures caused by the shortfall and loss in staffing will be suitably mitigated through other staffing and resource being suitably prioritised.																																								
What other services will affect this proposal?		None																																								
Will this proposal require any amendments to MCC policy?	N																																									
Will this proposal have any staffing implications?	N	Procurement section has been transferred to the Enterprise Portfolio and Future Monmouthshire co-ordinator is now reporting directly to the Chief Officer for Resources.																																								
Will this project have any legal implication for the authority?	N																																									
Will this proposal have any financial benefit?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>Remainder of 19/20</th> <th>20/21</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>22/23</th> <th>23/24</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Staff savings</td> <td></td> <td>100,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>100,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b></p>	Description	Remainder of 19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total	Staff savings		100,000				100,000																										
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Will this proposal require investment to implement?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Investment Description</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Remainder of 19/20</th> <th>20/21</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>22/23</th> <th>Total</th> <th>Source of funding</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comment:</b></p> <p>No investment requirement needed</p>	Investment Description	Description	Remainder of 19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	Total	Source of funding																																
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Has this proposal considered the opportunities for external funding?	N/A																																								
Will this proposal have any non-financial impacts?	No	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Benefit</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Disadvantage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Additional Comment:</b></p> </div>				Ref	Benefit	1		2		3		4		Ref	Disadvantage	1		2		3		4																	
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Has this proposal made any assumptions?	Yes	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Assumption</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>That the secondment of the Head of Transformation will continue through the entirety of the 20/21 financial year</td> </tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Additional Comment</b></p> </div>				Ref	Assumption	1	That the secondment of the Head of Transformation will continue through the entirety of the 20/21 financial year	2		3		4																											
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Has a risk analysis been completed for this proposal?  <a href="#">(Please refer to MCC Strategic Risk Management Policy)</a>		<p><b>Main Risks</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Risk</th> <th>RAG Rating</th> <th>Mitigation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>That the secondment of the Head of Transformation is concluded early</td> <td>Low risk</td> <td>Ongoing review and feedback from CCRCD</td> </tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>				Ref	Risk	RAG Rating	Mitigation	1	That the secondment of the Head of Transformation is concluded early	Low risk	Ongoing review and feedback from CCRCD	2				3				4				5				6											
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<p>Will consultation and engagement be required for this proposal?</p>		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Consultee</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Comp/Pending</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b> No consultation required. Agreement reached in both circumstances with relevant members of staff.</p>	Ref	Consultee	Description	Comp/Pending																												
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<p>Will this proposal require procurement of goods, services or works?</p>	<p>No</p>																																	
<p>Has a timeline been considered for this proposal?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Start</th> <th>Complete</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b> Will have taken effect ahead of the start of the 20/21 financial year to ensure a full year saving can be achieved.</p>	Ref	Activity	Start	Complete	1				2				3				4															
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<p>What evidence/data has been gathered to date to inform this Proposal?</p>		<p>Payroll data and calculations</p>																																



Will support services be required for this proposal?	No	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Support Service</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Internal/External</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Additional Comment:</b></p> </div>	Ref	Support Service	Activity	Internal/External	1				2				3				4				5				6				7				8											
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Will this proposal impact on the authorities built assets?	No																																													
Will this proposal present any collaboration opportunities?	No																																													
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	No																																													
How will the impact of this proposal be measured?		Ongoing review of the secondment and ongoing review of performance of services from which staffing has been removed to ensure no adverse impact on service performance and provision																																												

Proposal Title	Aggressive move away from cheques and cash towards automation and digital self service	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Ruth Donovan
Your Ref No:	RES002	Directorate:	Resources
Version No:	1	Section:	Finance
Date:	03/12/19		

Version	Date	Changes Made
1	03/12/19	-
2		
3		
4		

**Brief Summary** (Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored)

**To consider no longer accepting cheques as a method of payment and to fully adopt a previous decision made by this Council to become cashless.**

Currently our customers are able to pay for services by cheque. These cheques are either banked by the service departments (e.g. Leisure Centres, Museums, Markets etc.) by paying in at their local Barclays Bank or through a pick up by our Security Carrier, Security Plus.

Our Income Officers also receive cheques on a daily basis for council tax, sundry debtor invoices, residential/home care debtor invoices etc. Currently these cheques have to be manually receipted into Civica, our income system. A review of transaction data for April to October 2019 indicates that around 60% of all such transactions are cheque payments. The majority of these cheque payments are for either Council Tax or Debtor Invoices.

The proposal is to explore the impact a decision to no longer take cheque payments would have.

Also, some years ago the Council made the decision to become cashless and closed our public cash offices. Whilst we have taken a significant amount of cash out of our business there are still areas where cash remains e.g. Leisure Centres, Markets, and Libraries etc. This proposal also seeks to fully adopt this previous decision and to remove cash from our business altogether.

In removing these traditional payment options we will need to develop and strengthen our digital/self service payment options e.g. telephone and online payment facilities.

Please answer the following questions and provide as much information as you have available at this stage of the proposals development. It is appreciated that further information will be developed prior to final approval of submitted proposals.

Question	Y/ N	Comments/Impact
Does this proposal align with the MCC <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a> ?	Y	Forward thinking, future focussed council. Generates potential budget savings, will encourage customers to use the My Monmouthshire app, whilst reducing reliance on traditional services.
Has this proposal been included in your current Service/Business Improvement Plans?	N	The plan has been working towards automation and customer self service on a voluntary basis for our customers.
Has a Future Generation	Y	See attached

Evaluation been commenced?																																												
How will this proposal address MCC's Climate Emergency commitment?	N	n/a																																										
Is an Option Appraisal required?  (Please refer to MCC Standard Option Appraisal Process/Template)	Y	Advised not required at this stage. Can prepare if needed																																										
What is the impact of this proposal on other services?	Y	This will have an impact on all services taking payments. Day to day administrative proposals will need to change and different payment solutions developed and explored (some of which may require financial investment).  Services will have to manage and guide customers through the changes.																																										
What other services will affect this proposal?	Y	Support from the Digital Team, SRS and external system providers will be required.																																										
Will this proposal require any amendments to MCC policy?	Y	Sundry Debtor Policy, Council Tax Recovery Policy, any other Policies referring to payment facilities.																																										
Will this proposal have any staffing implications?	Y	Potential to reduce the number of Income Officer posts by 0.5 FTE from 2 FTE to 1.5 FTE (0.5 of which currently works in Banking, therefore leaving 1 FTE to receipt customer payments).  Potential impact on services through administrative changes.																																										
Will this project have any legal implication for the authority?	Y	Will need to clarify if the Council is able to withdraw cheques as a payment facility. (Aware some other Council's in England have done so. Also many major high street retailers no longer accept cheque payments).																																										
Will this proposal have any financial benefit?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>Remainder of 19/20</th> <th>20/21</th> <th>21/22</th> <th>22/23</th> <th>23/24</th> <th>Total</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Potential to reduce the number of Income Officers by 0.5 FTE</td> <td></td> <td>£20,000</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>£20,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b></p> <p>There may also be the potential to reduce security carrier costs (around £15k per annum) if cash is completely removed from the business.</p>	Description	Remainder of 19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	Total	Potential to reduce the number of Income Officers by 0.5 FTE		£20,000				£20,000																												
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	<p>However both this and the staff costs are likely to be offset by an increase in merchant card fees as customers move to alternative payment methods. These additional costs will have to be managed.</p>																																								
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<p>Has a risk analysis been completed for this proposal?</p> <p><a href="#">(Please refer to MCC Strategic Risk Management Policy)</a></p>	<p><b>Main Risks</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Risk</th> <th>RAG Rating</th> <th>Mitigation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Tax Payers stop paying their Council Tax/Business Rates resulting in a fall in collection rates.</td> <td>Possible, Substantial, High Risk</td> <td>Promoting alternative payment options e.g. Direct Debit.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Customers stop using services e.g. Leisure Centres, Museums, Markets etc.</td> <td>Possible, Substantial, High Risk</td> <td>Promoting alternative payment options e.g. Direct Debit.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Vulnerable service users are unable to access vital services such as home care and community meals.</td> <td>Possible, Substantial, High Risk</td> <td>Support customers through the change. Encourage alternative payment options e.g. Direct Debit. Possible</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Ref	Risk	RAG Rating	Mitigation	1	Tax Payers stop paying their Council Tax/Business Rates resulting in a fall in collection rates.	Possible, Substantial, High Risk	Promoting alternative payment options e.g. Direct Debit.	2	Customers stop using services e.g. Leisure Centres, Museums, Markets etc.	Possible, Substantial, High Risk	Promoting alternative payment options e.g. Direct Debit.	3	Vulnerable service users are unable to access vital services such as home care and community meals.	Possible, Substantial, High Risk	Support customers through the change. Encourage alternative payment options e.g. Direct Debit. Possible
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				extension of payment card solution used for Council Tax and Housing Benefits (although requires customer to be mobile)												
		4	Availability of Digital/self service facilities	Possible, Substantial, Medium Risk Only go live with proposal once systems are in place and working satisfactorily.												
		5	Resilience of existing telephone payment facilities and customer expectations of immediate response to online communications.	Possible, Substantial, Medium Risk Review of existing resources.												
		6	Current chip and pin set up at the Hubs is unreliable and not robust	Possible, Substantial, Medium Risk Develop and promote customer self service options												
		7	Any organisation taking card payments are required to comply with Payment Card Industry (PCI) requirements. Any data breach is subject to a substantial fine. The Council will need to invest time and effort in ensuring PCI compliance is achieved and maintained.	Possible, Substantial, Low Risk Work with partner agencies and teams to ensure systems and processes are up to date. Ensure any new online payment solutions run through our approved Merchant Provider – Barclaycard.												
		<b>Additional Comment:</b>														
Will consultation and engagement be required for this proposal?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Consultee</th> <th>Description</th> <th>Comp/Pending</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>General engagement with tax payers and service users</td> <td>Give customers prior notice of the change, giving them the opportunity to make alternative arrangements.</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>All staff</td> <td>Make Monmouthshire colleagues aware of the change and assist services in planning for the changes</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b></p> <p>Work with the Complaints Team to prepare for likely increase in customer complaints.</p>			Ref	Consultee	Description	Comp/Pending	1	General engagement with tax payers and service users	Give customers prior notice of the change, giving them the opportunity to make alternative arrangements.		2	All staff	Make Monmouthshire colleagues aware of the change and assist services in planning for the changes	
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Will this proposal require procurement of goods, services or works?		Unknown at this stage. May require some further system developments.																																			
Has a timeline been considered for this proposal?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Start</th> <th>Complete</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b> The details need to be worked through to develop a full timeline. If the reduction in FTE is to be implemented from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 then alternative digital arrangements will have to be in place before then.</p>				Ref	Activity	Start	Complete	1				2				3				4															
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What evidence/data has been gathered to date to inform this Proposal?		Review of activity held against the Income System – Civica.																																			
Will support services be required for this proposal?		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Support Service</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Internal/External</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Digital Team</td> <td>System development</td> <td>Internal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>SRS</td> <td>System development</td> <td>External</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>Civica</td> <td>System development</td> <td>External</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>Other system e.g. Clarity</td> <td>System development</td> <td>External</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comment:</b> Due to ongoing changes in the payment card market, Civica are experiencing difficulties in resourcing customer development requests. There are serious concerns at this stage that an enhanced online payment facility will be ready for 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.</p>				Ref	Support Service	Activity	Internal/External	1	Digital Team	System development	Internal	2	SRS	System development	External	3	Civica	System development	External	4	Other system e.g. Clarity	System development	External												
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Will this proposal impact on the authorities built assets?	N																																				
Will this proposal present any	N																																				

