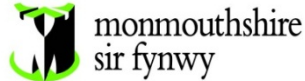


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 11 February 2020

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Conference Room - Usk, NP15 1AD** on **Wednesday, 19th February, 2020, at 2.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To consider the following reports (Copies attached):
 - i. **CONSIDERATION OF FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS** To Follow
 - i. **COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN** 1 - 194

Divisions/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To consider the approval of the Countryside Access Improvement Plan (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) and the Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide following the completion of public consultation.

Authors: Ruth Rourke, Countryside Access Manager, MonLife
Matthew Lewis, Environment and Culture Manager, MonLife

Contact Details: ruthrourke@monmouthshire.gov.uk;
matthewlewis@monmouthshire.gov.uk
 - i. **CORPORATE PLAN 2017-22: MID TERM REFRESH** 195 - 252

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To seek endorsement of a mid-term refresh of the Corporate Plan. This articulates the authority's purpose and values, alongside an update of the ambitious programme that will continued to be delivered during the course of the current Council which runs until the local elections in May 2022.

Authors: Emma Davies, Performance Officer
Richard Jones, Performance Manager

Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy and Governance

Contact Details: matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

- i. **OUTDOOR EDUCATION - SERVICE UPDATE** 253 -
324

Purpose: To advise on the current financial position for the Outdoor Activity Centres (Gilwern and Hilston Park)

Authors: Ian Saunders, MonLife Chief Operating Officer
Marie Bartlett, MonLife Finance and Resources Manager
Nick John, MonLife Leisure Services Manager

Contact Details: iansaunders@monmouthshire.gov.uk
mariebartlett@monmouthshire.gov.uk
nicholasjohn@monmouthshire.gov.uk

- i. **PROPOSED CHANGES SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA** 325 -
356

Purpose: The purpose of the report is to recommend changes to the schools funding formula in how it distributes funding to schools.

Author: Nikki Wellington

Contact Details: nicolawellington@monmouthshire.gov.uk

- i. **2020/21 EDUCATION AND WELSH CHURCH TRUST FUNDS INVESTMENT AND FUND STRATEGIES** 357 -
400

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet for approval the 2020/21 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee for adoption and to approve the 2020/21 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.

**Author: Dave Jarrett – Senior Accountant Business Support
Nicola Wellington – Children & Young People Finance Manager**

Contact Details: davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

- i. **WELSH CHURCH FUND WORKING GROUP** 401 -
410

Purpose: The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group meeting 7 held on the 16th January 2020.

Author: David Jarrett – Senior Accountant – Central Finance Business Support

Contact Details: davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

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

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

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

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

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REPORT

SUBJECT: Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 – Final proposals following scrutiny and public consultation

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 19th February 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To update Cabinet with the consultation responses to the draft budget proposals issued by them on the 20th December in respect of the Capital and Revenue budgets for 2020/21.
- 1.2 To update members with implications arising from the Provisional Local Government Settlement announcement of the Welsh Government as well as providing update with regards to the awaited Final Settlement announcement.
- 1.3 To make recommendations to Council on the Capital and Revenue budgets and level of Council Tax for 2020/21.
- 1.4 To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Prudential Indicator calculations for capital financing.
- 1.5 To receive the statutory report of the Responsible Financial Officer on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the responses to consultation and recommends to Council:
 - The 2020/21 revenue budget as attached in **Appendix I**.
 - The 2020/21 to 2023/24 capital programme as attached in **Appendix J1**.
- 2.2 That Cabinet acknowledges that the final budget proposals proposed look to support the priorities of the council and specifically seek to recognise in full, all pay and pension-related spending pressures in our schooling system and the increasing demand placed on children's social care services, adult social care and our children with additional learning needs budgets.
- 2.3 That a 4.95% increase in the Band "D" equivalent Council Tax for the County continues to be used as the planning assumption in the budget model and to apply for County purposes in 2020/21.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approves the revised saving and pressure proposals, updated following public consultation, scrutiny and more up to date information being made available since the draft proposals were released on consultation on 20th December 2019.

- 2.5 That Cabinet recognises the risks concerning an absence of a funding floor in the Final Local Government Settlement, and further steps needing to be taken to manage the remaining budget deficit if this was to materialise.
- 2.6 That Cabinet notes the movements anticipated in respect of earmarked reserves during 2020/21 culminating in forecast earmarked reserve balances of £5.29 million at the end of 2020/21.
- 2.7 That Cabinet approves changes to the draft capital budget proposals and programme for 2020/21 and as outlined in paragraph 3.29.
- 2.8 That Cabinet recommends Council to dispose of assets identified in the exempt background paper at best value.
- 2.9 That Cabinet considers the Responsible Financial Officer's report on the robustness of the budget process and the adequacy of reserves issued under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2003
- 2.10 That Cabinet adopts the Responsible Financial Officer's report on Prudential Indicators.
- 2.11 That Cabinet approves the following:
 - Further work is undertaken to develop a balanced Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) over the 3 year period 2021/22 to 2023/24.
 - Regular review of the MTFP to ensure it remains up to date, and that includes an assessment of evidence based pressures and risks, underlying modelling assumptions and the ongoing affordability implications of the Corporate Plan.

3. KEY ISSUES:

BUDGET CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Cabinet issued its budget consultation proposals on 20th December 2020 thereby allowing a period for public consultation and scrutiny. The proposals were scrutinised by the Children's and Young People Select Committee, Strong Communities Select Committee, Adult Select Committee, and Economy and Development Select Committee, the Schools Budget Forum and the Joint Advisory Group (JAG).
- 3.2 Furthermore, budget consultation was undertaken through two public meetings, a meeting of the Access for All forum, a meeting with Head Teachers, a young person's conference, Town and Community Council Cluster meetings and the North Monmouthshire Area Committee.
- 3.3 Extracts of the draft minutes from the Committees are included as **Appendices A1 to A6** respectively and a summary or minutes of the engagement events together with feedback received are included in **Appendices A7 to A17**.
- 3.4 In terms of public engagement the use of the website and social media as a mechanism for sharing information and getting feedback has continued with active engagement and responses received. An overview of the Council's budget engagement is included in **Appendix A18**.
- 3.5 As might be expected, responses to consultation varied. However there was a broad acceptance and understanding of the overall shape of the budget proposals and set against the backdrop of significant financial and demand driven challenges faced.

Residents understood that the Council continued to look to protect frontline services and in particular those most vulnerable in our communities.

- 3.6 There were a number of questions clarified via the Select Committee meetings and other consultation meetings. These questions particularly concerned the pressures being faced in children's services, children with additional learning needs and adult social care. Clarification was provided at meetings and via FAQs made available on the Council's website. The budget presentation delivered at the consultation events was made widely available via the Council's website. And the Cabinet Member for Resources delivered a video message to explain the challenges being facing in 2020/21 and how the Council was looking to respond to them.
- 3.7 The process in general has worked well, with thorough debate having taken place through scrutiny and public consultation events. Attendance was significantly improved from previous years at the two public meetings, in Abergavenny in particular, and particularly driven by residents wanting to feedback and raise concern about the savings proposed against Individual School Budgets (ISB). Constructive feedback was again also provided on how the budget consultation could be improved and this will be taken on board as part of ongoing improvement in the process.
- 3.8 In respect of the capital budget proposals, general support was expressed about the need to continue to invest in schools whilst recognising that there are future pressures to be managed. Concerns were also raised with regards to overstretched infrastructure in the South East of the County and the need to invest to alleviate congestion and to support active travel.
- 3.9 In terms of the key issues and concerns raised as part of the consultation, engagement and scrutiny process and which concern the revenue budget proposals specifically, these principally revolved around:
- a) Notable concerns and objections around the proposed 2% savings to Individual School budgets and the detrimental impact this would have on children and the quality of teaching and learning at schools. However, there was support for the proposed loan scheme being offered to schools to assist them with managing school deficits.
 - b) Concern raised around the level of proposed council tax rise. However, there was a recognition that the choices available to the Council were limited in the face of significant pressures and inadequate funding being received from Welsh Government.
 - c) A specific issue raised concerning the inability for VAT registered clubs and associations not being able to recover VAT resulting from bookings for leisure facilities and subsequent to the Council's decision in 2019 to adopt the Ealing ruling whereby such activities were treated as being VAT exempt.
 - d) Clarification sought around car parking charges and where it was confirmed that there were no increases being proposed for 2020/21 and with other charges being held in line with inflation and where practicable.
- 3.10 There was a general consensus reached by respondents that the funding formula used by Welsh Government to allocate funding to Welsh authorities disproportionately disadvantaged Monmouthshire and failed to recognise both the areas of deprivation within the County and its rurality. There was overriding support that the Council should challenge Welsh Government on the need for a funding floor to be introduced in order to protect vital services. Select committees asked for the funding formula to be reviewed and for evidence to be provided to the WLGA and Welsh Government such that Monmouthshire could benefit from a fairer settlement in future.

- 3.11 As a result of the consultation and upon subsequent reflection of concerns raised it is recommended that the following revisions are made to the savings proposals:
- a) That the 2% savings in Individual School Budgets is removed in full. Schools will also benefit from the full funding of pay and pension increases and the loan scheme offered to schools will be implemented.
 - b) To recognise a pressure of £25k to allow a scheme to be developed and that ensures that the impact that VAT registered clubs and associations are encountering from not being able to recover VAT from bookings for use of leisure facilities is mitigated.
 - c) To increase the budget for disabled facilities grants, and that supports people living independently and at home, from £600k to £900k for 2020/21 and the capital MTFP.
 - d) An ongoing commitment to recognise and value the contribution made by the workforce and ensuring that local government staff are paid no less than the minimum wage set by the living wage foundation of £9.30 per hour and that will take effect from April 2020.

PROVISIONAL AND FINAL SETTLEMENT

- 3.12 The provisional settlement was announced on the 16th December 2019. The Local Government settlement was announced with an increase (after adjusting for transfers) across Wales of 4.3%. However, for Monmouthshire the provisional settlement only delivered an increase in the Authority's Aggregate External Finance (AEF) of 3.0% after taking into account transfers into the settlement. Across Wales settlements varied widely from a 3.0% increase in Monmouthshire to a 5.4% increase in Newport. The Minister concluded at that stage that no funding floor was deemed necessary leading to Monmouthshire and a number of other Welsh Authorities receiving a settlement significantly lower than the average of 4.3%.
- 3.13 The Leader, on behalf of the Council, sent a strong letter to the First Minister and the Minister for Housing and Local Government on 3rd February 2020 in response to the poor settlement that the Council again received and made the case for the Minister to consider the introduction of a funding floor as well as future review of the funding formula which continues to disadvantage Monmouthshire and other rural authorities. A copy of the letter is included at **Appendix B2** of this report.
- 3.14 The final settlement is not expected to be announced by Welsh Government until 25th February 2020, leaving the Authority in a situation where it is unclear as to whether the Minister will have listened to the calls from the Council, other Welsh local authorities and the WLGA for a funding floor to be introduced and that would provide a fairer distribution of funding across Welsh local government. The Council will need to respond quickly to the final settlement announcement and ahead of Council on 5th March in order to ensure it has a robust and balanced set of budget proposals presented for approval.
- 3.15 The main adjustments to our AEF in the provisional settlement have resulted from transfers into the settlement of Teacher's pension grant (£1.01m) and Teacher's pay grant (£310k) which was afforded to authorities in 2019/20. Further transfers arise in respect of NHS funded nursing care (£55k) and local discretionary business rate funding (£63k). These transfers have been passported to directorates based on the values advised in the provisional settlement to meet associated cost pressures.
- 3.16 A table showing each authorities position resulting from the provisional settlement is included at **Appendix B1** to this report. Monmouthshire again remains at the bottom of the table in terms of AEF per head of population.

- 3.17 The provisional settlement also only included the notifications of specific grants at an all Wales level. There are still a number of grant announcements to be made and this position is extremely disappointing as it makes planning for next year's budget even more difficult. It is hoped that the final settlement will provide further clarification. The current position on Welsh Government specific grants is included in **Appendix C**. There are a number of significant grants where the Authority remains unclear as to the amount to be received and resultant terms and conditions attached.
- 3.18 The medium term prognosis is still of concern, there are no indicative settlement figures published and which significantly impedes and impacts on forward planning of budgets over the medium term. At this stage and with uncertainties remaining as to future levels of local government funding the MTFP for 2021/22 onwards factors in no cash increase in funding (0.0%), so that planning can be undertaken on a prudent basis.
- 3.19 There is still a need to think differently about the even greater challenges of the medium term and this work and engagement will continue in the coming months, and notably with other local authorities, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) and where funding distribution and projections are concerned. Specifically the Leader is garnering support with the WLGA rural forum for an evidence based review of the funding formula to be undertaken to demonstrate how rural authorities are disadvantaged in the formula distribution. Separately the WLGA will be looking to present to an all Member seminar to explain the funding formula, the role of the Distribution Sub-Group (DSG) and the key drivers in the settlement distribution. All intended to improve the challenge and the case for change in the funding distribution for Monmouthshire.

BUDGET PROCESS CONTEXT

- 3.20 Subsequent to Cabinet's budget consideration on 20th December 2019, proposals went on consultation indicating a need to close a £5.3 million gap with an unfunded gap of £1.178m still needing to be found. The budget at that time included £9.74 million of pressures and £7.98 million of saving proposals. Work has continued to review and revise existing and new savings and pressures in the light of further engagement and analysis. All the original proposals are available as part of the draft budget proposals. Summary details of revised savings and pressures and the movement from draft to final proposals are included in **Appendix D** and **E**.

3.21 Summary Movements

Pressures	Amount
	£'000
Draft proposals	9,742
Revisions and additions in intervening period	(216)
Final proposals	9,526

Savings Proposals	Amount
	£'000

Draft proposals	(7,981)
Revisions and additions in intervening period	(529)
Total	(8,510)
Budget shortfall remaining	£497k

3.22 The revisions and additions to pressures are summarised as follows:

- A managed reduction of £500k in the pressure and investment in the county-wide rollout of the *Turning the World Upside Down* commissioning strategy. The reduced level of investment, previously proposed and recognised as £1.048m, will be achieved through a delayed and phased implementation from July 2020. The rollout will see a pricing model introduced and that looks to positively impact recruitment and retention and supply of hours into the domiciliary care market and where Monmouthshire retains an important and ongoing role;
- As a result of further work undertaken since the draft budget proposals were prepared to include a pressure of £420k in respect of incremental pay pressure that results exceptionally from the introduction of the new pay spine for LGE employees in 2019/20. This incremental pay pressure most significantly results from those local government employees on the lowest pay scales.
- To recognise a pressure of £25k to allow a scheme to be developed and that ensures that the impact that VAT registered clubs and associations are encountering from not being able to recover VAT from bookings for use of leisure facilities is mitigated;
- As a result of Welsh Government in the provisional settlement confirming that they were affording a further £2.4m across Wales to support authorities with discretionary business rate relief, the inclusion of a £63k budget that reflects Monmouthshire's share of the funding;
- A reduction in the budget for the South Wales Fire Authority precept of £180k which is in part resulting from contingency no longer required from the current year in respect of Firefighter pension contributions and as a consequence of the proposed increase in levy reducing from 4.84% to 4.59%; and
- A reduction in treasury budgets of £44k as a result of the delayed impact of additional borrowing to fund schemes approved in 2019/20.

3.23 The revision and additions to savings are summarised as follows:

- As outlined in paragraph 3.11(a) above the full removal of the proposed 2% saving against Individual School budgets of £830k.
- A reduction in the saving for the proposed closure of Usk recycling centre of £10k to reflect the Cabinet decision taken on 20th December 2019 being held in abeyance and subject to further data collection, engagement, consultation and impact assessments being undertaken and resultant recommendations being brought back for pre-decision scrutiny and subsequent consideration by Cabinet.

- To increase the saving that results from the 4.95% proposed council tax increase by £293k and as a result of a revision required to the original calculation and an improved forecast in the number of housing completions forecast.
 - As noted in paragraph 3.11 above additional funding of £1.076m as a consequence of the Provisional Settlement announcement confirming a 3.0% increase in funding rather than the 1.0% increase modelled as part of the draft budget proposals.
- 3.24 A further £1.375m of additional funding was included in the provisional settlement in respect of transfers into the settlement and to meet costs that had been previously grant funded by Welsh Government (teachers' pay and pensions increases for 2019/20) or where additional burdens were being placed on the Authority (NHS funded nursing).
- 3.25 The consequence of the adjustments to pressures and savings leaves a remaining budget deficit to be managed of £497k. A real and present risk remains that the Final Settlement announcement from Welsh Government will not introduce a floor mechanism that would benefit Monmouthshire and assist in addressing the remaining budget deficit. Work is continuing to explore further options to bring forward savings and reduce pressures such as to ensure that the requirement to bring forward a set of fully funded budget proposals is presented to Council on 5th March 2020.
- 3.26 It is worth noting that the ongoing financial challenges remain as always a dynamic situation. As stated in recommendation 2.8 further work will be undertaken to develop the MTFP and that will include an ongoing assessment of pressures, risks and modelling assumptions. Notably key risks remaining to be assessed and managed in 2020/21 and as yet unknown are:
- a) The fact that the LGE pay award is still not known. The most recent offer made, and rejected by the unions, was for a 2% pay award for 2020/21. The current modelling assumption for pay award for non-teaching staff is currently 1%. The Council together with the WLGA will look to lobby UK Treasury to ensure that provision is made for the pay award and a consequential to Welsh Government that is passed on to Welsh authorities.
 - b) Demand-led pressures remain, as evidenced by the extent and level of pressures needing to be accommodated within these budget proposals. Ongoing budget monitoring and review of pressures will identify whether any further pressures need to be managed. As stated this is a dynamic situation to which the Authority will respond as any situation evolves.

Council Tax

- 3.27 The 4.95% increase in the Band "D" equivalent Council Tax for the County continues to be used as the planning assumption in the budget model and to apply for County purposes in 2020/21, reverting to 3.95% increase in each of the subsequent 3 years.

OVERALL REVENUE BUDGET POSITION

- 3.28 The current revenue position for each of the next 4 years is included in **Appendix I**. The proposed position for 2020-21 specifically is,

Services	Indicative Base 2020/21 £000
Children & Young People	55,539
Social Care & Health	50,686
Enterprise	20,568
Resources	7,792
Chief Executive's Unit	4,745
MonLife	3,565
Corporate Costs & Levies	22,898
Sub Total	165,792
Transfers to reserves	143
Transfers from reserves	(747)
Treasury	5,460
Appropriations Total	4,856
Total Expenditure Budget	170,648
Aggregate External Financing (AEF)	(93,229)
Council Tax (MCC)	(56,223)
Council Tax (Gwent Police)	(12,602)
Council Tax (Community Councils)	(2,699)
Contribution to/(from) Council Fund	0
Disinvestment	(5,397)
Sub Total Financing	(170,151)
(Headroom)/Shortfall	497

Note: An explanation of how services are grouped is included in **Appendix L**

CAPITAL BUDGET

- 3.29 On September 19th Council approved the first full Capital Strategy, a requirement of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance that was updated in 2017. The Authority's Capital Strategy is required to define at a high level, how the Authority ensures its capital plans contribute to the provision of local public services; are affordable, prudent and sustainable; are developed with a full understanding of the risks involved; are appropriate for the Authority and suit local circumstances and that they have due regard for the long run financing implications and risks to the Authority.
- 3.30 The capital MTFP strategy remains as one which seeks to work towards a financially sustainable core capital programme without recourse to further prudential borrowing or use of capital receipts so that these resources can be directed towards the Council's priority of the future schools programme. The draft capital budget proposals were prepared on this basis and were issued by Cabinet for consultation purposes at its meeting on 20th December 2019.
- 3.31 During the financial year, any new schemes volunteered can only be added to the programme if the business case demonstrates that they are self-financing or if the scheme is deemed a higher priority than current schemes in the programme and therefore displaces it.
- 3.32 When considering the relative merits of projects and potential displacement, the priority matrix in the capital strategy will be applied, either endorsing or amending it for onward consideration by full Council.

- 3.33 The provisional settlement and grant notification included therein confirmed an increase in anticipated General Capital Grant funding included in the capital MTFP budget proposals of £960k. This has assisted in allowing flexibility to continue to assist the capital and revenue budgets and as outlined below.
- 3.34 The proposed changes to capital programme since the draft proposals were on consultation by Cabinet on December 20th, based on feedback from public consultation and scrutiny as well as the benefit of additional Welsh Government capital grants, have resulted in a proposed increase in the capital programme of £1.302m. These changes are summarised as follows:
- A continuation of the increase in the Disabled Facility Grant budget, as has been the case for the last three years, by £300k for 2020/21 and the remaining years of the capital MTFP, and to meet an evidenced backlog of applications that will benefit applicants whilst alleviating pressure on social care. Funded through a combination of capital receipts and additional General Capital Grant received as part of the provisional WG settlement.
 - To apply £812k additional Welsh Government General Capital Grant funding to revenue expenditure that is deemed eligible to be capitalised and to fund highways maintenance capital schemes. This is a continuation of the approach taken in 2019/20 and again where additional Welsh Government Grant was made available.
 - To include £190k in 2019/20 in respect of the promotion of LDP candidate sites and that fall as attributable capital cost of disposal. Funded from capital receipts. In the event that sites are not progressed and disposed of such costs will be seen as abortive and will fall to be revenue. If this is the case then earmarked reserve funding will be sought from either the fixed asset disposal cost reserve or capital support reserve.
- 3.35 The Summary Capital MTFP is shown in **Appendix J1**. There remain significant pressures of a capital nature that cannot be afforded within the capital MTFP and these are outlined in **Appendix J5**. A review of the pressures and associated risks has been undertaken since the draft budget proposals were issued for consultation purposes. This has concluded that further feasibility studies and technical assessments will be undertaken on specific infrastructure assets during 20/21, funded from existing highways infrastructure capital budgets. The results of these studies and assessments will inform the capital MTFP and pressures that will need to be accommodated and funded therein in future financial years.
- 3.36 **Appendix J3**, the capital receipts summary shows the expected level of receipts and planned usage and highlights the balances available in the next couple of years. Future investment in capital schemes, is in part dependent on future success of achieving capital receipts and there are risks attached to some receipts materializing as shown in **Appendix J4**. The revised forecast receipt schedule is provided as exempt background papers to this report for Members approval as **Appendix J6**.

THE PRUDENTIAL CODE

- 3.37 Under the Prudential Code, local authorities are required to publish Prudential Indicators produced to demonstrate that capital programmes are prudent, sustainable and affordable in the longer term. The indicators for 2019/23 are contained at **Appendix G** to this report, assuming eventual Council approval of Cabinet's budget and Council Tax recommendations.

THE ROBUSTNESS OF PROCESS AND RESERVES

- 3.38 The level of the Council Fund, The Council's general reserve, is at £7.1m million, subject to 2019-20 year end, but at present it is within the range of 4-6% of net revenue budget and considered to be at a prudent level. The final revenue budget proposals do not include a requirement to use any of the general reserve to balance the budget in 2020/21. The total planned net earmarked reserve utilization in support of the 2020/21 revenue and capital budget is £0.71m. This includes a planned reduction and release from the Treasury Equalisation reserve of £400k that resulted from a review of earmarked reserves. **Appendix H1** shows the call on and contributions to reserves for the 2019/20 budget and **Appendix H2** shows the reserve balances projected for the medium term. Total planned reserve utilization in support of current year revenue and capital budgets means that by the end of 2019-20 the balance of earmarked reserves is likely to be £6.01 million. The further call in 2020/21 means that the earmarked reserves will fall to £5.30 million. In addition the Priority Investment reserve will need to be replenished to fund any future projects identified as going forward. It should be noted that this reduces the flexibility the Council has in meeting the challenges of scarce resources going forward.
- 3.39 Under the provisions of the 2003 Local Government Act, the Responsible Financial Officer has to provide conclusions on the robustness of the budget process and the adequacy of reserves. Those conclusions are shown at **Appendix F**.
- 3.40 The effect of Cabinets revenue budget recommendations is shown at **Appendix I**. The effect of Cabinets capital recommendations is shown at **Appendix J**. Final Council Tax setting is reserved for decision of Full Council on 5th March 2020.

FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EQIA)

- 3.41 There is a requirement placed on Local Authorities to comply with the general equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the specific equality duties such as the statutory responsibilities to assess the equality impacts of their budgetary decisions. The Equality Act 2010 places a General Duty on Monmouthshire County Council to eliminate discrimination according to nine "protected characteristics" (age, belief and non-belief, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, and sexual orientation). Also we need to comply with the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 through which the Welsh Language Commissioner has shaped the Welsh Standards which will come into force from 30th March 2016.
- 3.42 The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, by taking action in accordance with the sustainable development principle aimed at achieving the Wellbeing Goals. The authority was an early adopter of The Act and re-shaped its pre-decision evaluation tool to reflect the well-being goals and the principles which it sets out.

3.43 The Council has continued to respond to these issues by building considerations of equality, diversity and sustainability into the planning and delivery of its 2020/21 budget. It has done this by:

- Requiring Chief Officers to undertake a Future Generation evaluation of all the original savings proposals they offered for their service area to contribute towards the Council's overall savings target. This evaluation has since been updated to reflect the final budget proposals and individual evaluations are linked to each budget proposal. These can viewed via the attached [link](#).
- Producing an overall FGE assessment of the revenue budget proposals and publishing this as part of the revenue budget proposals for consultation. This is attached as **Appendix K** and the assessment has been updated as a result of budget consultation and the final revenue budget proposals being presented to Cabinet for consideration.
- Undertaking a FGE assessment of the capital budget proposals and publishing this as part of the capital budget proposals for consultation.
- Enabling the Council's Cabinet Members to consider initial savings proposals with the benefit of the FGEs, and to make initial decisions based on this information. The budget proposals reflect Cabinet's key priorities and therefore key services that support equalities – such as social care and schools.
- Deciding that once the final shape of the budget is agreed by Council in March 2020, Council service areas carry out more detailed work to mitigate and manage any equalities or Future Generation issues that have been identified.
- Including the FGEs as part of this report and published on the Council's website so that residents can understand the factors that went into the planning of the 2020/21 budget.
- Ensuring that where proposals will be the subject of further reports it is expected that further FGEs will be undertaken at that time and where savings are being made from decisions already taken then those implementing those decisions should consider mitigating any negative impacts where necessary.

4. REASONS:

- 4.1 To make appropriate recommendations to Council on the revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21, and the resultant Council Tax recommended to be set for County purposes, taking into account the public consultation and scrutiny in January.
- 4.2 To sustain the capital programme and establish capital resources to support the programme by the sale of surplus assets where this is deemed necessary and appropriate.
- 4.3 As required by statute, to consider the Responsible Financial Officers provisional conclusions on the robustness on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves going forward.
- 4.4 To approve the Prudential Capital Indicators calculated by the Responsible Financial Officer.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

As identified within the report and appendices.

6. CONSULTEES: Cabinet, Strategic Leadership Team

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- a) Directorate Budget builds, detailed capital programme and associated papers
- b) Draft revenue budget proposals, draft capital budget proposals and capital strategy – released on consultation by [Cabinet](#) on 20th December 2019
- c) Provisional Local Government Settlement
- d) The CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Expenditure

8. AUTHORS:

Peter Davies – Chief Officer for Resources (acting S151 officer)

9. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Borrowing Appendices

- A1 Extract of draft minutes of Adults Select committee – 21st January 2020
 - A2 Extract of draft minutes of Strong Communities Select Committee – 23rd January 2020
 - A3 Extract of draft minutes of Children & Young People Select Committee – 28th Jan 2020
 - A4 Extract of draft minutes of Economy & Development Select Committee – 31st Jan 2020
 - A5 Draft minutes of Schools Budget Forum – 30th January 2020
 - A6 Draft minutes of JAG (Joint Advisory Group) – 20th January 2020
 - A7 Extract of draft minutes of Chepstow Cluster meeting – 15th January 2020
 - A8 Extract of draft minutes of Caldicot Cluster meeting – 23rd January 2020
 - A9 Extract of draft minutes of Monmouth Cluster meeting – 21st January 2020
 - A10 Extract of draft minutes of North Monmouthshire Area Committee– 22nd January 2020
 - A11 Summary of Public meeting – Chepstow Library – 14th January 2020
 - A12 Summary of Public meeting – Abergavenny Library – 22nd January 2020
 - A13 Summary of Head Teachers meeting – 17th January 2020
 - A14 Access for All meeting – 17th January 2020 – Summary feedback
 - A15 Summary of Youth Conference – 24th January 2020
 - A16 Resident consultation responses received (personal details redacted)
 - A17 Budget consultation responses received by letter
 - A18 Overview of Monmouthshire County Council budget engagement
-
- B1 Provisional Settlement Data
 - B2 Provisional Settlement – MCC response letter
 - C Specific Grants 2020/21 (All Wales)
 - D1 Summary of evidence based pressures
 - D2 Summary of pressures – movement from draft to final budget
 - E1 Summary of budget savings proposals
 - E2 Summary of savings – movement from draft to final budget
 - F Responsible Financial Officers Opinion
 - G Prudential Indicators
 - H1 Use of reserves for Revenue Budget Purposes
 - H2 Reserve Balances
 - I Revenue Budget Summary
 - J1 Capital Budget Summary
 - J2 Schools Capital Budget Summary
 - J3 Capital Receipts Summary
 - J4 Receipt Risk Factors
 - J5 Capital Pressures
 - J6 Capital Receipts (Exempt – supplied under separate cover)
 - K Overall Wellbeing and Future Generations Evaluation
 - L Explanation of Service Groupings

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A/1 Extract of draft minutes of Adults Select Committee – 21st January 2020

- The social care pressures were discussed in detail. Members noted the grant income received and the committee welcomed the approval to use capital receipts to assist the revenue budget position. The committee remained concerned that the use of capital receipts to support the revenue position was an unsustainable approach to address the underlying budgetary issues already presented at month 7.
- The committee recognised that staff are trying to be creative and think differently and that recruitment in the sector is a major issue. Members were pleased to see that no cost increase had been proposed for the community meals service.
- Members welcomed the new monthly budget monitoring approach which was assisting departments in forecasting overspends and enabling mitigations to be put in place where possible.
- The committee felt strongly that the funding formula disproportionately disadvantages Monmouthshire and supported the Chief Officer's attempts to raise this with Welsh Government and to request a funding floor, which would significantly assist Monmouthshire and several other rural authorities. The committee supported the efforts by the Chief Officer for Resources and the Leader to progress via the WLGA an independent review of the formula and asked that a seminar be held in the Spring.

A/2 Extract of draft minutes of Strong Communities Select Committee – 23rd January 2020

- The committee discussed reasons for the significant pressures in social services, acknowledging this was outside of its remit, in order to understand the context for the budget proposals being presented to them. They scrutinised the proposals within their remit, but made no specific recommendations.
- The committee supported the request made by Monmouthshire to Welsh Government for a funding floor and the need for an independent review, noting that a seminar would be held in the spring. The committee did not discuss the operations proposals which were presented late to the committee and agreed to attend the Economy and Development Select Committee to undertake joint scrutiny of these.

A/3 Extract of draft minutes of Children and Young People Select Committee – 28th January 2020

- The children's services pressures were discussed in detail, the committee understanding the volatility of the service. The committee recognised that officers were attempting to achieve savings through changes in legal services and also piloting projects such as MIST which should assist the service over the longer term position. They had concerns however as to how Children's

Services can be effectively budgeted for and what mitigations could be put in place. Members appreciated that the situation is unprecedented, with increased demand against the backdrop of inadequate funding and they recognised that this is the national picture.

- Questions were asked around schools in deficit and their ability to effect a recovery position. Members in general supported the loan proposals for schools to manage their financial recovery over a longer timescale, but they had concern for the level of interest payable, if inflation were to rise significantly. The committee was particularly concerned at the proposal to reduce Individual school budgets by 2% and sought reassurance from the executive that this would be further examined to ascertain whether this cut to schools' budgets could possibly be avoided.
- The committee supported the Chief Officer's endeavours to progress the settlement through further discussion with Welsh Government and they supported the need for an independent review of the formula.

A/4 Extract of draft minutes of Economy and Development Select committee – 30th January 2020 – also attended by members of Strong Communities Select Committee

- The committee scrutinised its portfolio areas including the operations service area comprising passenger transport unit, street lighting, waste management and there were some concerns around the household waste and recycling centre proposals, but members noted a review will be brought to Strong Communities for pre-decision scrutiny. The proposals relating to car parking were briefly discussed and it was agreed that this will be jointly reviewed by Strong Communities and Economy & Development Select Committees at the appropriate juncture. Commercial development was scrutinised and the capitalisation directive was considered.
- The committee scrutinised some of the pressures outside of its remit – education, Additional Learning Needs, the proposed 2% cut to individual school budgets, social care pressures. Members were reassured by officers that there has been robust consultation with head teachers. The committee supported the loan proposal to offer greater flexibility to schools to borrow money or manage their budget recovery plans over a longer timescale.
- There were concerns for the provisional funding settlement for Monmouthshire and the long-term sustainability of such low level funding. Members supported officers' efforts to recover monies through the Ealing value added tax exemption ruling associated with Mon Life, which will assist the budgetary position to some degree and also welcomed the new ability to use capital receipts to assist the revenue budget.
- No specific recommendations were made, other than to request the seminar in the Spring with the WLGA to discuss the funding formula.

A/5 Extract of draft Minutes of Schools Budget Forum – 30th January 2020

While the additional funding was very welcome, does the rest of the council understand the impact on schools in cutting budgets - for example less support for our vulnerable learners and larger class sizes. Is it also still assumed that schools have too much money and have the ability to make additional savings?

This was acknowledged and Cllr Murphy said that any cuts to schools were a last resort. Cabinet want to protect schools as much as they can but on this occasion there was a requirement to consider school budgets. However it was the first area that cabinet reviewed when additional funding was found.

The finer details of the loan were requested. It was agreed that the finance manager would send these out to schools and would be willing to attend any Governing Body meeting should this be requested.

A/6 Extract of minutes of JAG (Joint Advisory Group) – 20th January 2020

The Cabinet Member for Resources, County Councillor P. Murphy, provided a presentation regarding Monmouthshire County Council's Draft Budget Proposals 2020- 2021.

There were several comments around the reduction to school budgets, particularly questioning the logic of asking schools to reduce budgets where they are already in deficit.

It was confirmed that the living wage will be maintained.

It was hoped that the final Welsh Government settlement will be higher than expected

The consultation period will end on 31st January 2020, and budget proposals will go to

Cabinet on 19th February 2020 and Full Council on 5th March 2020.

A/7 Extract of draft minutes of Chepstow Cluster meeting – 15th January 2020

- Objections were raised in relation to the proposed level of council tax rise. Cutting services was advocated rather than trying to continue to do everything, although no specific services were highlighted.
- Perception was put forward that Chepstow more often than not seems to be last in the queue in the county for capital spend.
- Suggestion to impose a fee for car parking at Newport leisure park to generate income and bring it in line with towns in Chepstow for the purposes of fairness

A/8 Extract of draft minutes of Caldicot Cluster meeting – 23rd January 2020

- Support in Caldicot cluster for lobbying Welsh Government for a funding floor

- Consideration needs to be given to sustainable future budgeting, given new housing developments in the county and in the south in particular.

A/9 Extract of draft minutes of Monmouth Cluster meeting – 21st January 2020

There were no specific items of interest raised in relation to the budget proposals from the Monmouth cluster.

The pertinent comments were around the Council's use of language when talking to the public (i.e. potentially jargon-orientated) and of being more open and honest about the commercial element (how we accessed the money to purchase Newport retail park and how we're generating income because of it etc.)

A/10 Minutes of North Monmouthshire Area Committee (extract) – 22nd January 2020

The Cabinet Member for Resources provided a presentation on the 2020/21 budget proposals.

Having received the presentation, the following points were noted:

- In response to a question raised regarding whether extra funding would be made available via Welsh Government to address the deteriorating roads across the County, it was noted that it this would be a matter for the Welsh Government to decide.
- It was noted that there were many retired professionally qualified people living within the County who could be utilised. Monmouthshire County Council currently utilises the services of over 2000 volunteers across the County.

A/11 Summary of Public meeting – Chepstow Library – 14th January 2020

- 6 in attendance - 3 made the point that they were only made aware of the event by chance
- Points made around events being communicated through community groups and associations and also in the press
- It was asked that posters be provided in the future and in advance at public buildings for consultation events
- Questions asked as to why MCC is so poorly funded and what we are doing to challenge WG. The question was responded to as part of the budget presentation.
- Comment made about need for greater NHS and social services integration in order to allow for residents to be kept at home and out of hospitals.
- Question around whether MCC 'protects' pressures in social care - Phil Murphy confirmed that it is Cabinet commitment to fund pressures.
- Point raised around Chepstow train station seeing increased charges when looking to promote rail transport when there is free parking elsewhere. Though

it was understood that there are pressures related car parks not being used in Abergavenny.

- Comments made about congestion along the road running from Caldicot through to Magor and the need for improvements to the road network before more houses were built through the next LDP.
- Question asked about why the Council is making investments and taking money away from services. It was explained that the Council wasn't and that in fact the commercial returns from investments were allowing services to be sustained.

A/12 Summary of Public meeting – Abergavenny Library – 22nd January 2020

Around 60 people in attendance on the night in Abergavenny Library on 22nd January. Cllr Phil Murphy and Will McLean were in attendance. Budget proposals being presented by Cllr Phil Murphy – not decisions at this stage but proposals.

- Consideration of a 4.95% increase in council tax for Monmouthshire. Phil described how “We are trying to strike a council tax balance”.
- There may be a need for schools to help with budget pressure.
- All departments will be thinking of alternative ways to generate income – fees and charges are a way to do that.
- Gap of £5.4M identified alongside £2.1M pressures. Gap of £1.17M still to be met after the proposed budget proposals.
- Cllr Murphy urging Julie James to come up with more money for Monmouthshire when the decision is made on 3rd March
- Schools will be offered a loan facility to help solve deficit positions. Schools can be lent money up to 10% of their annual income in order to manage savings over a longer timescale.

Will Mclean discussed the potential reduction in ISB for schools. When asked for feedback, Will confirmed that children with mental health problems will have different support depending on what stage children and young people are at.

Comments:

- The council tax banding implies that people are wealthier in Monmouthshire – which they are not.
- The Welsh Government funding comes from Westminster. We want a more equitable situation from Westminster. 10 years of austerity from Westminster has put us in this position. Cllr Murphy replied that it doesn't follow that the money flows down. Cllr Murphy suggested that we need a funding floor to help us and to help with the provisional settlement.
- Question asked about whether the money to cover salaries and pensions for teachers was included in the budget
- Question about whether budget is there for children with mental health issues within schools. Cllr Murphy replied that those pressures are covered

- Are pensions being funded by Welsh Government? Cllr Murphy replied that yes that is included in the funding from Welsh Government
- What proposals have come forward to meet the £800k schools saving or will schools be in even more of a deficit position?
- Why are you taking 2% off schools budgets that are already in deficit?
- Question about whether Chepstow comp is still being updated. Cllr Murphy confirmed that we are doing things to improve the school and the leisure centre.
- Question about whether council tax should go up further Cllr Murphy said that wouldn't be our choice
- What is the decision in relation to holiday homes in the county? Cllr Murphy said that a suggestion has been made in regard to second homes. It's not something we want to do because this may lead to people declaring their second home as a holiday let which would then incur business rates – some North Wales councils have lost money as a result of this.
- MCC has traditionally had a lower amount of funding. Why is that? Cllr Murphy explained the funding formula. The formula represents deprivation – there is the assumption that Monmouthshire does not have deprivation but there is and the formula does not take into account rurality
- Member of the public said that we have some of the highest cost properties in Wales which impacts on the formula. Resident asked how we can help to lobby? Who do we need to go to? Cllr Murphy confirmed work is ongoing with the WLGA to challenge the formula. Cllr Murphy explained that the challenge will be to Welsh Government and Westminster
- We've accepted there's a shortfall in budget coming from Cardiff, so if we were an English County would we be worse off? Cllr Murphy confirmed that we would be worse off again as Welsh Government has protected budget
- We need more notice of these meetings, people wanted to come and they feel very angry because they couldn't come and leave their young children at home. It would be helpful to have more notice.
- Local schools got letter on Monday at 3.30 ready for today that's not enough notice. Cllr Murphy replied highlighting how the various sessions have been promoted
- Addition concerns were raised in regards to the school cuts. Emotional support through projects such as Elsa and Forest Schools that all help with emotional health and wellbeing, won't be able to continue. Will replied that we understand there will be a consequence. We spent time with head teachers talking about this and Will replied that we still want to give children the best possible start in life. Will confirmed that we are seeing unprecedented numbers of looked after children in the system. Placements need to be right and give children the support they need.
- Concerns that we will have a crisis if we don't have early support in schools. Will confirmed that the ideal would be to pay for an Elsa project in every school but we have to find the budget.
- More support is needed to stop children going into social services. We need to produce children who can survive and thrive. Potential that we will have an even worse problem
- Cuts in education mean that some teachers can't cope anymore.
- The children who are most vulnerable will suffer due to cuts on staffing. Time people are spending with children will be cut.

- This is bottom up politics that is now affecting children who have no say in society.
- Question about federation. Will replied that if we ever have a federated school we do it to ensure their prosperity
- Question about what job losses have happened. Will replied no job losses have taken place. We are in a very tight position. The pressure in children's services is unprecedented. Will described that it's a very difficult situation. We have had to make difficult decisions to come up with our proposals. We recognise what is being said and the potential consequences on our children and young people. Welsh Government's influence is challenging but we continue to work on it.
- Schools in a deficit or reporting a deficit shows this will be perpetuating a problem.
- Will there be closures? Difficult to see how rural schools won't close. How can they survive with a 2% cut? Will confirmed that not all schools are carrying significant deficit budgets. The notion of a loan has been positively responded to by some schools.
- Can we talk about the reasons why schools go into deficit? Worried that there's an assumption that schools are fiscally irresponsible. This isn't just about the crisis of looked after children. There are more children with emotional and behavioral problems needing more 121 support and this is placing schools under even more pressure. There are serious reasons why schools go into deficit - it's a result of a series of circumstances to provide for children. Look at the number of exclusions going on in schools which highlights the problem of emotionally and behaviorally challenged children in school. It has not been suggested that it's due to financial mis-management. We are supporting more 121 and small group work in school. We need to find the best way to support. Some schools have had financial challenges for a whole range of reasons.
- This isn't about delivering extra this is about delivering a core provision that will be impacted. The funding needs to be here in Monmouthshire to fund the sixth form in King Henry. Head Teachers can only do so much- concerns that the sharing of Head Teachers does not work. Head Teachers are working for the EAS, not in their schools.
- This is going to destroy children's lives
- There are two savings needed here today. On your job page you are advertising £750k worth of jobs in a commercial environment. "I wouldn't hire those people I'd put that money with teachers". Councilors costs £3/4M to this county. I've saved you £2M by cutting that. Have you gone through the process of looking at where your money is spent? You have 43 people as councilors - we don't need those people doing that.

A/13 Summary of Head Teachers meeting – 17th January 2020

- Headteachers raised concerns that they are not able to make the savings required and asked cabinet to consider increasing council tax by an additional 1% to ensure that schools do not need to find this.
- Cllr P. Murphy explained that at the public meetings it was clear that the public did not want any further increase in council tax above what was already proposed. He also added that Cabinet were looking at all options to ensure that this can be reduced or even stopped.

- Headteachers agreed to contact their parents to make them aware of the proposals and to ensure that they responded to the consultation.

A/14 Access for All meeting – 17th January 2020 – Summary feedback

Q1 - Councils should be working in partnership with health. How is this taking place in Monmouthshire?

- In Monmouthshire we have integrated social care hubs across the county, for example in Abergavenny. Mardy Park is a very vibrant community hub and an asset. Various community groups use their grounds for projects to help mental health and wellbeing and some of the building is used as clinic spaces. In Monmouthshire we are very advanced in recognising how the community can benefit from shared spaces.
- Savings – this year we have been renegotiating the way we work.
- Fees and Charges - WG set the charge. People are assessed to look at how much people pay for support on a sliding scale of fees. We looked at the profile of some of our areas. One thing we have is the ability to pool money – through section 33. Looking at what we contribute and health contributes, we have seen that Health owe MCC money.
- We are trying to be as creative as possible to access more funding - this may be from gaining income from sources such as the health board. We have a very good relationship with health Integrated Service Partnership board. This works really well and is well developed in Monmouthshire.

Q.2 At what stage would I have to sell my house in order to get help if I wanted to move into a residential home?

- You don't need to sell your house while you still live in your home. In Monmouthshire we aim to keep as many people at home as possible. If the time arises when you can't live at home and need extra support from a care home, we make an assessment whereby legislative requirements need to be taken in to account. We work with the individual to see what is best to allow people to adjust to the change in their life.
- Government set the amount of £50,000 that the resident can keep if they need to sell their home. Anything above £50,000 is taken into account. Rate - £750-£1000 a week to stay in a care home. Anything below £50,000 LA will contribute.

Q3. Disabled Facility Grants - what is the uptake in Monmouthshire since the amount was increased from £300,000 to £600,000?

- A Disabled Facility Grant is for residents who need adaptation made to their homes. It is an area of growth and for people of all ages, people are also doing things for themselves. A report is going to Select Committee to look at the

current situation. The period of funding has lengthened which enables more residents to benefit. Now secure £600,000 this may rise to £900,000

Q4. 2% charge for schools – Pay and pensions will it be already taken out?

- Yes, it will not affect staff. 2% is the last resort.

Q5, Empty shops in Abergavenny - will the rates be reduced?

- This is a Welsh Government decision. Some shops may be able to get some help. It's out of our control. Maybe we can lobby WG on behalf of retailer.
- 'Abergavenny is a tourist town and there are more and more shops closing.' We are looking at buying old shops and regenerating them.

Q6. Are disabled toilets still going to be supported?

- The Toilet Strategy will provide more light on this and it is available on the website.

Issue with the nature of housing that is being built in Wales. They do not take into account people with disabilities. They are often not able to access public transport. They do not build 2 bedroom houses which are perfect for people who are downsizing. Planning Teams need to be aware and exercise more authority with big.

A/15 Summary of Youth Conference – 24th January 2020

During the Youth Conference, young people were asked to hold up different colour cards to demonstrate which statements they agree (green) or disagreed (red) with or were undecided (amber):

- “MCC gets the least funding per head of population compared to the rest of Wales” – all red cards, young people in Monmouthshire do not feel that this is fair
- “More funding put in to support for Adult Services, to help and support our growing older population.” – mostly amber, Monmouthshire’s young people are undecided about this
- “More investment in our schools to help you reach your full potential. We will continue to support the needs of children with Additional Learning Needs.” – all green, Monmouthshire’s young people support this
- “We will review how children with Additional Learning Needs travel to and from school. We are looking to see if some pupils could share transport rather than getting individual taxis to school.” – mostly amber, Monmouthshire’s young people are undecided about this
- “We face huge fines if we do not recycle waste properly. Black bags are containing more food waste and lots of items that can be recycled. We propose to carry out checks at our Household Waste and Recycling centres to check what people are throwing away and what could be recycled.” – mostly green, Monmouthshire’s young people support this

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A/16 Budget consultation responses received from residents (personal details redacted)

Response Identifier	Proposal it relates to	Proposal Title	Response
0001	CYP001	Individual Schools Budget Saving	As parents of children, who live and attend school in Monmouthshire, we would like to raise objections to the proposal to reduce base funding of schools by 2% for this financial year. Our children attend King Henry VIII school and we believe the Headteacher and her team have worked extremely hard to raise standards within the school; managing to effectively target limited resources to improve standards. We strongly feel that at 2% reduction would have a serious impact on their ability to continue that journey of school improvement. A good education system benefits everyone in Monmouthshire and should be fully funded. Please can our concerns be registered as a part of the consultation process.
0002	CYP001	Individual Schools Budget Saving	I would like to share my concerns regarding the reduction in funding allocation to King Henry VIII school. I understand there is a proposed 2% savings requirement which will impact on their base funding. Mrs Lewis and her team have worked extremely hard to drive up standards in the school and improve exam and test results, which has had a positive impact on both the students and the wider community. I am very concerned that they will not be able to maintain these standards and continue to grow and develop as a school if their base funding is cut. The school is a significant part of the Abergavenny and area community, with the majority of the children attending also living in the local area. It is for the benefit of this community that these children have a robust and high quality education. Please can this impact be considered in the consultation.
0003	CYP001	Individual Schools Budget Saving	My daughter currently attends Magor Church in Wales primary school. I am very concerned to see the proposal for school budgets to be cut by 2% in the coming financial year. The school has gone through a very difficult time following a estyn report a few years and the head, Mrs Haymer and her team have worked hard to try and bring about real improvement. Teaching staff, parents and PTFA are all aware that budgets are tight. As a member of the PTFA, and current joint Chair, I can honestly say that we are already helping the school in a number of areas, and have specifically funded new equipment for the junior yard as this was raised as an issue in the report, but if school funds could not hope to have achieved this with other pressures. The PTFA fund a number of school projects and are now looking to provide equipment to the infant yard. If the school budget is cut further my concern would be that the children would suffer with reduced opportunities. Alternatively it may mean parents having to contribute more and we have to be aware that not all parents are in a financial position to do this. Benefit entitlements have not increased, and universal credit puts even bigger pressures on families. Education should be free for all with no child feeling left out because parents are unable to contribute.
0004	CYP001	Individual Schools Budget Saving	As a parent of a pupil at King Henry VIII school, I would like to raise an objection to the proposed 2% cut to school funding. I hope very much that this cut is being reversed as part of the Wellbeing of Future Generations analysis, as it is clearly wrong to put the burden onto those who we should be giving the best possible start in life i.e. state school pupils. King Henry School has seen some fantastic improvements in recent years, and it is unacceptable to undermine the efforts of the Headteacher to do the best for her pupils. I understand that there are extremely difficult pressures being put on the council, but I would like to object to core school funding being cut.
0005	CYP001	Individual Schools Budget Saving	I'm writing to object to the proposals made in your draft document. We have a child studying at King Henry VIII in Abergavenny and are concerned a further cut to the school's budget will undermine the good work done by Mrs Lewis in improving standards. Protecting standards for future generation must surely be the first priority when budgeting, and while I understand the unfortunate position you have been put in, suggest that cuts are made in other areas and not education. Obviously this whole situation is terrible and the county should not be in this position, however state schools are the future.

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ABERGAVENNY TOWN COUNCIL

TOWN MAYOR

CLLR TONY KONIECZNY



TOWN CLERK

JANE LEE
TOWN HALL
CROSS STREET
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NP7 5HD
Telephone: (01873) 735820

Councillor Phil Murphy
Cabinet Member for Resources
Monmouthshire County Council

22nd January 2020

Dear Councillor Murphy

I have been asked to write to you on behalf of Abergavenny Town Council regarding the proposed budget for 2020/21.

At a recent Committee meeting the impact of the proposed cuts on the individual school budgets was discussed. It was agreed that the proposed cut of 2% is unacceptable as this would equate to a cut of £20,000 for primary schools and £75,000 for King Henry VIII School. This level of reduction in the individual school budgets will be detrimental to the education of the young people of Monmouthshire and their future options.

The Town Council requests that the proposed level of cuts is reconsidered in light of the long term impact that such decisions will have and the short term difficulty that schools will have in absorbing a significant reduction in their available budget.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Lee'.

Jane Lee
Town Clerk



“Believe, Succeed, Inspire, Achieve”
“Credù , Llwyddo , Ysbrydoli , Cyflawni”

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21: EDUCATION

To Whom This May Concern

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above consultation

Background

Raglan CiW VC Primary school is a bright, vibrant and friendly 21st Century School built for integrated learning, with 203 pupils enrolled into its educational care (Sept 2018 – July 2019). It is also one of the 15 schools which started 2019/20 in financial deficit. A five year budget recovery plan is in place, budgets are agreed in line with this strategic aim and are on track, but fragile.

As a school Raglan CiW VC Primary School has worked tirelessly over the past number of years to raise standards in what has been very challenging financial circumstances. The senior leadership team in conjunction with governors year on year have strived to reduce expenditure whilst carefully balancing the needs of the school and its pupils. It has been pleasing to see the growth and development of our school despite the financial challenges it is facing. The governing body and senior leadership team remain eternally grateful for the support it has received from parents and the local community during this difficult period, without their support such progress would have been impossible.

Education Proposal Response

We are pleased to see that the consultation proposal seeks to meet the budget requirements of the additional pension costs and pay awards and we acknowledge that this is alongside the safeguarding of funding used to support pupils with additional learning needs, which we welcome. In 2018/19, 15% of our learners were identified as having additional educational learning needs. However, the governing body of Raglan CiW Raglan Primary School are in no doubt that a real term 2% reduction in budget if approved will have a seismic impact on the school. The detrimental impact will not just be financial but also catastrophic in terms of the pressure it will place on school staff, the impact it will have on the well-being of pupils and the impairment it will have on the schools ability to maintain its current core provision.

There is also no doubt that the proposed budget reduction will detrimentally impact on the schools ability to sustain its 5 year budget elimination plan. The possibility of either a static or increased deficit cannot be disregarded as potential outcomes of the proposed budget reduction. Whilst we endorse the need for schools to be financially prudent and efficient, Raglan has already been through a very difficult budget cutting process. This has included staffing reductions, strained learning resources and a reduction in the funded provision of services to pupils. This has resulted in greater reliance on parents to financially contribute to school trips/activities/experiences to enrich the pupils learning and an increasing reliance on the school PTFA and community grants which may be available to bridge gaps in resources. At this stage of our recovery plan the expenditure savings are now marginal and consequently budget recovery is more fragile than ever. Prior to the announcement of Monmouthshire County



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“Credw , Llwyddo , Ysbrydoli , Cyflawni”

Councils education budget proposal, as a governing body we had already identified risks in 2020/2021 to the progress of our budget elimination plan, which are beyond the control of the Head Teacher and Governing Body. These concerns have been shared with Nikki Wellington and acknowledged during finance committee meetings.

We are not unique as a school in our financial position and the risk that the 2% reduction may have in terms of a collective impact on Monmouthshire school's deficit position and the overall reserves of MCC should not be underestimated. This risk is already noted in your Revenue & Capital Monitoring 2019/2020 Forecast Out-turn Statement. Such an outcome would eliminate any potential benefits foreseen from the budget reduction (which we believe are unfounded) and furthermore will potentially have a long-lasting damaging effect on individual schools, pupils, staff and the communities which they serve.

The proposed 2% budget cut to our school in addition to the financial pressures already faced is simply unsustainable and if approved will affect staff and pupil wellbeing and our school's ability to supply its core provisions. As a Governing Body we would need to explore which difficult areas of the core provision may be affected. In this consultation we specifically wish to raise concerns in relation to funding for support staff, maintenance of foundation phase ratio's and intervention availability. These are areas where services are already stretched to the bare minimum. Our pupils deserve more than this and as a governing body we strongly believe that our schools focus must always remain on pupil education, wellbeing and to strive for excellence. These attainments must not and should not be governed or impinged by unsustainable budget savings, which is the very real risk imposed by the MCC Education Budget proposals for 2020/2021.

Furthermore we are extremely concerned that the education proposals are not aligned with the Well Being of Future Generations Act. This is critical and flagship Welsh legislation than cannot be side-lined by the council when making such significant budget reduction proposals.

We hope that these comments are useful in your deliberations and urge you to seriously re-consider the education proposals due to the impact that the budget cuts will have on our school and its pupils.

As a governing body we would appreciate being kept informed of any further developments in this area.

Mike Fowler
Chair of Governors
Raglan CiW VC Primary

29 January 2020

Peter Davies
Monmouthshire County Council
Chief Officer for Resources (acting S151 officer)
E-mail: peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Dear Mr Davies,

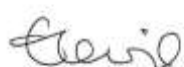
We are writing in response to the MCC budget proposals and, in particular, those for Children and Young People. We recognise the local authority has received the least favourable draft settlement from Welsh Government and, within the budget proposals; there are some helpful elements for schools. However, a proposed 2% reduction in ISB excluding ALN is considered collectively by all secondary schools of significant concern.

As school leaders, we do not agree that the proposed reduction of individual school budgets will protect schools. There is recognition of this within the budget process last year that school budgets were at breaking point. Hence the small uplift in the ISB. The proposed cut this year of 2% will provide a significant challenge to schools and could pose a threat to the provision made available, particularly, for our most vulnerable students. It must be remembered schools are the LAs first line of social care and ALN support. Through our wellbeing provision, we provide the structure to allow our most vulnerable pupils to engage in their education and secure a successful future. The proposed reduction means alternative curriculums, wellbeing and basic skills interventions, will be at risk and may add to the burden on wider services at MCC level such as social services and ALN. As a result, as schools we believe a proposed cut of 2% may be counterproductive. Furthermore, our concern is that this will negatively impact on the life chances of our most vulnerable students.

We understand there are difficult choices to make and understand all public services are important however, the children of Monmouthshire have one go at their education. Therefore, as a group of secondary schools we urge officers to invest further in the children and fully comply with the aim of the MMC Wellbeing Plan to "Provide children with the best start in life". Consequently, we firmly believe that the proposed reduction of ISB by 2% is amended so that there is no reduction.

We strongly urge that the council reconsider this proposal. While officers and cabinet members will have spent many hours reflecting on the options available, we believe these savings can be found in other areas of the overall corporate spend or through further increased council tax. Please be assured, as school leaders, we are committed to ensuring every child whatever their background is able to thrive in school and look forward to a fulfilling future. As a group of leaders, we trust this commitment is reflected in the final settlement to our schools.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs Elspeth Lewis
Headteacher, King Henry VIII



Mr Vaughan Davies
Headteacher, Monmouth



Mr Marc Belli
Executive Headteacher, Caldicot



Mrs Sian Phillips
Chair of KHS Governing Body



Mrs Victoria Smith
Chair of MCS Governing Body



Mr Peter Nurcombe
Chair of Caldicot Governing Body

cc. Will McLean
Paul Matthews
Cllr Richard John
Cllr Peter Fox
Cllr P Murphy

Face to face events were held throughout the county to capture public responses, including cluster meetings, public meetings, the Access for All meeting and Engage to Change meeting.



- Throughout January, 15 events were held to discuss the 20/21 budget proposals, including 11 public consultation events across the County

The engagement events were supported through a pro-active communications plan, which included the creation of Webpages with a link to all documents and a digital feedback form.



- Various media channels were used to encourage engagement, including local press articles and social media promotions through Facebook and Twitter.



- Facebook reached the greatest audience, reaching 1,000s of people per post.
- The highest viewed post was the Budget overview reminder link to budget details and survey form, which had a reach of nearly 6,000 people and received 25 comments.



- The online survey was a successful method for capturing budget response, with 285 people sharing their views via the online form

- Greatest level of objection was received in response to the proposed 2% cut to individual school budgets, with concern being raised at the public engagement events and through the online survey and email responses



Online survey responses – 95% disagreed with the Education proposals

1. Do you agree or disagree with the proposals for Education?

 Agree	14
 Disagree	265



- The proposed loan scheme received a more positive response yet this did not relieve concerns that the ISB savings would have a detrimental impact on children



- Whilst the public recognise the pressures local authorities are facing, strong views were expressed in relation to the proposed 4.95% increase in Council Tax, with the majority of responses objecting to the proposed increase.

