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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 25 November 2020

Notice of meeting

County Council

Thursday, 3rd December, 2020 at 2.00 pm,
Remote Meeting

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence	
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3.	Public Questions	
4.	Chairman's announcement and receipt of petitions	1 - 2
5.	Reports for Council:	
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6.	Notices of Motion:	
6.1.	Submitted by County Councillor L. Dymock We ask this Council to call upon the Welsh Government to adopt the Climate Emergency 10 point plan for Wales as launched by our Prime Minister Boris Johnson on November 18 th 2020.	
6.2.	Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni	

	<p>This Council supports the Welsh Government's firebreak policy, noting the last firebreak was estimated to save over 1000 lives. It is essential all parties and councillors support the firebreak policy because not only does it save lives but it also eases the huge pressure on all public services and staff, including council services and staff.</p>	
<p>6.3.</p>	<p>Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni</p> <p>That the Conservative administration makes plans to implement a council tax increase on second homes left vacant for over 6 months in the county. It is becoming an increasing problem in Monmouthshire, which is hollowing out rural communities, hiking local house prices and reducing the housing supply for local people. In addition, it could generate up to £200,000 a year to help towards the council's finances.</p>	
<p>6.4.</p>	<p>Submitted by County Councillor A. Watts</p> <p>This Council congratulates Aneurin Bevan University Health Board for its ahead of schedule opening of the £350m state of the art Grange University Hospital in Llanfrechfa, Cwmbran.</p> <p>This Council recognises and agrees with the Heath Boards strategic reconfiguration of its Minor Injuries Units back into our local Community Hospitals across Gwent.</p> <p>With that in mind Monmouthshire County Council calls on ABUHB to reintroduce the Minor Injuries Unit to Chepstow Community Hospital.</p>	
<p>6.5.</p>	<p>Submitted by County Councillor F. Taylor</p> <p>That this Council writes to the Minister for Health and Social Services Vaughan Gething MS to call for a routine asymptomatic testing programme for domiciliary care staff working in community settings in the same way as asymptomatic testing is available to care staff working in Care Homes.</p> <p>The current position would seem to put some of our most vulnerable residents at risk, and also puts carers at unnecessary and high levels of risk. Domiciliary care staff continue to appear undervalued for the vital work they do and we note that the caring workforce is disproportionately female. Whilst we acknowledge that that robust infection control and management is important in preventing transmission of the virus, this council welcomes reconsideration of Welsh Government Policy in this matter.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2020</p>	<p>47 - 54</p>

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillors:

P. Clarke
D. Batrouni
J.Becker
D. Blakebrough
L.Brown
A.Davies
D. Dovey
L.Dymock
A. Easson
R. Edwards
D. Evans
M.Feakins
P.A. Fox
R.J.W. Greenland
M.Groucutt
L. Guppy
R. Harris
J. Higginson
G. Howard
S. Howarth
R.John
D. Jones
L.Jones
P. Jones
S. Jones
S.B. Jones
P. Jordan
M.Lane
P. Murphy
P.Pavia
M. Powell
J.Pratt
R.Roden
V. Smith
B. Strong
F. Taylor
T.Thomas
J.Treharne
J.Watkins
A. Watts
A. Webb
K. Williams
S. Woodhouse

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Welsh Language

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

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

Chairman's Report – 13th October – 26th November 2020

Friday 16 th October 12.30 p.m.	Remote MCC Long Service Recognition Event
Friday 30 th October 12.30 p.m.	Remote MCC Long Service Recognition Event
Sunday 8 th November 11 a.m.	Remembrance Sunday - Wreath Laying Ceremony at War Memorial, Abergavenny
Wednesday 11 th November 11 a.m.	Remembrance Day Service County Hall, Usk
Friday 26 th November 12.30 p.m.	Remote MCC Long Service Recognition Event

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SUBJECT: SOCIAL CARE, SAFEGUARDING AND HEALTH ANNUAL DIRECTORS PERFORMANCE REPORT 2019/20

MEETING: FULL COUNCIL

DATE: 3rd DECEMBER 2020

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL



Social Care & Health: Directors Report 2020

This report is about people. The people we support, the people we work with and those that partner with us.

[Go to this Sway](#)

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To present to Council the Annual Statutory Report on Performance 2019/20 from the Director of Social Care, Safeguarding and Health.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 For Council to endorse the Annual Statutory Directors Performance Report 2019/20 .

3. KEY ISSUES:

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Preparing and publishing an annual report of the Statutory Director of Social Services is a requirement under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014). The format of the

report follows a nationally developed template, which shows how we are meeting the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

3.2 This is the second Directors Report for the Chief Officer for Social Care Safeguarding and Health. This year the report is presented in a format that uses a SWAY, which means the report is interactive, and is able to present many styles of information in one place.

3.3 This report is presented in a way that can be accessible to a wide range of audiences. It has been developed using an inclusive approach and includes contributions from the workforce and people who use services. Evidence of performance, analysis and stories are combined to develop a very comprehensive and extensive report covering many aspects of Social Services. This can be re visited and added to as a source of information on an ongoing basis.

3.4 This annual report reflects on the financial year 2019/20. The Directors report uses a set of broad themes to frame the work we do with commentary on progress in year .

3.5 Over the last decade Monmouthshire Social Services has embedded a model of delivery which is based around a relational and strengths based approach. This replaced a transactional service led approach. We are helping people to take control of their own lives and that any contact with us enhances the opportunity for greater wellbeing.

3.6 The report provides an analysis, commentary and evidence of the work around each of these themes. The annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on what we are doing to make a difference to the lives of the most vulnerable citizens of Monmouthshire, what we do well, and where we need to do even better. The report explains the context in which we are working and how we will continue to improve and modernise. It highlights some excellent, leading edge, practice, workforce development, service provision and commissioning. There are also areas where risk and challenge is highlighted.

3.6 To enable members to access the essential parts of this report the following pointers are suggested for an overview read.

- **Chapter 1** Is the **Directors summary** section. It includes an overview of performance, priorities and challenges. The narrative is presented alongside photos, PowerPoint presentations, films and hyperlinks to documents for further reading.
- **Chapter 2** Is **'how people shape our services'** and is a key requirement for delivery against the Social Services and well-being Act (2014). This section highlights evidence of how we are involving children who are looked after, young people and adults with disabilities, and evidence from a recent Care Inspectorate Wales older person's inspection.
- **Chapter 3** This large section is how we evidence progress towards the **six quality standards**. This section uses a large quantity of both qualitative evidence through stories and the lived experience of the people we support with all the national performance indicator measures. More stories, audio, film and data are combined to give a comprehensive assessment of how we are working towards delivering against the six quality standards.
- **Chapter 4** Covers **'how we do what we do'** it includes our arrangements for partnership working, governance, finance and workforce development. How we plan, and how plans link together.

- **Chapter 5 Summary and next steps.**

4. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

4.1 The report provides an appraisal of performance and identifies future priorities. The report identifies the contribution of social services in Monmouthshire to the Well-being of Future Generations Act and Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

4.2 The report provides analysis of performance and priorities related to safeguarding and corporate parenting.

5. OPTION APPRAISAL:

5.1 The report provides a comprehensive analysis, using a range information, on Social Care & Health Services in 2019/20, which has been used to inform progress against the priorities identified.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6.1 The report provides a comprehensive analysis of the performance of Social Care & Health Services in 2019/20. This has used a range of evidence, including the performance indicators from the measurement framework as part of the Social Services and Well-being Act alongside stories and qualitative evidence that share the complexity and reach that Social Services has daily.

7. REASONS:

7.1 To ensure that committee has a clear understanding and evaluation of the performance and impact of Social Services in 2019/20 and future priorities to deliver a positive and sustainable future for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health in Monmouthshire.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The Annual Report sets out the financial context of social care and health in 2019/20. The report also includes a visual representation of how the overall social care and health budget is divided between different service areas and individual budgets. The report identifies the financial context and the challenges of financial sustainability for the coming year and beyond in meeting the costs of social care services against the backdrop of reducing budgets and increasing demand for care and support.