collaboration opportunities?		
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	Y	Need to align this with My Council Services to ensure a seamless experience for our customer.
How will the impact of this proposal be measured?		



Proposal Title	Discretionary Fee Increase for Resources, CEO and Enterprise for 2021/21	Lead/Responsible Officer:	Peter Davies, Matt Phillips/Matt Gatehouse & Frances O'Brien
Your Ref No:	CFC001	Directorate:	RES, CEO & ENT
Version No:	1	Section:	RES, CEO & ENT
Date:	11.12.2019		

Version	Date	Changes Made
1		
2		
3		
4		

**Brief Summary** (Please include a brief description of the proposal being explored)

**Increased income generation as a result of a 2.5% increase to discretionary fee for Resources, CEO and Enterprise**

**This will result in the following proposed budget savings per area:**

**Resources - £608**

**CEO - £2,659**

**Enterprise - £48,617**

**In addition to the proposed Enterprise budget saving, an additional saving is proposed in relation to primary school meals due to a 2% increase (£2.45 to £2.50) to reflect inflation. Charge to commence in Summer Term 2020.**

**Based upon custom levels being maintained, this would result in a proposed saving of £23,956.**

Please answer the following questions and provide as much information as you have available at this stage of the proposals development. It is appreciated that further information will be developed prior to final approval of submitted proposals.

Question	Y/N	Comments/Impact
Does this proposal align with the MCC <a href="#">Corporate Plan</a> ?	Yes	The increase in charges enables us to sustain the quality of discretionary services
Has this proposal been included in your current Service/Business Improvement Plans?	N/A	
Has a Future Generation Evaluation been commenced?	N/A	
How will this proposal address MCC's Climate Emergency commitment.?	N/A	

Is an Option Appraisal required?  (Please refer to MCC Standard Option Appraisal Process/Template)	N/A																																											
What is the impact of this proposal on other services?	N/A																																											
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Has this proposal considered the opportunities for external funding?	N/A																					
Will this proposal have any non-financial impacts?	NO	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Benefit</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Disadvantage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comment:</b></p>	Ref	Benefit	1		2		3		4		Ref	Disadvantage	1		2		3		4	
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Has this proposal made any assumptions?	Yes	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Assumption</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>Forecast assumes no reduction in custom</td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comment</b></p>	Ref	Assumption	1	Forecast assumes no reduction in custom	2		3		4											
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Has a risk analysis been completed for this proposal?	N/A	<p><b>Main Risks</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Risk</th> <th>RAG Rating</th> <th>Mitigation</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Ref	Risk	RAG Rating	Mitigation																
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<p>(Please refer to <a href="#">MCC Strategic Risk Management Policy</a>)</p>		<table border="1"> <tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	1				2				3				4				5				6											
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<p>Has a timeline been considered for this proposal?</p>	<p>No</p>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Start</th> <th>Complete</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>2</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>3</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comments:</b></p>	Ref	Activity	Start	Complete	1				2				3				4															
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<p>What evidence/data has been</p>		<p>Previous year's budget has been utilised to inform a percentage increase for 20/21</p>																																

gathered to date to inform this Proposal?																																														
Will support services be required for this proposal?	Yes	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Ref</th> <th>Support Service</th> <th>Activity</th> <th>Internal/External</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Communications</td> <td>Additional promotional materials may be required to promote services to maintain and increase custom</td> <td>Internal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>CYP</td> <td>Amendment to parent pay</td> <td>Internal</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p><b>Additional Comment:</b></p>	Ref	Support Service	Activity	Internal/External	1	Communications	Additional promotional materials may be required to promote services to maintain and increase custom	Internal	2	CYP	Amendment to parent pay	Internal	3				4				5				6				7				8											
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Will this proposal impact on the authorities built assets?	N/A																																													
Will this proposal present any collaboration opportunities?	N/A																																													
Will this project benefit from digital intervention?	N/A																																													
How will the impact of this proposal be measured?	BUDGET	Continued monitoring to ensure income target is maintained																																												

Service Area	Service being charged for	Proposed Charges for 2020/21 £:p	Percentage Increase	Increased additional budget income identified for 2020/21 budget setting purposes	Reason why inflationary increase is not being considered
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVES</b>					
Community Education			2.50%	144	
Libraries			2.50%	1,098	
	Overdue Charges	22p per day, max charge £15.00			
		For concessionary groups, 12p per day, max charge £7.50			
	Internet Usage	£1.04 per half hour for non members			
	Photocopying	From 21p to 36p per sheet			
	Reservation Fees (Inter Library Loans)	£4.30 per reservation			
	Promotional Sales Commission			0	
Elections	Electoral Registration		0.0%	0	Set by central Govt
	Training Income		0.0%	0	Current target is not being achieved.
Legal Services	Legal advice for external clients		2.5%	1,417	
<b>Sub-Total CEO</b>				<b>2,659</b>	

Service Area	Service being charged for	Proposed Charges for 2020/21 £:p	Percentage Increase	Increased additional budget income identified for 2020/21 budget setting purposes	Reason why inflationary increase is not being considered	
<b>RESOURCES DIRECTORATE</b>						
<b>Markets</b>	Markets-Caldicot		0.00%	0.00	Prices will remain the same due to amount of disruption caused by building work being carried out in 19-20 and rents being halved.	
	Markets - Monmouth		0.00%	0.00		
	Markets-Abergavenny		0.00%	0.00		
	Tuesday Market inside per table	£15.76	0.00%	0.00		
	Tuesday Market Outside per foot of floor space	£2.40				
	Wednesday Market per table	£9.45				
	Friday Market per table	£10.51				
	Saturday Market inside per table	£15.76				
	Saturday Market Outside - Small	£11.56				
	Saturday Market Outside - Large	£23.11				
	Sunday Market per table	£10.51				
<b>Cemeteries</b>	Cemeteries Service Charge		10.00%	0.00		Prices will increase to bring in line with neighbouring authorities, although service cannot make 19-20 budget target so price increase will only go to help reach that target in 20-21 and not increase the budget.
	INTERMENT IN EARTHEN GRAVE: PERSONS 17 YEARS OF AGE OR UNDER:					
	Stillborn and non viable foetuses (New ERB)	No Charge /No Charge				
	New single depth grave in children's section (New ERB)	No Charge /No Charge				
	New Single Depth (New ERB)	No Charge /No Charge				
	New Double Depth (New ERB)	No Charge /No Charge				
	New Treble Depth (New ERB)	No Charge /No Charge				
	PERSONS 18 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER:					
	New Single Depth (New ERB)	1650/3300				
	New Double Depth (New ERB)	1934/3868				
	New Treble Depth (New ERB)	3144/6289				
	Re-opened grave to single depth - (New ERB)	1130/1790				
	Re-opened grave to single depth (Transfer ERB)	1047/1047				
	Re-opened grave to double depth - (New ERB)	1471/2131				
	Re-opened grave to double depth - (Transfer ERB)	1319/1319				
	Cremated remains in Garden of Remembrance	715/1430				
	Re-opened cremated remains - (New ERB)	715/1166				
	Re-opened cremated remains (Transfer ERB)	660/660				
	Cremated Remains in new full grave	1205/2409				
	BRICKED GRAVE:					
	Single Depth	2070/4139				
	Double Depth	2820/5640				
	Treble Depth	3564/7128				