- The proposed increase was considered to be too high and likely to have an adverse impact on Monmouthshire households.

We propose a 4.95% increase in Council Tax as a result of the financial challenges we face from the inadequate funding recovered from Welsh Government - Do you agree or disagree?

 Agree	67
 Disagree	167





- From the responses received there is an overall consensus that Welsh Government funding disproportionately disadvantages Monmouthshire in comparison to other Welsh Authorities and that it fails to recognise the areas of deprivation within the County.
- The public are in agreement that the current funding floor needs to be challenged in order to protect vital services.

- Survey responses were divided in regards to Planning, Transport and Highways, with almost a 50/50 split between agree and disagree
- Some of the main concerns raised in these areas are in regards to overstretched infrastructure and an inability to cope with increased development
- A lot of the initial feedback concerned Usk recycling centre – which was lessened when decision was put in abeyance.



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Appendix B1 - Provisional Settlement Data

Welsh Local Government Revenue Settlement 2020-2021

Provisional

Table 1a: Change in Aggregate External Finance (AEF) plus floor funding, adjusted for transfers, by Unitary Authority

£'000s

Unitary Authority	2019-20 final Aggregate External Finance* plus floor	2020-21 provisional Aggregate External Finance	Percentage difference	Rank
Isle of Anglesey	97,324	101,005	3.8%	18
Gwynedd	179,375	187,579	4.6%	6
Conwy	156,064	161,398	3.4%	21
Denbighshire	145,713	151,932	4.3%	11
Flintshire	192,212	199,386	3.7%	19
Wrexham	178,121	184,296	3.5%	20
Powys	176,940	184,289	4.2%	14
Ceredigion	103,308	107,646	4.2%	13
Pembrokeshire	164,153	172,204	4.9%	3
Carmarthenshire	262,611	274,159	4.4%	10
Swansea	325,697	339,381	4.2%	12
Neath Port Talbot	217,091	226,762	4.5%	8
Bridgend	193,949	203,127	4.7%	5
The Vale of Glamorgan	153,453	161,021	4.9%	2
Rhondda Cynon Taf	372,105	388,666	4.5%	9
Merthyr Tydfil	92,332	96,810	4.8%	4
Caerphilly	272,212	283,367	4.1%	16
Blaenau Gwent	111,727	116,063	3.9%	17
Torfaen	134,373	140,467	4.5%	7
Monmouthshire	94,896	97,760	3.0%	22
Newport	216,443	228,077	5.4%	1
Cardiff	450,512	469,047	4.1%	15
Total unitary authorities	4,290,612	4,474,444	4.3%	

Appendix B1 - Provisional Settlement Data

Welsh Local Government Revenue Settlement 2020-2021

Provisional

Table 1c: Aggregate External Finance (AEF) per capita, by Unitary Authority, 2020-21

Unitary Authority	2020-21 provisional Aggregate External	Provisional Aggregate External	Rank
Isle of Anglesey	101,005	1,442	11
Gwynedd	187,579	1,511	8
Conwy	161,398	1,378	17
Denbighshire	151,932	1,590	5
Flintshire	199,386	1,283	19
Wrexham	184,296	1,329	18
Powys	184,289	1,395	14
Ceredigion	107,646	1,440	12
Pembrokeshire	172,204	1,382	15
Carmarthenshire	274,159	1,466	10
Swansea	339,381	1,379	16
Neath Port Talbot	226,762	1,595	4
Bridgend	203,127	1,410	13
The Vale of Glamorgan	161,021	1,236	21
Rhondda Cynon Taf	388,666	1,623	2
Merthyr Tydfil	96,810	1,621	3
Caerphilly	283,367	1,564	6
Blaenau Gwent	116,063	1,669	1
Torfaen	140,467	1,517	7
Monmouthshire	97,760	1,044	22
Newport	228,077	1,508	9
Cardiff	469,047	1,277	20
Total unitary authorities	4,474,444	1,426	

* Based upon 2018 Mid Year Estimates and the 2014 LA based 2019 Population projections



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Monmouthshire County Council

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Rt Hon Mark Drakeford AM

First Minister

Welsh Government

5th Floor

Ty Hywel

Cardiff Bay

CF99 1NA

E-mail – P.S.FirstMinister@gov.wales

C.c. Julie James, Minister for Housing and Local Government –
correspondence.julie.james@gov.wales

LGFPSettlement@gov.wales – submitted as part of consultation response

Tel/Ffôn:

01633 644020

Fax/Ffacs:

E-mail/E-bost:

matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Our Ref/Ein Cyf:

PF/letters/2020/200203

Your Ref/Eich Cyf:

Date/Dyddiad:

3rd February 2020

Dear First Minister,

Local Government Provisional Settlement 2020/21

Thank you for your invitation to respond to the Provisional Local Government Settlement through the consultation process. Please find below Monmouthshire's response.

You will understandably notice a lot of consistency within Monmouthshire's response to the response from the Leader of Council and which was shared with us last week. We have also reflected on the letter from Julie James last Friday which confirmed that she would consider the case for a funding floor to be included.

The Provisional Settlement

The provisional Settlement better recognises the significant pressures faced by local government in respect of employment costs and service pressures and is a welcome improvement to the Settlements received in previous years. However, whilst AEF increases by £184m this still falls significantly below the £254m uplift that the Welsh Local Government Association had estimated that local authorities required in their budgets to maintain existing service provision during 2020-21.

Furthermore, it is of great concern to Monmouthshire that the AEF position across Wales is in a wide range of between 3% (the worst being Monmouthshire) and 5.4% (the best). The AEF span of 2.4% is the highest it has been for a number of years. As has been the case for a number of years, Monmouthshire has been afforded a poor Settlement relative to the rest of Wales through the application of need based indicators that drive the distribution of funding.

Monmouthshire, together with four of the six North Wales authorities, feature within the five worst Settlements across Wales. Monmouthshire again remains with the worst Settlement in Wales.

It is acknowledged that the Distribution Sub Group has a role to play with regard to the distribution arrangements of the annual local government revenue Settlement. It is noted that the intended outcome of the Settlement is the delivery of an equitable, appropriate and accurate distribution of revenue settlement funding to local authorities in Wales which reflects relative need. And it is understood that there are valid reasons as to why some authorities are experiencing smaller increases than others, such as relative changes in population and pupil numbers. Whilst these changes have been agreed through the Distribution Sub Group this only helps alleviate some of the distributional impact.

It is fair to say that there is a strong widespread feeling that the currently applied needs based distribution arrangements have shortcomings, indeed there are many calls to review the local government funding formula. Whilst these shortcomings remain in place a funding floor at least allows Welsh Government to 'step outside' the data driven process and introduce an element of fairness to support those authorities suffering from a form of 'data deficit' in the way that they are currently exposed to the number crunching exercise.

Employee Related Pressures (Pay awards, Pension costs and the National Living Wage)

It is true to say that pay related pressures form a significant part of the net revenue expenditure of our services and our schools. Such pay pressures include externally set pay awards, and externally determined teachers' pension increase. In addition, the National Living Wage, again externally determined, impacts upon care fees paid to the independent sector which is a vital part of supporting and sustaining both Social Services and Health services.

As you will appreciate, the percentage increase relating to employee related costs applies equally and consistently to authorities irrespective of geography, such that whether you are afforded one of the better Settlements, or in Monmouthshire's case the worst Settlement, the additional cost pressure is consistent. There is therefore a danger that the need indicator process that is applied by Welsh Government through the current distribution regime produces a 'need' to cut staff (including teachers) to compensate for the funding differences apparent within the distribution process.

Social Services

It is now widely accepted throughout the UK that the rising elderly population has become the major issue affecting the sustainability and resilience of local authorities having responsibility for Social Services. Obviously in Wales that means all of the 22 unitary authorities. This is a significant matter for Monmouthshire where population projections between 2014 and 2039 see Monmouthshire have the second highest increase in both those aged over 65 and aged over 85. Furthermore the Council is more recently seeing a significant increase in the number of disabled adults who are reaching an age where their parents are no longer in a position to care for them leaving the Council to have step in and provide expensive but necessary support.

In addition to the longstanding pressures within the adult social care sector, in more recent years significant pressures have emerged in respect of services and support provided to looked after children. Complex and rising demand for care to our most vulnerable children has added to the financial pressures within social care creating a significant resource shortfall that now has to be addressed. The cost pressures are in particular arising from a sharp increase and an associated significant increase of cost related to complex individual cases.

If it is not addressed through central grant funding (the AEF), cuts to other services (including preventative service and other services expected by your appointed Commissioners) and Council Tax increases are required to solve the overall financial equation. It does not seem fair and appropriate for a national problem to be addressed locally.

Pupils with Additional Learning Needs

We continue to experience significant pressures in our population of learners with additional learning needs (ALN). These pressures are manifesting in both increased out of county placement costs and increased funding for children supported in mainstream settings. The pressure is most acute for those with neuro-developmental needs. Schools are also experiencing greater numbers of children with complex needs whose origins lay in attachment and adverse childhood experiences.

Whilst the additional Welsh Government one-off grant funding is welcomed it is inadequate to cover the pressures being faced and in allowing the Council to fully embed the requirements of the new ALN and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018.

Sustainable Waste Management Grant

Moving on to other areas Monmouthshire like others find it counter-intuitive that the sustainable waste management grant should be cut. Monmouthshire, other Welsh local authorities and Welsh Government have all declared climate emergencies. The proposed reduction in grant appears to conflict with Welsh Government policy relating to the waste and recycling agenda specifically and the carbon agenda generally. Likewise, current recycling targets being based on tonnages and not the carbon impact, and which can lead to perverse outcomes.

Standard Council Tax

The provisional Settlement for 2020/2021 includes a Standard Council Tax of £1,335.76 which is an increase of 7.1% compared with the level Welsh Government used for the final Settlement in 2019/2020. It is accepted that this is to reflect the increases in Council Tax levels across Wales, but the fact that Welsh Government expects Councils to be able to generate additional income of 7.1% through Council Tax increases needs to be explained clearly in both the final Settlement papers and written statement that accompanies it so that the public can better understand the position.

Monmouthshire is currently having to consider a 4.95% increase in Council Tax and is already facing criticism from residents at the level of increase and which falls well below the % increase that Welsh Government expects Councils has modelled in its own Settlement calculations.

Capital Funding

In terms of the Settlement for capital funding, it is disappointing that General Capital Grant and Supported Borrowing have only seen small increases. The continuation of funding for highways refurbishment and school maintenance is welcomed but the level of unhypothecated capital funding has now reached a point where Monmouthshire like others cannot support the required investment into its vital infrastructure.

Further valued capital investment not only provides much needed repair and maintenance to our core assets, but also provides a boost the local economy and indeed the economy of Wales at a

time when it is needed. There are significant opportunities for Monmouthshire in improving the local road, rail and public transport infrastructure and that equally support active travel plans.

Conclusion Regarding The Floor Request

It has been argued by the Minister for Local Government and Finance and accepted that the purpose of providing for a floor is a temporary measure to mitigate against the impact of unmanageable change in authority funding in individual years and is not intended to be used every year. However, one further shortcoming of the funding formula and distribution mechanisms is that it fails to recognise the current and increased in-year demand pressures that Monmouthshire for example are suffering and that are needing to be managed.

The extent to which the provisional Settlement apparently reflects pay related pressures leaves little room (if any) in the adjusted AEF cash increase to acknowledge these service pressures and demand relating to social care and children with additional learning needs. It is little wonder that our other services require substantial budget reductions to compensate for inadequate real term financial growth to fund our 'real' needs based pressures.

As a consequence Monmouthshire would strongly urge you and your Minister for Housing and Local Government to see a funding floor continued in line with the request from the Welsh Local Government Association and on the basis of principle and precedent to introduce regional fairness into the Settlement arrangements for Wales. In so doing Welsh Government would better achieve the overarching principles of equity, stability, clarity and relevance through their financial support to local government.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Fox', written in a cursive style.

Peter Fox

Council Leader

WELSH LOCAL GOVERNMENT SETTLEMENT 2020-21

Provisional Revenue - Indicative Estimates

Table 7: List and estimated amounts of Grants for total Wales

Portfolio and Grant Name	£'000s	
	2019-20	2020-21
Education		
Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant ¹	140,623	154,399
Sixth Form funding	94,664	93,943
Pupil Development Grant	92,767	101,367
Professional Learning ²	15,000	0
Teachers Pay Grant 2019/20	12,018	RSG
Youth Support ³	10,056	10,056
Transition support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller learners ⁴	10,000	10,000
Costs associated with Teachers Pay ^{5,6}	7,500	0
PDG Access ⁴	5,154	8,354
Reducing Infant Class Sizes Grant - Revenue	5,000	6,000
Adult Community Learning	4,418	4,418
Additional Learning Needs Innovation Fund	3,331	3,268
Small and Rural Schools Grant	2,500	2,500
Whole School Approach	1,526	2,000
SEREN Foundation grant	655	655
School based supply cluster trial ⁵	350	0
SEREN Academy grant	329	329
School Business Managers ⁵	200	0
Foundation Phase Pilot (Flintshire only) ⁵	130	0
Additional Learning Needs ⁴	0	7,192
Elective Home Education ⁴	0	1,500
TOTAL	406,220	405,982
Housing and Local Government		
Children and Communities Grant(CCG) ⁷	136,442	135,442
Housing Support Grant	123,688	123,688
Teachers Pension Grant	39,112	RSG
Affordable Housing Grant (AHG) ⁵	18,762	0
Sustainable Waste Management Grant	18,200	16,400
Food and Residual Waste Treatment Gate Fee Support	10,017	13,300
Cardiff Capital Region City Deal	10,000	10,000
Cardiff Harbour Authority	5,223	5,223
Child Burials	600	600
Digital Transformation Fund	552	1,150
EU Support for Local Resilience Forums ⁵	500	0
Support for Public Service Boards	400	400
South Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP)	50	50
Waste Planning Monitoring Report - North Wales and South East Wales	49	50
Rural Housing Enabler	47	47
North Wales Regional Aggregate Working Party (RAWP)	25	25
Mid and South Wales Regional Viability Model and Assessment	19	0
Waste Planning Monitoring Report - South West Wales	16	16
Armed Forces Day	15	20
Circular Economy Projects	0	1,000

TOTAL	363,716	307,411
<u>Health and Social Services</u>		
Childcare Offer- Childcare Costs	46,150	56,177
Social Care Workforce and Sustainability Pressures Grant	30,000	40,000
Substance Misuse Action Fund	25,063	25,063
A Healthier West Wales (supported programmes 1, 3, 7)	4,484	7,483
Community Services - North Wales	3,732	2,041
Integrated early intervention and intensive support for Children, Young People and Families-North Wales ⁵	2,407	0
Childcare Offer- Administration Grant	2,323	2,323
Adoption Services	2,300	2,300
Together for Mental Health - North Wales	2,072	238
Social Care Tasks Performed by a Registered Nurse in Nursing	1,900	RSG
Seamless Services For People with Learning Disabilities - North Wales ⁵	1,651	0
Childcare Offer- SEN Grant	1,500	1,500
National Approach to Statutory Advocacy for Children and Young People	550	550
Early Years Integration Transformation Programme	463	463
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	263	263
Complex Needs Funding - Substance Misuse and Mental Health	229	1,018
Maintaining the Delivery of the Wales Adoption Register	178	178
National Fostering Framework – Developing Foster Wales Brand and Marketing	100	100
Drug & Alcohol Initiatives Naloxone Programme	80	80
Support Revision and Development of Wales Safeguarding Procedures for Adults and Children at Risk	75	75
Supporting Safeguarding Boards to deliver training for the implementation of Welsh Government policy and legislation	60	60
Residential care homes for Children - task and finish group	50	50
Review of the Local Authority Performance Management Framework Grant	34	34
Contact Centres	18	21
TOTAL	125,682	140,017
<u>Economy and Transport</u>		
Free Concessionary Bus travel	60,133	60,133
Bus Services Support Grant	25,000	25,000
Bus Revenue Support - Traws Cymru	2,530	3,187
Road Safety Grant	2,000	2,000
Arfor innovation Fund	1,000	1,000
Anglesey Airport - Operation & Maintenance	800	800
Continued support for Regional Skills Partnerships	495	495
Swansea Tidal Lagoon Taskforce ⁵	220	0
Business Improvement District ⁵	78	0
Youth Discounted Travel Scheme (My Travel Pass)	60	60
TOTAL	92,316	92,675
<u>Environment,Energy and Rural Affairs</u>		
Land Drainage and Coastal Protection	2,400	1,469
Environment Act 1995 (Feasibility Study for Nitrogen Dioxide Compliance) Ai	1,637	0
Local Authority Animal Health and Welfare Framework Funding	200	200
Coastal Risk Management Programme ⁸	151	1,600
Smart Living Initiative	135	185
Enforcement support to take forward legislation relating to bovine TB ⁵	63	0
Non-domestic (Business) Rates Support for Hydropower	8	9
TOTAL	4,594	3,463

Deputy Minister and Chief Whip

Period Dignity in Schools	2,300	2,300
Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse & Sexual Violence Grant	1,938	1,938
Community Cohesion Grant	1,120	1,120
Period Dignity in Communities ⁹	220	220
TOTAL	5,578	5,578

Culture, Sport and Tourism

Regional Tourism Engagement Fund (RTEF)	976	976
MALD strategic grants, including Fusion	331	331
Specialist Service Grants	25	25
TOTAL	1,331	1,331

International Relations and Welsh Language

Promote and Faciliate the use of the Welsh Language (WLG)	314	314
Major Events Unit Grants Scheme	150	600
TOTAL	464	914

Finance and Trefnydd

High Street and Retail Rates Relief	23,600	24,200
Cyber Resilience Revenue Grant	98	800
TOTAL	23,698	25,000

All Grants	1,023,599	982,370
All Grants excluding NA and RSG transfers (for like-for like comparison)	970,418	982,370

i The information shown above details the total amount of each grant. Some grants may be split between local authorities and other bodies.

ii It is important to note that amounts for future years are indicative at this stage and are liable to change.

iii Formal notification of grant allocations is a matter for the relevant policy area.

TBC= To be confirmed

RSG = funding transferring to Revenue Support Grant

¹ Includes programmes: EIG, Raising School Standards, Pioneer Schools, Assessment for Learning, Welsh Language Charter, Literacy and Numeracy, Modern Foreign Languages,

² In 2020-21 plan is for funding to be allocated to regions and it will form part of the RCSIG grant.

³ Includes Youth homelessness £3.7m funding transfer still to be agreed

⁴ Programmes are part of the Local Authority Education Grant

⁵ Grant ending 2019-20

⁶ £7.5m provided in 2018-19 and 2019-20 as a transitional time limited arrangement to support local authorities to meet cost pressures associated with implementation of 2018-19 teachers' pay award.

⁷ Includes programmes: Childcare & Play, Communities for Work Plus, Families First, Flying start, Legacy Fund, promoting Positive Engagement for Young People, St David's Fund.

⁸ £0.15m being transferred to RSG in 2020-21

⁹ Previously known as Period Poverty Grant

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APPENDIX D1 - SAVINGS AND PRESSURES SUMMARY - FINAL BUDGET PROPOSALS

Ref	Pressures by Directorate	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CYP	Children & Young People	2,650	0
SCH	Social Care & Health	5,005	(1,013)
ENT	Enterprise	789	(569)
RES	Resources	308	(358)
CEO	Chief Executives Unit	221	(163)
CORP	Corporate Costs & Levies	553	(628)
APP	Appropriations	0	(1,758)
FIN	Financing	0	(4,022)
	Totals	9,526	(8,510)

Ref	Children & Young People	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
PCYP004	Teachers Pension Scheme - increased pension contribution rate	689	0
	CYP Teachers pay increase (2.7% less 1%) - Apr to Aug '20	491	0
PCYP001	ALN - Mounton House recoupment income shortfall	298	0
	ALN - increased placements and increased cost of placements at Independent Schools	338	0
	ALN - increased cost of placements at other Local Authorities	41	0
	ALN - pressures arising from Authority supporting more children to remain in LA schools	529	0
PCYP002	ALN transport pressures	217	0
	ALN transport pressures - post 16	47	0
CYP001	CYP - 2% reduction in Individual School Budgets	0	0
	CYP Totals	2,650	0

Ref	Social Care & Health	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CSCH006	Myst project - increased investment and impact of ICF funding ceasing	287	0
	Childrens Services Looked After Children (LAC) pressure	2,600	0
	LAC savings - reduced legal costs	0	(100)
	LAC savings - additional investment in Myst project	0	(250)
CSCH003	Adult demographics - adults with disabilities pressure	1,044	0
	Disability Services - reduce budget in line with current year demand and forecast	0	(7)
	My Day My Life - Development of single Monmouth MDML Hub	0	(15)
	Care home and domiciliary provider fee levels - maintaining contractual fee levels	373	0

CSCH002	TWUD (Turning the World Upsidedown) and countywide rollout of commissioning strategy	548	0
	Fairer charging weekly threshold increases from £70 to £80 generating income following means test	0	(116)
	Practice change	0	(150)
Report	Investment in Safeguarding team	153	0
SCH001	Renegotiate Severn View section 28A contract sum	0	(166)
	Service Contract efficiency savings	0	(20)
SCH004	Fees and charges increases	0	(189)
	SCH Totals	5,005	(1,013)

Ref	Enterprise	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
PENT001	Street Lighting - Energy Increases	25	0
Report	Monlife investment (Council report 19/9/19)	98	0
Report	Strategic development plan contribution - part-year impact	41	0
CENT021	Planning Application income/fee deficit	100	0
	Planning & Building Control - Planning Application fee increase - WG set to increase price by 20%	0	(60)
	Planning & Building Control - Charging customers who wish to amend application during process.	0	(2)
	Planning & Building Control - Increasing Pre-app fees by 2.5%	0	(2)
	Planning & Building Control - New income from S106 monitoring fees	0	(20)
	Planning & Building Control - Increase in L2 Pre-app income - fee increase	0	(2)
	Planning & Building Control - Staff restructure	0	(27)
PENT019	Car Parks - Pay & Display Income deficit	183	0
ENT010-017	First year implementation costs of car parking proposals - removal of pressure from 19/20	0	(106)
CENT020	Highways & Flooding - PPA Income deficit	35	0
	Highways & Flooding - SAB (Sustainable Drainage Approval Body) income deficit	66	0
	Highways & Flooding - ESD Flooding grant deficit	20	0
	Highways & Flooding - Charge For Access Markings	0	(2)
	Highways & Flooding - Charge for Events signing	0	(5)
	Highways & Flooding - Increase Road Closure Income Budget	0	(32)
	Highways & Flooding - Increase in Street Name & Numbering Charges (in particular developers)	0	(5)
	Highways & Flooding - Increase in S50 Licences for Utilities	0	(15)
	Highways & Flooding - Software savings from new asset management system.	0	(7)
	Highways & Flooding - Provide design service for drainage schemes	0	(5)
	Highways & Flooding - Utilising grant to cover staff costs	0	(10)
CENT022	PTU Catchment change consequences	114	0
	Passenger Transport Unit - Private Hire income pressure	50	0
	Passenger Transport Unit - vehicle maintenance pressure	20	0

	Passenger Transport Unit - PTU - Route Optimisation and workforce planning	0	(60)
PENT020	ENT - Building Cleaning - Succession Management	12	0
ENT008 (19/20)	Waste - Issue "Tax Disc" style permits to all residents with council tax to reduce cross border traffic of waste	0	(50)
Report	Waste transfer station contract review	0	(30)
Report	Waste - Close Usk Recycling - dependant on policy approval by cabinet. Open Troy another day.	0	(40)
ENT019	Highways Operations - Staff Savings - Efficiencies in workforce and reception @ Raglan depot.	0	(9)
	Highways Operations - Winter Maintenance - Net saving from Route based forecasting software improving pre-salting accuracy.	0	(5)
	Hwys Operations - Reduction in Plant & Equipment Hire through investment	0	(3)
	Hwys Operations - Provision of recycled tarmac to other local authorities.	0	(5)
CFC001	School Meals - School Meals Price increase from £2.45 to £2.50.	0	(20)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges	0	(48)
	Ealing ruling - block booking scheme to mitigate impact of clubs and associates unable to recover VAT	25	0
	ENT Totals	789	(569)

Ref	Chief Executive's Unit	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CCEO001	Legal - additional investment in childcare solicitors in response to demand and to lessen need to take external legal advice	125	0
	Legal - employment lawyer investment	55	0
	Legal services income from Fire and police	0	(10)
	Offsetting legal costs against capital projects and investment activity	0	(40)
CEO002 (19/20)	Reduction in annual grant provided to Monmouth CAB	0	(1)
CCEO002	Technology renewal - increased software licence fees in community hubs, contact centre and community education	41	0
	Market and increase take-up of community education courses across all sites	0	(30)
CEO007	Staffing realignment across policy and governance	0	(79)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges	0	(3)
	CEO Totals	221	(163)

Ref	Resources	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
PRES001	Energy cost increases	22	0
PRES005 18/19	Technology & Systems review - digital savings no longer regarded as achievable	76	0
PRES006	SRS core contribution increase	147	0

RES001	Senior officer reduction	0	(100)
RES002	Exchequer savings - removal of cheques	0	(20)
RES003	Commercial income	0	(200)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges	0	(1)
	Business rate discretionary rate relief	63	0
Full Cost budget briefing note	Disinvest from top-up on discretionary business rate relief scheme	0	(37)
	RES Totals	308	(358)

Ref	Corporate Costs & Levies	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Fire precept increase - based on indicative increase notified	19	0
Full Cost budget briefing note	Insurance renewals - increase in premiums (half yr effect from 19/20)	114	0
Full Cost budget briefing note	Freeze pension contribution rate at 23.1% for next two years	0	(370)
	Incremental pay pressure caused by introduction of new pay spine	420	0
	Housing completions - improved forecast	0	(258)
	Corporate Costs & Levies Totals	553	(628)

Ref	Appropriations	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Net Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) increase based on additional activity	0	(204)
Full Cost budget briefing note	Additional borrowing in respect of Future schools tranche A, DFGs, and sewer plants	0	0
2019-20 Budget approval	Interest Receivable	0	(1)

Full Cost budget briefing note	Earmarked Reserves review - reduction in Treasury Equalisation reserve	0	(400)
	<u>Costs funded via capitalisation direction:</u>		
Full Cost budget briefing note	Corporate redundancy provision	0	(400)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Mounton House recoupment income loss and repayment of reserve funding for inclusion centres	0	(348)
Full Cost budget briefing note	School based redundancy provision	0	(300)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Safeguarding team - one-off investment in recruitment & training	0	(45)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Lead officer - workforce development	0	(60)
	Appropriations Totals	0	(1,758)

Ref	Financing	2020/21 Pressure Final £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
Report	Council tax base increase based on forecast housing completions - as per CT1 form	0	(322)
	AEF increase - revised assumption from 0% to 1%	0	(900)
	AEF increase - additional funding from provision settlement	0	(1,076)
Full Cost budget briefing note	AEF funding - assumed 100% WG funding of teachers pay increase - Apr to Aug '20	0	(491)
	AEF funding - assumed 100% WG funding of teachers pension increase	0	(689)
	Council tax increase to 4.95% (from 3.95%) - including CTRS	0	(544)
	Financing Totals	0	(4,022)

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APPENDIX E1 - SUMMARY OF PRESSURES - MOVEMENT FROM DRAFT TO FINAL

Ref	Pressures by Directorate	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
CYP	Children & Young People	2,650	0	2,650
SCH	Social Care & Health	5,505	(500)	5,005
ENT	Enterprise	764	25	789
RES	Resources	245	63	308
CEO	Chief Executives Unit	221	0	221
CORP	Corporate Costs & Levies	313	240	553
APP	Appropriations	44	(44)	0
FIN	Financing	0	0	0
	Totals	9,742	(216)	9,526

Ref	Children & Young People	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
PCYP004	Teachers Pension Scheme - increased pension contribution rate	689		689
	CYP Teachers pay increase (2.7% less 1%) - Apr to Aug '20	491		491
PCYP001	ALN - Mounton House recoupment income shortfall	298		298
	ALN - increased placements and increased cost of placements at Independent Schools	338		338
	ALN - increased cost of placements at other Local Authorities	41		41
	ALN - pressures arising from Authority supporting more children to remain in LA schools	529		529
PCYP002	ALN transport pressures	217		217
	ALN transport pressures - post 16	47		47
	CYP Totals	2,650	0	2,650

Ref	Social Care & Health	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
CSCH006	Myst project - increased investment and impact of ICF funding ceasing	287		287
	Childrens Services Looked After Children (LAC) pressure	2,600		2,600
CSCH003	Adult demographics - adults with disabilities pressure	1,044		1,044
CSCH002	Care home and domiciliary provider fee levels - maintaining contractual fee levels	373		373
	TWUD (Turning the World Upsidedown) and countywide rollout of commissioning strategy	1,048	(500)	548
Report	Investment in Safeguarding team	153		153
	SCH Totals	5,505	(500)	5,005

Ref	Enterprise	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
PENT001	Street Lighting - Energy Increases	25		25
Report	Monlife investment (Council report 19/9/19)	98		98

Report	Strategic development plan contribution - part-year impact	41		41
CENT021	Planning Application income/fee deficit	100		100
PENT019	Car Parks - Pay & Display Income deficit	183		183
CENT020	Highways & Flooding - PPA Income deficit	35		35
	Highways & Flooding - SAB (Sustainable Drainage Approval Body) income deficit	66		66
	Highways & Flooding - ESD Flooding grant deficit	20		20
CENT022	PTU Catchment change consequences	114		114
	Passenger Transport Unit - Private Hire income pressure	50		50
	Passenger Transport Unit - vehicle maintenance pressure	20		20
PENT020	ENT - Building Cleaning - Succession Management	12		12
	Ealing ruling - block booking scheme to mitigate impact of clubs and associates unable to recover VAT		25	25
	ENT Totals	764	25	789

Ref	Chief Executive's Unit	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
CCEO001	Legal - additional investment in childcare solicitors in response to demand and to lessen need to take external legal advice	125		125
	Legal - employment lawyer investment	55		55
CCEO002	Technology renewal - increased software licence fees in community hubs, contact centre and community education	41		41
	CEO Totals	221	0	221

Ref	Resources	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
PRES001	Energy cost increases	22		22
PRES005 18/19	Technology & Systems review - digital savings no longer regarded as achievable	76		76
PRES006	SRS core contribution increase	147		147
	Business rate discretionary rate relief		63	63
	RES Totals	245	63	308

Ref	Corporate Costs & Levies	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Fire precept increase - based on indicative increase notified	199	(180)	19
Full Cost budget briefing note	Insurance renewals - increase in premiums (half yr effect from 19/20)	114		114
	Incremental pay pressure caused by introduction of new pay spine		420	420
	Corporate Costs & Levies Totals	313	240	553

Ref	Appropriations	2020/21 Pressure Draft £000	Change £000	2020/21 Pressure Final £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Additional borrowing in respect of Future schools tranche A, DFGs, and sewer plants	44	(44)	0
	Appropriations Totals	44	(44)	0

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APPENDIX E2 - SUMMARY OF SAVINGS - MOVEMENT FROM DRAFT TO FINAL

Ref	Pressures by Directorate	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CYP	Children & Young People	(830)	830	0
SCH	Social Care & Health	(1,013)	0	(1,013)
ENT	Enterprise	(579)	10	(569)
RES	Resources	(358)	0	(358)
CEO	Chief Executives Unit	(163)	0	(163)
CORP	Corporate Costs & Levies	(370)	(258)	(628)
APP	Appropriations	(1,758)	0	(1,758)
FIN	Financing	(2,911)	(1,111)	(4,022)
	Totals	(7,981)	(529)	(8,510)

Ref	Children & Young People	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CYP001	CYP - 2% reduction in Individual School Budgets	(830)	830	0
	CYP Totals	(830)	830	0

Ref	Social Care & Health	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CSCH006	LAC savings - reduced legal costs	(100)		(100)
	LAC savings - additional investment in Myst project	(250)		(250)
CSCH003	Disability Services - reduce budget in line with current year demand and forecast	(7)		(7)
	My Day My Life - Development of single Monmouth MDML Hub	(15)		(15)
CSCH002	Fairer charging weekly threshold increases from £70 to £80 generating income following means test	(116)		(116)
	Practice change	(150)		(150)
SCH001	Renegotiate Severn View section 28A contract sum	(166)		(166)
	Service Contract efficiency savings	(20)		(20)
SCH004	Fees and charges increases	(189)		(189)
	SCH Totals	(1,013)	0	(1,013)

Ref	Enterprise	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CENT021	Planning & Building Control - Planning Application fee increase - WG set to increase price by 20%	(60)		(60)
	Planning & Building Control - Charging customers who wish to amend application during process.	(2)		(2)
	Planning & Building Control - Increasing Pre-app fees by 2.5%	(2)		(2)
	Planning & Building Control - New income from S106 monitoring fees	(20)		(20)
	Planning & Building Control - Increase in L2 Pre-app income - fee increase	(2)		(2)

	Planning & Building Control - Staff restructure	(27)		(27)
ENT010-017	First year implementation costs of car parking proposals - removal of pressure from 19/20	(106)		(106)
CENT020	Highways & Flooding - Charge For Access Markings	(2)		(2)
	Highways & Flooding - Charge for Events signing	(5)		(5)
	Highways & Flooding - Increase Road Closure Income Budget	(32)		(32)
	Highways & Flooding - Increase in Street Name & Numbering Charges (in particular developers)	(5)		(5)
	Highways & Flooding - Increase in S50 Licences for Utilities	(15)		(15)
	Highways & Flooding - Software savings from new asset management system.	(7)		(7)
	Highways & Flooding - Provide design service for drainage schemes	(5)		(5)
	Highways & Flooding - Utilising grant to cover staff costs	(10)		(10)
CENT022	Passenger Transport Unit - PTU - Route Optimisation and workforce planning	(60)		(60)
ENT008 (19/20)	Waste - Issue "Tax Disc" style permits to all residents with council tax to reduce cross border traffic of waste	(50)		(50)
Report	Waste transfer station contract review	(40)	10	(30)
Report	Waste - Close Usk Recycling - dependant on policy approval by cabinet. Open Troy another day.	(40)		(40)
ENT019	Highways Operations - Staff Savings - Efficiencies in workforce and reception @ Raglan depot.	(9)		(9)
	Highways Operations - Winter Maintenance - Net saving from Route based forecasting software improving pre-salting accuracy.	(5)		(5)
	Hwys Operations - Reduction in Plant & Equipment Hire through investment	(3)		(3)
	Hwys Operations - Provision of recycled tarmac to other local authorities.	(5)		(5)
CFC001	School Meals - School Meals Price increase from £2.45 to £2.50.	(20)		(20)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges	(48)		(48)
	ENT Totals	(579)	10	(569)

Ref	Chief Executive's Unit	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
CCEO001	Legal services income from Fire and police	(10)		(10)
	Offsetting legal costs against capital projects and investment activity	(40)		(40)
CEO002 (19/20)	Reduction in annual grant provided to Monmouth CAB	(1)		(1)
CCEO002	Market and increase take-up of community education courses across all sites	(30)		(30)
CEO007	Staffing realignment across policy and governance	(79)		(79)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges	(3)		(3)
	CEO Totals	(163)	0	(163)

Ref	Resources	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
RES001	Senior officer reduction	(100)		(100)
RES002	Exchequer savings - removal of cheques	(20)		(20)
RES003	Commercial income	(200)		(200)
CFC001	Discretionary fees & charges	(1)		(1)

Full Cost budget briefing note	Disinvest from top-up on discretionary business rate relief scheme	(37)		(37)
	RES Totals	(358)	0	(358)

Ref	Corporate Costs & Levies	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Freeze pension contribution rate at 23.1% for next two years	(370)		(370)
	Housing completions - improved forecast		(258)	(258)
	Corporate Costs & Levies Totals	(370)	(258)	(628)

Ref	Appropriations	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
Full Cost budget briefing note	Net Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) increase based on additional activity	(204)		(204)
2019-20 Budget approval	Interest Receivable	(1)		(1)
Full Cost budget briefing note	Earmarked Reserves review - reduction in Treasury Equalisation reserve	(400)		(400)
	<i>Costs funded via capitalisation direction:</i>			
Full Cost budget briefing note	Corporate redundancy provision	(400)		(400)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Mounton House recoupment income loss and repayment of reserve funding for inclusion centres	(348)		(348)
Full Cost budget briefing note	School based redundancy provision	(300)		(300)
Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Safeguarding team - one-off investment in recruitment & training	(45)		(45)

Report Cabinet Capital MTFP 20/9/19	Lead officer - workforce development	(60)		(60)
Appropriations Totals		(1,758)	0	(1,758)

Ref	Financing	2020/21 Saving £000	Change £000	2020/21 Saving Final £000
Report	Council tax base increase based on forecast housing completions - as per CT1 form	(322)		(322)
	AEF increase - revised assumption from 0% to 1%	(900)		(900)
	AEF increase - additional funding from provision settlement	0	(1,076)	(1,076)
Full Cost budget briefing note	AEF funding - assumed 100% WG funding of teachers pay increase - Apr to Aug '20	(491)		(491)
	AEF funding - assumed 100% WG funding of teachers pension increase	(689)		(689)
	Council tax increase to 4.95% (from 3.95%) - including CTRS	(509)	(35)	(544)
Financing Totals		(2,911)	(1,111)	(4,022)

Appendix F - Responsible Financial Officers Opinion

1.1 The 2003 Local Government Act imposes a number of statutory duties on a Councils Responsible Financial Officer (RFO). Guidance on these duties is contained within LAAP Bulletin 55 and the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Finance Director, compliance with which has been supported by the Councils Audit Committee. The primary duties are for me, as RFO, to provide a view on the robustness of the budget process, budgetary risk and the adequacy of reserves and balances.

1.2 Robustness of the budget process

1.3 In terms of robustness of the budget process, I have placed reliance on the work carried out by members of the Strategic Leadership Team in their Directorates involving budget managers and devolved accountants. The process has been undertaken properly and rigorously with notable elements of good practice. These include;

- The use of the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan as an integral part of budget planning
- Cabinet ownership of budget principles and assumptions through the development of the Medium Term Financial Plan and budget proposals
- Anticipating likely and known events through the application of appropriate indices for base costs.
- Applying rigour via Directorate Management Teams, Chief Officers, Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet Member scrutiny.
- Comparing year on year budgets by using 2018/19 outturn and 2019/20 budget monitoring data.
- Looking at a unit cost analysis for services against other Welsh authorities where necessary
- Providing Select Committees with opportunity to look at and scrutinize current budgets, gaining an understanding of the budgets within the remit of their Select committee.
- Providing Cabinet and Select Committees with the assumptions underlying the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- Consulting on budget proposals through public meetings, the website and social media as well as with Area Committees, Town and Community Council clusters, the Schools Budget Forum, Trade Unions (via the Joint Advisory Group), vulnerable groups and the disabled via the Access for All forum, and with young people at a Young People Session.
- Communicating emerging Settlement considerations to Cabinet members.
- Being clear on risks and assumptions within budget proposals and identifying the links with the corporate priorities of the Council and as set out in the Corporate Plan.
- Ensuring all members are involved in the budget setting process by establishing that budget and Council Tax settings is a function of full Council.

1.4 There are a number of explicit risks in the budget proposals now presented given the funding settlement for next year and the uncertainties into the medium term. Risks have been identified as the budget proposals have been put together and are captured as part of the MTFP model. Outlined below are the key risks and how they are being managed:

- Continued increase in demand and evidenced based pressures in relation to the financial impact of increasing demand in children's social services, demographic changes such as increasing elderly population, changes in pupil numbers, increase in special educational need provision has been included in the current budget process. The extent of these pressures in both the current year and next year are unprecedented. However, these risks have in part been mitigated by the protection and prioritisation given to these areas in the sense that budget savings continue to be more heavily weighted to other areas of the budget. Or where savings can be achieved to accommodate such pressures without having an adverse impact on the sustainability of these areas. However, given the current year position against the budget in many of these areas, this potential pressure will require careful monitoring over the course of the financial year so that problems can be highlighted early and any appropriate corrective action taken.
- Directorates are being required to manage some pressures within their service areas as only significant pressures have been highlighted and included in the budget build. Whilst individually these pressures are relatively small in total there is a considerable pressure to be managed alongside the achievement of the budget saving proposals contained as part of this budget.
- A number of the savings/efficiency proposals involve the generation of income, changes to current structures, systems and processes, consideration of alternative delivery models or have implications for service design involving community, other partners and entities. These savings involve higher levels of risk than those which broadly maintain current arrangements. At the practical level these risks begin with the income targets not being achieved, possibility of slippage and disruption in the transition from old to new arrangements resulting in further pressures to be managed in the year in which savings are budgeted to be made. Clearly robust and timely monitoring of the delivery of the savings in the budget will be critically important in order to manage the potential for these risks to materialise.
- The need to ensure that the Authority manages within its in-year revenue and capital budgets as the consequence of any resultant overspend removes the ability to replenish reduced levels of earmarked reserve and places an additional risk that Council Fund levels will be compromised below 4%-6% financial planning assumption traditionally volunteered to Members as prudent. Robust budget monitoring arrangements are in place and corrective action will be taken as needed by the Strategic Leadership Team in consultation with Cabinet Members as required.
- Some of the significant pressures evident during month 7 in-year monitoring have been addressed as specific pressures in 2020-21 budget proposals, and furthermore adjustments that need to be made in respect of previously savings volunteered to members and supported by them which are not subsequently being delivered.
- Late notification of grant funding streams being removed or reduced. There are still significant grant streams that the Council relies upon, that have either not yet been communicated by Welsh Government, have been received late in the budget process or where the impact of notifications is awaiting further clarification.

This is particularly an issue where the expenditure backing this grant has an effect on the financing of permanent staff. These will need to be managed on a case by case basis, with the default position being that if the grant ceases the activity also ceases unless a business case can be built that justifies the maintenance of the activity, the expenditure and identifies a means of funding this expenditure following the loss of grant income.

- No allowance for non-pay inflation is afforded in the proposed budget, despite RPI predictions over next 5 years being between 3.1% to 4.2%. Unless recognised as specific pressures in the budget proposals services will not receive budget to cover the full extent of inflation factors next year if they turn out as expected. This puts further pressure on service budgets to find efficiencies savings to manage this shortfall. There is an expectation that this would need to be managed within overall directorate budgets.
- General pressures on school budgets indicated by the number of schools requiring an agreed deficit budget recovery plan. As previously identified, schools have been protected from the level of savings required from the rest of the Authority. The LEA will be working closely with schools to help costs savings to be established. However, it is understood that some schools still need to establish timely sustainable budget management plans and where necessary budget recovery plans. A loan mechanism being offered to schools as part of the 2020/21 budget proposals will assist schools in managing and repaying these deficit balances.
- Treasury estimates established in the budget are based on cashflows, timing of capital spend, forecast interest rate levels and capital receipts occurring as planned.
- The risks on the capital side are largely caused by limited additional capital receipts being foreseen by colleagues during the next MTFP window, placing an additional emphasis on borrowing going forward, at a time when revenue headroom to afford borrowing is compromised by the extent of annual savings necessary to achieve a balanced budget. The need to make use of flexible use of capital receipts to fund revenue costs associated with service reform for 2019-20 and 2020-21 also results in a further depletion of available capital receipts.
- Whilst the Council is not playing a reliance on commercial income generation its commercial activities do naturally present commercial risks. The governance arrangements in place through Investment Committee and Audit Committee ensure that investments are made on the basis of sound recommendation resulting from robust business cases. Investment performance is monitored both budget monitoring report but explicitly by Audit Committee on an annual basis.
- In addition there is a balance between affording the significant pressures highlighted of a capital nature not currently met against Future schools aspirations.

1.5 Whilst the above risks in the 2020/21 budget have been identified, the main budgetary risks going forward in for the MTFP will also need to be managed and outlined are as follow:

- The increasing challenges with sustaining and maintaining existing service delivery

- The risk of low settlements projected for the medium term
- The risk of pay awards not being fully funded by UK and Welsh Government
- The financial, service and strategic implications of service transformation.
- The national and local emphasis on carbon reduction
- The deteriorating condition of local roads, associated infrastructure and property
- The ageing population
- Continued uncertainty in financial markets
- Low economic activity leading to increased demand for some services and reduced income in others.

1.6 Adequacy of reserves

- 1.7 The MTFP has established the principles for general and earmarked reserve utilization. The level of the Council Fund reserve stood at £7.1m at start of 2019-20. Whilst the latest financial monitoring information shared with Members and SLT during the year indicates a favourable forecast situation of £245k, contained within this are significant service overspends and pressures amounting to £4.9m. Any further adverse volatility in service costs and pressures and the delivery of the in-year budget recovery plan could have a material effect on Council's prudent financial planning assumption of keeping general reserve levels between 4-6% of net expenditure.
- 1.8 Based on a budgeted net expenditure (excluding Police and Community Council precepts) and before financing totalling £155.3m, a £7.36m balance (i.e. brought forward reserve balance plus £245k) equates to 4.74% cover, which sits just below the middle of agreed acceptable levels.
- 1.9 Net school balances, remaining at low levels, have reduced in the last three years to £253k. As at month 7, school balances were forecast to go into deficit by £883k. In-year forecasts have seldomly shown the forecast position to be as bleak though with Welsh Government grants often received late in the financial year the outturn position is expected to be improved. More emphasis is being placed by LEA finance colleagues to agree budgets that are sustainable to the resources available rather than passporting additional deficits to their school reserve. Recovery plans are in place for all schools in deficit and are being closely monitored by the LEA and relevant Cabinet members.
- 1.10 The 2020/21 budget recommendations anticipate some use of earmarked reserves to support the budget saving proposals and to even out one off expenditure items over the MTFP. Earmarked reserves have been established over time for the purpose of future utilisation, and whilst not currently earmarked for use provide a level of contingency for some of the risks associated with the budget recommendations highlighted in this report.
- 1.11 Earmarked reserve usage over the MTFP is projected to decrease the balance on earmarked reserves from £6.0 million forecast at end of 2019/20 to £5.3 million at the end of 2020/21. (Appendix H) 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 circa £3.8 million.

- 1.12 My judgement, taking into account the current budget forecast, the corporate budget position and its associated risks and notably around funding certainty, the quantum of earmarked reserves as well as the General Reserve is to certify reserves as adequate presently. However, given that the financial outlook is not set to improve significantly into the medium term, it is vital that the reserve position continues to be closely monitored, this will require continued sound budget management in future years of account and close Cabinet scrutiny of any further proposals to utilise reserves in the coming months. Extra savings may need to be drawn up and communicated to members after the budget process, if the 2019-20 outturn position introduced a Council Fund balance below 4%.
- 1.13 The provisional schedule of reserves estimated at the end of the financial year is included as an appendix to the budget report.

Peter Davies
Responsible Financial Officer

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PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS for Capital Programme Proposals 2020/24

Local Authorities determine their own programmes for capital investment in fixed assets. The Prudential Code is the code of practice which ensures the Authority can demonstrate it has properly identified the proposed financing streams, including borrowing, for those investments and the consequences of those decisions. The key objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within the Prudential Framework, that capital investment plans of the Authority are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

To demonstrate that local authorities have fulfilled these objectives, the Prudential Code, revised in December 2017 sets out the Prudential indicators that must be used, and the factors that must be taken into account. These indicators are reported below based on actual, current and planned capital budget proposals as in the proposed 2020/21 capital medium term financial plan.

Importantly, it should be noted that the proposed supported and unsupported borrowing results from the current and future capital budget proposals:

Borrowing budgeted in the capital budget proposals 2020/21 to 2023/24 is as follows:

- General Unsupported borrowing of £544,000 in 2020/21 and £1,000,000 from 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- Severn view replacement £1,833,000.
- New property investments of £2,588,000.
- City deal £311,000 in 2020/21 and £489,000 from 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- Tranche B of the Future schools initiative £1,173,000 in 2021/22 and £13,631,000 in 2022/23.
- £2,403,000 of supported borrowing from 2020/21 to 2023/24 which assists in financing the core capital programme and is funded through Revenue Support grant from the Welsh Government.

Capital Expenditure

The actual capital expenditure (excluding vehicle leasing) that was incurred in 2018/19 and the estimates of capital expenditure and financing for the current year and future years that are recommended for approval are:

Capital Expenditure £m	2018/19 actual	2019/20 forecast	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget
General Fund services	39.6	27.6	29.2	20.6	19.9	6.2
Commercial investments (£50m total pool)	30.7	16.7	2.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
TOTAL	70.3	44.3	31.8	20.6	19.9	6.2

As stated in the Capital programme budget proposals, the medium term programme has been drafted, and a programme constructed for the next four years. There will be opportunity for the programme to be reviewed annually.

Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

Estimates of the ratio of financing costs (net interest and MRP) to net revenue stream for the current and future years, and the actual figures for 2018/19 are:

Proportion of Financing Costs to net revenue stream	2018/19 actual	2019/20 forecast	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget
Interest £m	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8
MRP £m	4.6	5.7	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.8
Total Financing costs £m	7.9	9.5	10.1	10.2	10.5	10.6
Net Revenue Stream (£m)	150.4	154.3	160.8	163.3	165.9	168.6
Proportion of net revenue stream %	5.2%	6.1%	6.3%	6.2%	6.3%	6.3%

The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in the draft 2020/21 MTFP and are based on the actual and anticipated borrowing, net of investments.

Capital Financing Requirement

Estimates of the end of year Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) for the Authority for the current and future years and the actual Capital Financing Requirement at 31 March 2019 are:

Capital Financing Requirement	31.3.19 Actual £m	31.3.20 Estimate £m	31.3.21 Forecast £m	31.3.22 Forecast £m	31.3.23 Forecast £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m
Commercial Investments CFR (including solar farm)	35.1	50.7	51.4	49.3	47.2	44.3
Other Loans CFR	148.8	158.0	158.8	160.7	174.8	175.9
Total Loans CFR	183.9	208.7	210.2	210.0	222.0	220.2
Other Debt Liabilities CFR	2.4	2.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4
Total CFR	186.3	211.1	213.6	213.4	225.4	223.6

The Capital Financing Requirement measures the authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. In accordance with best professional practice, Monmouthshire County Council does not associate borrowing with particular items or types of expenditure, other than under its current policy for determining its Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). The authority has an integrated treasury management strategy (last approved on 7th March 2019 by Council). The Council is legally obliged to "have regard" to the Treasury Management Code and the Prudential Code "as amended or reissued from time to time" by the relevant Capital Finance Regulations so there is no requirement for the Council to explicitly adopt the

CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services from 2020/21 onwards.

The Council manages its treasury position in terms of its borrowings and investments in accordance with its approved treasury management strategy and practices. In day-to-day cash management, no distinction can be drawn between revenue and capital cash. External borrowing arises as a consequence of all the financial transactions of the authority and not simply those arising from capital spending. In contrast, the Capital Financing Requirement reflects the authority's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes alone.

CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities recommends that the Authority's total gross debt including other long term liabilities should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. This is an indicator of prudence.

Net external borrowing is gross external borrowing offset by the levels of cash and treasury investments held. This is the borrowing budgeted to finance the capital programme.

A comparison of Net and Gross Debt to Capital Financing Requirement (Loans CFR)	31.3.19 actual	31.3.20 forecast	31.3.21 budget	31.3.22 budget	31.3.23 budget	31.3.24 budget
Net Debt	158.0	182.0	174.8	170.1	181.4	178.1
Gross Debt	178.3	197.0	189.8	185.1	196.4	193.1
Loans CFR	183.9	208.7	210.2	210.0	222.0	220.2

The Chief Officer – Resources (the Authority's S151 officer) reports that the Authority's gross external borrowing is expected to stay below the Capital Financing Requirement in 2020/21. The forecasts for later years takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and the proposals in the 2020/21 capital budget report.

Authorised Limit for External Borrowing

In respect of external debt, it is recommended that the Council approves the following Authorised Limit for its total external debt gross of investments for the next four financial years.

Authorised Limits	2019/20 for comparison	2020/21 limit	2021/22 limit	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit
Authorised limit - borrowing	248.2	230.0	225.3	236.6	233.3
Authorised limit - PFI, leases & Right of use assets	4.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
Authorised limit - total external debt	252.6	235.5	230.7	242.0	238.7

The limits for borrowing and other long-term liabilities are identified separately. The Council is asked to approve these limits and to delegate authority to the Head of Finance or Deputy, to manage the Authority's borrowing within these limits in order to achieve best value for money for the Authority. The Authorised limit is intended to be a ceiling on borrowing levels. Any changes required to these limits will be reported to the Audit Committee or Council at the next opportunity following the required change to this ceiling.

These limits are consistent with the authority's current commitments, existing plans and draft budget proposals for capital expenditure and financing, and with its approved treasury management policy statement and practices. They are based on the estimate of the most likely, prudent but not worse case scenario, with sufficient headroom over and above this to allow for operational management including movements such as in year Cabinet or Council decisions which are in line with the Corporate Plan of the Authority or unusual cash movements.

Operational Boundary for External Debt

The Council is also asked to approve the following Operational Boundary for external debt for the same period.

<u>Operational boundary</u>	2019/20 for comparison	2020/21 limit	2021/22 limit	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit
Operational boundary - borrowing	218.0	210.8	206.1	217.4	214.1
Operational boundary - PFI, leases & Right of use assets	2.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
Operational boundary - total external debt	220.9	214.8	210.0	221.3	218.0

The proposed Operational Boundary for external debt is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit but reflects the estimate of the most likely, prudent but not worst case scenario, without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit. It is expected that this will allow for movements such as normal variations in working capital and equates to the maximum external debt projected.

The Operational Boundary represents a key management tool for in-year monitoring by the Head of Finance or Deputy. The limits for borrowing and other long-term liabilities are identified separately. The Council is asked to approve these limits and to delegate authority to the Head of Finance or Deputy, to manage the Authority's borrowing within these limits under normal circumstances. If this boundary is exceeded, it will be reported to Audit Committee or Council at the next opportunity but as it is a management tool, it is not required to be amended.

In taking its decisions on the 2020/21 budget report, the Council is asked to note that the Authorised Limit determined for 2020/21 would be the statutory limit determined under section 3(1) of the local Government Act 2003.

APPENDIX H/1 - USE OF RESERVES FOR REVENUE BUDGET PURPOSES 2020/21

Cat2(T)	2020/21			
	B/F	Contributions To	Contributions From	C/F
Council Fund (Authority)	-7,111,078			-7,111,078
School Balances	253,404			253,404
V	-6,857,675	0	0	-6,857,675
Earmarked Reserves:				
Invest to Redesign Reserve MAIN	-1,554,673		90,928	-1,463,746
Invest to Save Reserve - Advances (vehicles)	103,963	0	32,469	136,432
City Deal	30,835			30,835
Payroll & HR support	25,000			25,000
Inspire to Work	78,645		20,000	98,645
Waste & Recycling Review	60,000	-30,000		30,000
Pupil Referral Service	99,950	-49,975		49,975
Sub-Total Invest to Redesign	-1,156,280	-79,975	143,397	-1,092,858
Sub-Total IT Transformation	-287,321	0	44,430	-242,891
Sub-Total Insurance and Risk Management	-1,018,744	0	0	-1,018,744
Sub-Total Capital Receipt Generation	-135,579	0	70,500	-65,079
Sub Total Treasury Equalisation	-990,024	0	400,000	-590,024
Sub-Total Redundancy and Pensions	-244,797	0	88,038	-156,759
Sub-Total Capital Investment	-627,338	0	1,999	-625,339
Other Earmarked Reserves:				
Museums Acquisitions Reserve	-52,885			-52,885
Elections Reserve	-118,183	-35,000		-153,183
Grass Routes Buses Reserve	-156,084	-5,000		-161,084
Youth Offending Team	-150,000			-150,000
Building Control trading reserve	-14,490			-14,490
CYP maternity	-135,795			-135,795
Plant & Equipment reserve (Highways)	-33,541			-33,541
Homeless Prevention Reserve Fund	-49,803			-49,803
Solar Farm Maintenance & Community Fund	-64,000	-23,000		-87,000
Newport Leisure Park Reserve	-61,899			-61,899
Castlegate Reserve	-79,500			-79,500
Local Resilience Forum Reserve (Gwent PCC Tfr)	-115,090			-115,090
Rural Development Plan Reserve	-413,190			-413,190
Sub-Total Other Earmarked Reserves	-1,444,460	-63,000	0	-1,507,460
Total Earmarked Reserves	-6,009,543	-142,975	853,364	-5,299,155
Total useable revenue reserves	-13,366,403	-142,975	853,364	-12,156,829

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APPENDIX H/2 - RESERVE BALANCES

Useable revenue reserve projection using latest available budget and MTFP information

Financial Year ending	2021 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2024 £000
Council Fund				
Council Fund (Authority)	(7,111)	(7,111)	(7,111)	(7,111)
School Balances	253	253	253	253
Sub Total Council Fund	(6,858)	(6,858)	(6,858)	(6,858)
Earmarked Reserves				
Invest to Redesign Reserve	(1,093)	(1,193)	(1,293)	(1,293)
IT Transformation Reserve	(243)	(243)	(243)	(243)
Insurances & Risk Management Reserve	(1,019)	(1,019)	(1,019)	(1,019)
Capital Receipt Generation Reserve	(65)	(14)	37	88
Treasury Equalisation Reserve	(590)	(590)	(590)	(590)
Redundancy and Pensions Reserve	(157)	(69)	19	107
Capital Investment Reserve	(625)	(623)	(621)	(619)
Other Reserves	(1,507)	(1,440)	(1,503)	(1,566)
Sub Total Earmarked Reserves	(5,299)	(5,191)	(5,213)	(5,135)
Total Useable Revenue Reserves	(12,157)	(12,049)	(12,071)	(11,993)

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Appendix I - 2020/21 Reconciliation through Budget process

	December 2019 Cabinet proposals						Final Settlement Changes		February 2020 Cabinet and Final budget recommendations to Council			
	Indicative Base Budget 2019/20	Proposed savings	Identified Explicit Pressures	Other Net Movements	Council Tax Income	Proposed Budget 2020/21	Adjustment to AEF	Settlement pressures / adjustments	Changes to Pressures	Changes to Savings	Final amendments	Final budget recommended
Net Expenditure Budgets												
Children and Young People	51,215	-830	2,650	354		53,389				830	1,320	55,539
Social Care and Health	46,334	-1,013	5,505	307		51,132			-500		54	50,686
Enterprise	23,346	-579	764	535		24,067			25	10	31	24,133
MonLife												
Resources	7,648	-321	245	160		7,732			63		-3	7,792
Chief Executive's unit	4,637	-163	221	61		4,757					-12	4,745
Corporate Costs & Levies	22,112	-370	313	37		22,092			240	-258	823	22,897
Sub Total	155,292	-3,275	9,698	1,454	0	163,169	0	0	-172	582	2,213	165,792
Appropriations	6,436	-1,358	44	370		5,492			-44		11	5,459
Contributions to Earmarked reserves	341			-198		143						143
Contributions from Earmarked reserves	-275	-400		-72		-747						-747
Total Net Proposed Budget	161,794	-8,033	9,742	1,554	0	168,057	0	0	-216	582	2,224	170,647
Funding Budgets												
Aggregate External Financing (AEF)	-93,229	-2,117				-95,346				-1,076	-1,338	-97,760
Council Tax (MCC)	-54,087	-831			-2,137	-57,055				-34		-57,089
Council Tax (Gwent Police)	-11,779					-11,779					-823	-12,602
Council Tax (Community Councils)	-2,699					-2,699						-2,699
Total Funding	-161,794	-2,948	0	0	-2,137	-166,879	0	0	0	-1,110	-2,161	-170,150
Headroom/-shortfall	-0	-7,981	9,742	1,554	-2,137	1,178	0	0	-216	-528	63	497
	Council Tax 2019/20					2020/21 tax base	Council Tax 2020/21	%age increase				
Council tax recommendations	1,315.64					46,331.92	1,380.76	4.95%				

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APPENDIX I/1 - REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY

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	55,539	55,987	56,488	56,945
Social Care & Health	46,332	50,686	51,099	51,522	51,911
Enterprise	19,912	20,568	20,996	21,390	21,789
Resources	7,681	7,792	7,882	8,004	8,150
Chief Executive's Unit	4,626	4,745	4,812	4,881	4,950
MonLife	3,465	3,565	3,676	3,789	3,904
Corporate Costs & Levies	22,112	22,898	27,518	32,290	37,290
Sub Total	155,343	165,792	171,970	178,364	184,939
Transfers to reserves	341	143	195	188	63
Transfers from reserves	(275)	(747)	(302)	(164)	(139)
Treasury	6,385	5,460	6,089	6,443	6,552
Appropriations Total	6,451	4,856	5,983	6,467	6,476
Total Expenditure Budget	161,794	170,648	177,953	184,832	191,415
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)	(12,602)	(12,602)	(12,602)	(12,602)
Council Tax (Community Councils)	(2,699)	(2,699)	(2,699)	(2,699)	(2,699)
Contribution to/(from) Council Fund	0	0	0	0	0
Disinvestment		(5,397)	(5,397)	(5,397)	(5,397)
Sub Total Financing	(161,794)	(170,151)	(172,371)	(174,680)	(177,080)
(Headroom)/Shortfall	(0)	497	5,582	10,152	14,335

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

Meeting and Date of Meeting: Cabinet 19th February 2020

Report: Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 – Final proposals following scrutiny and public consultation

Author: Peter Davies, Chief Officer for Resources (Acting S151 Officer)

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

Exemptions applying to the report:

Appendix J – detailed indication of the value of individual capital receipts

Non-disclosure reason – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Factors in favour of disclosure:

Openness & transparency in matters concerned with the public

Prejudice which would result if the information were disclosed:

In communicating Appendix J intact, the Council would be undermining its negotiating position with regard to future capital receipts by communicating the likely value that it would accept in the sale of particular assets.