9. CONSULTEES:

9.1 An inclusive approach means that contributions to the report have been sourced widely and have aided in demonstrating how we are meeting the key quality standards defined by the Social Services and Well-being Act.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

11. AUTHOR:

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SUBJECT:	CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEE CONSULTATION
MEETING:	County Council
DATE:	3rd December 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To seek approval of a response to be submitted on behalf of Council to the Welsh Government Corporate Joint Committee Regulations consultation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the draft response to the consultation on Corporate Joint Committees contained at appendix 1 be submitted on behalf of Council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The concept of Corporate Joint Committees was introduced within the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. These will be new corporate bodies, which will be a vehicle for regional collaboration and which can employ staff, hold assets and budgets and undertake functions. Discussions on the concept began in 2019, however there has been only limited engagement on the matter throughout 2020 as local government has been occupied with the response to the Coronavirus pandemic.
- 3.2 The specific functions of a CJC and how it will be governed are set out in Corporate Joint Committee Regulations which are currently being consulted on by Welsh Government with a closing date of 4th January. The full consultation document can be found via a link in the background papers section of this report.
- 3.3 The Minister intends to bring forward the final regulations by April 2021. This includes draft regulations for each of four proposed CJs: North Wales; Mid Wales; South East Wales and South West Wales. The South East Wales Committee covers the same footprint as the Cardiff Capital Region. It is expected that the Cardiff Capital Region Cabinet and staffing structure will transform into the South East Wales CJC.
- 3.4 The regulations propose that the new CJC will exercise the following functions:
- Preparing, monitoring, reviewing and revising of a Strategic Development Plan;
 - Developing a Regional Transport Plan;

- The economic well-being function encompassing the current regional approaches to the City and Growth deals into the CJC structures.

Education was initially considered as a function for inclusion within this CJC but is not within the regulations establishing the committees. Authorities may choose to use Corporate Joint Committees as a vehicle for future collaborations, these would not need to be on the same footprint as the South East Wales CJC.

3.5 Two key principles underpin the development of the Regulations:

- CJCs should be treated as a member of the local government family and subject to the same powers and duties as principal councils;
- How they operate in practice should be left to the members of the CJC itself to determine which should enable the CJCs to differ between geographical areas to meet the needs and ambitions of region.

3.6 The draft regulations provide that CJCs:

- will be made up of leaders, though they could co-opt other members;
- will be established on a 'one member one vote' basis, however, once established, a CJC could adopt alternative voting procedures;
- will have powers delegated to it and will make timely decisions without the need for ratification by its constituent principal councils;
- will be accountable to its constituent principal councils and members will report back to those principal councils and must respond to questions and scrutiny;
- can set-up sub-committees to lead on specific functions and can agree other members such as cabinet members or co-optees;
- must 'appoint' a Chief Executive, Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer and Chief Governance Officer. However these could be provided by a constituent authority, or via secondment;
- must set up an overview and scrutiny committee;
- are likely to be bound by legislation such as the Equality Act, Welsh Language and Well-being of Future Generations Act.

3.7 It will be for each CJC to decide if it wishes to have sub-committees, and who sits on them. A CJC could choose to have sub-committees for each of its main functions and that these subcommittees might engage broadly and involve a range of relevant stakeholders. For example sub-committees could be introduced for planning and regional transport. It will be possible for CJCs' sub-committees to consist of members of the constituent local authorities other than those members on the CJC itself – for example a relevant member or portfolio holder.

3.8 The CJC is expected to play a major role in ensuring the region is able to access and make effective use of successor EU funds, known as the Shared Prosperity Fund. It will do this within the context of the Regional Investment Wales Framework created by Welsh Government to invest replacement funding from the UK Government.

3.9 This issue was considered at a meeting of the Public Services Select Committee, to which all members were invited, and the resulting debate used to shape the response which is attached as appendix 1. There were a number of concerns about the proposals. These included:

- The imposition of CJs by Welsh Ministers rather than these being a vehicle for councils to deploy where locally elected councillors assess they will add the greatest value;
- Concerns about scrutiny and accountability, with the CJC able to establish its own arrangements and the concentration of power in a single individual from each organisation;
- The cost of the CJC, with these bodies being able to set their own budgets which then have to be met by local authorities.

3.10 There have been some concerns within the local government family that opportunities to engage with, and shape these proposals have been overshadowed by the Coronavirus pandemic. In some areas the concept of CJs would be welcomed as an additional and optional collaborative model for authorities to choose where they themselves deem them appropriate. However, the WLGA Council has expressed concern over the principle of mandating the committees which it has argued, undermines local democracy. The WLGA has nonetheless signalled a commitment to continue to engage in shaping the proposals.

4. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

A full evaluation has not been carried out at this stage. The committee's attention is drawn to the integrated impact assessment produced by Welsh Government which is available at <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2020-10/integrated-impact-assessment.pdf>

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

At this point no specific options have been put forward for consideration. The only choice being whether or not to submit a whole council response to the consultation.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

CJs will operate as part of the performance and governance regime in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill. The Strategic Development Plan and transport functions will also have separate performance measures and monitoring requirements either within the establishing regulations or within / part of the relevant legislation being transferred.

7. REASONS:

To ensure that the views of elected members in Monmouthshire are able to shape the development of the Corporate Joint Committee Regulations.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

Further work will be required to fully understand the resourcing of Corporate Joint Committees. This will include the production of a regulatory impact assessment by Welsh Government. Since the South East Wales CJC will occupy the City Region footprint many of the structures are already in place. If implemented effectively CJsCs should be able to pull capacity from within Welsh Government rather than absorbing capacity from local government.

9. CONSULTEES:

Public Services Select Committee.

Scrutiny of the consultation by the committee has resulted in the production of the draft response included as appendix 1.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Welsh Government Consultation Document: Consultation on Regulations to Establish CJsCs - <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2020-10/consultation.pdf>

11. AUTHOR:

Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy and Governance

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Draft Consultation Response

We have chosen not to respond to all of your specific questions and have determined the areas of the consultation that we believe require our input and referenced the appropriate section of the where relevant.

We recognise that certain functions can be delivered more effectively at scale. This council has committed to regional working over many years and has seen real benefit from collaborating where it makes sense to do so. We are after all, already operating in this way through City and Growth Deals. Our members have indicated via previous consultations on local government reform that the decision to set up vehicles for collaboration should be a matter for local democratic discretion rather than in accordance with a pre-determined model and this remains our view. This council is opposed to CJs being imposed by Welsh Government as this disenfranchises local elected members.

Members of this council have also raised concerns about concentration of power in a small number of individuals with insufficient checks and balances. We recognise that the regulations covering scrutiny have yet to be written. It will be vital for effective scrutiny arrangements to be put in place to ensure democratic accountability and ensure public trust in these new corporate bodies, which will have responsibility for major areas of public policy and delivery.

We do however recognise that, given the stage we are at, these are an inevitability and the comments that follow are made on the basis of ensuring that the arrangements are as effective as possible while seeking to preserve democratic oversight and legitimacy.

Powers and Duties

Consultation Question One:

a) What are your views on CJs being subject to broadly the same powers and duties as principal councils? b) Do you agree that CJs should have broadly the same governance and administrative framework as a principal council provided that this is proportionate? Please give your reasons. c) Do you agree that members of CJs should have appropriate discretion on the detail of constitutional and operational arrangements? Please give your reasons.

We agree that CJs should be subject to the same powers and duties and local authorities. However, we have some concerns about the costs of duplicating governance and administrative frameworks, for example the requirement for a CJC to have its own Monitoring Officer and Chief Governance Officer.

We agree that the CJC should have discretion on the on-going detail of constitutional and operational arrangements following their creation; however, oversight from principal councils

should occur at the inception of the new bodies to ensure that the governance arrangements afford sufficient oversight to locally elected councillors.

Functions

Consultation Question Two: These CJC areas have been agreed by local government Leaders as the most appropriate to reflect the functions being given to CJCs by these Establishment Regulations. Do you have any comments or observations on these CJC areas in relation to these functions or the future development of CJCs?

It is recognised that, if the concept for CJCs is accepted, then these functions are the most appropriate ones to sit at a regional level since there are clear and unequivocal benefits of operating at scale providing these can retain clear alignment with local democratic accountability.

Consultation Question Three: a) Do you agree with the approach to the development of the regulations for CJCs as outlined in this consultation? Please give your reasons. b) We have indicated throughout this document what may be included in the Regulations of General Application, subject to the outcome of this consultation. Whilst the Regulations of General Application are not the subject of this consultation, in order to inform their development we would welcome your views on anything else which should be covered?

It is recognised that the Establishment Regulations require CJCs to put in place appropriate scrutiny arrangements but the precise nature of these will be at the discretion of the CJC itself. It will be important for the Regulations of General Application, to be drafted at a future date, should include provision so that any scrutiny committee does not include a member of the CJC, is politically balanced and has access to appropriate independent advice to be able to scrutinise the new body.

Consultation Question Fourteen: a) Is it clear what functions the CJCs will exercise as a result of these establishment regulations? If not, why? b) Do the establishment regulations need to say more on concurrence, if so what else is needed, or should that be left to local determination? c) In your view are there any functions which might be appropriate to add to these CJCs in the future? If yes, what?

We agree that the establishment regulations give sufficient clarity on the functions that will sit within a CJC. We are satisfied that any issues concerning the concurrent discharge of functions can be determined by the CJC itself with principal council as and when matters arise.

We feel it is appropriate to establish and evaluate the effectiveness of the CJC before taking a view on any additional functions that could come within its remit. It is possible that CJCs could be established on different footprints in future if local authorities decide these to be the most appropriate vehicle. It should be remembered that this CJC has a defined remit and would not be expected beyond that unless this were deemed necessary by the constituent councils.