	RESERVATION OF GRAVE SPACE				
	Normal	297/741			
	Cremated Remains	188/470			
	RIGHT TO ERECT MEMORIALS				
	Normal Grave Space				
	All memorials for Children's Interments	No Charge			
	Headstones	220/440			
	Memorial Vases or Tablets	138/275			
	Re-Erection of Memorial following safety testing failure	No Charge			
	Replacement of existing memorial	88/176			
	Cremation Plots				
	Memorial Vases or Tablets	138/275			
	ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS ON MEMORIALS	88/88			
	Re- gilding of existing Inscriptions on all memorials	88/88			
	EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL FOR FULL GRAVE PLOT				
	Initial Issue	660/1320			
	Each subsequent transfer	578/578			
	EXCLUSIVE RIGHT OF BURIAL FOR CR PLOT				
	Initial Issue	451/902			
	Each subsequent transfer	396/396			
	Form of Assignment	36/36			
County Farms				0	No rent review is due so we cannot increase the fee income
	Agricultural Rents		0%	0	
	Cottage Rents				
	Grazing Rights				
Asset Management					
	Rents from shops and other properties	Various - all individual	0%	0	Increase already built into resources restructure
	Industrial Unit Rent	Various - all individual	0%	0	Increase already built into resources restructure
Allotments	Allotment plots	£28.30 Per Plot	3%	60	
Procurement	Agency rebate		0%	0	New agency contract, without rebate method that was previously agreed This will be offset by pressure built into MTFP.



Property Services	External Fee Income			0	Increase already built into resources restructure
			0%	0	
			0%	0	
			0%	0	
Central Finance	External Fees	4318	2.00%	548	Realigning budget to atuals charged
Audit	External Fees	Various	0.00%	0	
People & HR	Training	Various	0%	0	Forecast in 19/20 is below budget so no increase on budget for 20/21
	Corporate Training	Various	0%	0	
	Payroll	various	0%	0	No increase as working towards reducing late payments
<b>Sub-Total Resources</b>				<b>608</b>	

## **REVENUE BUDGET 2020-21**

### **Full Cost budget adjustment explanations**

In addition to specific service pressure and savings mandates, the budget has the potential to also move year on year due to corporate changes. The following briefing note provides details of those revisions,

#### **PRESSURES**

Full Cost budget briefing note	CORP - Fire precept increase	199
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The Council has received notice from the South Wales Fire & Rescue Authority of their likely precept next year. They exhibit 3 scenarios depending upon whether Welsh Government settles revised pension obligations caused by recent national court action against central government. The above costs reflects their most economic proposal.

Full Cost budget briefing note	CORP - Insurance renewal (half yr effect from 19/20)	114
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The insurance contract is reviewed annually (every October) to take account of activity changes. The two biggest increases are on Property (£95k increase) and Motor (£31k increase) insurance. For property this is primarily due to the high value cost of the barn fire to the insurers and the increased value of properties on cover (Monmouth School mainly). For Motor it is an increase in the number of vehicles on cover (from 401 to 433) and worsening claims history. Rises have been mitigated slightly by an increase to certain premia.

Full Cost budget briefing note	Net Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) increase based on additional activity	(204)
Full Cost budget briefing note	Additional borrowing in respect of Future schools tranche A, DFGs, and sewer plants	44

The revenue budget will always require review of corporate financing provisions to ensure they remain accurate. Sale of assets, revisions to capital financing requirement, and changes in activity of the capital programme can all affect the quantum of minimum revenue provision (MRP), and indeed when it falls due as it is usual practice to start making MRP payment in the year after capital assets become operational. The combined adjustments above are also reflective of the Capital MTFP

priorities and their related funding assumptions being considered by members during the budget process.

### **SAVINGS**

Full Cost budget briefing note	Commercial income	(200)
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This is an estimate currently reflective of a further increase in commercial income from commercial acquisitions, developments and investments that the Council will look to target as part of its Investment Portfolio. A wider review of Commercial income and activity is being undertaken to ensure that an overall increase is reasonable and appropriate, and affords sufficient cover and provision for returns to be generated from the existing investment portfolio.

Full Cost budget briefing note	Freeze pension contribution rate at 23.1% for next two years	(370)
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The Council receives advice from Greater Superannuation Pension Fund advisers pertaining to liability of the fund, the return on investments and the resultant contributions rate to use. The actuary, in undertaking its triennial valuation has recently proposed that Superannuation rates can be held at 2019-20 levels for a period of two years across 2020-21 and 2021-22 and in light of a strengthening of the fund performance.

Full Cost budget briefing note	Disinvest from top-up on discretionary business rate relief scheme	(37)
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As part of 2019-20 budget process the Council supplemented additional discretionary funding received from Welsh Government for business rates support. This capacity has not been fully utilised and with no such announcements from Welsh Government for 2020-21 this top up has been removed.

Full Cost budget briefing note	RES - earmarked treasury equalisation - reserve review	(400)
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The treasury equalisation reserve was originally created to manage volatility in financing rates, either in year or extending across years. Currently the balance stands at £990k, and it felt this can be reduced by £400k as a one year benefit, whilst still providing appropriate cover.

Full Cost budget briefing note	CORP - Redundancy budget review	(400)
Full Cost budget briefing note	School based redundancies	(300)

The Council has historically provided a revenue budget to assist with affording schools based and general redundancies. However the nature of the expenditure allows the Council to capitalise such aspects as part of its service re-design considerations. The equivalent headroom has been added to the Capital programme proposals for 2020-21 to be afforded by capital receipts.

Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Mounton House recoupment income loss and repayment of reserve funding for inclusion centres		(348)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Safeguarding team - one-off investment in recruitment & training		(45)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Lead officer - workforce development		(60)

Other expenditure to be capitalised as part of service re-design considerations are contained in the draft capital budget proposals being considered by Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The report is available via the attached link:

<https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/documents/s23428/6.%2020191220%20Cabinet%20-%20Draft%20Capital%20Budget%20Proposals%202021%20to%20202324.pdf>

Mark Howcroft

Assistant Head of Finance



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Ref	Chief Executive's Unit	2020/21 Pressure £000	2020/21 Saving £000
CCEO001	Legal - additional investment in childcare solicitors in response to demand and to lessen need to take external legal advice	125	
	Legal - employment lawyer investment	55	
	Legal services income from Fire and police		(10)
	Offsetting legal costs against capital projects and investment activity		(40)
CEO002 (19/20)	Reduction in annual grant provided to Monmouth CAB		(1)
CCEO002	Technology renewal - increased software licence fees in community hubs, contact centre and community education	41	
	Market and increase take-up of community education courses across all sites		(30)
CEO007	Staffing realignment across policy and governance		(79)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges		(3)
	<b>CEO Totals</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>(163)</b>

Ref	Resources	2020/21 Pressure £000	2020/21 Saving £000
PRES001	Energy cost increases	22	
PRES005 18/19	Technology & Systems review - digital savings no longer regarded as achievable	76	
PRES006	SRS core contribution increase	147	
RES001	Senior officer reduction		(100)
RES002	Exchequer savings - removal of cheques		(20)
RES003	Commercial income		(200)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges		(1)
	<b>RES Totals</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>(321)</b>

Ref	Corporate Costs & Levies	2020/21 Pressure £000	2020/21 Saving £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Fire precept increase - based on indicative increase notified	199	
Full Cost budget briefing note	Insurance renewals - increase in premiums (half yr effect from 19/20)	114	
	Investments - Corporate Plan	TBC	
Full Cost budget briefing note	Freeze pension contribution rate at 23.1% for next two years		(370)

<b>Corporate Costs &amp; Levies Totals</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>(370)</b>
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Ref	Appropriations	2020/21 Pressure £000	2020/21 Saving £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Net Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) increase based on additional activity		(204)
Full Cost budget briefing note	Additional borrowing in respect of Future schools tranche A, DFGs, and sewer plants	44	
2019-20 Budget approval	Interest Receivable		(1)
Full Cost budget briefing note	Earmarked Reserves review - reduction in Treasury Equalisation reserve		(400)
	<b><i>Costs funded via capitalisation direction:</i></b>		
Full Cost budget briefing note	Corporate redundancy provision		(400)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Mounton House recoupment income loss and repayment of reserve funding for inclusion centres		(348)
Full Cost budget briefing note	School based redundancy provision		(300)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Safeguarding team - one-off investment in recruitment & training		(45)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Lead officer - workforce development		(60)
	<b>Appropriations Totals</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>(1,758)</b>

Ref	Financing	2020/21 Pressure £000	2020/21 Saving £000
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Report	Council tax base increase based on forecast housing completions - as per CT1 form		(322)
	AEF increase - revised assumption from -1% to 0%		(900)
Full Cost budget briefing note	AEF funding - assumed 100% WG funding of teachers pay increase - Apr to Aug '20		(491)
	AEF funding - assumed 100% WG funding of teachers pension increase		(689)
	Council tax increase to 4.95% (from 3.95%)		(509)
Full Cost budget briefing note	Disinvest from top-up on discretionary business rate relief scheme		(37)
	<b>Financing Totals</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(2,948)</b>

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monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

## Future Generations Evaluation (includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)

<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> Frances O'Brien Peter Davies Matt Gatehouse Matt Phillips</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 01633 644686 <b>E-mail:</b> francesobrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>As part of the Authority's MTFP process and in setting an annual budget, we have reviewed all of our current fees &amp; charges and if there is any scope to increase this for 2020/21.</p> <p>Full details of all proposals can be found under Efficiency Saving Proposal CFC001 – Enterprise Fees and Charges (inc associated spreadsheet)</p>
<p><b>Name of Service:</b> Enterprise, Resources and Chief Executives</p>	<p><b>Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed</b></p> <p>18<sup>th</sup> December 2019</p>

1. **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?