My view on the public interest test is as follows:

Factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by those against.

Recommended decision on exemption from disclosure:

Maintain exemption from publication in relation to report

Date: 12th February 2020

Name: Peter Davies

Post: Chief Officer for Resources (Acting S151 Officer)

Signed:

I accept/I do not accept the recommendation made above

Date: 12th February 2020

Name: Paul Matthews

Post: Chief Executive

Signed:

APPENDIX J/1 - CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY 2019/20 to 2022/23

Capital Budget Summary 2020/21 to 2023/24

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	Total Budget 2019/20	Indicative Budget 2020/21	Indicative Budget 2021/22	Indicative Budget 2022/23	Indicative Budget 2023/24
Asset Management Schemes	26,004,932	10,194,942	1,929,276	1,929,276	1,929,276
School Development Schemes	2,636,258	14,383,333	14,383,333	13,681,287	50,000
Infrastructure & Transport Schemes	9,014,745	3,452,740	2,240,740	2,240,740	2,240,740
Regeneration Schemes	3,346,589	310,500	489,100	489,100	489,100
County Farms Schemes	300,773	300,773	300,773	300,773	300,773
Inclusion Schemes	1,315,937	1,150,000	1,150,000	1,150,000	1,150,000
ICT Schemes	378,873	370,000	0	0	0
Vehicles Leasing	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000
Capitalisation Directive	2,075,000	1,416,000	0	0	0
Other Schemes	459,425	235,000	70,000	70,000	70,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	47,032,533	33,313,289	22,063,224	21,361,177	7,729,890
Supported Borrowing	(2,403,000)	(2,417,000)	(2,417,000)	(2,417,000)	(2,417,000)
Unsupported (Prudential) Borrowing	(26,299,079)	(5,275,300)	(2,662,097)	(15,120,387)	(1,489,100)
General Capital Grant	(2,275,000)	(2,423,000)	(1,463,000)	(1,463,000)	(1,463,000)
Grants & Contributions	(7,160,525)	(18,234,199)	(13,160,337)	0	0
Interest Free Borrowing	(1,667,271)	0	0	0	0
Reserve & Revenue Contributions	(447,085)	(1,999)	(1,999)	(1,999)	(1,999)
Capital Receipts	(5,280,573)	(3,461,791)	(858,791)	(858,791)	(858,791)
Vehicle Lease Financing	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)	(1,500,000)
TOTAL FUNDING	(47,032,533)	(33,313,289)	(22,063,224)	(21,361,177)	(7,729,890)
(SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	(0)	0	0	0	0

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Appendix J2 - Schools Capital Budget Summary 2020/21 to 2022/23

Schools capital programme	Financial Year 2020/21	Financial Year 2021/22	Financial Year 2022/23	Financial Year 2023/24
	Indicative Budget	Indicative Budget	Indicative Budget	Indicative Budget
	£	£	£	£
Expenditure:				
Future schools tranche B	14,333,333	14,333,333	13,631,287	
Total Expenditure	14,333,333	14,333,333	13,631,287	0
Financing:				
Future schools Tranche B (65% intervention rate)	(14,789,663)	(13,160,336)	0	
External Grant & Contribution Funding	(14,789,663)	(13,160,336)	0	0
Capital Receipts	0			
Future schools Tranche B	456,330	(1,172,997)	(13,631,287)	
Unsupported Borrowing	456,330	(1,172,997)	(13,631,287)	0
Total Financing	(14,333,333)	(14,333,333)	(13,631,287)	0
(Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	0

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Appendix J3 - Capital Receipts Summary

Forecast Useable Capital Receipts

Amounts in excess of £10,000 are categorised as capital receipts. The balance of receipts is required to be credited to the Useable Capital Receipts Reserve, and can then only be used for new capital investment or set aside to reduce the Council's borrowing requirement.

The forecast movement on the reserve based on forecast capital receipts and the budgeted application of capital receipts to support the financing of the Authority's capital

<u>GENERAL RECEIPTS</u>	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1st April	4,581	6,553	9,904	10,245	10,791
Less: capital receipts used for financing	(3,010)	(2,046)	(859)	(859)	(859)
Less: capital receipts used to support capitalisation directive	(2,000)	(1,416)	0	0	0
	(429)	3,091	9,045	9,386	9,932
Capital receipts Forecast	6,884	6,713	1,098	1,300	100
Deferred capital receipts - General	4	4	4	4	4
- Morrisons	94	96	98	100	100
Less: capital receipts set aside:	0	0	0	0	0
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	6,553	9,904	10,245	10,791	10,136
<u>LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP AND HOMEFINDER RECEIPTS</u>	2019/20	2019/20	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1st April	142	142	142	142	142
Less: capital receipts used for financing	0	0	0	0	0
	142	142	142	142	142
Capital receipts Received / Forecast	-	-	-	-	-
Balance as at 31st March	142	142	142	142	142

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Appendix J4 - Capital Receipts Summary and Risk Factors

The analysis below provides a summary of the receipts and the respective risk factors:

Capital Receipts Risk Factor	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£	£	£	£
Education Receipts				
Low / completed	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0
High	0	0	0	0
Total Education Receipts	0	0	0	0
County Farm Receipts				
Low / completed	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0
High	200,000	0	0	0
Total County Farm Receipts	200,000	0	0	0
General Receipts				
Low / completed	95,926	98,083	100,289	100,289
Medium	200,000	0	700,000	0
High	0	0	0	0
Total General Receipts	295,926	98,083	800,289	100,289
Strategic Accommodation Review				
Low / completed	0	0	0	0
Medium	0	0	0	0
High	0	0	0	0
Total Strategic Accommodation Receipts	0	0	0	0
Dependent on Outcome of LDP				
Low / completed	0	0	0	0
Medium	6,216,690	1,000,000	500,000	0
High	0	0	0	0
Total LDP Receipts	6,216,690	1,000,000	500,000	0
TOTALS				
Low / completed	95,926	98,083	100,289	100,289
Medium	6,416,690	1,000,000	1,200,000	0
High	200,000	0	0	0
Total Capital Receipts Forecasted / Received	6,712,616	1,098,083	1,300,289	100,289

Risk Factor key:

High - External factors affecting the potential sale that are out of Authority control

Medium - Possible risk elements attached but within Authority ability to control

Low - No major complications are foreseen for the transaction

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Appendix J5 – Capital MTFP pressures

Description of Pressure	Forecast Cost	Date Updated	Responsible Officer / Champion
<p>Current Rights of Way issues (Whitebrook byway) - Engineering assessments have been completed on landslip / collapse of byway at Whitebrook, estimated cost of repairs in the region of £70-£80k.</p>	75,000	Dec 16	Matthew Lewis
<p>Current Rights of Way issues (Wye and Usk Valley Walks) - Engineering assessments have been completed on river erosion / landslips on the Wye and Usk Valley Walks. [Monmouth] (Wye Valley Walk) £23,925, [Clytha] (Usk Valley Walk) £46,725, [Coed Y Prior] (Usk Valley Walk) £9,900, site investigations/design £5,500.</p>	86,000	Dec 16	Matthew Lewis
<p>A major review of the waste Mgt and recycling service is ongoing. Proposals are likely to include consideration of receptacles rather than bags (anticipated cost of between £0.3-1.3m) To accommodate the change at kerbside, developments will be needed at our transfer stations at an indicative cost of £800k depending on the scale of works required. Options may be limited if WG insist on certain scheme components. The quoted capital costs exclude new vehicle costs which are modelled as being leased currently.</p>	2,100,000	Dec 16	Roger Hoggins / Carl Touhig
<p>Monmouth Community Amenity site upgrade - indicative costs are £1.5-2m if built and run by the Council. The transfer station and CA capital costs could be avoided if the Council decided it was best value to procure a build, finance, operate contract for its sites in future. The work to evaluate these options will follow on after kerbside collection.</p>	2,000,000	Dec 16	Roger Hoggins / Carl Touhig
<p>Property Maintenance requirements for both schools & non-schools as valued by condition surveys carried out some years ago. The existing £2m annual budget mainly targets urgent maintenance e.g. health & safety, maintaining buildings wind & watertight, etc., and is insufficient to address the maintenance backlog. A lack of funding means maintenance costs will rise; that our ability to sell buildings at maximum market rates will be affected ; Our ability to deliver effective services will be affected and a Loss of revenue and poor public image.</p>	22,000,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells
<p>Disabled adaptation works to public buildings required under disability discrimination legislation.</p>	7,200,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells
<p>School Traffic Management Improvements - based on works carried out on similar buildings.</p>	250,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells
<p>Refurbishment of all Public Toilets - Capital investment required to facilitate remaining transfers to Town and Community Councils</p>	95,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells

Description of Pressure	Forecast Cost	Date Updated	Responsible Officer / Champion
School fencing improvements	68,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells /Headteachers
Modification works to school kitchens to comply with Environmental Health Standards. Without additional funding school kitchens may have to be closed and additional costs for transporting meals in incurred, possibly causing disruption to the education process.	38,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells
Radon remedial works Following the commissioning of Radon Wales to carry Radon Surveys of public buildings, remedial works will be required at various premises to resolve issues	75,000	Dec 16	Deb Hill Howells
Countryside Rights of Way work needed to bring network up to statutorily required and safe standard. This should be taken as a provisional figure as surveys and assessments of bridges and structures are on-going and the rights of way prioritisation system which includes risk assessment will more accurately define and rank the backlog. Bridge management report on 787 bridges completed in October 2013 identifies 254 known bridge issues of which 77 need repair, 31 replacement & 80 are missing. 68 have 'other' issues including 51 bridges which require full inspection to further ascertain requirements/costs. 13 bridges are 10m+ and require replacement or repair. It is not possible to cost all of these currently but a ball park figure of £288k has been identified for the first tranche of issues. Additional ROW allocation (30K) helping, but scale of overall pressure means these figures are still relevant	2,200,000	Dec 16	Ian Saunders
Transportation/safety strategy –Air Quality Management, 20 m.p.h legislation and DDA (car parks)	1,200,000	Dec 16	Richard Cope
Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) - Other than last year, the DFG's budget has remained unchanged for the last ten years. Each year the fully committed/spent date falls earlier in the financial year.	500,000	Dec 16	Ian Bakewell
Bringing County highways to the level of a safe road network. This backlog calculation figure has been provided by Welsh Government. The Authorities Capital Programme is not addressing the backlog significantly as the annual level of funding available is not of sufficient magnitude to address this. The annual programme is set in relation to the approved budget and this programme is shared with all members. Routes are selected on the basis of their significance within the overall highway network and their condition. Programmes are reviewed annually around December and then distributed to members.	80,000,000	Dec 16	Roger Hoggins

Description of Pressure	Forecast Cost	Date Updated	Responsible Officer / Champion
Investing in infrastructure projects needed to arrest road closures due to whole or partial bank slips. Without additional expenditure there is the potential for deterioration, increased scheme costs, disruption to communities and the travelling public and road closures.	5,000,000	Dec 16	Roger Hoggins
Backlog on highways structures including old culverts, bridges and retaining walls. With existing budget this backlog will take 23 years to cover and there will be increased likelihood of loss of network availability.	12,700,000	Dec 16	Roger Hoggins
Reprovision or repair of Chain Bridge - Cost prediction is indicative at present. Summary quotes updated August 15. The bridge is currently under special management measures and inspection. Repair/ reprovision will remove / minimise the need for these measures. Without remedial work, the structure will continue to deteriorate. The current 40T maximum limit will have to be further reduced restricting access to the Lancayo area especially for heavy vehicles. Options evaluated from repairing sufficiently to maintain 40t limit, to converting to footbridge and reprovisioning	1,800,000 to 7,500,000. Mid point 4,700,000	Dec 16	Roger Hoggins
Caldicot Castle remedial works - longer term pressures given the condition of the curtain walls / towers etc. The £2-3m estimate is a ball park figure ranging from just the backlog of maintenance to also including improvements to bring the visitor facilities up to modern standards. An RDP grant is paying for a condition survey / outline conservation plan. The current condition of buildings constrains current operations and will impact on future management options including the assessment of viability of potential Cultural Services Trust. Heritage Lottery Funding is possible (but very competitive) Substantial match funding would still be required.	3,000,000	Dec 16	Ian Saunders
Leisure and cultural services - Currently the service is exploring future delivery options. Part of the work will involve conditions surveys which may lead to capital works being required to improve service delivery and income generation:- e.g. museums, Shire hall, Abergavenny castle, Old station Tintern, leisure centres, outdoor education provision	1,000,000	Dec 16	Ian Saunders
Total Pressures	142,287,000		

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

Meeting and Date of Meeting: Cabinet 19th February 2020

Report: Revenue and Capital Budget 2020/21 – Final proposals following scrutiny and public consultation

Author: Peter Davies, Chief Officer for Resources (Acting S151 Officer)

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

Exemptions applying to the report:

Appendix J – detailed indication of the value of individual capital receipts

Non-disclosure reason – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Factors in favour of disclosure:

Openness & transparency in matters concerned with the public

Prejudice which would result if the Information were disclosed:

In communicating Appendix J intact, the Council would be undermining its negotiating position with regard to future capital receipts by communicating the likely value that it would accept in the sale of particular assets.

My view on the public interest test is as follows:

Factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by those against.

Recommended decision on exemption from disclosure:

Maintain exemption from publication in relation to report

Date: 12th February 2020

Name: Peter Davies

Post: Chief Officer for Resources (Acting S151 Officer)

Signed:



I accept/ I do not accept the recommendation made above

Date: 12th February 2020

Name: Paul Matthews

Post: Chief Executive

Signed: 

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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Evaluating the Potential Impact of the 2020/21 Budget Proposals

Introduction

Monmouthshire receives the lowest funding per head of population of any local authority in Wales. This means that a higher proportion of the income we need to generate to provide services needs to come from council tax and charges for services.

Since 2013/14 the council's revenue support grant from central government has reduced by more than 15% from £73.386 million to £61.788 million, the largest percentage reduction of any local authority in Wales, the council has also experienced reductions in funding from other central government sources¹. Over this period, we have delivered savings of £20 million but have also needed to find additional money to meet demands and pressures on services for example services for children who are looked after.

The council has always sought to preserve local service delivery in the face of budget pressures. We know how important many of the things we do are to the people who live in our communities and have worked hard to maintain the things that matter by reducing the amount we spend on things like buildings and energy costs.

We recognise that when we increase charges and put up Council Tax it can have a detrimental impact on those who can least afford it, this does not just mean those who are unemployed, many people experience in-work poverty while others are impacted upon by disability or other protected characteristics that affect their opportunities. Whenever we introduce changes to policy or charges we evaluate the impact of these upon different groups. Our commitment to social justice means that we also look at the potential impact on those in poverty. An approach we will continue to develop in response to the new socio-economic duty being consulted upon by the Welsh Government.

Where a budget proposal could alter a service, or the way in which it is delivered in 2020/21 a Future Generations Evaluation assessment of its potential impact has been completed. This assesses its potential impact on the national well-being goals and the ways of working enshrined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act and also the people and groups who possess the protected characteristics specified as part of our duty under the Equality Act 2010.

This document summarises the headline message from these assessments. The table below shows a summary of these main impacts while a summary of the main messages from these is presented as appendix 1. The summary does not highlight every single issue but should help reveal some of the key impacts of budget proposals and provide scope for continual learning and improvement as proposals are developed.

The document has also drawn on an initial analysis of the cumulative financial impact of the budget proposals on households with different income levels and groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Open and robust scrutiny and challenge is essential as the proposals continue to be shaped in line with the priorities in the corporate plan and the issues that matter most to our communities. This analysis has been updated following public engagement and scrutiny in January 2020.

	Age	Disability	Gender Re-assignment	Marriage or civil partnership	Pregnancy and Maternity	Race	Religion or Belief	Sex	Sexual Orientation	Welsh Language	Poverty	Safeguarding	Sustainable Development	National Well-being goals
Additional budget for pupils with additional learning needs (CYP 001)														
Increase in charges for school meals (CFC 001)														
Uplift in income from Adult Services Contracts (SCH 001)														
Increase fee levels for private care providers (SCH 002)														
Continue to develop new model for care at home (SCH 002)														
Practice change in adult social care (SCH 002)														
Raising cap on non-residential social care charges (SCH 002)														
Increase funding of placements for adults with disabilities (SCH 003)														
Increase in fees and charges for social care (SCH 004)														
Increasing demands and costs for children who are looked after (CSCH 006)														
Changes to passenger transport service (ENT 022)														
Charges for highways services (ENT 020)														
Increase in fees and charges for development management (ENT 021)														
Efficiency in highways services (ENT 019)														
Increase in council tax														

Key

Red – negative impact on this category that is difficult to overcome with mitigating actions

Amber – some potential negative impact which is lower risk or can be managed with mitigation

Green – impact is largely positive

White – no impact has been identified at this stage

Our Corporate Plan objectives

Our purpose and mission remains one of *building sustainable and resilient communities that can support the wellbeing of current and future generations*. We share this core purpose with our Public Service Board and it is our guiding force in working towards the seven national Well-being Goals.

The five organisational goals described in the Corporate Plan incorporate the council's well-being objectives but go further in reflecting the need for a deeper organisational and council business focus. Setting our goals in this plan and the actions necessary to deliver on them enables us to identify the future we want.

The goals are:

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

The council's strong record of delivery within a balanced budget has enabled us keep frontline services operating. We are clear that money should follow our core purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities and delivering the well-being objectives in the Corporate Plan.

We continue to develop our Medium Term Financial Plan to support us as far as possible to continue to deliver the aims and aspirations set out in this Corporate Plan and our purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. We recognise that they are not without challenges, however they will enable us to focus our finite resources on the areas that matter most to people and enable us to build a sustainable service offer for current residents and businesses as well as future generations.

We have undertaken a mid-term review of the commitments in the Corporate Plan to ensure that the aspirations and activity set remain relevant and that they are deliverable with the resources we have available, which will continue to be an iterative and ongoing process as part of our financial planning.

The budget proposals are a broad mix of small adjustments designed to optimise efficiency and larger longer-term proposals. The corporate plan gives us the framework to focus on the big challenges but we can never lose sight of the need to spend every pound wisely, nor the reality that the cumulative impact of many small changes can add up to a significant impact on some people within our communities and the need to ensure that there is some degree of mitigation against this for the most vulnerable.

The Legal Context

The Equality Act 2010 came into operation on the 6th April 2011. It replaced 116 previous different pieces of law relating to equality, and put them all together into one piece of legislation. The Act strengthens the law in important ways, and in some respects extends current equality law to help tackle discrimination and inequality.

The Council, as a public body in Wales, has a requirement under the Act to meet both general and specific duties.

The general duties are that in exercising its functions the Council must have due regard to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not;
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

The Protected characteristics are: Age; Sex; Gender re-assignment; Pregnancy and maternity; Sexual orientation; Race; Religion or belief; Marriage and civil partnership.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act creates a legal framework for better decision-making by public bodies in Wales by ensuring that we take account of the long-term, help to prevent problems occurring or getting worse, take an integrated and collaborative approach, and considers and involves people of all ages. This supports existing commitments such as the Welsh language, equalities and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Together, the seven well-being goals and five ways of working provided by the Act are designed to support and deliver a public service that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Socio-economic impact of the budget

Almost any change to a council service has some socio-economic impact. This is because of the nature of our responsibilities and the extent to which some groups, communities and vulnerable people rely on public services. Our aim is to properly understand this impact so that we can identify appropriate mitigations wherever possible and minimise the impact on people in greatest need.

We provide and help fund a wide-range of services in communities to ensure support for communities. These include:

- Council Tax reduction scheme
- The single person Council Tax discount
- Financial Support for Monmouthshire Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Community Connectors to help people to maintain their independence and prevent people becoming dependent on statutory health and social care

Community Hubs that provide advice and also host community learning opportunities including the new skills at work programme which aims to upskill those in lower paid jobs to increase their career prospects.

The Welsh Government is currently consulting on a new socio-economic duty which will place a legislative duty on council's to consider the need to reduce the inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage. Until the implications of this are fully understood we will continue to assess the impact of our budget decisions on those in poverty.

Approach / Methodology

As part of our impact evaluation we have looked to establish the financial impact of proposals on different people within our communities. This paper has been prepared alongside the budget proposals for 2020-21 to assess the cumulative financial impact of the budget. It also brings together the most significant issues identified by the Future Generations Evaluations completed for each of the proposals to understand whether any groups will experience a detrimental position as a result of the cumulative impact of separate proposals.

We have used UK level data to identify the estimated number of households in different income bands. This shows gross household income at a UK level. This was not available at a local level, we were also unable to access local data, in bands, that identified disposable income after housing costs.

When any change is looked at in isolation it may not seem significant but the cumulative impact of multiple changes can sometimes mount up placing pressures on some groups in society. Monmouthshire is often perceived as affluent with the county having the lowest proportion of households with income below £20,000 per year and the highest proportion earning over £40,000. However there are still many families living on low incomes. The net annualised income in Monmouthshire after housing costs is £25,618. The England and Wales figure is £27,124. This is measured at middle super output area and ranges from £12,500 (Blackpool MSOA) to £57,000 in (Elmbridge MSOA in the South East of England)²

All residents will also be impacted upon by inflation which will result in higher prices, the rate of inflation is presently 1.5%³. The extent to which higher prices are off-set by wage rises will vary by household and is not included within this assessment, nor is any impact on prices or incomes that could arise from Britain exiting the European Union.

This assessment identifies areas where there is a risk that changes resulting from individual budget proposals may have a significantly greater impact on particular groups when looked at together with other proposals.

This enables the local authority to identify where we may need to mitigate against negative impacts on certain groups of people. Mitigating actions could include re-shaping services to target them more efficiently and to reduce the potential of disproportionate impacts on groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010 of those in poverty.

This is a dynamic process, and this assessment will continue to be reviewed as individual budget proposals are developed and any further mitigating actions will need to be considered.

The Impact and Mitigation

The table shown as appendix one provides a simple overview where proposals have been identified as having a positive or negative impact on those with protected characteristics, those in poverty, safeguarding and the ways of working and national well-being goals.

Disability

The definition of disability is when a person has a physical or mental impairment which has a long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out day to day activities.

There are increases in fees for social care services, both residential and non-residential. The cap on fees for domiciliary care has been raised. These will be received by proportionately more people with disabilities although there are means testing and caps on charges that limit the impact on those on the lowest incomes.

Age

Older people – People in later life may be more likely to use some council services as they are more likely to acquire a disability and so may be more vulnerable than the general population to changes in those services. This impact will be worsened for those on low incomes. Below is a summary of the main proposals that may impact on some older people.

The raising in the cap for domiciliary care of £10 per week, in line with Welsh Government guidance, will result in a cost to a household where one adult is in receipt of care of an additional £520 per year. However, as these services are means tested only those who are assessed as being able to afford this will pay this increase.

There have also been increases in fees for local authority run residential care from £523.37 to £557.92. This will impact on proportionately more older people but these are means tested and so the impact on those on the lowest incomes will be mitigated.

Children and Young People – Around 14% of children in Monmouthshire live in poverty and this figure rises to 29% in the least well-off wards⁴. Continued economic and social pressures on families are likely to put increased pressure on some families. Below is a summary of the main proposals that impact on children and young people.

Families with school-aged children

A five pence increase in the charge for school meals will result in an increase in annual costs of £9.50 for a family with one school age child rising to £28.50 for a family with three children⁵.

Other protected characteristics

There is very limited reference to some of the protected characteristics within the individual assessments that have been developed alongside the budget proposals, in particular:

Marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity are essentially work place regulations. Sex (gender), race, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, religion and belief also have limited references attributed to them and this may be for a two reasons:

- because these groups are not affected by the proposals or
- because we have gaps in our information due to people perceiving that the characteristic is of a personal and sensitive nature and are therefore unwilling to respond.

We welcomed any views on the impacts of our proposals on these protected groups as part of our consultation on the budget and will continue to look at national information and relevant studies to improve our knowledge and understanding of how changes can adversely impact on these groups.

The authority's approach to car parking charges is currently being reviewed.

The proposed council tax increase of 4.95% will result in an additional monthly cost of £6.72 on a Band D property.⁶ This will impact on all groups, while this modelling has been based on a Band D property those with higher incomes typically live in larger properties and therefore will pay higher council tax. However it is acknowledged that some people may have a large house and low income. This can often be true of older people.

Mitigation

Charges for social services are linked to peoples' ability to pay and service users will be required to undergo a means tested assessment of their financial ability to meet a reasonable charge calculated for these services.

The council tax reduction scheme offers some mitigation, council tax is means tested and those in receipt of universal credit, pension credits, job-seekers allowance and other benefits are able to apply for a reduction. Single person households are eligible for a 25% reduction on council tax.

There will be a range of additional mitigations that are not fully modelled here.

The Cumulative Financial Impact

The impact below has been modelled on some of the planned increases in fees and charges.

A household with an income of £16,000 per year, with two children would see their costs rise by £111 per year or £2.13 per week, assuming they paid for the increase in school meals, increase in children swimming lessons and paid Band D council tax with no discounts. This would equate to 0.70% of their income. It is unlikely that someone in this financial position would be paying for social care.

At present, one of the ways of assessing poverty in the UK is living in a household where the income is below 60% of the median income. Based on Average (Median) household net disposable income in the UK in 2017/18, 60% of the median income before housing costs is £304 per week (around £15,800 per year) and after housing costs is £262 per week (around £13,600 per year).⁷ In September 2018 The Social Metrics Commission, an independent Commission, published a new approach to poverty measurement that is intended to better reflect the nature and experiences of poverty that different families in the UK have. The Department for Work and Pensions has completed an initial evaluation of this work and have concluded that this new approach could form the basis of a new measure of poverty. Given this, DWP will be publishing experimental statistics in the second half of 2020⁸. We will continue to work to use local data to gain a better understanding of poverty locally to inform the next version of this analysis.

A household with an income of £29,000 per year and two children paying the increases above and if they were paying the increased domiciliary care charge would be paying an additional £163.67 per year, or £3.15 per week. This would equate to 0.56% of their income.

A household with an income of £40,000 per year would pay the same increases, assuming they lived in a Band D property. This would equate to 0.41% of their income. A household with an income of £56,000 would experience increased charges equating to 0.29% of their income on the same assumptions. However, as incomes rise it would be expected that many household will be living in more expensive properties and would be paying higher rates of council tax.



Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

<p>Name of the Officer: Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644397 E-mail:</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal: To deliver a balanced budget while continuing to make progress against the council's well-being objectives and delivering the long-held purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities</p>
<p>Name of Service area: Chief Executive's</p>	<p>Date: 10 February 2020</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	<p>Local Authorities provide many universal services such as highways and waste collections which bring multiple benefits to all age groups. However many of our services are delivered to proportionately higher numbers of younger and older people.</p> <p>Practice change in adult social services which are person-centred with a focus on well-being reducing dependency and empowering individuals and families to achieve their own outcomes which is a positive outcome.</p> <p>Deployment of early intervention and preventative services for children who are looked after can reduce the likelihood of placements breaking down and lead to better and more stable long-term outcomes.</p> <p>Pressures are being funded to continue to support pupils with additional learning needs.</p>	<p>Increasing the cap on fee levels for non-residential social care in line with Welsh Government Policy will have a financial impact for those who pay which will include a higher proportion of older people.</p> <p>There will be an increase in fees and charges for both residential and non-residential social care which will have a disproportionate impact on older people.</p> <p>A change to the routes that are run by the grassroutes bus scheme may negatively impact on the services users preferred times, this service is used by a higher proportion of older people.</p> <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>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>There is no increase in the charges for community meals.</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>Any changes to social care, including practice change and new ways of working with independent care agencies are likely to have a particular impact on people who have disabilities.</p> <p>Additional funding of placements for adults with physical and learning disabilities, including college places, will have a positive impact on their long-term well-being.</p>	<p>Any changes to social care arrangements are likely to have a particular impact on people who have disabilities, this includes increased charges as described above.</p> <p>There are some reductions in disability service budgets but these are focused on back office efficiencies and will not impact directly people who use services.</p> <p>There will be an increase in fees and charges for both residential and non-residential social care which will have a disproportionate increase on people with disabilities.</p> <p>Changes to the routes that are currently run by grassroutes bus scheme may negatively impact on a higher proportion of older people who use this service and may also be disabled.</p>	<p>For social care charging increases we will ensure that service users are means tested to determine their ability to pay.</p>
Gender reassignment	<p>At this stage none of the proposals have identified a particular impact, either positive or negative, on people who have undergone or are considering gender reassignment.</p>	<p>None of the budget proposals have been identified as having either a positive or negative impact at this stage.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions are necessary</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?
Marriage or civil partnership	Same-sex couples who register as civil partners have the same rights as married couples in employment and must be provided with the same benefits available to married couples, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. At this point of the analysis there are no proposals which have been assessed as having either a positive or negative impact on this group	None of the budget proposals have been identified as having either a positive or negative impact at this stage.	No mitigating actions are necessary
Pregnancy or maternity	In the provision of services, goods and facilities, recreational or training facilities, a woman is protected from discrimination during the period of her pregnancy and the period of 26 weeks beginning with the day on which she gives birth. None of the budget proposals have been identified as having either a positive or negative impact at this stage.	None of the budget proposals have been identified as having either a positive or negative impact at this stage.	No mitigating actions necessary
Race	There are no proposals identified that will have a specific positive outcome that will differ by race.	Proposals to increase back office efficiency may have an element of artificial intelligence or AI. Research has shown that AI has the potential to reinforce existing biases. This is because computer algorithms are unequipped to consciously counteract learned biases in the same way that humans do.	Work closely with developers to understand any applications where this could potentially occur and remedy immediately.




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	There are no impacts, either positive or negative that have been identified.	There are no impacts, either positive or negative that have been identified.	No mitigating actions necessary
Sex	The council has already carried out a full pay evaluation exercise.	None identified	No mitigating actions necessary
Sexual Orientation	None of the budget proposals have been identified as having either a positive or negative impact at this stage.	None of the budget proposals have been identified as having either a positive or negative impact at this stage.	No mitigating actions necessary
Welsh Language		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.	An increase in council tax will have a financial impact on all households. The impact will be felt more acutely by those on lower incomes as any bills will form a higher proportion of their household expenditure. Increases in school meal charges will have a more significant impact on those on lower incomes.	There are a range of mitigations in place. These include a council tax reduction scheme. Free school meals are available for those on incomes below a certain level.



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>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Examples of proposals that impact positively on this goal include the acquisition of commercial assets which will generate a financial return and where possible support the creation or retention of employment.</p>	
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>The council has recently declared a climate emergency. At this stage the action plan is not sufficiently developed to model the financial consequences of the authorities aspirations to reduce its carbon emissions.</p>	
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>		<p>Examples of proposals within the budget include practice change in Adult Social Services which focus on prevention and person-centred well-being.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Place-based approaches proposed as part of practice change proposals in adult social care will contribute to healthy inclusive communities.</p>	<p>Some communities may be opposed to commercial development or regeneration schemes In such cases we will involve people with proposals subject to planning and local consultation.</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>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>We continue our efforts to reduce pollution and increase recycling and these will have a small but important positive impact on CO2 emissions and waste which will contribute to global environmental efforts.</p>	<p>Wales has an enviable record in sustainable waste management and we will continue to progress this in our approaches to waste management and carbon reduction.</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>More efficient use of telephony include continuing the use of a chatbot. This has been developed to be bilingual and respond to queries through the medium of Welsh.</p>	
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>The council has already carried out a full pay evaluation exercise.</p>	<p>Increased charges for some services enable the council to provide other services such as transport which benefit people on low incomes and which has positive environmental impacts. Many of the council services that are sustained through charging provide a valuable safety net and contribute to more equal outcomes.</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>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.</p>	<p>Mitigating arrangements are in place to minimise the impact of increased fees or charges on people on low incomes</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The budget includes a range of collaborative proposals. This includes working with health, the voluntary sector and private companies.</p>	<p>No specific further actions are proposed at this stage</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>These proposals formed part of the budget exercise and have been subject to a public consultation exercise. This included sessions with existing groups such as the Access for All forum that represents people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Ensuring that proposals and the accompanying Future Generations evaluations have been updated as a result of, consultation and engagement.</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>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Practice change in adult social services which person centred with a focus on well-being reducing dependency and empowering individuals and families to achieve their own outcomes</p>	
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The council works across many areas and many of these proposals can have positive and potentially negative impacts on another. It is important that as individual proposals are developed we seek to balance competing impacts.</p>	<p>The council's Corporate Plan contains a table which highlights which of the objectives impacts on each of the 7 national well-being goals and any detailed proposals brought forward following the consultation will need to assess the impact of that proposal on the 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?

	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	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. The proposals in the budget include those focused on children and preventative services that reduce loneliness and isolation.	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.	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.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect. Specific Proposals include the strengthening of the councils legal service since lawyers sits at the heart of all child protection work around the Court system.	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	Further investment is being made into children’s social services including securing longer-term funding for the MySupportTeam (MyST) works with looked-after children and young people whose needs are such that they require significant support to keep them safe, maintain secure relationships and stable placements and improve their life chances.	There are no specific negative impacts identified at this stage	

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

The proposals are based upon a wide range of data and evidence and this will be contained within the evaluations of each of the individual proposals. Future monitoring will be done in accordance with the evaluation arrangements recently developed by the council's democratic services committee. This will allow members to assess whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect.

Data sources include for example:

- Quantitative data such as user numbers, measuring whether changes have had a positive or negative impact on the number of people using the service, in some cases, such as preventative services less users will be a positive
- Qualitative data that gives people views of the service which includes analysis of complaints
- Data derived from national sources such as stats Wales and the National Survey for Wales which allow us to measure whole population

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 outcome of the budget consultation exercise and any changes made to proposals are detailed within the accompanying budget papers. This assessment has been updated 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
Existing actions have been highlighted within the individual assessments.		

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	20/12/2019	
2.0	Cabinet	19/02/2020	Updated following the budget consultation.

¹ Available at <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Local-Government/Finance/Settlement/Central-Government-Support/standardspendingassessmentsandcentralgovernmentsupport-by-authority> .

² ONS, Small area income estimates for middle layer super output areas, England and Wales, 2016 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/earningsandworkinghours/datasets/smallareaincomeestimatesformiddlayersuperoutputareasenglandandwales>

³ Consumer Price Index, October 2019. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices>

⁴ Figures quoted are before housing costs. Equivalent rounded after housing cost figures are 22% and 43% http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Wales_LA-and-ward-data.xlsx

⁵ Calculated on a daily increase of £0.05 per child for 190 days.

⁶ Average Band D in 2019/20 = £1629.72 <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2019/03/Bandings-Template-2019-20.pdf>

⁷ Department for Work and Pensions, Households below average income 2017/18 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/households-below-average-income-199495-to-201718>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-of-a-new-measure-of-poverty-statistical-notice/development-of-a-new-measure-of-poverty-statistical-notice>

Children and Young People – comprising individual school budgets together with school improvement and LEA run services such as overseeing school admissions and supporting children with Additional Learning Needs

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Social Care & Health

- Services to adults and which seeks to enable them to live as independently as possible
- Services to help the most vulnerable children and families
- Services centred around public protection such as trading standards and licencing

Enterprise

- Supporting economic development in the County
- Waste and recycling, highways maintenance, transport and other operational services
- Planning and housing services

Resources – support services such as finance, ICT, HR, payroll, training, emergency planning, estates, property services, procurement and commercial activities

Chief Executive's Unit

- Administers the democratic process through member support and democratic services
- Legal services and land charges
- Corporates services such as communications, customer services, welsh language and equalities

MonLife – Providing a wide range of tourism, leisure and culture services

Corporate Costs – precepts and levies to other statutory bodies as well as other costs such as insurances, bank charges and audit fees

Appropriations – the costs of borrowing together with contributions to or from earmarked reserves

Financing – comprising core Welsh Government funding (AEF), council tax income and any contribution from the Council's general reserve

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SUBJECT: COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 19th February 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To consider the approval of the Countryside Access Improvement Plan (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) and the Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide following the completion of public consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 Cabinet approves the finalised Countryside Access Improvement Plan (Rights of Way 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. Strong Communities Select Committee considered the proposed timetable and assessment stages in November 2016. Subsequently substantial research and consultations were undertaken before formal public consultation on a Draft RoWIP. Strong Communities Select Committee considered the responses to the draft in January.
- 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. As the content of the RoWIP now includes wider countryside access issues, such as countryside sites and not just rights of way, on this occasion we have chosen to call the plan Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan (MCAIP).
- 3.3 There are strong links between the MCAIP, 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.

- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 The public consultation on the Draft CAIP and its five assessments has run for 14 weeks to 16 December 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.
- 3.6 In total 34 responses were received to the Draft CAIP 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.
- 3.7 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."* Natural Resources Wales said *"This is a good forward thinking plan which is progressive in its actions, mindful of future considerations in Wales. We consider 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."*
 - 4) Some respondents raised 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!"*
- 3.8 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.

- 3.9 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 CAIP, will continue to help deliver improvements.
- 3.10 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 RoWIP. These requests have been added here unless they were 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 CAIP 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.

3.11 Two themes received specific comments:

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

3.13 **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 publishing the CAIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No access to future grant Undermines partnerships Makes it difficult to update policies and strategies for countryside access management. The CROW Act requires all local authorities to review and publish a ROWIP. WG has produced guidance that covers new issues such Active Travel that does not appear in the old ROWIP 	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.
Publish the CAIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports appropriate management of countryside access provision within Monmouthshire Supports existing relationships and new partnership work Maintains potential access to future funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified 	Meets Welsh Government Guidance and legislation.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Progress will be monitored against the approved MCAIP by the production of an annual or three year MCAIP “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. If 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:

SLT
Cabinet
Chief Operating Officer MonLlife
Chief Officer Enterprise

Strong Communities Select Committee considered the draft ROWIP and consultation responses on 23rd January 2020 and resolved as follows:

Pre-decision scrutiny of the plan has been welcomed by this committee. We are very supportive of the volunteering that the service benefits greatly from, however, we have some concern relating to the resources of the team. We consider the plan is fit for purpose and we support you in taking it forward to Cabinet for endorsement on 19th February.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: Equality and Future Generations Evaluation (attached)
Appendix 2: Final MCAIP Consultation Report December 2019 (attached)
Appendix 3: Countryside Access Improvement Plan (attached)
Appendix 4: Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide (attached)

11 AUTHORS AND CONTACT DETAILS:

Ruth Rourke, **Countryside Access Manager, MonLife**

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Matthew Lewis, **Environment and Culture Manager, MonLife**

Tel: 01633 644855 E-mail: matthewlewis@monmouthshire.gov.uk



<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Ruth Rourke Countryside Access Manager</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644860 E-mail: ruthrourke@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>Countryside Access Improvement Plan (2019 – 2029)</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>MonLife</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>19/12/2019, amended 10/02/2020</p>

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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	
Pregnancy or maternity	None	None	

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?
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!


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?
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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>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The assessments show that rights of way contribute towards jobs and the economy. 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>- Maximise positive opportunities by continuing to work with partners as well as other key organisations including the local community, volunteer groups and local businesses.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales 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>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Appendix 2 and 3 show 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</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?
	walks, helping with maintenance and promotion of the network.	
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	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.	- Maximise opportunities for engagement with a range of key stakeholders.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	n/a	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	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..	Promote countryside access to others so that they can maximise opportunities to for volunteering and participation a wide range of outdoor activities.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	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.	

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 & 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. 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 Countryside Access 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.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Take to Cabinet for ratification	February 2020	Countryside Access Manager
Translate Publish and promote	February / March 2020	Countryside Access 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.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Select Committee	23 January 2020	Minor formatting and consequential amendments
2	Cabinet	19 February 2020	

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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 & 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. https://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/standardmap.aspx <li>2) Any idea of when the, very useful, Countryside Access Design Guide will be updated? <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"
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 & 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..." &/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.

Page 5 of 11

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.³ 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 reens.

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
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • National should be Natural • For clarity, it might be best to refer to freehold public forest.
		<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>
10	CADW	<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 (Blaenafon 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. 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 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 & 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 & 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 & 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 & town councils (C&TCs), yet they feature heavily in the action table. We would like to see a specific section on the role that community & town councils can play in delivering ROWIP and how the relationship with C&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 & 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 & town councils arranges a quarterly meeting for community & 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 & 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	Please could you send a JPEG of the poster and I will circulate on our Facebook page.
17	Goytre Fawr	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.
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>• Commitments to give greater prominence and visibility to Unclassified County Roads and to improve their maintenance and use.<li>• A commitment to improving access for the less able and continuation of the "Least Restrictive Access" Policy.<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>• 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". <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&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">• 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&B's (including mine) in the past few years, and it is possible that this has something to do with it.

- 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>

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 visitmonmouthshire.com (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 & 27 October 2016, despite enforcement action being promised by staff).</p>

ID	Name	Response
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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: https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/rights-of-way-improvement-plan-rowip/ .</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

ID Name
29 continued

Response

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"> • 7.0 Target priority areas..... what are these, what does target mean, should you do this any way? • 7.1 Prioritises maintenance....., this is strategic rather than an action. • 7.2 Support volunteers how can this be measured and what does it achieve? • 13.3 Seek to improve circular route. What does seek mean, how many additional routes, how many improvements and by when? • 13.5 Encourage NRW how do you measure the effect of encouraging, what is the outcome of this?

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

Section 3. About this Plan 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.”¹

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.”² 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.

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.”³ 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

Monmouthshire’s Countryside Access Draft Improvement Plan 2019-2029 Public Consultation, p.4 2

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>Section 8. Extent to which rights of way and other access provision meets present and potential future use. 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

This document forms the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for purposes of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

PHOTO TO BE ADDED before translation

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

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 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

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 (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 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, 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

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, 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 economy¹. Tourism spend supports the most employment in the accommodation and food & drink sectors. In addition, a significant number of self-employed people in Monmouthshire earned a living from tourism².

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

² STEAM Survey 2018

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.

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

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

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, 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).

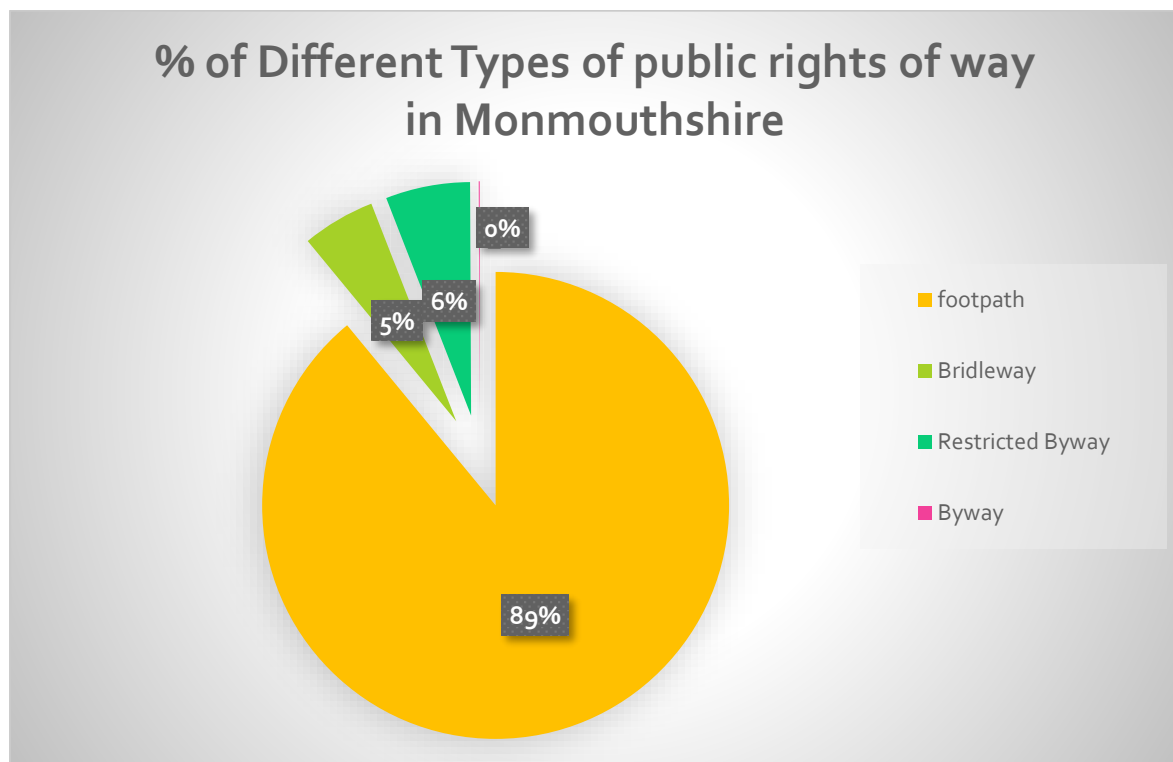
There are 2,164.83 kms of rights of way in the County of Monmouthshire and 1609.6kms³ of other public highways (roads). However an agreement is in place for the 505.78kms of public rights of way in the Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) to be maintained by that Authority. Monmouthshire County Council (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 covered by the procedures and policies that apply to the rest of Monmouthshire including this plan.

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

MCC and BBNP have worked closely to develop their improvement plans. The MCAIP 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. 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.

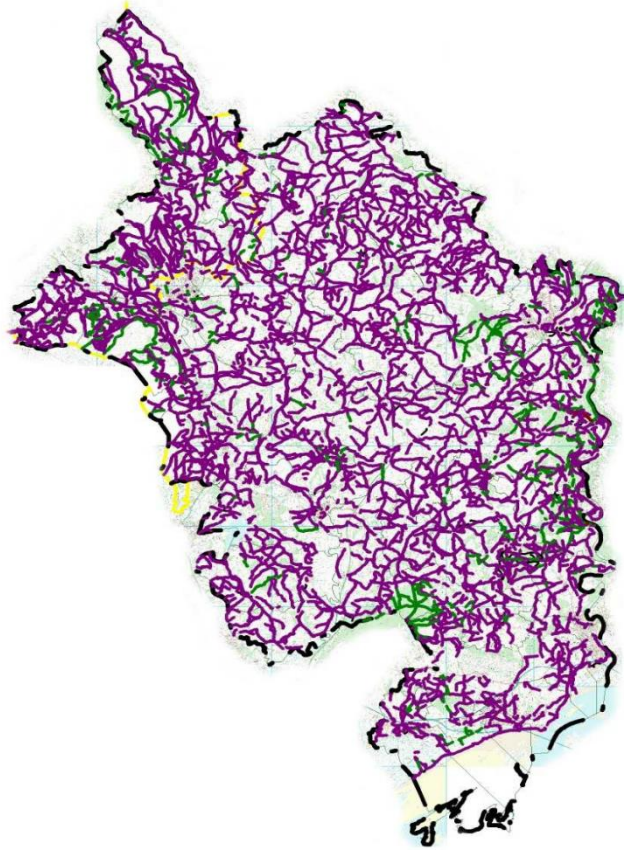
Table 1 Extent of highway network in Monmouthshire (including BBNP) 2018

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	1,659.05	505.78	2164.83	
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 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, 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 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 3,550ha of freehold Welsh Government Woodland Estate has been dedicated as open access in Monmouthshire.

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 more⁴. 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 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.

⁴ Forestry Statistics 2017

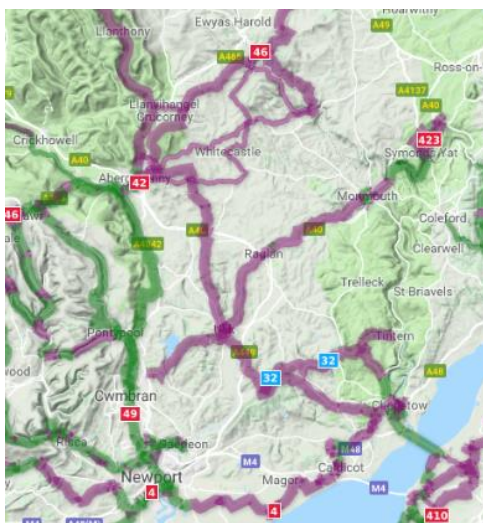
<https://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/forstats2017.nsf/0e01ca232ca463ed802570a60054c205!CreateDocument>

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 (220 miles 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 map⁵ below shows the National Cycle routes available in Monmouthshire.



We are home to the prestigious Abergavenny Festival of cycling⁶, 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. However, 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 Travel brings, as well as extending the network of routes out of major towns to connect to other villages and places of interest.

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

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

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 Chepstow⁷. 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. Although formal agreements have ended some permissive routes 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 landholdings with multiple routes crossing them; all of them form outdoor visitor destinations or amenities.

7

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

- 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, Pentwyn 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 swap 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



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.

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 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, 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.

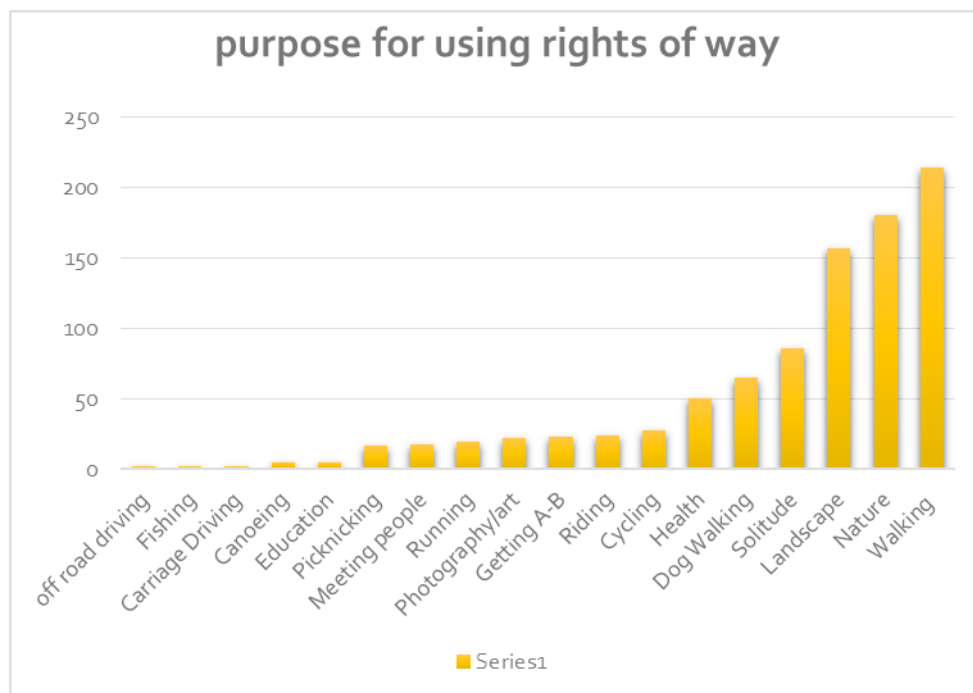
8 EXTENT TO WHICH RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER ACCESS PROVISION MEETS PRESENT AND POTENTIAL FUTURE USE

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

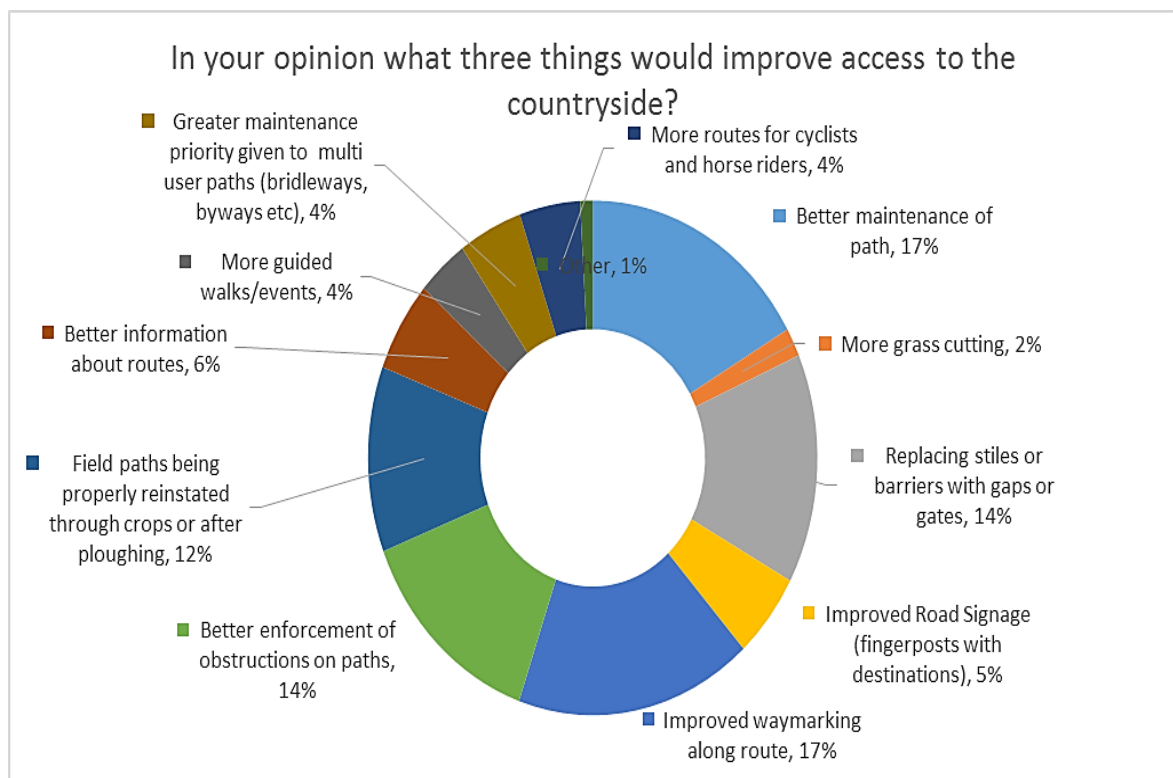
- Disabled people, younger age groups and those from ethnic minorities visit the countryside less frequently.
- Younger age groups were less likely to be interested in using the PROW network.

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, 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 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 4,000 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, the *Monmouthshire Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management ROWIP Assessment Report* outlines all Countryside Access Policies.

<p>Well Being of Future Generations Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 ➤ The Public Service Board agreed The Well- Being Plan for Monmouthshire in April 2018. ➤ From this plan a set of Actions has been produced. The aims of The Well- Being Plan covers areas which the Monmouthshire Countryside Access Improvement Plan (MCAIP) is also involved with, such as health, climate change, protecting landscapes & biodiversity, reducing levels of inactivity, working with communities etc.
<p>Active Travel Wales Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 MCAIP contributes to these objectives. See Chapter 11 Active Healthy Lifestyles.
<p>Environment Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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 MCAIP will link into these.

Due to the wide-reaching work of the PROW and Access Service, the MCAIP 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.



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 Countryside Access Team has at its disposal including staff, allocated budget, volunteers, PROW & countryside site asset and funding raised through external sources.

The Countryside Access Team consists of 14 staff, only 7 of which are full time. The team are assisted by various volunteers and volunteer groups.

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.

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.

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 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 Countryside Access Team 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?

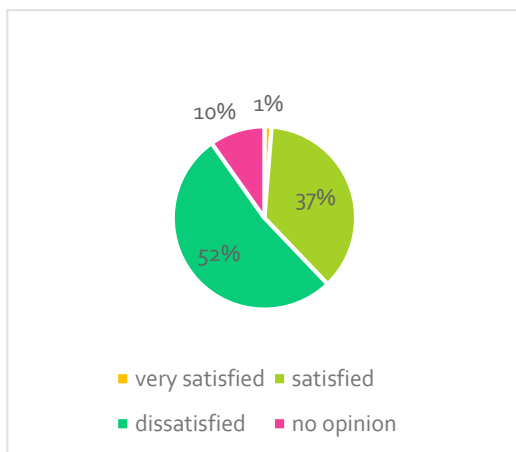
From March 2012 to March 2018 the Countryside Access Team have received 2800 enforcement and 9400 maintenance issues.

The Countryside Access Team 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 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 builder's skip.

- 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.



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

- ⇔ 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.

The top 3 things Stakeholders would like are:

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

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 (not including backlog of issues & revenue costs like staff, or cutting programmes) to keep the asset in optimum condition.
- The 2007-2017 RoWIP 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.