Consultation Question Sixteen: What are your views on the approach to transfer of the exercise of functions to these CJsCs?

It is correct that CJsCs will hold the economic well-being function from the point at which they are established, however there may be some specific teams or activities sitting with the local authority that cannot transfer immediately and where concurrent operations may be preferable. This should be a matter for local resolution between the principal council's and CJC.

There may be a case for further powers to be transferred to the CJC from other tiers of government, for example the CCR City deal does not have oversight of the South Wales metro project, this is something that could come within the remit of the new CJC.

Membership and Voting

Consultation Question Four: a) Do you agree with the proposed approach to membership of CJsCs including co-opting of additional members? Please give your reasons. b) What are your views on the role proposed for National Park Authorities on CJsCs, as described above?

We agree that the CJC should be comprised of representatives of the constituent councils. This has proved an effective structure to govern the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal enabling decision making at the necessary pace. However there are concerns that the nature of any vehicle which vests power in a single representative from each authority will lessen democratic accountability.

It is right that the regulations make provision for the national park authorities to become members of the CJC providing this is limited to, and does not go beyond, the exercise of the Strategic Development Plan functions of the CJC.

Consultation Question Five: a) What are your views on the proposed approach of 'one member one vote' and the flexibility for CJsCs to adopt alternative voting procedures? b) What are your views on the proposed quorum for CJsCs? c) What are your views on the proposed approach to voting rights for co-opted members to a CJC?

We agree with the position of 'one member one vote', any decision to move away from this in future should require an explicit decision from each of the constituent councils rather than being left to the CJC itself, or require a unanimous rather than majority vote. We agreed that quorum for the CJC should be higher than the 25% that applies in principal councils and that a level of 70% is appropriate providing that members may nominate a substitute who may attend and vote in their absence.

It is appropriate that the CJC regulations should be limited in the number of co-opted members with votes to prevent this exceeding the number of council members to preserve the democratic

accountability and legitimacy of the committee. The CJC will be able to deploy sub-committees and advisory boards to broaden its expertise and it is not necessary for the vote to be extended to the point where un-elected co-optees would be able to out-vote councillors.

Consultation Question Six: a) What are your views on CJsCs being able to co-opt other members and/or appoint people to sit on sub-committees?

Elected members have a broad range of expertise, as do many other stakeholders and we feel it is appropriate that CJsCs are able to co-opt people to sit on select committees to provide a diversity of views and increase scope for experts in different fields to become involved in shaping delivery.

Consultation Question Seven: a) Do you agree that the approach to co-option of members would enable wider engagement of stakeholders in the work of a CJC? b) What might be needed to support CJC members in the involvement and engagement of appropriate stakeholders in their work?

Involvement can be broadened in many ways. People do not always need to be co-opted to make a valid contribution, for example the use of advisory boards and project teams.

The Cardiff Capital Region currently has a range of advisory boards and sub-committees with membership drawn from all sectors who advise and make recommendations to the regional Cabinet and it would be expected that the same could apply to the CJC.

Consultation Question Eight: a) Do you agree that members and staff of a CJC should be subject to a Code of Conduct and that the code should be similar to that of Principal Councils? Please give your reasons. b) What are your views on the adoption of a Code of Conduct for co-opted members? c) Should all co-opted members be covered by a code i.e. those with and without voting rights?

We believe that members of the CJC, whether elected or co-opted, should be subject to a code of conduct enshrined in the Nolan Principles since this codifies that values and behaviours expected of those who are leading the CJC and gives assurances to the public about the standards that can be expected. This is particularly important for the CJC as it will be seen as one-step removed from the governance and decision-making arrangements of local authorities.

One option would be for members of the CJC to abide by the code of conduct within their own organisation. However as the CJC is a corporate body in its own right, the code should reflect its values and the particular circumstances of its operations.

Budget and Workforce

Consultation Question Nine a) What are your views on the proposed approach for determining the budget requirements of a CJC? b) What are your views on the timescales proposed (including for the first year) for determining budget requirements payable by the constituent principal councils?

This council is already making a significant financial contribution to the Cardiff Capital Region and that the CCR will transition into the CJC for south east Wales. However there are some concerns that the CJC is able to set its own budget without the need for this to be ratified by the constituent councils.

Consultation Question Ten a) Do you agree that CJCs should be subject to the same requirements as principal councils in terms of accounting practices? Please give your reasons. b) Do you agree that the detail of how a CJC is to manage its accounting practices should be included in the Regulations of General Application? If not what more would be needed in the Establishment Regulations?

It is accepted that the CJC should be subject to the same accounting practices as constituent council's. More broadly, there are some concerns that as current accounting practices discount the value of future benefits and costs, they are not necessarily conducive to incentivising the long-term thinking required which we would expect for a body which is tasked with delivering sustainable long term growth for the region and which is a duty under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Consultation Question Eleven: What are your views on the proposed approach to staffing and workforce matters?

We think it is necessary for CJCs to be able to employ and recruit staff in their own right to be able to undertake secondments to discharge duties. We agree that it is correct that CJCs do not adopt significantly different staffing arrangements in terms of conditions of service, political restrictions, accountability etc. than principal councils. However, some flexibility may be needed with regards to remuneration if these bodies are to be able to attract the necessary calibre of staff to operate within a UK and global marketplace.

While the principal that CJCs should not be a vehicle to erode or inflate salary levels it needs to be recognised that the reference point for a CJC when recruiting may not be a local authority in Wales but a city in Europe or North America.

Consultation Question Twelve: What are your views in relation to CJs being required to have or have access to statutory “executive officers”?

We have concerns about the financial costs of requiring CJs to have these four executive officers. The dedicated post of chief executive is clearly necessary. The roles of Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer must be undertaken but we remain to be convinced that these need to be dedicated full-time posts within the CJC since those roles traditionally cover the whole remit of a local authority which is more complex and carries significantly larger budgets. We do not believe that a dedicated Chief Governance Officer is necessary. It is the belief of this authority that CCR currently has a staffing structure in place that could accommodate these key positions without the need for additional appointees.

Consultation Question Thirteen: Do you have any other views on provision for staffing or workforce matters within the establishment regulations?

No Further comments are made in relation to staffing / workforce matters

Governance

Consultation Question Fifteen: Do you think the regulations should provide for anything to be a decision reserved to the CJC rather than delegated to a sub-committee? If so what?

We agreed that certain decisions should be reserved to the CJC itself. These should cover any reports required by statute and the approval of the annual budget.

Consultation Question Seventeen: What are your views on CJs being subject to wider public body duties as described above?

We believe it is appropriate for CJs to be subject to duties that are placed on other public bodies

Consultation Question Eighteen: a) The Welsh Government is keen to continue working closely with local government and others on the establishment and implementation of CJs. Do you have any views on how best we can achieve this? b) In your view, what core requirements / components need to be in place to ensure a CJC is operational, and exercising its functions effectively? c) In particular, what do you think needs to be in place prior to a CJC meeting for the first time, on the day of its first meeting and thereafter?

We welcome ongoing dialogue and collaboration between Welsh Ministers and local government. These should take place at a regional level to reflect local context and the scale and maturity of existing regional relationships. It will be necessary to have a constitution in place from the outset along terms of reference for any sub-committees that will operate under delegated powers.

Consultation Question Nineteen: a) Do you think it would be helpful for the Welsh Government to provide guidance on the establishment and operation of CJsCs? b) Are there any particular areas which should be covered by the guidance?

We welcome additional guidance providing this is co-produced with the local government family and subject to agreement with the WLGA Council.

Consultation Question Twenty: a) How can the Welsh Government best support principal councils to establish CJsCs? b) Are there areas the Welsh Government should prioritise for support? c) Is there anything that CJsCs should/should not be doing that these Establishment Regulations do not currently provide for?

No specific response is being made to this question.

Consultation Question Twenty One: a) Do you agree with our approach to, and assessment of, the likely impacts of the regulations? Please explain your response. b) Do you have any additional/alternative data to help inform the final assessment of costs and benefits contained within the Regulatory Impact Assessment? If yes, please provide details.

We do not have any additional data which would enhance the Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Consultation Question Twenty Two:

- a) We would like to know your views on the effects that establishment of CJsCs would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- b) What effects do you think there would be? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated?

Consultation Question Twenty Three:

Please also explain how you believe the proposed policy for the establishment of CJsCs could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

We do not believe that the establishment of CJsCs will have either a positive, or negative, impact on the language providing they remain bound by the Welsh Language Standards that would apply to principal councils in their region.

SUBJECT:	Updated Asset Investment Policy
MEETING:	County Council
DATE:	3rd December 2020
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. **PURPOSE:**

To amend the existing Asset Investment Policy to reflect Audit Committee recommendations, national guidance and learning and as endorsed by the Council's Investment Committee.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Council agree to the proposed update and amendments to the Asset Investment Policy as contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 To agree the revised terms of reference for the Investment Committee as contained in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 That all future investment proposals are to consider the environmental impact and sustainable development principles as part of the business case for any proposed investment.