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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	Maintaining a service that provides access to healthy meals	<p>A five pence increase in the charge for school meals will result in an increase in cost for those with school-aged children.</p> <p>Raising the cost of cemetery fees may have a disproportionate impact on those above the age of 18 who will incur the additional costs.</p>	<p>Ensure the Social Services and Well-being Act charging legislation is adhered too, so service users are means tested to determine their ability to pay.</p> <p>Free school meals are available for those on incomes below a certain level. We will continue to promote Free School Meal entitlement</p> <p>If a family cannot afford to pay for a burial they may be entitled to assistance in the form of a S46 burial. A local authority has a responsibility to organise a S46 funeral where</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. no funeral arrangements have been made</li> <li>2. no relatives of the deceased can be found, or</li> <li>3. the relatives of the deceased cannot or will not arrange a funeral</li> </ol> <p>The Local Authority however will be entitled to recover the costs of the funeral from the deceased estate.</p>

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?
Disability	<p>Both the Careline Alarms and installation charges are remaining fixed for 2020/21 and are not being increased in line with inflation.</p> <p>The Disabled Facility Grant administration fee remains fixed for 2020/21.</p>	N/a	Ensuring that the Careline service continues to be offered to those how require it.
Gender Reassignment	N/A	N/A	
Marriage or civil partnership	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	N/A	N/A	N/A
Race	N/A	N/A	N/A
Religion or Belief	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sex	N/A	N/A	N/A

2020/21

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?
Sexual Orientation	N/A	N/A	N/A
Welsh Language	None identified	None identified	All signage and material arising from budget proposals will be compliant with the Welsh Language measure 2011
Poverty	Although Poverty isn't a protected characteristic, it is important to assess and understand the impact of our proposals on those in poverty, especially if there is a cumulative impact from a number of proposals. This is in line with our Social Justice policy.	Increases in school meal charges will have a more significant impact on those on lower incomes.  Increases in cemetery fees will have a disproportionate impact on those on lower incomes.	Free school meals are available for those on incomes below a certain level. We will continue to promote Free School Meal entitlement to ensure greater awareness and take up.  The Local Authority will undertake a S46 funeral where the family is unable or unwilling to organise the funeral, but the costs can be recoverable from the deceased estate.




**2. 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. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Allows for the fees and charges we levy to be uplifted to reflect current price of goods, services and works	The full range of increased fees and charges incorporated within this proposal will be subject to full engagement and consultation with the community and elected members of the authority prior to being considered for inclusion in the 20/21 budget.



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	N/A	N/A
<b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Uplift in fees and charges allows resources to be allocated to priority areas across the authority such as social care and education.  Increase in school meals charges enables us to maintain a service that focuses on providing nutritional meals to young people that supports their physical wellbeing and health.	The full range of increased fees and charges incorporated within this proposal will be subject to full engagement and consultation with the community and elected members of the authority prior to being considered for inclusion in the 20/21 budget.
<b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	N/A	N/A
<b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Adhere to the charging legislation of the Act will mean a fairer and consistent charging for services across Wales.	As above
<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	N/A

<b>Well Being Goal</b>	<b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b>	<b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	N/A	N/A

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

<b>Sustainable Development Principle</b>	<b>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</b>	<b>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
 <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	Increases in fees and charges have been considered in the context of whole life cost analysis over the long-term in order to ensure sustainable and cost effective service delivery now and in the future.	Mitigating arrangements are in place to minimize the impact of increased fees of charges on people on low incomes
 <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	Fee increases are considered in conjunction with opportunities to deliver services more efficiently in collaboration with existing and new partners	Consultation and engagement with communities and elected members of proposed increases as part of MCC 20/21 budget setting process
 <p><b>Involvement</b></p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	These proposals will form part of the budget exercise and will be subject to a public consultation exercise. This will include sessions with existing groups such as the Access for All forum that represents people with disabilities.	Ensure that proposals and the accompanying Future Generations evaluations are used during, and updated as a result of, consultation and engagement.



Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Proposed fee increases enable priority services across the authority to receive additional financial support for pre-emptive services to be delivered that help reduce demand for costly provision in the future</p>	<p>Consultation and engagement with communities and elected members of proposed increases as part of MCC 20/21 budget setting process</p>
 <p><b>Integration</b></p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The proposal will generate additional revenue and ultimately support the economy of Monmouthshire</p>	<p>Consultation and engagement with communities and elected members of proposed increases as part of MCC 20/21 budget setting process</p>

**Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Social Justice	<p>Social justice is about reducing inequalities in society by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential. Increasing charges enables to maintain services that are accessible to all..</p>	<p>There is a risk that any budget proposals that increase in costs will have a disproportionate impact on people on low incomes and therefore will widen inequality.</p>	<p>The council is committed to aligning evidence based policy, programmes of work and resources with the aim of supporting people and communities to fulfil their potential and live the lives they want to live. Mitigation is in place to reduce the financial burden on people who can least afford it.</p>

Safeguarding	There are no specific positive impacts identified at this stage	There are no specific negative impacts identified at this stage	Safeguarding is at the heart of everything the council does. All staff are trained to a level that is appropriate to their role.
Corporate Parenting	There are no specific positive impacts identified at this stage	There are no specific negative impacts identified at this stage	

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

- Review of competitors charges
- Review of practices within other public sector organisations
- Current spend and income data
- Feedback Select Committees, SLT and Cabinet

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**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?**

These will be added following the budget consultation.

**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
The assessment will continue to be updated as individual budget proposals are developed and shaped by consultation.	As part of budget consultation	

**8. VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.0	Cabinet	20/12/19	



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

## Future Generations Evaluation (includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)

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<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation</p> <p>Ruth Donovan</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 01633 644592</p> <p><b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ruthdonovan@monmouthshire.gov.uk">ruthdonovan@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>To consider no longer accepting cheques as a method of payment and to fully adopt a previous decision made by this Council to become cashless.</p>
<p><b>Name of Service</b></p> <p>Revenues, Systems &amp; Exchequer</p>	<p><b>Date Future Generations Evaluation</b> form completed</p> <p>03/12/19</p>



**NB. Key strategies and documents that may help you identify your contribution to the wellbeing goals and sustainable development principles include: Single Integrated Plan, Continuance Agreement, Improvement Plan, Local Development Plan, People Strategy, Asset Management Plan, Green Infrastructure SPG, Welsh Language Standards, etc.**




- 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.

<b>Well Being Goal</b>	<b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b>	<b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Ensures limited resources are being utilised effectively and efficiently by removing manual processes from day to day business.	
<b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	n/a	
<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	n/a	
<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	n/a	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation		
<b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	n/a	

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The manual receipting of cash and cheques cannot be sustained in the long term. Would expect the use of cheques to gradually reduce as many high street banks no longer issue cheques with new current accounts. Online payment solutions using mobile devices are likely to become the norm over the next decade.</p>	
 <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Will need to work with the MCC Digital Team, SRS &amp; software suppliers to ensure income receipting systems are resilient and up to date.</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p><b>Involvement</b></p>	<p>Customers, tax payers and service departments will be affected by this proposal. Engagement is needed with each of these groups to ensure that they are prepared for the changes.</p>	
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p><b>Prevention</b></p>	<p>Alternative payment options (e.g. Direct Debit) are actively encouraged. However we still continue to receive a significant number of cash and cheque payments. These require a significant amount of staff time to process and administer.</p>	
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p><b>Integration</b></p>	<p>There is the potential that customers will opt out of services if they are unable to pay for them. Need to ensure that vulnerable groups are not disadvantaged and are able to receive the services they need.</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. For more detailed information on the protected characteristics, the Equality Act 2010 and the Welsh Language Standards that apply to Monmouthshire Council please follow this link: <http://hub/corporatedocs/Equalities/Forms/AllItems.aspx> or contact Alan Burkitt on 01633 644010 or [alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:alanburkitt@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

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	Online payments/digital solutions is now the default position for our younger community. Strengthening our online payment offering and linking in to My Council Services will help meet this demand and allow customers to pay for services in a mobile/digital way.	Our older residents tend to prefer to write cheques and don't have access to online services. The proposal will mean these customers will have to move to alternative payment options.	Engagement with our residents and customers to promote the change will be required. Encouraging alternative payment methods (e.g. direct debit) to be put in place.
Disability	Ability to make payments for all services online without the need to travel and at minimal cost	Difficulties accessing online services with certain disabilities	Engagement with our residents and customers to promote the change will be required. Encouraging alternative payment methods to be put in place.
Gender Reassignment	n/a	n/a	n/a
Marriage or civil Partnership	n/a	n/a	n/a
Pregnancy or maternity	n/a	n/a	n/a
Race	n/a	n/a	n/a
Religion or Belief	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sex	n/a	n/a	n/a
Sexual Orientation	n/a	n/a	n/a

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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?
Welsh Language	n/a	n/a	n/a

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>

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on safeguarding and corporate parenting	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	n/a	n/a	n/a
Corporate Parenting	n/a	n/a	n/a

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

Activity data held against the Income System – Civica.