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. 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

'HAVE YOUR SAY'
on the future of the Castle Meadows

Your views are needed on the new management plan for the Meadows

Drop in anytime between
3pm—7pm on Friday 4th April
or
10am—12 noon on Saturday 5th April

Venue— The Methodist Hall, Castle Street
Abergavenny

Light refreshments available



For further details:
✉ mark.angley@monmouthshire.gov.uk ☎ 07836 221596



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 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 MCAIP 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, 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 MCARIP 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 fynwy

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:

- Town/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 Address: County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk

monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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 (backlog of 253) and width enquiries

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

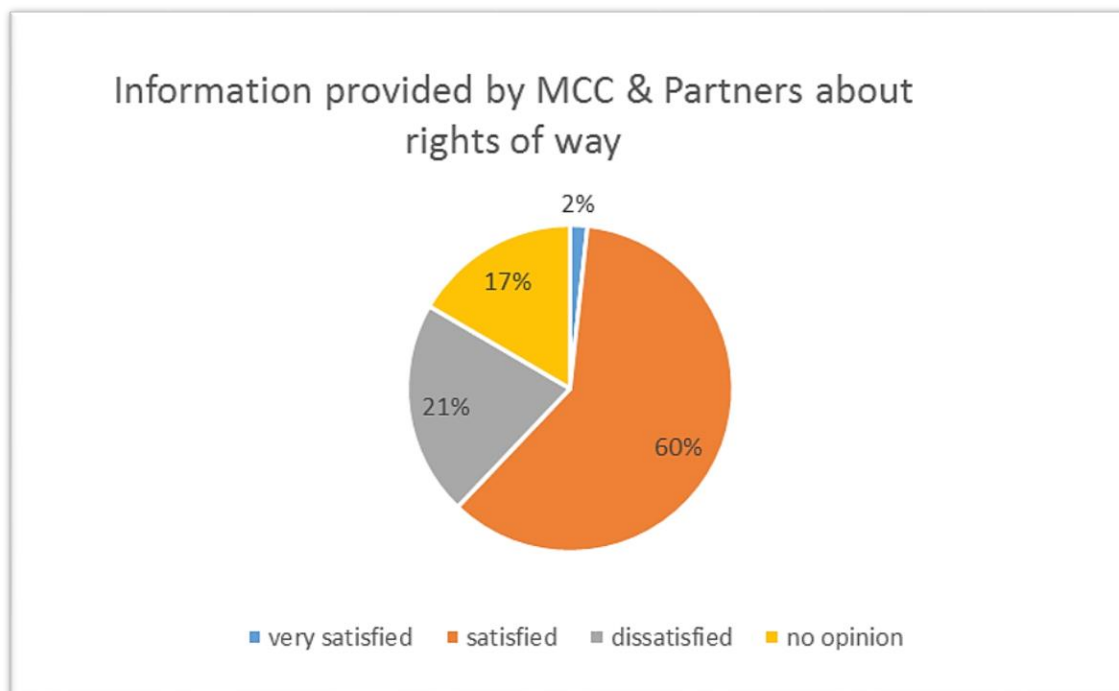
It is expected that the Welsh Government will legislate within the lifetime of this plan to allow for an “All Wales” digitised version of the Definitive Map. Until then Monmouthshire County Council is still required to bring the Definitive Map up to date in paper format.

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.

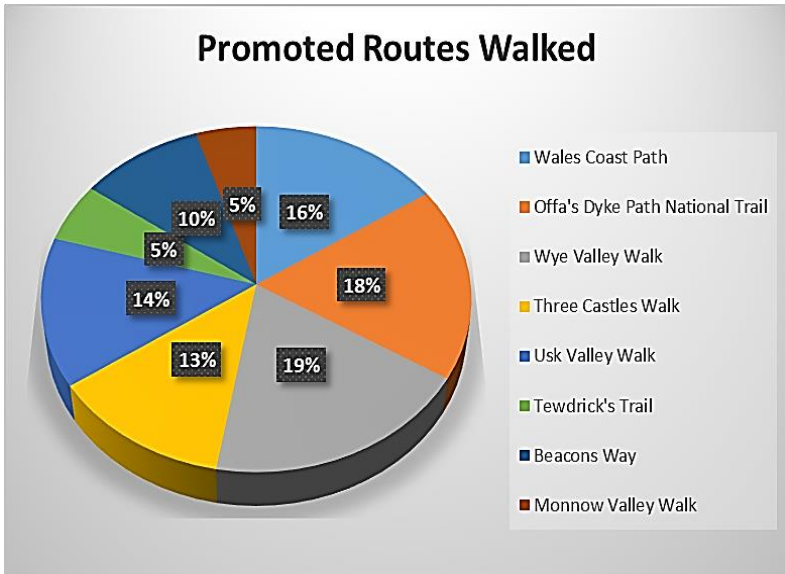
12.3 PROMOTION

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.



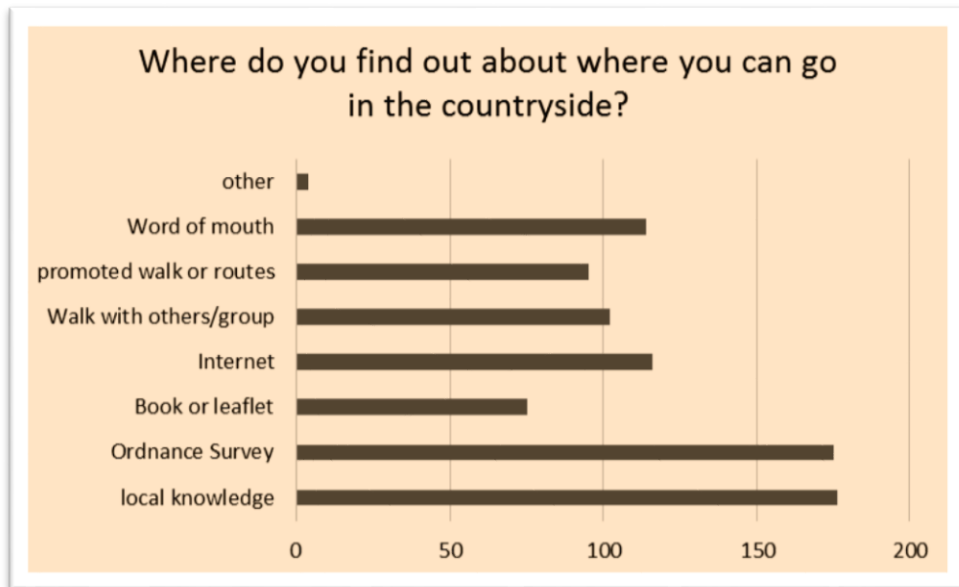
60% of Stakeholders say that they are satisfied with the information provided by the Council and its partners, whilst only 21% were dissatisfied.

Information on walking and other activities is principally available through official long distance route websites, www.visitmonmouthshire.com, www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk and other organisation websites and national websites like www.walk4life.com or 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 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 annum⁸. 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 of them. Partnership working with these organisations and services is key to the delivery of this plan.

Some of our key partners include:- Sustrans, The Canal & 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.

⁸ Extract from Public Policy Exchange.co.uk Training Flyer 14062017

The level of interest of organisations in being <u>more actively</u> involved in maintaining or improving the network of paths in their local area			
	Very interested	Moderately interested	Not interested
Maintenance	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
Promotion	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	
Improvements	Sustrans, Llanbadoc CC, Trellech United CC, The Narth & District Footpath Group, Chepstow Walkers Are Welcome	St Arvans, Caldicot U3A, Llangwm CC, Pontypool & District RA	
Other (specify)	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 Countryside Site.		

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 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

13.5 MCAIP 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

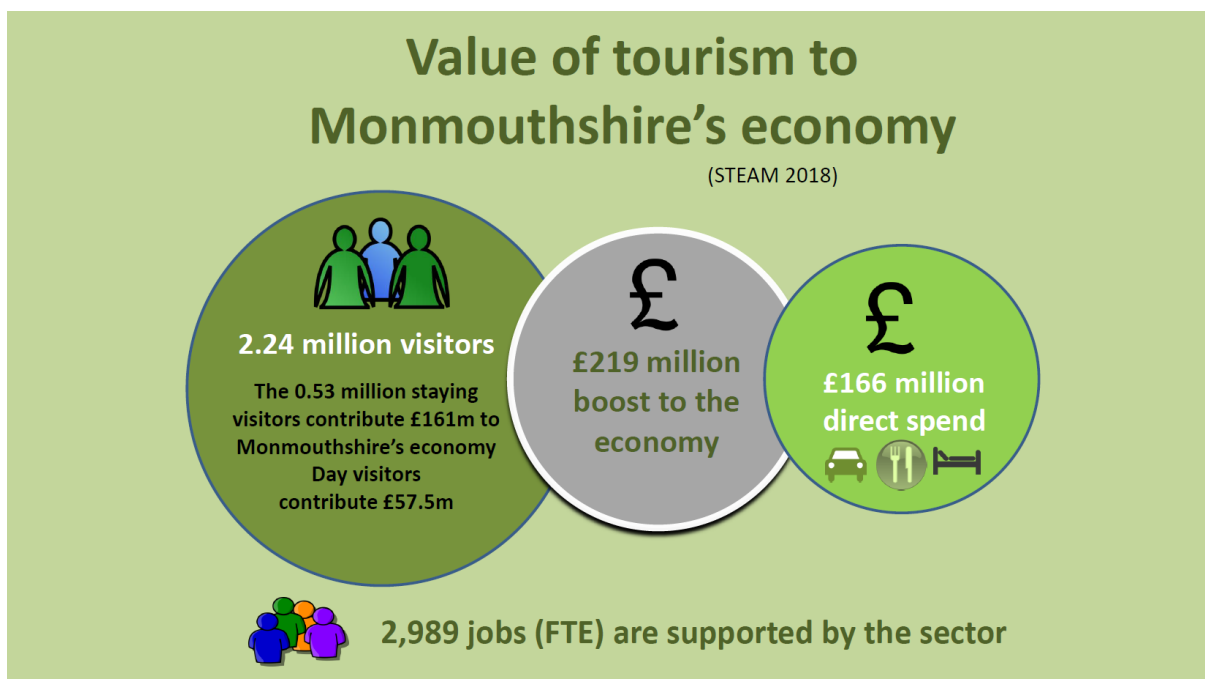
This plan can help contribute towards a robust infrastructure that enables development and encourages economic growth leading to regeneration and attraction of new businesses. It has a significant role in supporting sustainable economic growth, directly contributing towards transport, green infrastructure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

The MCAIP 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 economy⁹.
- 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 MCAIP 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 MCAIP 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

⁹ <https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/tourism-business-support.aspx>

15 FUTURE FOCUSED

The Countryside Access service is under several pressures, some constant, others variable. Legislation requires that this plan is for a 10-year period. Additionally the Well-Being of 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 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.

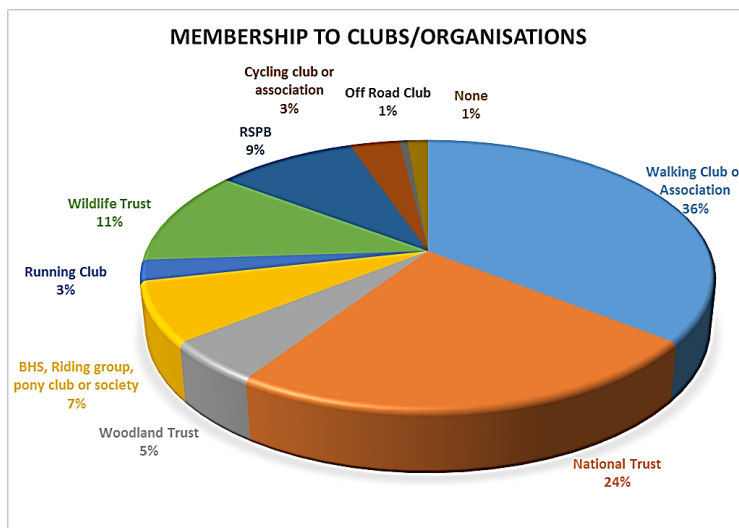
Nuisance use of PROW network is an issue raised by many Users and generally reflects wider issues in society. There is a role for Monmouthshire’s Local Access Forum in promoting understanding between different stakeholders and responsible use of PROW network by the public.

15.5 QUALITY OF LIFE/CONNECTION TO LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY

Residents of Monmouthshire value the landscape and nature. However, the Wye Valley AONB 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.

- 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.

Partnership project work requires significant amount of staff time, sometimes over many years, both to create the partnerships, deliver 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 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 MCAIP 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 Access 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 MCAIP 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

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, Glanus 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 Llangybi

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

17 DELIVERY PLAN/STATEMENT OF ACTION

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 & 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 & 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 & 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 & identify barriers for removal enabling more</p>	   	<p>£+</p>  	<p>Landowners & Land Managers, NFU</p> <p>Community & Town Councils</p> <p>Volunteer & 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 & GI Staff</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Canal & 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 & 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 & 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>1.12 Maintain countryside sites and prepare management plans for each site.</p>			
WM2	Compliance	2.0 Work with landowners to ensure higher levels of compliance with their obligations in respect of PROW and sites. Take enforcement action where required to ensure PROW are open and available to the public.	  	  	CLA, NFU, Landowners, Land managers, Gwent Police
WM3	Promote responsible use	3.0 Promote the Countryside Code and responsible use by the	★		All partners








		<p>public particularly dog ownership and England/Wales Dog Walking Code. Where possible link into other organisations existing schemes such as Canal & Rivers Trust Share the Space and Drop the Pace and NRW's position statements.</p> <p>3.1 Provide advice and guidance to landowners regarding PROW responsibilities.</p> <p>3.2 Work with key partners to prevent conflict between different user groups</p> <p>3.3 Work with Stakeholders/Partners to minimise impact of use on sensitive and protected sites, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments.</p> <p>3.4 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>3.5 Support measures to prevent or reduce anti-social and criminal behaviour while preserving public access.</p>	 		
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</p>	<p>★ </p> <p> £</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p>	<p>User Groups & volunteers</p> <p>Highways & Green Infrastructure & Countryside staff</p>








		<p>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 & 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>4.5 Update the Countryside Access Design Guide</p> <p>4.6 In conjunction with Cadw seek to establish a project combining the conservation of historic assets with access improvement schemes.</p>			<p>Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Gwent Police</p> <p>Disabled Ramblers</p> <p>Cadw</p>
WM5	Improve Green Infrastructure	5.0 Work with planners/developers to create planned strategic green infrastructure which incorporates the PROW network to promote and encourage sustainable, active travel and provide opportunities for recreation & leisure.	<p>★</p> <p>🚲</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>✎</p>	<p>Planning & Developers</p> <p>Green Infrastructure & Countryside Access Team</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 & 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>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Canal & 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 improve network connectivity for non-motor vehicle users.</p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p></p> <p></p> <p></p>	<p>Network Rail</p> <p>Welsh Government Transport Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>MCC Highways & Planning</p> <p>Community & Town Councils</p> <p>Landowners & User Groups</p>

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 & 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 & consider equestrian and other parking where reasonable to encourage recreational and leisure 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</p>	<p>£   </p>	<p>£ </p> <p>£ </p> <p>£ </p> <p></p>	<p>Health care providers & professionals</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>User & Interest Groups</p> <p>Canal & 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>Mon Life Staff</p>

		<p>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 & cycle routes, thus educating responsible lifestyles and reducing obesity.</p> <p>7.9 In conjunction with partners look at installing & maintaining picnic benches/seats to enable more use of sites/PROW for those with disability or health issues.</p>			
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, greenspaces and countryside sites.</p> <p>8.3 Pursue the provision of motorised traffic free, safe walking, cycling and equestrian routes linking towns, villages and rural areas where possible.</p> <p>8.4 Support & influence the authorities and other strategies & policies to ensure that active travel is firmly integrated into work programmes.</p>	   	  	<p>Active Travel Steering Group, Developers/Planners, Highways, Disabled Ramblers, Monmouthshire Local Access Forum</p> <p>Local Schools/colleges, Community Councils, User & Interest Groups,</p> <p>Canal & 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>9.3 Work with Planning and Green Infrastructure colleagues to secure PROW within green corridors and green space.</p> <p>9.4 Improve & 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>9.5 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>9.6 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.</p>	   	   	<p>Active Travel Steering Group</p> <p>Natural Resources Wales</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>Highways, Planning, GI & Countryside</p> <p>Monmouthshire Local Access Forum</p> <p>Local Schools</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>User & Interest Groups</p>
AHL4	Tackling deprivation and	10.0 Remove barriers for those economically disadvantaged by encouraging the use of countryside sites and prowl network as a free-	  	 	<p>Monmouthshire Local Access Forum, Developers,</p>



	disadvantage	<p>at-the-point of-use resource for active travel, recreation & leisure use</p> <p>10.1 Tackle health disadvantage by promoting access to the natural environment and green space, beyond urban areas, providing connectivity to nature and heritage.</p> <p>10.2 Encourage active travel to schools through promotion and enhancing PROW & cycle networks.</p>	★	£ 😊 ✍️	Health Care Providers and Professionals. Wye Valley AONB Schools/colleges, Leisure Services, Community Councils, User & Interest groups
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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>11.0 Maintain and update the county's Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way & Statement.</p> <p>11.1 Ensure the Definitive Map & Statement is easily accessible</p> <p>11.2 Maintain public registers on line and add list of all section 147 authorisations and legal orders (diversions/closures).</p> <p>11.3 Continue to process claims according to prioritisation and seek additional resources to clear backlog of applications.</p> <p>11.4 Seek to ensure Ordnance Survey Maps are corrected and updated.</p>	🚲 ❤️ £ ★	£ ✓ £ +	Ordnance Survey, Highways, Legal Services and SRS.
KWOT 2	Provide advice on PROW network	12.0 Provide advice and guidance to landowners and users.	🚲 ❤️	£ ✓	Developers, NFU, Landowners, Land managers,

	and countryside sites	<p>12.1 Liaise with Planning and Development Management to provide advice on Local Development Plan and planning applications.</p> <p>12.2 Respond to and give appropriate advice to Land Charge Searches.</p> <p>12.3 Advise on and where appropriate, progress orders to amend the PROW network in the interest of the public and or the landowner.</p> <p>12.4 Provide advice and where appropriate progress orders for temporary closures but with conditions as per policy</p> <p>12.5 Consider developing policy for requests to plant trees, install seats/plaques etc in country parks/sites.</p>	£ ★		Community Councils, User & Interest Groups. Legal Services, Planning, GI & Countryside Access
KWOT 3	Negotiate Improvements	<p>13.0 Work with landowners to deliver improvements to the PROW network and countryside sites, to increase accessibility and encourage active travel and recreation, leisure use and support local economy.</p> <p>13.1 Work with NRW to review access on their sites, reduce Modification claims and produce management plans that can help inform future tree clearance programmes, reducing access closures and assisting with aims in 13.0.</p> <p>13.2 Secure any opportunities that arise from changes to the regime of agricultural and land management subsidies.</p> <p>13.3 Consult on proposed improvements in management</p>	  ★	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	Landowners and agents, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales

		<p>plans for countryside sites as they are developed.</p> <p>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.</p>			
<p>KWOT 4</p>	<p>More accessible information /increasing Knowledge and confidence</p>	<p>14.0 Working with key partners, increase the range of information on and about countryside access and its benefits. Consider using walking & other organisations publications to do this and disseminating information through local publications.</p> <p>14.1 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>14.2 Target approach to reach PROW & Countryside site non users, improving accessibility of information to spark interest in walking or cycling or horse riding, increase knowledge and confidence to encourage use.</p> <p>14.3 Seek to promote circular routes (as per walking development plan) with specific themes to improve benefits and target audiences better.</p> <p>14.4 Work with NRW & other woodland partners to provide better information about what access is available in woodlands.</p>	<p></p> <p> £</p> <p>★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Active Travel Strategy & 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 User and Interest Groups Mon Life Leisure services Canal & Rivers Trust</p>

		<p>14.5 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>14.6 Promote Bus Services where possible, to access promoted routes and the countryside.</p>			
KWOT 5	Promotion of Wales Coast Path, NT & promoted routes	<p>15.1 Maintain primary promoted routes to a high standard to safeguard economic benefits and tourism product.</p> <p>15.2 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>16.0 Provide information to help support community led tourism.</p> <p>16.1 Increase length of stay through packaging, linking and developing new products (e.g. new routes or new promoted routes). Promote the resource.</p> <p>16.2 Refresh & improve signage to and in countryside sites</p> <p>16.3 More guided walks & events</p> <p>16.4 Utilise Ambassadors more so they can be the "go to people".</p>	 ♥ £ ★	£✓ £+ 	Tourism, MCC Countryside Access Forum, Local Businesses, Community Councils, GI & Countryside Access, Leisure Services, User & Interest Groups
KWOT7	Disability promotion improvements	<p>17.1 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>	♥★ 	£✓  £+	Health organisations and professionals

		17.2 Better promotion of health walks, distributing to GP Surgeries/chemists etc.			Tourism, GI & Countryside Access User Groups
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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>18.0 Continue to develop volunteer programmes that support the delivery of the objectives of the RoWIP and seek funding to do so.</p> <p>18.1 Support existing groups and the development of new Community Groups to improve and maintain their local rights of way and countryside sites.</p> <p>18.2 Develop guidance, training and promotional material to help educate and attract volunteers.</p> <p>18.3 Develop focused paper & other media promotional material with volunteer groups to help ensure material reaches intended client groups.</p> <p>18.4 Work with community & town councils to deal with annual overgrowth & identify funding/priorities for improvement schemes</p> <p>18.5 Signpost walkers/riders to local walking & riding groups</p>	<p>★ ♥</p> <p>£ 🚲</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Mon Life (Leisure Services, Outdoor Education etc.)</p> <p>User & Interest Groups</p> <p>Community & Town Councils</p> <p>Canal & Rivers Trust</p> <p>Keep Wales Tidy</p> <p>Ramblers Association, BHS</p> <p>BBNP Wye Valley AONB</p> <p>Appropriate Organisations</p>
Ci2	Assisting volunteers	19.0 Improve information technology and mapping interface to be more useful for volunteer projects.	£ ★	£✓	Mon Life, Ordnance Survey, GI & Countryside Access

		<p>19.1 Develop & publish guidance on responsibilities for groups & insurance requirements</p> <p>19.2 Identify method of collating & giving information on grants to community and other groups.</p> <p>19.3 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.</p>			
Cl3	New volunteer programmes to improve health and well-being, improve environment /biodiversity and get young people volunteering .	<p>20.0 Identify route improvements & new health walks</p> <p>20.1 Work in partnership with appropriate organisations and with volunteers to eradicate invasive species.</p> <p>20.2 Encourage local volunteer groups to provide information boards/events/information which increases the publics overall appreciation and connectivity to landscape & nature.</p> <p>20.3 Investigate opportunities to encourage younger people to volunteer.</p> <p>20.4 With partners establish “Friends of “groups along regional routes to promote and look for funding opportunities along regional routes.</p>	<p>£</p> <p>★</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Volunteers and User Groups</p> <p>Landowners</p> <p>Appropriate organisations like NRW, Wye Valley AONB, BBNP</p> <p>Tourism, Youth & outdoor Education, Leisure Services</p> <p>Health care providers and professionals</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Community Councils</p> <p>Businesses</p>




A prosperous Wales

To maximise the economic benefits of countryside access

Ref Code	Objective	Action	Benefit	Resource	Key Partners
PW ₁	<p>Maximise economic benefits</p> <p>Improve product and grow new markets</p>	<p>21.0 Highlight the economic benefits of countryside access in Monmouthshire</p> <p>21.1 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>2112 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>214 Work closely to develop walking/riding products with tourism officers</p> <p>21.5 Use ambassadors to promote countryside access provision and ensure they are kept up to date with improvements/projects in their area.</p> <p>21.6 Develop where possible long distance, multi-purpose routes, cycle or bridleway routes.</p> <p>21.7 Make use of partners/businesses and volunteers to promote targeted circular walks and events.</p> <p>21.7 Identify & promote technology driven measures that would appeal to younger age groups</p>	<p>★ £</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£✓</p>	<p>All partners</p>

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	22.0 Raise awareness of the ROWIP to customers, non-users of the network and stakeholders	 ★	£✓	All partners
FF2	Links to other strategies & plans To deliver objectives in plan Partnership Working	23.0 Promote the wider benefits of countryside access, improve and maintain partnerships to implement key aims of this plan. 23.1 Promote the rights of way network as a mechanism for helping achieve other appropriate internal and external aims described in this plan. 23.0 Strengthen partnership working with key Stakeholders to make better sense of the network and provide well-maintained safe attractive environments.	♥  £★	£✓ £+ £😊	All partners
FF4	Environmental Impact & Mitigation Measures	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. 24.1 Update and continue to promote use of Countryside Access Biodiversity Technical guidance. 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	♥ ★ £	£✓ 	All Partners

		<p>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 & 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>			
Ff5	Resourcing	<p>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>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>£ ★</p> <p>🚲</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	<p>Active travel Group, Development Control</p> <p>Developers</p> <p>GI & Countryside Access, 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>😊</p> <p>♥</p>	<p>£✓</p>	<p>GI & Countryside staff</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>Monmouthshire LAF</p> <p>Community Councils User & 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>27.3 Provide PROW officers and volunteers with the training necessary to ensure effective delivery of PROW operations.</p>	<p>🚲</p> <p>♥</p> <p>£ ★</p>	<p>£✓</p> <p>£+</p> <p>£😊</p>	

18 GLOSSARY

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
BBNP	Brecon Beacons National Park
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
MCAIP	Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Improvement Plan
NRW	Natural Resources Wales
OrVAL	Outdoor Recreation Valuation tool
PROW	Public Rights of Way
ROWIP	Rights of Way Improvement Plan
WG	Welsh Government

19 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

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.

Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Policy, Protocol and Operational Management Guide

Version 2, Final February 2020

This document is available in alternative formats and in Welsh on request.



monmouthshire
sir fynwy



Ar gyfer meddwl, corff ac enaid ein cymuned
For the mind, body and soul of our community

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2.0 Introduction

2.1 The Resource

Monmouthshire has nine countryside sites that are directly managed by MonLife's Countryside Access Service. These do not include Caldicot Castle Country Park and Tintern Old Station which are managed as part of MonLife's portfolio separately. The sites are important in providing places for people to undertake leisure pursuits and active lifestyles. Research shows that they are also important for the mental well-being and physical health of residents and has a positive effect on longevity of life. The sites are managed in cooperation with "Friends of" Groups, where they exist.

Monmouthshire's Public Rights of Way (PROW) network extends to 2,164.83km and provides unparalleled opportunities for public access throughout a tremendously varied and rewarding landscape. A significant number of PROW provide invaluable links for the community to shops, schools and services, in effect continuing to serve the utilitarian purpose out of which all rights of way evolved. It is the very links with Monmouthshire's heritage, culture, life and landscape that make public rights of way the single most important recreational resource in the County.

The PROW network like the countryside sites are also unique in offering not only a recreational resource, but provide benefits for health and well-being, make a significant contribution to the tourism industry and the rural economy. The PROW resource currently costs each resident of Monmouthshire around £4 per year!

2.2 Existing Policy

The existing policy for PROW management can be found in Monmouthshire's "Public Rights of Way An A to Z of Problems, Policy and Protocols" which was published in 2005. This is supplemented by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2007 and its review in 2010, the Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) 2020, the Rights of Way Biodiversity Action Plan 2011 and Countryside Access Design Guide 2012. Since then there have been changes in legislation and Government thinking. There is now more emphasis on improving the PROW network for meeting the needs of all of the public today and an onus on Highway Authorities to manage more strategically into the future. Guidance¹ produced by the Welsh Government, to update the ROWIP requires that all key policies for the management of local rights of way should be reviewed. This new policy document reflects this and updates the previous "A-Z of Policy and Protocols" to bring together all aspects of rights way and countryside access management policy in one place.

There has never been a management policy document for countryside sites, but as the revised CAIP has been extended to include other types of access such as countryside sites then where applicable they are included.

2.3 Aims and Objectives of this Guide

The Countryside Access Service provides a statutory service to the residents of Monmouthshire and its visitors. In order to continue to provide a good service it is

important that the service seeks continual improvement and adapts to the ever-changing world of public rights of way/access management. With an already large and ever increasing workload, new policies must be developed to manage growing public expectation.

Importantly it should be noted that the Monmouthshire Countryside Access Improvement Plan(CAIP) remains an ambitious and forward-looking document. It doesn't limit its remit to the duties that the County Council is obliged to fulfil as highway, surveying and access authority. The statements of action are not fully resourced; it recognises the need to work with partners and stakeholders to deliver many of its elements.

This policy review is an integral element of the CAIP review. It focusses directly on

- how the service delivers statutory elements of its work
- manages the resources available to it, and
- operational priorities

Practice continually evolves in response to: new legislation, guidance from Government, case law, changing priorities, improving technology, emerging good practice in other authorities and regularly from our own officers and perhaps most importantly as a response from feedback from our users.

This review is not meant to be a definitive guide to legislation. It assumes a little understanding of the subject matter.

This review provides an opportune moment to restate policy and practice and where necessary amend it. It also provides an ideal opportunity to set out the approach taken by the County Council to the management of PROW and access.

3.0 Summary of Issues/Background

Monmouthshire's Countryside Access service has a good national reputation and staff have continually strived to improve the service to the people of Monmouthshire within the limitations placed upon them.

Issues highlighted by the rights of way improvement plan review assessments 2016/18 and Monmouthshire's Public Service Board Well-Being Assessment include:

1. The PROW network performs many functions, which include, but stretch beyond leisure and recreation alone. The network is part of the local transport infrastructure and is an important factor in the local economy of Monmouthshire and an invaluable free resource for the well-being and quality of life for Monmouthshire's residents and visitors alike. It also provides valuable volunteering opportunities. Countryside sites also provide similar opportunities.
2. The Countryside Access Team is under several pressures, some constant, others variable. The service requires greater resources than present to help overcome these pressures.
3. The Well-Being of 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.
4. The Active Travel (Wales) Act provides opportunities to improve existing paths and create new ones and needs a partnership approach to ensure a sustainable and usable network is developed around the whole county.
5. The service must plan for the future and identify the demands of the future. 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 need to be addressed in the future.
6. The service must explore and exploit further ways of promoting how it works, what it does, and the importance of that work.
7. Monmouthshire's Countryside Access Service has an active and valued volunteer base which the citizens of Monmouthshire would like to see expand.
8. The service must explore other ways of raising funds, involving the community and relating the Service to the general public.
9. The Service must prioritise where it focuses resources and standards to reflect areas of most demand. It must also be able to be adaptable to cover such things as bad weather events.
10. The Service must demonstrate provision of a full and effective Service by a commitment to pursuing its duties, including enforcement action, when legislation is ignored and requires that policies should enable rather than constrict timely action.

4.0 Classification of Public Rights of Way

The PROW network is part of the highway network making up 57% of the over-all highways in Monmouthshire. These “minor” highways are protected by the same highways legislation as the wider highway network and as such must be kept open and available for use by the public at all times.

However they are distinguished from other all purpose-highways in the way they can be used as this is dependent on what the status is. PROW are broken down into four levels of status:

- **Footpath**, a highway over which the public have a right of way on foot only, other than such a highway at the side of a public road;
- **Bridleway**, a highway over which the public have a right of way on foot and a right of way on horseback or leading a horse, with or without the right to drive animals of any description along the highway. Section 30(1) of the 1968 Countryside Act introduced the right of riding pedal cycles on bridleways.
- **Byway open to all traffic** (BOAT), a highway over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, but which is used by the public mainly for the purposes for which footpaths and bridleways are so used;
- **Restricted byway** (RB) – a highway over which the public have restricted byway rights. This means a right of way on foot, a right of way on horseback, or leading a horse, a right for vehicles other than mechanically propelled vehicles and the right to drive animals of any description along the highway.

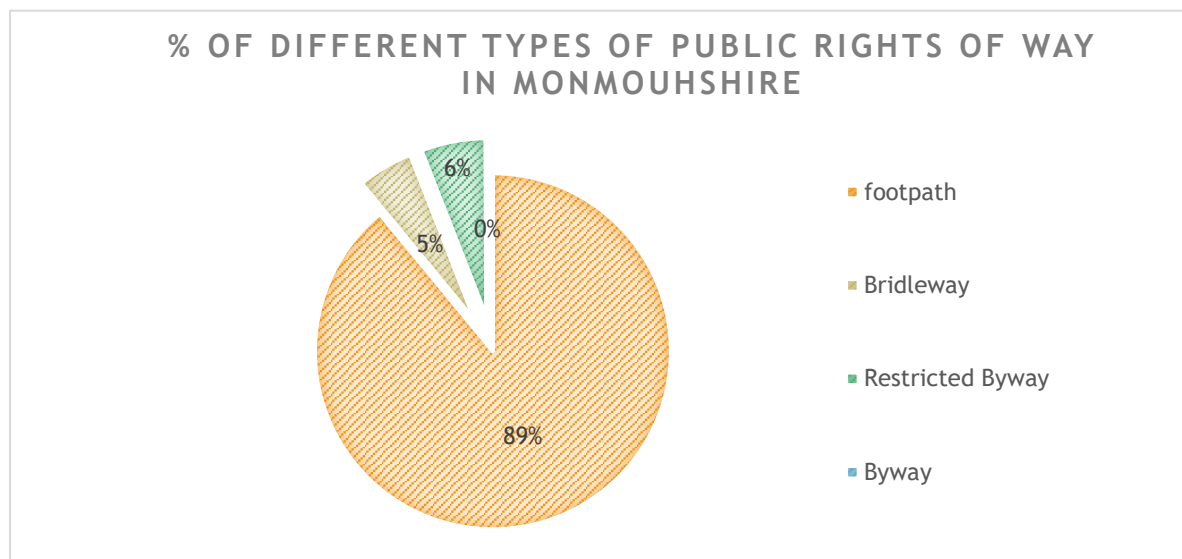
Restricted Byways are a new category of highway introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW). Under the CROW Act, all PROW which were designated as a Road Used as Public Path (often denoted as CRB's or CRF's on Monmouthshire's Definitive Map) were re-designated as Restricted Byways.

Section 30 of the Countryside Act 1968 expanded public rights on bridleways to include a right to ride bicycles. However, in exercising that right, cyclists are required to give way to pedestrians and persons on horseback. Furthermore, the Countryside Act 1968 expressly provides that the expansion of rights to cyclists does not create any further obligation as respects maintenance or to do anything to facilitate the use of the bridleway by cyclists.

Invalid carriages, including wheelchairs and powered wheelchairs, may be used on both footways, footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways by virtue of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

Electrically-assisted pedal cycles must meet the specification set out in the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles Regulations 1983, as amended by the Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (Amendment) Regulations 2015, in order to be considered such. As is the case on footpaths, invalid carriages, including wheelchairs and powered wheelchairs, may be used on bridleways by virtue of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.

Powered wheelchairs must not exceed a maximum speed of 4 mph on rights of way and should be used in accordance with prescribed conditions set out in regulations.



The network available for the disabled, horse riders and cyclists is particularly poor and disjointed. Therefore, maintenance of existing bridleway and restricted byway routes is more critical to the public's ability to use the network.

The List of Streets is held by Highways and should show all county maintained roads in Monmouthshire. This shows an extensive number of county unclassified roads many of which are important links in the rights of way network.

The network in Monmouthshire is very dense and ancient. This provides a challenge as it is not then easy to manage this network in a way which is fit for the modern and future needs of the public using it. It also presents a challenge in that resources are spread thinly in an attempt to keep as much of the network as possible available to as many people as possible. This can create conflict of interest when trying to decide where to channel resources.

Together with an increasingly litigious society and a firm statutory duty placed upon Monmouthshire County Council as Highway Authority the Countryside Access Service must adopt and adhere to a robust statement of priorities for effective management of the network.

5.0 Structure and Delegation

5.1 Delegation of Functions

The various functions relating to the delivery of the County Council's statutory obligations relating to public rights of way and countryside sites are delegated by the County Council to either officers or committees of the County Council; primarily the Licencing and Regulatory Committee and elected member – principally the Portfolio Holder for Countryside.

Who the various duties and powers are delegated to and any limitations or requirements on their use are set out in Monmouthshire's Scheme of Delegation.

5.2 Structure of the Countryside Access Service

PROW and Countryside Sites in Monmouthshire are directly managed by the Countryside Access Team, within MonLife.

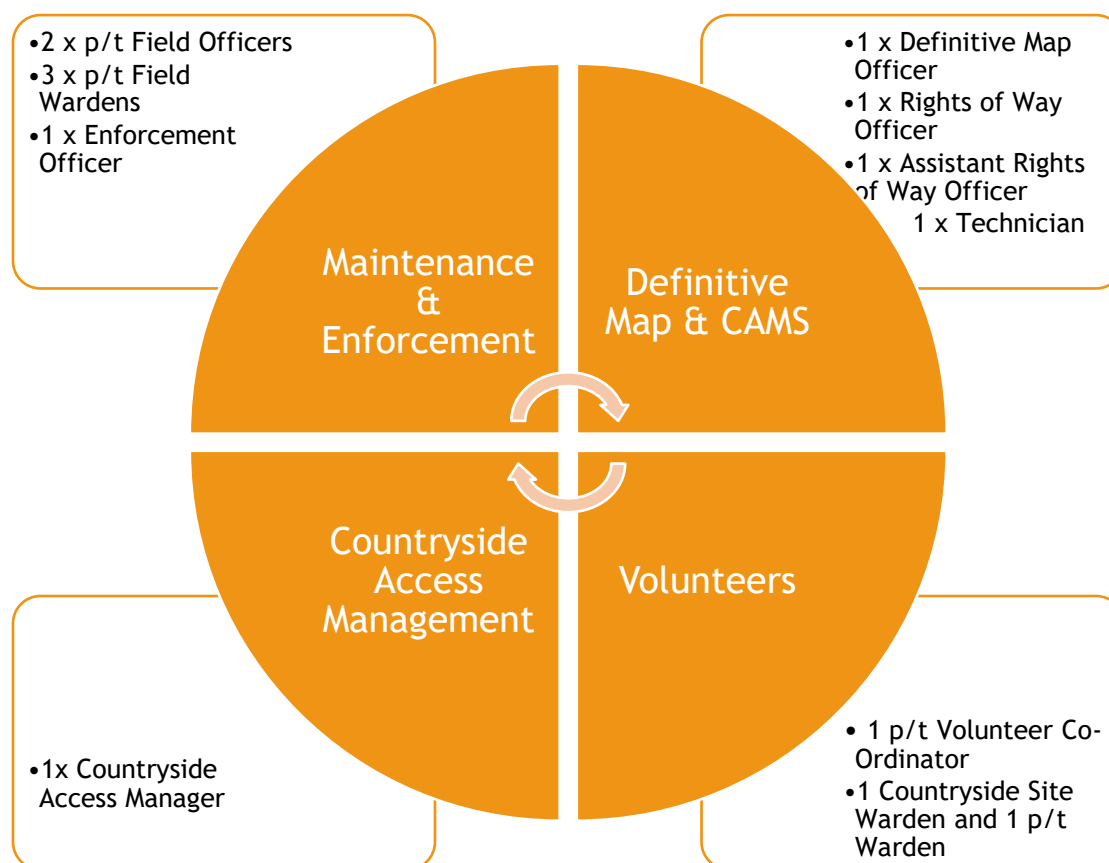
MonLife is an exciting collaboration that has unified all services and facilities under one brand, strengthening awareness and enhancing opportunities for all. MonLife is part of Monmouthshire County Council and delivers leisure, youth and outdoor education, green infrastructure and countryside access, play, learning, destination management, arts, museums and attractions.

Below are the Operational Areas of MonLife



MonLife is part of Monmouthshire County Council. It is a new, dynamic and fast moving organisation with a commercial focus but also ensuring that the valuable services within its portfolio combine to provide huge benefit to the communities, young people and customers they serve. The strategic focus of MonLife is on physical and mental health and wellbeing, providing opportunities in learning and experiencing, achieving a more physically active lifestyle for all.

It should be noted that an agreement is in place for those rights of way which fall within the National Park in Monmouthshire to be directly managed by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNP). Should that agreement ever be rescinded then the rights of way in the BBNP would be covered by the procedures and policies that apply to the rest of Monmouthshire.



The work of the Countryside Team can be broken down into several areas but staff increasingly work across disciplines.

- Strategic Management – Policy, CAIP Review and monitoring, Delivery Plans, Countryside Site Management Plan development, research, promotion, staff management, managing budgets/resources, developing and managing projects, partnerships and grants, Green Infrastructure projects, national and local consultations, training and development, Freedom of Information Requests, Insurance claims and prioritisation of work.
- Definitive Map Review –statutory elements of ensuring the Definitive Map and Statement is up to date. This includes researching and processing claims, anomalies, legal orders (such as diversions), temporary closures, monitoring and advising on development, land searches and other types of inquiries. There is also work involved to keep up to date and improve our on-line mapping service, public registers and our Countryside Access Management System (CAMS).
- Maintenance and Enforcement – inspection, prioritisation, maintenance and enforcement of the PROW network. Also includes asset protection, community liaison, Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and Wales Coast Path Annual Project programme and leads on least restrictive access and other improvement programmes etc.

- Management of Countryside sites – promotion, inspections, maintenance, community liaison, agreements, education, events, improvement projects, asset protection & enforcement.
- Volunteers – enabling groups, town and community councils to assist with the administration, maintenance and promotion, identification and funding of improvements on the rights of way network and countryside sites.

6.0 Aims and Objectives of the Countryside Access Service

The aim of the Countryside Access Service is to provide Countryside Sites and a public rights of way network in Monmouthshire which are correctly recorded, easy to follow, safe to use and adaptable to the needs of today and the future. There is an ever increasing amount of statutory powers and duties placed upon us to achieve this aim. Generally, these are: -

To protect, assert and provide an accessible network free from interference and obstructions by

- a) Continuing to develop constructive and good relationships with landowners/occupiers and User Groups
- b) Promoting conciliation as a first result in resolving problems of illegal obstructions and infringements as is reasonable
- c) Using all enforcement powers necessary when conciliation fails following legislation, MCC Enforcement Policy and The maintenance and Enforcement Prioritisation system (Chapter 15)

Manage, maintain and enhance a network fit for the needs of Monmouthshire's residents now and in the future by: -

- a) Managing the network in accordance with the statement of priorities (Chapters 13 & 15)
- b) Replace known missing bridges and those that need repair (as per statement of priorities & 16.4)
- c) Seek resources to inspect bridges and to replace/repair them
- d) Install and repair all missing and broken fingerposts where public right of way meets metalled road
- e) Preventing the fabric of the network (stiles/gates/surfacing) from deteriorating further and applying the Least Restrictive Access policy (chapter 7)
- f) Fully utilising and updating the CAMS database
- g) Providing improvements where possible to take account of the needs of those less able and those of the local community as per the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- h) Encouraging and developing Community/Town Council and local groups to assist with maintenance, promotion and events on rights of way.

Keep the Definitive Map and Statement up-to-date and to ensure the status and alignment of all PROW are correct in accordance with statutory duties by: -

- a) Investigating and determining all claims in accordance with the statement of priorities (see chapter 14)
- b) Investigate and determine anomalies in accordance with statement of priorities & 14.2
- c) Process applications to change PROW in accordance with policy (14.4)

- d) Ensure all changes are covered by a formal order

Develop and improve the network through public right of way improvement initiatives

- Plan for and prioritise programme of improvements identified through CAIP, Green Infrastructure, Active Travel and Well-Being Plan.
- Link to external initiatives where possible to add benefit to the public rights of way network.
- Link to other plans such as Active Travel and Well-Being Plan to provide improvements in a partnership approach and wider scale than just countryside access service alone.
- Seek resources to increase consultation and undertake surveys of possible improvements (like identifying those paths which can be made more accessible to all by removal of barriers etc.) with local communities and Volunteer Groups to ensure maximum benefits of any improvements and to help monitor benefits afterwards.

Manage, Promote & Improve Countryside Sites to provide opportunities for the public to access green spaces, encouraging active travel or recreational activities thereby improving their health, well-being, and the environment.

- Promote and maintain sites
- Plan for and prioritise improvements using CAIP and Green Infrastructure plans to develop individual management plans for each countryside site. These should link to other plans such as Active Travel and include community involvement and needs both now and in the future.
- Improve biodiversity/landscape of sites, connecting people with quiet spaces and the environment.
- Improve facilities where possible to enable people to enjoy the sites and enable more people to use the sites.
- Manage events and requests for events/ supervise any agreements relating to other people's access via or through the land, tenancy agreements, fishing, geocaching, filming, park run etc.
- Enabling "Friends of.." and community groups to be actively involved with the above.

Manage Open Access Land

- Look at how to provide access to any isolated parcels of access land
- Work with landowners to provide the best means of providing access to Open Access Land
- Provision and management of agreements with respect to means of access to Open Access Land
- Carry out enforcement where necessary
- Support Natural Resources Wales with review of Conclusive Maps
- Oversee any bylaws

6.1 Access to Water

Access to some water sport provision such as canoeing in Monmouthshire is limited. There are rights of navigation on the River Wye. To canoe on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal a licence is required. However, there is no clarity regarding canoeing on the River Usk. If such rights were to be negotiated by all parties than Monmouthshire County Council would be prepared to be involved, specifically where negotiation of access may need to be sort on land the Council holds near or besides the Usk.

6.2 Community Involvement

The very nature of public rights of way encourages involvement of the community from community councils to small groups of volunteers. The Countryside Access Service has always recognised this and has a long history of encouraging community involvement.

Our aim is to continue to encourage local groups/ Community Councils to assist with the maintenance, surveying, promotion, events and other appropriate activities on countryside sites and rights of way network.

6.3 Partnership & Working with Others

The wide ranging remit of the Countryside Access Service necessitates strong working relationships with numerous other service areas within Monmouthshire County Council. Regulatory work requires close work with Planning & Development Management, Legal Services, Highways and Trading Standards. Increasingly as budgets have minimised and there is recognition of the similar benefits of our work, new and other relationships are being sought across MCC and MonLife such as with Exercise Referral, Outdoor Education, Youth etc.

Outside of MCC the service works with relevant government agencies such as Natural Resources Wales. The Service also has many other links with NGO's, other voluntary bodies, charities such as National Trust and Wildlife Trusts, countryside management projects and the Wye Valley AONB.

The Countryside Access Service is actively involved with numerous partnerships where two or more partners work together on common interests and goals by sharing information and skills, pooling resources and pursuing opportunities to develop grant projects. An example of this is the Living Levels Landscape Partnership. Such partnership working will continue.

6.4 Monmouthshire Local Access Forum

Section 94 of the CROW 2000 places a duty on authorities to establish Local Access Forums to advise on public access to land for any lawful purpose and outdoor recreation, including public rights of way and the right of access to open country.

Membership of The Monmouthshire Local Access Forum tries to include a balance of users of rights of way and the right of access to open country, landowners and occupiers, together with any other interests especially relevant to Monmouthshire. The

Local Access Forum focuses on those issues that are most relevant to Monmouthshire, considers issues at the strategic level, and adopts a proactive approach. Monmouthshire County Council must have regard to this Forums' views in reaching decisions on access and public rights of way issues.

There are 3 to 4 meetings per year and these are open for the public to attend. Agendas and reports are available on our [website](#).

6.5 Community & Town Council Maintenance

Under s. 43 of the HA 1980, community or town councils can maintain footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways in their area which are maintainable at public expense without the prior consent or agreement of the authority, although it is strongly advised that agreement is sought before work is undertaken.

Under s. 50 of the HA 1980, authorities, community or town councils can maintain footpaths and bridleways not maintainable at public expense without prejudice to the responsible owners' rights and duties.

Town and Community Councils are also important partners for the Countryside Access Service in supporting local volunteer groups, identifying & funding improvements, promotion and reporting issues.

6.6 Communication

The Countryside Access Service is an extremely high profile and busy frontline service. It deals with highly complex and contentious issues and with parties often vehemently opposed to each other's viewpoint.

Much of the services day to day activity is one to one contact with farmers and landowners and so a good working relationship with the landowner/farming community is paramount in resolving issues and ensuring the network is in a fit condition. Similarly, good working relationships are required with User Groups, who can contribute both to work on the ground and in development. A pragmatic, objective and constructive attitude to the work is therefore essential and the Service should continue to: -

- Work closely with NFU/CLA Cymru and user groups to ensure constructive liaison is continued
- Liaise with local communities to ascertain local priorities
- Engage with Monmouthshire Local Access Forum to benefit from public liaison
- Work closely with other access development initiatives
- Monitor and improve means of communication and promotion
- Forge and develop links wherever necessary to enhance service delivery and development

6.7 Performance

Performance is notoriously hard to measure as officers know that one claim for a new path could represent months of work or one maintenance or enforcement issue could

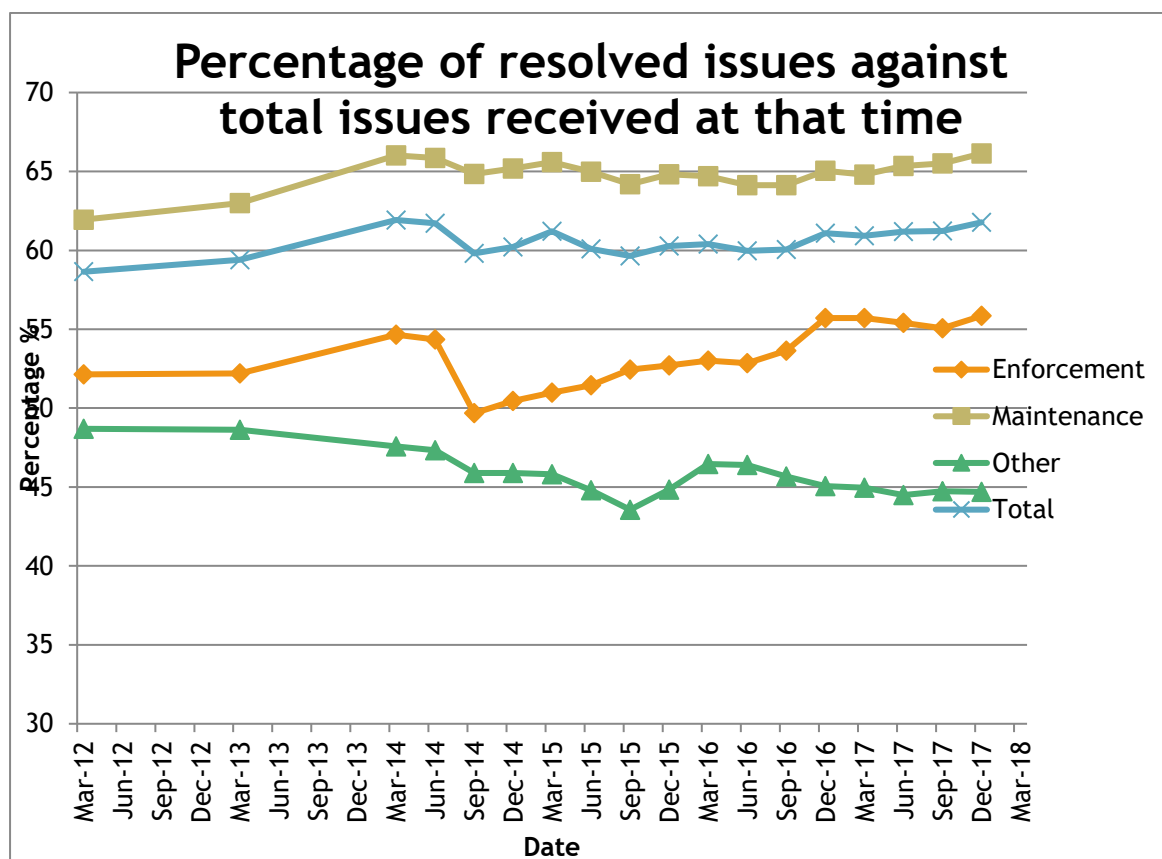
take weeks of negotiation. This work is therefore difficult to quantify in performance measure.

Until 2012 the Authority used to survey 5% of the network and measure "ease of use of paths" and "signage at metalled roads". This measure did not accurately reflect the position across the whole of Monmouthshire and was not meaningful to the management of the network or public.

Since 2013, the Countryside Access Service has adopted measures that show

- the total number of unresolved and resolved maintenance issues
- the total number of unresolved and resolved enforcement issues
- the numbers using the main promoted routes,

The new indicator gives an understanding as to the amount of work that is outstanding and the amount of work that is achieved. This is a performance indicator which the public can relate to and which provides useful information to the Council itself on the condition of the network. The information is collected within CAMS and is reported within the annual Monmouthshire Improvement Plan.



7.0 Equalities Act 2010 and Well-Being Act

7.1 SOCIAL AND HEALTH BENEFITS OF WALKING, RIDING AND CYCLING

The importance of recreational access for health and well-being is widely acknowledged. The annual report of the Chief Medical Officer for Walesⁱⁱ draws clear associations between activity and health stating *“It has been estimated that the cost of physical inactivity to Wales is around £650 million per year. Regular physical activity such as walking and cycling has significant benefits for health including lowering the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, colon and breast cancer, and depression.”*

Evidence from the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey 2014 suggests that when compared with other outdoor activities, the levels of intensity associated with many of the pursuits and landscape types typically accessed by the rights of way network might be particularly beneficial to health.

7.1.2 Obesity

Currently 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. Obesity harms children in the short term and between 55% and 80% will go on to become obese adults. Obesity in childhood has been linked to a range of social and economic consequences in adulthood. Obesity is the most potent risk factor for Type 3 Diabetes. Public Health Wales warn of a Type 2 diabetes epidemic, across Wales rates of diabetes have increased from 5% in 2003/4 to 7% in 2015/16 with 7% of Monmouthshire residents currently being treated.

7.1.3 Mental Health

Nearly a quarter of diseases in the UK can be attributed to mental health problems, a larger share than any other single health problem including cardiovascular diseases (16%) and cancer (16%). The Welsh Government's "Together for Mental Health" strategy reports one in four adults experience mental health problems or illness at some point during their lifetime and one in six of us will be experiencing symptoms at any one time. At a time of recession when levels of stress and anxiety inevitably rise, more people will be affected and suicide rates are likely to rise. Promoting well-being and preventing mental health problems is a critical element of wider public health strategy, since a person's mental health is influenced by a broad range of social, economic, cultural, environmental and wider health factors. An effective approach to population mental well-being includes a combination of interventions across the life course.

Monmouthshire has an increasingly aged population. Daffodil 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. It becomes even more important to remain active in older age in order to stay healthy and remain independent. Engaging in physical activity carries very low health and

safety risks for older adults. In contrast the risk of poor health as a result of inactivity are very high.

There is growing evidence of the benefits of engagement with the natural environment for those living with dementia. There is a recognised need however to raise awareness with specialist dementia organisations and the wider health community of the demonstrable benefits, value and opportunities for engagement with the natural environment as often their focus lies with health and social care solutions. There is also an interest from the natural environment, greenspace and volunteering sectors to better service the needs of people living with dementia, but it is not always clear where they are required, or what the greatest needs are and how to deliver solutions.

The Greening dementia report states *“evidence shows that barriers particularly affecting people living with dementia include: concerns about how they will be perceived; a lack of awareness of the needs of people with dementia among greenspace organisations and their staff; the costs of resourcing visits, including transport and carer costs; and the impact of risk aversion among people with dementia, their carers and service providers.”*

Studies have found evidence that physical activity in natural environments brings additional benefits to mental well-being on cessation of exercise with greater feelings of revitalization and positive engagement, decreases in tension, confusion, anger and depression and increased energy.

7.1.4 Longevity

Proximity of local green spaces in walkable distance has a positive effect on longevity regardless of social economic status or age according to a longitudinal study in Japan. This investigated the association between older people's longevity and the existence of nearby green spaces in which they could walk. The five year survival percentage of older people who lived in an area with walkable green spaces was significantly higher than that of people living in an area without such spaces¹.

7.1.5 Sedentary Lives

People's lives are increasingly sedentary. Fewer people are doing manual work and many jobs involve little physical effort. Across Wales only 24% of people aged 65 and over exercise 3 or more times a week, however 58% of this age group report doing no frequent physical activity. However the UK Chief Medical advisers say that for currently inactive individuals, evidence shows the following health benefits could be achieved from 10 minutes of brisk walking per day:

- Increased physical fitness
- Greater ease of performance of everyday physical activities
- Improved mood
- Improved quality of life

¹ Green dementia (a literature review of the benefits and barriers facing individuals living with dementia in accessing the natural environment and greenspace), Natural England 21 November 2013

- Increased body leanness and healthier weight
- 15% reduction in risk of early death

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”.

7.1.6 Loneliness

According to the Office for National Statistics, the UK has the highest rates of loneliness in the EU, with all ages severely affected. Over 10% of over 65s experience chronic levels of loneliness (*Campaign to End Loneliness*), whilst 83% of 18-34 year olds often, always or sometimes feel lonely². The effects of isolation and loneliness upon public health are substantial, as is the subsequent burden upon public services. Indeed, social isolation carries a health risk equivalent to smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day and can increase the risk of premature death by up to 30 percent³.

Enabling more proactive and preventative care for those who are most vulnerable is essential for both public health and the health service, with 1 in 10 GP appointments attributable to loneliness, costing the NHS £1.53bn per annum⁴.

The Countryside Access Service has many volunteers, who carry out a variety of tasks. One of the main benefits and value to our volunteers is the sense of companionship and social interaction that they bring. This benefit is known to be of particular importance to those attending GP Referral and our guided health walks.

7.2 Barriers

Evidence shows that the benefits of access to the natural environment are unevenly distributed and that many groups of people are noticeably absent or failing to reap these benefits. It is therefore important to bear in mind the barriers to the general population when also considering the specific needs of people such as those with dementia.

The general barriers outlined by Greening Dementia and Monmouthshire’s Outdoor Study can be summarised as below:

- **Availability of Information** – Lack of information is a potential deterrent to people engaging with the natural environment. This can include lack of awareness of the opportunities available to people and where they can go. Also a lack of information

² Acevo 2016

³ LGA 2016

⁴ Extract from Public Policy Exchange.co.uk Training Flyer 14062017

about what services to expect at a given location including information on access, terrain, paths and information about facilities such as toilets and parking.

- **Negative perceptions-** fears and concerns can exist which determine people's willingness to access the natural environment and or public green spaces
- **Time** – A lack of spare time to plan and prepare for a visit can stop the visit taking place. In addition people can feel that to gain benefit, they need to give up more time for exercise or visits than in reality they do.
- **Motivation** – There are easier, less challenging things to do in which case there can be a lack of motivation to engage with the natural environment.
- **Physical accessibility** – Access to cheap, reliable transport is an issue. Also physical barriers on paths such as stiles or broken furniture. Location, distance and availability of transport was a key factor identified by the Wye Valley AONB in people living with dementia being able to access a local project.
- **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.
- **Lack of reasonable or accessible local greenspaces** – A key barrier and potential inequality is the availability of accessible green spaces near where people live with the appropriate 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.
- **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. 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.

The Countryside Access Service is committed within the new ROWIP to work with partners to reduce all barriers.

7.3 Equalities Act 2010

The Countryside Access Service is committed to providing the best possible level of service to its customers.

In delivering our work we undertake 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, or countryside site 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.

7.4 Well-Being Act

Monmouthshire County Council is committed to delivering the aims and objectives of the Well-Being Act. The Countryside Access Service will look to deliver improvements

and work in partnership with others to deliver and implement the Well-Being Act. The Countryside Access Service is particularly well-placed regarding improvements to health and well-being and we will continue to implement our Least Restrictive Access Policy on both rights of way and countryside sites.

7.5 Least Restrictive Access Policy

The latest best practice guides, including those produced by relevant groups such as the Sensory Trust, Natural Resources for Wales ("[By All Reasonable Means Toolkit](#)") and Pittecroft Trust, together with the British Standard BS 5709 for gaps, gates and stiles, provides enough information on how to assess the needs of people with mobility problems and to determine which routes should have priority for improved access for such people.