3. **KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 Council approved the Asset Investment Policy in May 2018 and a further report was approved in February 2019, which extended the policy to enable commercial loan funding, the use of investment funding to undertake development or refurbishments and the use of equity or debenture interests.
- 3.2 Audit Committee undertook an annual review in March of this year, which identified opportunities for improvement arising from an internal audit review, changing financial practice guidelines relating to commercial investments and self-reflection on the investments undertaken to date.
- 3.3 Investment Committee has considered the proposed amendments and have endorsed the proposals.

Recommendation – To review and update the Investment Committee terms of reference and Asset Investment Policy

3.4 The terms of reference have been reviewed and revised as outlined in Appendix 1. The proposed changes are as follows:

- The ability for Investment Committee members to nominate deputies with full voting rights in the event that they are unable to attend.
- The requirement for all officers and external advisors attending meetings to sign declarations of interest.
- The Investment Committee is to undertake an annual self-review to determine the effectiveness of the committee and any training requirements.

3.5 These proposals have been made following a review of the effectiveness of the Investment Committee and existing governance arrangements. Ensuring that deputies have full voting rights will enable meetings to be quorate and decisions to be made in a timely manner to take advantage of potential commercial opportunities. Whilst it is acknowledged that Members are required to identify declaration of interests prior to decision making, given the influence that officers and advisors will have in supporting Members it was considered appropriate to ensure that they are subject to the same level of transparency. The annual review of the committee and training requirements will ensure that self-review identifies any support necessary for Members and officers to enable them to continue to make appropriate decisions and undertake informed challenge.

Recommendation – That all future investment proposals are to consider the environment impact and sustainable development principles as part of the business case for any proposed investment

3.6 The current policy identifies the factors that should be considered in a business case for a potential investment, which does not explicitly include the environmental impact and sustainable development principles. Given the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and our commitment to reduce our environmental impact, the Asset Investment Policy has been amended to ensure that any future investment proposals include an evaluation within the business case of the environment and sustainable development considerations of the investment. Evaluations will reference the environmental impact and sustainable development principles referenced in the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and alignment with the Council's evolving climate change action plan.

Governance Improvements

3.7 The annual performance review enabled officers to evaluate opportunities to improve governance and provide Investment Committee members with greater access to information to improve investment decisions and manage risks. Whilst these do not require an update to the Asset Investment Policy, it is considered helpful to provide this detail to full Council.

3.8 A performance dashboard will be developed and reported to members of Investment Committee on a quarterly basis so that the performance of individual assets can be

measured against the original business case assumptions, financial and investment criteria and wider market trends.

- 3.9 A risk assessment is to be maintained and reported back to Investment Committee on a quarterly basis and if appropriate, more frequently to reflect the changing circumstances of individual investments or wider financial or structural market conditions.
- 3.10 The reporting process for potential investments has adopted a two-stage approach and the Asset Investment Policy has been amended and updated to reflect this. Initial investment opportunities will be assessed against the financial and viability criteria. If this initial assessment indicates that they could be met, an initial business case will be developed which will outline heads of terms, the financial model and the wider social and environmental benefits that the proposed investment will derive. This will be presented to Investment Committee for stage one approval to enable officers to incur expenditure on due diligence, legal and specialist fees to substantiate the assumptions and modelling built into the initial business case. When the due diligence has been completed, the finalised business case will be presented to Investment Committee for stage two approval. If this is agreed, the Council will enter into the investment.
- 3.11 Potential investment opportunities that are not progressed to stage one approval are reported to Investment Committee with accompanying rationale for their rejection. This provides greater transparency to Investment Committee members on the decisions that officers are making and ensuring these continue to align with the Council's policy objectives.
- 3.12 The current financial climate and market conditions have exemplified the need for Investment Committee to continually re-assess the Council's commercial risk appetite. This will reference a review of the performance of the existing investment portfolio, wider property or financial prevailing market conditions and external influences from forthcoming UK or WG policy changes that will affect future conditions set against Council's finances and pressures.
- 3.13 Investment Committee has recently undertaken such a review and determined to curtail all investment activity and potential acquisitions at this time, unless they are in County and grant funded or will further a wider policy aim. Investment Committee will continue to review this position in line with the Asset Investment Policy.

Asset Review, Disposals and Development

- 3.14 In line with the Asset Management Strategy the Estates team are currently undertaking a review of operational and investment assets to determine which if any can be released to generate capital receipts which can be used to support the capitalisation directive or capital programme priorities.
- 3.15 Allocated LDP sites, namely Chepstow Road in Raglan and phase 2 of Rockfield Farm are currently being advertised for disposal with tenders due to be received early in the new year.
- 3.16 Furthermore, the Council will be looking to commit to actively develop its first site with a development partner in 2021, allowing the approach to be tested and developed with a view to exploring other smaller schemes that could be taken forward in a similar manner.

This would then allow the Council to establish a development company from a more informed position and aligned to the opportunities to scale the approach through Council owned sites being put forward into the Replacement LDP. An update report outlining the Council's future intentions will be presented to Cabinet on the 16th December.

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

- 4.1 This proposal does not have any safeguarding and corporate parenting implications.
- 4.2 Amending the Asset Investment Policy will ensure that the sustainable development ambitions of the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act are embedded in our policy. This will ensure that investment decisions are fully sighted on potential implications and if necessary mitigating actions.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 An evaluation of the Asset Investment Policy and review of the performance of the Investment Committee and investment portfolio resulted in proposed improvements being accepted by Audit Committee earlier this year. The improvements have sought to improve existing practice and ensure that reviews of performance, risk appetite and risks are more dynamic with quarterly evaluations. The terms of reference have also been amended to provide accountability that is more transparent and strengthen governance arrangements. A do nothing scenario would result in these improvements being lost and was therefore discounted. A process of continual review and reflection will be undertaken to ensure alignment with prevailing policy and legislation and opportunities for improvement and public value creation are embedded in the policy.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Quarterly reviews of performance, risk appetite and risk will be undertaken by Investment Committee. Audit Committee will undertake an annual review. Evaluations will be undertaken against the financial and investment criteria set out in the Asset Investment Policy.

7. REASONS

- 7.1 The recommendations were developed as a result of an audit committee review, changing practice standards and guidance and to mitigate risks for future investment decisions made by the Investment Committee.
- 7.2 Investment Committee members and supporting officers have an obligation to ensure that decisions are made in accordance with prevailing Council Standing Orders and that the best possible advice is provided by appropriately qualified technical experts.
- 7.3 The adoption of regular portfolio performance and risk monitoring will ensure assets are being effectively managed, potential issues are identified and mitigation is implemented in a timely manner.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The current pandemic has highlighted the risks that naturally come with undertaking commercial investments. The Councils budget position remains under significant strain and the commercial investment and property markets remain uncertain and which we expect to continue until a vaccine is successfully rolled out. Investment Committee has therefore concluded that it would not be prudent to undertake further investments, save for opportunities within the County that are grant funded or support wider policy aims.
- 8.2 The Council's existing investments are regularly monitored, however revenue income has fallen against initial appraisal forecasts particularly the Newport Leisure Park investment. Officers are working with tenants and specialist advisors to mitigate impacts and have been able to recover lost income in the current financial year from Welsh Government's COVID hardship fund. The continuation of funding beyond March 2021 is unknown, and without which will place pressures on the commercial investment income target.
- 8.3 All property assets are being reviewed and where property sector values are still robust, e.g. the residential market, disposals will be pursued to realise capital receipts.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Audit Committee report and minutes 19th March 2020

Audit Committee Recommendations Update 14th September 2020

10. AUTHOR:

Debra Hill-Howells Head of Commercial, Property, Fleet and Facilities

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendix 1 – Asset Investment Policy (Updated Nov 2020)

1. Introduction

Local government has been challenged to identify new ways to generate both revenue and capital funding streams to help bridge the gap between available funds and increasing service demands.

In common with all public bodies, the Council has a property portfolio, which is used to facilitate service delivery and deliver corporate objectives. The Council has been driving down running costs through the rationalisation of its operational estate and enabling staff to work remotely. Whilst this process will continue to seek efficiencies, it is limited to cost avoidance and efficiency savings. This policy is concerned with the generation of net revenue returns through prudent investments, which will be used to support the costs associated with front line service delivery.

It is recognised that there has been significant scrutiny over public agencies acquisition of commercial portfolios funded by borrowing or capital reserves. This policy will outline the system process that will ensure that investments are prudent, decision-making is transparent, there are defined performance and risk management frameworks in place and accountability is embedded within the governance arrangements.