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?



Positive impacts:

- Potential to save money and to use limited resources more effectively by reducing day to day manual processes.
- Strengthening our online/digital platform and providing customers with the modern payment facilities they now expect

Negative impacts:

- Potential loss of income
- Restricting payment options to certain customer groups (e.g. the very young and elderly) which may result in the withdrawal of services

Need to engage with our residents and customers before the change is introduced to ensure that they know what this means for them and can plan for the change (e.g. by setting up a direct debit).

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

<b>What are you going to do</b>	<b>When are you going to do it?</b>	<b>Who is responsible</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Engage with service departments collecting income	Before any decision to remove cheques and cash	Finance	
Engage with residents and customers to make them aware of the change and help them make alternative payment arrangements	Before any decision to remove cheques and cash	Finance	

**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>	6 months after implementing the change
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**9. VERSION CONTROL: The Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stages of decision making, and then honed and refined throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process so that we can demonstrate how we have considered and built in sustainable development wherever possible.**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Decision making stage</b>	<b>Date considered</b>	<b>Brief description of any amendments made following consideration</b>
1	Cabinet	20.12.19	

## Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Strong Communities Select Committee held at on Thursday, 7th November, 2019 at 10.00 am

### Councillors Present

County Councillor L.Dymock (Chairman)  
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: D. Dovey, A. Easson,  
V. Smith, J.Treharne, T.Thomas and  
D. Batrouni(substituting for R. Harris)

Also in attendance County Councillor D. Batrouni

### Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager  
Roger Hoggins, Head of Service - Strategic Projects  
(Fixed Term)  
Matthew Lewis (Countryside), Interim Performance,  
Evaluation and Programme Development Lead for  
MonLife  
Peter Edward Sutherland  
Cath Fallon, Head of Economy and Enterprise  
Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy and  
Governance  
Colette Bosley, Green Infrastructure Manager  
Charlotte Owen, Wales Audit Officer

**APOLOGIES:** County Councillor R. Harris

### **1. Declarations of Interest**

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

#### **Public open Forum**

Mr Sullivan attended on behalf of Llanbadoc Community Council to raise 2 issues to the select committee and to request a meeting with officers to resolve them:

- Monkswood and signage regarding speed limits
- Parking outside St Marks Church for funerals

Mr Sullivan also advised that Church View cottages Llanbadoc had been subjected to flooding the previous night and expressed thanks to the council officer for visiting. He also expressed thanks on behalf of Llanbadoc Community Council for the regeneration works undertaken in Usk.

### **3. Reducing Child Poverty and social inclusion and improve economic inclusion: Scrutiny of the Wales Audit Office Report and its recommendations**

#### **WAO report.**

The report context was outlined, members being advised that from the 79 steps outlined in the Corporate Plan, the step on child poverty and economic inclusion had been chosen against which to apply the 'sustainable development principle'. The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 requires public bodies to apply the 'sustainable

development principle' to their activities. The Wales Audit Office (WAO) explained that the report had focussed on the application of the sustainable development principle in reducing child poverty and promoting economic inclusion, as opposed to conducting a review of how the council is performing in those areas. The WAO advised that this was the first review of its kind and that the application of the principle through the 'long term' lens had enabled them to assess how well the council was applying the requirements of the act. The WAO reported that when they assess 'long term', they are looking to identify activities that span generations and to see evidence of plans for a 25-year timeframe. The primary finding was that the council has a good understanding of the requirements of the act and the key issues, but doesn't have a sufficiently 'long term' plan in place.

The committee heard that the 5-year Social Justice Strategy will help to deliver a coordinated approach and that exploratory work is being undertaken by the Public Service Board to gain a deeper understanding of factors related to wellbeing. However, officers acknowledged that a key area for improvement is developing a long term approach and a means by which to meaningfully measure performance outcomes. Whilst there is no specific budget to deliver the Social Justice Strategy, grant funding opportunities are being explored that could assist in developing longer term interventions and we have positive collaborative arrangements. For example, we are working with town and community councils and the business sector on initiatives to help alleviate holiday hunger. The Public Service Board also has established an Early Intervention Panel that can identify the most appropriate partners to help families. We need to access more innovative funding streams to do things differently.

The act applies different lenses to its requirements and one of the lenses is the 'involvement lens'. The council recognises that it needs to work closely with communities in order to identify who needs more support to assist them out of poverty. Officers advised that the council is developing its awareness around social isolation in rural and farming communities and is trying to identify the people for whom Brexit will have the most implications, acknowledging that links to its communities is crucial in developing the insight. The Department for Work and Pensions is undertaking a piece of work around universal credit and how data can be used to target those who need the most support and the council is similarly focussing on how data can be used to gain a better understanding of who needs help.

The committee were advised that unlike other WAO reports, this report did not provide 'proposals for improvement', however, the WAO will be working with the council to develop an action plan, which will be brought to the committee in the spring of 2020.

### **Challenge:**

- Why did WAO choose to focus on this topic over other areas outlined in our Corporate Plan? Have similar reviews been conducted with other councils so that we can benchmark ourselves against others?

*This topic was chosen as we felt whilst it was early days in terms of progress, we could usefully apply the sustainable development principle to assess how the council is performing in terms of the requirements of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015. The WAO hasn't reviewed this topic with any other*

*councils, but they will check to see if there is anything comparative that could help the council to benchmark itself in terms of its performance.*

- If this review has not been conducted before, who defines 'good' and what 'good' looks like? And without any ability to draw comparisons with others, would the WAO be taking into account the individual demands of each county?

*The Future Generations Commissioner sets the standard against which to assess whether public bodies are meeting the requirements of legislation, as opposed to drawing comparisons between them. We recognise that each county has individual needs.*

- It's positive that the WAO has appreciated through their review the GovTech work the council has been undertaking and it is good to see it has been recognised. Members are looking forward to seeing the impact of this work.

- We note the lack of a definition of child poverty and social isolation and we feel that without a clear definition, assessing performance is difficult.

*This review did not specifically analyse the performance of the council in terms of reducing child poverty or promoting economic inclusion, so no definitions were referenced in the report. The review was based solely upon the application of the sustainable development principle through the 'long term lens' in order to form a view as to whether the council is implementing the act's requirements.*

- We find this very difficult to scrutinise given that the scope is limited. For example, we would expect a review on this topic to consider the community meals service or to consider the work that the Strategic Transport Group have undertaken, but we recognise that this was a different type of review.

- How have you approached your analysis? Who was interviewed as part of this review?

*We held workshops with officers and cabinet members as the review had a specific focus. We will be doing a full review on an annual basis of how the act is applied across all services, so there will be more scope to provide full feedback on how the council is doing.*

- In terms of paragraph 18 of your report, this is a question for the council's officers. How do you propose to improve how you measure outcomes?

*It is very difficult to know how to measure success until an action has been implemented but we recognise we need to put more capacity into this, particularly in gaining the data. Swansea University is undertaking work on poverty and are developing a data model which would take into account a wide range of complex factors and this may help us to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that lead households to fall into poverty and to identify patterns. The work is at a very early stage, but would be the first opportunity for a university to test a research methodology in a public sector context, so we look forward to reporting back to the committee on this.*

- How can we be confident that we are working with right people?

*The Community and Partnerships team are the team whose key role is to bridge between the communities and the council in setting policy and some of the work being undertaken by those team members to tackle poverty is delivering real progress.*

- We cannot see any reference in the report to 'social capital' and this is a really important consideration for lonely and isolated people. Income and deprivation measurements are pretty established, but in terms of social capital, who people have access to, what help they have available to them should be an important

consideration when assessing the extent to which the act has been applied and yet it isn't reflected under 'prevention measures'. Why?

*The WAO were only examining this using the five ways of working. There is a lot of work being undertaken around this, such as community schools, the volunteering work and this can be brought to the committee in the spring.*

- I appreciate this, but I don't believe this review has analysed this from a holistic perspective.