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 Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (section 69) and the Highways Act (section 147 & 147A) requires all highway authorities to have regard for those people who have mobility and sight problems. Highway Authorities also have a duty to regard the needs of disabled and blind when executing any works (Highways Act 1980 section 175A), and where restrictions to people with disabilities may be created (Disability Discrimination Act 1995 now replaced with Equality Act).

Section 147ZA HA 1980, gave the authority powers to enter into agreements with landowners, lessees or occupiers of land to undertake work on a structure which is on a footpath or bridleway in order to replace it with a new or improved structure which will be safer or more convenient for persons with mobility problems.

The power to enter into an agreement is limited to structures which are "relevant structures". These are structures which are lawful, and it is for the Country Access Service to satisfy themselves that a structure that is subject of a proposed agreement is a "relevant structure". Any structure across a footpath or bridleway which is not a "relevant structure" can be dealt with by the authority under s. 130 and s. 143 of the HA 1980 as an obstruction.

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 the Rights of Way Field Warden 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 and
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.

Stiles will only be installed where it has not been possible for Monmouthshire County Council to negotiate a change in structure or it is not possible to use an alternative barrier. (See also "stiles and gates on footpaths and bridleways").

Where a landowner wishes to refuse to alter a stile this must be received in writing.

Copies of section 147 or section 147ZA authorisations are kept with the Definitive Map records and are available to view on request.

The Council also operates management of its countryside sites to reduce barriers and improve access. Where opportunities to improve the service provided or the accessibility of Countryside Sites are identified we will do our best to bring about those improvements within resources available.

8.0 Transport and Access to Services

The need for better public transport came across clearly in the assessments for The Mental-Well Being Strategy for Monmouthshire and also in the Outdoor Disability Health Assessment for the RoWIP review in 2016 and 2018 RoWIP review (public questionnaire) and Draft CAIP consultation. 15.2% of households in Monmouthshire have no car or van. Poor public transport limits people's ability to travel for work and pleasure and can lead to isolation of communities and groups of residents.

There is therefore an identified need (CAIP Statement of Action KWOT3 13.4) to 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 and reduce traffic, thus benefiting people's health, local economy and the environment.

The National Survey for Wales reports that 45% of Monmouthshire children travel over 1 mile to primary school and 80% of secondary pupils travel over 1 mile both higher than the Welsh average. Children who travel over a mile to school are far more likely to be driven to school which means they are missing the opportunity to benefit from regular exercise and to learn road safety. This also results in substantial costs for home to transport for parents and the local authority.

Rights of way within towns play an important part in providing the people with the ability to get to work, schools, shops, play areas etc. They are therefore an important part in making a town vibrant and provide opportunities for walking rather than using a car benefiting people's health and the environment.

8.1 Active Travel Act

The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 is a landmark Welsh law to make it easier for people to walk or cycle in Wales. MCC has compiled maps identifying current and potential future routes. A Cycling Strategy is currently being prepared to take advantage of the opportunities active travel brings, as well as extending the network of routes out of major towns to connect to other communities and places of interest.

The 2007 ROWIP and the new CAIP actively support sustainable travel as it encourages healthy active lifestyles. It incorporates the objectives of:

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

The Countryside Access Service will work with MonLife's new Active Travel Officer to ensure rights of way and routes through relevant countryside sites are upgraded if they fulfil active travel requirements.

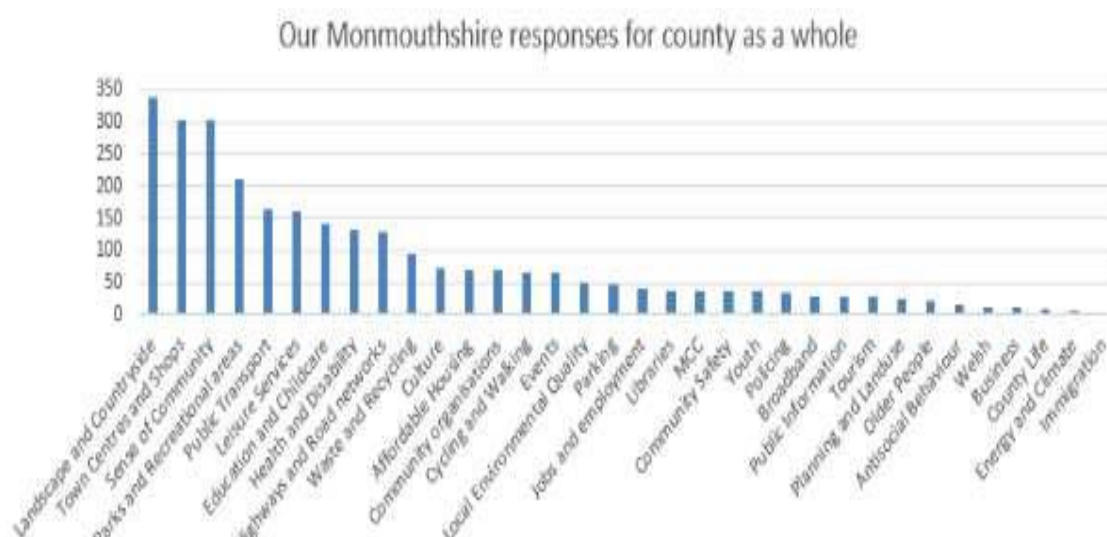
9.0 ENVIRONMENT ACT

9.1 Landscape and Countryside

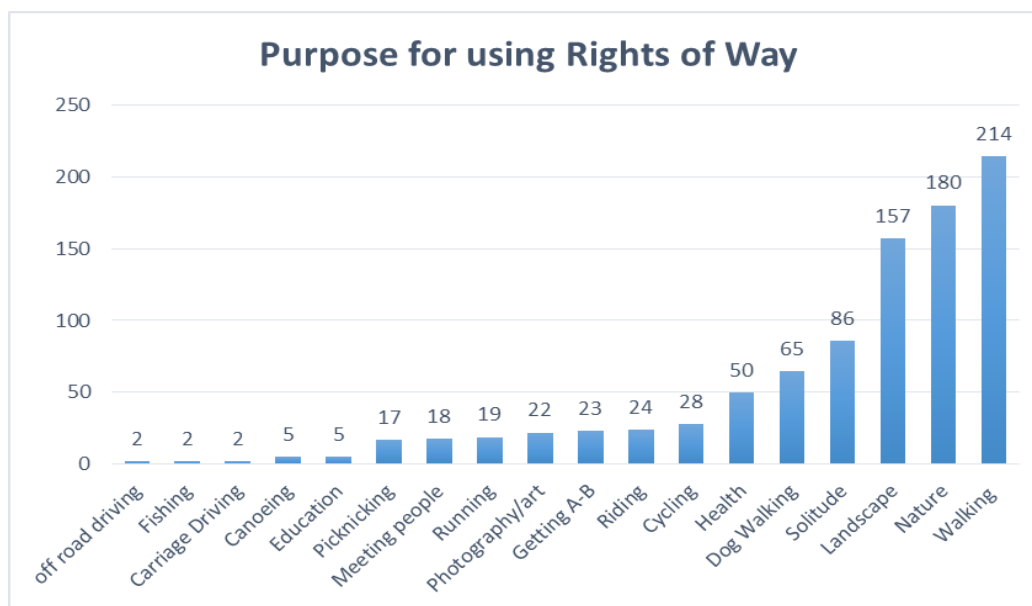
Monmouthshire's greatest asset is its landscape and natural environment.

Monmouthshire has rich and diverse landscapes stretching 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 Beauty. It has major biodiversity and nature conservation resources which are internationally and nationally recognised with the landscape baseline being amongst the highest in Wales.

Between August and December 2016 staff from a range of public services in Monmouthshire attended over 80 events speaking to more than a thousand people to get their views about what is good about Monmouthshire and what would make it better. The chart below shows the topics that people mentioned most often. Landscape and countryside come at the top of the list.



In the Rights of Way Improvement Plan Public Questionnaire Consultation in 2018 Landscape and Nature were also top reasons for visiting Monmouthshire's Countryside as shown in the table below.



The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act also puts in place a Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty for public authorities 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. This recognises the underpinning importance of biodiversity in its widest sense to healthy, functioning ecosystems, and therefore the multiple benefits that we derive from them.

In 2011 Monmouthshire Countryside Access Team produced a **"Biodiversity Action Plan" and a Technical Summary Manual"**. These will continue to provide assistance to both staff, volunteers, contractors and managers regarding protecting biodiversity when undertaking rights of way work. These documents are available on-line or by request.

Opportunities exist to deliver the aims of the Environment Act through protecting Biodiversity and Landscape whilst undertaking rights of way improvement projects and through working closely with the Green Infrastructure Team particularly where there are large developments proposed.

Of most relevance to the development of the new ROWIP will be the Area Statements being developed by Natural Resources Wales. The Act contains no statutory timeline for the production of these statements, but Natural Resources Wales has indicated that full coverage of Wales will be achieved by Spring 2020.

Monmouthshire County Council will work with Natural Resources Wales to contribute useful information to the Area Statements, develop work programmes and projects that will contribute towards the sustainable management of natural resources.

9.2 Invasive species

The control of invasive non-native species is principally dealt with under the WCA 1981, Environmental Protection Act 1990, the CROW 2000 and NERC 2006 Invasive Alien Species Regulation (EC 1143/2014) and Environment (Wales) Act 2016. When

undertaking maintenance of the rights of way network, or on countryside sites, work will be planned to ensure that invasive non-native species, such as (but not exclusively) Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Japanese knotweed, are not allowed to spread and the appropriate disposal of 'controlled waste' is carried out.

Similar attention will be paid to injurious weeds such as (but not exclusively) Common Ragwort and Broad-leaved Dock. The Countryside Access Service will work with appropriate authorities and other landowners to help ensure these do not spread.

Authority staff or contractors will take into account the guidance provided on the use of pesticides near public rights of way and other publically accessible outdoor spaces such as country parks. The guidance can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/pesticides.htm>

10. Development

10.1 Development & Public Rights of Way

The PROW Service contributes to the shaping of development framework policies to bring benefits to PROW and access provision from the development process, prevent where possible the avoidable loss of access and to mitigate any adverse impacts of development where possible.

The Service responds to many planning consultations annually. The applications relate to the full spectrum of development from major transport infrastructure projects, large housing provision to the smaller scale change of use applications for agricultural buildings, house extensions etc.

Development can bring positive benefits for PROW and Access particularly through:

- The improvement of existing PROW
- The application of good design principles to new routes
- The provision of new or up-graded routes

Equally development can adversely impact upon the amenity and enjoyment of the network. Where this is the case responses will set out what those adverse impacts are likely to be and, where possible, how they can be designed out or mitigated.

The Service responds with advice about how the proposed development can contribute to improving PROW and access provision and will work with developers to secure improvements through good design and/or developer contribution.

The effect of development on a public right of way is a material consideration in determining planning applications. Developers should therefore incorporate details of any alterations proposed within the application for planning permission. Planning Officers should ensure all applications affecting a right of way should be brought to the attention of the Countryside Access Team immediately.

In some circumstances where the Service feel that there is the potential for significant harm to be caused to the network by proposed development and or the development conflicts with the development plan, an objection to the proposed development may be made.

There is a high probability that objection will be made to planning applications that:

- fail to indicate the existence of recorded rights of way that would be directly impacted by the development, and or,
- where public rights of way require diversion or extinguishment to facilitate the development and no provision has been made to secure the necessary legal orders.

There are a number of long standing and difficult to resolve obstructions on the PROW network as a result of development on the line of a PROW without the necessary

diversion or extinguishment order having been made at the time. In the worst case this can result in a complete loss of public access and blighted property.

New obstruction by development is treated as a high priority, as once complete there is little motivation for developers or planners to resolve the issues that are created.

Where a public right of way is affected by development the path must be kept on the legal alignment wherever possible or diverted under the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 prior to any works being carried out. The use of Estate Roads should be avoided wherever possible and preference given to the use of estate paths through landscaped or open spaces away from vehicular traffic.

The County Council requires either a minimum width of 2 metres for footpaths and 3 metres for bridleways or the full width previously enjoyed by the public, if greater.

10.2 Public Rights of Way are protected by law.

Any interference with, or obstruction of or attempt to move a Public Right of Way can only be done by legal means. It is important therefore, that Public Rights of Way are identified at any early stage in the development process because the identification of a Public Right of Way at a later stage in the development process may result in significant delays, halt development and may make properties unsaleable.

Monmouthshire County Council has a duty to keep Public Rights of Way open and available for use by the public and will therefore take such action as may (including direct enforcement action and prosecution) to ensure that members of the public are not inconvenienced in their use of the Public Rights of Way network.

It should be noted that granting of planning permission does not give permission to obstruct a public right of way.

Developers must ensure that:

- There is no diminution in the width of the right of way
- No builder's materials are stored on a right of way
- No damage or substantial alteration, either temporary or permanent, is caused to the surface of the public right of way
- Vehicle movements are arranged so as not to interfere with the public's use of the way
- No additional barriers (e.g. gates) are placed across the right of way
- No wildlife fencing or other ecological protection measures are placed across a right of way or allowed to interfere with a right of way
- The safety of members of the public using the rights of way is ensured at all times.

11.0 Recording

11.1 Information Governance

The requirements of the Freedom of the Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 have placed an additional burden on the Service. The Service has in recent years invested to increase the number of documents held electronically. It is hoped to be able to continue with this investment as there are significant long term costs associated with the storage and retrieval of archived paper records.

In addition to the benefit of having archive and other material such as the draft and provisional Definitive Map more readily available to officers, this has enabled the Service to respond more easily to FOI and EIA requests reducing the time otherwise spent on this largely unproductive area of work.

In compliance with the FOIA the service has a publication scheme on the County Council's website detailing what information is readily available to the public and the charges associated with its provision.

11.2 CAMS (Countryside Access & Management System)

In order to improve service delivery and management planning we purchased a few years ago a prowl database. The CAMS system is based on a geographical information system (GIS) technology. The data within CAMS is owned and managed by all officers. All officers will, input, record and process their work using this system. The Definitive Map has been digitised in draft so that it can be viewed electronically and is linked into

CAMS so that it is updated regularly.

Some of the data held within CAMS is available publicly to fulfil our aims of promoting the network and helping people make informed choices about routes.

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/countryside-services/countryside-access/>

The Countryside Access Team continues to work with the software provider to develop the system further to meet service and customer demands.

11.3 Registers

Section 53B of the WCA 1981 and the Public Rights of Way (Registers) (Wales) Regulations 2006 requires authorities to keep a register of applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders, which can be found on the [authority's website](#)

Information with respect to declarations lodged and maps and statements deposited under s. 31(6) of the HA 1980 is kept in another register available on the website. Such declarations and deposits enable landowners formally to acknowledge the rights of way across their land and, in doing so, make clear that they have no intention to dedicate any further routes across their land.

11.4 The Definitive Map and Statement Recording Policy

The Definitive Map and Statement is the conclusive legal record of public rights of way. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 53 places a duty on the County Council as surveying authority to "keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review".

The Definitive Map and Statement is the foundation for the Countryside Access Service and it is essential that the record is accurate. The work associated with maintaining the Definitive Map and Statement is not only essential for the delivery of front line maintenance and enforcement work but in dealing with: -

- Property searches
- Applications to add unrecorded rights to the Definitive Map and Statement
- Applications to amend recorded public rights of way
- Recording statutory declarations to protect land from future claims for rights
- Applications to divert or extinguish existing PROW in the landowner or public interest
- Anomalies and width enquiries

The duty to maintain the definitive map is a front line activity in its own right and affects a great many people. Cases can have a significant bearing on the quality of life for an individual or community and can be highly emotive. They therefore require a high level of professionalism from the officers involved in determining them.

The Countryside Access Service has made significant strides towards producing a new Definitive Map and making rights of way information more accessible. The draft, provisional and Definitive Maps have been scanned to enable officers to respond to communications more quickly and work remotely. To assist with this a digitised working map and countryside access management system has been created.

A digital Working copy of the Definitive Map is available for the public to use at <https://access.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>

A set of Definitive Maps is available at Gwent Record Office. **An appointment** can also be made to view the Definitive Map and Statement and any orders made since its publication by contacting countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The National Streets Gazetteer, aiming to combine all authorities' List of Streets online, is live at www.findmystreet.co.uk/. Public Rights of Way should be shown on it by 2020.

The principal objectives and policies of the Countryside Access Service relating to the Definitive Map and Statement are as set out below:

1. Keep the Definitive Map and Statement up to date and ensure the status and alignment of all PROW are correct in accordance with statutory duties by:-
 - a) Investigating and determining all claims in accordance with the statement of priorities
 - b) Investigating and determining anomalies in accordance with statement of priorities
 - c) Processing applications to change PROW in accordance with policy and statement of priorities
 - d) Ensuring all changes are covered by a formal Order

12.0 Publicity and Promotion

The Countryside Access Service has no budget or personnel to carry out promotion. Nevertheless, wherever possible the service seeks to actively promote access to the countryside and its benefits.

Research for the RoWIP review shows that promotion is highly important both in terms of finding out where to go, but also by good signage and information on the ground to give confidence. Those routes that are well promoted are well used by both locals and tourists.

Access to the internet can help alleviate difficulties in accessing services. 79% of households in Monmouthshire have internet access⁵. The ONS 2016 report into internet access tells us there has been an increase in daily internet access and that use of smart phones to access the internet has nearly doubled since 2011. The growth of smart phones is important to bear in mind when planning digital services. However, the Older People's Commissioner notes that 35% of people aged 50+ in Wales are digitally excluded so for the time being it is important to look at a wide range of publicity material not just digital technology. This was backed by the ROWIP public questionnaire consultation which showed local people still rely on local knowledge, word of mouth, publications and on Ordnance Survey Maps.

Monmouthshire has a large number of local circular routes and these are promoted on VisitMonmouthshire.com. The paths are all "pathcared" by local volunteers and community groups so that there can be confidence in the routes condition. The Countryside Access Team actively work with community and other volunteer groups to promote walking themselves. This approach is identified in the Monmouthshire Walking Product Development Strategy (2013).

Monmouthshire hosts parts of the Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail both of which are promoted in partnership by the Welsh Government and Natural Resources Wales. The Wye Valley Walk also has a management team via the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (WV AONB) which helps promote this route. A CAIP aim is that means of promoting other regional routes can be achieved with other local authorities and partners. The Countryside Access Service will not be looking to devise and promote new long distance paths itself, unless it is a multi-purpose path with high public value and benefits.

Research shows that there is a desire for an increase in short circular routes and routes that connect with places of interest/other communities. There is a need in particular for a wider range of health walks to be developed and promoted to targeted audiences such as GP Surgeries. There is also a need for general information to enable volunteers to be active, landowners and the public to understand their responsibilities and for an understanding of how orders are made etc.

⁵ National Survey for Wales

The general approach taken overall to promotion is that MCC will:

- Actively promote the public rights of way network and all other types of countryside access (parks and country parks) irrespective of ownership via VisitMonmouthshire.com
- Seek to implement the Monmouthshire Walking Product Development Strategy
- Provide access to digitised version of the Definitive map on modern mapping with access to information regarding furniture and promoted routes so that people can make informed decisions of where they want to go.
- The Service will try to target publications to specific users as per the Destination Development Plan and Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- The Countryside Access Team will work with Ordnance Survey to correct errors on its mapping and to encourage the regular publication of Ordnance Survey maps.
- The Service will actively encourage other authorities involved with promoted regional routes and others to actively maintain and continue to promote the routes.
- The Countryside Access Service will not look to devise and promote new long distance paths itself, unless it is a multi-purpose path with high public value and benefits.
- To assist where possible user groups, volunteer groups, community/town councils and "Friends of.....Groups" to promote access opportunities and in particular to assist in the promotion of local circular health walks.

Occasionally private individuals or organisations wish Monmouthshire County Council to help design or promote a walk or ride of their own. In this situation the following criteria must be met:-

- The route must be substantially on public rights of way and any permissive routes would require permission of the landowner.
- The route must conform to one of the types of walk specified in the Walking Product Development Strategy for which there is a known demand.
- Route furniture must be in a good condition
- Signage and waymarking should be in place at all decision points
- The route needs to be regularly inspected, pathcared and managed by the producers of the walk or by an agreed other organisation.
- Where possible the route should be least restrictive access
- Where possible the routes should be made available to higher users (cyclists/horse riders).
- The route guide must conform to good practice and be available to download from visitmonmouthshire.com or a well-designed website.
- Routes should be accessible by public transport and or will require adequate car parking close to the start/finish.
- Where possible routes should start /finish close to settlements.

Private routes which are not subsequently maintained or promoted adequately as per the conditions above, will be removed from Monmouthshire's website.

13.0 Statement of Priorities and Overview

Management of the network is essential in order for users to use the network safely and with confidence. Given all the consideration of legislation, finance, best practice, practicality and policy, priorities are required to meet the expectations of users and to meet our obligations. Management includes not just the physical elements of public rights of way but also the enforcement, protection and legal definition of the network.

By focusing on the priorities within this document more officer time will be available to concentrate on proactive issues and projects across the network for the benefit of users. This must be partly steered by the Countryside Access Manager.

14.0 Statement of priorities for Definitive Map and Statement Orders

14.1 Section 53 Modification Order Prioritisation

If a way is shown on the Definitive Map, then it is conclusive evidence of public rights along the way unless there has been a legally authorised change. Monmouthshire, like other Authorities, has a backlog of applications for a path to be added or altered on the Definitive Map and Statement. These are known as Section 53 Applications (commonly also known as claims) and are dealt with under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The Service has a [public register](#) of section 53 applications which can be found on our website.

Monmouthshire County Council agreed a programme for dealing with such work as outlined below in November 2004:

All evidential Modification Orders will be dealt with in the date order that the completed application was received except in any of the following circumstances where a case may be investigated sooner.

A. **Statutory Provision** *There may be paths not recorded on the Definitive Map which the Community Council nonetheless consider to be highways.*

The path must be subject to obstruction or encroachment as stipulated under Section 130 (3) & (6) of the Highways Act 1980. The resulting investigations may lead to the Definitive Map being modified by the surveying authority taking action about the encroachment/obstruction.

B. **Planning Considerations.** *Planning permission may be sought for a site where an unresolved claim that a path already exists.*

- The existence of a public right of way is a material planning consideration
- The question of the existence of the path should if at all possible be agreed with the landowner but that might not prove to be possible.
- The planning authority may take the view that the existence of the path needs to be resolved in association with the consideration of the planning application for the site.
- The surveying authority needs the discretion to take the matter out of turn if not to do so could be prejudicial to the developer, the public or the highway authority.

C. **Status Enquiries.** *Paths may be subject to diversion, extinguishment or traffic proposals or give rise to other causes of legal action for the purpose of which it may be necessary to establish the nature of the public's rights.*

- The opportunity to resolve the issue should not previously have arisen.
- For the purposes of justice, the status should need to be resolved and the surveying authority in association with the police, local authority or legal advisors involved should be satisfied that this is so.

D. **Matters of Financial Disadvantage.** There may be instances where because the status of a way has not been conclusively determined there would be financial prejudice if matters were to be left to be determined in accordance with the programme.

- There may be discrepancies between maps perhaps not reflected in search replies.
- A potential large maintenance obligation could fall upon the Local Authority if the matter were to be left.
- It is more cost effective to resolve the issue at an early date.

E. **Drafting errors** where they meet the above criteria

This prioritisation is currently under review and it is likely that an additional criteria of “public benefit” may be added as outlined below.

To be consistent with CAIP and maintenance prioritisation public benefits could consist of

- Routes that allow more types of user – consistent with aims of CAIP of increasing access to those with disabilities/health issues and who have little off road access
- Routes with positive health and safety benefits – such as providing safe off road routes as alternative to busy roads
- Links to amenities/tourism attractions.

In addition the Monmouthshire LAF have recommended that these issues should also be considered within any change:

- Where there is predominantly User Evidence
- Where there is Loss of use

14.2 Anomalies prioritisation

Anomalies will be dealt with in accordance to the same exceptions as laid down in the modification order prioritisation, unless there is an opportunity to resolve an anomaly through a diversion package or in order to progress an enforcement/maintenance issue/improvement scheme.

14.3 Planning Considerations. Planning permission may be sought for a site where a Temporary Closure/Diversion for Events or Works is required

The Countryside Access Service receives requests from Natural Resources Wales, Statutory undertakers and others for temporary closures or diversions where works or events are going to be undertaken on or over a right of way. Any orders made are advertised on our [website](#)

The Service will charge for processing these and will ask that certain conditions to be met. These will include such things as below, but might also be more specific relating to the particular path or landscape.

- The route must be checked prior to and following an event, or any operations i.e. tree felling, and the path restored at the applicants expense to a suitable condition as agreed by the Countryside Field Officer.

- The path, if possible, must have a diversion in place especially where national, regional and other promoted routes are involved.
- Any events along public rights of way have to be marshalled.
- Insurance for events is required
- The route should be well signed regarding any formal closure and be opened as soon is safe to do so.

It should be noted that complete closures of woods and other areas of land can deny communities access to the countryside, affecting their ability to lead active healthy lifestyles. **Such applications will not be allowed**, except in exceptional circumstances (where it can be shown that harvesting operations cannot be carried out in another way and will affect the whole site and be an actual safety issue for the public).

14.4 Prioritisation of Rights of Way Legal Orders

The Countryside Access Service also has many requests per year for paths to be moved, altered in status or closed. There is one officer that deals with such requests and consequently there is a backlog of requests for changes.

The Council has published guides for the different types of orders to help applicants understand the processes, costs and timescales involved with legal orders. These are regularly updated and are available on request from countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

The County Council will take into account whether the following criteria are satisfied before promoting a Public Path Change Order. Irrespective of the following, the statutory tests (as set out within the various acts) for changing a PROW must apply.

- The status of the route must not be in dispute at the time of the application, unless the Public Path Order is being implemented concurrently with an application under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
- The Applicant must agree to meet the County Council's costs of promoting the Order and bringing the new path into a fit condition for public use.
- The applicant must also agree to defray any compensation which may become payable as a result of the proposal.
- The definitive line should (where it is considered by the County Council to be reasonably practicable) be open, clear and safe to use.

As with Evidential Modification Orders, the County Council is often under pressure to process certain applications in advance of others. A policy is therefore required for this area of work also, to set out the priority that will normally be applied by the County Council.

14.4.1 Prioritisation of Public Path Orders Policy

Public path change orders are prioritised in date of application, or referral from an officer, but may be dealt with earlier if one or more of the following applies.

- Where an application has been made to the County Council in its capacity as Planning Authority
- Where the processing of an Order could save significant costs incurred in other Rights of Way functions.
- Where a Public Path Change Order is made concurrently with Orders made under Section 53 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.
- A problem exists which cannot be solved through maintenance or enforcement.
- A safer route is provided
- A route forms all or part of a missing link in the network
- A route forms part of a promoted or long distance or circular route
- A route is not shown in the Definitive Map and Statement but has an anticipated high level of use if it were to be added either by Agreement or Order
- A route is shown in the Definitive Map with lower rights and the anticipated level of use would be greater if higher rights were to be added either by Agreement or Order.

For the purpose of these policies the term 'Public Path Change Order' shall be taken to include:

- Orders made under Section 26 (creations), 118 (extinguishments) or 119 (diversions) of the Highways Act 1980
- Applications to the Magistrates Court under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 (extinguishments or diversions).
- Orders made under Section 257 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (extinguishments and diversions).

14.5 Processing Dedication and Creation Agreements

The County Council has powers to accept dedications of new rights. A policy is required to set out the priority that will normally be applied by the County Council to individual cases and hence the order in which applications will be dealt with.

Dedications and Creation Agreements will normally only be processed in the following circumstances:

- Where it will satisfy one or more of the relevant key principles set out above in 14.4.1
 - Where the requirements to make a dedication forms part of an obligation in a section 106 agreement.

15.0 Statement of Priorities Maintenance & Enforcement

15.1 Overview

In common with many services the demand placed on the Countryside Access Service by the public is greater than our capacity to meet it and there is static and reducing budgets. How we allocate the resource available must therefore be prioritised. The priorities must reflect the need to adequately meet our statutory obligations while providing the greatest benefit to the public, and do so in a transparent and accountable way.

15.2 Network Prioritisation

The network management priorities for enforcement and prioritisation have been developed with regard to best practice and to reflect the extensive public consultation undertaken in 2010/11 (2 workshops, 331 consultations including all volunteers and Monmouthshire Local Access Forum, press and web advertisement and article in Countryside Newsletter sent to 500 people). The final version was agreed by Cabinet on 5th October 2012.

15.2.1 How the prioritisation system works.

Monmouthshire's prioritisation system takes into account priorities from the Countryside Access Improvement Plan to increase the number of paths available to horse riders, disabled and cyclists, as well as the Council's responsibilities for health and safety and maintenance/enforcement. Also the route usage, status, promotion, whether a route is barrier free, the inconvenience and safety of the issue are all factored in.

On receiving an issue from the public, County Councillor, volunteer or other source, staff seeks relevant information and tick the relevant boxes within CAMS. This automatically generates a final prioritisation number and report as shown below.

Criteria	Value	Range
A Health and safety product	36	Between 1 & 81. If this number equals 999 then either the Risk fields have not been filled in or an error has occurred.
B Status product	3	Between 3 & 12
C Usage product	24	Between 8 & 32
D Effect product	10	Between 0 & 20
E Promotion product	15	Between 15 & 40
E Required product	0	Between -15 & 0
F Discretionary product	5	Between 0 & 20
G Discretionary points Reason	: permission form landowner to improve stile to a gate	
H Barrier Free product	0	Between 0 & 10
I Maint Type product	15	Between 0 & 20

Priority Number: **J108**

Please enter this number into the priority box on the issue form, this figure should be between 11 & 254

It is important to note that once a prioritisation number is issued, it can be reviewed and changed if the nature of the issue alters, or other factors change the situation. This may increase, decrease or leave the score the same. The highest number an issue can receive is 254 and the lowest is 11. It should also be noted that a lower prioritisation number does not necessarily mean that that issue will not achieve attention or be forever at the bottom of the workload. Many lower priority issues are dealt with by contracts when grant funding is found or as part of other works on a path, or by volunteer groups.

The system is subject to monitoring and periodic review. If found necessary, than the scoring used to prioritise may change.

The prioritisation system is based upon a list of 7 criteria which are assigned a weighting and given a range of scores. Combined these scores give the final total prioritisation score. The Enforcement Officer, Field Officer and two Field Wardens will use the prioritisation system to organise their workloads, alongside their other duties. The 7 Criteria are:

Health and Safety, Impact and Effect– This forms the greatest weighting and is broken into two sections. Firstly, it calculates a risk product between 0 and 100, the greater the number the greater risk. The second section is the effect on the use of the path, and is secondary to the first.

Likelihood	Impact	Effect:
Very likely = 10	Fatality = 10	Inconvenient,
Likely = 8	Major injury/ fatality =8	Unusable,
Possible = 6	Major injury = broken bones/ incapacitated =6	Unknown/ bypassed,
Unlikely =4	Minor injury = cuts, scrapes, bruises, strains (walking wounded)=4	none
Extremely unlikely = 2	Insignificant = cuts, scrapes, bruises = 2	
Not recorded = 0	Unknown = 0	

When dealing with an issue the above options are selected as consistently and as objectively as possible. Officers receiving the issue will use their experience and all knowledge to hand to give a balanced view on the factors above erring on the side of caution. It is not until an officer views the issue on site that a more comprehensive assessment will be given. Once a site visit has been carried out the officer will update the risk assessment and therefore the overall prioritisation score may change.

Route Usage - The Route Usage box is broken down in to High, Medium, Low and Unknown/blank. To ascertain which category a link falls into the following factors are taken into account:

- People Counter figures
- worn surface of path or worn furniture showing heavy use by legitimate users
- Information from local users/communities
- Large number of issues from multiple sources/users
- A link path to local amenities (e.g. Pub, Dog walk area, Park etc.)
- Worn surface of path shown on aerial photos/street view
- Landowner information
- Change of vegetation
- Promotion

Status - This relates to whether the route is a footpath (3 points), Bridleway (6 points), Restricted Byway (9 points), or Byway Open to All Traffic (12 points). Routes that allow more types of use support a more diverse range of users and as such have been a greater weight in the prioritisation system. This is consistent with the aims in the CAIP of increasing access to those with disabilities/ health issues and who have little off road network to use.

Promotion – More weight is given to those routes which are promoted and the amount of points awarded is governed by the type of promotion as follows:

- National Trail e.g. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail or Wales Coast Path (40 points)
- Regional Trail e.g. Usk Valley Walk (35 points)
- Monmouthshire Promoted Tourism Trail e.g. Tread and Trot Trails (points 25)
- Pathcare route – (points 25)
- Local Walks – e.g. Mitchel Troy Circular
- Cycle route – Points 15

Maintenance/Enforcement type: These are weighted according to which group they are broken down into.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|-----------|
| 1 Obstacle | } | 20 points |
| 1 Crow notice | | |
| 1 S56 repair notice | | |
| 1 Bridge – maintenance | | |
| 1 Clearance maintenance | | |
| 2 Ploughing cropping | } | 15 Points |
| 2 Steps – maintenance | | |
| 2 Gate – maintenance | | |
| 2 Stile –maintenance | | |
| 2 Tree – clear | | |
| 2 Deposit - enforcement | | |
| 2 Landscape - enforcement | | |
| 2 Animals -enforcement | | |

3 Surface – maintenance
3 Drainage – maintenance
3 Surface – enforcement

10 points

4 Notices/signs - enforcement
4 Hazard abutting - enforcement
4 Fingerposts
4 Overhead/side veg – clear/enforcement
4 Waymarking

5 points

5 Info board
5 Other obstructed
5 Other maintenance
5 Other clearance
5 Other enforcement other
5 Other signage

0 Points

Barrier free - Currently linked into the promoted route section of CAMs any routes deemed to be barrier free, meaning easily accessible to those with disabilities for example wheelchair users. This is currently being expanded to take into account routes that are already barrier free, and to identify routes that have potential for changing into a barrier free route. Any routes that fulfil this criteria gain an extra 10 points.

Discretionary Points - To be used when not covered by existing factors to a maximum value of twenty points, normally five points for each additional reason. These must also be authorised by the Countryside Access Manager. Some of the possible uses of this are as follows:

- Where a deadline is involved for works such as grant funding or enforcement notice
- Where the work is part of a project
- Where works are grouped with others to open up the network
- Where improvement works have been authorised e.g. making the network more accessible
- Fulfilling existing policies e.g. The Equality Act
- Where works are to facilitate a Planning application
- Land charge search - requiring Quality Assurance work to be undertaken

15.2.2 How the system is applied

- The highest prioritisation scores equate to highest priority.
- As many tasks are then implemented as resources allow, starting with the highest scores, but subject to any practical considerations affecting implementation and the ability to work in key community areas where there are clusters of issues and most public benefit can be gained, or where other opportunities exist to enhance the network i.e. grants for specific areas.

15.3 Permissive Paths

Permissive paths will not be managed by the County Council unless they have been established under a formal signed agreement, or form part of a national or regional trail promoted directly by Monmouthshire County Council. The Council will not enter into any formal agreement unless there is a demonstrated public need for the path which cannot be met by other means.

It is known that large parts of the Usk Valley Walk, Wye Valley Walk and small sections of Offa's Dyke Path National Trail are permissive paths. These routes and other permissive routes will be managed in conjunction with the landowner and according to the above prioritisation system. The Council will seek to make Definitive all permissive paths on existing promoted regional and long distance routes i.e. Wye Valley Walk, Usk Valley Walk, Three Castles Walk. It will also seek to make Definitive those permissive paths which provide important access links into countryside sites.

16.0 Enforcement Policy Overview

The primary function of central and local government enforcement work is to protect the public and the environment. This applies specifically to Public Rights of Way as well as to a wide range of other functions. Furthermore the effectiveness of legislation in protecting the Public Rights of Way network and the rights of the public depends crucially on the compliance of those regulated. We have therefore adopted the central and local government Concordat on Good Enforcement.

Included in the term "enforcement" are advisory visits and information. We will therefore provide information and advice in plain language on the rules we apply and we will be open about how we go about our work. We will always be keen to discuss general issues or specific problems with anyone experiencing difficulties.

We believe that prevention is better than cure and that our role therefore involves actively working with both landowners and users to advise on and assist with compliance. We will provide a courteous and efficient service and our staff will always identify themselves by name. Our staff will also provide a contact point and telephone number for further dealings with us. In cases where disputes cannot be resolved without formal enforcement any right of appeal or complaint will be explained, with details of the process and the likely timescales involved.

We are also required by legislation to act in a timely fashion where some issues are concerned such as cropping and ploughing. The Countryside Access Team does not hold a directory of all landowners. In each situation every effort is made to identify an owner of land, however in cases where one cannot be found (for example for ploughing and cropping, barbed wire obstructions, ropes across paths, locked gates etc.) a Notice will be placed in clear view on site.

In dealing with obstructions, the authority is aware that information recorded in the Definitive Statement about the position or width of a right of way, or of the limitations or conditions that are relevant to it, is conclusive evidence of those matters. Where there are legitimate limitations, information should be recorded in the Definitive Statement describing the effect that they have in restricting the use of the way by those who are lawfully entitled to use it. Where the information recorded is not about position or width, or is not relevant to limitations or conditions, the authority will examine the evidence in each instance to resolve any inconsistency and make any necessary modifications to the Definitive Map and Statement in line with the duties imposed by s. 53(2) of the WCA 1981.

Evidence may be available to suggest that a public right of way shown on the Definitive Map does not exist. However, the Map is conclusive as to the public rights of way shown to exist on it (without prejudice to the existence of other rights – see s. 56(1) of the WCA 1981) and the path or way must remain open and available for use until the Definitive Map has been amended, or closure procedures have been complied with.

In investigating an alleged offence, we will consider:

- Whether sufficient evidence exists to show an offence is being committed or may have been committed.
- The powers available to the authority to deal with the offence.
- Whether the offence is a repeat of an offence that has been dealt with previously through enforcement procedures.
- Whether the offence involves the erection of permanent structures or developments.
- Whether the offence is a recent occurrence or has been going on for a substantial length of time before it was identified.
- Whether enforcement action would be proportionate in the circumstances.
- The terms of any other policy in place within that authority, including the principles contained within the Concordat for Good Enforcement, where relevant.

Options available to the authority following investigation of such complaints will usually be:

- **No enforcement action.** (It may be concluded that an offence has not been committed or that the issue could be resolved other than by enforcement action. In these circumstances the complainant and alleged offenders will be notified and CAMS updated accordingly)
- **Informal advice** (Where problems identified are of a minor nature and an authority is confident that corrective action will be taken by the alleged offender, it may seek to address the problem by giving informal advice. In such circumstances, we will agree a reasonable timescale for corrective works after which more formal enforcement methods will be considered.)
- **Informal enforcement action.**
- **Service of a notice and/or direct action with recovery of costs.**
- **Simple Caution.**
- **Prosecution.**

16.0.1 Service of Notice and Direct Action

Where provision is made in the relevant statute, the authority may serve statutory notices which require a person, business or organisation to comply with specific requirements.

Where a formal notice is served, the method of appealing against the notice, if any, should be explained in writing at the same time. The notice should explain what is wrong, what is required to put things right and what will happen if the notice is not complied with.

In general, failure to comply with a properly written and served statutory notice will make the recipient liable to prosecution. In some cases, the authority is able to carry out direct works in default of a failure to comply with the notice and recover the cost of doing so from the recipient of the notice. In certain circumstances, it is possible to prosecute in conjunction with service of a notice.

Often, specific provision is made within a statute for the form that a notice must take, and how it must be served. For notices issued under the HA 1980, sections 320 and 322 apply.

The Authority may also use common law powers to remove an obstruction or otherwise legally abate a nuisance on the highway without prior notice.

16.0.2 Simple Caution

Previously known as a formal caution, simple cautions may be given in circumstances where offences have been investigated and evidence of guilt sufficient to give a realistic prospect of successful prosecution has been established. Simple cautions require the offender to admit guilt by signature of a declaration. The suspected offender must understand the significance of a simple caution and give an informed consent to the caution.

The Authority will follow the procedures described in Ministry of Justice guidance when issuing a simple caution.

The aims of simple cautions are:-

1. Deal quickly and simply with less serious offenders.
2. Avoid unnecessary appearances in a criminal court.
3. Reduce the likelihood of offenders re-offending.

A record of a caution that has been accepted will be kept on file, and may be referred to if a prosecution is brought at a later date for a further offence.

16.0.3 Prosecution

Where an offence is serious in nature, the authority may elect to bring about a prosecution.

16.1 Network Inspection

The Service does not operate a programmed inspection regime of the PROW network given the length of the network, the resource this would require, and the many factors over which the County Council has little influence but that can affect the network and would render inspection regimes ineffective; for example

- Ploughing and cultivation
- Excavation by animals
- Private vehicular use
- Landowner liability items such as gates and stiles
- Forestry operations

In place of a programmed inspection regime the Service assess all reports received in line with the network and operational priorities set out in Chapter 16 above.

Volunteer Community Groups however are encouraged to undertake surveys of the communities they work in to establish volunteer work and improvement programmes.

16.2 Barbed Wire Across a Public Right of Way

A barbed wire fence or exposed barbed wire erected across a Public Right of Way without an adequate means of crossing is an offence. It is an obstruction to the right of

way and a nuisance and a danger to members of the public wishing to use the right of way. The protocol the County Council has adopted in these matters is firstly to ask the owner of the fence to remove it immediately or, if it is necessary for agriculture, to provide an adequate means of crossing it on the line of the path. The latter will require authorisation by the County Council as it would constitute a new stile, (see stiles and gates). If the owner fails to agree to either of these courses of action the County Council will remove the barbed wire where it affects the path without further notice. If the owner continues to commit further offences of this nature the County Council will consider prosecution for obstruction. (Highways Act 1980 section 137 and 149).

16.3 Barbed Wire Alongside a Public Right of Way

Where a barbed wire fence is situated alongside a Public Right of Way it may be a danger and a nuisance to members of the public. If in the opinion of the County Council the barbed wire does represent a danger to the public then the County Council has a protocol of firstly asking the owner to make the fence safe for members of the public using the path. If the owner refuses or fails to do so the County Council will serve legal notice requiring the owner to remove the source of danger within a specified time. (Highways Act 1980 section 164.)

16.4 Bridges

Sections 91 and 92 of the HA 1980 allow for the construction and reconstruction of bridges forming part of a public right of way.



A bridge may be reconstructed either on the same site or on a new site within 200 yards of the old one. Should a bridge be moved to a new site within the 200 yard limit, the power extends to the highway that gives access to the bridge and this can be reconstructed along with the bridge without the need for a diversion Order.

However, under the Flood Risk Regulations 2009 and the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, flood defence consent is required from Natural Resources Wales prior to any work in, over, under or near a main river. Where a bridge is to be constructed over any other form of water course (including ditches, drains, cuts, dikes, sewers other than public sewers, and passages through which water flows) ordinary watercourse consent is required.

Monmouthshire has 1326 bridges on its rights of way network. Many of these are of specialist design and over 10 metres. Monmouthshire County Council will maintain and install bridges that are the responsibility of the Highway Authority.

All bridge work is prioritised according to the prioritisation used for all maintenance and enforcement issues and includes risk, usage, promotion and inconvenience. But when it comes to replacement, it also includes the possibility of diverting the path, whether

there is another bridge nearby, cost and complexity. The benefits of replacing each bridge to the public as a whole are therefore very much taken into account when prioritising which bridges should be replaced first.

16.5 Bridges Required Over New Ditches, Ponds and Channels

It is an offence for a landowner to wilfully obstruct a Public Right of Way (Highways Act 1980 s137). The County Council has a duty to protect and assert the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of the public rights of way network (Highways Act 1980 s130).

Where a landowner creates a new ditch, pond or channel etc. that crosses an existing right of way, a suitable bridge, or structure must be provided which can accommodate all legitimate users safely and without restriction.

Structures will be supplied and erected by the County Council or approved agents. Landowners will normally be charged 100% of the reasonable costs of the bridge structure and installation. Where a structure is built to a higher specification at the request of the Authority than the County Council will bear any additional cost. Absence of any structure can be construed as "wilful obstruction" on behalf of the landowner. Exceptions may include instances where a path is not recorded in the Definitive Map and Statement subsequent to the new feature being created.

This policy is designed to ensure that landowners, who intentionally obstruct rights of way, by creating ditches or water features, are required to provide a bridge or other suitable structure on the Definitive line of the right of way. Diverting the path retrospectively is not normally an acceptable solution and the feature will normally be considered an obstruction.

Higher specifications may include extra width beyond minimum requirements, higher parapets and additional requirements where the route is considered appropriate for access for all. The County Council will still charge up to a minimum standard but will bear the costs of a higher specification. This approach is consistent with the County Council's aim to improve access for all.

16.6 Bulls and Dangerous Animals

It is an offence under s. 59 of the WCA 1981 for the occupier of land crossed by a Public Right of Way to allow a bull over 10 months old and on its own and/or any bull of a recognised dairy breed (even if accompanied by cows/heifers) to be at large in it.

Bulls that are less than 10 months old or of a recognised beef breed and at large with cows/heifers are exceptions to this rule.

The recognised dairy breeds are: Ayrshire, British Friesian, British Holstein, Dairy Shorthorn, Guernsey, Jersey and Kerry. However, even for bulls that are excluded from the offence in s. 59, farmers' obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 still apply.

If any animal, which is known to be dangerous by the keeper of the animal, causes injury to a member of the public using a Public Right of Way an offence may be committed and the occupier could be sued by the injured party (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 section 59). Farmers and landowners/occupiers should have regard also to s. 2 of the Animals Act 1971 when considering keeping any animal in a field crossed by the public right of way, including horses.

The County Council will deal with the problem by approaching the landowner and requesting that he moves the bull or dangerous animal from the field in which the right of way passes. A failure on the part of the landowner to comply with such a request may result in prosecution.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) study reported that most of the incidents on rights of way involving cattle arise when suckler cows and calves are at large in fields. The HSE have summarised their findings and provided guidance for the public and for farmers in Agriculture Information Sheet No 17EW (rev1). The guidance also includes useful information as to the form and contents of signs that could be used to indicate the presence of animals.

The Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976 states that "no person shall keep any dangerous wild animal except under the authority of a licence granted in accordance with the provisions of the Act by a local authority". A full list of the species covered can be found in the Act. For the purposes of agriculture, it should be noted that the list includes wild boar and ostrich. The Act requires such animals approved by licence to be kept in secure accommodation and not to be in contact with members of the public. Consequently, no such animal should be kept on or near a public right of way.

16.7 Cattle Grids

Cattle Grids are not encouraged as they can limit access to some users. Policy is currently being written. To be included at later date with costs

16.8 Competitions and Speed Trails

It is an offence (under section 33 of the Road Traffic Act 1988) to hold a motor vehicle race or trial or speed on a footpath or bridleway unless the event is authorised by the highway authority and the consent of the owner is obtained in writing. Even if authorised and where the owner has given consent an offence is still committed if the vehicle is driven dangerously or without due care and attention or without reasonable consideration for others.

The use of public rights of way for organised sponsored walks, cross-country running challenges and similar events is generally considered to be acceptable, provided they

reflect the rights available on the chosen route, i.e. not promoting a cycle race upon a footpath.

16.9 Crops Growing on Public Rights of Way

Where a crop (other than grass) has been planted or sown on land crossed by a Public Right of Way the occupier has a duty to ensure that the line on the ground of the Public Right of Way is indicated to be not less than the minimum width (1m for cross field footpaths and 2m for cross field bridleways 1.5m + field edge footpaths and 3m+ for field edge bridleways). Additionally the occupier has a duty to prevent the crop from encroaching within that width throughout the growing season. Failure to fulfil this duty is a criminal offence. (Rights of Way Act 1990 section 137A.)

16.10 Ploughing and Crops on Public Rights of Way

In some circumstances occupiers of land are entitled to plough Public Rights of Way if it is not reasonably convenient to avoid them. This only applies to cross-field footpaths and bridleways. All field edge public rights of way and cross-field Roads used as Public paths (RUPPs), Restricted Byways and 'Byways Open to all Traffic' (BOATS) should never be ploughed.

Where a cross-field footpath or bridleway is ploughed it must be reinstated within the "statutory time limit" otherwise a criminal offence is committed. Reinstatement means indicating it on the ground and making the surface reasonably convenient for public use to not less than the statutory minimum width. In respect of footpaths the minimum width is 1m and 2m for bridleways. The "statutory time limit" is 14 days for the first disturbance of the cropping cycle and 24 hours for any further disturbance such as harrowing and drilling. (Rights of Way Act 1990 section 134)

The minimum width is the absolute minimum acceptable for path users. For crops such as oil seed rape, which are prone to collapse across a cleared way as they reach maturity, it will be necessary to clear the plants to a greater width than the minimum to ensure convenient passage. These minimum widths only apply in relation to the reinstatement of a public right of way following ploughing or disturbance and are not general widths to be applied in other circumstances.

16.11 Enforcement of Ploughing and Cropping

Interference with Public Rights of Way by ploughing and cropping is a major problem and the County Council has adopted the following protocol to deal with it.



For a first offence the County Council will explain the law to the offender and advise that the route will be inspected again within 14 days. Upon expiry of that period if the path has not been reinstated to a satisfactory standard the Council will serve formal legal notice upon the offender requiring them to reinstate the path within a further 14 days. If the path is still not reinstated satisfactorily the Council will carry out the necessary work

with contractors and recover costs from the offender.

On occasions where there are repeated offences in subsequent years the County Council will immediately serve formal legal notice requiring the reinstatement of the path within 24 hours (unless other time frame agreed).

Where an occupier re-offends after service of formal legal notice on the same path, the County Council will serve legal notice and additionally will consider prosecuting the offender.

16.12 Dangerous Land Adjoining a Public Right of Way

From time to time the County Council encounters unfenced dangers on adjoining land, which present hazards to path users. The County Council has a duty to protect path users from such dangers and will in the first instance enter into dialogue with the owner of the adjacent land to urge him to remove or adequately fence the danger. The County Council can require the owner of the dangerous land to carry out the necessary works by service of notice. If the owner does not comply with the notice the Council may carry out the work and recover the costs from the owners. (Highways Act 1980 section 165.)

16.13 Diversion, Creation and Extinguishment of Public Rights of Way

To alter, close or create a new Public Right of Way a legal order is required. All orders are open to public consultation and certain legal criteria have to be met. The County Council therefore cannot guarantee that all orders will be made or completed. Application forms and advice regarding diverting, closing or creating a public right of way are available from the Countryside Access Team at countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk

16.14 Dogs On Public Rights of Way - see also Intimidating Dogs

The Council endorses responsible dog ownership. Clear and concise advice can be found in the dog walking code which is available on the Natural Resources Wales Website <https://naturalresources.wales/media/4862/the-dog-walking-code.pdf>

Dogs are allowed on Public Rights of Way but they should be kept under close control at all times. There is no requirement in law for a dog to be on a lead at the current time (but legislation may soon change this). A path user who allows a dog to wander off the right of way becomes a trespasser and owners and occupiers have a right to ask them to leave the land. If a dog is likely to wander off the line of the path or to worry livestock the owners are advised to keep the dog on a lead.

It is an offence to allow a dog that is not under close control or on a lead to be at large in a field or enclosure with sheep. A farmer may shoot a dog, which is attacking or chasing livestock.

The fouling of a public right of way by a dog may be an offence under an order made under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act where the person in control of the dog fails to remove the fouling. Dog fouling is an accepted hazard to health. The County Council will attach signs to stiles, gates and fingerposts advising owners to keep their dogs on a lead, or under close control where there is a reported problem. The County Council may also choose to use its powers to make an order under section 27 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 requiring dogs to be kept on a lead on specified footpaths and bridleways. Failure to comply is an offence.

16.15 Intimidating Dogs

It is an offence to keep a dangerous or intimidating dog on a Public Right of Way and it can also be considered a "public nuisance".

In the above circumstances the County Council will request the landowner to take action to remove the dog from the vicinity of the footpath so that users of the public right of way will not be deterred from using the path. The County Council may also advise complainants to notify the police directly.

16.16 Electric Fences Across a Public Right of Way

An electric fence erected across a Public Right of Way without a safe means of crossing is an offence. It is an obstruction to the right of way and a nuisance and a danger to members of the public wishing to use the right of way. The protocol the County Council has adopted in these matters is firstly to ask the owner of the electric fence to remove it immediately, or if it is necessary for agriculture to provide an adequate means of crossing it on the line of the path. The latter will require authorisation by the County Council as it would constitute a new stile, (see stiles and gates). If the owner fails to agree to either of these courses of action the County Council will remove the electric fence where it affects the path without further notice. If the owner continues to commit further offences of this nature the County Council will consider prosecution for obstruction. (Highways Act 1980 section 137, 137Z, and 149.)

16.17 Electric Fences Alongside a Public Right of Way

Where an electric fence runs alongside a Public Right of Way it may be a danger to and a nuisance to members of the public. If in the opinion of the County Council this is the case then the County Council has a protocol of firstly asking the owner to make the fence safe for members of the public using the path. If the owner refuses or fails to do

so the County Council will serve legal notice requiring the owner to remove the source of danger within a specified time. Failure to comply with the notice will result in the County Council removing the fence and recovering costs from the owner. (Highways Act 1980 section 165.)

16.18 Encroachment

An encroachment is an unlawful obstruction of the highway. When an encroachment has occurred, or is alleged to have occurred, the County Council is duty bound to investigate and the following action will be taken.

Consideration will be given to whether the encroachment has actually occurred and is materially affecting the way or may do so in the future. This may require considerable research including historical research to establish the legitimate width of the highway, (see Width of Public Rights of Way). If it is demonstrated to the County Council's satisfaction that encroachment has occurred but it is not materially affecting the path or the rights of Users the County Council may regard it as *de Minimis "the law is not concerned with trifles"*. In these circumstances the County Council will inform the person responsible that their actions are unlawful and any additional encroachment will result in enforcement action to remove all the encroachment.

If the encroachment has been found to the County Council's satisfaction to be materially affecting the right of way and the rights of Users the following approach will be taken to have it removed. Firstly the circumstances will be brought to the attention of the person responsible and they will be asked to remove the encroachment within a reasonable timescale to be determined by the County Council. If this fails to secure the removal of the encroachment the County Council will commence enforcement action in respect of the obstruction. (See obstructions).

16.19 Erosion

Erosion will be addressed by preventative maintenance wherever possible.

Sites, which are identified as suffering from erosion, will be prioritised for action according to public safety and budget restraints.

16.20 Firearms on Public Rights of Way

It is not an offence to shoot across a Public Right of Way, although to do so could amount to a common law nuisance, wilful obstruction of the Highway under Highways Act 1980 s137, a breach of Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 or intimidation, depending on the circumstances. It is an offence to discharge a firearm within 50 feet of the centre of a byway (carriageway carrying public vehicular rights) if it injures, interrupts or endangers any user of the byway.

Section 19 of the Firearms Act 1968 also makes it an offence for a person to have a loaded air-weapon, or any other firearm whether loaded or not, together with ammunition, in a public place (which includes public rights of way), unless the person

has lawful authority or a reasonable excuse, such as a landowner shooting vermin on his own land.

Where the County Council receives a complaint regarding firearms and is concerned about public safety than the matter will be referred to the police. -see also intimidating and threatening behaviour

16.21 Hedges and Trees Adjacent to Public Rights of Way

(See also 16.22 "Tree Branch across Public Rights of Way")

In most circumstances the responsibilities of the County Council do not extend to the maintenance of hedges and trees at the side of public rights of way. Where a hedge overhangs or obstructs a Public Right of Way the County Council has a right to remove so much of the overgrowth to prevent obstruction to pedestrians and equestrians. Additionally, the Council has a power to require the owners of overhanging hedges to require them to lop or cut back the hedge within a period of 14 days. (Highways Act 1980 section 154.)

If a byway open to all traffic or restricted byway is being damaged by the exclusion of light and air due to adjacent hedges or trees the County Council has a power to seek an order at a Magistrates Court to require the owner to cut back sufficient of it to prevent such damage. However before employing this power the County Council will discuss the matter with adjacent landowners and request that the hedges or trees be cut back or agree to carry out the work in conjunction with the owner as part of a larger project. (Highways Act 1980 section 136.)

16.22 Tree Branches and Limbs across Public Rights of Way

If a branch of a tree has fallen across a Public Right of Way such that the way is obstructed the County Council has adopted the following protocol. It will contact the owner of the tree and request the branch is removed within a predetermined time. If the owner fails to comply with this request the County Council will serve notice on the owner of its intention to remove the branch and recover from the landowner or occupier the costs incurred. (Highways Act 1980 section 150 (4) (c).)

16.23 Intimidating or Threatening Behaviour Intended to Deter Users from A Public Right of Way

The use of intimidating behaviour with the intention of deterring the use of a right of way is possibly an offence and may amount to obstruction of the path.

In these circumstances the County Council will seek to address any underlying issues, which have led to the situation arising. The County Council may then issue a warning to the offender and involve the police as appropriate. (Public Order Act 1986 section 4)

16.24 Landowners Liability to Path Users

Owners and occupiers of land crossed by Public Rights of Way can be liable for injuries caused to path users by the negligence of the owner or occupier. For example if a stile were to collapse under a walker or if a path user were to be injured by an electric fence placed across a path then the injured party may pursue a claim against the occupier of the land. (Occupiers Liability Act 1957.)

16.25 Liability to Path Users by The County Council

As Highway Authority the County Council is responsible for the surface of Public Rights of Way. In certain circumstances the County Council will be liable for injury caused to persons using a Public Right of Way if the injury is due to a negligent act with regard to the surface of the path.

16.26 Litter and Fly Tipping

The County Council is responsible for keeping rights of way in their area, which are publicly maintainable, clean and clear of litter and refuse, so far as is practicable. (Environmental Protection Act 1990ss 86(9) and 89(1)&(2). However regard has to be had to the character and use of the right of way as well as to the measures that are practicable in the circumstances.

If there is sufficient litter to amount to an obstruction, then the County Council also has a duty to take appropriate action – see obstruction.

To help deal with the problem of litter and dog poo, we ask all visitors/users to follow the advice in the [Countryside Codes](#) to keep our places special for both wildlife and people.

This means that everyone should take their litter and bagged dog poo away with them at the end of their visit if there is no bin on site, or if the bin is already full.

16.27 Misleading Signs and Notices Erected On Public Rights of Way

Misleading and unlawful signs can deter people from lawfully exercising their right to use paths and the county council has a duty to prevent such occurrences. Such signs erected on a public right of way can be removed by the county council.

Signs erected affecting a public right of way but on adjacent land can be dealt with on application to the Magistrates Court. The Magistrates may impose a fine or order the offender to remove the sign on pain of a continuing fine for each day it remains.

(highways act 1980 section 132. National parks and access to the countryside act 1949 section 57.)

16.28 Obstructions and Encroachments, which can be Readily Removed

The County Council has a statutory duty to remove all obstructions and encroachments to Public Rights of Way (The Highways Act 1980). The County Council also has a

common law right to remove anything that it believes constitutes an obstruction, danger or encroachment without consultation with any other party.

Monmouthshire County Council has a protocol of dealing with obstructions firstly by consultation and dialogue, requesting the offender to remove the obstruction. Depending on circumstances, offenders are normally given 7 days to comply. This informal notice will be confirmed in writing. If after that period the offender has failed to comply, formal legal notice is served requiring the offender to remove the obstruction within a specified time. Upon expiry of that time the County Council will remove the obstruction and recover the costs from the offender.

The County Council has a protocol for considering prosecution for obstruction or other offences relating to rights of way as well as taking the direct action outlined above. (Highways Act 1980 S143.)

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16.29 Obstructions and Encroachments Which Are More Permanent

From time to time permanent obstructions on Public Rights of Way are encountered. Often permanent structures are erected on Public Rights of Way and an unofficial diversion put in place by the landowner or occupier. The County Council has a statutory duty to assert and protect all Public Rights of Way. (Highways Act 1980 S130.)

Monmouthshire County Council has a protocol of dealing with obstructions firstly by consultation and dialogue with the landowner/occupier who will be given the opportunity to apply for a diversion of the path. If, after a certain period of time, no application is forthcoming enforcement proceedings will be commenced against the offender in the magistrates Court. The magistrates can make an Order requiring the offender to remove the obstruction within a specified time period and impose an ongoing fine if the offender fails to remove the obstruction. (Highways Act 1980 section 137 and 137Z.)

Where authorities choose to exercise any of their powers to remove an unlawful obstruction after a person has been convicted under s. 137ZA(3), s. 137ZA(4), in conjunction with s. 305 of the HA 1980, allows authorities to recover expenses reasonably incurred in doing so.

16.30 Pesticides and Herbicides

The Health and Safety Executive advises that rights of way should not be over sprayed and that if the product label advises that people and animals should stay out of a crop, which has been sprayed, the need for warning notices where rights of way join or cross the treated area should be considered. (Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 section 3.)

Authority staff or contractors should also take into account the guidance provided on the use of pesticides near public rights of way and other publically accessible outdoor

spaces. The guidance can be found at:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/agriculture/topics/pesticides.htm>

16.31 Rope Across a Public Right of Way

It is an offence to stretch a rope or similar object across a public right of way. In some circumstances, a temporary rope or wire to restrain farm animals may be acceptable across a public footpath (but no other class of right of way), provided that it is visible and can be easily and safely removed and replaced by path users.

The County Council will request that any unauthorised rope or similar object be permanently removed. If this is not done, the County Council will remove the rope and prosecution may be considered. (Highways Act 1980 section 162.)

16.32 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Scheduled monuments are nationally important monuments that are afforded statutory protection under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 and the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The aim of the protection is to avoid any damage or significant alteration to the monument and its setting. The extent of any such monument is depicted on a plan known as the scheduled area.

Cadw should be consulted prior to undertaking any work to a public right of way within a scheduled monument. Scheduled monument consent is required from the Welsh Ministers, via application to Cadw, before any works are carried out within the scheduled area that could cause damage to the scheduled monument. It is a criminal offence to do otherwise and the types of works that require such consent include ordinary maintenance activities such as digging post holes, installing new furniture, and tipping materials onto a surface. Proposals should be considered in light of published guidance on the Conservation Principles for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment in Wales. Further information is available from the Cadw website.

16.33 Signposts

Monmouthshire County Council has a duty to signpost all footpaths, bridleways and byways where they meet a metalled road (Countryside Act 1968). This is usually undertaken by installing a fingerpost. But sometimes other signs may be required for example traffic regulation order signage.

All signposts used in association with public rights of way will conform to:

- The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 or subsequent amendments.
- Quality Standards for Wales Coast Path and Offa's Dyke Path National Trail.
- Designs approved in special circumstances, by the Countryside Access Manager, to allow local distinctiveness and to aid improvements on promoted or "access for all routes", or to contribute to actions within the CAIP.

It is an offence under s. 131 (2) of the HA 1980 to remove or obliterate a traffic sign that complies with the Traffic Signs Manual without authorisation.

Before signage is installed checks for relevant designations or constraints that might require appropriate consultation or approval are required (e.g. SSSIs, SAMs etc.). It is also important to check for underground cables with appropriate machinery. The materials proposed for the location must be suitable e.g. bespoke signs may be necessary in conservation areas, or to fit with local schemes. Any text on signage or waymark discs on Offa's Dyke Path National Trail (ODPNT) and on the Wales Coast Path must be presented bi-lingually with Welsh first, English second and with both on both sides of the sign if double sided. A metal acorn if not routed on the blade must be used on the ODPNT.

On public rights of way the status of the path should be shown on a fingerpost. This is usually shown on the blade by the use of a walking man (footpath), Horse (bridleway) and Horse and carriage (Restricted Byway). It is important to remember the Equalities Act and the use of symbols that are universally recognised and avoiding colours that may fade or be difficult for some to see should be considered. In all cases text should be kept to a necessary minimum for clarity and the blades should be as short as possible.

Fingerposts should be sited suitably to insure that the blades will not pose a hazard to anyone or anything (hitting heads, passing vehicles etc.).

Where distances are shown on blades this should be in miles as per regulations and not km.

16.34 Waymarking

The County Council has no duty to waymark. However it is recognised that it is important for land management and that identifying the alignment of routes provides confidence to users. Therefore, public rights of way should be waymarked where necessary along their length in accordance with the former Countryside Commission's recommended colour co-ordinated notation and following consultation with landowners/and or occupiers. Moreover, if agreement can be reached to use existing structures, this will be preferable to erecting new ones.

- ⇔ Footpaths are waymarked using yellow arrows (BS 08 E 51).
- ⇔ Bridleways are waymarked with blue arrows (BS 20 E 51).
- ⇔ Restricted byways are waymarked with purple (plum) arrows (BS 02 C 39).
- ⇔ Byways open to all traffic are waymarked with red arrows (BS 06 E 55, approximate).

Waymarks should not be placed on trees or in hedges except in very exceptional circumstances where it is not possible for a waymark post or other structure to be provided.

It is common for promoted routes to have specially designed waymarkers for the route. These need to be approved by the Countryside Access Manager before being installed on site. Additionally, it should be noted that Regional routes such as Usk Valley

Walk, Wye Valley Walk, Three Castles Walk along with the ODPNT and WCP take priority where waymarking and signage is required.

16.35 Stiles and Gates on Footpaths and Bridleways

It is the duty of the landowner to ensure that any stiles and gates are kept in a good state of repair. The County Council's only duty extends to ensuring that the landowner complies with this obligation and to provide a grant of 25% towards repairing or replacing such structures.

However, the County Council has a discretionary power to extend this grant where least restrictive access improvements are taking place and will, in normal circumstances where there is sufficient budget provide a 100% grant by arranging to carry out all the work at no cost to the landowner and will also normally supply the necessary furniture. This discretionary grant will be withdrawn if landowners fail to cooperate, are obstructing other rights of way or are requesting a diversion. (Highways Act 1980 section 146.)



If an occupier of land wishes to install additional stiles or gates on footpaths or bridleways they must apply in writing to the County Council for authority to do so. To erect stiles or gates without this authority is an unlawful obstruction and is a criminal offence (see obstructions).

The only circumstance for which the County Council can provide authorisation for the erection of a new stile/gate is that the structures are required for stock control purposes or forestry works. (Highways Act 1980 section 147.) Note gates and stiles authorised under section 147 will be under the condition that if the land reverts to a different use from forestry or livestock are no longer present than the structure can be removed.

Stiles and gates cannot be erected for security or other purposes and may be regarded as obstructions to the highway. (See obstructions)

When authorising new gates or stiles under s. 147 of the HA 1980 on a path that is suitable and of sufficient width to allow vehicular access, the authority will consider including a condition to require the landowner to remove and replace that structure should the authority require later access.

It is the landowner's duty to ensure that livestock do not get out onto highways and cause an accident. Monmouthshire County Council has in the past taken a sympathetic approach to farmers who padlock their gates to prevent livestock from getting on to main highways by installing stiles and kissing gates alongside the field gate through which the right of way passes. This approach will continue only where there is a possibility of livestock getting on to main roads if the farmers gate is left open

by the public. However, it should be noted that Monmouthshire has a duty in law to ensure paths are accessible to all and in line with that legislation the Council will no longer allow stiles next to gates.

Farmers field gates must remain unobstructed and available for public use, so that the public can open and shut the gate easily on footpaths where

- such a field gate is not the last restrictive barrier to livestock,
- the livestock are permanently removed
- it is not possible to erect a self-closing gate or kissing gate next to the existing farm gate
- complaints are received from the public

Monmouthshire County Council will provide signs reminding the public to shut the gate. It should also be remembered that to lock a gate through which a Public Right of Way runs is an offence and the County Council may have no choice but to deal with the matter as an obstruction if complaints from the public are received.

Unless dedicated with a limitation of a gate, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic may not have such a structure placed across them. Section 145 of the HA 1980 specifies that a minimum width of 5 feet (1.5 metres) must be provided for a gate across a bridleway and a minimum of 10 feet (3 metres) for a gate on a highway comprising a carriageway (i.e. one where the public have a right of way for the passage of vehicles). In the case of bridleway gates dedicated subject to BS 5709 standards, those gates should be useable whilst the horse rider is mounted.

Monmouthshire County Council operates an "Access for All" policy where the least restrictive option of furniture will be used. (See Chapter 7 Equality Act and Least Restrictive Access Policy)

16.36 Surface of Public Rights of Way

Section 263 of the Highways Act 1980 vests the surfaces of highways maintainable at public expense in the highway authority. Monmouthshire County Council is therefore able to act as if they were owners of surfaces of public rights of way, to an extent sufficient to control, protect and maintain the way for use by the public.

The authority is required to ensure that ways are capable of accommodating the use that is made of them by ordinary traffic at all times of the year. This means that work will be undertaken to ensure the route is safe and fit for ordinary traffic, as appropriate to its status. This includes cutting back any surface vegetation as required. This is carried out in accordance with our maintenance and enforcement prioritisation.

The Authority also has a general power of improvement under s. 62 of the HA 1980 that can be relied on in circumstances where specific powers are not applicable. However, where this is used improvements should ensure that the route remains usable as dedicated.

The County Council as the highway authority owns the surface of all Public Rights of Way that are publicly maintainable; the landowner's interest only extends to the sub soil. It is an offence to interfere with the surface of a public right of way to the detriment of users, the County Council has a duty to protect the interests. The County Council will take enforcement action to ensure the surface of Public Rights of Way unlawfully disturbed are reinstated. (See also Enforcement and Ploughing and Crops on public rights of way).

Occupiers of land can disturb the surface of a right of way by special licence if they first apply to the County Council to do so and by statutory licence in respects of ploughing. (See ploughing and crops)

Where there are public footpath or bridleway rights on a route, which also has private vehicular rights, the County Council may consider making a contribution towards the costs of maintenance of the surface to the extent required for the level of public rights.

Landowners and occupiers who wish to upgrade the surface of a footpath, Restricted Byway or bridleway on which there are also private vehicular rights, must apply in writing to Monmouthshire County Council's Countryside Access Team. Full details of the works to be undertaken and proof of the landowner's agreement will be required before permission to alter the surface the right of way can be considered or agreed. Where upgrading a surface of a path is agreed this will normally be on the basis that the applicant will pay the costs involved and continue to maintain and repair the surface of the path and any necessary drains to the new standard. In considering such applications, the Authority will also consider the impact on the public's enjoyment of the route, safety, environmental and landscape issues.

16.37 Vegetation, Clearance & Cutting

The County Council is responsible for ensuring that vegetation growing in the surface of a Public Right of Way is kept under control. Overgrowth i.e. plants growing across the path from beside it, are the responsibility of the landowner (see Hedges and Trees Adjacent to PROW)

Effort will be made to ensure vegetation clearance observes good conservation practice by following the guidance within the Rights of Way Biodiversity Technical Manual.

Rights of Way found in need to be cutting will be incorporated into the maintenance list for attention according to our prioritisation in Chapter 16.

16.38 Volunteers

The Council has various policy and practice documents that provide a comprehensive source of information for individual volunteers and MCC's role as managers. A new set of guidance is in production to enable community and other groups to volunteer.

16.39 Width of Public Rights of Way

There is no general rule applying to the width of Public Rights of Way and the width is a matter of fact to be determined on each occasion based upon the following. The width may be set out in

- the Definitive Statement,
- an historical document or
- It may be the width of the way between boundaries such as hedges or fences.
- Alternatively, the width may be that which the public have customarily enjoyed.

In the absence of the foregoing the County Council will require a reasonable width to be made available, which would be sufficient for two users to pass and be convenient for cutting machinery and assist to make paths accessible to all users as required under the Equality Act. In the case of a footpath, this will be regarded as 2 metres. In the case of a bridleway 3 metres and in the case of a byway 5 metres.

An encroachment into the width of a Public Right of Way is an obstruction and a criminal offence and the County Council will deal with encroachments according to protocols. (See also Encroachment, Obstruction and Enforcement).

Statutory default minimum widths apply to all Public Rights of Way (as per Schedule 12 A Highways Act 1980), but in relation to ploughing and reinstatement following ploughing these are as follows. (See also ploughing and crops).

Path	Headland path (field edge)	Crossfield
Footpath	1.5 metres	1 metre
Bridleway	3 metres	2 metres

Restricted Byway and Byway, should never be ploughed, historic width applies

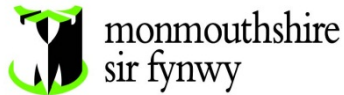
17.0 Contact Details

Email: countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk **Telephone** 01633 644850

Countryside Access, MonLife,
Monmouthshire County Council
County Hall
The Rhadyr, Usk
Monmouthshire NP15 1GA

ⁱ Review of Rights of Way Improvement Plans - Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in Wales
<http://gov.wales/topics/environmentcountryside/consmanagement/rights-of-way-and-wider-access/rights-of-way/?lang=en>

ⁱⁱ <http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/report/140929cmorereportten.pdf>



SUBJECT:	Corporate Plan 2017-22: Mid-Term Refresh
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	19 February 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek endorsement of a mid-term refresh of the Corporate Plan. This articulates the authority's purpose and values, alongside an update of the ambitious programme that will continued to be delivered during the course of the current Council which runs until the local elections in May 2022.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorse the Corporate Plan prior to its approval by Council.
- 2.2 That Cabinet endorse the adoption of the objectives contained in the plan as the Council's Well-being Objectives and Improvement Objectives in accordance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In October 2017 Cabinet commissioned the development of a Corporate Plan which converted high-level political ambition into a tight and understandable whole authority strategic plan and programmed the associated delivery work over the medium-term.
- 3.2 This meant setting priorities and re-shaping direction around the agreed purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. The Plan: draws on the political priorities articulated in the local conservative manifesto and emerging cabinet member priorities; challenges highlighted in the Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment; issues identified through data and financial analysis and issues raised by local people as being of highest importance.
- 3.3 The refreshed Corporate Plan re-states the council's purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities and the five priority goals. Under each

of these sits a number of programmes of work, twenty-two in total. The mid-point of the current council's term of office presents the opportunity to take stock and identify whether any of the programmes of work need to be amended to reflect changes in the external environment or policy positions subsequently adopted by council. Examples of this include the unanimous motion to declare a climate emergency, which is now embedded within the corporate plan.

- 3.4 Some of the actions identified in the first iteration of the document have been completed and are marked accordingly. There have been some amendments while other new actions have been incorporated, the aforementioned climate emergency being one example along with new commitments such as the redevelopment of town centres. An appendix to the report contains some of the key numerical measures of progress. A full evaluation of progress will be made available for scrutiny in June and July and an annual progress report presented to Council in September.
- 3.5 This plan will discharge the authority's duty to produce Well-being Objectives and Statement and Improvement Objectives under the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. It provides continued clarity on priorities and purpose for the authority's enabling strategies and provides a clear direction to teams as they continue to deliver their service or business plans.

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

- 4.1 The plan contains commitments to action related to equalities, social justice, corporate parenting and safeguarding.
- 4.2 A Future Generations Evaluation has been completed and accompanies this report. The Corporate Plan applies the ways of working outlined in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. This includes taking a long-term view and developing preventative approaches. The Plan details some activities that require further development and which will be subject to individual decisions in accordance with the council's constitution including completing equality and future generations evaluations where appropriate.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 Every choice we make carries an opportunity cost. Each of the programmes of activity in this plan have been considered against the other choices that could have been made, how that money could be spend and the alternative uses of resources or officer time. Some of these commitments – such as the

building of new schools – have already been approved by council as part of an agreed policy position while others are in the early stages of development. Each new proposal brought forward to deliver against these goals will be subject to an individual decision in accordance with the council constitution.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The Corporate Plan sets out clearly the council's purpose. It contains five specific objectives which can be measured over time. These are: Best Possible start in life; Thriving and well-connected county; Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment; Lifelong learning and well-being and forward looking-future focused council. These are clearly aligned to the purpose and well-being objectives of the Public Service Board. The measures relating to each of these are shown in the plan.
- 6.2 The actions to deliver the Corporate Plan will be embedded in the service or business plans of individual teams and progress can be tracked at this level through quarterly service updates on The Hub. Headline quantitative measures and progress updates will be reported bi-annually to the relevant Select Committee. A full evaluation of progress will be produced annually for scrutiny and will be reported to Cabinet.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 There are significant challenges and opportunities that must be responded to and the Council, with its diminishing resources, must prioritise what can be done adjusting in response to new evidence and external factors and opportunities.
- 7.2 To ensure that high-level political ambition, data, evidence and 'what matters' continues to inform a coherent whole authority strategic 'Corporate Plan'.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 With less money, we will not be able to keep doing everything that we have done in the past. Each of the activities in the corporate plan carries resource implications. In its entirety, the plan will be delivered within the resources made available through the Medium Term Financial Plan. Some programmes brought forward may require capital or reserve funding and individual and detailed proposals will be presented for each of these at the appropriate time in accordance with the council's constitution.

9. CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

The refresh of the corporate plan has been informed by a series of informal discussions between SLT and Cabinet. This has helped inform and shape the adjustments to the programme of activity.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment

11. AUTHOR:

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A Monmouthshire that works for everyone Corporate Business Plan Midterm Refresh 2017 // 2022



INCORPORATING WELL-BEING OBJECTIVES



Version Control

Title	Corporate Business Plan: A Monmouthshire that Works for Everyone
Purpose	<p>To set out a clear direction for the Council and resources required to deliver it. Inform and shape a whole set of enabling and delivery plans around People; Digital; Economy; Customers, Land and Assets.</p> <p>To set the goals as the Council's Well-being Objectives meeting requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations act and as the Council's Improvement Objectives complying with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009.</p>
Owner	Senior Leadership Team
Approved by	Endorsed by Cabinet, approved by Council
Date	<p>Previous version approved by Council, 21st February 2019 as Improvement Objectives for 2019/20</p> <p>Mid-term refresh for endorsement of Cabinet on 19th February and approval of Council on 5th March</p>
Version Number	2.8
Status	For Cabinet Endorsement
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	March 2021
Consultation	Informal consultation with SLT and Cabinet.

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Welcome to Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire is an incredible place to live, work and visit. This plan considers the people who call this place home now and in ten or twenty years' time. The decisions and actions we take over the next few years will determine the sort of place people live in, how they will travel around our county, the jobs they will do and the community facilities, learning, and support services available.

Almost two years ago, we published our first Corporate Plan. We wanted to let you know what you could expect from us, as your local authority, in the medium term. We are proud of our great schools, and have invested tens of millions of pounds opening a brand new, state of the art school and leisure facility in Monmouth. We are geographically and strategically well-connected at the gateway of Wales and England. Since 2017, we've seen an increase in the number of businesses in the county and have worked hard as a member of the Cardiff Capital Region to continue to grow the local economy. We continue to create the conditions for local social action and to ensure nobody is left behind developing a Social Justice Strategy that demonstrates our commitment to address inequalities and improve outcomes for the people and communities.

We continue to face some big challenges. We are still by some way the lowest funded authority, per person, in Wales. We continue to work hard to use the money we receive as efficiently and effectively as possible, being a largely rural county means that we do not benefit from the economies of scale that urban areas have. Centralising services in one place in the middle of the county will not work for residents of Caldicot or Abergavenny. We also have an ageing population, which brings many benefits, but also challenges for functions such as Health and Social Services. We need to ensure families can afford to live here and that we have enough people of working age to create local wealth and deliver key services.

Budget pressures mean we will not be able to keep doing everything that we have done in the past. We will continue to listen to our communities, find out what matters to them and focus on these areas. This mid-term refresh of the Corporate Plan, has allowed us to review the latest evidence and thinking on issues of importance to our communities and ensure our attention remains on the significant issues for Monmouthshire. We are keen to help communities build their own resilience. We believe in social justice and are committed to a fair and equal society. We believe in helping people create communities that they feel they belong to whilst supporting their well-being. All this means that people have responsibilities as well as rights. Our officers and councillors will not have all of the answers and we need to make it easier for people to get involved in shaping their own futures. We will continue to broaden our horizons, developing innovative solutions to ensure the council can keep pace with expectations. At the same time, we will ensure our contribution to the wider county works hard at creating the conditions for a thriving economy, connected and sustainable communities and an ecologically resilient and culturally rich environment.

Whether you are a resident, a local business owner or a member of staff I encourage you to read this plan and get involved in helping build the future we want. The future Monmouthshire deserves.



Councillor Peter Fox OBE
Leader of the Council

The Purpose of our Corporate Business Plan

Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Business Plan sets out the things we will be working on in the medium term. It provides direction and a sense of what will be important, taking us up to the end of the political term in 2022, but many of the things we are doing are incredibly ambitious and are focused on the longer-term future of our county. It is not enough to keep our county and council going for now – we have to ensure it is continually growing for the future. The plan is our way of ensuring the council, its staff and elected members deliver what matters, and that we do this as efficiently and effectively as possible. The plan is also our way of ensuring that as a local stakeholder, you have a tool through which to assess our actions and hold us to account.

We have huge drive and ambition for this place and there are some really significant improvements that we are committed to delivering. The issue is the council does not have the resources – in both financial and human terms - to deliver on all these things at the same time. This plan focuses on policy priorities that will deliver the Council's purpose and is aligned with the financial resources we have available as set out in our Medium Term Financial Plan.

The mid-term refresh of the commitments in the Corporate Plan has ensured that the aspirations and activity set remain relevant, are deliverable with the resources we have available and reflect the things that are important to communities. Beyond the allocation of financial resources to priorities, this plan will also set the context for how we will mobilise the wider assets and resources at our disposal. The funding we receive to run services continues to be stretched, but we continue to see a growing countywide commitment to local social action, volunteering and the contribution of new ideas, time, efforts and energies.

As a result, you can expect this plan to:

- Commit to priorities that are big impact and cross-cutting
- Contain programmes that contribute in a clear way, to one or more of our priorities
- Be underpinned by robust evaluation metrics and a clear ability to track progress
- Focus on the right things – not the easy things. Every choice carries an opportunity cost of the alternative things we could have done with that time or money
- Benefit from the regular focus of our Cabinet and Strategic Leadership Team
- Draw from and align with other long-term service plans and enabling strategies for People, Customers, Digital, Assets and the Economy
- Provide the architecture for our wider performance management framework. This is an approach that integrates long-term strategies and policy direction with department-level business plans that give clarity on what needs to be done, how and by when
- Have clear design principles that ensure over time, our financial, people and community resources are aligned with the things that can make the biggest difference to the lives of local people.

The plan will not set out everything that the Council does in our county, every day, to help ensure it is a sustainable and resilient place. It is underpinned by a clear policy framework that sets out in more detail our work in areas such as social justice and safeguarding. The contribution it makes is to ensuring we stay focused on priorities and enable people everywhere to see how their work fits into the larger picture of our ambitions and goals.

Our Foundation: Purpose, Values & Design

Monmouthshire County Council has a strong sense of character and purpose. We shape this in line with the goals and ambitions of our partners in other public services such as the NHS, Police, Public Health, housing associations and the Fire and Rescue Service. These and many more organisations are part of the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB). We are combining the ingenuity and initiative of all partners to find new solutions to pressing, social, economic and environmental problems. This sense of 'power of the collective' is central to our core purpose, reflected in our values and embodied in our culture.

Purpose

At the heart of everything we do:

We want to help build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.

Values

We can only achieve great things for our place through the people who live and work here, those on our payroll and those in Monmouthshire's communities including the countless volunteers and groups that give this place a richness and vibrancy. Our values reflect who we are, how we do things and how we are shaping the future. We try our best to apply these in everything we do.

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.

This plan sets out in more detail what we will do to help achieve our goal of building sustainable and resilient communities.

Understanding What Matters

If everything is a priority then nothing is a priority. We examined evidence and identified the areas that we intend to focus on. We have aligned ambition with a clear assessment of the financial investment needed to deliver this and everything in this plan aligns with our purpose.

Our motivation is to help improve lives and create capable communities. The question at the heart of this plan is therefore not, 'what can we afford?' but 'what matters?' Our core belief is that if we do the things that make the most difference – business and organisational benefits will result because money follows clarity. At the start of the political term in 2017, we began by gathering a wide-range of information to understand the issues that are most important to people. We have also been looking at future trends to make sure we consider the things that will affect how we work in the longer-term and are able to capitalise on the benefits of emerging technology and to take account of things like climate change.

Informing our Plan

The Public Service Board's (PSB) Well-being Assessment has been produced following extensive engagement with contributions from more than 1,400 people and examination of a wide range of data and evidence about what works and future trends such as the changing nature of employment and the impact of environmental factors such as pollution. It highlighted issues including:

- Low wages and high property prices are making it hard for families to live and work here
- Limited public transport and relatively low levels of broadband infrastructure make it harder for people to access work, jobs and services and car journeys cause air pollution which has real health impacts
 - Reducing physical activity levels and the resulting rise in obesity and type 2 diabetes
 - Pressure on health and care services from an ageing population



Although this work has been carried out on behalf of the Public Service Board, it surfaces issues that are incredibly important for our Council and the local area. As a key partner in the PSB, we are playing a significant role in taking these forward and recognise that we are the principal enablers in enabling the shifts and changes needed to develop a sustainable and resilient future. The priorities set for Monmouthshire Council also reflect our contribution to well-being objectives set for the county by the PSB well-being plan. The objectives for the county and the goals for the council are shown in the diagram.

Councillors gathered information on the issues raised most frequently on the doorstep during the 2017 local elections and ward surgeries. These include speeding; the quality of our physical and digital infrastructure; traffic; litter and education.

We have also looked at the issues people are reporting through community hubs, the contact centre and the My Monmouthshire App, which now has almost 60,000 active accounts. Amongst the most common reasons for contact with the council are waste - things like registering for garden waste collections, getting new bags and reporting missed bin collections and council tax and revenues – help with filling out forms and benefit enquiries. Other issues that result in direct contact tend to be around provision of our Grass Routes bus service and reports of fly tipping.

As part of the mid-term refresh of the commitments in the Corporate Plan, we have looked at the latest evidence and thinking on issues of importance to our communities, such as growing concern about the impact of carbon emissions on our climate, to make sure that the aspirations and commitments remain relevant to the significant issues for well-being in Monmouthshire.

Further important themes and issues that guide our work include the priorities that the Administration set out in its Political Manifesto prior to the election in May 2017. These include commitments to support:

- **Education & Skills** – investing in new secondary schools, raising standards and emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths or STEM subjects
- **Social Care & Health** - enabling people who are vulnerable and elderly to be supported to live in their homes and communities for longer. Working in an integrated way with Health and other agencies in order to create more seamless services, combat loneliness and keep people well
- **Social Justice** - a fair and equal society, respecting and upholding diversity within our communities, addressing child poverty and worklessness
- **Enterprise & Job creation** - capitalise on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and removal of the Severn Bridge tolls to unlock opportunity and drive economic growth so that productivity becomes a lever for increased prosperity
- **Rural Community** - combating rural deprivation and access to services, promoting new 'smart' technologies in agriculture, recreation and tourism and improving access to digital and physical infrastructure
- **Locally Accessible Services** – maintaining a local service offer and enhancing our leisure and recreation provision including a new pool and facilities in Monmouth
- **Provision of quality housing** - including affordable housing, to meet the needs of our communities and to address the needs of our changing demography.

The mid-term refresh has confirmed that the goals we have set remain the right ones based on the latest evidence available on the priorities and issues for well-being in Monmouthshire and the activity that we are committed to set remains relevant. We have identified where activity has been completed and have added some new actions. This is in line with our requirements under the Future Generations Act to keep our goals under review and make any revisions where we identify activity needs to be adjusted in order to maximise our contributions the well-being goals of Wales as a whole.

Managing Our Performance

Performance Management is about ensuring a shared understanding of what needs to be achieved and making sure that it happens. All other plans will be built from this one. These include the high level enabling strategies that form the council's policy framework and the strategic plans that provide the detail that brings this strategy to life.

All of our teams have service business plans that describe the specific actions colleagues will be working on to deliver the objectives. All colleagues have annual appraisals that ensure their own contributions are aligned with the purpose, values and objectives of the council as well as providing the path for their own personal development.

Underpinning all of this is a suite of measures that enable us to understand how well processes are working and more importantly to track progress against the things that matter. You can see more detail about our performance management framework in appendix two.

Progress so far

We have continued to review our progress and performance against our goals in the plan and our annual performance reports are available at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/improvement . Some of our significant areas of progress are set out below. Our plan is an ambitious programme; some commitments focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act. Some of the impact of our activity may not yet be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will be in the early stages.

CORPORATE PLAN

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?



GOAL A: BEST POSSIBLE START IN LIFE

Opening of a new **£40m** school in Monmouth providing a modern learning environment for pupils.

Focussing on raising standards in education for all pupils, although there is more to do. **1.6%** of Year 11 school leavers are not in education, training or employment.

Continuing to develop ways to assist the increasing number of children and families who require our support, which is putting pressure on our services. We currently have **201** Looked After children.

Attracting more foster carers to offer placements to Looked After Children. We have **71** foster carers, although we need more and active campaigns continue.



GOAL B: THRIVING AND WELL-CONNECTED COUNTY

Working on projects of regional significance as part of the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. Within its first year, **46** highly skilled technicians and engineers have started work at the new Compound Semiconductor Foundry.

Supporting and advising **145** pre-start and existing businesses through Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise Team and via referrals to partners.

Attracting **£1.2 million** of Cabinet Office funding to develop solutions to loneliness and limited rural transport in our communities.

Revising our Local Development Plan, as we were not achieving key outcomes relating to housing provision. **215** affordable houses have been built in the last two years.

CORPORATE PLAN

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR?



GOAL C: MAXIMISE THE POTENTIAL OF THE NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Introducing new waste and recycling collections to improve the service and minimise cost. Our annual recycling rate is **63%**, this is below Welsh Government targets.

Declaring a climate emergency and producing a strategy on how we will reduce our own emissions, while working with others to reduce emissions across the county as a whole. **19.3%** of the electricity we currently use comes from our own renewables including our solar farm.

Working with Riversimple to pilot **20** hydrogen powered cars in Monmouthshire.

Establishing a Green Infrastructure Strategy to enhance the environment across the **88,000** hectares of Monmouthshire.



GOAL D: LIFELONG WELL-BEING

Progressing work to build a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. Our Adult social services supported **2,691** people last year.

Developing a Social Justice Strategy committed to addressing inequalities and improving outcomes for the county's people and communities. **10%** of people in Monmouthshire are in income deprivation although this can vary in different parts of the county.

Supporting volunteering opportunities available within the county; there are currently **1360** volunteers directly supporting the council.

Opening a new **£7million** Leisure Centre in Monmouth and launching MonLife: protecting and enhancing our Tourism, Culture, Leisure and Youth Services.



GOAL E: FUTURE-FOCUSED COUNCIL

Launching 'Monty' the Council's Chatbot, which helps people find out information on common queries, resolving an average of **460** queries per month.

Developing a Commercial strategy to enhance a commercial culture and approach. **2** commercial investments have been purchased to generate income to support Council services.

Planning how we spend our **£154million** budget on services and delivering with continuing financial challenges and pressures.

Developing a strategy to support apprenticeship, graduate jobs and internships across the local authority. There are **21** apprentices and graduate posts in the Council.

Delivering What Matters – Our Policy Priorities

The Plan so far has established the context, evidence and inputs. Attention now turns to the outputs and outcomes to be achieved if we are to convert our understanding of what matters into delivering what matters through a meaningful programme. This section sets out our five Organisational Goals 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.

The five organisational goals also serve as the Council's Well-being Objectives – but go further in reflecting the need for a deeper organisational and council business focus. Setting out our aspirations in this way and the actions necessary to deliver on them enables us to identify the future we want. These are our commitments to action. We will report on progress annually in order to demonstrate the difference the plan is making in local communities. We will wherever possible, make open and available, data and information that gives a more dynamic and continual account of our performance.

Our Five Policy Priorities

This plan sets out in clear terms our commitment to action between now and 2022 and incorporate the council's Well-being Objectives as required by the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

A. The best possible start in life

Evidenced By

Research shows that improving outcomes for children and young people relies upon a 'life course' approach; each stage of life builds to the next. We will work with children, their families and communities recognising everyone has strengths as well as needs. We will work across professions and agencies and will be led by data and evidence from emerging good practice.

As an organisation we recognise the importance of wellbeing and people's safety and security as a part of that. We will promote safeguarding and ensure that it is everyone's business and encourage active lifestyles for children and young people through a broad range of activities.

We will commit to beginning the work necessary to ensure that children and young people choose to attend school in the county.

We will invest in all our children's learning and development, ensuring they have the environments, skills and support to flourish and be prepared for work of the future. We want our children and young people to be industry ready, able to contribute locally and globally and meet the demands of a rapidly changing world environment.

- Percentage of children and young people at the end of Key Stage 2 in Monmouthshire Primary Schools who move to a Secondary School in the county
- Percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational learning need educated in mainstream setting within the county
- Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET)
- Percentage of looked after children who experience non-transitional school moves
- Percentage of families supported by early help services who report being helped with what matters to them
- Percentage of children placed with generic/kinship foster carers
- Percentage of pupils who take part in sport on three or more occasions per week
- Number of young people trained in the playmaker award

B. Thriving and well-connected county

Monmouthshire is the most competitive economy in Wales after the capital city of Cardiff, is best placed for growth per head of population¹ and has the highest rate of business births. Whilst productivity is comparatively high – more needs to be done to increase Gross Value Added in existing & new industries. As the closest point for business relocation, post cessation of the Severn Bridge Tolls – this means seizing the opportunity to boost Research & Development capacity. We will develop a clear strategy that articulates our distinct strengths and goals for enhancing competitiveness, innovation and productivity.

We want Monmouthshire to be a place to be – not just a place to be from - and so we will review our Local Development Plan to ensure it is meeting our needs. The delivery of quality, sustainable and affordable housing will help enable the retention of young people, helping combat 'brain drain' and managing the social and economic challenges associated with a rapidly ageing population.

We will tackle the barriers to productivity, and focus sustainable infrastructure and connectivity. Externally, developing such foundations will enable businesses and community enterprises to deliver employment, growth and prosperity. Post-Brexit this will enable businesses to look beyond our shores for customers. Internally, we will unlock the value of our own procurement spend; developing data-driven, enterprise and commercial mindsets and more innovative approaches to local market creation.

Evidenced By

- Gross Value Added (£ per head)
- Difference in average pay between men and women
- Average weekly earnings of people who work in Monmouthshire
- Number of active business enterprises in the county
- Number of businesses assisted by Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise and referrals to partners
- Total income generated from tourism
- Number of market and affordable housing units built
- Number of premises with access to high speed broadband through the Superfast Cymru 2 scheme
- Number of white premises gaining access to high speed broadband

¹ UK Competitiveness Index 2019

C. Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment

Monmouthshire has a spectacular natural environment, a unique heritage value and a culturally rich identity. We believe that necessary growth, development, and expansion of our place, need not compromise our distinctive offer – indeed it should complement and enhance it. As an agricultural and food producing county, we recognise the moral and economic impetus around reducing food waste and the impact on greenhouse gases. We support the principles of the 'circular economy' and the recycling & restoration of goods and want to work with businesses and organizations that subscribe to these too.

We have declared a Climate Emergency and are committed to delivering the strategy and action plan to reduce the council's carbon emissions. We will maintain the internal corporate systems, policies and asset management plans that emphasis carbon reduction, energy resilience and a green council culture. Connected to this, we will safeguard the wider environmental interests of our rural communities through developing multi-agency approaches to road safety.

We will continue to recognise the value of our culture and heritage in enhancing the livability of our county. We will work with partners and communities to enhance our high quality recreational and cultural facilities to provide opportunities for people to learn develop and enjoy themselves and help attract the talent so key to driving a strong economy.

Evidenced By

- Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted
- Average number of days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents
- Percentage of streets that are clean
- Percentage reduction of Council carbon dioxide emissions
- Capacity of renewable energy in the county driven by the Council
- Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) pollution in the air
- Number of trees planted
- Number of new active travel routes
- Number of rural communities in which speed safety initiatives are supported
- Percentage of roads in poor condition
- Total amount of Rural Development Plan funds committed to projects in Monmouthshire

D. Lifelong well-being

Developing well-being and adopting community-focused approaches is about changing practice and lives. We will continue to commit to the personalisation of care and true collaboration with people who have care and support needs and carers.

Making deep relationships the norm is challenging – but it is the right thing to do and developing really effective partnerships and supporting individual family and community resilience is key to this. Creating good social support systems relies on more than just the economic and wealth creation aspects of our work. We will work to create prosperity for all and this means taking into account economic and social wellbeing.

We are committed to social justice; addressing inequalities and improving outcomes for the county's people and communities. We will cultivate social capital and promote access to opportunity and in so doing, will work towards better physical and mental health and social care outcomes. Our approach will take a strengths based approach to encouraging independence, self-care, support, learning, and engagement.

Evidenced By

- Percentage of people living independently at home 6 months after reablement
- Percentage of adult services users who are happy with the care and support they have had
- Percentage of adult services users who feel they are part of their community
- Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation
- Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access facilities and services they need
- Number of volunteers directly supporting MCC
- Percentage of people participating in sport 3 or more times a week
- Percentage of people participating in the exercise referral scheme still active after 16 weeks

E. Future-focused Council

Our operating environment is a changing and challenging one. Demographic shifts, increasing demand, our exit from the EU and fiscal uncertainty – all require an understanding that ‘business as usual’ is no more. We will continue to rapidly adapt, develop foresight capability and enable the service changes and countywide transformations that best meet the aspirations of our communities. This outward facing approach will mean reducing the reliance on traditional public services and having more genuinely collaborative local relationships. Digital will feature strongly in this, allowing ‘fit for future’ service models and enabling the sharing of approaches and resources to addressing crosscutting problems.

Our goal is to continue to build an engaged, responsive and adaptive council, able to provide effective leadership, in collaboration with other local partners. We will develop and sustain a dynamic, healthy and rewarding work environment that attracts and retains top talent and enables them to perform at their best.

Good governance will be at the heart of what we do and we will ensure the right information gets to the right people to inform decision-making. We will integrate a service focus into all dealings with customers and ensure they are well informed and engaged in decision-making. We understand the best public servants see themselves as not working for the council – but for the county.

Evidenced By

- Over/underspend of Council revenue budget
- Percentage of targeted budget reductions achieved
- Income generation from commercial investments
- Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area
- Number of open data sets published
- Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees
- Average days lost to sickness absence per FTE employee
- Percentage of staff turnover

A Monmouthshire that Works for Everyone

A. Best possible start in life

	How we're doing it	Who is accountable?
1) THE COUNCIL INVESTS IN FUTURE SCHOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conclude comprehensive redevelopment of new secondary school with community leisure facilities in Monmouth <i>(Completed)</i> Commence Abergavenny school redevelopment Develop 'Band C' proposals for the re-provision of secondary learning in the Chepstow area 	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Monlife
2) THE COUNCIL HAS A PLAN FOR RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to raise standards in education and ensure an ongoing focus on vulnerable learners Prepare for the new curriculum in Wales including a focus on the broader skills required by employers. Strengthen the links between schools, their communities and local businesses to improve the well-being of children and young people <i>(New)</i> 	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Monlife
3) THE COUNCIL CARRIES OUT A STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the findings and recommendations of the independent Additional Learning Needs Review Review of Catchment and Nearest School Policy Review of Home to School Transport Review and develop leadership structures across schools 	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Monlife Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services
4) THE COUNCIL IMPLEMENTS A MODEL OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate preventative children and family services within each locality into one prevention focused function Provide services that meet mental health and emotional well-being Promote active lifestyles for children and young people through a broad range of activities including sport, exercise and the natural environment Roll out the 'Children's Voices in Play' toolkit across the county to support the creation of play-friendly communities <i>(New)</i> 	Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health

5) THE COUNCIL ENSURES PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT FOR LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase the number of Monmouthshire foster carers	Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
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	<p>improvements at Severn Tunnel Junction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of new technology to improve how we maintain highways services • Complete the second phase of the Chepstow Transport study in conjunction with the appointed contractors and neighbouring local authorities; and take action based on the findings (<i>New</i>) • Identify ways to reduce the difference in pay between men and women in the county 	
<p>9) THE COUNCIL PROVIDES MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the current Local Development Plan to ensure an appropriate supply of land for homes and businesses • Participate in and shape opportunities for regional strategic land-use development plans • Increase the volume, quality, variety and affordability of housing • Provide flexible support for tourism development in the county • Engage with communities to create plans for the redevelopment of Usk and Caldicot town centres and begin discussions on plans for Monmouth and Chepstow (<i>New</i>) 	<p>Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Land Use Planning</p>
<p>10) THE COUNCIL UNLOCKS ECONOMIC VALUE OF ITS SPENDING POWER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review our procurement spend, improve analysis of expenditure and build local supply chains where possible • Minimise the long-term impact of our activities by using resources where they are needed, reducing waste, recycling materials, increasing local value-creation and focusing on whole life costs • Ensure we play an active part in national-led commissioning consortia 	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources</p>

C. Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment

What we're doing	How we're doing it	Who is accountable?
11) THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS & DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE PLAN FOR ENHANCING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with community groups to reduce litter and fly tipping while using technology to improve our own processes. • Ensure that we reduce the amount of waste, achieving recycling targets and not exceeding national limits for the amount we can send to landfill • Work towards becoming a plastic free county, reducing single use and unnecessary plastics to an absolute minimum. • Deliver Green Infrastructure Policy to ensure people have access to green spaces • Secure and deliver funds for projects including Living Levels, Agri-urban and Air Quality • Install real time air quality monitoring equipment in four schools • Deliver more opportunities for active travel and improved connectivity <i>(New)</i> • Maintain the diversity of plants and wildlife in the county while taking measures to make them more resilient to external threats like flooding and rising temperatures. <i>(New)</i> 	<p>Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Land Use Planning</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Monlife</p>
12) THE COUNCIL WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CLEAR PLANS TO REDUCE ITS CARBON EMISSIONS TO NET ZERO BY 2030 AND WORK WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS ACROSS THE COUNTY AS A WHOLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and enable more local renewable energy schemes • Develop an investment programme to help our services transition to a low carbon future • Trial and test hydrogen vehicles through partnerships with organisations such as River Simple • Install battery charge points for electric vehicles in all towns using funding opportunities such as grants from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles 	<p>Cabinet member for Resources</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services</p>
13) THE COUNCIL KEEPS ROADS AND AREAS SAFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with town and community councils and local people to identify where speed reduction measures are needed including 20 mph zones where appropriate 	<p>Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Community Speed Watch and community-led speed safety initiatives 	
<p>14) THE COUNCIL ENHANCES LOCAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a resilient and sustainable cross-county museum offer whilst identifying opportunities for arts and cultural development-<i>(New)</i> • Pursue opportunities to improve the facilities at the Borough Theatre <i>(New)</i> • Protect and enhance our built heritage including the submission of bids to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, where appropriate 	<p>Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Land Use Planning</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Governance and Law</p>

D. Lifelong well-being

What we're doing	How we're doing it	Who is accountable?
15) THE COUNCIL ENABLES CONNECTED AND CARING COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximise the opportunities for all people to live the lives they want to live and the positive outcomes they identify. Co-produce our approaches to well-being, care and support Complete the move from task and time approach in social care to relationship-based care at home Develop opportunities for people to be involved in their local communities reducing isolation and loneliness Improve opportunities for people with care and support to actively contribute through employment and volunteering 	Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
16) THE COUNCIL WORKS COLLECTIVELY TO DELIVER ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENABLING PROSPERITY AND REDUCING INEQUALITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND WITHIN COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop programmes to tackle poverty addressing worklessness and in-work poverty through schemes such as the Skills at Work programme. Ensure that all council policies services are focused on ensuring equity of access Promote equality and diversity and ensure opportunities are genuinely available to all Support and enable the development of community-led plans and placed-based working to improve well-being and increase prosperity. 	Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
17) THE COUNCIL ENABLES BETTER LOCAL SERVICES THROUGH SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure meaningful community engagement to understand the assets and priorities in each locality Approve volunteering policy, develop volunteering opportunities and continue to support the Be.Community Leadership Programme increasing the skills and knowledge of community volunteers Re-launch the Monmouthshire Made Open Platform to promote opportunities to 	Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development

	engage with communities and improve well-being	
18) THE COUNCIL BOOSTS LEISURE, RECREATION AND WELLBEING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a new pool and leisure facilities in Monmouth <i>(Completed)</i> • Complete a business case on transfer of services to an Alternative Delivery Model <i>(Completed)</i> • Refurbish the leisure facilities in Caldicot <i>(New)</i> • Develop a business case for improved leisure facilities in Abergavenny and Chepstow <i>(New)</i> • Use section 106 funding strategically to develop local projects that maximise well-being • Improve well-being and support healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as the Exercise Referral Scheme • To develop a more sustainable delivery model for the Outdoor Education Service. 	Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Monlife

E. Future-focused Council

What we're doing	How we're doing it	Who is accountable?
19) COUNCIL ENABLES AND PROVIDES GOOD SUSTAINABLE LOCAL SERVICES WHILST DELIVERING AN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACROSS ALL CHANNELS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop new business model for Community Hubs and Customer Care to increase access and provide a greater choice of channels for customers to engage with us (online, via the My Monmouthshire app, over the phone or face-to-face) • Increase the publication and use of open data to increase accountability and enable others to develop apps that have a civic benefit • Introduce Digital Service Standard 	Leader of Council Chief Executive Cabinet Member for Governance and Law
20) COUNCIL OPENS UP DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT & COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-shape our governance arrangements including more detailed options appraisals • Identify ways to get more people involved in local democracy and scrutiny to enhance local decision-making • Develop remote access and attendance at meetings to maximize participation • Revise all enabling strategies and plans – People, Digital and Customers, Assets and Economy and Enterprise <i>(Completed)</i> • Review and consolidate working groups and arrangements • Revise performance and improvement plans and replace with 'real-time' data dashboards 	Cabinet Member for Governance and Law
21) THE COUNCIL DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION AND RELEVANT, VIABLE AND VALUED PUBLIC SERVICES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and embed new ways of working – Artificial Intelligence, automation and collaborative technology • Develop a commercial strategy and approach • Establish and deliver a sustainable and viable Medium Term Financial Plan to meet the significant financial challenges faced by the Council. 	Leader of Council and all Cabinet

<p>22) THE COUNCIL PUTS PEOPLE AT HEART OF ALL IT DOES AND INSPIRES EXCELLENCE IN WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen decision making and accountability through revisions to the constitution • Prioritise Health, Safety and workplace Well-being • Promote diversity and inclusion including a focus on socio-economic factors • Engage employees through personal development training and learning 	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Governance and Law</p>
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Medium Term Financial Plan

In recent years the Council has had to make savings of £23.2 million from its service budgets. Funding from Welsh Government has reduced over the period. At the same time, pressures on the budget have been increasing in terms of demographic growth, demand and expectations. Our motivation is to help improve lives and build sustainable and resilient communities. The question at the heart of this plan is therefore not, 'What can we afford?' but 'What matters?'

Monmouthshire remains at the bottom of the table in terms of funding per head of population and Welsh Government funding is not adequate to meet the significant financial pressures the council faces. We have always sought to preserve local service delivery in the face of budget pressures by changing, improving and adapting our services. We know how important many of the things we do are to the people who live in our communities; listening to our residents is more important than ever and we have worked to maintain the things that matter. After several years of delivering significant savings from the budget, the means of achieving further reductions becomes increasingly more challenging.

We plan our budget as part of our Medium Term Financial Plan; this identifies the financial position in both the short and medium term and models different financial scenarios and pressures. We continue to work hard to plan for more than a standalone one-year budget. Our financial planning helps build a bridge between identifying potential cost-reductions to ensure that the organisation can balance its budget in the short term, without taking action that will hamper our ability to contribute to the longer term planning.

Our budget setting process in recent years has involved a blend of service changes/cost reductions, continued income generation and a focus on supporting priority areas for the Council such as education and social care linked to the corporate plan. We continue to develop our Medium Term Financial Plan to support us as far as possible to continue to deliver the aims and aspirations set out in this Corporate Plan. This mid-term refresh of the Corporate Plan has considered how our commitments are deliverable with the resources we have available which will continue to be an iterative and ongoing process as part of our financial planning.

How we will Evaluate Progress - update

This Plan sets a clear direction and main things we will be working on for the period up to 2022 when the next council elections take place. It's really important that we are able to demonstrate progress and can be held to account against these. Some of the things we have set out to do are easy to see or count, such as new school buildings or reducing the amount of waste we send to landfill. Others, such as reducing inequality or encouraging business growth are harder to quantify. This section sets out how we will evaluate our progress to ensure transparency and accountability, which is part of our governance arrangements.

We will produce an annual progress report and present this to council. This will be scrutinised by select committees during the year alongside other key performance measures, recognising that the impact made by the objectives may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales. At the end of the plan period a full evaluation will be completed and this will be reviewed prior to the 2022 local elections.

The front part of the plan shows some of the measures we will use to assess our progress. These are a mix of process, output and outcome measures. In short: Did we do it? Did we do it well? Are people better off as a result? When we are dealing with complex issues it isn't always easy to measure progress quarterly or annually in a single number. In this plan we've highlighted some of the more accessible metric and milestones but behind all major programmes of activity we have a separate project plan or service business plan. As part of the mid-term refresh we have updated some performance measures to ensure they are the most up to date and relevant measures to assess progress against the goals.

We will track progress against these key metrics that enables the authority to be held to account. All of our teams have service business plans that describe the specific actions colleagues will be working on to deliver the goals, which are updated quarterly. Many of the programmes listed in this plan are ambitious and some will be in the early stages of development. Over the course of the corporate plan there may be some further changes to measures, especially when these are drawn from national sources that are beyond our control. Where this happens we will look to include alternative measures that are aligned with our purpose.

Appendices

Performance Management & Policy Framework

This section provides a picture of our performance management framework; illustrates the interdependencies and how the policies, plans and programmes it contains, should be mutually reinforcing. In simple terms, our performance management framework is integral to the adoption and application of our Corporate Business Plan because it makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes.



Building sustainable and resilient communities is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The council's own well-being objectives are set by the Council based on the same well-being assessment as the PSB objectives and as this plan illustrates, form the backbone of our Five Organisational Goals. Each of our teams has a business plan that aligns to these objectives. We have a range of performance measures that we use to keep track of our progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show how the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values. Our 'enabling strategies' support the delivery of our objectives. Our work is informed and guided by national policy and external regulation and inspection.

Policy Framework

Our Improvement Framework is supported by a range of plans as part of our Policy Framework” that guide our actions to improve services. These are:

Level	Policy Framework	
Vision	<p>The Public Service Board Well-Being Plan</p> <p>Monmouthshire’s Public Service Board has produced a well-being plan, which sets four objectives they will work on to improve well-being in the County now and in the future.</p>	
Plan	<p>Corporate Plan including Council well-being objectives</p> <p>Sets out the direction for the Council up to 2022, the resources required to deliver it and incorporates the council’s well-being objectives for carrying out sustainable development and maximise the contribution to achieving the wellbeing goals.</p>	
Strategy	<p>Asset Management Strategy & Plan</p> <p>Describes how we manage our land and property portfolio</p>	<p>Financial Plan</p> <p>Sets out the financial challenges we face & how we will meet these challenges</p>
	<p>People Strategy</p> <p>The strategy connects people to purpose to improve performance and deliver better outcomes</p>	<p>Digital Strategy</p> <p>The steps we will take to develop our digital offer in our services and communities</p>
	<p>Local Development Plan</p> <p>Our proposals and policies for future development and use of land</p>	
Delivery	<p>Service business plans</p> <p>Each service has a plan that evaluates performance, plans actions for the year ahead, includes metrics to monitor performance and manages risks.</p>	<p>Employee Aims and Objectives</p> <p>Employee appraisals enable individuals and teams to outline the values and performance that is relevant in their role and connects them to the purpose of the organisation.</p>
Evaluation & Risks	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Evaluates performance, plans & metrics to monitor performance.</p>	<p>Strategic Risk Assessment</p> <p>Identifies, manages and monitors the Council’s Strategic risks.</p>

Good Governance - Strategic Risks

Corporate governance sets out, co-ordinates and aligns the organisational processes and frameworks that will need to come together to deliver this plan at a whole-council level. There will be risks attached to this and good governance will ensure these risks are understood, managed and communicated. The Council has an established risk management policy that sets out the Council's policy and approach to strategic risk management. The risks are 'high-level' but not as much as to limit their practical usefulness and application.

The council's strategic risk assessment ensures that:

- Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority.
- Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate
- Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the council.

The Council's aim and intention is to anticipate and manage risks pro-actively rather than deal with the consequences of actual occurrences. The strategic risk assessment typically identifies key risks, which could significantly jeopardise the Council's ability to achieve its objectives and statutory requirements. The strategic risks related to delivering the objectives in the Corporate Business Plan will be identified in the strategic risk assessment which provides a full assessment of the risk and mitigation actions.

Innovation & Risk - risk tolerance and risk appetite

There will be occasions – including the application of this plan - when the Council may benefit from introducing new opportunities or adopting innovative approaches. These may necessarily result in a degree of calculated risk that is inherent in the approach in order that a return or benefit can be achieved. Where circumstances involve exposure to such risks, they must be assessed in line with the Council's 'risk tolerance' levels. Individual project proposals and business plans must contain an assessment of likely risks and consider the risk tolerance levels. Any innovation or opportunity that presents medium or high risks must be closely examined; the risks clearly identified, analysed, documented and as appropriate consulted on. The risk tolerance levels are:

Accepted risks

In general, these are assessed risks, which may result in exposure to the following:

- adverse effect on the Council's reputation and/or performance
- censure or a fine by regulatory / statutory bodies
- financial loss or impact on assets

Unaccepted risks

In general, these are assessed risks, which may result in exposure to the following:

- physical or other harm to any person
- intentional non-compliance with legislation and regulations
- intentional non-compliance with the Council's policies, rules and procedures, etc.
- major financial loss or damage to / loss of assets

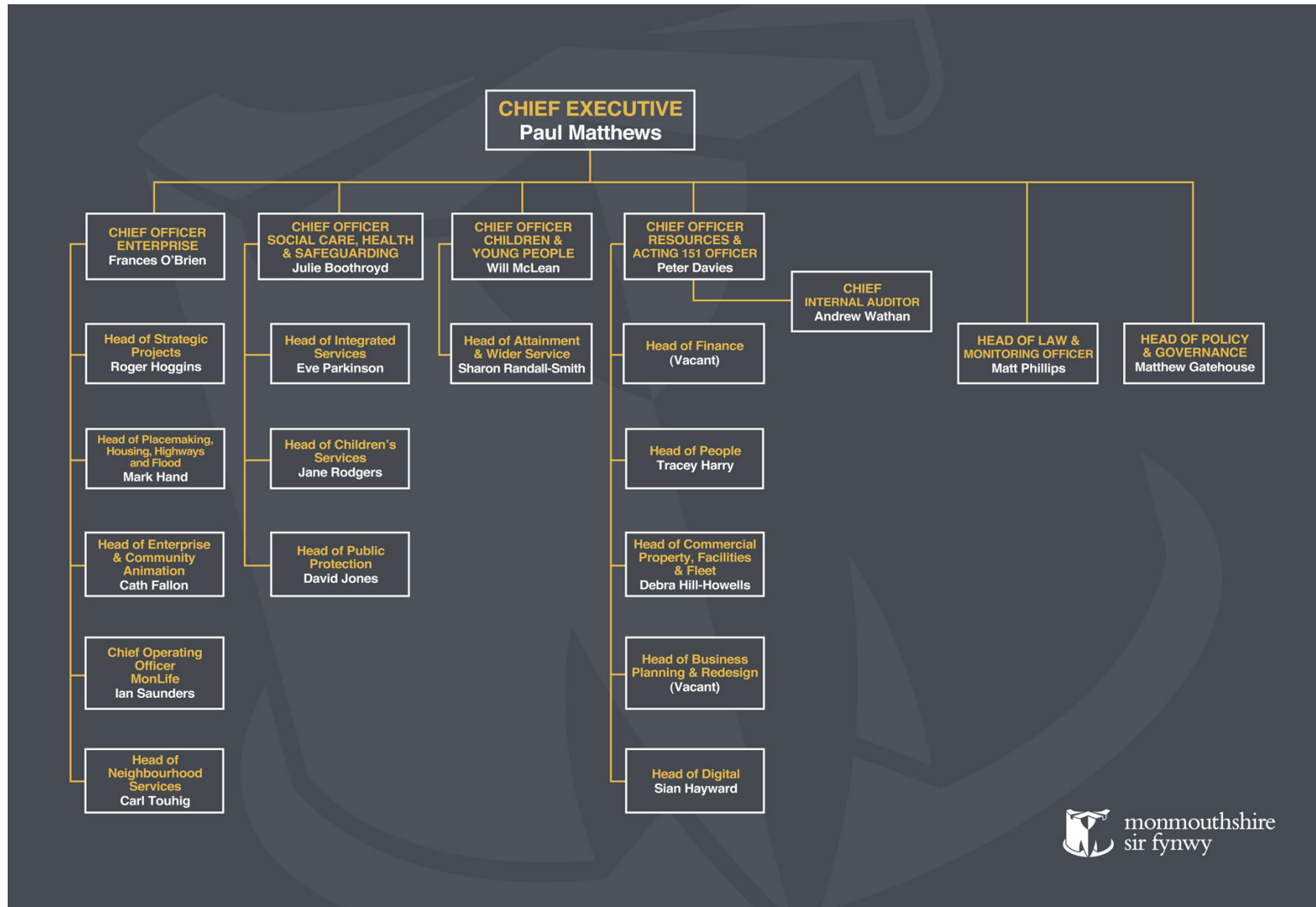
Risk appetite

In some circumstances, a degree of risk may be accepted in order that a benefit can be gained or an opportunity taken. A strict parameter on the risk appetite of the organisation has not been defined, as this will vary between risks, departments and functions. It is therefore important that individual projects, proposals and plans assess risks and consider risk appetite whilst doing so. Assessment against the Council's 'risk tolerance' levels, set out in the risk management policy and guidance, will help inform this.

The strategic risk assessment is just one part of the Council's risk management arrangements. The risk assessment typically covers high and medium level risks. Lower level operational and strategic risks are not included unless they are projected to escalate within the three years covered. These risks are managed through a variety of processes for example through teams' service plans, through Emergency Management Plans and the business continuity, health and safety procedures, insurance arrangements etc. The framework below highlights some of the main processes through which risks are identified and managed



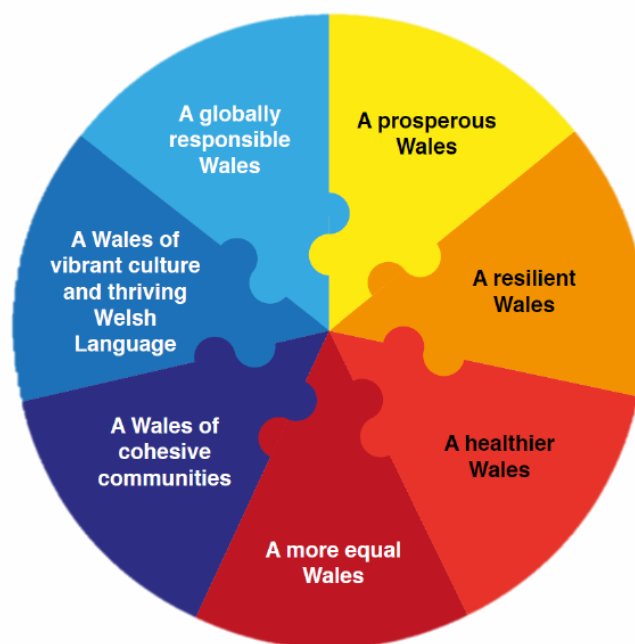
Organisational Structure



National Policy Context

The Well-Being of Future Generations Act

The Well-being of Future Generations Act is the fundamental legislation that requires us to carry out sustainable development, this should ensure that present needs are met without compromising future generations in meeting their own needs. When carrying out sustainable development, we have to publish well-being objectives which are designed to maximise our contribution to achieving each of the seven national wellbeing goals and take all reasonable steps to meet the objectives. The seven wellbeing goals are shown in the diagram below while our own well-being objectives are incorporated within the goals set in this plan.



The contribution our local objectives make towards the seven national objectives has been assessed and is shown in the table below.

In planning our services and taking action to meet our well-being objectives we must consider, but also demonstrate that we have applied, the following sustainable governance principles in our decision-making:

- Balancing short term needs with long term needs.
- Using an integrated approach, balancing social, economic and environmental needs.
- Involving others and considering their views.
- Working in collaboration with others.
- Putting resources into preventing problems

All the current decisions made by the council and its cabinet are assessed using a Future Generations Evaluation which ensures equality and sustainable development are considered fully in the decisions we take. The Act also puts a well-being duty on specified public bodies to act jointly via Public Service Boards (PSB) to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of their area by contributing to the achievement of the well-being goals.

Well-being Objectives	Contribution of Well-being Objectives to Well-being Goals						
	Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
The best possible start in life	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Thriving and well-connected county	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Lifelong well-being	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Future-focused Council	✓	✓			✓		✓

Local Government (Wales) Measure

The council is required under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set annual Improvement Objectives and produce an improvement plan. In order to deliver sustainable development the council recognises that the setting of wellbeing objectives needs to be at the heart of the council's improvement framework and therefore has decided to combine the two requirements to provide a set of clear objectives of the council. This plan discharges the council's responsibility to publish its Improvement Objectives in line with the plans for the year ahead as outlined in section 15(7) of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and shows how the council is delivering the seven aspects of improvement.

Equality and diversity

The council has a long-standing commitment to equality and diversity and under the Equality Act 2010 has to produce a Strategic Equality Plan to ensure we deliver better outcomes for people with protected characteristics: race, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity and age. This is clearly aligned with the well-being goals set by Welsh Government, but above all else it is important to us as it is the right thing to do.

The Welsh Language

The authority recognises that the Welsh language is central to the goals introduced as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act to ensure we are able to maximise our contribution to a Wales of vibrant culture and a thriving Welsh language and also to help the Welsh Government reach the target of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and accompanying standards place a legal duty on councils to promote the Welsh Language and provide services to the public through the medium of Welsh. The council has to comply with the 175 standards that they have been allocated. This is a significant challenge that has been set but systems have been put in place in divisions to ensure compliance. One of the Standards set was to write a Welsh Language Strategy for 2017 – 2022, which sets out a vision of how the language will look in Monmouthshire in five years' time and is accompanied by targets to help achieve that vision. Welsh Government in 2012 also produced a new strategy known as "More Than Words". This basically requires us as a care provider to ask people whether they want services through the medium of Welsh (known as the "Active Offer").

Alternative Formats

We can provide this document in Braille, large print, on tape or in electronic form. If you would like a copy in a different format, please contact our Equality and Welsh Language Officer by:

Phone: 01633 644010

e mail: equality@monmouthshire.gov.uk


If you want to comment on the council's objectives give your thoughts on issues that you feel should be considered as part of the council's approach to well-being, please get in touch.

We have included a short form for feedback at the end of this plan. You are welcome to use this and return it to us via post or e-mail. However, we welcome all views however you wish to supply them.

 improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk

 www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/improvement

 Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy and Governance Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Usk, NP15 1GA

 01633 644397

 @MonmouthshireCC

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Corporate Plan Performance Measures

The corporate plan shows some of the measures we will use to assess our progress. These are a mix of process, output and outcome measures. In short: Did we do it? Did we do it well? Are people better off as a result? When we are dealing with complex issues it isn't always easy to measure progress quarterly or annually in a single number. In the plan we've highlighted some of the more accessible metric and milestones but behind all major programmes of activity we have a separate project plan or service business plan.

The table below provides the performance measures set and includes; the direction of travel aimed for over the period of the Corporate Plan, the latest full year data, which is mainly full year 2018/19 data or equivalent for each measure, and the specific target set for the current year 2019/20.

Description	Direction aimed for	Latest	Target 2019/20
Goal A Best Possible Start in Life			
Percentage of children and young people at the end of KS2 in Monmouthshire primary schools who move to a secondary school in the county	↑	75.4%	Increase
Percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational learning need who are educated in mainstream setting within the county	↑	69.7%	Increase
Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) ¹	↓	1.6%	1.1%
Percentage of looked after children who experience non-transitional school moves	↓	5.3%	<10%
Percentage of families supported by early help services who report being helped with what matters to them	↑	Baseline in 19/20	Baseline
Percentage of children placed with generic/kinship foster carers	↑	37.6%	Increase
Percentage of pupils who take part in sport on three or more occasions per week ²	↑	45%	Next survey 2021
Number of young people trained in the playmaker award	→	914	900

Description	Direction aimed for	Latest	Target 2019/20
Goal B: Thriving and well-connected county			
Gross Value Added (£ per head) ³	↑	£21,220	Increase
Difference in average pay between men and women ⁴ :	↓	£109.6	Reduce pay difference
Men		£578.90	
Women		£469.30	
Average weekly earnings of people who work in Monmouthshire ⁵	↑	£537.8	Increase
Number of active business enterprises in the county ⁶	↑	4170	Increase
Number of businesses assisted by Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise Team and referrals to partners	↑	82	75
Total income generated from tourism ⁷	↑	£218.93 million	10% increase by 2020
Number of market and affordable housing units built	↑	443 (of which 131 affordable)	488
Number of premises with access to high speed broadband through the Superfast Cymru 2 scheme	↑	New Measure	1581 (over 3 years)
Number of white premises gaining access to high speed broadband	↑	New measure	New measure
Goal: C. Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment			
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	↑	63.37%	64.5%
Average number of days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	↓	4.82	<5
Percentage of streets that are clean	↑	97.2%	97.5%
Percentage reduction of Council carbon dioxide emissions	↓	9.9%	3%
Capacity of renewable energy in the county driven by the Council	↑	6240KW	Increase

Description	Direction aimed for	Latest	Target 2019/20
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) pollution in the air (µg/m ³) ⁸	↓	8	Decrease
Number of trees planted	↑	Baseline in 19/20	10,000 (by 2022)
Number of new active travel routes	↑	0	Increase
Number of rural communities in which speed safety initiatives are supported	↑	0	Increase
Percentage of roads in poor condition:			
A roads	→	2.7%	<3%
B roads		4.7%	<5%
C roads		7.3%	<8%
Total amount of Rural Development Plan funds committed to projects in Monmouthshire	↑	£194,702	£1,674,000 Dec 2021
Goal: D. Lifelong well-being			
Percentage of people living independently at home 6 months after reablement	↑	74.3%	77%
Percentage of adult services users who are happy with the care and support they have had	↑	88.3%	90%
Percentage of adult services users who feel they are part of their community	↑	53.5%	Increase
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation ⁹	↓	9%	Decrease
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need ¹⁰	↑	79%	Increase
Number of volunteers directly supporting Monmouthshire County Council	↑	1360	Increase
Percentage of people participating in sport 3 or more times a week ¹¹	↑	38%	Increase
Percentage of people participating in the exercise referral scheme still active after 16 weeks	↑	54%	>50%

Description	Direction aimed for	Latest	Target 2019/20
Goal: E. Future-focused Council			
Over/underspend of Council revenue budget (£)	➡	£49k under-spend	£0
Percentage of targeted budget reductions achieved	⬆	81%	95%
Income generation from commercial investments (£)	⬆	£122,889	£610,000
Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area ¹²	⬆	20%	Increase
Number of open data sets published	⬆	5	10
Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees	⬆	Baseline in 19/20	Baseline
Average days lost to sickness absence per FTE employee	⬇	11.5	10.5
Percentage of staff turnover	➡	9.6%	Track

¹ Careers Wales, Annual Survey of School Leavers <http://destinations.careerswales.com/>

² Sport Wales, School Sport Survey data <http://sport.wales/research--policy/surveys-and-statistics/statistics.aspx>

³ Stats Wales, Gross Value Added <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Regional-Accounts/Gross-Value-Added-GDP>

⁴ Stats Wales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings>

⁵ Stats Wales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings>

⁶ Stats Wales, Active Business Enterprises <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Businesses/Business-Demography>

⁷ The total economic impact of tourism, STEAM data. The economic impact of Tourism is indexed each year.

⁸ Stats Wales, Air quality <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Air-Quality>

⁹ Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Well-being-and-Finances/percentageofpeoplelivinginhouseholdsinmaterialdeprivation-by-localauthority-year>

¹⁰ Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Local-Area-and-Environment/percentageofpeoplesatisfiedwithaccesstofacilitiesandservices>

¹¹ Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Sport-and-Recreation/percentageofpeoplewhoparticipateinsport3ormoretimesaweek-by-localauthority-year>

¹² Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales, <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales>



Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Emma Davies Phone no: 01633 644689 E-mail: emmadavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>A midterm refresh of the Corporate Plan, which was originally published in 2018 to convert high-level political ambition into a tight and understandable whole authority strategic plan.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>All services</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>7th February 2020</p>

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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	Many of our services are focused on improving the wellbeing of young people and older people. Two strategic goals, 'Best possible start in life' and 'Lifelong well-being' place a focus on the early years of life, and on increasing wellbeing throughout people's lives and into old age.	Any new proposal will need to be assessed individually to consider if it impacts disproportionately on any particular group. For example, technology solutions could exclude some older people who are proportionately less likely to be early-adopters of new technology	Particular focus is given to a lack of digital skills in the county and the potential for social and economic disadvantage. This is being monitored via the Digital Deprivation action plan.

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	The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone. The objective on lifelong well-being is likely to bring particular benefits to people with disabilities as these individuals are proportionately more likely to be users of Adult Social Services.	None identified at this stage	
Gender reassignment	<p>The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone</p> <p>The plan proposes bringing forward programmes that promote diversity and inclusion</p>	None identified at this stage	
Marriage or civil partnership	<p>The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone</p> <p>The plan proposes bringing forward programmes that promote diversity and inclusion</p>	None identified at this stage	
Pregnancy or maternity	The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone. The plan commits to addressing the issue of the gender pay gap; this could have a positive impact on women returning to work following maternity leave.	None identified at this stage	
Race	<p>The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone</p> <p>The plan proposes bringing forward programmes that promote diversity and inclusion</p>	None identified at this stage	




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	<p>The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone</p> <p>The plan proposes bringing forward programmes that promote diversity and inclusion</p>	None identified at this stage	
Sex	<p>The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone</p> <p>The plan proposes bringing forward programmes that promote diversity and inclusion</p>	None identified at this stage	
Sexual Orientation	<p>The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone</p> <p>The plan proposes bringing forward programmes that promote diversity and inclusion</p>	None identified at this stage	
Welsh Language	The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone. The Welsh language will be considered where required.	Increasing the use of technology and automation could result in the emergence of globally-developed solutions that are not immediately available in Welsh.	Early work with developers to mitigate this and seek to work regionally and nationally where possible to get benefits of scale
Poverty	The Wellbeing Objectives aim to bring multiple benefits to everyone. The plan aims to deliver on social justice, better prosperity and reducing inequality.	None identified at this stage	



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?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The Corporate Plan sets out five clear strategic objectives, each contributing to this goal. The greatest impact will be under the objective of 'Thriving and well-connected county' and 'The best possible start in life'.	More specific details regarding contributions to the wellbeing goals will be through subsequent Future Generations Evaluations as specific actions are developed under the objectives.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	The greatest impact will be under the objective, 'Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment'. Several projects were proposed in the original plan that aimed to reduce CO ₂ emissions. This has been developed further with the introduction of the climate emergency strategy to develop and implement clear plans to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, and to work with community groups to enable carbon reduction across the county as a whole.	As above
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	With the exception of 'Future-focused council', all objectives contribute to a healthier Wales. The greatest impact will be under the objectives, 'Best possible start in life' and 'Lifelong well-being'.	As above
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	The objectives with the greatest impact are, 'Thriving and well connected county', 'Maximise the potential for the natural and built environment' and 'Lifelong well-being'.	As above
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The greatest impact will be under the objective, 'Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment'. Several projects were proposed in the original plan that aimed to reduce CO ₂ emissions. This	As above

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?
	has been developed further with the introduction of the climate emergency strategy to develop and implement clear plans to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030, and to work with community groups to enable carbon reduction across the county as a whole.	
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	The objectives with the greatest impact on this goal are, 'Best possible start in life' and 'Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment'.	As above
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The objective with the greatest impact on this goal is, 'Lifelong well-being'. The objectives, 'Best possible start in life' and 'Thriving and well connected county' will also contribute to achieving this goal.	As above

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>This timescale for the original plan was medium term to align with the political cycle. The refreshed document continues the commitments up until 2022. However, the objectives are broader than this and take a more long-term perspective to improving well-being in a number of the activities identified. The plan also seeks to embed design principles and ways of working that are focused on the long term.</p>	<p>Programmes of work aimed at achieving the proposals will have associated Future Generations evaluation where they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>One of the key sources of evidence for the Corporate Plan was the Public Service Board well-being assessment. The objectives are clearly aligned with the objectives shared by our public service partners in Monmouthshire and this plan acts as the council's response to achieving those collaborative objectives. Many of the individual actions will be developed with partners.</p>	<p>As above</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The original plan was developed from an extensive evidence base, including widespread consultation with residents of the county. The 'Our Monmouthshire' community engagement work carried out during 2016 engaged with over 1400 people. A further source of evidence was feedback received by county councilors during the 2017 election campaign regarding the issues of greatest importance to residents.</p> <p>The mid-term refresh of the commitments in the Corporate Plan, has looked at the latest evidence and thinking on issues of importance to our communities, such as growing concern about the impact of carbon emissions on our climate, to make sure that the aspirations and commitments remain relevant to the significant issues for well-being in Monmouthshire</p>	<p>As above</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>The aim of each of the objectives is to take action now in order to prevent problems in the future. For example, implementing a model of early support and intervention for children and families and promoting active lifestyles. We are also developing community capacity and volunteering now in order to prevent an overdependence on institutional care in the future with an ageing population.</p>	<p>As above</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The objectives are all integrated; each one can have positive and potentially negative impacts on another. It is important that as individual proposals are developed, we seek to balance competing impacts. The plan contains a table highlighting which of the objectives impacts on each of the seven national wellbeing goals. The Council will work together with other partners to help deliver many aspects of the Objectives.</p>	<p>As above</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?
Social Justice	The plan aims to deliver on social justice, better prosperity and reducing inequality.		Programmes of work aimed at achieving objectives will have associated Future Generations evaluations where they are brought to Cabinet or council for a decision.
Safeguarding	Early intervention and prevention approaches will reduce the number of young people at risk of harm. Safeguarding is central to the authority's work and this is highlighted within the corporate plan.	..	As above
Corporate Parenting	Developing an increased number and range of local authority foster care placements will provide greater choice, enabling children to live closer to home and improve the stability of placements.		As above

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

The Public Service Board's (PSB) Well-being Assessment was produced following extensive engagement, with contributions from more than 1,400 people. Extensive examinations were also conducted on a wide range of data and evidence regarding future trends, such as the changing nature of employment and the impact of environmental factors such as pollution. The data can be viewed at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire. These include, but are not limited to, the proportion of people who report a sense of belonging to the local area; percentage of young people not in education, training or employment; average weekly earnings of people who live and work in Monmouthshire; gender pay gap; number of affordable housing units built; proportion of premises with access to high speed broadband; and CO₂ emissions.

The mid-term refresh of the commitments in the Corporate Plan, has looked at the latest evidence and thinking on issues of importance to our communities, such as growing concern about the impact of carbon emissions on our climate, to make sure that the aspirations and commitments remain relevant to the significant issues for well-being in Monmouthshire.

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?

This is an evaluation of the process of producing the corporate plan refresh, rather than of each individual action. Many of the activities it proposes will require an individual evaluation to be completed.

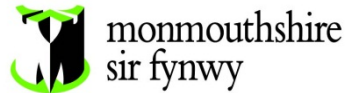
7. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
We will produce an annual report assessing progress on the objectives and present this to council. This will be scrutinised by select committees alongside other key performance measures.	October 2020	

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.	Cabinet	19 February 2020	

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SUBJECT:	OUTDOOR EDUCATION – SERVICE UPDATE
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	19th FEBRUARY 2019
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

NON-PUBLICATION

Appendix 1 is exempt under paragraph 12 of Schedule 12A, - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

1 Purpose

1.1 To advise on the current financial position for the Outdoor Activity Centres (Gilwern and Hilston Park)

2 Recommendations

2.1 Members note the current overspending position for 2019/20 of 95k and the potential for the service to have the same level of overspending in 2020/21. This is not included within the MTFP pressures list for 2020/21.

2.2 To move to a more sustainable model of delivery which could eventually involve site rationalisation.

3 Key Issues

3.1 The Outdoor Education service has gone through a period of change over the last 5 years, with the long-established Gwent Outdoor Education Service partnership being dissolved at the end of 2018/19. Provision has been reduced from three to two sites, retaining Hilston Park and Gilwern Outdoor Education Centres.

3.2 The joint service had previously been supported by annual subsidies from Local Authority partners. Core funding was frozen in 2006 with fees to clients increasing above inflation to compensate for the reduction in core funding. Between 2013 and 2019, the other three partners withdrew or reduced their subsidy and by the end of 2018/19 the subsidy had been removed completely. (As shown in table 1 below)

Table 1 – Subsidy Received 2012/13 to 2018/19

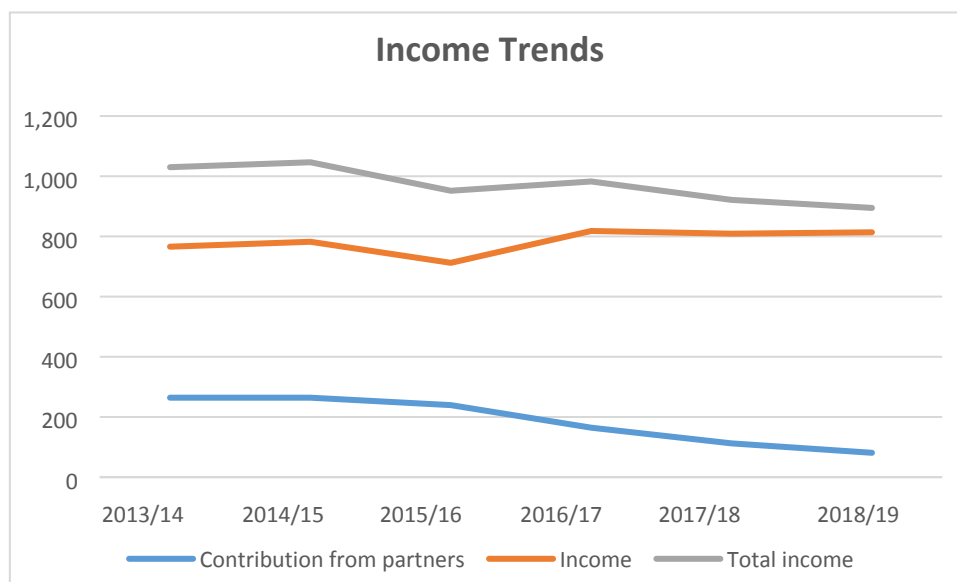
Total Contribution	2012/13 £	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
NCC	78,708	0	0	0	0	0	0
TCBC	107,943	107,943	107,943	107,943	44,943	0	0
BGCBC	74,925	74,925	74,925	74,925	62,925	55,730	24,460
Monmouthshire	81,275	81,275	81,275	56,580	56,580	56,580	56,580
Total	342,851	264,143	264,143	239,448	164,448	112,310	81,040

3.3 Table 2 demonstrates the financial position for the service with surpluses in the earlier years being invested in the Outdoor Education reserve. This reserve was then used to fund the deficits incurred in 2017/18 and 2018/19. The reserve has now been fully utilised.

Table 2 – Service Costs from 2013/14 to 2018/19

Total Direct Costs	2013/14 £	2014/15 £	2015/16 £	2016/17 £	2017/18 £	2018/19 £
Employee	644,693	627,865	590,212	599,208	627,026	685,720
Premises	122,941	102,732	79,707	106,074	112,549	125,211
Transport	67,319	56,043	49,975	54,582	56,030	63,727
Supplies & services	170,391	208,053	228,631	204,146	169,605	161,828
Total expenditure	1,005,344	994,693	948,525	964,010	965,210	1,036,486
Contribution from partners	-264,143	-264,143	-239,448	-164,448	-112,310	-81,040
Income	-765,893	-782,233	-712,268	-818,110	-809,058	-813,673
Total income	-1,030,036	-1,046,376	-951,716	-982,558	-921,368	-894,713
Net Cost	-24,692	-51,683	-3,191	-18,548	43,842	141,773

3.4 The data demonstrates that as partner contributions have been reducing, customer income particularly from 2016/17 has remained at a similar level. Given that price increases of 2.5% have been applied annually, it actually is a slight reduction in utilisation. The graph below shows the trend analysis.



3.5 The current year of operation 2019/20 is the first full year of operating with no other external local authority contribution and so the costs fully reside with the Council. Table 3 demonstrates the predicted outturn for these two sites.

Table 3 – Predicted Outturn and Comparison to Budget for 2019/20

Budget 2019/20	Total Direct Costs	Hilston Park £	Gilwern £	Total £	Overspend from Budget
559,348	Employee	285,511	301,510	587,021	27,673
91,144	Premises	44,257	56,549	100,806	9,662
58,138	Transport	20,809	35,576	56,385	-1,753
123,644	Supplies & services	79,432	67,756	147,188	23,544
832,274	Total expenditure	430,009	461,391	891,400	59,126
-702,000	Total income	-275,000	-391,160	-666,160	35,840
130,274	Net Total	155,009	70,231	225,240	94,966

- 3.6 The subsidy afforded the sites by the Council has been set at £57k since 2015/16 and in 2019/20 the budget was increased further to 130k to allow for pay awards of £10k and an extra pressure of 63k for the loss of subsidies. The latest cost predictions at 225k, is now expected to be some 95k above the budget. There is also a redundancy cost of 42k that is not included above but will be reserve funded. This does not include the cost of building maintenance, grounds maintenance or insurances all of which are held centrally. Both sites have significant backlog maintenance issues.
- 3.7 Further analysis has identified that anticipated income from Monmouthshire schools is likely to be only 148k, which is just over 22% of predicted total income. Discounts continue to be given to Monmouthshire School children accessing free school meals and this has a value of 10k.
- 3.8 The projected overspend had been identified early on in the financial year and in May 2019, a tactical action plan was developed which focussed on promoting residential trips and days visits to primary schools both within Monmouthshire and the wider southeast Wales region. This initial campaign was to begin to drive some commercial gains and focused on developing core business with a view to replicating the approach in different markets if it is successful. As part of this exercise, the service received feedback from schools and customers.
- 3.9 Feedback indicated that the service is well-established and a positive relationship has developed over the years between schools and the centres. There is a flexible and progressive approach to provision with a strong sense of trust between the school and the centres and between the young people and the leaders. The range of activities on offer is seen as providing ‘authentic adventure’ experiences, using the local environment to create memorable experiences.
- 3.10 However, one of the main reasons for the projected overspend is the reduction in residential occupancy as the number and length of bookings are less than the previous year. This has been explored with customers and some of the reasons for this are identified below;
- Challenging school budgets which are important given that schools (most notably primary) are the core users of the centres.
 - The loss of a key account (2019/20, £60k), following structural changes to how the National Citizen Service plans to deliver in the future. This is in stark contrast to previous years when the centres were part of the high-profile delivery network for the scheme.

- Affordability (by schools and parents) which has in some instances changed school usage by reducing the length of the stay (from 5 days to 3) or requesting an extended day offer to avoid having to find a staff member to undertake an overnight stay.
 - Significant increase in the rise of independent operators offering a wide range of non-residential adventure and outdoor experiences often operating without a centre / fixed base, they are agile, customer-focused and more affordable.
- 3.11 Given the current financial position and future projections, the service has been reviewing its operating practices including whether to rationalise the service onto one site. The service is also looking to become more entrepreneurial and business like and overlaps with so many of the Council's services and functions and working with those other department have extended their provision to include;
- offering adventure days during the holidays as part of the TMG brand (Monmouthshire Games)
 - extending its relationship with carers groups,
 - providing short breaks for disabled children
 - providing schools; social services and health colleagues with support packages, tailored to some of their alternative needs and identified pressures,
 - designing bespoke packages for and working with children who has a range of needs and sometimes complex needs,
 - being more flexible with our packages; including half day, full day, evening activities and curriculum focused options,
 - key stage curriculum development and whole school life opportunities and pricing options.
- 3.12 This is starting to open up new possibilities for service design and delivery particularly in terms of exploring new markets and hopefully this expansion will ensure the service is within budget for 2020/21. The Service is now considering new approaches to delivery, reviewing the existing staffing structure across the sites and restructuring the service to best respond to the new challenges ahead. This includes the option of looking at the Gilwern site and establishing as an integrated hub of fully inclusive provision for children and young people's services.
- 3.13 Current operating practices are being reviewed with a view to reducing costs and maximising income however despite the implementation of the action plan, we have had limited success in attracting new bookings. The level of overspend may continue and although we have made some changes to the staffing structure, reduced costs where possible, consideration may need to be given to whether we need to continue to operate at two sites as a sustainable model. With demand being fairly static, a one site approach would reduce fixed costs and encourage fuller occupancy of the remaining site and would enable the service to concentrate on delivering a high quality product.
- 3.14 The Hilston Site needs modernising and requires capital investment notwithstanding the need to be more energy efficient and carbon neutral, with clients referring to it as 'shabby' and 'well past its best'. Notwithstanding its stunning setting and the splendour of its original interior, the centre is in dire need of investment, particularly concerning having accessible accommodation, in order to bring it up to the required standard but given its grade II listing that it likely to be a significant cost.
- 3.15 Gilwern is the larger of the two sites and is well located and is a flat, level site offering accessible accommodation. One accommodation block includes purpose-built disabled bedrooms and wheelchair access showers and has an accessible classroom block that includes disabled toilets and changing area. The site is also in need of some capital works to

bring them up to modern day standards. The site is shared with the Community and Youth Team and staff delivering the Duke of Edinburgh offer. This has encouraged the diversification of the Youth Offer.

- 3.16 Recent diversification has also indicated that the Gilwern site could become an integrated young people’s hub, with a mix of accommodation stock and provision of outdoor activities which would help revitalise the site and help extend outdoor provision to new markets. If Gilwern were to be an integrated hub for children and young people’s services it could offer affordable services to address some of Monmouthshire’s key priorities but recognise that critical success factors in this would include achieving economies of scale, cross subsidisation and obtaining mutual support from other departments of the Council
- 3.17 A review of the Outdoor Education Service was undertaken in 2015 and updated in 2018. Action plans have been developed which is focussed on income generation. An independent review was commissioned and is available for Members (see appendix 1). The report identified ways to;
- deliver efficiencies
 - generate additional revenue which may need further capital investment
 - improve income by adjustments pricing for commercial and private lettings
 - Improve sales by improved marketing
- 3.18 The focus since May 2019 has been on generating short-term gains to reduce the ever-increasing funding deficit and to look to deliver improvements in business and operational performance for now and future years. Recommendations and actions identified with the December 2019 review are now being implemented. This is the start of the transformation of the service with a drive to becoming self-financing however this is a very challenging market, with market intelligence showing lots of competition. Given the need to invest in both sites and looking at current income trends, it is questionable whether MonLife can operate two centres without a continuing subsidy and a more sustainable solution may be to operate at one site only.

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

- 4.1 There are no equality and sustainability implications arising from this report. The service in its current format needs to be reviewed for both financial and practical reasons to ensure it is sustainable and continues to provide a quality service across the two sites. By its very nature the service has continued to provide quality outdoor learning experiences, jobs and new skills – the service will continue to deliver this whilst also ensuring the facilities and activities deliver positive outcomes for all’.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks
Do Nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficit Increasing • Deteriorating Assets • Health and Safety (other providers are experiencing difficulties such as fire risk assessments) • Accessibility issues

Transform Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced Subsidy • Extend provision to supply services to other parts of the Council which are currently provided externally • Quality provision which also aligns to policies about decarbonisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demand continues to reduce and more subsidy required • Internal customers choose to outsource provision
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6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 This will be evaluated through Delivery and Service Improvement Plans. Regular monthly performance meetings are held to evaluate the success of marketing and sales action plans which captures data such as utilisation, occupancy rates. The regular monitoring of the service and its performance against budget will be reported through the standard budget monitoring report.

7 REASONS:

7.1 To raise awareness of the issues facing the service and to recognise the initiatives being undertaken to make the service more sustainable.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Current Service costs are £95,000 above budget in 2019/20. Whilst work in ongoing to reduce costs and seek new markets to increase occupancy, it may be difficult to deliver the service within budget in 2020/21.

9 CONSULTEES:

Cabinet Members
SLT
Service area staff

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Monmouthshire Outdoor Education Centres Review (exempt from publication)

11 AUTHOR:

Ian Saunders, MonLife Chief Operating Officer
Marie Bartlett, MonLife Finance and Resources Manager
Nick John, MonLife Leisure Services Manager

12 CONTACT DETAILS:

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<p>Name of the Officer Ian Saunders</p> <p>Phone no: : 07876545793</p> <p>E-mail: iansaunders@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>OUTDOOR EDUCATION – SERVICE UPDATE</p>
<p>Name of Service area – MonLife</p>	<p>Date 30th January 2020</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?
Age	The service will continue and the need to ensure facilities are well promoted and increase community use will continue.	Neutral	There has been an effort by the outdoor team to ensure suitable and sufficient provision
Disability	The service will continue to allow people of all abilities to enjoy the local outdoor environment.	Neutral	There is work underway to improve the disability access to services at the Gilwern site.
Gender reassignment	Neutral	Neutral	

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?
Marriage or civil partnership	Neutral	Neutral	
Pregnancy or maternity	Neutral	Neutral	
Race	Neutral	Neutral	
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Neutral	
Sex	Neutral	Neutral	
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	Neutral	
Welsh Language	Neutral	Neutral	
Poverty	Neutral	Neutral	


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?


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?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Neutral	The service has continued to provide quality outdoor learning experiences – they will continue to deliver this and look at ensuring the facilities and activities they run deliver positive outcomes.
A healthier Wales People’s physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Neutral - By the nature of the service it aims to give people skills and education to embrace the outdoors and participate in activity.	The team have continued to deliver great outcomes and evaluation forms from users groups
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Neutral	
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Neutral - the service continues to deliver excellent, safe residential sessions and activities to those networks.	The team continue to keep open clear lines of communication with visiting staff and head teachers to organise their bespoke visit.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global wellbeing when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The service will continue to provide opportunities - it is keen to ensure it is attractive, relevant and affordable. The cost of delivering the service has always been a challenge and how to ensure all pupils have an opportunity to attend a concern.	Costs and opportunities will be regularly reviewed and other markets explored

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>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	Neutral - The service will continue to provide activities and sessions at its two sites at Gilwern and Hilston	The service by design maximizes the beautiful rich countryside and natural landscape in Wales. To connect children and communities and provide learning, sport and outdoor experiences are positive across the two sites and surrounding countryside.
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	Neutral - there is still a service in place for all to access	Actively marketing service at two sites and looking at new markets

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>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	The service in its format needs review for both financial and practical reasons. The service needs to be more sustainable and keep providing a quality service across its sites.	Service is working to ensure sustainability and opportunities for all

 <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>It is hoped that the service continues to deliver excellent, safe residential sessions and activities to those networks.</p>	<p>Seek to maintain relationships with Head teachers and Schools and other key stakeholders</p>
 <p>Involvement</p>	<p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>Schools still send schools into the service but have accepted that the service needs to increase charges to become more sustainable</p>	
 <p>Prevention</p>	<p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The commitment for the service from MonLife is to ensure key posts are filled, a new marketing campaign and to drive new markets and opportunities to ensure the service thrives and grows from its current financial pressures.</p>	
<p>Sustainable Development Principle</p>	<p>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</p>	<p>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</p>	

 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>Service is embedded in MonLife which is targeted on preventative services and health and well-being.</p>	
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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?
Social Justice	The service will give opportunities to all, giving people the best start in life and support them throughout their lives to lead a healthy and active lifestyle. It will look to close the gap and improve access to services across Monmouthshire.	n/a	We will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure we better understand the needs and engage closely with our users / non-users.
Safeguarding	We will ensure safeguarding is at the forefront of all plans with the relevant documentation, systems and procedures and levels of training in place for all staff relevant to the role consistently across the board.	n/a	We will continue to prioritise our safeguarding measures, reflect on current practice and continue to train staff to the appropriate levels.

Corporate Parenting	We will continue to work with our partners to assist in any way we can and add value to the current provisions.	n/a	We will continue to have representation for this area at all team meetings and continuously monitor and review all systems and procedures mentioned above to ensure we are providing as safe an environment for all of our customers as possible. We actively encourage all staff to be vigilant and report any instances they feel appropriate and have procedures in place for this.
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5. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

- • Current Service Improvement Plans
- Review of outdoor education completed in 2019 and further discussion from this review

There have been team meetings to discuss income pipelines for future opportunities across the two sites. Several budget meetings have occurred over the period where the service has looked to review its operation with regard to efficiency and income generation.

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 service needs review for both financial and practical reasons to ensure it is sustainable and continues to provide a quality service across the remaining two sites. By its very nature the service has continued to provide quality outdoor learning experiences, jobs and new skills – the service will continue to deliver this whilst ensuring the facilities and activities deliver positive outcomes for all.

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

Continue working on action plan for bookings and logistics	Monthly	Outdoor Education Team and Head of Service
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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
	<i>2019 – Discussion with Head of Service / Teams due to budget pressures and t ensure sustainability of service</i>	<i>May – Sept 2019</i>	

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

Meeting and Date of Meeting: Cabinet 19th February 2020

Report: OUTDOOR EDUCATION – SERVICE UPDATE

Author: Ian Saunders

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

Exemptions applying to the report:

Appendix 1 will be exempt under paragraph 12 of Schedule 12A, - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Factors in favour of disclosure:

Openness & transparency in matters concerned with the public

Prejudice which would result if the information were disclosed:

The report contains sensitive pricing data and information about how the service operates which if disclosed would give our competitors market advantage and adversely impact our customer base.

My view on the public interest test is as follows:

Factors in favour of disclosure are outweighed by those against.

Recommended decision on exemption from disclosure:

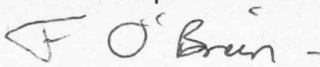
Maintain exemption from publication in relation to appendix 1

Date: 30th January 2019

Signed: Ian Saunders

Post: Chief Operating Officer, MonLife

I accept/~~I do not accept~~ the recommendation made above

Signed:  -

Date: 03/02/2020

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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SUBJECT:	PROPOSED CHANGES SCHOOLS FUNDING FORMULA.
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	5TH FEBRUARY 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the report is to recommend changes to the schools funding formula in how it distributes funding to schools.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

To approve the proposed changes to the school funding formula as detailed in section 3 of the consultation document in appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

- 3.1 The school budget forum is the statutory body that oversees and proposed changes to the funding formula for schools. At the meeting in June members asked that a working group met to discuss all elements of the formula to ensure that they were distributing in the fairest way.
- 3.2 The working group met twice and from their review they agreed to consult on the following areas:
 - Free School Meals (this does not affect any funding relating to deprivation or the Pupil Development Grant)
 - Payroll
 - Advertising
 - Administration
 - Foreign language assistants.
- 3.3 The reasons for this are outlined in Section 3 of the consultation document attached in appendix 1.
- 3.4 There is no proposal from this consultation to reduce the total funding going to schools, however given that the total budget will be distributed in a different way. Should this be agreed, there will be some schools who will gain and some that will lose. The financial summary of each proposal per school is shown in appendix 2. It should be noted that this is using the pupil numbers at January 2019, but will change each year. The implementation date, if agreed, is 1st April 2020.

- 3.5 The consultees are outlined in section 8 of this report, there were 6 responses including CYP Select Committee. The majority of responses were in favour of the changes. CYP Select Committee raised some concerns and these and the other responses are outlined in appendix 3 of this report.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

There were three options considered:

- 4.1 Status quo to make no changes to the formula, this was disregarded as there were some elements of the formula that were not distributing funds in the fairest way.
- 4.2 To consult on all elements of the formula (excluding Additional Learning Needs). The members of the working group decided to disregard this as there were a large majority of funding streams that distributed in the fairest way.
- 4.3 To consult on the elements listed above, this is the preferred option of the working group and agreed with the School Budget Forum.

5. REASONS:

To ensure that the funding formula for schools distributes funding to all schools in the fairest way.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There is no proposal through this paper to change the funding for schools. This is looking at how the funding is distributed. If agreed there will be some schools that will gain and some that will lose, this is based on the pupil numbers in January 2019. The individual schools affected are listed in appendix 2.

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

This is attached in appendix 4.

8. CONSULTEEs:

All Headteachers
Chairs of Governing Bodies
Members of the School Budget Forum
Senior Leadership Team
Departmental Management Team
Diocesan Directors
All Elected Members
CYP Select Committee.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Current funding formula
Current expenditure in schools
Individual school changes based on the January 2019 pupil numbers
Evidence from the working group
Consultation responses
The Schools Budget Share (Wales) Regulations 2010
Regional formula working papers.

10. AUTHOR:

Nikki Wellington

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644549 E-mail: nicolawellington@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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Appendix 1

MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITY
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTORATE
CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – CHANGES TO THE FUNDING
FORMULA FOR SCHOOLS

- This document forms part of the consultation process on the proposed changes to the funding formula, which delegates funding to schools within Monmouthshire.
- The relevant Welsh Government legislation that Monmouthshire Local Education Authority is bound by is:

The Schools Budget Share (Wales) Regulations 2010.

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

**PROPOSAL TO CHANGES TO THE FORMULA FOR MONMOUTHSHIRE
SCHOOLS.**

Date of Issue: **16th October 2019**

Action Required: **Consultation closes noon on the 21st November 2019.**

Title of Document: The Review of Funding for Schools in Monmouthshire Consultation Document.

Audience: All Head teachers of Monmouthshire Schools, Chairs of Governing Bodies of Monmouthshire Schools, The Schools Budget Forum, the Senior Leadership Team, the Departmental Management Team of the Children and Young People Directorate, Diocesan Directors of Education and All Elected Members.

Overview: This document details the reasons for the review of the current consultation on Schools funding and outlines the new proposals for the distribution of this funding.

Action Required: A proforma (Appendix 2) is enclosed for your response. The completed form should be sent to the address below by the consultation closing date of **noon on the 21st November 2019**

Responses to: Nikki Wellington

Finance Manager
Children and Young People Directorate
Monmouthshire County Council
@Innovation House
PO Box 106
Caldicot
Monmouthshire
NP26 9AN
e-mail: nicolawellington@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Further Information: Enquiries about this consultation document should be directed to **Nikki Wellington**

Nikki Wellington
Tel: 01633 644549 / 07766 504389
e-mail: nicolawellington@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Additional Copies: These can be obtained from Nikki Wellington (telephone number and e-mail address above)

Related Documents: The Schools Budget Shares (Wales) Regulations 2010

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1	Background	<u>Page</u> 4
2	Issues with Current Arrangements	4
3	Proposal	4 - 6

Appendix 1 – Response Proforma

Appendix 2 – Proposed changes per school

1. Background

- 1.1 The school budget forum regularly reviews the funding formula for schools to ensure that the funding is distributed to schools in the fairest way.
- 1.2 Following a meeting of the School Budget Funding Forum on the 12th September 2019, members agreed to consult on the basis for delegating the following parts of the funding formula:
 - Free School Meals (this does not affect any funding relating to deprivation or the Pupil Development Grant)
 - Payroll
 - Advertising
 - Administration
 - Foreign language assistants.

2. Issues with current arrangements

- 2.1 The School Budget Forum requested that all parts of the formula, excluding funding for additional learning needs be reviewed. The review was to ensure that the distribution of the funding is relevant and reflects the cost drivers in the schools.
- 2.2 There is no proposal from this consultation to reduce the total funding going to schools, however given that the total budget will be distributed in a different way, should this be agreed, there will be some schools who will gain and some that will lose.
- 2.3 The School Budget Forum requested that a working group of interested parties was set up, to review the current distribution and make proposals to be consulted on. This working group met twice; once in July to look at the total formula and agree areas to be review, and again in September to decide on the proposals to take forward.
- 2.4 These proposals were agreed at the School Budget Forum on the 12th September 2019.
- 2.5 The financial summary of each proposal per school is shown in appendix 2. It should be noted that this is using the pupil numbers at January 2019, but will change each year. The implementation date, if agreed, is 1st April 2020.

3. Proposals.

3.1 Free School Meals: (Secondary Schools only, excl Mounton House)

- All secondary schools contract their own school meal service and therefore receive funding for pupils who are entitled to free school meals. This does not affect Mounton House or any of our Primary schools, as the service is provided free by the Local Authority.

- Currently the funding for key stage 3 is £4.79 per pupil and this drops to £2.39 per pupil for key stage 4. The reason for the reduction in funding are unclear and given that they are both compulsory school years, the working group are proposing that the funding is £4.79 per pupil for both key stages.

3.2 Payroll:

- Currently the funding for primary schools is £3.61 per pupil and £4.53 per pupil for secondary schools. All schools currently buy into the service level agreement for payroll, however the funding per school will not always cover the cost of this. The service level agreement charges a fixed rate per school that has been inflated over a number of years. Any changes to the Service Level Agreement will not be affected by these proposed changes.
- The proposal is to fund all schools at a consistent rate of £3.61 per pupil. The pupil numbers in a school will have a direct impact on the number of staff employed.

3.3 Advertising:

- Currently the funding for all schools is £0.85 per pupil. Schools rarely use this funding for advertising; therefore the working group felt that this funding should be distributed in a more appropriate way.
- The proposal is to distribute this funding via the general allowances element of the age weighted pupil units. This would mean that the following weighting would be applied:

Nursery	1.43
Foundation Phase	1.00
Key Stage 1	1.00
Year 7	0.65
Year 8	0.90
Year 9	1.00
Years 10 & 11	1.12

3.4 Administration (Primary Schools Only):

- The current formula has several administration elements of funding. These are split between the age weight pupil units with a top up of £4,414 for each primary school funded via the lump sum.
- The proposal is to bring all these elements together and fund as one administration element via the age weighted pupil units. The total funding will not reduce, but the schools with larger pupil numbers will attract more funding.

3.5 Foreign Language Assistants (Secondary Schools Only):

- All of our secondary schools are funded a lump sum of £11,246. Our schools have confirmed that the funding is outdated, as they no longer employ foreign language assistants.
- The proposal is to distribute this funding via the age weighted pupil units for secondary schools only.

4. Responses – to be received by noon on the 21st November 2019.

Please use appendix 1 below to complete your response.

APPENDIX 1 – RESPONSE PROFORMA

Formula area	I agree	I disagree	If you disagree, what is your proposal?
Free School Meals (ref 3.1)			
Payroll (ref 3.2)			
Advertising (ref 3.3)			
Administration (ref 3.4)			
Foreign Language Assistants (ref 3.5)			

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Schools	Areas	Current 2019-20 S52		
		Funding	FSM	Payroll
Caldicot School	AWPU	4,009,573	1,112	-1,048
	Premises & Other Factors	937,356		
	Post 16	764,597		
	SEN	587,888		
	Total	6,299,415	1,112	(1,048)
Chepstow School	AWPU	2,436,955	750	-633
	Premises & Other Factors	817,485		
	Post 16	776,924		
	SEN	131,845		
	Total	4,163,210	750	(633)
King Henry VIII	AWPU	2,864,797	750	-753
	Premises & Other Factors	842,198		
	Post 16	592,144		
	SEN	358,325		
	Total	4,657,464	750	(753)
Monmouth Comp	AWPU	4,482,208	1,225	-1,174
	Premises & Other Factors	860,994		
	Post 16	1,169,265		
	SEN	379,003		
	Total	6,891,471	1,225	(1,174)
Mounton House	AWPU	30,475		-19
	Premises & Other Factors	711,768		
	SEN	517,777		
	Total	1,260,020	0	(19)
	PRU	AWPU	-	
Premises & Other Factors		179,643		
SEN		261,600		
Total		441,243	0	0
ARW		AWPU	461,405	
	Premises & Other Factors	212,311		
	SEN	63,709		
	Total	737,425	0	0
	Castle Park	AWPU	452,133	
Premises & Other Factors		218,340		
SEN		30,187		
Total		700,660	0	0
Cantref		AWPU	511,826	
	Premises & Other Factors	227,557		
	SEN	52,665		
	Total	792,048	0	0
	Cross Ash	AWPU	415,495	
Premises & Other Factors		227,332		
SEN		38,649		
Total		681,476	0	0
Deri View		AWPU	659,161	
	Premises & Other Factors	370,121		
	SEN	175,891		
	Total	1,205,173	0	0
	Dewstow	AWPU	532,531	
Premises & Other Factors		260,360		
SEN		86,874		
Total		879,765	0	0
Durand		AWPU	530,295	
	Premises & Other Factors	209,448		

	SEN	58,820		
	Total	798,563	0	0
Gilwern	AWPU	463,675		
	Premises & Other Factors	199,782		
	SEN	40,895		
	Total	704,352	0	0
Goytre	AWPU	445,356		
	Premises & Other Factors	200,567		
	SEN	35,508		
	Total	681,430	0	0
Kymin View	AWPU	442,088		
	Premises & Other Factors	275,124		
	SEN	93,013		
	Total	810,225	0	0
Llandogo	AWPU	153,045		
	Premises & Other Factors	146,943		
	SEN	8,433		
	Total	308,421	0	0
Llanfoist	AWPU	479,565		
	Premises & Other Factors	204,154		
	SEN	31,534		
	Total	715,253	0	0
Llantilio	AWPU	458,943		
	Premises & Other Factors	207,123		
	SEN	33,813		
	Total	699,880	0	0
Llanvihangel	AWPU	155,251		
	Premises & Other Factors	141,064		
	SEN	6,257		
	Total	302,572	0	0
Magor	AWPU	717,323		
	Premises & Other Factors	219,518		
	SEN	77,473		
	Total	1,014,313	0	0
Osbaston	AWPU	458,911		
	Premises & Other Factors	204,218		
	SEN	20,565		
	Total	683,694	0	0
OLSM	AWPU	420,553		
	Premises & Other Factors	221,177		
	SEN	34,096		
	Total	675,826	0	0
Overmonnow	AWPU	764,065		
	Premises & Other Factors	295,504		
	SEN	431,925		
	Total	1,491,495	0	0
Pembroke	AWPU	517,503		
	Premises & Other Factors	227,630		
	SEN	358,020		
	Total	1,103,153	0	0
Raglan	AWPU	461,373		
	Premises & Other Factors	197,680		
	SEN	40,054		
	Total	699,107	0	0
Rogiet	AWPU	456,801		
	Premises & Other Factors	213,866		
	SEN	60,130		
	Total	730,798	0	0
Shirenewton	AWPU	456,705		

	Premises & Other Factors	194,255		
	SEN	35,941		
St Mary's	Total	686,901	0	0
	AWPU	376,554		
	Premises & Other Factors	234,931		
	SEN	14,631		
The Dell	Total	626,116	0	0
	AWPU	903,915		
	Premises & Other Factors	265,450		
	SEN	45,263		
Thornwell	Total	1,214,627	0	0
	AWPU	629,985		
	Premises & Other Factors	256,669		
	SEN	43,612		
Trellech	Total	930,266	0	0
	AWPU	401,907		
	Premises & Other Factors	229,232		
	SEN	29,216		
Undy	Total	660,355	0	0
	AWPU	748,353		
	Premises & Other Factors	299,943		
	SEN	114,391		
Usk	Total	1,162,687	0	0
	AWPU	596,323		
	Premises & Other Factors	253,390		
	SEN	55,079		
Ysgol y Fenni	Total	904,792	0	0
	AWPU	587,770		
	Premises & Other Factors	234,208		
	SEN	26,846		
Ysgol y Ffin	Total	848,824	0	0
	AWPU	268,359		
	Premises & Other Factors	234,596		
	SEN	15,921		
	Total	518,876	0	0
Total Funding		47,681,897	3,838	(3,628)

APPENDIX 2

debits = increase in funding
 credits = reduction in funding

Advertising	Admin	FLA	Total of Amendments compared to current S52 Funding
28		16,248	16,340
		(11,246)	(11,246)
28	0	5,001	5,094
26		9,814	9,957
		(11,246)	(11,246)
26	0	(1,432)	(1,289)
16		11,669	11,682
		(11,246)	(11,246)
16	0	422	436
27		18,202	18,280
		(11,246)	(11,246)
27	0	6,955	7,033
2		300	282
		(11,246)	(11,246)
2	0	(10,947)	(10,964)
0	0		0
-3	4,101		4,098
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-313	0	(316)
-3	4,019		4,016
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-394	0	(398)
-3	4,547		4,544
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	133	0	130
-3	3,695		3,692
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-719	0	(722)
-4	5,857		5,852
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-4	1,443	0	1,438
-4	4,730		4,726
	(4,414)		-4,414
-4	316	0	312
-4	4,710		4,706
	(4,414)		(4,414)

-4	296	0	292
-3	4,121		4,118
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-293	0	(296)
-3	3,959		3,956
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-455	0	(458)
-3	3,928		3,925
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-486	0	(489)
-1	1,360		1,359
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-1	-3,054	0	(3,055)
-3	4,263		4,260
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-151	0	(154)
-3	4,080		4,077
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-334	0	(337)
-1	1,380		1,379
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-1	-3,034	0	(3,035)
-5	6,374		6,369
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-5	1,960	0	1,956
-3	4,080		4,077
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-334	0	(337)
-3	3,634		3,631
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-780	0	(783)
-5	6,790		6,785
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-5	2,376	0	2,371
-3	4,598		4,595
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	184	0	181
-3	4,101		4,098
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-313	0	(316)
-3	4,060		4,057
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-354	0	(357)
-3	4,060		4,057

	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-354	0	(357)
-3	3,350		3,347
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-1,064	0	(1,067)
-6	8,039		8,033
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-6	3,625	0	3,619
-4	5,593		5,588
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-4	1,179	0	1,175
-3	3,573		3,570
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-3	-841	0	(844)
-5	6,648		6,643
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-5	2,234	0	2,229
-4	5,298		5,294
	(4,414)		(4,414)
-4	884	0	880
17	5,638		5,656
	(4,414)		(4,414)
17	1,224	0	1,242
8	2,579		2,587
	(4,414)		(4,414)
8	-1,835	0	(1,827)
31	747	(0)	988

APPENDIX 3 – RESPONSE PROFORMA - RESPONSES

Formula area	I agree	I disagree	If you disagree, what is your proposal?
Free School Meals (ref 3.1)	5 Schools agreed Senior leadership team – no comment. Member agreed.		
Payroll (ref 3.2)	5 Schools agreed Senior leadership team – no comment. Member agreed.		
Advertising (ref 3.3)	5 Schools agreed Senior leadership team – no comment. Member agreed.		
Administration (ref 3.4)	5 Schools agreed Senior leadership team – no comment. Member agreed.		
Foreign Language Assistants (ref 3.5)	5 Schools agreed Senior leadership team – no comment. Member agreed.		

CYP SELECT COMMITTEE RESPONSE

Scrutiny of proposals to change the Schools Funding Formula

The report was brought to the committee to seek the views of members on the proposed changes to the funding formula for all schools, whilst this is under consultation. The lead officer advised that this review is a regular review in order to ensure the fairest distribution of funding to schools. The Schools Funding Forum had requested a working group review the formula and having undertaken the review, the forum has made the recommendations outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report. The officer explained that the rationale for the recommendations is outlined in section 3 of the consultation document attached in appendix 1 of the report.

The committee were advised that there were no proposals to reduce the overall funding, but that the recommendations outlined in the report proposed a redistribution of funds in a fairer way. The views of the select committee would be taken into account with the consultation responses when the Executive make a decision.

Challenge:

- My first question is around equity. I'm keen for everyone to be treated equally and I believe that whenever we get an opportunity to consider funding, we should address inequality and disadvantage. Some schools have to spend a lot of resources on addressing inequality, so I would be reassured if we could somehow acknowledge the effect of deprivation.

It is difficult, it's essentially the same pot of money and we are just redistributing it in a fairer way, but we will consider this. There are Welsh Government grants that address deprivation and the pupil deprivation grants that go to schools are one of these, but we will take tis into account.

- Please can you offer more explanation into the rationale for the changes, the justification and explain the impacts on schools?

The officer described in detail the rationale for the recommendations, explaining that some schools received funding streams for services they no longer administered and that through consultation, the feedback of each school had been taken into account in making the recommendations.

Outcome and Chair's Conclusion:

The committee supported the proposals to change the schools funding formula in line with the findings and recommendations of the Schools Funding Forum's review. They acknowledged that the overall funding for schools is not being reduced, but that funds are being distributed in a fairer way. The committee requested:

- The officer considers how best to reflect the issue of deprivation.
- The Service Level Agreement on payroll is emailed to the committee.

The chair reminded the committee that all elected members can feed their individual comments through via the consultation process.

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monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Future Generations Evaluation (Includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)

<p>Name of the Officer Nikki Wellington</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644549 E-mail: nicolawellington@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>Proposed changes to the schools funding formula for the elements.</p> <p>Free School Meals (this does not affect any funding relating to deprivation or the Pupil Development Grant), Payroll, Advertising, Administration and Foreign language assistants.</p>
<p>Name of Service CYP Finance</p>	<p>Date Future Generations Evaluation 16th January 2020</p>

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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.



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?
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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>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The proposal will not alter the level of funding for schools or the amount of grants that are distributed to schools.</p> <p>As the recommendations change the method of distribution to have more funding distribute via pupil led factors, there will be some schools that will have an increase in funding. This will allow additional resources in schools to support pupils. The effect on individual schools is outlined in appendix 2.</p> <p>The funding for pupils with Additional Learning Needs has been excluded from this proposal.</p>	<p>The proposal will not alter the level of funding for schools or the amount of grants that are distributed to schools.</p> <p>As the recommendations change the method of distribution to have more funding distribute via pupil led factors, there will be some schools that will have a decrease in funding. The largest decrease is £10,964 based on January 2019 pupil numbers. While this is not material to the overall funding the school will need to seek savings to offset this. The effect on individual schools is outlined in appendix 2.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to expand learning for pupils in this area.</p>	<p>Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to reduce / cease learning for pupils in this area. The largest funding reduction is not material to the overall funding levels for schools it will be necessary for schools to make saving to offset the reduction in income.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to expand learning for pupils in this area.</p> <p>The funding for pupils with Additional Learning Needs has been excluded from this proposal.</p>	<p>Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to reduce / cease learning for pupils in this area. The largest funding reduction is not material to the overall funding levels for schools it will be necessary for schools to make saving to offset the reduction in income.</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?
		In addition to this should there be a need to make redundancies as a result of this, the protection of employment policy will be followed with advice from people services.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to expand learning for pupils in this area.	Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to reduce / cease learning for pupils in this area. The largest funding reduction is not material to the overall funding levels for schools it will be necessary for schools to make saving to offset the reduction in income.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to expand learning for pupils in this area.	Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to reduce / cease learning for pupils in this area. The largest funding reduction is not material to the overall funding levels for schools it will be necessary for schools to make saving to offset the reduction in income.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to expand learning for pupils in this area.	Where there is an increase in the funding for a school, it may be the decision of the Headteacher to reduce / cease learning for pupils in this area. The largest funding reduction is not material to the overall funding levels for schools it will be necessary for schools to make saving to offset the reduction in income.
A more equal Wales	Schools will still have sufficient funding to allow them to support learners to fulfil their potential. The changes in funding mean that more funding will be	Schools will still have sufficient funding to allow them to support learners to fulfil their potential. The changes in funding mean that more funding will be

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?
People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	<p>pupil led and therefore schools with more pupils on roll will receive greater funding to support this.</p> <p>The funding for pupils with Additional Learning Needs has been excluded from this proposal.</p>	<p>pupil led and therefore schools with fewer pupils on roll will receive less funding to support this. However the largest decrease is £10,964 and while the school will need to identify savings.</p> <p>The funding for pupils with Additional Learning Needs has been excluded from this proposal.</p>

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>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The changes in funding have been proposed following a regular review of the formula to ensure that it distributes funding in the best way. The formula needs fund schools in a way that allows sustainability of provision.</p>	<p>Under this proposal there is no proposal to reduce funding to schools and therefore this will allow schools to see the impact of this change over a number of years and plan for future years.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</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>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>There has been full consultation over long period to allow all interested parties to respond. The list of full consultees is outlined in section 8 of the cabinet paper.</p>	<p>All responses have been reported to the school budget forum and discussed in full before agreeing to progress with these changes.</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>		
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</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

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	As the funds will be distributed on pupil led factors then larger schools will see an increase in funding to support resources in their schools.	As the funds will be distributed on pupil led factors then larger schools will see an increase in funding to support resources in their schools. However the largest reduction in funding, based on January 2019 pupils is £10,964 and this is for a secondary school. This reduction is not material in terms of the overall level of funding received therefore schools should be able to make the saving required without impacting on the education provision.	There has been full consultation with schools and this has been communicated clearly to all schools. This has included the impact per school. The finance team will continue to work with schools to find the saving required to minimise the impact on the delivery of education.
Disability	The funding for pupils with Additional Learning Needs is outside the scope of this proposal.		
Gender reassignment			
Marriage or civil partnership			
Pregnancy or maternity			
Race			
Religion or Belief			

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?
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			
Welsh Language			

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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	<i>All safeguarding policies will be followed by schools.</i>		
Corporate Parenting			

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

Current funding formula
Current spend in schools
Individual school funding changes based on the January 2019 pupil numbers
Evidence from the working group
Consultation responses
The Schools Budget Share (Wales) Regulations 2010
Regional formula working papers.

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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 proposal is to change the current funding formula to distribute more funding via pupil led factors, this will result in schools with a greater number of pupils on roll will gain funding. As this proposal does not change the level of funding distributed then some schools will see a reduction in funding as a result. The schools with the largest reduction (£10,964) is a secondary school and this reduction is not material to the overall level of funding provided.

Schools have been fully consulted and their views have been taken into account when shaping the final proposal. All funding for pupils with Additional Learning Needs has been excluded from this proposal.

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
Assess the impact on school budgets	June 2020	Nikki Wellington	

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.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	May 2020 and continuing via the 2020-21 monitoring process.
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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.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1.0	Initial draft	16 th January 2020.	

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SUBJECT: 2020/21 EDUCATION AND WELSH CHURCH TRUST FUNDS INVESTMENT AND FUND STRATEGIES

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 19th February 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All Authority

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Cabinet for approval the 2020/21 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee for adoption and to approve the 2020/21 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.

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RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the proposed Investment and Fund Strategy for 2020/21 for the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund be approved.
- 2.2 That the proposed Investment and Fund Strategy for 2020/21 for the Welsh Church Fund be approved.
- 2.3 To delegate responsibility for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Head of Finance (S151 officer) who will act in accordance with the Investment and Funds Strategy (appendix 2).
- 2.4 To approve the 2020/21 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries to the Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund of £210,000 to be distributed in accordance with population shares as per the 2010 Census.
- 2.5 That the Monmouthshire Farm School Trust Board determines the 2020-21 grant allocation at its January 2020 meeting based on the previous years' investment return at the end of March 2019, and any under spends carried forward from the 2019-20 grant allocation, and to avoid eroding the overall fund.
- 2.6 To endorse the Welsh Church Fund Principles, Policy Considerations and Grant Allocation Criteria for 2020-21 (Appendix 6) as considered and approved by the Welsh Church Fund Committee on the 16th January 2020.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Authority acts as the sole trustee for the Welsh Church Fund and the custodian with responsibility for financial arrangements for the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund and is required annually to approve Investment and Fund Strategies for them. In addition, for the Welsh Church Fund the Authority is required to determine the grant allocation for the forthcoming year.
- 3.2 The contract for the position of Treasury Advisor to Monmouthshire County Council, the Welsh Church Act Fund and the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust was retendered in 2015/16. This resulted in Arlingclose being re-awarded the contract in March 2016 for 4 years with the option to extend for a further two years now being implemented. All three bodies will therefore continue to receive ongoing advice and support on investments until at least the 31st March 2022 from Arlingclose.

Investment and Fund Strategy

- 3.3 In acting in its capacity as either sole trustee or custodian, the Authority is required to have Investment policies in place for the Monmouthshire Farms Endowment Trust Fund and the Welsh Church Fund in order to comply with the [Trustee Act 2000](#). The policies ensure that monies are invested in the best interests of the Trusts.

The Annual Investment and Fund strategies for the Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund and Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Fund set priorities are, in the order shown, to;

- a) Maintain security of the invested capital;
- b) Maintain sufficient liquidity to allow grants to be distributed;
- c) Maintain an optimum yield which is commensurate with security and liquidity.

- 3.4 The Trust holds real assets within pooled funds (Collective Investment Funds) such as to maximise the average annual income stream to the Trust over a 3 to 5 year' business cycle without a sustained loss of capital funds. This policy was adopted as the Investment Strategy for the WCF in 2013/14. Arlingclose as treasury advisors to the Welsh Church Fund have supported the Welsh Church fund in making these types of investments, and these investments were taken out between May 2013 and January 2014. The latest fund review was undertaken by Arlingclose in 2019 and these investments remain a risk balanced investment portfolio in line with the investment priorities.

- 3.5 The current view from investment market projections continues to be that UK base rates will remain relatively low with a small downward perspective in regard to the economy struggling to grow. The basis for the change in investment strategy in point 3.4 was still relevant for 2019/20 and will be monitored with the help of the Authority's treasury advisor on an ongoing basis to ensure returns are optimised in 2020/21, which may require a change in investment vehicles.

- 3.6 Pooled investment funds are suited to bodies such as the Welsh Church Fund and the Mon Farm School Trust Fund which are looking for a steady and/or higher average income streams and who are able to leave the principal in place for a business cycle as they do not need to access the principal over the medium term. This enables the Trust to benefit from above average good years despite lower returns in infrequent poorer years.
- 3.7 There is a risk relating to the use of these funds in that the principal amount can go down as well as up in value. Again this is suited to the Welsh Church Fund as the Trust can tolerate these movements over a longer business cycle. The movements are expected to be at least neutral over a business cycle and the earning power of these investments is not largely affected by the market value.
- 3.8 For the financial year 2018-19, the WCF has received income of £210,597 from its external investment funds and through rental income. The forecast for income for the full maintaining the distribution level at £210,000 will ensure that the funds raised for charitable purposes in 2018-19 are distributed fully and thereby assisting future grant recipients in need of financial support without a significant depletion in capital assets.
- 3.9 In the financial year 2018/19, the income received from the pooled funds was off-set by a paper net capital gain of £41,399 (£21,068 loss in 2017/18). As indicated in point 3.6, a movement in capital value is expected with these types of investments and not expected to impact the fund in the long term. For this reason, Arlingclose strongly recommend continuing to spread the investments over a number of assets classes, equity, property and bonds to reduce any substantial risk of losses.
- 3.10 A revised Investment and Fund strategy for the Welsh Church Act Fund is contained in Appendix 2.
- The strategies state that the balance of cash not invested directly by the Trust Funds can be managed on a pooled basis by Monmouthshire County Council to maximise investment returns and to minimise exposure to investment losses. This cash balance is required primarily to ensure sufficient cash is available to distribute grants during the financial year and reimburse other authorities within Greater Gwent at the financial year-end.
- 3.11 Following recommendations from Treasury Advisors Arlingclose, The Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust adopted a similar risk and investment strategy to that of the Welsh Church Fund. A report continuing this strategy was presented to, and approved by the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust Board in January 2020. The additional investments adopted are still in place.
- 3.12 In the financial year 2018-19, the Mon Farms Trust received income of £25,429 from its direct investments in funds and £1,436 from the Roger Edwards Educational Trust Fund. These total investment returns were below the grants and fees allocated from the Trust and so this potentially decreases the funds available for distribution in 2020/21. The trustees have agreed though to maintain the grants available at £30,000 in 2020-21 as a result of underspends from previous years.

3.13 In the 2018/19 financial year, the income received from the pooled funds invested in by the Trustees directly was augmented by a paper net capital gain of £1,590. As indicated in point 3.6, a movement in capital value is expected with these types of investments and not expected to impact the fund in the long term. For this reason, Arlingclose strongly recommend continuing to spread the investments over a number of assets classes, equity, property and bonds to reduce the risk of losses. It should be noted however that as the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust receives income from the Roger Edwards Trust and that this income is achieved by investing in Equity and Property based products, in order to diversify, the additional products selected for direct investment were weighted towards bond based products, with some additional property based products being purchased more recently. The bond based products have performed on a relatively flat basis over the last 12 months, creating a small capital gain. This situation is being actively discussed with Arlingclose to optimize performance over the medium term although diversification is still seen as the best policy.

3.14 Appendix 1 outlines the Annual Investment and Fund Strategy 2020/21.

Grant Allocation of the Welsh Church Fund

3.15 The Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund was established on 1st April 1996 from the former Gwent Fund and part of the former Mid Glamorgan Fund. The Fund covers the administrative areas of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Torfaen and Monmouthshire, with Monmouthshire being designated as the lead Authority.

3.16 Since 1996 trustees have sought to obtain a satisfactory rate of return from the fund's investments thereby enabling grants to beneficiaries after meeting expenses, whilst maintaining the capital value of the fund in real terms.

3.17 The fund balance held by the trust was £5,374,556 at 31st March 2019 (£5,492,332 at 31st March 2018). It is recommended that the grant allocation be maintained at £210,000 in 2019/20 (£210,000 in 2018/19). The forecast for 2019- 20 income is estimated to be around £210,000 which is on par with the £210,597 received in 2018-19 and is sufficient to maintain the budget level for 2020-21 without a long term detrimental effect on capital balances.

3.18 . This will result in the following distribution being recommended:

AUTHORITY	POPULATION (000)**	PERCENTAGE SPLIT	BUDGET*
Blaenau Gwent CBC	68.4	12.2	25,586
Caerphilly CBC	173.1	30.8	64,751
Monmouthshire CC	88.1	15.7	32,955
Newport CBC	141.3	25.2	52,855
Torfaen CBC	90.5	16.1	33,853
TOTAL	561.4	100.0	£210,000

*The above figures do not include any brought forward unspent grant allocations

**Source: 2011 Census ONS

Risk Assessment of the Welsh Church Fund

- 3.19 The financial assistance provided by the Welsh Church Fund supports a very wide range of community activities, including voluntary and sporting organisations. Annually, monies are distributed and the key risk faced by the Welsh Church Fund is loss or reduction in the amount of monies available.
- 3.20 The risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that risks faced by the Trust are identified and mitigated through appropriate and robust controls put in place by the Authority in its position as sole and corporate Trustee. The existing risk assessment policy has been reviewed and is considered to be adequate and sufficiently robust to continue during the 2020/21 financial year. The risk assessment is attached for information at appendix 5.

Risk Assessment of the Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust

- 3.21 The financial assistance provided by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust supports a very wide range of students, studying at agricultural based colleges in the UK. Applicants must live in the former Gwent area (excluding Newport) and preference is given to those under 25 years old. Annually, monies are distributed and the key risk faced by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust is loss or reduction in the amount of monies available for distribution.
- 3.22 A risk assessment is undertaken to ensure that risks faced by the Trust are identified and mitigated through appropriate and robust controls put in place by the Authority, in its position as the Trustee with responsibility for financial arrangements. The risk assessment policy is attached for information at Appendix 4.

4. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Options available are restricted by the nature of the governing documents of the Welsh Church Act Fund and Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust

5. REASONS:

- 5.1 To produce an annual Investment and Fund Strategy in order that the Authority fulfils its responsibilities as corporate and sole trustee in order to comply with the Trustee Act 2000.

5.2 To approve the 2020/21 grant allocation for the Welsh Church Fund, enabling constituent Local Authorities to make qualifying grant allocations under the Welsh Church Fund Trust Scheme.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The grant allocation to beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund is set in the context of the fund balance being maintained over the long term. It is funded through net income generated through investment returns.

6.2 The appointment of a dedicated treasury advisor to the Welsh Church Fund will be an ongoing annual charge against the Fund. However, in light of the revised treasury strategy which attracts more treasury risk it is deemed prudent and it is anticipated will be more than outweighed by increased investment returns. The fee negotiated is considered to be competitive and further efficiencies are generated from the Authority dealing with one advisor for its treasury advice.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

7.1 There are no adverse Future Generation implications arising directly from this report. The Future Generations Evaluations form is attached under appendix 5.

There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

The approval of the Investment and Fund Strategies do not require any specific decisions to be made which could have an adverse impact on any group or individual within the Council. The approval of the Welsh Church Fund budget for 2020-21 is seen to have a neutral impact on the sustainability of the fund going forward.

8. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet Members
Head of Legal Services

Results of Consultation

No adverse comments received

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust – Annual Investment and Fund Strategy 2020/21

Appendix 2 – Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund – Investment and Fund Strategy 2020/21

Appendix 3 – Monmouthshire Farm School Endowment Trust – Risk Assessment Policy 2020/21

Appendix 4 – Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund – Risk Assessment Policy 2020/21

Appendix 5 – Future Generations Evaluation Form

Appendix 6 -- Welsh Church Fund Principles, Policy Considerations and Grant Allocation Criteria for 2020/21

10. AUTHORS:

Dave Jarrett – Senior Accountant Business Support

Nicola Wellington – Children & Young People Finance Manager

CONTACT DETAILS:

E-mail: davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Telephone: 01633 644657

The Investment & Fund Strategy for the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust 2020/21 Appendix 1

1. Background

- 1.1 The Trustees shall each year consider for approval an annual Investment Strategy. The Trustees may also request submission of a longer term investment strategy for approval. Any proposed in-year modification to the Investment Strategy must be approved by the Trustees.
- 1.2 This investment strategy has been prepared with the assistance of Arlingclose, the current treasury advisor to both the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust and also Monmouthshire County Council.
- 1.3 The Trustees have agreed to a continued relationship with a Treasury advisor to provide expert advice on the continued suitability of a variety of investment vehicles for inclusion in its portfolio. This will carry a small charge.

2. Interest Rate Forecast

Arlingclose's forecast is for the UK Bank Rate to remain flat at .075% with a chance of decreasing further by 0.25% in late 2020. Risks remain slightly weighted to the downside.

With short term interest rates still low, an investment strategy historically would have typically resulted in a lengthening of investment periods, where cash flow permits, in order to lock in higher rates of acceptable risk adjusted returns. The problem in the current environment is finding an investment counterparty providing acceptable levels of counterparty risk for investments of that duration and also an acceptable return.

- 2.3 The Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust, by means of this Investment strategy is permitted to utilise suitable Collective Investment Schemes/Pooled Funds, which enable the Authority to diversify the assets and thereby reduce the underlying risk in the investment portfolio and at the same time providing the potential for enhanced returns.

3. Annual Investment and Fund Strategy

- 3.1 The Trustees shall invest Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust monies in accordance with Section 15 of the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire.
- 3.2 Day to day activities required to implement this shall be delegated to the S151 Officer and the Treasury team of Monmouthshire County Council. This can include a change to investment vehicle providing it still lies within the scope of this Investment strategy and is approved by the current Treasury Management advisors.
- 3.3 In accordance with best practice, the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust must consider the three objectives of security, liquidity and yield in relation to the investment of its funds when making any investment. Maintaining a high level of security of investment ensures the long term income generating capacity of the fund. The liquidity or accessibility of a portion of the investments ensures in the short term expenses of the fund can be met.
- 3.4 The Overall Fund Strategy of the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund is to generate investment returns which after meeting the expenses of managing the Fund, can be distributed to selected beneficiaries. The investment strategy is therefore to maximise returns commensurate with appropriate levels of security and liquidity. Investments in Collective Investment Funds are likely to result in fluctuations in principal. It is acceptable to allow this, if having taken appropriate advice; they are expected to be temporary in nature, in order to improve total returns over a 3 to 5 year' business cycle.
- At 31st March 2019, the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust had £643,160 of pooled investments and £11,751 of cash.
- 3.5 Investments can be taken out by the Fund without specific reference to the Treasury Advisors at the time providing they are sterling denominated investments with a maximum maturity of one year and also meet the "high credit quality" criteria determined by the Trustees and set out in paragraph 3.9 and are not deemed capital expenditure investments under Statute.
- 3.7 Investments which do not meet the strict definition below of high credit quality and which have a longer term Investment horizon can be made but only after consulting with the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund treasury advisors and the Head of Finance (S151 Officer) at Monmouthshire County Council, who represents the Trustees, to ensure the level of risk is in line with the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund's other current investment options.
- 3.8 The types of investments that are permitted to be used by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust are as follows:

Table 2: Investments

Investment	
Term deposits or Cash Deposits with banks and building societies	✓
Gilts, Treasury-bills or the UK Debt Management Office	✓
Collective Investment Schemes	✓
Pooled funds with Monmouthshire County Council	✓

3.9 The Trustees and its advisors select countries and financial institutions after analysis and ongoing monitoring of:

- Published credit ratings for financial institutions (counterparties):
 - Investments are classed as having high credit quality if the lowest credit rating they have with Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poors' is A-, A3 and A- or higher.
 - And a country rating of AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns
- Credit Default Swaps (where quoted)
- Sovereign Support mechanisms
- Economic fundamentals (for example Net Debt as a percentage of GDP) and Economic trends
- Sovereign support mechanisms
- Share Prices
- Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum
- Historical performance and expected future trends of Collective Investment Funds
- Subjective overlay – or, put more simply, common sense.

Any institution can be suspended or removed should any of the factors identified above give rise to concern. The Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust fund will not enter into any investment if it is outside the advice given by its Treasury advisors which is updated monthly, weekly and daily according to the movements in the worldwide backdrop. This includes guidance on the maximum maturity of investments with approved counterparties.

3.10 New Investments made directly by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust Fund will be restricted in the following ways to ensure diversification and hence reduction of both credit risk and interest rate risk.

- A minimum of £40,000 (at the time of investment) needs to be held in investments which are sufficiently liquid such as cash or other investments less than one year so that grants can still be made if investment returns are low or to allow for the lead time for realising certain investments. The full remaining balance can be invested in Collective Investment funds to maximise returns if this is in line with the requirements of this strategy.
- The maximum amount which can be invested directly by the Monmouthshire Farms Endowment Trust Fund [MFETF] in any one Collective Investment Fund (at the time of investment) is 45% of the total MFETF investment balance.

The amount invested should be spread across different asset classes such as Property, Bonds and Equity to diversify and reduce overall risk. This spread should be viewed collectively with the funds invested by the Roger Edwards Educational Trust [REET] and from which the MFETF benefits (£650,000 purchase price). As the REET Investments are weighted towards Equity it is not possible to achieve an equal split across asset classes but a level of between 20% and 45% for at least three asset classes should be aimed for. Appendix A includes the model portfolio which was used as a basis for the investments which have been undertaken.

- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be held with Monmouthshire County Council or Instruments issued by the UK Government, if required
- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be invested as term deposits, CDs or call accounts with banks and building societies. The maximum amount which can be invested with any one financial institution is £100,000 if of high credit quality (approx 15% of the total MFETF investment balance) or £50,000 if approved by the Treasury advisors although not considered high credit quality.
- The maximum duration of term deposits and CDs with banks and building societies shall be in line with the ongoing advice given by the Trust's treasury advisors which varies with world economic factors.

3.11 At the end of each financial year the Trustees shall consider the actual return on investments & the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved.

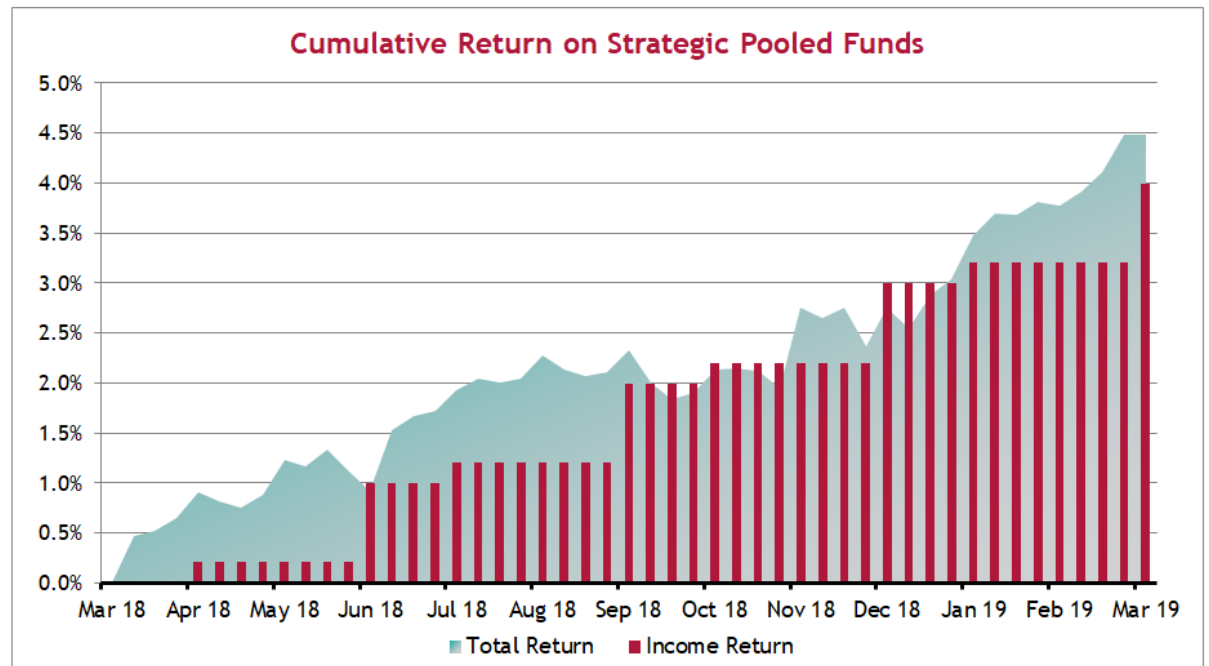
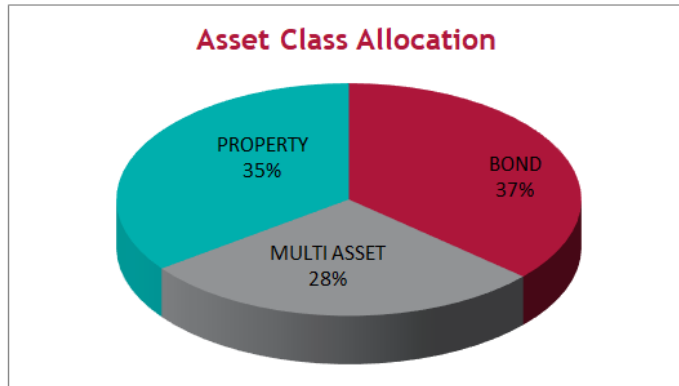
3.12 The Trustees shall observe the following constraints in pursuing the investment objectives:

- The restrictions on investments contained within Section 15 of the scheme made by Monmouthshire County Council.
- A proportion of the funds held may be pooled with Monmouthshire County Council's overall investment portfolio, which is invested in line with the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy. Interest earned by the Authority and any investment losses incurred by the Authority will be apportioned proportionally between the Local Authority and Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust in line with the total investments held by each party.

NB: Any investments which move outside of the above criteria with time will be reinvested within the above criteria on maturity.

- 3.13 There are currently no ethical constraints on investment of funds and this matter will be reviewed if there are any changes in charity law or other requirements.
- 3.14 There is now more than 12 months' history to Monmouthshire Farms Trust's pooled fund holding. In capital terms, it should be remembered that the emphasis of the investment in the selected funds is based on a long-term strategy of a five-year rolling basis
- 3.15 The values and performance of the investments reported in the latest available Arlingclose report are as follows;

FUND NAME	ASSET CLASS	No of Units Held in Period	Current Value £	Capital Growth £	Dividends Earned £	Holding Period (yrs)	Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return	Volatility
CCLA - COIF PROPERTY FUND	PROPERTY	193,705	225,860	5,559	12,397	1.0	2.52%	5.63%	8.15%	2.8%
M&G CHARIBOND FUND	BOND	190,470	234,907	-76	5,333	1.0	-0.03%	2.27%	2.24%	1.4%
UBS MULTI ASSET INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	377,858	182,392	-2,343	7,859	1.0	-1.27%	4.25%	2.99%	3.3%
GRAND TOTAL			643,159	3,140	25,590	1.0	0.49%	4.00%	4.49%	1.6%
Annualised Returns:							0.49%	4.00%	4.49%	



Please note the data above reflects the performance of the funds since inception as the funds were purchased on 29th January 2015.

4. Training

- 4.1 The Head of Finance (S151 Officer) will ensure all staff are suitable trained to assist with this process and will organise awareness training to Trustees, Cabinet and Audit Committee where appropriate.

5. Investment Consultants/ Treasury Advisors

- 5.1 The Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trustees use Arlingclose as their Treasury Management Consultants to provide information, advice and training relating to investments. Information relating to investments is provided from publicly available data and is summarised in order to assist with decision making within the Authority. The information and advice covers the level of risk of investment and the variety of options available.

The Investment & Fund Strategy for the Welsh Church Act Fund 2020/21

1. Background

- 1.2 The Cabinet shall each year consider for approval an annual Investment Strategy. The Cabinet may also request submission of a longer term investment strategy for approval. Any proposed in-year modification to the Investment Strategy must be approved by the Cabinet.
- 1.2 The Welsh Church Fund Funds strategy shall be considered in conjunction with any review of the Investment Strategy.
- 1.3 Local Authorities are required by the Welsh Government's Investment Guidance to produce an Annual Investment Strategy. The Trustees of the Welsh Church Fund have elected to use this Guidance where practicable and relevant. The guidance emphasises an appropriate approach to risk management, particularly in relation to the security and liquidity of invested funds.
- 1.4 This investment strategy has been prepared with the assistance of Arlingclose, the current treasury advisor to both the Welsh Church Fund and also Monmouthshire County Council (the sole Trustee of the Welsh Church Fund).

Interest Rate Forecast

Arlingclose's forecast is for the UK Bank Rate to remain flat at .075% with a chance of decreasing further by 0.25% in late 2020. Risks remain slightly weighted to the downside.

- 2.2 The economic and interest rate forecast is provided by Monmouthshire County Council's current treasury management advisor. The Authority, in its position as trustee, will reappraise its strategies from time to time in response to evolving economic, political and financial events.
- 2.3 With short term interest rates still low, an investment strategy historically would have typically resulted in a lengthening of investment periods, where cash flow permits, in order to lock in higher rates of acceptable risk adjusted returns. The problem in the current environment is finding an investment counterparty providing acceptable levels of counterparty risk for investments of that duration.
- 2.4 The Welsh Church Fund is permitted to utilise suitable Collective Investment Schemes/Pooled Funds, which enable the Authority to diversify the assets and underlying risk in the investment portfolio and at the same time providing the potential for enhanced returns.

3. Annual Investment and Fund Strategy

3.1 The Cabinet shall invest Welsh Church Fund monies in accordance with Section 15 of the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire under Section 19 of the Welsh Church Act 1914.

3.2 In accordance with best practice, the Welsh Church fund must consider the three objectives of security, liquidity and yield in relation to the investment of its funds when making any investment. Maintaining a high level of security of investment ensures the long term income generating capacity of the fund. The liquidity or accessibility of a portion of the investments ensures in the short term expenses of the fund can be met.

3.3 The Overall Fund Strategy of the Welsh Church Trust Fund is to generate investment returns which after meeting the expenses of managing the Fund, can be distributed to selected beneficiaries. The investment strategy is therefore to maximise returns commensurate with appropriate levels of security and liquidity. Investments in Collective Investment Funds are likely to result in fluctuations in principal. It is acceptable to allow this, if having taken appropriate advice; they are expected to be temporary in nature, in order to improve total returns over a 3 to 5 year' business cycle.

At 31st March 2019, the Welsh Church Fund had £4.87m of Fixed Asset and Pooled Fund investments (market value) and £395,958 of cash.

Investments which do not meet the strict definition below of high credit quality and which have a longer term Investment horizon can be made but only after consulting with the Fund's treasury advisors and the Head of Resources (S151 Officer) at Monmouthshire County Council, who represents the Trustees, to ensure the level of risk is in line with the Welsh church Fund's other current investment options.

3.6 The types of investments that are permitted to be used by the WCF are as follows:

Table 2: Investments

Investment	Specified
Call accounts, term deposits or Cash Deposits with banks and building societies	✓
Gilts, Treasury-bills or the UK Debt Management Office	✓
Collective Investment Schemes	✓
Pooled funds with Monmouthshire County Council	✓

3.7 Investments can be taken out by the Fund without specific reference to the Treasury Advisors at the time providing they are sterling denominated investments with a maximum maturity of one year and also meet the “high credit quality” criteria determined by the Trustee and set out in paragraph 3.8 and are not deemed capital expenditure investments under Statute.

3.8 The Trustees and its advisors select countries and financial institutions after analysis and ongoing monitoring of:

- Published credit ratings for financial institutions (counterparties):
 - Investments are classed as having high credit quality if the lowest credit rating they have with Fitch, Moody’s and Standard & Poors’ is A-, A3 and A- or higher.
 - And a country rating of AA+ or equivalent for non-UK sovereigns
- Credit Default Swaps (where quoted)
- Sovereign Support mechanisms
- Economic fundamentals (for example Net Debt as a percentage of GDP) and economic trends
- Sovereign support mechanisms
- Share Prices
- Corporate developments, news, articles, markets sentiment and momentum
- Historical performance and expected future trends of Collective Investment Funds
- Subjective overlay – or, put more simply, common sense.

Any institution can be suspended or removed should any of the factors identified above give rise to concern. The Welsh Church fund will not enter into any investment if it is outside the advice given by its Treasury advisors which is updated monthly, weekly and daily according to the movements in the worldwide backdrop. This includes guidance on the maximum maturity of investments with approved counterparties.

3.9 New Investments made directly by the Welsh Church Fund will be restricted in the following ways to ensure diversification and hence reduction of both credit risk and interest rate risk.

- A minimum of £350,000 needs to be held in investments which are sufficiently liquid such as cash or other investments less than one year so that grants can still be made if investment returns are low or to allow for the lead time for realising certain investments. The full balance can be invested in Collective Investment funds to maximise returns if this is in line with the requirements of this strategy.
- The maximum amount which can be invested in any one Collective Investment Fund (at the time of investment) is 20% of the total investment balance. The amount invested should be spread across different asset classes such as Property, Bonds and Equity.

- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be held with Monmouthshire County Council.
- Up to 100% of the total investment balance can be invested as term deposits or call accounts with banks and building societies. The maximum amount which can be invested with any one financial institution counterparty is 10% of the total investment balance.
- The maximum duration of term deposits with banks and building societies shall be in line with the advice given by the Trust's treasury advisors which varies with world economic factors.

3.11 At the end of each financial year, Audit Committee consider the actual return on investments & the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved.

3.12 The Cabinet shall observe the following constraints in pursuing the investment objectives:

- The restrictions on investments contained within Section 15 of the scheme made by Monmouthshire County Council under section 19 of the Welsh Church Act 1914.
- A proportion of the funds held may be pooled with Monmouthshire County Council's overall investment portfolio, which is invested in line with the Authority's Treasury Management Strategy. Interest earned by the Authority and any investment losses incurred by the Authority will be apportioned proportionally between the Local Authority and Monmouthshire Welsh Church Act Fund in line with the total investments held by each party.

NB: Any investments which move outside of the above criteria with time will be reinvested with the above criteria on maturity.

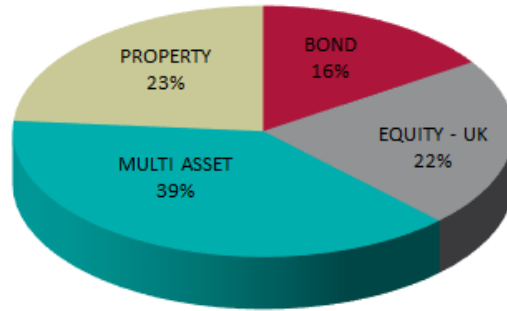
3.13 There are currently no ethical constraints on investment of funds and this matter will be reviewed if there are any changes in charity law or other requirements.

3.14 Performances of the externally managed pooled funds of the Welsh Church Fund for the 12 months to March 2019 are set out below. These investment funds are to be reviewed in 2020 in ensure that they are fulfilling the criteria of income generation and capital sustainability.

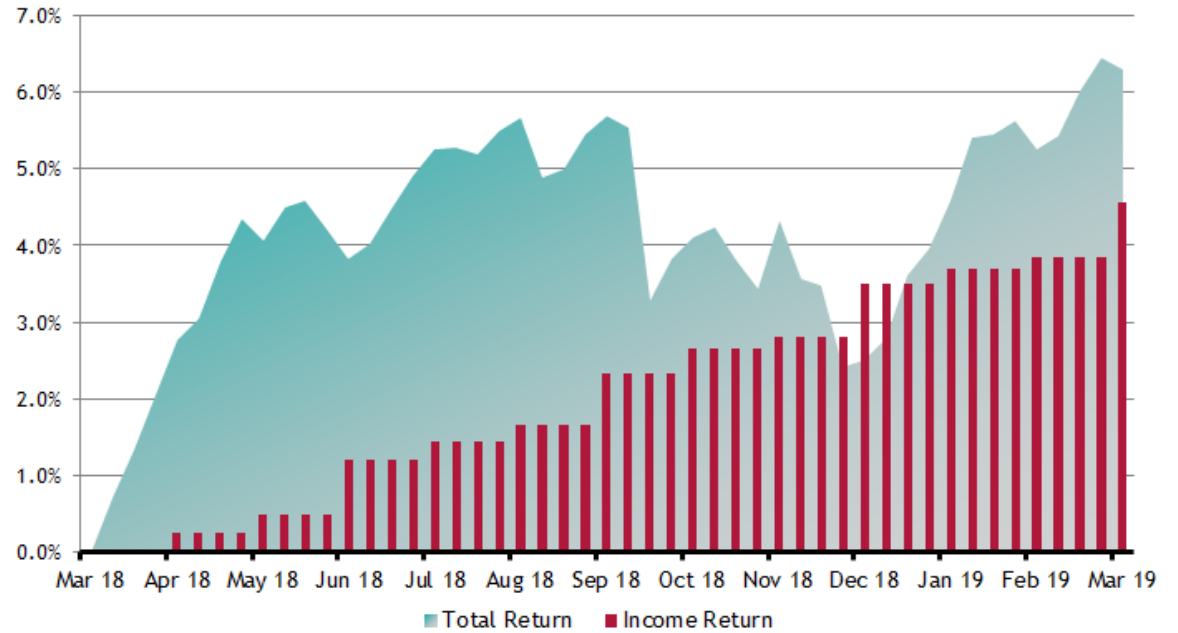
3.15 The dividend income earned from this portfolio, shown by the maroon bars, was £196,209 for the 12 months till March 2019.

FUND NAME	ASSET CLASS	No of Units Held in Period	Current Value £	Capital Growth £	Dividends Earned £	Holding Period (yrs)	Capital Return	Income Return	Total Return	Volatility
CCLA - COIF INVESTMENT FUND	MULTI ASSET	67,524	1,016,693	68,456	33,978	1.0	7.22%	3.58%	10.80%	7.9%
CCLA - COIF PROPERTY FUND	PROPERTY	889,400	1,037,041	25,526	56,922	1.0	2.52%	5.63%	8.15%	2.8%
M&G CHARIBOND FUND	BOND	558,982	689,393	-224	15,652	1.0	-0.03%	2.27%	2.24%	1.4%
M&G CHARIFUND	EQUITY - UK	34,796	535,509	4,106	27,837	1.0	0.77%	5.24%	6.01%	8.7%
SCHRODER INCOME MAXIMISER FUND	EQUITY - UK	981,740	422,246	-14,039	32,545	1.0	-3.22%	7.46%	4.24%	9.0%
UBS MULTI ASSET INCOME FUND	MULTI ASSET	1,407,494	679,397	-8,726	29,276	1.0	-1.27%	4.25%	2.99%	3.3%
GRAND TOTAL			4,380,279	75,099	196,209	1.0	1.74%	4.56%	6.30%	3.7%
Annualised Returns:							1.74%	4.56%	6.31%	

Asset Class Allocation



Cumulative Return on Strategic Pooled Funds



4. The Welsh Church Fund's Bank Account

4.1 The Welsh Church Fund holds cash with Barclays Bank. At the current time, it meets the minimum credit criteria.

5. Training

5.1 The Authority, acting as Trustee to the Welsh Church Fund, will ensure that suitable awareness training is provided to members of the Audit Committee and Cabinet to enable them to discharge their scrutiny function together with such wider training as may be required from time to time.

6. Investment Consultants/ Treasury Advisors

6.1 The Welsh Church Fund use Arlingclose as their Treasury Management Consultants to provide information, advice and training relating to investments. Information relating to investments is provided from publicly available data and is summarised in order to assist with decision making within the Authority. The information and advice covers the level of risk of investment and the variety of options available.

Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust – Risk Assessment Policy 2020/21

The financial assistance provided by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust is to support the advancement of education in agriculture and related subjects at college. Annually, monies are distributed and the key risk faced by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust is loss or reduction in the amount of monies available.

An assessment of the risks faced by the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust has been undertaken and steps taken to:

- avoid risks through alternative strategies
- limit and reduce risks by improving controls
- insure against specified risks

On an annual basis the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated to include any new risks identified.

The risks identified have been encompassed within 4 categories:

- Page 495
- governance & management
 - operational risks
 - financial risks
 - compliance risk

Monmouthshire County Council as custodian and administrator of the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Trust manage the fund on the Trustees behalf through the Cabinet and make all risk and investment decisions in a unified risk policy as advised by the Authority's investment and risk advisors.

The following paragraphs list the risks identified & the steps taken to mitigate or eliminate the risk.

1. Governance & Management

(a) The fund lacks direction?

The activities of the Fund are governed by the guidance in Section 4 of the Charity Act 2000.

The Cabinet has a clear purpose to maximise the return on its investments and this is contained within the investment policy.

(b) There are conflicts of interest?

Cabinet members are elected in accordance with the electoral cycle and are required to conduct themselves in-line with the Authority's Code of Conduct.

Members are required to declare any interests related to the activities of the Trust and may not vote on these decisions. These matters are recorded in the official minutes.

Members allowance and expense payments are not charged to the Monmouthshire Farm Endowment Fund.

(c) Funds are used inappropriately?

The purpose for which funds can be used is contained within the objectives of the trust.

(d) Key staff, leave the Council's employment?

The actions of Officers of the Council are determined by Delegated Powers.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Trustees on legal & financial matters.

(e) Inadequate information is provided to the Trustees?

Annually, the Trustees consider the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made available.

Variances between the anticipated & actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants.

2. Operational Risks

(a) Unsuitable staff support and advise Cabinet?

Monmouthshire County Council has a comprehensive recruitment process which is supported by a wide range of personnel policies.

The training & development needs of officers are identified through the Employee Review process.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise Cabinet on financial and legal matters.

(b) Systems & procedures are not secure?

Systems & procedures are documented & document retention policies are in place. IT systems have data back-up arrangements & disaster recovery plans. Periodic audits identify internal control improvement requirements. Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses.

(c) Stakeholders are not satisfied with the operation of the Fund?

The Scheme made by the Trustees provides for the advancement of education in agriculture and related subjects at college.

The Trustees consider annual reports on the financial performance of the Trust.

The Trustees consider annually the level of funding available for grants.

(d) The assets of the Fund are at risk?

In accordance with the investment policy a number of constraints are placed upon the way in which monies are used.

Risk minimization strategy has been adopted which limits the investment of funds to individual institutions meeting specified criteria.

(e) Unsatisfactory returns on investment are achieved?

The reserves policy requires monies be invested in financial instruments which produce interest payments and there is no appreciation in the capital value of the investment.

The overall aim is to obtain a satisfactory rate of return enabling Trustees to distribute an amount based on the forecast return on investments during the current year, after meeting the expenses incurred in managing the fund.

Annually, the Trustees consider the actual return on investments and the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved.

3. Financial Risks

(a) Budgetary control is inadequate?

Annually, the Trustees consider the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made.

Variance between the anticipated and actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants.

(b) Financial administration is unsatisfactory?

Monmouthshire County Council personnel policies and procedures ensure Officers are appropriately qualified for the roles undertaken.

Internal control arrangements ensure there is division of duties amongst Officers. Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements.

(c) Financial losses arise due to speculative investment?

The investment policy prescribes a risk minimisation approach which can limit the investment of funds to institutions meeting specified criteria.

(d) Financial losses arise from fraud or error?

The internal control arrangements are based upon segregation of duties. Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements. Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses.

4 Compliance Risk

(a) Failure to comply with legislation / regulations?

The activities of the Fund are specified within objects of the Trust. The nature and format of financial reporting is specified by the Charity Commission and an external audit of the accounts is mandatory. A number of senior Council staff support and advise Cabinet on legal and financial matters.

Welsh Church Fund – Risk Assessment Policy 2020/21

The financial assistance provided by the Welsh Church Fund supports a very wide range of community activities, including voluntary and sporting organisations. Annually, monies are distributed and the key risk faced by the Welsh Church Fund is a loss or reduction in the amount of monies available.

An assessment of the risks faced by the Welsh Church Fund has been undertaken and steps taken to:

- avoid risks through alternative strategies
- transfer risks to others
- limit and reduce risks by improving controls
- insure against specified risks

On an annual basis the risk assessment will be reviewed and updated to include any new risks identified.

The risks identified have been encompassed within 4 categories:

- Page 499
- governance & management
 - operational risks
 - financial risks
 - compliance risk

The following paragraphs list the risks identified & the steps taken to mitigate or eliminate the risk.

1. Governance & Management

(a) The fund lacks direction?

The activities of the Fund are specified by the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire under section 19 of the Welsh Church Act 1914.

The Cabinet has a clear purpose to maximise the return on its investments and this is contained within the investment policy.

The Cabinet is accountable to the Councils within the Greater Gwent area.

(b) There are conflicts of interest?

Members of the Cabinet are elected every 4 years and are required to conduct themselves in-line with the Code of Conduct.

Members are required to declare any interests related to the activities of the Cabinet and may not vote. These matters are recorded.

Members allowance and expense payments are not charged to the Welsh Church Fund.

(c) Funds are used inappropriately?

The Charitable purposes for which funds can be used is contained within the Scheme made by Monmouthshire County Council, which is also implemented by the other constituent authorities within the Monmouthshire Welsh Church Fund Scheme. The Trust is currently putting in place set criteria to assist constituent authorities in making grant distributions and to ensure that there is transparency in decision making and due process. The Trust will look to agree with constituent authorities in future that grant distributions have been made in accordance with the scheme in place and the set criteria being developed.

The investment and fund strategy prescribes a risk minimisation approach, with funds only placed with institutions meeting specified criteria.

(d) Key staff leaving the Council's employment?

The actions of Officers of the Council are determined by Delegated Powers.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Cabinet on legal & financial matters.

(e) Inadequate information is provided to the Cabinet?

Annually, the Cabinet considers the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made available to the constituent Councils.

Variances between the anticipated & actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants to the constituent Councils.

2. Operational Risks

(a) Unsuitable staff support and advise the Cabinet?

Monmouthshire County Council has a comprehensive recruitment process which is supported by a wide range of personnel policies.

The training & development needs of officers are identified through the Employee Review process.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Cabinet on financial and legal matters.

(b) Systems & procedures are not secure?

Systems & procedures are documented & document retention policies are in place. IT systems have data back-up arrangements & disaster recovery plans. Periodic audits identify internal control improvement requirements. Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses.

(c) Stakeholders are not satisfied with the operation of the Fund?

The Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire provides for financial assistance to be made available for a wide range of community activities.

The Authority's Audit Committee considers annual reports on the financial performance of the Fund.

The Constituent Councils also consider annually the level of funding available for community activities.

(d) The assets of the Fund are at risk?

In accordance with the investment policy a number of constraints are placed upon the way in which monies are used. A risk minimisation strategy has been adopted which limits the investment of funds to individual institutions meeting specified criteria.

The proposed Investment and Fund Strategy for 2020/21 for the Welsh Church Fund includes scope for investment in pooled investment funds (Collective investment funds).

(e) Unsatisfactory returns on investment are achieved?

The fund strategy requires monies be invested in financial instruments which produce interest payments and where there is no long-term depreciation in the capital value of the investment.

The proposed Investment and Fund Strategy for 2020/21 allows for the continued use of pooled investment funds. This does increase the risk that the principal amounts held can go down as well as up in value. This is suited to the Welsh Church Fund as the Trust can tolerate these movements over a business cycle. The movements are expected to be neutral over a business cycle and the earning power of these investments is not largely affected by the market value.

The overall aim is to obtain a satisfactory rate of return enabling the Cabinet to distribute an amount based on the actual return on investments achieved during the preceding twelve-month period plus any accumulated capital receipts, after meeting the expenses incurred in managing the fund.

Annually, the Cabinet considers the actual return on investments and the extent to which the investment objectives have been achieved. Benchmark information is available from the Authority's Treasury Management Advisors for jointly invested funds with the Council.

3. Financial Risks

(a) Budgetary control is inadequate?

Annually, the Cabinet considers the level of reserves and anticipated investment income before determining the level of grants to be made available to the constituent Councils.

Variance between the anticipated and actual investment income will be reflected in the following year's grants to the constituent Councils.

(b) Financial administration is unsatisfactory?

Monmouthshire County Council personnel policies and procedures ensure officers are appropriately qualified for the roles undertaken.

Internal control arrangements ensure there is division of duties amongst officers.

Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements.

(c) Financial losses arise due to speculative investment?

The investment policy prescribes a risk minimisation approach which can limit the investment of funds to institutions meeting specified criteria.

(d) Financial losses arise from fraud or error?

The internal control arrangements are based upon segregation of duties.

Periodic audits review the internal control arrangements.

Insurance provides a means to recover from specified losses

4. Compliance Risk

(a) Failure to comply with legislation / regulations?

The activities of the Fund are specified within the Scheme made by the County Council of Monmouthshire.

The nature and format of financial reporting is specified by the Charity Commission and an external audit of the accounts is mandatory.

A number of senior Council staff support and advise the Cabinet on legal and financial matters.

Ensure that the Welsh Church Fund is administered in line with section 3(8) of the Charities Act 1993.



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Future Generations Evaluation (includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Peter Davies Phone no: 01633 644294 E-mail: peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To assess the 2020/21 Budget, Investment & Risk Management Strategies of the Welsh Church Fund and Mon Farm Education Trust
Name of Service Finance	Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed 04th March 2020



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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.




Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Grants are awarded to help with infrastructure projects on cultural and community assets that help sustain jobs in the community for skilled tradesmen and stimulate educational well being	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Environmental schemes can benefit from funding awards to assist in drainage, water course management and flood alleviation works	No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A healthier Wales</p> <p>People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Grants assist in providing facilities for groups / individuals that help residents participate in sporting / recreational clubs that have a positive mental impact both physically and in the environment that the clubs operate within.</p>	<p>No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities</p> <p>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Community groups and individuals can apply for funding for projects that enhance their local community facilities and environment</p>	<p>No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p> <p>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Restrictions are imposed in regard to the nature and purpose that grants can be made to ensure that funding enhances or doesn't have any negative impact upon activities carried out in Monmouthshire that affect the global environment</p>	<p>No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs</p>
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p> <p>Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>Assists applicant organisations / individuals to promote recreational participation and organization of sports clubs and associations. Applicants can use the funds provided to enhance the heritage and culture of Monmouthshire through community projects and groups</p>	<p>No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs</p>

Well Being Goal	How does the proposal contribute to this goal? (positive and negative)	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A more equal Wales</p> <p>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Grants are generally only given to organisations / individuals can prove a basis of need due to their own personal circumstances or collective need for improvement to cultural or environmental infrastructure or help further community participation</p>	<p>No negative impacts as grants given to assist in providing positive impacts on actions / schemes / training in regard to applicants needs</p>

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

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
<p>Page 506</p>  <p>Long-term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>Schemes of a capital nature tend to draw more substantial awards which will ensure longevity of assets and project outcomes. The application process also ensures that those applicants that demonstrate a need for short term financing also have due consideration when funding is allocated</p>	<p>The trusts award allocation principles are reviewed and if required amended annually to ensure funding is matched to those that require support.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The Trusts assist applicants in achieving their objectives by providing part or full funding for implementation of their project goals.</p>	<p>Not Applicable to the Trusts</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	How does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle?	What has been done to better to meet this principle?
 <p>Involvement views</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The Committee seek to ensure that those directly involved with the applicants and decision makers are informed of all the necessary information to make informed beneficial decisions</p>	<p>The Trust report is distributed to interested parties for consultation and amendment before final confirmation at Cabinet</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>Funding is provided for preventative as well as remedial schemes in regard to infrastructure and community assets and supporting community groups with social and cultural activities</p>	<p>The trusts have developed investment strategy policies in order to facilitate greater income returns in order to distribute to qualifying applicants</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Positively impacting on people, economy and environment and trying to benefit all three</p>	<p>Positive impacts are made on all successful applicants to the Trusts as funding is provided for economic, cultural, environmental and educational needs as demonstrated by the applicants on their application forms</p>	<p>The trusts award allocation principles are reviewed and if required amended annually to ensure funding is matched to those that require support.</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Positive impact as most community groups who apply support the elderly. Also, educational grants awarded to young people applying to the Trusts	None identified	
Disability	Positive impact as grants awarded to groups and individuals that either support the disabled or have a disability	None identified	
Gender Reassignment		No restrictions on applicants	
Marriage or civil partnership		No restrictions on applicants	
Race		No restrictions on applicants	
Religion or Belief	Positive impact as Religious organisations are supported	None identified	
Sex		No restrictions on applicants	
Sexual Orientation		No restrictions on applicants	
Welsh Language		No restrictions on applicants	

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 note <http://hub/corporatedocs/Democratic%20Services/Equality%20impact%20assessment%20and%20safeguarding.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	Grants are awarded to organisations that assist children in need either through their health or social deprivation. Awards are also made to Community Children's Group's that assist in their integration in social patterns	No negative impact	
Corporate Parenting	Not applicable to the Trust		

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

<p>The Arlingclose Ltd Monmouthshire County Council Investment Strategy Review 2019; The Arlingclose Ltd Monmouthshire Mon Farm Education Investment Strategy Review 2019; The ONS Survey 2010 and The Welsh Church Act Fund Audited Accounts 2018-19. The Monmouthshire Farms School Endowment Trust Fund Accounts 2018-19.</p>

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 proposals that support the distribution of charitable grants from the trusts are positive in that they support individuals, community and environmental groups in their pursuit of enhancing the culture, environment and personal wellbeing of people covered by their demographic remits. The application of the Investment and Risk Strategies are designed to provide the maximum amount of investment returns to provide funds to support those applicants to the fund without substantially diminishing the Capital value of the Trust Funds.

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible	Progress
Page 510			

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.

The impacts of this proposal will be evaluated on:	The application of the Trust fund policies are reported in the financial statements of those trusts at each financial year-end.
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WELSH CHURCH FUND PRINCIPLES, POLICY CONSIDERATIONS AND GRANT ALLOCATION CRITERIA – 2019-20 FUNDING YEAR

Basic Principles of the Welsh Church Fund Trust

The basic principle is that the charity needs to be independent of the local authority. This means that decisions about the administration of the charity need to be taken solely in the interests of the charity to further its charitable purposes, and for no other purpose.

There are also a number of duties the trustee must consider when making this type of decision. If these duties are met, then the trustee can be confident that the decision about how to apply the charity's income is reasonable and defensible. Therefore, again, the trustee must act only in the charity's best interest and meet the duties to:

1. Act within the powers conferred upon them and the established rules and procedures for dealing with issues of the kind under consideration.
2. Adequately inform themselves in order to make the decision in question, where necessary making further enquiries and where appropriate considering legal or other professional advice.
3. Consider any factors which they should take into account.
4. Not take into consideration any factors which are not relevant.
5. Act in good faith (and this includes managing conflicts of interest).
6. Make a decision within the range of decisions which a reasonable body of trustees could have made.

The decision and the reasoning must also be clearly recorded in the charity's minutes.

Policy Considerations for Charity Trustee

1. Make sure the trustee is clear about the objects of the charity as set out in its governing document as these dictate how any such asset may be used, in accordance with charity law.
2. Make sure that the Welsh Church Fund's assets, for which the council is the trustee, are managed independently in accordance with their charitable purpose and any restrictions in the governing document.

3. **Recognise that the charity trustees have a duty to be prudent and to act solely in the best interests of the charity.**
4. **Ensure that there are in place clear procedural guidelines for the Officers and Councillor's about their roles, responsibilities and decision making in the administration of the charitable fund.**
5. **Ensure we have a clear process for identifying and managing any conflicts of interest that arise where the local authority is the trustee of a charity.**

Allocation Criteria for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group

Groups and individuals that benefit from grant allocations

Churches and Religious Groups tend to be given higher awards as it is the Welsh Church Fund.

Church Parish's

Community Groups and Charities

Sports and Recreation Clubs

Environmental Groups

Individuals that have an identified and proven need of financial assistance

Other deemed charitable causes by the Working Group Committee

Allocation Policy and Principles

Awards are only given on the existence of a proven financial need as identified by a sponsoring Councillor in the first instance and the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Committee in the main instance.

Existing policy of no allocations to Community or Town Councils

Existing policy of no allocations to Private Business's

or other Public Bodies

Policy of not supporting day to day running expenses except in exceptional circumstances as clubs / organisations should be self-supporting and not rely on WCF money for their continued existence.

Existing policy of only Churches are allowed to re-apply every year to be maintained, though, these applications will only be considered for applications of a different and distinct purpose.

Existing policy of restricted or no allocations for day trips or trips that will not benefit the County by an individual's subsequent personal actions

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SUBJECT:	WELSH CHURCH FUND WORKING GROUP
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	19th February 2020
DIVISIONS/WARD AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group meeting 7 held on the 16th January 2020.
- 1.2 To approve The Welsh Church Fund funding allocation criteria for 2020-21 financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

- 2.1 We resolved that the following grants be awarded as per the schedule of applications.

SCHEDULE OF APPLICATIONS CONSIDERED 2019/20 – MEETING 7.

1. **Usk Baptist Church**, requested £1,800 in funding to rectify a leak in the roof valley between the Church and the adjoining church function rooms.

Recommendation: £1,300 was awarded to assist in providing essential roof repairs to this Grade 1 listed Church.

2. **St Peter's Church, Dixon**, requested £5,000 to assist in the replacement of the Chancel roof of the Church as the roof has been deemed to be unsafe.

Recommendation: £3,500 was awarded to assist in the essential replacement of the Chancel roof of the Church.

3. **Monmouthshire Meadows Group** requested £5,479 to replace unsafe fencing; the relocation of the road gate; provision of a kissing gate; installation of interpretive sign boards and install 2 owl boxes.

Recommendation: £597 was awarded to assist in funding this community project that benefits residents within Monmouthshire.

4. **Usk Memorial Hall**, requested £1,000 to assist in the replacement of non-regulation electrical fuse-boards and the total re-wiring of the Memorial Hall.

Recommendation: £800 was awarded to assist in the replacement and upgrading to regulation of the electrical fuse-boards and wiring within this community asset.

- 5 **Caldicot Community Garden**, requested £659.20 required to erect fencing around allotment area to protect crops and flowers being cultivated as current edging is crumbling and is a Health & Safety hazard to volunteers.

Recommendation: This application was deferred for further information.

- 6 **Rockfield Village Life Community Project**, requested £900 for the repair / restoration of the Village Praying Stone Cross as it has fractured and is being held together by metal support banding.

Recommendation: £500 was awarded to assist in providing essential safety repairs to this historical community cross.

- 2.2 The grant allocation funding criteria (Appendix 2) for the Welsh Church Trust Fund for 2020-21 was approved.

3. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Options available to the Committee are driven by the information only supplied by the applicants

4. **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

No evaluation criteria are applicable to the grants awarded by the trust

5. **REASONS**

A meeting took place on Thursday 16th January 2020 of the Welsh Church Fund Cabinet Working Group to recommend the payment of grants as detailed in the attached schedule (Appendix 1).

County Councillors in attendance at meeting:

County Councillor A. Webb (Chair)
County Councillor D. Evans (Vice Chair)
County Councillor B. Strong
County Councillor S. Woodhouse

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Jarrett Central Finance
W Barnard Committee Administration

5.1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Item 1 – Usk Baptist Church: County Councillor B. Strong declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest as a Member of the Church

5.2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

5.3 CONFIRMATION OF REPORT OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meetings held on the 24th October 2019 were confirmed and signed as a true record.

.RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

A total of £6,697 was allocated at Meeting 7 of the Welsh Church Fund Committee. These grant awards have now extinguished the total available grant allocation for the 2019-20 financial year.

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

There are no Future Generations, equality, safeguarding, corporate parenting or sustainable development implications directly arising from this report. The assessment is contained in the attached appendix.

6.1.1 CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
All Cabinet Members
Head of Legal Services
Assistant Head of Finance
Central Finance Management Accountant

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Welsh Church Fund Schedule of Applications 2019/20– Meeting 7 (Appendix 1)
The Welsh Church Fund Funding Allocation Criteria for 2020-21 (Appendix 2)

8. AUTHOR:

David Jarrett – Senior Accountant – Central Finance Business Support

9. CONTACT DETAILS

Tel. 01633 644657
e-mail: davejarrett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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<u>ORGANISATION</u>	<u>ELECTORAL DIVISION</u>	<u>Signed by Councillor</u>	<u>REQUEST</u>	<u>DECISION</u>	<u>NATURE OF REQUEST</u>	<u>APPROX COST</u>	<u>DATE Received</u>	<u>D of I*</u>	<u>Comments</u>	
NEW APPLICATIONS AWAITING DECISION			£	£		£				
1	Usk Baptist Church	Llangibby Fawr	P. Clarke	£1,800	£1,300	Funding required to rectify a leak in the roof valley between the Church and the adjoining church function rooms	£1,800	05/11/2019	No	The Church is a Grade One listed building
2	St Peter's Church, Dixon	St Arvans	A.Webb	£5,000	£3,500	Funding required to assist in the replacement of the Chancel roof of the Church as the roof has been deemed to be unsafe.	£63,747	05/11/2019	Yes	The Church is situated on the banks of the Wye and holds Weekly Church Services, Festival Services, Art Exhibitions, Concerts as well as hosting many walkers that are enjoying the Wye Valley walks.
3	Monmouthshire Meadows Group	Trellech	D. Blakeborough	£3,479	£597	Funding required to replace unsafe fencing; the relocation of the road gate; provision of a kissing gate; installation of interpretive sign boards and install 2 owl boxes	£5,479	05/11/2019	No	The site is jointly managed by Monmouthshire Meadows Group and Gwent Wildlife Trust. Gwent Wildlife Trust has agreed to provide in kind manpower to around £1,000 of contract work.
4	Usk Memorial Hall	Usk	B.Strong	£1,000	£800	Funding required to assist in the replacement of non regulation fuseboards and the total re-wiring of the Memorial Hall	£6,071	05/11/2019	Yes	An electrical installation condition report was undertaken in August by an approved contractor and this has highlighted that a large amount of upgrading to the electrical system needs to be undertaken to meet current safety legislation for community buildings
Late Applications										
	Caldicot Community Garden	Caldicot Castle	Jo Watkins	£659.20	defer	Funding required to erect fencing around allotment area to protect crops and flowers being cultivated as current edging is crumbling and is a Health & Safety hazard to Volunteers	£659.20	14/01/2020	No	Caldicot Community Garden offers a well-being environmental opportunity for gentle exercise; learning horticultural skills; networking new members / friendships. Also working in partnership with Social Services, Volunteering for Wellbeing, Hafal and MHA Social inclusion it offers mutual, friendly, peer support to members and people feeling isolated in the community; the disabled and people with mental health issues.
Deferred Applications										
	Rockfield Village Life Community Project	Llantillio Crossenny	R. Edwards	£900	£500	Funding required for the repair / restoration of the Praying Stone Cross as it has fractured and is being held together by metal support banding.	£900	02/10/2019	No	The repair of the cross is a one-off issue with the maintenance of the surrounding plinth and borders being maintained by the Rockfield Village Life Community Project.
SUB TOTAL Meeting 6										
				£12,838	£6,697	OTHER INFORMATION :				
					5,850					
					4,650					
					4,220					
					3,988					
					6,422					
					1,900					
					6,697					
					33,727					
					32,955					
					£772					
					£33,727					
					£0					

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