2. Objectives of the policy

- 2.1 To invest in opportunities within the County of Monmouthshire to support economic and regeneration policies, support job and wealth creation and improve the opportunities for Monmouthshire citizens.
- 2.2 To invest in opportunities within the City Deal geographical boundary and neighbouring areas of economic influence which will support the region's economic and regeneration priorities.

- 2.3 In order to manage and spread investment risk we may also identify investment options beyond our county and regional boundaries, which meet the financial and investment criteria in order to create a blended investment portfolio.
- 2.4 To help sustain Council services through prudent investments which generate a net revenue surplus that will be used to support Council priorities.
- 2.5 The Council’s Corporate Plan 2017 – 2022 identifies five priorities, the last of which is a “future focussed Council”. One of the key measures for this is *income generation from commercial investments*. This policy will provide the framework and criteria for commercial investments

3. Purpose of the Policy

3.1 The purpose of this policy is provide a robust governance and appraisal framework against which Investment Committee will assess investment opportunities and subsequent performance. Whilst the initial policy appended to the Asset Management Strategy considered the acquisition of land and property assets, this was refined by Council in 2019 to include the following:

- Commercial investments through the provision of commercial loan facilities
- The use of investment funding to build or renovate investment portfolio holdings
- Investments within equity or debenture interests.

3.2 All commercial investment opportunities will need to be the subject of a Business Plan which evidences that the specified financial and investment criteria set out in this policy are met.

3.2 The principal purpose for undertaking commercial investments will be to improve the financial, environmental or social wellbeing of the Council and its communities. Consideration will be given to the sustainable development principles within the business case and where possible the identification of options to reduce the existing carbon and environmental impact of potential investments.

4. Powers to acquire land and property assets.

Power to acquire and hold assets

4.1 The 1972 Local Government act provides the authority for local government to both acquire and dispose of property assets. S120 deals with the acquisition of assets as follows:

S120 Acquisition of land by agreement by principal councils.

(1) *For the purposes of—*

(a) *Any of their functions under this or any other enactment, or*

(b) *The benefit, improvement or development of their area,*

(c) A principal council may acquire by agreement any land, whether situated inside or outside their area.

4.2 Well-being powers

Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000, gives local authorities the power to do:

- 1) Anything which they consider is likely to achieve any one of the following objects:
 - (a) The promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of their area,
 - (b) The promotion or improvement of the social well-being of their area, and
 - (c) The promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of their area

Section 2 (4), of the act provides local authorities with the ability to incur expenditure, give financial assistance, enter into arrangements or agreements and provide goods services and accommodation.

We have obtained specific advice on the application of these powers to acquire investment assets, which has confirmed that a direct benefit to the citizens of Monmouthshire needs to be accrued from the acquisition of the assets which can be tangible i.e. the provision of new facilities, or intangible i.e. funding service delivery.

General Power of Competence

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill which received royal assent earlier this year will introduce the general power of competence powers which have been enjoyed by English authorities since the introduction of the Localism Act. The powers will enable councils to be more innovative and lend or invest money; or setup a company or co-operative society to trade and engage in commercial activity. Use of the power is not restricted to the geographical area of the authority or for the benefit of its residents.

Power to borrow

- 4.3 The power to borrow is provided via S1 of the 2003 Local Government Act. This determines that borrowing may be undertaken;
- (b) For the purposes of prudent management of its financial affairs provided it does not exceed its affordable borrowing limit under s.3 Local Government Act 2003 (s.2 (1) and 2(4))

A number of English Authorities have sought advice on the extent of this power and whether it confers the right to borrow money for purely financial purposes. This is yet to be tested in the Courts; however, Welsh Government proposals seem to infer a greater degree of freedom than that afforded by the Localism Act, which confers the general power of competence to English authorities.

5. Financial Criteria

- 5.1 Commercial investments will be expected to meet the criteria set out below; investments outside these criteria will require approval by Cabinet with a supporting business case and reasons for deviating from the agreed protocols.

Criteria	Measure
Total Investment Fund	£50,000,000, to be reviewed annually
Maximum Lot size	No greater than 20% of the Investment Fund value, unless approved by Cabinet.
Minimum Return	2% net return on investment (to determine this the costs of borrowing will be deducted from the gross income received)

	Where the acquisition will result in net economic growth to Monmouthshire (through the provision of jobs, additional employment floor space, local regeneration or any other measurable community benefit) the Investment Committee can adopt a lower return, but the return cannot be lower than 0% after borrowing.
Target annual return	7% per annum, to be reviewed annually to reflect prevailing market conditions
Minimum Repayment Provision (MRP)	To be assessed on a case-by-case basis by reference to the economic life of the asset or commercial loan term. In all cases, the MRP will not exceed 50 years.
Environmental impact and Sustainable Development principles of the proposed Investment	The proposed investment will need to quantify the baseline position and identify opportunities to reduce the environment impacts.

6. Investment Criteria

Property Investments

6.1 All proposed land and property acquisitions are to be undertaken by the Council's Estates team or its appointed agents in accordance with prevailing legislation and the codes of practice of relevant professional bodies. All valuations must be undertaken by a qualified¹ member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors with knowledge of the relevant local and specialist markets.

6.2 All potential acquisitions will be assessed against the following Investment Criteria:

- Location
- Quality
- Tenure
- Title
- Portfolio blend
- Covenant strength and security of income
- Income and capital growth potential
- Potential landlord liabilities
- Identifiable risks & portfolio blend
- Development and added value opportunities
- Economic, regeneration and other key Council priorities
- Market and sectoral conditions
- Independent Valuation
- Wellbeing and future generations impact and sustainable development principles
- Potential exit strategy
- Sinking fund requirement

6.3 If consent is being sought to undertake borrowing to refurbish or develop a property asset a business case will be developed which considers the investment criteria set out in 6.2 above. In addition it will need to outline:

¹ MRICS or FRICS

- Statutory consents required to enable the development and the outcome of any initial investigations
- Anticipated development/ refurbishment costs
- Programme timescales
- Clarification how debt repayments will be funded in advance of rental returns.

Commercial loans, Debenture or Equity Interests.

6.4 All proposed commercial investments will be led by the Councils Finance Department or its appointed specialist technical advisors in accordance with prevailing legislation and the codes of practice of relevant professional bodies.

6.5 All potential investments will be assessed against the following investment criteria:

- Financial standing of the proposed borrower
- Company gearing and assets
- Payback periods and affordability
- Opportunity to protect investment through charges over residual assets, IPR, contracts etc.
- Potential step in rights
- Viability of investment purpose and market competition
- Loan to value ratio
- Potential risks
- Environmental impact and the sustainable development principles
- Potential exit strategy
- Sinking fund requirement

7. Governance Criteria

7.1 All investment decisions up to a total lot value of 20% of the investment fund value are delegated by Council to the Investment Committee. Any proposed investments over this sum will need to approval from Cabinet.

7.2 The Investment Committee will be comprised of the Council Leader, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources and the Leaders of the two largest opposition parties (political balance 3:1:1). The Committee will be advised by the Resources Chief Officer and officers from Finance, Estates and Legal Services together with specialist technical advisors.

7.2 The terms of reference, which will govern the operating practices of Investment Committee, are set out in Appendix 1. Three members of the Investment Committee or their nominated deputies will need to be in attendance for the meeting to be quorate.

7.4 A minimum of a two-stage process will be adopted by Investment Committee when considering any investment proposals.

Stage 1

7.3 An initial business case is to be prepared which considers the financial and investment criteria set out in this policy. Provisional heads of terms, dependencies, anticipated timescales and potential risks should also be contained in the report.

7.4 The business case will be presented to the Investment Committee for approval to incur costs to undertake the due diligence necessary to substantiate the provisional proposal and recommendations.

Stage 2

- 7.5 Following the completion of due diligence, a final business case will be prepared. If the proposed investment remains prudent and in line with investment and financial criteria the business case will be presented to Investment Committee for their decision.
- 7.6 Should the due diligence demonstrate that the proposed investment should not be progressed, this should be reported back to Investment Committee with the supporting rationale.
- 7.7 Members of Investment Committee will be required to undertake an annual review of their training needs to ensure that they are suitably equipped to challenge and scrutinise investment proposals.
- 7.8 Officers will provide quarterly investment portfolio performance and risk data for Investment Committee members to evaluate, together with details of potential investments which did not progress to Investment Committee.