*This review has only examined the arrangements the council has in place, not the actual outcomes, but we would like to look at this from a wider perspective as a future piece of work if that is helpful to the council.*

- Accepting that we cannot draw comparisons with other councils to give us insight on the issues we really need to be addressing, we need to have some way of identifying the issues we are not yet suffering from, but are likely to, so how can we be geared up?

*The report highlights that we need to grow our capacity around data to better understand what's going on and what may be coming. Whilst this review only focuses on 1 of our 79 actions, there are lots of pieces of work such as the work on Adverse Childhood Experiences that examines factors that lead to worse outcomes for young people, so in terms of preventative work, all public services are looking at preventative work that can enable us to put early interventions in place.*

#### Cabinet Member Contribution:

We really welcome this report and we can see there are early outputs from the Social Justice Strategy, so we would be keen for the WAO to return and examine the elements within the strategy. The feedback is really helpful for us in terms of reflecting on our practice and bolstering what we are doing. The Social Justice Strategy is an overarching strategy and if the chair and committee are in agreement, we would like to return in the spring with the Action Plan. We would like to update you on the GovTech work, the work on mental health and social isolation within the farming community and the Community and Partnerships Team can offer a full update on the work they are undertaking with communities.

#### Chairs Conclusion:

As a committee, we recognise that this review had a narrow focus, but it has been helpful in terms of helping us identify the direction of travel. The committee would be very interested in the work that Swansea University are undertaking in relation to the data modelling and similarly, the committee would like an update on the GovTech work. We look forward to inviting you back in the Spring of 2020 to present your action plan and we thank you for all your hard work on this very important topic.

#### **4. Green Infrastructure Strategy: Pre-decision scrutiny of the strategy**

##### **Pre-decision Scrutiny of the Green Infrastructure Strategy**

The committee were presented with the draft strategy which is due to be considered by Cabinet on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019, full details contained within the presentation attached

as Appendix 1. The officer explained that the strategy is a live document which will be updated to reflect emerging priorities, but intends to provide an overarching framework for green infrastructure and provide a framework that will be helpful for stakeholders and the authority in managing the approach to green infrastructure.

[CLICK HERE FOR PRESENTATION](#)

### Challenge:

- We recognise there is a substantial element of volunteering which supports what you intend to achieve. Please can you expand on the volunteer base and how actions will be carried out to support this strategy?  
*Volunteering is an integral element and is very much appreciated. The action plan is the critical part that will implement the strategy and needs the ownership of communities and the various groups involved.*
- You refer to the Gwent Levels project and we feel this is very important in terms of the success in implementing this. How deeply you are involved in partnership working with the project?  
*That is a very important point ~ we are highly involved. We lead on some of the key projects and the proposal is that the strategy will add value to the work of the Gwent Levels Project. The work is fully integrated and we know we are adding value. We are very sure of this and that makes it more rewarding.*
- Please can you explain how the funding streams work?  
*There wider project is grant funded through a combination of European Union funding monies and Heritage Lottery Funding and is centred around making the Gwent Levels a more attractive place to visit. There are key elements on the natural environment and community involvement, volunteers and specific events. In the primary hubs, visitors will find some consistent information. Initially, some criteria are set, but then communities are able to input what is required to enhance it. The projects delivered are legacy projects, for which funding can be sought.*
- We feel it's vital that the public are aware of the project, even in areas such as the Brecon Beacons National Park. Do you ensure they are updated and can signpost visitors?  
*Yes, they were involved in the workshops and have inputted into the strategy and we work closely together.*
- We notice that other groups play their part and an example is Llanbadoc Community Council who have produced a good footpath leaflet and the work of their volunteers is to be commended.  
*Yes, we recognise the need to raise awareness, so the intention is to take the strategy to Cabinet and hopefully it will be approved and then we intend to produce some material to distribute within communities.*
- How does this integrate with other policies?  
*This isn't a separate planning policy, it is part of our overall framework, providing critical information at strategic level but also for the public who may be submitting applications. This provides a broad vision and sets the direction. It sits alongside the Destination Management Plan and is embracing the green economy, looking at the whole range of factors, including social wellbeing and ensures everything is complementary.*



### Chairs conclusion

We thank you for bringing this to us for pre-decision scrutiny. We have raised some questions which you have fully answered and we are in full support of this strategy which will provide the clarity needed and will ensure our approach is integrated to the work of our partners and communities. We fully endorse that this strategy should be adopted by the Executive and request a further report in due course on the implementation of the action plan.

### **5. To confirm minutes of the previous meetings:**

#### **Approval of the Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The minutes of the meetings on the 10th September, the 26th September and 15th October were approved subject to amendments relating to attendance. The Scrutiny Manager will ask Democratic Services to check the attendance register and make the necessary adjustments.

### **6. Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 10th September 2019**

The minutes were approved subject to the addition of apologies for absence from County Councillor J. Treharne, and the removal of Squires and N. Vincent from the list of Councillors present.

### **7. Minutes of the meeting held on 26th September 2019**

The minutes were approved subject to the removal of County Councillor J. Pratt from the list of Committee Members as she was in attendance in her capacity as Cabinet Member.

### **8. Minutes of the meeting held on 15th October 2019**

### **9. Strong Communities forward work programme**

The Forward Work Programme was received.

### **10. Cabinet & Council forward work programme**

The Cabinet and Council Forward Work Programme was received.

### **11. Date and time of next meeting to be confirmed**

The meeting ended at **Time Not Specified**



*Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2019-20*

<b>Strong Communities Select Committee</b>					
<b>Meeting Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Purpose of Scrutiny</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Type of Scrutiny</b>	
<b>23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020</b>	<b>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</b>	Pre-decision scrutiny on the final plan ~ following the assessment stage, there will be a formal review, preparation of a draft plan, formal consultation prior to decision.	Matthew Lewis	Pre-decision Scrutiny	
	<b>Wye Valley AONB Management Plan</b>	Scrutiny of the draft plan prior to adoption.	Matthew Lewis	Consultation	
	<b>Short Break</b>				
	<b>Scrutiny of the 2020/21 draft budget proposals</b>	Scrutiny of the draft Capital and Revenue proposals for 2020-21 within the context of the 4 year Medium Term Financial Plan.	Peter Davies	Budget Scrutiny	
	<b>Budget Monitoring report - Month 7</b>	Budget monitoring report for quarterly scrutiny.	Mark Howcroft	Budget Monitoring	
<b>February 2020 TBC</b>	<b>Car Parking Proposals</b>	To engage members in the Car Parking Strategy and to consider initial ideas.	Mark Hand	Policy Development	
<b>Workshop with Economy and Development</b>					
<b>Special Meeting February 2020 TBC</b>	<b>Strategic Equality Plan</b>	Scrutiny of the Council's performance in delivery of the Strategic Equality Plan via an annual monitoring report for (2018 – 2019)	Alan Burkitt	Performance Monitoring	
	<b>The New Strategic Equality Plan</b>	Pre-decision scrutiny of the Council's new Strategic Equality plan prior to adoption by Council on 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2020.	Alan Burkitt	Pre-decision Scrutiny	
<b>12<sup>th</sup> March 2020</b>	<b>Car Parking Strategy and Proposals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endorsement of the Car Parking Strategy</li> <li>• Consideration of Car Parking Charging Options</li> </ul>	Mark Hand	Pre-decision Scrutiny	
	<b>Public Toilet Progress</b>	Progress report on the implementation of the Public Toilet Strategy and action plan.	David Jones Roger Hoggins	Performance Monitoring	
<b>Invite Economy and Development Members</b>					

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2019-20

Strong Communities Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2020	Tackling Poverty	Scrutiny of the Council's Tackling Poverty Action Plan following the recent Wales Audit Office Review.	Cath Fallon Matthew Gatehouse Cabinet Member Councillor Sara Jones	Performance Monitoring
	Hubs / Contact Centre / Customer Service	Performance report requested.	Matthew Gatehouse	Performance Monitoring
May 2020	Public Protection Performance Update	Annual scrutiny of the performance of the service and risks.	David Jones	Performance Monitoring

### Future Agreed Work Programme Items: Dates to be determined

- × Street Furniture policy
- × SEP Annual Monitoring Report 9 (2019 – 2020) ~ June 2020
- × Welsh Language Annual Monitoring Report (2019 – 2020) ~ June 2020
- × Annual monitoring of Public Protection in May, a half year exception report, highlighting any gaps in service delivery, to be scheduled in November of each year.
- × Registrars Service ~ annual monitoring in May
- × Air Pollution Monitoring Report ~ Multiple departments – Autumn
- × Social Justice Policy update
- × Open Space Review ~ review of open spaces and the prioritisation and management of highways ~ strategic review rather than operational.
- × Civil Parking Enforcement ~ members seminar in Autumn
- × Welsh Language Report ~ return of data
- × Cremations and Burials ~ 3 Members to investigate/report back. Social issues and financial.

**Emerging issues/topics to be raised with the committee before inclusion ~ some reports to be received by email for comment rather than in-depth scrutiny**

## Cabinet, Council and Individual Cabinet Member Decisions (ICMD) Forward Plan

Monmouthshire County Council is required to publish a forward plan of all key decisions to be taken. Council and Cabinet items will only be considered for decision if they have been included on the planner no later than the month preceding the meeting, unless the item is considered urgent.

Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Subject	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner	Date item originally scheduled for decision
Council	14/05/2020	LDP Preferred Strategy	Endorsement of final preferred strategy	Mark Hand	19/09/19	
Cabinet	03/06/20	Budget Monitoring report - month 12 (period3) - outturn	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2019/20 financial year	Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
Cabinet	01/04/20	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 9 held on 5th March 2020.	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Council	05/03/20	Strategic Equality Plan		Alan Burkitt	26/09/19	
Council	05/03/20	Council Tax Resolution	To set budget and Council Tax	Ruth Donovan	18/04/19	
Council	05/03/20	Constitution Review		Matt Phillips	14/08/19	
Cabinet	04/03/20	Budget Monitoring report month 10		Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
Cabinet	04/03/20	2019/20 Education and Welsh Church Trust Funds Investment and Fund Strategies	The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet for approval the 2019/20 Investment and Fund Strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee for adoption and to approve the 2018/19 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	

Cabinet	19/02/20	Consideration of Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals		Peter Davies	03/10/19	
Cabinet	12/02/20	Strategic Review of Outdoor Education		Marie Bartlett	18/10/20	
Cabinet	12/02/20	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 8 held on 23rd January 2020.	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Council	16/01/20	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		Ruth Donovan	18/04/19	
Council	16/01/20	Mid Term Review of the Corporate Plan		Peter Davies	26/09/19	
Council	16/01/20	Local Development Plan Preferred Strategy		Mark Hand	06/09/19	
Council	16/01/20	Constitution Review		Matt Phillips	14/08/19	
Council	16/01/20	Safeguarding - Annual Report to Council		Jane Rodgers	20/06/19	
Council	16/01/20	Proposed Development Company		Deb Hill-Howells	16/09/19	

ICMD	29/01/20	Various roads, county wide Amendment No. 1 of consolidation order 2019 (part 2)		Paul Keeble	13/01/20	
ICMD	15/01/20	Archaeology Planning Advice	Adoption post-guidance	Mark Hand	19/09/19	
ICMD	15/01/20	SPG S106 guidance note	To clarify how S106 contributions are calculated	Mark Hand	01/05/19	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Ethical Employment code of practice - Approval Paper Draft		Scott James	08/11/19	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) review/ Policy Statement - Results of statutory consultation and proposed Final Plan	To seek approval of the Review of the ROWIP and associated policies	Matt Lewis	18/07/19	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 7 held on 5th December 2019	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Budget Monitoring report - month 7 (period 2)	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2019/20 financial year.	Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Redundancy implications within MonLife		Marie Bartlett	07/11/20	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Homelessness Report		Deb Hill-Howells	07/11/19	
Cabinet	08/01/20	Primary School Places Reiview in Caldicot		Matthew Jones	02/10/19	

Cabinet	20/12/19	ARUP Report		Cath Fallon	07/11/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals		Peter Davies	26/09/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Tree management Strategy Update		Carl Touhig	16/09/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Green Infrastructure Strategy	To approve the Green Infrastructure Strategy	Matt Lewis	18/07/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Road Safety Strategy		Frances O'Brien	16/09/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Home to School Transport Policy		Frances O'Brien	16/09/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Long Term Household Recycling		Carl Touhig	29/01/19	
Cabinet	20/12/19	Statutory consultation to establish a new Welsh Medium Primary School in Monmouth		Debbie Morgan	15/08/19	
IMCD	18/12/19	Council Tax Base 2020/21 and associated matters	To agree the Council Tax Base figure for submission to the Welsh Government, together with the collection rate to be applied for 2020/21 and to make other necessary related statutory decisions	Sue Deacy/Ruth Donovan	18/04/19	

ICMD	18/12/19	SPG Landscape	To provide guidance on landscape character to inform planning decisions	Mark Hand/Amy Longford	02/05/19	
ICMD	18/12/19	SPG archaeology	To identify three new Archaeologically Sensitive Areas	Mark Hand/Amy Longford	01/05/19	
ICMD	27/11/19	Museum Review	To seek agreement to implement a staffing restructure and new public opening hours following a review of the Museums Service	Matthew Lewis		
ICMD	27/11/19	Infill SPG		Phil Thomas	06/11/19	
ICMD	27/11/19	Structure Change - Outdorr Education Service		Ian Saunders	08/11/19	
ICMD	27/11/19	Strategic Lead for Youth Enterprise & Skills		Cath Fallon	06/11/19	<b>ITEM WITHDRAWN</b>
ICMD	27/11/19	New Posts within MonLife		Marie Bartlett	01/11/19	<b>ITEM WITHDRAWN</b>
ICMD	27/11/19	LANDSCAPE SPG		Andrew Nevill	31/10/19	
ICMD	27/11/19	Sale of land at Llanvair Discoed for use as garden land'	To seek consent to dispose of two sections of land in Llanvair Discoed to current occupiers for use as garden land'	Gareth King/Cllr P Murphy	31/10/19	
ICMD	27/11/19	Infill Development Supplementary Planning Guidance	For adoption post-consultation	Mark Hand	19/09/19	

ICMD	13/11/19	CYP staffing structure – ALN Team		Nikki Wellington		
ICMD	13/11/19	MONLIFE AMENDMENTS TO TEAM CONFIGURATIONS		Marie Bartlett		
Cabinet	06/11/19	Climate Emergency Action Plan	Deferred	Matt Gatehouse	16/09/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 5 held on 19th September 2019 and meeting 6 held on 24th October 2019	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Section 106 Funding – The Hill, Abergavenny		Mike Moran	20/02/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Caldicot Leisure Centre		Ian Saunders	16/09/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Economic Growth		Cath Fallon	16/09/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Section 106 Funding – Penperlleni		Mike Moran	20/02/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Croesonen S106 Off-Site Recreation Funding		Mike Moran	30/09/19	
Cabinet	06/11/19	Monmouth S106 Off-Site Recreation Funding		Mike Moran	30/09/19	



Council	24/10/19	Corporate Parenting Annual Report		Jane Rodgers	28/08/19	
Council	24/10/19	Re-appointment of Monmouthshire Local Access Forum	To secure the appointment of members to the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum (LAF) for its next 3 year period	Matt Lewis	18/07/19	
Council	24/10/19	Change to Terms of Reference of PSB Select	To approve a wider remit for the PSB Select Committee to enable it to focus on broader public service activity within Monmouthshire	Hazel Ilett	01/08/19	
Council	24/10/19	National Development Framework		Mark Hand	06/09/19	
Council	24/10/19	Modern Day Slavery & Exploitation Protocol		Dave Jones	11/09/19	
ICMD	23/10/19	Museums - Collections rationalisation	Cllr Paul Jordan	Rachael Rogers	07/08/19	
ICMD	23/10/19	SPG S106 guidance note	To clarify how S106 contributions are calculated	Mark Hand	01/05/19	deferred to 27/11/19
ICMD	09/10/19	VARIOUS ROADS, COUNTY WIDE AMENDMENT NO.1 OF CONSOLIDATION ORDER 2019		Paul Keeble	20/09/19	
ICMD	09/10/19	Archaeology Planning Advice	Endorsement to consult on this advice note, which includes designating new Archaeologically sensitive Areas	Mark Hand	19/09/19	
ICMD	09/10/19	Planning Report		Rachel Lewis	11/09/19	

ICMD	09/10/19	Planning Services - Annual Performance Report 2018/19		Phil Thomas	11/09/19	
Council	19/09/19	Capital Strategy Approval		Mark Howcroft	09/08/19	
Council	19/09/19	Rights of Way Orders Decision Making	To review rights of way order decision making and remove the need for objected public rights of way Section 53 Wildlife and Countryside Act and 1980 Highway Act applications to be approved by ICMD	Matt Lewis	18/07/19	
Council	19/09/19	MCC Audited Accounts and ISA 260	To notify Council of completed Audit process and resultant accounts - To go to Audit Committee	Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
Council	19/09/19	SE Wales Strategic Development Plan		Mark Hand	18/06/19	
Council	19/09/19	Corporate Plan Annual Report		Richard Jones	19/06/19	
Council	19/09/19	Director of Social Services Annual Report		Julie Boothroyd	04/06/19	
Council	19/09/19	MonLife		Tracey Thomas	03/05/19	
Cabinet	18/09/19	Decision on the closure of Mounton House School	Special Meeting	Matthew Lewis	20/05/19	
Cabinet	18/09/19	VAT Management arrangements		Peter Davies	08/08/19	

Cabinet	18/09/19	MTFP and Budget Process	To outline the context and process within which the MTFP over the next 4 years and the budget will be developed.	Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
ICMD	11/09/19	Proposed acquisition of MOD railway line.		Deb Hill Howells/ P Murphy	222/08/19	
ICMD	11/09/19	Property Appreciation	Equity Release Scheme	Ian Bakewell	07/08/19	
ICMD	11/09/19	SPG Landscape	To provide guidance on landscape character to inform planning decisions	Mark Hand/Amy Longford	02/05/19	WITHDRAWN
ICMD	11/09/19	<a href="#">Skills @ Work Programme</a>	To seek approval for Monmouthshire's approach to delivering this pan-Wales, fully funded, scheme designed to enhance skills and increase productivity in the workplace, providing opportunities for employers in all sectors to gain accredited qualifications for their workforce	Richard Drinkwater/Nikki Jones	05/08/19	
ICMD	11/09/19	SPG archaeology	To identify three new Archaeologically Sensitive Areas	Mark Hand/Amy Longford	01/05/19	WITHDRAWN
ICMD	11/09/19	Sale of land for Garden use Llanfair Discoed	To seek consent for the sale of the section of the land at Llanfair Discoed to the existing leaseholder for use as garden land.	Gareth King/Cllr P Murphy	08/08/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	Public Services Ombudsman Annual Report		Paul Matthews	07/08/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	Sec 106 Funding; Countryside Sites	To seek approval for section 106 expenditure on various countryside sites	Matthew Lewis	18/07/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	Digital Infrastructure Action Plan		Cath Fallon	01/04/19	

Cabinet	04/09/19	Windows 10 Laptop Replacement	This report seeks funding for the replacement or upgrade of workplace laptop stocks, bringing them up to a minimum of Windows 10 operating system and meeting our ICT security requirements	Sian Hayward	01/08/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	Digital Infrastructure Action Plan		Cath Fallon	08/05/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	School Partnership Agreement		Cath Sheen	01/07/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	Restructure of Resources Directorate	deferred	Peter Davies	07/06/19	
Cabinet	04/09/19	Brexit Preparedness		Cath Fallon		
ICMD	21/08/19	Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation Protocol'		David Jones	01/08/19	
ICMD	21/08/19	Insourcing of Engineering Design Service	DEFERRED	Paul Keeble	01/08/19	
ICMD	21/08/19	MonLife - Learning Staffing Establishment	To approve an adjustment to the staffing establishment in order to provide business support to the MonLife Learning Manager to deliver additional courses to a range of groups and individuals	Matt Lewis	18/07/19	
ICMD	07/08/19	EMERGENCY PLANNING – BUSINESS CONTINUITY MANAGEMENT POLICY STATEMENT .		Julia Detheridge	10/07/19	
ICMD	07/08/19	Collaborative Heritage Services Provision		Amy Longford		

ICMD	07/08/19	Rural Landscape Development Officer	DEFERRED	Desiree Mansfield	03/07/19	
ICMD	07/08/19	Collaborative Heritage Services		Amy Longford	11/07/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	SPG Affordable Housing commuted sums pre consultation	To revise guidance on affordable housing contributions, specifically to amend when commuted sums are required on small scale developments	mark Hand	01/05/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	Apprentice, Graduate and Intern Strategy		Hannah Jones	07/06/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	Restructure of Enterprise Directorate		Frances O'Brien	07/06/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	Section 106 monies concerning Gilwern Primary School		Matthew Jones	12/07/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	2. Section 106 monies concerning Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni		Matthew Jones	12/07/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 4 held on 18th July 2019	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Cabinet	31/07/19	Budget Monitoring report - month 2 (period 1)	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2019/20 financial year.	Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
ICMD	24/07/19	Proposed disposal of land and foul drainage easement' to Edenstone Homes at Penlanlas Farm, Old Hereford Road, Abergavenny.	Cllr P Murphy	Ben Thorpe	20/06/19	

ICMD	24/07/19	The expansion of the Shared Service to include Revenues		Ruth Donovan	18/06/19	
ICMD	24/07/19	The Social Housing Grant Programme		Louise Corbett	02/05/19	deferred
ICMD	24/07/19	SPG S106 guidance note	To clarify how S106 contributions are calculated	Mark Hand	01/05/19	deferred
ICMD	24/07/19	SPG Infill Development	To provide planning guidance for dealing with infill and backland development	Mark Hand/David Wong	01/05/19	
Council	18/07/19	Statement of Accounts	The purpose of this report is to volunteer a pilot change in the approval process for Statement of Accounts, recognising earlier publication deadlines are not conducive with existing meeting cycles.	Mark Howcroft	09/07/19	
Council	18/07/19	Audit Committee Annual Report		Phillip White	10/06/19	
ICMD	10/07/19	Proposed disposal of land and foul drainage easement' to Edenstone Homes at Penlanlas Farm, Old Hereford Road, Abergavenny.	Cllr P Murphy	Ben Thorpe	20/06/19	
ICMD	10/07/19	PTU Structure		John McConnachie		
ICMD	10/07/19	Collections Review		Rachael Rogers	27/03/19	
Cabinet	03/07/19	Replacement LDP Issues, Vision and Objectives		Rachel Lewis	11/06/19	

Cabinet	03/07/19	Social Justice Strategy Annual Update		Cath Fallon	08/05/19	
Cabinet	03/07/19	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 1 & 3 held on 11th April and 20th June 2019	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Cabinet	03/07/19	LDP Growth Options	From ICMD	Mark Hand	01/05/19	
Cabinet	03/07/19	Guaranteed Interview Scheme for Service Leavers, Veterans and Spouses		Joe Skidmore	07/06/19	
ICMD	26/06/19	Training/PTU Structure		John McConnacie	14/05/19	
ICMD	26/06/19	SWTRA agreement signature - May 19	Jane Pratt	Roger Hoggins	04/06/19	
ICMD	26/06/19	Household Waste Duty of Care Fixed Penalty Notices	Sara Jones	Huw Owen	04/06/19	
ICMD	26/06/19	LDP Growth Options	<b>Going to Cabinet 3 July</b>	Mark Hand	01/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	PROPOSED 30 MPH SPEED LIMIT STATION ROAD AND OLD TRAP ROAD, GILWERN	DEFERRED PENDING FURTHER WORK ON COSTINGS	Paul Keeble	02/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	Interim arrangements - transfer of the GIS from SRS	to outline the interim arrangements for provision of the GIS function in collaboration with Newport City Council	Sian Hayward	16/05/19	

ICMD	12/06/19	Non Domestic Rates application for hardship relief	To determine whether it is appropriate to give discretionary rate relief on the grounds of hardship to a ratepayer in Monmouth town	Ruth Donovan	23/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	Structural Changes in Policy and Governance Section		Matt Gatehouse/P Jordan	02/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	Volunteering Update	DEFERRED	Cath Fallon	08/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	Eco-Flexi Statement of Intent	To scrutinise the Council's "Statement of Intent" regarding access to Energy Company	Steve Griffiths	01/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	Training/PTU Structure	DEFERRED TO 26/6	John McConnacie/Bryan Jones	14/05/19	
ICMD	12/06/19	Monmouthshire Local Toilet Strategy	From Cabinet Planner	Dave Jones	21/05/19	
Cabinet	05/06/19	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2019/20, meeting 2 held on 16th May 2019	Dave Jarrett	18/04/19	
Cabinet	05/06/19	Revenue and Capital Monitoring Outturn	To provide Members with information on the outturn position of the Authority for the financial year	Mark Howcroft	18/04/19	
Cabinet	05/06/19	Local Toilet Strategy		Dave Jones	06/03/19	
Cabinet	05/06/19	Section 106 funding – Forensic Science Laboratory Site, Chepstow		Mike Moran	20/02/19	



Cabinet	05/06/19	LDP Issues, Objectives & Vision		Mark Hand		
ICMD	22/05/19	SWTRA Agreement - Singature & Seal		Roger Hoggins	02/05/19	
ICMD	22/05/19	APPEARANCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN LEGAL PROCEEDINGS		Matt Phillips/ Paul Jordan	30/04/19	
ICMD	22/05/19	(ENRaW) Funding: Gwent Green Grid Partnership		Matthew Lewis	24/04/19	
ICMD	22/05/19	PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF WAITING AT ANY TIME, NEWTOWN ROAD, PENPERLLEN.		Paul Keeble	18/04/19	
ICMD	22/05/19	PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF WAITING AT SPECIFIED TIMES ONLY, LAUNDRY PLACE, ABERGAVENNY		Paul Keeble	18/04/19	
Council	16/05/19	Chief Officer CYP Annual Report		Will Mclean	26/03/19	
Council	16/05/19	Proposed Off-Road Cycling Centre, Llanfoist		Mike Moran	20/02/19	
Council	16/05/19	Speed Management		Roger Hoggins	29/01/19	
ICMD	08/05/19	Delivering Excellence in Children's Service: Establishment update in line with setting the structure for 2019/20.	To establish a fit for purpose structure for Children's Services for the forthcoming financial year of 2019/2020 and beyond.	Jane Rodgers	17/04/19	

ICMD	08/05/19	Museum Service Interim Reduction in hours		Matt Lewis	11/04/19	
Cabinet	01/05/19	Cabinet to agree to commence statutory consultation to open a new Welsh Medium Primary School in Monmouth.	Deferred to ?	Debbie Morgan	05/03/19	
Cabinet	01/05/19	Recruitment & Selection Policy		Sally Thomas	26/02/19	
Cabinet	01/05/19	Play Sufficiency Audit and Action Plan 2019		Mike Moran	20/02/19	
Cabinet	01/05/19	Proposed changes to the membership of the school budget finance forum	This paper is to propose changing the membership of the school budget forum to allow wider representation	Nikki Wellington	15/02/19	