8. Review Principles

- 8.1 An annual performance review of the Investment Committee and the investment portfolio will be reported to Audit Committee to ascertain performance against the following criteria:
- Individual investment performance against Business Case projections
 - Governance arrangements and adherence to policy
 - Market conditions and performance
 - Risk analysis
 - Proposals for improvement
- 8.2 The Asset Investment Policy will be reviewed annually and adjusted to reflect prevailing market circumstances.
- 8.3 There will be a continual and ongoing review, quarterly or otherwise, of the Investment Committee's risk appetite and as recommended by officers and advisors.
- 8.4 Quarterly performance data will be presented to Investment Committee to evaluate performance against the financial criteria and business case projections. If this data illustrates that an investment is deemed to be underperforming or fails to meet any debt repayment costs, a review will be undertaken to determine:
- Wider prevailing market conditions and the impact on the investment
 - The potential to increase the revenue generated or reduce holding costs
 - The anticipated sale value of the asset
 - Opportunities for debt refinancing
 - Opportunities for step in
 - Residual value against outstanding borrowing
 - Consideration whether the circumstances are short, medium or long term and the potential for recovery
- 8.5 If it is determined that the net sale value will realise a receipt in excess of the initial investment and that there is little potential to increase the revenue then the investment will be sold / traded. If however, the net sale value will not realise a value equal to or in excess of that originally paid, the investment will be retained until such time the capital value has increased. All income and

expenditure for property assets will be funded and managed by the Estates Team and commercial loans by the Finance Department.

- 8.6 Where a property investment is located outside of the County or requires specific expertise, external agents may be instructed to manage the asset on the Councils behalf. If costs cannot be recovered from service charges, they will instead be deducted from the gross annual return.

9 Risks

- 9.1 As with all investments, they will be subject to fluctuations in market conditions and external factors. All investments will be considered against the security, liquidity, yield principles acknowledging that there will be variations between commercial loans, which are likely to be more liquid than property assets and have shorter paybacks. They will however unlikely to be secured against tangible assets as opposed to property investments, however their payback periods will be longer.
- 9.2 Illiquidity - In the event that a property needs to be sold to generate capital funds, the disposal process may take in the region of 6 – 12 months to complete, dependent on the prevailing market conditions.
- 9.3 Commercial property will require management to safeguard the physical condition of the asset and the landlord tenant relationship. Regardless of contractual arrangements, there will always be the risk of tenant default.
- 9.4 In the event of a market downturn, it is likely that rental streams will reduce and voids may occur. This may result in the costs of borrowing exceeding revenue received; this risk can be in part mitigated through the creation of sinking funds for each investment. This is where a portion of the surplus income is ring fenced to the asset and used to fund unexpected maintenance costs or offset declining rent rolls.
- 9.5 When providing commercial loans, risks may arise from a change in the financial viability of the borrower, changes in the market, competition, changes in UK or Welsh Government policies. Whilst these scenarios should all be considered in the business plan, not all circumstances can be predicted as has been highlighted by the Covid 19 pandemic.
- 9.6 Quarterly assessments of the risk profile for the investment portfolio will enable Investment Committee to evaluate and if necessary seek opportunities to mitigate the risk through for example refurbishments, or disposal of the investments.

10. Purchasing and Finance.

- 10.1 The Council benefits from the ability to access funding from the PWLB at relatively low interest rates and fixed repayment terms enabling certainty over debt repayments and potential yields at the point of the acquisition of an investment.
- 10.2 If stage 1 approval is provided by Investment Committee, due diligence costs will be incurred. If the investment proceeds these will be included in the total investment cost and funded through borrowing. If the proposal does not proceed if the abortive costs cannot be financed through existing revenue budgets, they will need to be set against the Investment Fund and repayments offset from the gross investment income.
- 10.3 A sinking fund will be created to manage unforeseen repair works or offset a fall in income levels to prevent the portfolio becoming a net cost to the authority. The value of the sinking fund will be determined on an individual investment basis to reflect value and risk.

11. Governance & Purchase Flow Chart

Identification of potential investment opportunity & initial assessment of compliance against financial and investment



If initial assessment identifies that it does not meet the criteria it is not progressed, but reported back to Investment Committee



If initial assessment identifies that the criteria should be met, an outline business case is prepared to establish viability of proposal, evidence that the Financial and Investment Criteria are met and identification of due diligence necessary to substantiate any assumptions and analysis of risk.



Stage 1 Approval

If the Outline Business case meets financial and investment criteria, officers will seek approval from the Investment Committee to submit a conditional offer subject to contract, due diligence & Member approval. Due



Commission due diligence reports, surveys, re-assess financial, and investment criteria against initial assumptions. Finalise Business Case.



Stage 2

Present finalised Business Case to Investment Committee for their scrutiny and decision. If investment is approved then legal processes can be implemented.

Approvals



Completion of legal formalities

Commence legal processes, which will be undertaken by the Councils Commercial Legal Team.



If the investment is a property acquisition, exchange contracts, which contractually commits the Council to the purchase.



Finalise legal documentation. Arrange draw down of funds and completion of investment.



Post completion – if property acquisition, payment of Land Transaction Tax and other fees; arrange for rental payments and ongoing property / portfolio management. Establish sinking fund with finance team.



Update relevant colleagues / external organisations and update terrier and other software systems.



Performance

Monitoring

Performance dashboard of investments to be presented to Investment Committee on a quarterly basis or sooner if required.



Risk register to be prepared and monitored by Investment Committee on a quarterly basis or sooner if required.



Undertake annual assessment to review compliance with financial and investment criteria and compliance with governance arrangements. Annual report to be presented to Audit Committee for scrutiny.



Investment Committee to undertake an annual review of training needs to ensure effective scrutiny and challenge of investment

Annex 1 – Investment Committee Terms of Reference.

- Purpose:* To hold strategic oversight and accountability for the acquisition and monitoring of commercial investments in line with the Asset Investment Strategy.
- Membership:* The Committee will be comprised of the following elected Members:
- The Leader
 - Deputy Leader
 - Cabinet Member with portfolio responsibility for Resources
 - Leaders of the two largest opposition parties
- The membership of the committee reflects the political balance of the current administration and will be subject to review following a local government election within the Monmouthshire County Constituency.
- Chairperson:* The Leader of the Council. In the absence of the Leader, the Deputy Leader will assume the Chair role in their absence.
- In attendance:* Leaders of the remaining opposition parties
- Chief Executive
 - Chief Officer, Resources
 - Chief Officer, Enterprise
 - Head of Law/Monitoring Officer
 - Other Council Officers as required.
 - Specialist advisors as required.

Deputising: Members of the Investment Committee are able to nominate a substitute elected Member to deputise for them if they are unable to attend a committee meeting. The deputy will be able to vote on behalf of the substantive Committee Member.

Democratic Services should be advised of any substitute Members, no less than 24 hours prior to the meeting, save in the event of an emergency.

Voting Rights: Will be limited to the members of the Investment Committee

Quorum: Three members of the committee

Frequency: The meetings will be convened as investment opportunities arise as required. A minimum of four meetings will take place per annum to review the performance of the investment portfolio.

Declarations of Interest:

All Members, Officers and external advisors will be required to submit declarations of interest prior to the discussing proceeding. Officers and external advisors with a personal or commercial interest in the proposed investment will not take part in the discussions, without the express consent of the Chair.

Investment Committee remit will be to:

1. Take decisions on proposed acquisitions or investment opportunities.
2. Scrutinise business cases and ensure that proposals are in accordance with the approved Asset Investment Strategy.
3. Monitor and review the performance of the investment portfolio, ensuring that it meets the agreed financial benchmarks within the asset investment policy and identified risks are actively managed.
4. Agree mitigation and exit strategies for poorly performing assets, including disposals.
5. Provide an annual position statement for Audit Committee to review the performance of the investment portfolio
6. To execute the powers of authority delegated by Council in a prudent manner
7. Members of Investment Committee will act in the best interest of the corporate entity
8. The Committee will undertake an annual self-review to review the effectiveness of the committee and identify any training required for committee members.

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Future Generations Evaluation (includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments)

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</p> <p>Debra Hill-Howells Phone no: 01633 644281 E-mail: debrahill-howells@monmouthshire.go.uk</p>	<p>Proposal Name:</p> <p>Asset Investment Policy</p>
	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To provide a governance and evaluation framework for commercial investments</p>
<p>Name of Service</p> <p>Landlord Services</p>	<p>Date Future Generations Evaluation form completed</p> <p>Initial assessment 25.04.18. Updated 20.11.20.</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?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Investment opportunities will be used to generate revenue and capital generation, and where possible</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?
	the creation of employment opportunities and wealth creation.	
<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 Asset Management Strategy actively promotes the implementation of low zero carbon technologies, whole life costing and upgrading mechanical and electrical infrastructure during refurbishment projects.</p> <p>The Asset Investment Policy has been amended to include the assessment of environmental impact within the investment criteria and investment business case.</p>	<p>The inclusion of the environmental criteria will ensure that informed investment decisions are taken and if necessary carbon off-setting and mitigation will be sought. This could be the installation of renewable technologies, the use of green energy suppliers or increased green corridors.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Provision of affordable housing within allocated development sites</p>	
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Regeneration opportunities, community asset transfer process and development of community hubs</p>	<p>Some communities may be opposed to commercial development or regeneration schemes. Whilst we will be seeking to acquire existing assets we will consider other ways of enhancing revenue and capital values through intensification, change of use or re-development. If these options were exercised they would be subject to planning and local consultation and we will actively explore opportunities to mitigate the impacts on local communities through public value initiatives e.g. the provision of a community hub in Magor partially funded through the development of Rockfield Farm.</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>Where possible we will consider ways to develop local supply chains, utilizing local materials and reduce our carbon emissions through the implementation of energy efficient and renewable technologies.</p> <p>Any proposed investments will need to be consider the environmental implications of the investment and sustainable development principles. Opportunities to generate public value will be considered as part of the investment.</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>Welsh language reception facilities and signage within operational buildings.</p>	
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>The release of development land will provide affordable housing and employment opportunities.</p> <p>The income derived from commercial investments will enable front lines services to be sustained or developed to support all community members.</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>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>The strategy supports the development of whole life costing principles, implementation of renewable technologies and low zero carbon technologies to reduce energy consumption. Rationalisation of the operational portfolio will continue and emerging policies support a commercial approach utilizing assets for income generation that can also support economic and regenerative activities</p> <p>Opportunities to generate public value through long term investments will be sought.</p>	
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>The development of the community hubs supports a collaborative approach for integrated and co-located services. We work with Gwent Police on a collaborative approach to facilities, design and maintenance services and share accommodation with Aneurin Bevan Health Board.</p> <p>Commercial investments, particularly loan funding will be used where possible to support policy initiatives, local companies and projects, e.g. providing commercial loan facilities to broadband companies to enable the implementation of dark fibre in the county and the reduction in white spots so that residents can access broadband.</p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p>Involvement</p>	<p>The Community Asset transfer policy will be subject to review working with stakeholders to develop a model based on best practice, GAVO and user feedback. We work with local members, community groups and other stakeholders when disposing of assets and will ensure feedback is provided in any Cabinet / Council reports</p> <p>We will adopt, where ever possible a people centered approach and include service users and stakeholders in design decisions.</p>	
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p>Prevention</p>	<p>We have implemented a whole life costing approach to refurbishments, actively seeking opportunities to upgrade mechanical and electrical infrastructure to reduce energy consumption, operating costs and CO2. Where assets are surplus to MCC requirements, we will work with local groups to undertake community asset transfers to provide additional community resource and S106 funding from new developments is used to support community benefit projects.</p> <p>Where possible investments will be undertaken that improve infrastructure and opportunities for Monmouthshire residents. Out of County or commercial loan investments will derive a net income that can be used to supporting front line services and support community initiatives.</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>All decisions and policies will have regard to the well-being principles and the need to avoid short term decisions that have long term implications.</p> <p>Investment criteria within the Asset Investment Policy requires an evaluation of the sustainable development principles and environmental impact.</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	All operational assets are accessible	Neutral	
Disability	All operational assets are accessible and take into account various types of disability.	Neutral	Where CATs are proposed we will work with community groups to safeguard accessibility. Access audits are undertaken to establish physical alterations.
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	Where possible, baby changing facilities will be provided.	Neutral	
Race	Neutral	Neutral	
Religion or Belief	Neutral	Neutral	
Sex	Neutral	Neutral	
Sexual Orientation	Neutral	Neutral	
Welsh Language	Ensure that signage is compliant with the Welsh Language measure 2011	Neutral	

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

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

Safeguarding	Neutral	<i>Neutral</i>	
Corporate Parenting	Neutral	Neutral	

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

- Welsh Audit Office review
- Review of practice within other Authorities
- Feedback from Economy & Development Select Committee
- Professional advice from investment and legal advisors
- Feedback from stakeholders (County Farms and Community Asset Transfer)
- WAO and NAO reviews of commercial investments
- Audit Committee review
- Performance and risk assessments

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

Benefits

- Create an additional revenue source for the Council without impacting on services or being an additional cost to tax payers.
- Potential to support the local economy and jobs by acquiring or developing assets within Monmouthshire and the Capital City region
- Potential for investments to stimulate regeneration opportunities
- Reducing operating costs

Negative Impacts

- Competing with the private sector and the artificial inflation of purchase prices.
- Risks associated with property market and commercial lending

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

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:	Jan 2022
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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
	County Council	10th May	Asset Management Strategy adopted
	Asset Investment Performance & Policy Review	March 2020	Audit Committee
	Asset Investment Policy and Performance Review	September 2020	Investment Committee

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 7

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
at Remote Meeting on Thursday, 22nd October, 2020 at 2.00 pm**

PRESENT: County Councillor S. Woodhouse (Chairman)
County Councillor S.B. Jones (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: P. Clarke, D. Batrouni, D. Blakebrough, L.Brown, A.Davies, L.Dymock, A. Easson, R. Edwards, D. Evans, P.A. Fox, R.J.W. Greenland, M.Groucutt, L. Guppy, R. Harris, J. Higginson, G. Howard, S. Howarth, R.John, D. Jones, L.Jones, P. Jones, S. Jones, P. Jordan, M.Lane, P. Murphy, P.Pavia, M. Powell, J.Pratt, V. Smith, B. Strong, F. Taylor, T.Thomas, J.Treharne, J.Watkins, A. Watts, A. Webb and K. Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Matt Phillips	Head of Law/ Monitoring Officer
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Chief Officer, Resources
Roger Hoggins	Head of Service - Strategic Projects (Fixed Term)
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
John Pearson	Local Democracy Manager
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Enterprise
Matthew Gatehouse	Head of Policy and Governance
Mark Hand	Head of Place-making, Housing, Highways and Flood
Emma Davies	Performance Officer
Jonathan Davies	Central Accountancy Finance Manager
Richard Jones	Performance Manager
Matt Lewis	Deputy Director Shared Resource Services
Rachel Lewis	Planning Policy Manager
Gareth Lucey	Wales Audit Officer
Craig O'Connor	Head of Planning
Philip White	Chair of Audit Committee
Anthony Veale	Wales Audit Officer

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors D. Dovey and R.Roden

1. Declarations of interest

County Councillor L. Guppy declared a non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 6.a as a Flying Start Health Visitor.

County Councillor P. Fox declared a prejudicial interest in relation to item 5.c as an owner of a potential development site.

2. Public Questions

None.

3. Chairman's announcement and receipt of petitions

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Out of respect for those who have recently passed, and former MCC Chairman Alan Breeze Council observed a period of silence.

The Chair congratulated the Emergency Planning Team who have achieved the RSPCA Gold Award for the 10th consecutive year.

The Chair also thanked the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team, and all staff and colleagues for their efforts through the pandemic.

4. Reports for Council:

4.1. Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019/20

The Cabinet Member for Governance and Law presented the report to seek council approval of the Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019/20. The report sought to ensure that members have a clear understanding of progress made against the aspirations within the Corporate Plan and the subsequent 'plan on a page' documents that were approved by Cabinet to ensure the organisation is focused on the things that matter most during its response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Cabinet Member thanked services for their hard work and efforts and added that the Corporate Plan remains under review during the uncertain times.

Concerns were highlighted regarding the impact on education services, including FSM pupils, blended learning provision and the provision of Welsh Medium education.

It was suggested that there was disconnect between qualitative discussion and quantitative measures around social justice.

The report lacked a clear plan to tackle the Welsh Government funding formula.

The Leader welcomed challenge from the opposition and recognised the report as a good position statement.

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to approve the recommendation:

That the Corporate Plan Annual Report 2019/20 be approved, subject to the inclusion of any amendments agreed by Council.

4.2. Audited Statement of Accounts 2019/2020 and ISA260 Report

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report to provide the audited annual accounts for the Authority for 2019/20 for final approval, following the audit process undertaken by Audit Wales and review and endorsement by the October Audit Committee.

The Chair of Audit Committee highlighted that the accounts were prepared in a timely, professional manner resulting in the appropriate final opinion of an unqualified, clean report. He concluded that the Audit Committee endorsed the report to Council.

A Member asked if it would be appropriate to provide the original budget alongside the report for comparison. The Chief Officer explained that the Statement of Account is as at 31st March and therefore the revised budget is more representative.

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A question was raised around an increase in the number of senior officers and it was explained that a number of employees have moved into the £60,000 plus threshold due to pay awards.

It was asked if the procurement of Newport Leisure Park needs further scrutiny by Audit Committee. The Chair of Audit Committee did not think there was anything new to add at this point.

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

That the final audited Monmouthshire County Council Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 (Appendix 1) are approved by Council.

4.3. Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan, Review of issues, vision, objectives and evidence base in light of COVID-19 and revised delivery agreement

The Cabinet Member for Enterprise presented the report to provide Council with an update on the preparation of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Review of the RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives and Evidence Base in terms of sensitivity to the consequences of the current pandemic.

The report also sought Council's agreement to the RLDP Revised Delivery Agreement, which amends the project timetable for Plan preparation and the Community Involvement Scheme in light of the pandemic and the recently published Welsh Government 2018-based population and household projections, for submission to the Welsh Government for approval.

More detail was required when Council receive the preferred strategy and spatial options.

With regards to high prices and affordable homes, it was suggested that consideration be given to type for type developments across South Wales. Officers recognised the challenge and seek to address the issue within the LDP.

Reassurance was sought around the evidence base given the current pandemic, and the Cabinet Member assured that Members would be kept up to date with any further need for consultation, and the ongoing review.

Further detail was sought on strategies to attract new businesses.

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendation:

Council endorses the Review of the RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives and Evidence Base, and agrees that these remain relevant in light of Covid-19 and that it is appropriate to progress with Plan preparation.

Council agrees the Revised Delivery Agreement, which amends the project timetable and the Community Involvement Scheme as a result of the Covid-19

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pandemic and the recent publication of the 2018-based population and household projections, for submission to the Welsh Government for approval.

4.4. Future Data Hall and Data Hosting Arrangements

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report to consider the full business case for the SRS data centre and proposed data hall move from Blaenavon, replacing it initially with a move to a commercial scale purpose built data hall followed by cloud based solutions as appropriate. Also, the funding model and resultant funding requirement for the Council.

It was confirmed that CCTV across Monmouthshire is an independent function, and there were no plans to change this.

There would be no change to contact details and the service would remain the same.

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:

That Council acknowledges Cabinet's support and approval of the recommended option to move to an alternative physical data centre solution with Next Generation Data (NGD).

That Council supports the funding model predicated on equal costs of the shared infrastructure.

That Council approves that its share in the £2.3m up front capital investment of £361k and its 1/3 share of decommissioning costs (£203k) is funded as part of the 2021/22 capital budget proposals.

That the actual capital financing solution be determined as part of the 2021/22 budget setting process and where it is anticipated to be funded from prudential borrowing and/or useable capital receipts.

5. Notices of Motion

5.1. Submitted by County Councillor A. Easson

Flying Start is a positive facility for parents with young children. However, it is post code related which debars many parents from Public Document Pack accessing the service. In my ward in particular, young parents supported by Flying Start have in recent times moved a distance of maybe 100 metres. In doing so their post code changes and they then fall out of the Scheme. In the current climate all help that can be given by Flying Start to these families in need should be opened up to other Post Codes. I move that Monmouthshire County Council explores with some

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urgency the expansion of the Flying Start scheme to draw in the maximum number of families who are currently struggling to make ends meet.

County Councillor Higginson seconded the motion.

Members were keen to support the motion recognising the support provided through the Flying Start programme.

It was highlighted that deprivation is across all areas of the County and is not dependent on postcode.

A full report on the service would be welcomed by Council.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was carried.

Councillor Blakebrough left the meeting at 16:54pm

6. Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni

That this Council is disappointed by the Conservative cabinet's decision to close Usk recycling centre and believes the cabinet should have worked with Usk residents, the Surf campaign group and Usk town council to remedy the problems at the site and deliver a solution that worked for everyone.

County Councillor Groucutt seconded the motion, and in doing so referred to the matter being discussed at Strong Communities Select Committee meeting and the support at the meeting, compared to the lack of consideration at the meeting of Cabinet meeting. He urged the Cabinet to reverse the decision and work with Usk Town Council.

The Cabinet Member was confident the right decision had been taken and explained that officers are happy to provide expertise and work with Usk Town Council.

A Member asked how many Members had visited and observed the site, and highlighted the financial savings of the closure.

Councillor Fox left the meeting at 17:30pm

Councillor Pavia left the meeting at 17:34pm

The results of a recorded vote were:

For	10
Against	20
Abstain	1

Therefore, the motion was defeated.

7. Submitted by County Councillor D. Batrouni

That the Conservative cabinet should abandon plans to increase kerbside garden waste charges by 94%.

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Councillor Batrouni proposed to withdraw his motion, which upon being put to the vote was agreed by Members.

Councillors Williams (18:02) and Groucutt (18:04) left the meeting.

8. Members' Questions:

9. From County Councillor L. Dymock to County Councillor S. Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Justice and Community Development

What support has been given to children and young people during the last 7 months in terms of those struggling with mental health and wellbeing?

As Councillor S. Jones was unavailable to provide a response Councillor Dymock agreed to accept a written response, a copy of which would be distributed to all Members.

10. From County Councillor J. Watkins to County Councillor J. Pratt, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Neighbourhood Services

On September 18th the Cross Destination Space stage of Caldicot Regeneration Plan was completed, however signage – announcing speed limit change and pedestrian right of way - was not installed. At time of writing October 12th still no signage has been installed (after repeated contact with council officers) leading to a dangerous situation of confusion for motorists and pedestrians. Can the Cabinet member please give details when the signage will be installed and how it was possible that it was omitted?

Councillor Watkins was pleased to report that since submitting the question some signage has been installed and assurance has been provided that more signage will be coming. She asked Councillor Pratt for further information.

Councillors Howarth (18:10), Batrouni (18:08) and Treharne (18:11) left the meeting

Councillor Pratt thanked Councillor Watkins for her question. With regard to signage it was thought that some signage had been installed, such as new road layout and restricted zone but there has been a delay installing the 20mph speed limit signs so it was pleasing to hear one has been installed. It was understood that there had been some confusion between teams over who was arranging the installation, but this has now been resolved and temporary signage was installed yesterday. The complete 20mph scheme is to be installed tomorrow. She acknowledged wider concerns of local members regarding pedestrian safety and advised further warning signage is to be installed, and a road safety audit being undertaken.

Councillor Pratt will ask officers to provide briefings and update on measures being undertaken.

The Head of Strategic Projects explained that the road had opened after completion of the scheme. The RSA3 can either be carried out prior to, or after, the scheme being in place. Feedback will be provided to the Authority.

As a supplementary Councillor Watkins stated there has been a huge amount of upset around a scheme removing pedestrian crossings without enough public information.

It was confirmed that a note for wider distribution is being prepared.

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10.1. **From County Councillor A. Watts to County Councillor P. Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health**

How will Council continue to support care homes?

Councillor Jones thanked Councillor Watts for his question and confirmed she would also email responses to Members. She gave assurance that MCC have been supporting care homes throughout the pandemic and officers of social services and public protection have been in regular contact. She provided examples of work carried out such as regular weekly check-ins with care providers, providing daily reports on the number of cases, fortnightly virtual get-togethers with all care at home providers, increasing frequency as required. There has been coordination with officers with Environmental Health, Finance and Business to provide support and advice. There has been coordination with colleagues from ABUHB to ensure infection control measures were correct. There has been a two weekly PPE ordering system with all providers.

Providers have been supported through the claims process to access WG funds and provided with specific financial support.

Councillor Jones assured Members that parity was given to all care homes throughout Monmouthshire and will continue to do so.

11. **From County Councillor A. Watts to County Councillor P. Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health**

Is there any evaluation of better practise across Monmouthshire's care settings?

Councillor Jones responded that the care sector across Monmouthshire has had to deal with a rapid change in the delivery of services during the pandemic. We continue to be in close communication with providers and have seen the efforts that have needed to be in place to keep people safe. Care Inspectorate Wales continue to carry out inspection work and our social work and nursing staff continue where possible to have access to people.

There are concerns around the limited access families have had but we have worked with the sector to ensure communication and socially distanced visits have taken place when allowed.

The Cabinet Member thanked care home sector and all staff at care homes across Monmouthshire for their hard work and dedication to keeping our most vulnerable people safe.

All care home staff and residents are tested fortnightly. If a positive result is detected they are all re-tested, carrying on until all tests are negative.

12. **From County Councillor A. Watts to County Councillor P. Murphy, Cabinet Member for Resources**

How much new money has been invested in the Council's preparedness for a second wave?

Councillor Murphy explained that the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF) has received £150,000 Covid19 specific funding to support the partners in the Strategic Coordinating Group (SCG) and the work of any tactical groups. MCC has received around £11,000.

In terms of the Council's preparedness for the ongoing response and planning, this is being managed by existing organisational capacity and staff resource. As and where necessary staff have been reassigned and the response effort prioritised.

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The Council continues to monitor Covid19 risks, impact on service provision, engagement with partner agencies in mitigating the consequences in delivering the agreed strategic aims of the Council.

The Council has enacted its emergency management plan and business continuity arrangements to coordinate response with external partnerships, neighbouring authorities and WG. These continue to operate in a dynamic and challenging environment, evolving and adapting to manage and mitigate as far as possible a variety of risks to Council service delivery and the well-being of staff and residents.

The ongoing planning and preparation around the Covid response remains an ongoing feature of the SCG.

As a supplementary Councillor Watts asked if there is now a good opportunity to ensure that care workers are being paid the minimum living wage.

Councillor Murphy responded that Council has been paying the living wage, and the last budget saw an increase in payments to care homes to ensure staff were paid the living wage.

Councillor Jones responded that there are talks around future recruitment of social workers and domiciliary carers and how working standards can be improved.

13. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2020 were approved.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm