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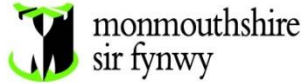
Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 1 November 2022

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Conference Room - Usk, NP15 1AD** on **Wednesday, 9th November, 2022,** at **5.00 pm.**

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

3. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (SPF) UPDATE – ALLOCATION OF MONMOUTHSHIRE FUNDING

   1 - 28

   Division/Wards Affected: All

   Purpose: Approval is sought for the granting of investment from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) to projects and interventions listed in Appendix One of this report, as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Programme.

   Author: Frances O'Brien, Chief Officer Enterprise
   Hannah Jones, Head of Economy Employment and Skills

   Contact Details: francesobrien@monmouthshire.gov.uk
   hannahjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4. RESOURCING THE SHAREPOINT ONLINE IMPLEMENTATION

   29 - 60

   Division/Wards Affected: None

   Purpose: To present the business case for resources to implement the Microsoft SharePoint Online Electronic Data & Records Management System (MS SPO EDRMS), bringing business benefits and efficiencies and enabling full use of the business tools within the MS Enterprise Agreement.

   Author: Sian Hayward - Head of Information Security and Technology

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

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CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	**Leader** Lead Officer – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation Cardiff City Region Joint Cabinet Regional working Government relations WLGA, LGA and Public Service Board	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	**Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy and Deputy Leader** Lead Officer – Frances O'Brien Economic resilience and Sustainability focus towards foundational economy Local Development Plan and Strategic Development Plan Town Centre and neighbourhood investment and Stewardship Development Management and Building Control Skills and Employment including green jobs and apprenticeships Broadband connectivity Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Health, Licensing Registrars Service	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Rachel Garrick	**Cabinet Member for Resources** Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Frances O'Brien, Matthew Phillips, Jane Rodgers Finance Developing and proposing the budget to Council Digital and Information technology Benefits Human Resources, Payroll, Health and Safety Strategic Procurement – promoting localism Land and Buildings Property Maintenance and management Fleet Management Emergency Planning	Caldicot Castle

Martyn Groucutt	**Cabinet Member for Education** Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs / Inclusion Post 16 and adult education School Standards & Improvement Community learning 21st Century Schools Programme Youth service	Lansdown
Sara Burch	**Cabinet Member for Inclusive and Active Communities** Lead Officers – Frances O'Brien, Ian Saunders, Jane Rodgers, Matthew Gatehouse Affordable Housing Strategy Homelessness Community Safety Active Travel Leisure Centres Play and Sport Tourist Information, Museums, Theatres, Attractions Public Rights of Way	Cantref
Tudor Thomas	**Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services** Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers Children's services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending Service Adult Services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental Health and wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision Welsh language	Park
Catrin Maby	**Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment** Lead Officer – Frances O'Brien, Matthew Gatehouse Decarbonisation Transport Planning Local Food production, consumption and procurement including agroforestry and local horticulture Traffic network planning Public Transport Highways Pavements and back lanes	Drybridge

	Flood alleviation, management and recovery, river quality Waste management Street care, litter and public spaces Countryside and Biodiversity Public conveniences	
Catherine Fookes Angela Sandles	**Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement (Job Share)** Lead Officers – Frances O'Brien, Matt Phillips, Matthew Gatehouse Community inequality (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation) Democracy promotion and citizen engagement Community Hubs and Contact Centre Customer service and citizen experience Communications, public relations, marketing Working with voluntary organisations Electoral Services Constitution Review Ethics and Standards	Town Magor East with Undy

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.

Kindness: We will show kindness to all those we work with putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

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SUBJECT:	**UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND(SPF) UPDATE – ALLOCATION OF MONMOUTHSHIRE FUNDING**
MEETING:	**CABINET**
DATE:	**9th November 2022**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL	

1. **PURPOSE**

1.1 Approval is sought for the granting of investment from the UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) to projects and interventions listed in Appendix One of this report, as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Programme.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That Cabinet:

2.1 Approves the list of UK SPF projects in Appendix One, which contribute significantly to the strategic aims of the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, namely:

• Communities and Place;

• Local Business; and

• People and Skills

2.2 Agrees with the Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership's informed decisions in the allocation of Monmouthshire's UK SPF funding.

KEY ISSUES:

3.1 **Approval Progress to Date**

3.1.1 In March 2022, Cabinet were provided with an update on the UK Government Levelling Up White Paper which contained details of the UK SPF Pre-Launch Guidance. Approval was also given to establish a citizen focussed, Local Partnership to inform the development of a Monmouthshire Investment Plan – now termed the 'Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership'.

3.1.2 In July 2022 Cabinet made a decision that enables Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC) to act as the Lead Local Authority for the UK SPF for the ten Local Authorities across the South East Wales Region, with RCTCBC holding overall accountability for the funding. Cabinet also:

- Endorsed the submission of the Regional Investment Plan by RCTCBC, which incorporates Monmouthshire County Council's outline Local Investment Plan, which was submitted to UK Government on 1st August 2022;

- Agreed to enact a 'Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership' to inform and assess the appropriateness of MCC's outline Local Investment Plan and monitor progress and performance over the funding period;

- Agreed to delegate powers to the Chief Officer – Communities and Place, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services and the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy, Deputy Leader, to agree the legal agreements associated with the UK SPF, with RCTCBC, on behalf of the Council;

- Agreed to extend the contracts of NEET (Not in Education, Employment and Training) related staff who are currently at risk of redundancy in December 2022, due to the cessation of the European Social Fund programmes – Inspire2Achieve, Inspire2Work and Skills@Work. Staff will be funded via UK SPF until March 2025 by taking a locally delivered, regionally coordinated approach; and

- Agreed to utilise up to 4% of the funding for financing the administration of the Monmouthshire element of the Fund to establish a delivery team from within the Council's existing Monmouthshire Economy, Employment and Skills Team.

3.2   The UK Shared Prosperity Fund to date

3.2.1 The Regional Investment Plan was submitted to UK Government by Rhondda Cynon Taff the 'Lead Local Authority' on the 1st August 2022. The anticipated date for the first investment plans to be approved and payment to be awarded to Lead Local Authorities is by UK Government is October 2022.

3.2.2 The Council was not required to develop its own local investment plan for submission to UK Government. However, it was required to provide an outline of proposed activity, to achieve specific interventions, targets, and outputs with its UK SPF funding allocation, which was used to inform the Regional Investment Plan.

3.2.3 Once approval is given, funding will be confirmed for three financial years:2022-2023,2023-2024 and 2024-2025. All interventions should end March 2025 or have a break clause allowing for closure by March 2025 if required (for example, yearly renewable funding).

3.3   Monmouthshire Shared Prosperity Fund Allocation

3.3.1 In developing the outline of local activity, the Council has taken a soft approach due to very short timescales and limited funding availability impacting on deliverability. Monmouthshire's funding allocation is £5.9M, the lowest in the Cardiff Capital Region. The team contacted key stakeholders and the Monmouthshire UK CRF projects, who had been trialling new approaches in advance of the UK SPF, who provided 'Declaration of Interest' forms outlining proposed projects. These projects have been developed into

an outline plan used to inform Monmouthshire's Investment Plan, which will feed into the Southeast Wales Regional Investment Plan.

3.3.2 Over the summer the team established the Monmouthshire 'People and Place Partnership' that has since met and assessed the appropriateness of MCC's outline Local Investment Plan, with a view to developing detailed local interventions, in partnership with local stakeholders and monitor progress over the funding period.

3.3.3 The Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership is chaired by Paul Griffiths – Deputy Lead and Cabinet member for a Sustainable Economy and is made up of representatives from the following organisations:

- Careers Wales

- Cardiff Capital Region Regional Skills Partnership

- Cwmpas Digital Communities Wales

- Department of Work and Pensions

- Melin Homes

- MCC Partnerships – Link for Monmouthshire Programme Board

- MCC Regeneration

3.3.4 The funding structure for Shared Prosperity Fund creates a significant financial challenge for all local authorities in year 2 (2023-24). This necessitated significant changes to proposed delivery plans from those submitted within the original declarations of interest. Revised financial and output profiles were submitted by each project ahead of final consideration by the People and Place Partnership.

3.3.5 In assessing the projects applying for UK SPF, the Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership has considered the overarching aim of UK SPF – 'Building pride in place' and 'Increasing life chances' in addition to the three UK SPF investment priorities: Communities and Place; Supporting local business; and People and Skills.

3.3.6 Within the context of the Fund's aims, the Council has the flexibility to invest across a range of activities that represent the right solutions to address the three UK Investment Priorities in order to reflect local need and opportunities.

3.3.7 Monmouthshire County Council will receive a conditional allocation from the UK SPF of £5,919,533 and an allocation of £1,235,631 for *Multiply (*UK Gov Adult numeracy programme).
.
3.3.8 Monmouthshire's allocation is 2.57% of the total allocation for the Southeast Wales region. The total funding is broken down into annual allocations; 12% in Year 1 (22/23), 24% in Year 2 (23/24) and 64% in Year 3 (24/25), as detailed in Table Two below.

Table One UK SPF allocation per year for Monmouthshire

Total SR (UKSPF core)	22-23 (UKSPF core)	23-24 (UKSPF core)	24-25(UKSPF core)
£5,919,533	£718,390	£1,436,780	£3,764,363
Total SR (Multiply)	22-23 (Multiply)	23-24 (Multiply)	24-25 (Multiply)
£ 1,235,631	£373,563	£ 431,034	£ 431,034

3.2.9 The Multiply model for Monmouthshire will be delivered at a local and sub-regional level across the Gwent Authorities. This will be led locally by Monmouthshire Council's Economy, Employment and Skills team and sub-regionally by Torfaen County Borough Council. Some activity will be commissioned which will be delivered by local and regional organisations. The interventions for investment are detailed in Appendix Two. UK Government has advised that the parameters of Multiply could change, however have recommended that delivery is in line with the UK SPF core investment.

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

4.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix Two, anticipates that the projects detailed within this report will have a positive impact on peoples' social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education, and skills. This will develop resident's resilience and improve their life chances.

5. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL:**

5.1 The list of projects for UK SPF funding in this report have either a local or regional/local delivery focus and will contribute to Monmouthshire's priorities focusing on the three UK SPF themes (Communities and place, Supporting local businesses and People & Skills) and the Levelling Up objectives.

5.2 Monmouthshire's allocation is 2.57% of the total allocation for the Southeast Wales region, therefore investment for greater impact and outcomes is imperative.

5.3. Local priorities are addressed within the Declaration of Interest forms and reflect the UK Government interventions selected. There is a range of projects for UK SPF investment with quantitative and qualitative evidence provided, all of which have been assessed by the People and Place Partnership.

6. **EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

6.1 Projects for potential UK SPF investment, that have previously received Community Renewal Funding, have been required to complete an external evaluation of their project. These evaluations have provided a solid foundation for transition into the UK SPF Programme.

6.2   All projects approved for UK SPF investment will adhere to evaluation guidelines set out by UK government and our Lead Local Authority, Rhondda Cynon Taff County Borough Council (RCTCBC).

7.   REASONS:

7.1   The Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership acknowledge that UK SPF's three Investment Priorities – Communities and Place, Supporting Local Businesses and People and Places, align with the new Community and Corporate Plan (2022-23) purpose, principles and priorities.

- Communities and Place investment projects demonstrate strengthen social fabric, sense of community and pride and develop capacity to drive grassroot change.
- Supporting Local Business investment projects show support local productivity, local business development alongside providing sector specific support.
- People and Skills investment projects demonstrate improve opportunities for our citizens to gain sustainable employment to those furthest away from the labour market; contributing towards helping citizens to upskill to meet labour market demands

7.2   The Monmouthshire People and Place Partnership acknowledge that this is an opportunity to invest at a regional and local level, working as ten Local Authorities, to maximise the impact of UK Government investment for wider benefit.

8   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1   All places in the UK will receive a conditional allocation from the UK SPF. Monmouthshire County Council has a conditional allocation of £5,919,533, and an allocation of 1,235,631 for *Multiply (*UK Gov Adult numeracy programme).

8.2   4% of the funding will be used for management and administration of the Fund. 40% of this will be allocated to the Lead Authority, with the remainder (£169,238) retained by the local authority. This will be allocated to the Council's Monmouthshire Economy, Employment and Skills Service for local management and administration.

8.3   Table Two outlines the allocation of funds for local projects and approved project values within the three core investment priorities. This is broken down by financial year.

Financial Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Allocation for local projects	689,654	1,346,491	3,547,158	5,583,303
Local projects approved	422,490	1,569,438	2,586,100	4,578,028
Variance	267,164	- 222,947	961,057	1,005,275

Table Two Core allocation per financial year

8.4   £961,057 of funding is unallocated in 2024-25. This will allow the local authority flexibility to consider pipeline or pilot projects in year 3 as well as upscaling opportunities for existing projects where positive performance and impact is identified.

8.5   Table Three outlines the allocation of multiply funds and the split of in house and commissioned project delivery. This is broken down by financial year.

Table Three Multiply Allocation per financial year

Financial Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Allocation for Multiply	358,620	413,793	413,793	1,186,206
Monmouthshire CC delivery	92,883	264,290	268,364	625,537
Local/regional commissioning	120,000	149,503	145,429	414,931
Variance	145,737	-	-	145,737

9. **CONSULTEES:**
   - DMT – Communities and Place.
   - Cabinet;
   - Strategic Leadership Team;
   - Local MPs and MS's;
   - Local communities and businesses

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

    Appendix One – Local Investment Plan

    Appendix Two – Integrated Impact Assessment

11. **AUTHOR:**

    Frances O'Brien, Chief Officer Enterprise
    Lead officer
    Hannah Jones, Head of Economy Employment and Skills

9. **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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    Tel: 01633 644686
    E-mail:hannahjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk
    Tel: 0773834418

Appendix One Shared Prosperity Fund Local Investment Plan 2022 – March 2025

Investment Priority	Project	Lead Delivery body	Interventions	Financial Investment
Communities and Place (W1-W15)	**Community Well-being Spaces and Places** • Spaces and Places building on Together Works • Be Community – Volunteering support and training	MCC & GAVO	W1 – Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets W6 – support for local arts, cultural and creative activities W9 – Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects W11 – Investment in community engagement schemes W13 – Community measures to reduce the cost of living	• £318,798.00 • £34,000.00
	Gwent Green Grid Project • Pollinator Friendly Gwent – community awareness of climate impacts, sustainable management of grasslands, Green Infrastructure • Projects – working with communities, volunteers and schools on climate mitigation and adaption, projects include country parks, river corridors	MCC	W3- Creation and improvements to local green spaces W9 – Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects W14 – Funding to support feasibility study	• £339,000.00
	Community Enhancement Scheme • Supporting local communities to improve their social fabric and belonging through investment in activities such as Design Out Crime, Local Arts and Culture, Sports and recreation, nature-based solutions	MCC	W3 – Creation and improvements to local green spaces W5 – Design and management landscaped environment to design out crime W6– support for local arts, cultural heritage and creative activities W10 – Funding for local sports facilities, tournaments etc bring people together W13 – Community measures to reduce the cost of living W33 – Investment in resilience infrastructure and nature-based solutions	• £320,000
	Today's Heritage Tomorrow • Heritage Project Officer • Enhance x 10 Heritage sites • Offer a Cycling for All Scheme	MonLife	W4 – Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions W6 – Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities W8 – Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns W9 – Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects W12 – Investment in Community engagement schemes	• £238,303.00

			W15 – Investment and support for digital infrastructure W17- Funding for the development and promotion of the visitor economy	
	Iconnect • Develop Digital Champion programme • Develop community MESH programme • One to one digital support • Bursary support to access career enhancing provision	Monmouthshire Housing Association	W9 - Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects W15 -– Investment and support for digital infrastructure W36 – Activities to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing W37 – Interventions to increase levels of digital inclusion W42 – Funding to support local digital skills	• £417,321.75
	Wye Valley River Festival • Support delivery of Wye Valley River Festival • Local community events in rural and urban locations • Develop partnership delivery and work with other local arts organisations and regional and international partners	Wye Valley River Festival	W4 – Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions W6 – Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities W8 – Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns	• £190,000.00
	Creative Futures • Creation of Youth Arts Producer • Collaborative programme of local arts activities giving young people a voice • Establishment of Monmouthshire Youth Theatre • Youth Arts Catalyst fund to support existing youth arts activity	MCC & Melville Theatre	W2 – Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets W4 – Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions W6 – Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities W11 – Investment in capacity building and infrastructure support W12 – Investment in Community engagement schemes W36 – Activities to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing	• £188,020.00
	Destination Monmouthshire • Specialist advice for businesses to develop more inclusive and sustainable experiences • A capital and revenue grant to improve accessibility at visitor attractions • Support to encourage others to develop and manage high quality events	MonLife	W4 – Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions W6 – Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities	• £232,153.00

Investment Priority	Project	Lead Delivery Body	Interventions	Financial Investment
Supporting Local Businesses (W16-W33)	**MCC Tourism – Regional Bid** • Regional activity focussed on group travel/travel trade and business events • Development and management of relevant regional digital and social channels	MonLife	W8 – Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns W17 – Funding for the development and promotion of the visitor economy W23 – Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems	• £45,000.00
	Food4Growth – Sub Regional bid • Food Business – support through training, networking, and investment to develop infrastructure, local supply chains from primary producers to retailer • Business Support Framework • Food Partnership and Strategy • Food Innovation Centre Business Case	MCC	W19 – Increasing investment in research and development at a local level W23 – Strengthening local entrepreneurial systems W24 – Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs W26 – Support for growing the local social economy W29 – Supporting decarbonisation and improving the natural environment whilst growing the local economy W30 – Business support measures to drive employment growth W31 – Funding to support relevant feasibility studies W32 – Funding to support progression of small businesses	• £206,000.00
	TaLK • Conduct knowledge transfer activities that link Monmouthshire farmers to Hartpury Agri-tech Centre • Outreach to these businesses to review existing technology and potentially adopt new technology to increase competitiveness and, improve productivity • Support existing and new entrants to farming to deliver new solutions to improve farm business performance	Hartpury Further Education College	W18 – Supporting Made Smarter Adoption W19 – Increasing investment in research and development at a local level W21 – Funding for the development and support of appropriate innovation infrastructure at the local level W22 – Investing in enterprise infrastructure and employment/innovation site	• £220,868.48
	Unified Business Accelerator • Network of support for entrepreneurs and retailers through commercialisation and digital customer acquisition programme • Establish local peer to peer support • Development of evidence based regional entrepreneurial support	Alacrity	W16 – Investment in open markets and improvements to town centre retail and service sector W21 – Funding for the development and support of appropriate infrastructure at the local level W23 – Strengthening local entrepreneurship ecosystems W24 – Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs W42 – Funding to support local digital skills	• £262,500.00
	Business Monmouthshire	MCC	W23 – Strengthening local entrepreneurship ecosystems	• £309,481.00

| | Implementation of a customer relationship management system
• Increased engagements with pre-starts and existing business
• Increased level of business advice and guidance
• Delivery of a grant scheme in Year 3 for community businesses, cooperatives, and social enterprises | | W24 – Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs
W26 – Support for growing the local social economy
W32 – Funding to support progression of small businesses | |

Investment Priority	Project	Lead Delivery Body	Intervention	Financial Investment
People and Skills (W34-W43)	**CELT + (Adult Provision) – Regional** • Employability support for low term unemployed • Support for training courses • Tailored support for employed people • Support for local skills needs e, g construction, care, hospitality etc	MCC	W34- Employment support for economically inactive people W35 – Courses including basic skills and life skills for people who are not economically inactive W38 – Tailored support to help people in employment who are not supported by mainstream provision W39 – Support for local areas to fund local skills need	• £478,774.87
	CELT + (Youth Provision) Regional • Lead Worker and wrap around support for young people in KS4 for are at risk of disengaging from education • Offering alternative qualifications and enhanced support to the young person's needs • Support to improve school attendance • Support to transition at the end of year 11	MCC	W43 – Funding to support engagement and softer skills development for young people	• £632,448.00
	CELT + Commissioned Services • Funding for regionally commissioned post 16 support for young people at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment, or training) • Funding for local commissioned services based on local skills needs and priority sectors	MCC	W39 – Support for local areas to fund local skills need W40 - Green skills courses targeted around ensuring we have the skilled workforce to achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental ambitions. W41 - Retraining and upskilling support for those in high carbon sectors, with a particular focus on transitioning to green, and Industry 4.0 and 5.0 jobs. W43 – Funding to support engagement and softer skills development for young people	• £145,000

			Recommendation that People & Place partnership to agree for local commissioning to target W40 and W41.	

Investment Priority	Project	Lead Delivery Body	Intervention	Financial Investment
Multiply	Multiply Monmouthshire – Sub Regional proposal • Adult numeracy programme designed to improve functional numeracy skills through free personal tutoring, digital training, and flexible courses. • MCC focus will be family learning through primary schools. Care leaver focus on managing finances and engagement work to offer non-accredited work-shops/courses and support participants wanting to achieve additional numeracy courses	MCC	W44 – Courses designed to increase confidence with numbers W45 – Courses for parents wanting to increase their numeracy skills W52 – Courses aimed at over 19s that are leaving	£661,319
	Multiply Monmouthshire commissioned services – Sub- Regional proposal • Joint Commissioned work across the region focussing on courses helping people save money and developing partnerships with community organisations to offer numeracy courses.	MCC	W51 – Courses designed to help people use numeracy to manage their money W53 – activities, courses or provision developed in partnership with community organisations and other partners to engage with the hardest to reach leaners	£415,000

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People & Skills
Total number of intervention selections: 13

Most selected interventions:
W43: Funding to support engagement and softer skills development for young people
W42: Funding to support local digital skills
W39: Support for local areas to fund local skills needs including vocational licences/training
W36: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing

All people & skills interventions selected by at least 1 project

Local Business
Total number of intervention selections: 24

Most selected interventions:
W23: Strengthening local entrepreneurial ecosystems, and supporting businesses at all stages of their development to start, sustain, grow and innovate, including through local networks.
W24: Funding for new and improvements to existing training hubs, business support offers, 'incubators' and 'accelerators' for local which can support entrepreneurs and start-ups through the early stages of development and growth

No projects selected
W20: Research and development grants supporting the development of innovative products and services
W25: Grants to help places bid for and host international business events and conferences
W27: Funding to develop angel investor networks
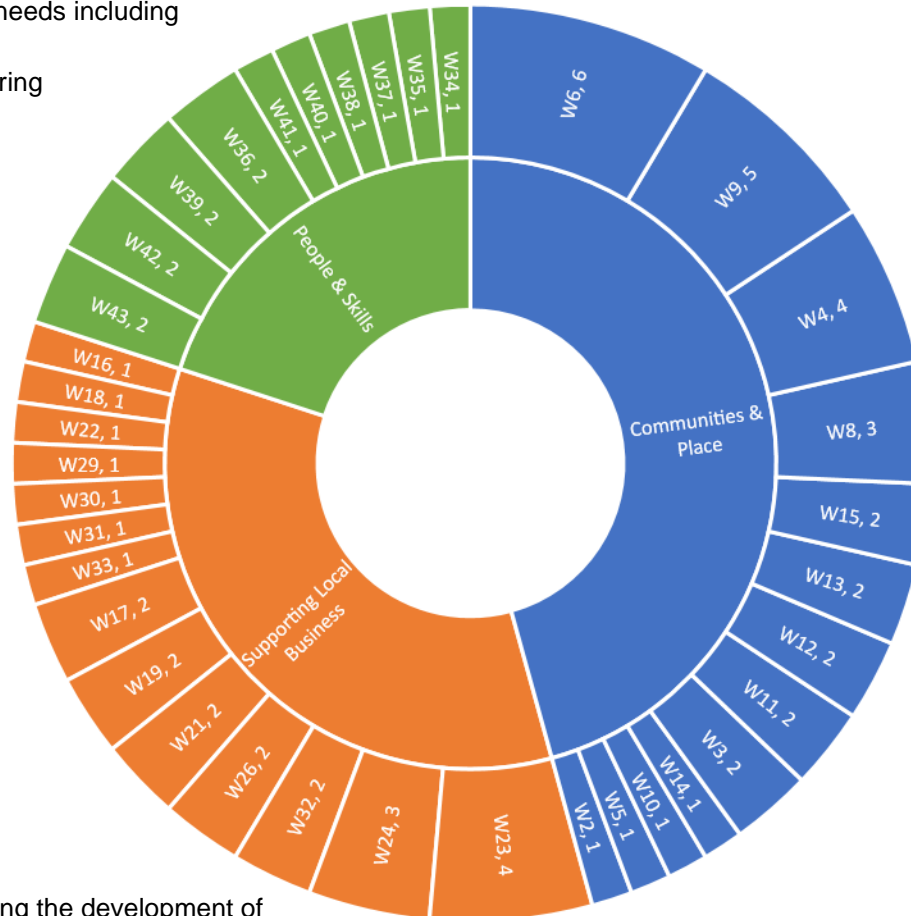**W28:** Export Grants to support businesses to grow their overseas trading

Chart 1: Number of projects targeting each Intervention (W) & Investment Priority

Communities & Place
Total number of intervention selections: 32

Most selected interventions:
W9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.
W6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.
W4: Enhanced support for existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions that make up the local cultural and heritage offer, including improvements to access to sites to counter the effects of isolation, particularly for older people and disabled people.
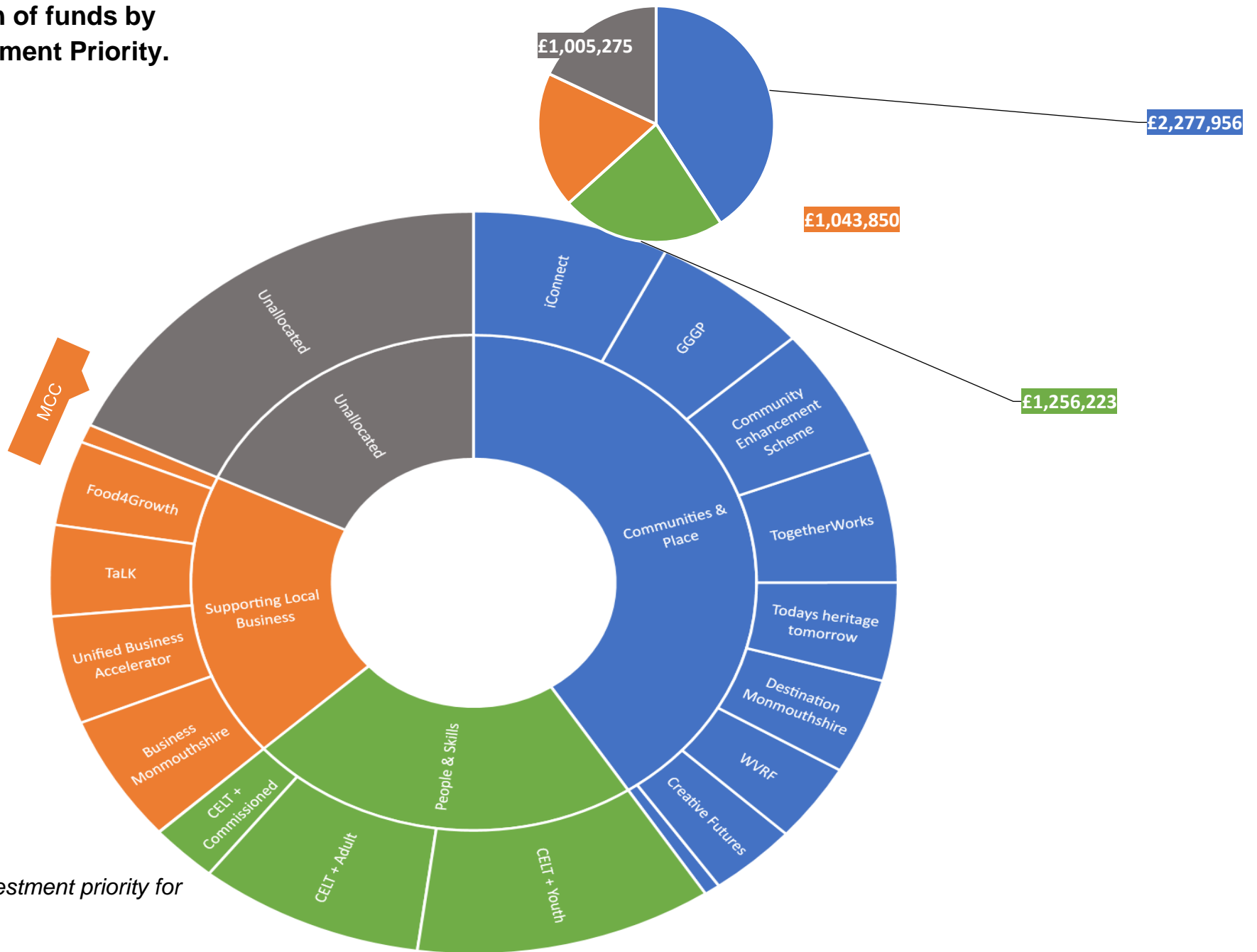**W8:** Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns and year-round experiences which encourage people to visit and explore the local area.

No projects selected
W1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people
W7: Support for active travel enhancement and other small-scale green transport infrastructure projects, having regard to the Wales Transport Strategy.

People & Skills: W34, 1; W35, 1; W37, 1; W38, 1; W40, 1; W41, 1; W36, 2; W39, 2; W42, 2; W43, 2

Supporting Local Business: W16, 1; W18, 1; W22, 1; W29, 1; W30, 1; W31, 1; W33, 1; W17, 2; W19, 2; W21, 2; W26, 2; W32, 2; W24, 3; W23, 4

Communities & Place: W6, 6; W9, 5; W4, 4; W8, 3; W15, 2; W13, 2; W12, 2; W11, 2; W3, 2; W14, 1; W10, 1; W5, 1; W2, 1

Chart 2: Allocation of funds by Project and Investment Priority.

£1,005,275

£2,277,956

£1,043,850

£1,256,223

iConnect

GGGP

Community Enhancement Scheme

TogetherWorks

Todays heritage tomorrow

Destination Monmouthshire

WVRF

Creative Futures

Communities & Place

People & Skills

CELT + Youth

CELT + Adult

CELT + Commissioned

Business Monmouthshire

Unified Business Accelerator

TaLK

Food4Growth

Supporting Local Business

MCC

Unallocated

Unallocated

*Based on primary investment priority for each project

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Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer Hannah Jones **Phone no: 07738 430418** **E-mail: hannahjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk**	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal** • To approve the list of projects and interventions for UKSPF investment for the Monmouthshire funding allocation 2023 - 2025
Name of Service area: Communities and Place	**Date 19th October 2022**

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	Yes: All SPF projects have been assessed against the list of interventions, outputs and outcomes and provide opportunities for participation and support for all ages	There are therefore no negative impacts anticipated.	

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	Yes: All SPF projects have been assessed against the list of interventions, outputs and outcomes and provide opportunities for participation, support and are accessible for those with disabilities.	None identified	
Gender reassignment	Yes: All SPF projects have been assessed against the list of interventions, outputs and outcomes and provide opportunities for participation, support and are accessible for all.	None identified	
Marriage or civil partnership	Yes: The list of projects for SPF Monmouthshire investment will ensure fairness and equity	None identified	

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?
Pregnancy or maternity	Yes: The list of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment will help to address any perceived barriers that might impact on residents' participation in their community and routes into employment.	None identified	
Race	Yes: The list of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment will ensure equity of opportunity regardless of race	None identified	
Religion or Belief	Yes: The list of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment will offer opportunities that will consider peoples' religion and religious beliefs	None identified	
Sex	Yes: The list of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment will offer opportunities that will consider individual needs regardless of sex.	None identified	

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	Yes: The list of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment will offer opportunities that will consider individual needs regardless of sexual orientation.	None identified	

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	The purpose of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to level up communities by boosting productivity where it is lagging; spreading opportunities, improving public services where weaker; restoring a sense of community and pride and empowering local leaders. This is evident from the list of projects proposed for Monmouthshire SPF investment	Not applicable	Not applicable

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts

| Policy Making

Effects on the use of the Welsh language,

Promoting Welsh language

Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably | The use of the Welsh language has been taken into consideration in developing the SPF projects. The promotion of welsh language will be monitored throughout the lifetime of the programme. Good practice identified in the Together Works Project

The delivery team will ensure that they adhere to the Council's Welsh Language Standards. | None identified | n/a |
|---|---|---|---|
| Operational

Recruitment & Training of workforce | Where new posts are required, the need to communicate through Welsh and English as part of the recruitment process and any necessary training offered as needed. | None identified | n/a |

Service delivery	Any advertising about the projects will promote the fact that people can deal with the Council in Welsh by phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.	None identified	n/a
Use of Welsh language in service delivery			
Promoting use of the language			

4. **Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The proposal strongly supports the Prosperous Wales wellbeing goal: - The UK SPF will enable noticeable investment in the places people live, as well as support individuals. - Supporting local businesses Projects will support local productivity, local business development alongside sector specific support.	There is a strategic imperative to maximise our economic growth and wealth creation capability and increase our productivity to increase the GVA for the county and the country.

	- People and Skills Projects will support to residents will lead to improved labour market positions for those in employment; will lead to employment, and increased income for those who are currently seeking work and will lead to improved productivity and growth for companies in the region. SPF investment is due to end of European Union for the UK. Post Brexit investment for previously EU funded programmes	
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)	The proposal strongly supports the **Resilient Wales** wellbeing goal: - One of the Communities and Place projects- Gwent Green Grid Project will focus on maintaining and improving biodiversity and ecosystems that support community resilience and climate change	
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised, and health impacts are understood	The Communities and Place and People and Skills projects will contribute toward citizens health and wellbeing at a grass roots level to improve their resilience and ability to take part in their community and work life.	
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe, and well connected	The primary goal of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to build pride in place and increase life	

	chances across the UK. Levelling Up communities for a better future. Communities and Place and Supporting Local Businesses projects will improve the landscape and connectivity of Monmouthshire making it a more attractive, safe, and viable place to live and work.	
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic, and environmental wellbeing	People and Skills Investment will work closely with priority industries to help steer the labour market towards those growing industries. Many of these industries focus on developing products that will support global health (MedTech, life science etc) or reduce greenhouse gas emissions (e.g., e-mobility. There is investment for supporting decarbonisation and improving the natura environment whilst growing the local economy and, nature-based solutions that protect local business and community areas.	
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	Communities and Place projects – Today's Heritage Tomorrow, Creative Futures Wye Valley River Festival, Community Enhancement Scheme will create a sense of pride and community cohesion. Promoting and encouraging people to take part in heritage, Cultural arts and recreation activities and events.	Not applicable

A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	People and Skills projects- CELT will contribute to sustainable employment within communities, reducing inequalities between communities.	Not applicable

5. 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?
Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	The List of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment well-align to a long-term way of working: - By supporting households and young people into employment and helping to sustain and improve the quality of that employment, employability activity is a key part of the suite of early intervention & prevention activities. This reduces the likelihood of long-term challenges resulting from deprivation, adverse childhood experiences, and unemployment.	None identified
Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	The People and Place Partnership is a range of partners that work and will continue to work collaboratively to the benefit of communities, local business, local employment, and skills opportunities at a local and regional level.	None identified

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?
Involving those with an interest and seeking their views **Involvement**	Following UK SPF guidance, we have sourced approval from our local MPs and MSs for the regional investment plan to be submitted to UK government by 1st August.	None identified
Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse **Prevention**	The purpose of the UK SPF funding is to empower each place to identify and build on their own strengths and needs at a local level, focused on pride in place	None identified
Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies **Integration**	.As part of the local engagement process all aspects of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act will be embedded in our local investment plan	

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Not applicable		
Corporate Parenting	Not applicable		

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

When submitting the County's Investment Plan Officers will evidence strategic fit and link activities to local social, economic, and business need. Strategies to be referenced will include Monmouthshire NEET Reduction Strategy 2018 – A Great Start for All Vision Monmouthshire 2040: Economic Growth and Ambition Statement; the Digital Infrastructure Action Plan; the MCC Apprenticeship, Graduate, and Internship Strategy alongside alignment with UK Government Investment Priorities and Cardiff Capital Region regional priorities.

8. **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?**

It is anticipated that the list of projects for Monmouthshire SPF investment will have a positive impact on peoples' social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education, and skills. This will develop resident's resilience and improve their life chances.

9. **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
Cabinet	9th November 2022	Frances O'Brien, Chief Officer for Enterprise

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Enterprise DMT	24th October 2022	DMT approved the report
2	SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM	25th October 2022	SLT approved the report

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SUBJECT: **RESOURCING THE SHAREPOINT ONLINE IMPLEMENTATION**

MEETING: **CABINET**

DATE: **9TH November 2022**

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: NONE

1.   PURPOSE:

1.1   To present the business case for resources to implement the Microsoft SharePoint Online Electronic Data & Records Management System (MS SPO EDRMS) in collaboration with Torfaen County Borough Council. This will bring business benefits and efficiencies and enabling full use of the business tools within the MS Enterprise Agreement.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet agree funding of £355,441 to be drawn from the ICT reserve for the implementation of the SharePoint Online, enabling workforce mobility, data security, data analysis and full use of the O365 suite of business tools provided under the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. This includes funding of an internal resource requirement that is needed for a 24-month period to support the successful delivery of the project and to ensure the transition of SPO into 'business as usual'.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1   The council is a Microsoft site, and has an investment of circa £400k per annum in a web-based suite of business products under an Enterprise License Agreement. The products are fully integrated and include email, Teams, network security, SharePoint Online, OneDrive and a full suite of business tools enabling automation, data analysis, efficiency and workforce mobility. We are all aware of the business benefits of Email and Teams as they have become an essential part of everyday work, bringing our very flexible and mobile workforce closer together through video conferencing and messaging tools. We are less aware that much of the accompanying suite of tools can revolutionise the way we do business if they were fully utilised. Many of these tools rely on the data contained within SharePoint Online to work effectively, though we haven't yet rolled out SharePoint Online right across the Council. We currently have most of our information stored in line of business systems e.g. HR, Purchasing etc. as well as network drives. These network drives are not effectively managed, and it's difficult for our workforce to find accurate, recent and meaningful information to share with the people who need it wherever they may be and whatever time of day. This may

present a data protection issue as well as affect business efficiency if documents are difficult to find and share with the organisations and individuals who need to use them.

3.2   SharePoint Online is web based, meaning our workforce can access information anytime any place anywhere. It has inbuilt retention and deletion, and we can share access to information with the right people at the right time. Essentially it has inbuilt, automated, information management and security abilities. In addition to the functionality described above, SharePoint Online is becoming a standard for storage of data from within 'line of business systems' e.g. our Legal system, meaning there is improved scope for keeping our data in a single location where it can be analysed rather than kept in disparate systems. The business case for using SharePoint Online stacks up in all sorts of ways as it unleashes all sorts of business benefits as described below -

Business Benefits

- ENABLING THE FULL EXPLOITATION OF THE O365 BUSINESS PRODUCTS PAID FOR IN THE ENTERPRISE AGREEMENT
- BRINGING ACCURATE AND STRUCTURED INFORMATION TO INFORM BUSINESS DECISIONS
- ENSURING INFORMATION GOVERNANCE AND LEGISLATION COMPLIANCE
- AUTOMATION OF ELECTRONIC FILE MANAGEMENT AND RETENTION
- ENABLING WORKFORCE MOBILITY
- INFORMATION SHARING COLLABORATION AND OPEN DATA
- REALISE THE BENEFITS AND VALUE OF INFORMATION & CREATE A CULTURE WHERE DATA AND EVIDENCE LEADS DECISIONS AND POLICY

3.4   The main barrier to rolling out SharePoint Online is the financial and staff resource to be able to move our information over from the network drives in a structured and effective way. Resources are needed to set up the technical elements of the system itself, as well as help our service areas understand the benefits of online information management. The people involved need to have expert knowledge of SPO and how to implement it effectively.

3.5   SharePoint Online is a strategic project for the SRS (the shared resource service), and they have undertaken the necessary configuration of the One Wales architecture to enable all of the partners to benefit from the future implementation of SharePoint Online. MCC currently has an identical configuration of its file storage as Torfaen County Borough Council, and both councils have embarked on this project as a joint venture. This has enabled us to share expertise and knowledge, increase resilience and avoid considerable duplication of effort and cost.

4.   **THE BUSINESS CASE, OPTIONS APPRAISAL & BUSINESS PLAN**

4.1   Though MCC and TCBC are leading on this project, we have collaborated with all of the SRS partners to create a robust business case that can benefit everyone when they run their future implementations. The business case is attached in Appendix 1, and shares the detail of the options appraisals, project plan, outputs, outcomes and risks associated with the project.

4.2   Implementation of the project is complex, affecting both the technical architecture and bringing the workforce alongside to realise the business benefits. The council currently has a Data & Information Systems Co-ordinator and who has worked tirelessly to set up the project business case and plan in collaboration with other LA partners. This single resource is not adequate to undertake a wholescale implementation of SharePoint online across the whole organisation, and we will require extra resources to take us through two aspects of the project plan: -

4.2.1   *Setting up the core technical system structure and processes: -*

- Creating the core service design
- Extraction and cleansing of data from the legacy SharePoint On-Premise and Network Drive storage
- Holding workshops for staff to support their user journey
- Creating guides and training documents
- Training service 'process administrators' in the structure and process of the system

4.2.2   *Assisting our workforce to transition to the new system and enabling them to understand the value of information and data to the smooth running of the organisation: -*

- Creating a culture of data led business operations
- Training the workforce to recognise the value of information and how to use it to better inform the business operations
- Reinforcing and supporting the 'new norm'
- Document storage becomes business classified and shared with the right people rather than hidden in individual personal accounts where they present a risk of data loss if an individual moves out of their role or organisation

4.3   The detailed business case outlines the options open to us –

- Do nothing and lose the business benefits and tools that are supported by SPO
- Implement SPO fully, realising the business benefits
- Implement a hybrid version of the previous 2 options

4.4   We know we don't have the resources to do this in-house, and the business case has found that the best solution is to bring in resources from outside that have the skills, knowledge and experience from implementing it in other LA's. This type of resource can hit the ground running

from the outset and take us through both the technical and people elements of the implementation. It would work out more cost-effective than building the same resource in-house too, as it would use already skilled and trained people to implement the project more quickly than doing so in-house.

4.5   We have undertaken a joint procurement exercise with Torfaen County Borough Council, and a preferred supplier has been identified with proven, practical experience of the large-scale implementation of SPO across both the technical and people aspects of the project.

4.6   TCBC gained approval from their Cabinet for funding on 18th October. As it's a joint procurement exercise the preferred supplier appointment is dependent on both MCC and TCBC Cabinet approval.

4.7   Should approval be given, the preferred supplier will be appointed, and the project will start with all of the necessary monitoring and review to ensure that it is meeting the outcomes and that we can embed sustainability, resilience and business continuity into 'business as usual'.

- Helping services take ownership and responsibility for their own information and data
- Understanding the importance and value of information as a resource
- Keeping up the pace of digital step-change to invest in the future business benefit

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Performance of implementation will be checked within the project plan process as well as the Information Security and Technology Business plan and roadmap.

7.   REASONS:

7.1   Full implementation of the online suite of business tools contained withing the MS Enterprise License Agreement will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation. More specifically the SharePoint Online system underpins a suite of business automation and analysis tools as well as being an EDRMS that integrates with MS Teams and Outlook. The specific business benefits of SPO are:-

- Full exploitation of the Microsoft suite of products under the MS Enterprise Agreement
- Accurate and structured information to inform business decisions and policy
- Ensure compliance with legislation and information governance
- Automation of electronic file management and retention
- Enable workforce mobility and flexibility
- Facilitate the sharing of information and Open Data
- Realise the benefits and value of information with a culture of evidence-based decision making

7.2   We have identified that we cannot successfully implement SharePoint Online with existing in-house resources so have collaborated with Torfaen County Borough Council to undertake a procurement exercise that will enable us to implement to project within a 2 year timescale.

8.   RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1   This report requests that the project is funded from the ICT reserve, which is set aside to fund specific digital projects. The total project cost is £355,441 which includes internal MCC resources to help with the project and the costs of the preferred supplier up until March 2025.

8.2   Internal resource requirement:

1 FTE is currently employed in the capacity of Data and Information Systems Co-ordinator and is project managing the implementation of SPO. In addition, a band F resource (£36,700 including on-costs) will be needed for a 24-month period to support the successful delivery of the project and to ensure the transition of SPO into 'business as usual'.

There is likely to be a post implementation resource requirement to successfully administer the system on an ongoing basis. Options regarding the post implementation support will need to be evaluated and considered as part of the normal budget setting process

The total project cost for both Monmouthshire and Torfaen councils is detailed below:

TOTAL BID COST	£534,465
INTERNAL RESOURCE COST	£176,417
TOTAL PROJECT COST TO MARCH 2025	£710,822
COST PER LOCAL AUTHORITY	£355,441

9.   WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING:

9.1   This proposal has no negative impacts. It has positive impacts upon:

The actual impacts from this report's recommendations, i.e. the business benefits from the implementation of SharePoint Online will be continuously reviewed and performance managed via project plans to ensure that the implementaion achieves the desired purpose and outcomes.

- Sustainability, with the ability to access digital information and services with automatic retention and sharing, security and accuracy built into the product
- Ensuring that our digital information infrastructure is future ready and can keep up with the pace of change in modern business systems
- Working together with partner organisations, specifically the SRS and its partner organisation
- A prosperous Wales, with the improvement of data sharing within our businesses and communities to help them grow and develop

- Economy, with the ability to 'sweat' our investment in our digital information and communications systems provided via the Microsoft Enterprise licence agreements
- Safeguarding, with the upgrade and implementation of security of our information on vulnerable children and adults as well as keeping their information accurate and current
- Upskilling our workforce in the use of modern, efficient and effective business information systems
- The ability to analyse our information into useful data insights and evidence for our workforce, businesses and communities

10   CONSULTEES:

SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM
SRS STRATEGIC BOARD
TORFAEN COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL (AS PARTNERS)
DMT's
SERVICE DEPARTMENTS
IGG

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

The SharePoint Online business plan (Appendix 1)

5.   **AUTHOR:** Sian Hayward - Head of Information Security and Technology

6.   **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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APPENDIX 1 – FULL BUSINESS CASE

JOINT BUSINESS CASE TCBC MCC

Contents

1. Executive Summary

The purpose of the project is to provide an effective and efficient cloud-based document management system that enables our workforce to access, store, retrieve and share information wherever they may be. In addition, it will enable easy data collection and analysis to inform business and community needs.

We believe there are 3 options - Do nothing (use existing file stores), use internal resources to deliver the project or use an external migration specialist to deliver the project.

Option 1 – Do Nothing. We will see exponential growth of unstructured data on network drives and an increased risk of non-compliance to GDPR/FOI requirements. The business is unable to take full advantage of digital improvement and opportunities.

Option 2 – Implementation of project using only internal resource. Whilst this option has not been fully investigated and costed, initial feedback from the Pilot run by MCC highlighted the project could not be achieved with 1FTE in a reasonable time frame.

Main risks of this option include: - a slower roll-out, delayed implementation of the advantages of new technologies including mobility and collaboration, delayed realisation of data cleansing to reduce risks of non-compliance and inform business decisions. A slow roll-out will lead to a disparity in the user experience across the Local Authority (LA). Whilst there is not a cost of an external supplier, there would be a significant requirement to recruit into the project team and secure extra internal resource to deliver the project. Current migration tools do not maintain the links between documents, and this means either staff would need to re- create the links in those documents, or each LA would need to invest in a software tool to keep links in documents being migrated. This option also adds extra pressure to SRS, potentially affecting other corporate projects.

Option 2 also relies heavily on the business teams to do in-depth work with the project team to clean, map and migrate data. Over time, the project costs are likely to be similar or higher to bringing in an external specialist.

Option 3 – Our recommended option is to use an experienced specialist supplier/service to aid delivery of the project. The chosen supplier will lead data cleansing and migration, plan, design and implement the Information & Document Management architecture whilst putting staff at the front of the journey via training and cultural change management. This capital spend will ensure the project is delivered to the required standard, at speed with minimal impact to business as usual. An experienced external supplier will provide a tried and tested Information & Document Management design which will be instrumental to user adoption of the implemented solution.

We predict all areas to be affected by this project. Timescale from adoption to project completion is estimated at 24 months.

Following an extensive procurement process, we have received 2 supplier bids. The bids received are different in their approach, with one concentrating on data analysis and the other on achieving the change in process.

Both Local Authorities wish to go ahead with the project. We believe this project meets the criteria of digital transformation and would recommend funding from Capital Reserves.

2. Problem Statement

A substantial part of each council's electronic information is stored within shared network drives which have grown steadily over many years. This is unstructured electronic data, with no automated retention, relying on user disposal. Therefore, a large percentage is classed as duplicate, redundant, obsolete, or trivial information (DROT). In MCC there are also older SharePoint repositories which hold more data.

Much of our information is stored in Line of Business System systems which may also need cleansing but is beyond the scope of this project.

3. Problem Analysis

Current Position

The current position places a burden on ICT infrastructure and makes it increasingly difficult for staff to find valuable information quickly and manage their information efficiently. The retention and disposal of data currently depends on users identifying the correct retention period for each piece of information based on the retention schedule for each area and then manually maintaining or disposing of it following this. Many teams do not have the resource or capacity to prioritise this as a regular admin task. Electronic records therefore exist beyond their agreed retention periods, and this leads to the need for data cleanse or disposal exercises with limited success. A lack of structure can also lead to records being lost or duplicated in multiple locations.

Each LA has undertaken a high-level analysis of data on the file shares. TCBC recently (April 2022) carried out a top-level data trawl and has found to be holding 7.5TB of unstructured folders and files with 15% (number) of duplication and an unknown quantity of non-compliant information. MCC analysed its data estate in mid-2021 and at that point had 20TB of data across network drives and older SharePoint Sites with over 16 million files on the network drives alone. Analysis carried out in June 2022 shows that the network drives have grown by another 1,000,000 files.

Both LAs need to improve how information is stored, managed, processed and accessed. Improving the accuracy and relevance of the data, enabling improved document collaboration across each team and deploying automatic retention and deletion of data.

Information governance is a crucial consideration. Failed audits and concerns around compliance i.e., GDPR/FOI/SARS need to be addressed and remedied within any recommended solution. For both MCC and TCBC, this unstructured and ungoverned growth is unsustainable without information management in the longer term. The move to SharePoint Online will address recent Audit recommendations to TCBC.

Both Local Authorities are looking to implement a solution for an EDRMS (Electronic Data and Records Management System) to apply structure and governance to our business documentation and enable cleaner data analysis. SharePoint Online provides an opportunity to us to provide this governance within existing licence arrangements.

With the introduction of other cloud-based technologies such as Microsoft Teams and One Drive (both of which utilise SharePoint), the advantages of cloud-based technology now need to be expanded to incorporate other business documents. Utilising SharePoint Online as our EDRMS will maximise our investment into the M365 platform, implementing the integrated suite of SharePoint Online, Teams and Outlook.

4. Benefits

- **Cleaner data collection and analysis**

- **Information Governance**

- o Reduced business risk – only data within retention is migrated and this poses less risk for the Freedom of Information (FOI) process and GDPR regulations governing data protection and how long we should keep data.
- o Automated retention and disposal – SharePoint Online can apply agreed retention and deletion policies against files stored in the EDRMS which eliminates the reliance on users to manually cleanse files.
- o Reduced duplication of files – Being able to send links to files for multiple users to view and collaborate on will give one version of the truth
- o DROT (Duplicate, Redundant, Obsolete, Trivial) files are removed / not migrated. In similar projects other councils have seen a reduction of up to 70% being removed.

- **Digital Improvements**
  - o Mobility - SharePoint Online is cloud-based and will support access from anywhere.
  - o SharePoint is the cornerstone of M365 - One Drive, Teams, Microsoft Lists are all SharePoint-based products
  - o Links to other apps – SharePoint allows us to make improvements to working practices and helps links to other O365 tools such as Power apps and Power Automate. This will allow us to automate more processes.
  - o Utilising SharePoint Online helps maximise our investment in existing M365 licences
  - o SharePoint Online will improve Business Efficiency (see below)

- **Business Efficiency**
  - o Staff productivity – Staff will have a structured EDRMS with access to their relevant areas, where the data has been cleansed, is relevant, recent with DROT removed.
  - o Data Sharing / Collaboration - SharePoint Online allows multiple users to work on the same document at the same time which is not possible on the file shares.
  - o Reduced duplication - Users can share links to documents rather than email individual copies so everyone works on the same source document. This gives huge benefits and will eliminate the scenario where a file is emailed, then stored multiple times individually, creating confusion of who has the latest version and what the latest changes are.
  - o Versioning – Each time a file is saved in SharePoint Online, a new version is created within that file. SharePoint Online can hold thousands of versions per file, although the project team recommends 500 rolling versions. If needed, the document owner can "roll-back" to an earlier version.
  - o Mobility / Access to information – The network drives require a VPN link but as SharePoint Online is cloud-based, users can access through a secure device using www.office.com allowing them to access from any location.
  - o Improvements in being able to find information for customers and staff - migrating only current and in-date info, this improves the speed of finding the information we need.
  - o Improved data on which to base business decisions - quality and structure to data held will allow the data teams to be able to confidently find and supply information on which to inform business decisions.
  - o Files are stored within a classification scheme agreed by the business, rather than individual structures.

5. **Project Scope**

In scope: -
- Migration of files on corporate network drives / file-shares
- Existing SharePoint on-premises sites into SharePoint Online.

Out of scope: -
- Emails stored in Outlook
- Digitisation of paper records

- Business systems / team files which may use the network drives to transfer files into other systems not easily changed
- Other Line of Business corporate systems such as Civica, SIMS, Hwb, My Council Services (or equivalent).

The SharePoint Online project is the next stage of journey of digital transformation through O365 which will improve business continuity and information governance. Other projects to analyse and improve information stored in other areas/formats will follow once the SharePoint Online platform is in place and being utilised across the authority.

This may include (but is not an exhaustive list)
- Further roll-out of Microsoft Teams to staff in MCC (TCBC have Already rolled out on an approval basis, potential to integrate into Existing Teams, by using Teams as the graphical user interface)
- Review of existing Microsoft Teams and link/migrate to SharePoint EDRMS to existing Microsoft Teams areas as needed. (Excludes Teams set up for projects)
- Review of Outlook (following planned retention applied Nov 22) and SharePoint Online to improve integration of the 2 applications. There are software tools which will make this easier for staff but would need to be assessed.
- A review of remaining systems that use the network drives / file shares to see if they can also be moved to cloud.

Further detail has been included in the Post-Implementation Section

6.   Recommended Solution

Overview of Options			
	Summary of option	Pros	Cons
Option1	**Do Nothing** **Keep File Shares & Renew Servers**	Nothing Changes	Not adhering to audit recommendations. GDPR/FOI non-compliance. Data unstructured / complicated file paths with no retention. Not able to use new technology (available as part of current M365 license), improved access to information and collaboration methods are limited. Continued server costs - increasing as more server space is needed due to ever increasing file volumes. Manual manipulation of data to provide evidence.
Option 2	**Roll Out project with Internal Resources.**	Overall project Capex cost is assumed to be lower than Option 3.	Slower rollout Inability to use data to inform business decisions. (Delayed implementation) Data sharing limited (Delayed implementation)

			Prolonged risk of non-compliant data held against audit recommendations and continued risk of unstructured data / not cleaned. Limited current resources to do the work – 1 SharePoint project officer per LA. Project would need an injection of internal resource. Limited resources in SRS dedicated to project and reliance on SRS to create SharePoint Online sites, retention labels etc. Difficult to ensure consistency and risk of human error. Opportunities of new technology not available to staff at the same time across the LA with slow rollout. Current migration tool does not support the links between documents, and this means staff would need to re-create links in those documents. Each LA responsible for their own culture change and adoption of technology
Option 3	**Use specialist supplier/services to aid delivery of the project.**	Rollout achieved at a faster rate due to injection of resources and experience. Achieves the goal of mobility Organisation moves together, improving adoption rates of the software. Achieves the goal of data sharing more quickly Specialist software will be used to undertake the migration work, reducing the risk of human error. Supplier will have previous experience of data cleansing/migration and a dedicated team of specialists will ensure a consistent migration Supplier can provide high level support for technical requirements, training requirements and change management opportunities. Document retention and destruction will be built in tools reducing the risk of non-compliance.	Cost of employing external specialist – partly offset against renewal / ongoing costs of servers – currently unknown Whole organization needs to commit time to data cleansing and migration mapping. Collaboration - need to align projects and ensure synchronicity – needs to be factored in.

		Able to use specialist software to support the links between documents when migrating. Collaboration project will supply opportunities of scale and increased consistency across the One Wales tenant. Hidden costs of team data cleansing reduced (but not eliminated) as migration expertise software can identify duplicates and redundant data for teams to check.	

As well as the 3 main options outlined above, there are various permeations and partial options that fit in between the choices in the table provided.
For example –

1. Cleanse the file shares and continue working in a similar fashion.

   Pros - This would supply the temporary advantages around cleaning the data (reduced DROT), more space released from file share support
   Cons – No improvements as detailed in options 2 and 3 i.e., limited collaborative working, no automated retention and we would soon be back in a similar position.

2. Create the new EDRMS environment in SharePoint Online, and all new business files created would be stored there. File shares/Network drives would be made 'Read Only', and old data would be deleted over time.
   Pros – A clear "cut-off" of transition to the new environment. No migration needed. Partial move to cloud.
   Cons – Increased frustration for staff, are files in the new or old system? Read-only files may still be needed to active work – who would move them across? Archive file shares would still need to be cleansed area by area to eliminate files out of retention as they cannot stay there forever.

From previous experience any archived /ring fenced area to be "revisited/sorted at a later date" becomes a low priority and is rarely completed. This in turn causes a permanent archive, with data risks increasing as older files are never removed. Having files on both an EDRMS and an old file share complicates BAU processes, and business productivity is compromised due to effort needed to find files over multiple storage options.

These partial approaches to the project are not recommended by the project team. We believe this will create confusion and frustration for staff, will create an extra administrative burden on staff and information teams with limited advantages and no quantifiable timeframe for project aims to be realized.

There is a myriad of possible combinations of the partial approaches. However, none of the partial scenarios lead to a realization of all project benefits covered by implementation of the project team's recommended option. **In summary, the project team recommend Option 3 from the main options table.**

7.   **Solution**

We have recommended an external migration specialist who have successfully completed this project with other councils. The previous experience, insight and solutions they will bring will prove invaluable in helping each council navigate the process. The migration specialist also brings an understanding of the importance of training and change management, the need to bring staff on the journey so staff understand the "why" and feel part of the process, rather than being "done to". This is essential to maximise user adoption.

The experience of the supplier we have recommended gives us reassurance as they have delivered this project successfully with other councils. They were heavily involved in the development of the Local Government Classification Scheme (LGCS), recommended by the Information and Records Management Society (IRMS).

They have successfully delivered a migration into a SharePoint Online EDRMS in other councils. We believe their wealth of experience in working with local government and meeting (and overcoming) challenges at each council gives them a depth and breadth of knowledge of how councils work, migration projects and SharePoint Online. This will be invaluable to the successful adoption and delivery of this project.

As outlined in the options table above AND having undertaken a Pilot of migrating to SharePoint Online with one team, we have identified the time and resource needed to implement the solution cannot be done at speed across the organisation without injecting significant extra resources into the project.

An injection of resource will enable faster data cleansing, supply support to agree and implement an EDRMS design, agree information governance and manage the migration process. A structured roll-out, at a reasonable pace across the organisation will mean all staff can benefit from the advantages of the new solution within a reasonable time frame.

Earlier attempts to implement an EDRMS stalled due to insufficient process change structures.

8   Implementation with the Preferred Supplier

In recognition of the business-as-usual pressures teams face, the project will work closely with the Digital Teams of each Local Authority to ensure the roll-out does not conflict with other corporate projects such as Teams Telephony. The Heads of Digital (from each LA) are part of the Joint Project Working group and will help in planning the roll-out alongside other projects. Feedback from the service areas themselves on their working pressures / other projects will also be considered in adopting the best roll-out plan.

As part of the bid process, we asked the bidders to adopt a 3-stage approach.
1. Development phase – 3 Teams per Local Authority (teams tbc)
2. Pause – Evaluate design and roll-out approach and consider team feedback. Adjust EDRMS design and rollout approach as needed.
3. Phased roll-out to rest of organization.

Aims for the development phase
- EDRMS design tested and agreed for 3 teams per LA.
- Delivery methodology including training and change management tested and agreed.
- Retention for development phase teams agreed and implemented.
- Data for development phase teams analysed, mapped, and migrated.
- File Shares / area of network drive made read-only for a period after migration, then removed.
- Pause – Review development phase. We will capture feedback throughout the development phase from all stakeholders (staff, project team and migration specialist) and evaluate this during the pause / analysis of the development phase. As part of this evaluation, we will also review the EDRMS design. Any changes will be agreed by the respective LA or wider joint project working group as needed. At the end of the development phase, any concerns and feedback will be addressed until we are confident, we have a solution that meets the needs of the business.

Whilst the core element of the EDRMS design is likely to be similar for each LA, they are unlikely to be the same as functions may differ. It is crucial we allow some flexibility in the design.

Costs to development phase are included in the Financial Overview section.

9.   Contingency

Should the recommended option not be approved, it is important to highlight the following:

The bids currently received are valid until the 31st of October, should any exploration of alternative solutions continue past this date, the invitation to tender process would need to be re-done.

Should only one Local Authority approve Option 3, they would need to re-invite to tender again based on one LA.

If the project spend is not approved, the project will need to restart with a new project definition and scope, exploring all possible methods of approach whilst using internal resource to deliver a minimum viable product.

Should an alternative solution by agreed utilising internal resource, any onboarding process would take time and money.

All the above would ultimately delay project start and therefore overall project delivery, impacting realization of new technologies, in turn causing delays to other dependent corporate projects.

10   Challenges and approach.

Whilst the project needs to have strong IT support and involvement, it is not a solely IT-driven initiative.

Project success does require commitment across the organisation and strong support from leadership downwards. Where there are obstacles which may affect the success of the project and the project team will try to mitigate these through identification of risks, communication, training and change management.

Resources available from the teams will be a key dependency for the roll-out of the project. Teams will need to be involved in design, agreeing retention, analysis of current data and migration. The project team will liaise with their digital teams to minimize impact on business as usual and in consideration of other corporate projects.

We have taken the opportunity to adopt a Joint working / collaborative project between TCBC and MCC as both councils have the same aim to move all business documents into cloud-based storage (SharePoint Online). Project collaboration will increase momentum on the project and allow both councils to take advantage of economies of scale in going to market as one project covering two councils (in one IT Tenant.)

Following the creation of the Joint Working Project group, Blaenau Gwent (BGCBC) were invited to take part in the project, as an observing partner at the present time.

The project team will need both support and resource from SRS in implementing the project. SRS will need to help the presence of the external migration specialist in their work in the tenant, plus understand the design and building of the system with a long-term commitment of supporting the EDRMS when the project ends. SRS will be especially involved in creation and maintaining security/permission groups.

11   Post-implementation

Once the EDRMS is in place, there will be a requirement to maintain the system and other related projects will need to follow: -

1.   Managing the EDRMS

SRS - Manage groups, permissions, access, and retention labels.

LAs - Information Management / Digital Resource
-   MCC Resource secured via role of Data and Information Systems Co-Ordinator to manage project delivery and keep oversight of the EDRMS as part of an information governance role in BAU.
-   TCBC – 1 FTE is currently employed as a records management project officer for a 24-month fixed period. In addition, a permanent role should be secured for EDRMS transition into BAU.
-   Options of FTE support for the project through recruitment/secondment and post-implementation EDRMS maintenance will need to be evaluated in line with business needs and resources available in each LA. Recommendations have been made within the costing model but are subject to evaluation by each LA.

Each LA – SharePoint / Information /Digital Champions needed in each service area to help support their dedicated SharePoint Online sites and Microsoft Teams areas.

2. Outlook

Both LA's have used Outlook as their email tool for several years. Outlook is part of the M365 suite of products available within existing licences. Whilst email usage has dropped since the introduction of Microsoft Teams and Teams Chat, it is still one of the 3 main tools we use.

Outlook, whilst being a useful tool, is linked to an individual's account. This means it is not visible to others and will be removed when a user leaves. It should serve as an "in-tray" and should not be used as a business document repository for these reasons.

From November 2022 an initial retention of 7 years will be applied to Outlook emails. Over time, the Information Teams would like to reduce this to 1 year (check TCBC). The SharePoint Online EDRMS will help achieve this as it will allow the user to move an email or attachment out of Outlook into the correct business area of the EDRMS and apply correct retention/disposal.

Outlook to SharePoint integration is not as seamless as other Microsoft Products to SharePoint. This is an area we will need to evaluate once the SharePoint Online platform is in place. There are tools which integrate the 2 together to allow a much more seamless process to move documents and messages from Outlook into SharePoint (and vice versa) e.g., Repstor, AISyncpoint, but this does come with an associated cost and will need to be subject to a full cost-benefit analysis. We have recently been made aware Microsoft are developing a new "Outlook for Windows" which will also improve this integration feature.

3. Teams

For MCC - Following the implementation of the EDRMS, a more comprehensive rollout of Microsoft Teams can be done. This will need to include: -
   o A roll-out of Microsoft Teams to those business Teams requiring a Microsoft Teams area. This would need to be done with guidance on best practice for files and linking the files areas of these teams to their appropriate areas of the SharePoint EDRMS.

For both Local Authorities - A review of existing teams created during and since Covid (excluding projects) to evaluate whether files in each Microsoft Team should be saved into the SharePoint EDRMS and retention applied.
   o Re-linking these SharePoint areas back into the team so the link to the files is not lost.

SharePoint Online will be where users store their business files, whilst integrating with the other M365 products for a best fit approach to where files are stored.

MEWORK

My Files e.g. Coursework, Early Ideas...

WEWORK

Teams Chat, Email communication

PROJECTWORK

Project Documents

TEAM+WORK

Business Documentation

OneDrive

Project Complete

11. Financial Overview

Following the procurement process, in June 2022 we invited (via the NEPRO/Bloom framework) 9 suppliers to tender for our project. We extended the deadline for potential responses to 29 July 2022 and of those invited, 2 suppliers sent bids. General feedback for not bidding was staffing resources leading to capacity issues to undertake a large project at this time.

The project team asked SRS to confirm whether the reduction in the number of network drives, with a minimal volume of files left for now, would release any server costs. SRS confirmed the files on the network drives do not exist on servers, but on SAN disks, which the servers communicate with, so no direct server savings. Alongside our enquiry, SRs confirmed new servers were bought for the move to Vantage which will deliver server savings to the LAs.

Internal resource requirement:

1 FTE is currently employed in the capacity of Data and Information Systems Co-ordinator and is project managing the implementation of SPO. In addition, a band F resource (£36,700 including on-costs) will be needed for a 24 month period to support the successful delivery of the project and to ensure the transition of SPO into 'business as usual'.

There is likely to be post implementation resource requirements to successfully administer the systems on an ongoing basis. Options for the post implementation support will need to be evaluated and considered as part of the normal budget setting process

The cost breakdown for Monmouthshire and Torfaen Councils is outlined below:

6.1.2		
Bid cost (£) - Total		£534,465
Internal Resource Cost - Total (to March 2025)		£176,417
Total Project Cost to March 2025 (Both Local Authorities)		£710,882
Total Project cost PER LOCAL AUTHORITY until March 2025		£355,441

12 Implementation Timeline

Project Timeline								Planned					
Phase	Start	End	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	Q1-23	Q2-23	Q3-23	Q4-23	Q1-24	Q2-24	Q3-24	Q4-24
Discovery	Q2-22	Q3-22	■	■									
Initiation	Q3-22	Q4-22		■	■								
Execution	Q4-22	Q3-24			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Closure	Q4-24	Q4-24											■

Development and implementation are expected to take 2 years but will require strategic support from the Leadership Team, and SRS in terms of information and systems support from each service area to ensure understanding, buy in and delivery.

The project will be delivered over a 2-year period from external supplier appointment via a phased approach. Phase 1 would involve roll-out of the EDRMS design for a selection of teams, a pause and evaluation, a redesign/adjustment for any changes and then a move to full roll-out.

13   Conclusion

A joined-up approach to digital transformation, information governance and data is crucial to our organisation. This approach gives reassurance to customers, users and leaders that our business information is held in a safe and secure way. Each LA aims to supply data insight and business intelligence that will support service design and interventions at the right time, whilst creating the ability to extract and join up data, supplying insight and business intelligence to support the Council around data driven decision making.

SharePoint is the foundation for many of the collaboration solutions through Microsoft 365. SharePoint allows us to unlock new ways of working together by helping people and teams stay connected, engaged, and ensure fluid communication across organisations and applications.

Utilisation of an external migration specialist will serve to deliver a significant step-change to both our digital journey and strategic aims within a reasonable timeframe. Specific recommendation of the Method4/LG Improve partnership to support delivery of the project will supply unparalleled ability and knowledge transfer to both Local Authorities, enabling upskilling of our own staff and service areas.

In Summary, the project team requests approval for the following:

- The expansion of the Local Authorities investiture in the M365 Stack by relocation of Corporate Data to a Cloud-Based EDRMS solution, namely SharePoint Online.
- The appointment of an External Migration Specialist /Process Change consultant partnership to support and deliver intelligent data migration and process change management throughout the Local Authority in line with a joint working approach in the One Wales Tenant by Monmouthshire County Council and Torfaen County Borough Council.
- The recommendation of Bidding Partners Method4 and LG Improve as the preferred external supplier option, based on the Procurement scoring process (mini comp) and supporting costing model outlined in the Business case.
- The provision of internal resource to support delivery of the project during the allotted term and subsequent transfer into Business as Usual.
- The Use of Funds from Capital Reserves to fund the above recommendations over a 3 (financial) year project timeline, detailed in the cost model outlined above.

Integrated Impact Assessment document
(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Sian Hayward **Phone no: 01633644309** **E-mail: sianhayward@monmouthshire.gov.uk**	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal** To present the business case for resources to implement the Microsoft SharePoint Online Electronic Data & Records Management System (MS SPO EDRMS), bringing business benefits and efficiencies and enabling the full use of the business tools within the MS Enterprise Agreement.
Name of Service area Information Security and Technology	**Date** **28/09/2022**

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on age characteristics	None	None
Disability	This proposal will have some positive impact on disability characteristic, as it is likely to improve the provision of information and access to services for people with a disability	None	None

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on gender re-assignment	None	None
Marriage or civil partnership	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on marriage or civil partnership characteristics	None	None
Pregnancy or maternity	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on pregnancy or maternity characteristics	None	None
Race	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on age characteristics.	None	None
Religion or Belief	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on religion or belief characteristics	None	None
Sex	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on sex characteristics affects, either positive or negative on sex characteristics	None	None

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	This proposal will not have any significant impacts, either positive or negative on sexual orientation characteristics	None	None

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	This proposal will have a positive impact on people suffering socio economic disadvantage, as will help to provide the community with information and access to services within MCC. It will also supply data which can find people at risk of social or economic disadvantage enabling MCC to target its services and change policies.	None	None

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	None	None	None
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	SharePoint is the platform which our intranet is built. The Intranet will have selected documents in English and Welsh as advised by the Welsh Language Officer who will liaise with content managers accordingly.	None	None
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	'Teams' uses SharePoint Online as the underlying platform for its operations. It has the ability to transcribe English to Welsh as part of its functionality. It also has the functionality to have English to Welsh voice translation (and vice versa).	None	None

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, supplies jobs	The provision of a robust and modern electronic document and records management system (EDRMS) will vastly improve the information we keep and analyse into useful data insights, enabling businesses and communities to predict trends and forward plan their activities.	None
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)	SharePoint Online will be able to organise and manage our data electronically, enabling us to supply data insights for future planning of activities. The data and evidence will help to predict the effects of certain projects and activities with much greater precision. In addition, access to electronic data at any time, any place and anywhere will substantially reduce the amount of travelling, printing and copying needed when using physical documents.	None
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised, and health impacts are understood	None	None
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Digitisation of data and information will result in the ability of the workforce to access it from any place, at anytime and anywhere. This will have a positive effect on businesses and communities, providing them with speedy information when needed most, as well as being able to access information direct from web-based comms tools where connected.	None

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	Enhanced digitisation will have an impact on local social, economic and environmental wellbeing.	None
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	No	None
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	SharePoint Online can share information with Businesses, schools and the community, contributing to more equal access to services and education.	None

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal show you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any added actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future Long Term	Digital services don't stand still, and if we don't continuously plan for the long-term future, we will suffer significant shortfalls and failure in our digital service provision. SharePoint Online is an integral part of our digital information systems, and non-implementation will prohibit access to a range of tools contained within our Office Enterprise suite.	None

Sustainable Development Principle		Does your proposal show you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any added actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	We are actively working together with our partners in other local authorities in the SRS to implement SharePoint Online. This is a joint procurement exercise with Torfaen County Borough Council and will be taken up by the other 3 partners, following the lessons learned in this implementation.	None
Involvement	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	The project is a joint one with other partners forming the SRS, and their views have been sought. There are also comprehensive consultations in play with the service departments across MCC.	None
Prevention worse	Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting	This implementation is a considerable financial and human resource investment. The benefits of having structured, managed data and integrated central information system far outweighs the investment by improving the speed at which information can be turned into useful data insights and enabling our workforce to access information wherever they may be working.	None
Integration other bodies	Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on	. None	None

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	This implementation will ensure the safety and security of information relating to vulnerable adults and children within Monmouthshire County Council. It will also automate the retention of information, keeping it recent and relevant for our service users and staff.	None	None
Corporate Parenting	None	None	None

What evidence and data have informed the development of your proposal?

We have evidence that the current network storage is unstructured and inaccessible. It is effectively not fit for purpose and is a risk of losing data and information within individual people's files. In addition to that, the network files are not stored in a way that information can be turned into evidence and data insights.

The council has an investment of £417k in our Microsoft Enterprise Agreement. The licences include the provision of SharePoint Online as well as other automation and data analysis tools that work off SharePoint Online. These tools will supply efficiencies for our Workforce and will 'sweat' the full use of our Enterprise investment.

Implementing SharePoint online will involve our workforce having to learn to utilise the benefits of structured and accessible information and will be a change in their business filing process. We need help to train and hold people's hands through the change as well as implement the technical structures forming the background of SharePoint Online. Our current ability is in a single postholder and therefore a single point of failure. Bringing in extra resource to 'train the trainer' with SharePoint online ability within each service will enable our workforce to take on the changes as part of business as usual. We have evidence of several attempts to implement other business process changes where we did not invest in sufficient resources to implement fully throughout the organisation at speed.

- *Equalities dashboard link.* [Equality data dashboard for EQIA's 2020.xlsx]

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

This proposal has no negative impacts. It has positive impacts upon:

- Sustainability, with the ability to access digital information and services with automatic retention and sharing, security and accuracy built into the product
- Ensuring that our digital information infrastructure is future ready and can keep up with the pace of change in modern business systems
- Working together with partner organisations, specifically the SRS and its partner organisation
- A prosperous Wales, with the improvement of data sharing within our businesses and communities to help them grow and develop
- Economy, with the ability to 'sweat' our investment in our digital information and communications systems provided via the Microsoft Enterprise licence agreements
- Safeguarding, with the upgrade and implementation of security of our information on vulnerable children and adults as well as keeping their information correct and current
- Upskilling our workforce in the use of modern, efficient and effective business information systems
- The ability to analyse our information into useful data insights and evidence for our workforce, businesses and communities

9. **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

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Cabinet	9th November 2022	

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monmouthshire
sir fynwy

SUBJECT:	**A County of Sanctuary**
MEETING:	**CABINET**
DATE:	**9th November 2022**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All	

1.   PURPOSE:

1.1   To begin the process of formally applying to become a county of sanctuary for those fleeing persecution and to provide updates on the Council's ongoing support for Ukrainians and accommodation for asylum seekers arriving in the UK.

2.   RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1   That Cabinet agree to the council becoming a member of the City of Sanctuary network and working towards becoming an awarded member by going through an accreditation process.

2.2   That Cabinet receive an update on support currently being provided for Ukrainian refugees and identify areas where additional changes may be required.

2.3   That Cabinet note the current position regarding the Home Office approach to asylum dispersal in the UK.

3.   KEY ISSUES:

3.1   The communities of Monmouthshire have done a huge amount to welcome people fleeing war and persecution. Abergavenny has been a town of sanctuary since 2016, during this time our county has welcomed a number of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan and this year more than a hundred residents have hosted refugees from Ukraine.

A County of Sanctuary

3.2   The Welsh Government has already declared 'Nation of Sanctuary' status for Wales to welcome people through safe and legal routes who need help on humanitarian grounds to rebuild their lives. The county council will now

formally commit to becoming a local authority member of the City of Sanctuary Network and working towards becoming an *Awarded Member*.

3.3   As part of membership Cabinet pledge to:

- Support the 'City of Sanctuary' vision that we will be a welcoming place of safety for all, and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution;
- Endorse the City of Sanctuary Charter, and agree to act in accordance with City of Sanctuary values and apply the network principles within our work as far as our specific context enables us;
- Recognise the contribution of people seeking sanctuary. Sanctuary seekers are welcomed, included and supported within our context and support local city of sanctuary groups;
- Add the Council's name to a list of supporters of City of Sanctuary and contribute ideas for how we can turn this support into practical action.

3.4   Following acceptance of our membership we will work towards awarded criteria. This includes passing a motion to support this pledge and developing an action plan, showing how we will meet the will meet UK local authority network criteria. This involves providing evidence that we are:
- Learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, both in general and specifically;
- Taking positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion. To take steps to ensure this progress remains sustainable;
- Sharing our vision, achievements, what we have learned, and good practice with other local authorities, the local community and beyond.
Full details of the procedure and criteria are available at https://la.cityofsanctuary.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/166/2021/08/Council-of-Sanctuary-Award-Minimum-Criteria.pdf which should be read as an appendix to this report.

Ukraine Response

3.5   More than 110 Monmouthshire households have come forward to host families who have fled the war as part of the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme. The council is also working closely with Welsh Government to help accommodate people under the Super Sponsor scheme which sees arrivals who are sponsored by the Welsh Government placed temporarily into welcome centres while more settled accommodation is identified.

3.6   The number of arrivals into both the UK and Wales from Ukraine has slowed considerably in recent months, although this could change at any moment given the dynamic situation in Ukraine at present. The biggest challenge will be finding move-on accommodation for those in welcome centres and when host placements come to an end. There are very few vacant social housing

properties and affordable private sector rentals continue to be in short supply. Fortunately, early indications are that around three quarters of hosts have opted to continue to support guests after the initial six-month arrangement comes to an end.

3.7 To recognise the incredible work done by hosts, the increased pressures they will be experiencing during the cost of living crisis and the challenge of finding affordable accommodation in our county when placements come to an end, we are offering a discretionary increase of £250 in the thank you payment between October and March bringing the total payment to £600.

3.8 A number of new fixed-term posts have been created, three based with housing and two within community development. These will increase the support provided to hosts and help refugees move into their own accommodation. To help with this, the authority can assist refugees with bonds payments and their first months rent in the same way that it assists local homeless households to prevent problems arriving which can lead to worse outcomes and higher costs for public services.

Asylum Dispersal

3.9 The Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 created an intention that no one area of the UK would be overburdened by the responsibility of supporting asylum seekers. Until this year participation in dispersal has been voluntary with the result that populations of asylum seekers are not equally spread across the UK with some areas seeing large concentrations. In Wales, Newport, Cardiff, Swansea and Wrexham have the largest numbers with Conwy, Caerphilly and RCT joining the scheme more recently and accommodating smaller numbers.

3.10 In April of this year, the Home Office announced that all local authorities in the UK will be expected to be asylum dispersal areas. This approach is designed to address the unsustainable pressures in the asylum system and increase the supply of dispersed accommodation across all councils. Each region and nation has been allocated a share of the forecast asylum seeker population.

3.11 The Wales Strategic Migration Partnership, hosted by the Welsh Local Government Association, has developed a draft Wales Asylum Dispersal Plan. Councils have been consulted and agreed with the principle that allocations will be based on population share. The sourcing and operation of accommodation and support in each area will be provided by Clearsprings Ready Homes who have been awarded the contract for this service by the Home Office. The local authority has had no involvement in the decision to award this contract or how it will be delivered. There is an expectation that they work closely with our housing team and Community Cohesion Officer.

3.12 There is a well-established ratio of 1:200 ratio of asylum seekers to general population, known as a cluster limit. If a council area reaches 75% of this ratio

then dispersal will move to another area. It is recognised that finding suitable, affordable accommodation within Monmouthshire will be challenging. The provider will consult the authority's housing team about any potential properties identified.

3.13   Cabinet will continue to be briefed as these three dynamic and inter-related areas of work progress to ensure that we do everything we can to assist those fleeing war and persecution and ensuring that this is done in line with our commitments to community safety and cohesion.

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

4.1   The proposal to become a county of sanctuary is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers by providing a welcoming environment, challenging discrimination and negative perceptions and ensuring equality of opportunity where possible within UK Immigration law. It strives to promote good relations between groups ensuring vibrant and cohesive communities.

4.2   The impact assessment identifies the positive impact that migration has on the economy and the potential for improved outcomes for some groups who will have fled persecution in their home country because of their sexual orientation or religious beliefs. It also highlights challenges, such as pressure on local housing which will need to be addressed through the Replacement Local Development Plan.

5.   OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1   Recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 are briefings and do not require cabinet to make a decision or weigh up alternative policy choices. Recommendation 2.1 concerns the decision to apply to become a network of like-minded organisations wishing to improve the lives of refugees and asylum seekers.

5.2   The option not to join the network would deny the authority access to expertise and learning to progress its policy aspirations. Since membership carries no financial cost or risk it is deemed there is no need to assess value for money and no need to complete a full options appraisal.

6.   EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1   The success of our application to become an awarded member of the city of sanctuary network will be determined by a third party. The outcome of this application will be part of the evaluation of the success of the recommendations of this paper.

6.2   The success of our approach to supporting refugees from Ukraine will be based on i) the number of those accommodated in our county per head of population and ii) successfully preventing refugees from becoming homeless

through the successful identification of appropriate housing options iii) case studies produced after 12, 24 and 36 months identifying whether those fleeing the war have been accommodated, entered education and employment and become part of the community.

7. REASONS:

7.1 To ensure that the council becoming a county of sanctuary for those fleeing persecution while play its full part in asylum dispersal.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The costs of all actions related to Ukraine can be afforded within the tariff made available by the UK and Welsh Governments of £10,500 for each refugee staying with a host in the county with separate funding available for the Super Sponsor scheme. Harder to quantify is the opportunity cost of staff being diverted to manage the response.

8.2 The asylum dispersal policy comes with funding of £3,500 for councils for each new bed space occupied.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Housing & Communities Manager
Community Cohesion Officer

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

None

11. AUTHOR:

Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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	Integrated Impact Assessment document
monmouthshire sir fynwy	**(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)**

Name of the Officer: Matthew Gatehouse	**Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal:**
Phone no: 01633 644397 **E-mail:** matthewgatehouse@monmouthshire.gov.uk	To begin the process of formally applying to become a county of sanctuary for those fleeing persecution.
Name of Service area Policy, Performance and Scrutiny	**Date:** 20/10/22

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups. No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	Refugees and asylum seekers often experience similar issues upon arrival in the UK but have comes from many different cultures, backgrounds and countries of origin. Taking a person-centered approach will ensures that individuals are supported to achieve integration regardless of their background or circumstances.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	See above
Gender reassignment	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups. Some asylum seekers may have fled areas which were less tolerant of difference and will be better able to live as themselves in the UK.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified	See above
Marriage or civil partnership	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified	See above
Pregnancy or maternity	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	See above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Race	.The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups. Some asylum seekers may have fled areas which were less tolerant of difference and will be better able to live as themselves in the UK.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	See above
Religion or Belief	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups. Some asylum seekers may have fled regimes which did not tolerate religious freedoms.	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	See above
Sex	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups. A higher proportion of asylum seekers are males. Women are likely to experience greater equality in the UK than some of the regimes they have fled from	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	See above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Sexual Orientation	The proposal is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers through challenging discrimination, ensuring equality of opportunity (where possible within UK Immigration law) and promoting good relations between groups. Some asylum seekers may have fled regimes which did not afford rights to people in same sex relationships and they will benefit from different social attitudes living in the UK	No negative impacts of these proposals have been identified.	See above

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	Research shows that Migrant workers make important contributions to the labour market in both high- and low-skilled occupations. However, those seeking asylum have limited rights, do not have access to full benefits and will be surviving on low incomes. The county of sanctuary approach can help overcome some of the disadvantage experienced by increasing access to networks and advocacy as well as support from things like foodbanks	Inward migration is likely to place increased pressure on an already limited housing supply at a time when new developments are constrained as a result of phosphate levels in the Wye and Usk rivers	Promote the availability of ESOL classes to ensure that migrants are able to improve their language skills and maximise their employability ad earning potential

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	No specific impacts have been identified at this stage	No negative impacts have been identified at this stage	Materials will be made available in Welsh alongside languages such as Ukrainian to ensure that refugees arriving have an understanding that Wales is a bilingual nation. Make material available to new arrivals on the benefits of bilingual education.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	No negative impacts have been identified at this stage	No negative impacts have been identified at this stage	
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	No negative impacts have been identified at this stage	Translation and interpretation services are unlikely to be able to translate from some languages into Welsh reducing the ability of Welsh speakers to use their preferred language when conversing through a translator.	Ensure that material continues to be made available in Welsh alongside the language of new arrivals into the UK

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	Research shows that nations benefit economically from immigration. The UK currently has a shortage of workers in many sectors. The plan will seek to remove barriers to asylum seekers accessing services and improve employability support for refugees and access to education. ,	Future actions will be incorporated into an action plan which will be developed as outlined in the recommendations.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	No specific impacts have been identified.	Work will need to be done on environmental education so that new arrivals understand approaches to recycling and the need to re-use and recycle waste.
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	Becoming a county of sanctuary should enable a positive welcome for those arriving in the UK, mitigating mental ill health and homelessness.	Future actions will be incorporated into an action plan as outlined in the recommendations.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	A positive approach to welcoming those from other nations can have a positive impact on community cohesion as communities come together to provide support.	Learn from local groups, such as Abergavenny Town of Sanctuary and the local government network to ensure positive action is taken to maximise community cohesion.

Engage with accommodation providers and ensure that community cohesion concerns are factored into and decision on property locations |
| **A globally responsible Wales** Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing | Becoming a county of sanctuary will show our commitment to being global citizens that recognizes the plight of others and increases understanding of international issues. | Future actions will be incorporated into an action plan as outlined in the recommendations. |

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A 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	No specific impacts have been identified at this stage.	Ensure that we promote the Welsh language and culture to new arrivals.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Becoming a county of sanctuary is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers and ensuring equality of opportunity.	Future actions will be incorporated into an action plan as outlined in the recommendations.

5. 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?
Long Term	Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	The five ways of working set will underpin the development of the action plan is we move towards becoming a nation of sanctuary. Taking a proactive approach will deliver the best possible outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers in the long-term.	None identified at this stage
Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	We will work as part of the city of sanctuary local authority network as well as local groups and the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership to deliver our commitments as a county of sanctuary	None identified at this stage

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?
Involvement	Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	The five ways of working set will underpin the development of the action plan. We will engage and involve those with lived experience of the issues faced with immigration in the development of the action plan referred to in the recommendations	None identified at this stage
Prevention	Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	Becoming a county of sanctuary is intended to prevent the most harmful problems experienced by refugees and asylum seekers in Wales. These include homelessness, mental health conditions, poor accommodation and the risk of destitution.	None identified at this stage
Integration	Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	This proposal commits the authority to developing an action plan which will seek maximum impact on all seven national well-being goals	We will develop the action plan in full cognizance of the ways of working and well-being goals to maximise the impact of our actions on all goals.

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children can be some of the most vulnerable children in our society	Unaccompanied children may be unfamiliar with systems in the UK. Migrants may not trust officials if they have received negative treatment in their home county making it harder to engage them positively on safeguarding issues .	Ensure that staff and volunteers have access to guidance, information and resources
Corporate Parenting	Unaccompanied asylum seeking and refugee children can be some of the most vulnerable children in our society. Developing a county of sanctuary model can help raise community awareness helping to mitigate the risks of harm.		We need to ensure appropriate placements are available to meet the needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Improve the skills and confidence of foster carers to care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children

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

- Asylum seekers made up around 6% of immigrants to the UK in 2019. In 2020, when overall immigration was lower than usual due to the pandemic, asylum seekers might have made up around 12% of immigrants.
- In 2021, 43% of asylum seekers were nationals of Middle Eastern countries, 28% of asylum applicants were nationals of African countries, 18% were nationals of Asian countries, and 12% were from Europe.
- In 2020, there were around 6 asylum applications for every 10,000 people living in the UK. Across the EU27 there were 11 asylum applications for every 10,000 people. When compared with EU countries, the UK ranked 14th out of the individual countries in terms of the number of asylum applications per capita.
- The number of asylum seekers in Wales is largest in Cardiff, Swansea, Newport and Wrexham
- Of those fleeing the war in Ukraine, there are a higher proportion of females
- Of those seeking asylum a higher proportion are male. In 2019 26% of asylum applications were made by women. This was close to the average for recent years. The highest proportion of female applicants were from China and the lowest from Afghanistan

Sources:

https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn01403/ (House of Commons Library)
https://www.oecd.org/migration/OECD%20Migration%20Policy%20Debates%20Numero%202.pdf (OECD)
https://refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Asylum-Statistics-Annual-Trends-Feb-2020.pdf (Refugee Council)

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

The proposal to become a county of sanctuary is about improving outcomes for refugees and asylum seekers by providing a welcoming environment, challenging discrimination and negative perceptions and ensuring equality of opportunity where possible within UK Immigration law. It strives to promote good relations between groups ensuring vibrant and cohesive communities.

The impact assessment identifies the positive impact that migration has on the economy and the potential for improved outcomes for some groups who will have fled persecution in their home country because of their sexual orientation or religious beliefs. It also highlights challenges, such as pressure on local housing which will need to be addressed through the Replacement Local Development Plan.

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Take a person-centred approach will ensures that individuals are supported to achieve integration regardless of their background or circumstances	March 2023	Head of Policy, Performance and Scrutiny
Ensure that material continues to be made available in Welsh alongside the language of new arrivals into the UK	December 2022	Welsh Language Officer
Ensure that staff and volunteers working with refugees and asylum seekers have access to guidance, information and resources on safeguarding	December 2022	Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Officer

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Informal Consultation	25/10/2022	None
2	Cabinet	9/11/2022	

monmouthshire
COUNTY COUNCIL
sir fynwy
REPORT

SUBJECT: BUDGET UPDATE, PROCESS AND TIMETABLE 2023/24 **MEETING:** CABINET **DATE:** 9th November 2022 **DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: WHOLE AUTHORITY**

1. PURPOSE:

1.1. To provide update on the most recent update of the MTFP and to agree the process and timetable for developing the budget for 2023/24.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1. That Cabinet notes the unprecedented challenges facing the Council as a result of the most recent update of the MTFP and the budget shortfall of £23.1m needing to be addressed through the remainder of the budget process.

2.2. That the budget process and timetable as outlined in section 9 is adopted and that includes member budget scrutiny and consultation conducted through all-member seminars, member and officer working groups, member scrutiny, community engagement and consultation events.

2.3. It be noted that the Chief Executive as Head of Paid Service will be issuing all necessary statutory and non-statutory employment consultation in respect of the staffing implications of budget preparation.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Summary

3.1. A clear and robust financial strategy is vital to identifying the likely level of funding available to the Council, as well as the anticipated level of demand for, and cost of, providing services. Given the recent and anticipated funding pressures facing all Councils, it is also important to identify how we intend to respond to those pressures, and particularly how we will meet projected funding gaps.

3.2. The Council's Medium term financial plan (MTFP) is the link between its long term policy objectives and its financial capacity. It seeks to ensure that the Council's strategic objectives can be achieved within the confines of the financial resources available, such that the Council remains financially sustainable over the longer term.

3.3. The current MTFP model was developed and updated as part of the budget process for 2022/23 and ultimately informed the budget that was approved by Council on the 3rd March 2022. There has been unprecedented change impacting the Council's operating environment

since that time, both globally and nationally in terms of the changing financial and economic environment, and locally in respect of the new political administration of the Council.

3.4. It was therefore appropriate that the MTFP model was reviewed and updated as part of the budget process for 2023/24 to reflect the impact of the current economic situation, the revised demands and assumptions that this brings, together with aligning with the policy objectives of the new Cabinet. Based on the assumptions modelled and pressures included this identifies an unprecedented £23.1m budget shortfall to be addressed for the 2023/24 financial year.

3.5. Whilst the budget process is as always a dynamic one the funding outlook remains bleak and the budget shortfall a very real one. The Council will need to bring forward significant savings proposals and cost reduction measures in order to balance the budget. It is clear as a consequence that impacts will be felt across Council's services, albeit it every effort will as always be made to minimise the impact on front line services through innovation and service redesign where possible.

4. External context

4.1. The budget and medium term financial planning process has had a consistent theme over recent years. Since the financial crisis in 2008 the level of resources available to public services has been under pressure and the Council has had to absorb and manage significant pressures as well as adopting significant savings proposals.

4.2. The process adopted has sought to maintain a medium-term view on the financial position and plan savings targets over a 4-year period. This is essential given the lead in time for making some of the service changes required.

4.3. Over the past two financial years, the pandemic outbreak and response drew significantly on the Council's resources, both in terms of capacity and finances, and the legacy impact continues to place demands and pressures upon the Council.

4.4. The Welsh Government Hardship fund supported Local Authorities in meeting their direct additional costs and income losses directly resulting from the pandemic. During the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22, we received £36 million in support from the fund. This support ceased on 31st March 2022 and we are now managing the additional costs and reduction in income from within our Revenue budget from 2022/23.

4.5. Since the last update of the Council's MTFP, the global and national political and economic landscape has changed enormously, resulting in an unprecedented operating environment for the Council.

4.6. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has continued to put pressure on global inflation and the economic outlook for UK and world growth remains weak. The recent UK political situation following the 'fiscal event', albeit now principally reversed, has increased economic uncertainty further. It is hoped that a new Prime Minister and Chancellor will provide some stability and in moving the UK's public finances forward on a clear and sustainable path. However, it is becoming evident, when the Chancellor delivers his Autumn budget statement that there will be a further tightening of public finances and that could impact further on the Council's most recent update of its MTFP model.

4.7. The economic backdrop continues to be characterised by high oil, gas and commodity prices, ongoing high inflation and its impact on consumers' cost of living, no imminent end in sight to the Russia-Ukraine hostilities and its associated impact supply chains.

4.8. The labour market remains tight, meaning that there are far more vacancies than there are applicants.

4.9. The Bank of England, Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank have all pushed up interest rates and committed to fighting inflation. UK inflation has remained extremely high. Annual headline CPI hit 10.1% in July, the highest rate for 40 years and whilst falling modestly to 9.9% in August has returned to 10.1% in September.

4.10. The energy regulator, Ofgem, increased the energy price cap by 54% in April, while a further increase in the cap from October, which would have seen households with average energy consumption pay over £3,500 per annum, was dampened by the UK government stepping in to provide around £150 billion of support to limit bills to £2,500 annually until 2024. However, the extent of this support is now subject to a further review by the UK Treasury such that further and ongoing support beyond April 2023 is targeted at those in most need of support.

4.11. The Bank of England has increased the official Bank Rate to 2.25% from 0.75% in March, with the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) noting that domestic inflationary pressures are expected to remain strong, and given ongoing strong rhetoric around tackling inflation, further bank rate rises are expected.

4.12. On 23rd September 2022 the UK government, following a change of leadership, announced a raft of measures in a 'mini budget', loosening fiscal policy with a view to boosting the UK's trend growth rate to 2.5%. With little detail on how government borrowing would be returned to a sustainable path, financial markets reacted negatively. Gilt yields rose dramatically leaving pension funds vulnerable, as it led to margin calls on their interest rate swaps and risked triggering large scale redemptions of assets across their portfolios to meet these demands. It became necessary for the Bank of England to intervene to preserve market stability through the purchase of long-dated gilts, albeit as a temporary measure.

4.13. On 17th October 2022 the newly appointed Chancellor reversed almost all of those measures introduced in the aforementioned 'mini budget'. The chancellor confirmed he was looking to give certainty about the sustainability of public finances. The chancellor indicated that there more difficult decision to take on both tax and public spending. More will be known when the Chancellor announces the UK government's medium-term fiscal plan as part of his Autumn budget statement on the 17th November.

4.14. The emergence of inflation at levels outside of previous estimates comes at a time when the significant and welcome temporary financial support provided by Welsh Government during the pandemic has ended. Increased inflation will also drive increased demand for Council services at a time when the Council themselves are facing inflationary pressures.

4.15. The cost of living crisis is also impacting upon our communities and local businesses and this is likely to create additional demand upon the services the Council delivers through:

> Increasing homelessness levels
> Increased referrals to Social services
> Reduced demand for income generating services
> The recovery of debt owed to the Council

- ➢ The provision of Cost of living / Winter fuel grant schemes
- ➢ Pressure on the Council tax reduction scheme

4.16. The context outlined above has significant implications for the Council's medium term financial planning. These implications are summarised below and have been central to the update in the budget assumptions for 2023/24 and over the medium term.

Factor	Planning Implications
Inflation	Increased costs across supplies and services, contractual arrangements calculated via CPI/RPI, impact on pay awards.
Supply chains	Disruption to availability of materials, parts and supplies leading to increased costs for alternative/expedited solutions.
Labour market	Shortage of staff leading to increased costs for commissioned services and agency staff, real living wage implications.
Energy Crisis	Increasing energy costs across Schools, Leisure centres, Offices, and Street Lighting, increased fuel costs for Council vehicles and for contracted transport providers. At present, there is no certainty regarding the UK Government's Energy Price Guarantee for public services after March 2023.
Interest Rates	Increased cost of borrowing and associated impact upon the affordability of the capital programme.
Economic Growth	Impact on future funding settlements for the public sector.

5. Funding context

5.1. The primary funding of the Council's revenue budget comes from the Welsh Government settlement and through council tax income. The assumptions for these funding elements are fundamental in developing robust medium term financial plans.

5.2. As part of the Welsh Government final budget for 2022/23, they issued indicative increases in Local Government funding settlements for both 2023/24 and 2024/25 of 3.5% and 2.4% respectively. It was noted that these were dependent on current estimates of NDR income over the multi-year settlement period, and the funding provided to Welsh Government by the UK Government based on the 2021 comprehensive spending review.

5.3. The UK government has cancelled the 2022 comprehensive spending review and it remains unclear what impact this may have on those indicative funding settlements. Though it is expected that further public spending cuts will be forthcoming when the Chancellor announces his Autumn budget statement on the 17th November. There is further concern that consequently, the inflationary impacts noted above will not be recognised which may lead to difficult decisions around the size and shape of service delivery moving forward.

5.4. Local authorities continue to lobby Welsh Government directly and through the WLGA to ensure that there is a strong body of evidence to support the need for funding at a level that

allows Council services to be sustained and at the level of increased demand being experienced.

5.5. The further challenge amidst this uncertainty is one of timing. The provisional settlement is expected on 13th December 2022. Cabinet will therefore need to delay consideration of the draft budget proposals until January in order that the most up to date funding announcement can be included. Welsh Government's final local government settlement is due to be published on the 28th February 2023, the day before Cabinet will be considering the final budget proposals and ahead of Council setting the budget for 2023/24 on 9th March.

5.6. The Council Tax planning assumption is currently modelled at a 3.95% year on year increase. Cabinet have not yet considered the level at which Council Tax will be set for 2023/24, and the rate of increase used is for illustrative purposes only at this stage. In proposing the final level of increase for the 2023/24 budget, consideration will be given to local context, such as the affordability for communities, together with the ongoing need to meet increasing demand and cost pressures of essential local services.

6. Budget Position for 2022/23

6.1. All of those issues highlighted above are already having a significant impact on the Council in the current financial year. The month 4 position reported to Cabinet on the 19th October highlighted an in year forecast over spend of £8.8m as a consequence of demand pressures, cost inflation, income loss, and pay awards.

6.2. Whilst the Council is taking immediate budget recovery action in the current year, recourse to earmarked reserves is likely to be required as part of the range of mitigation measures. The Council replenished earmarked reserves by approximately £10m over the financial years 2020/21 and 2021/22, with particular focus in providing protection against some of the legacy impacts of the pandemic.

6.3. However, reserves only provide a finite and one-off source of mitigation and do not address re-current and structural budgetary deficits. It is essential that a prudent reserve level continues to be in place to ensure ongoing financial resilience, especially during a period of economic uncertainty and at a time when significant budgetary risks are presenting themselves.

6.4. Importantly the budget for 2022/23 continues to be supported by £2.65m of identified eligible expenditure to be funded from capital receipts under the flexible use of capital receipts directive. Reliance on this mitigation was a short-term measure only and is not sustainable at this level beyond 2022/23 as capital receipts forecast to be generated start to fall away.

6.5. The inherent pressures presenting in 2022/23 will clearly have a bearing on the budget for 2023/24 and over the medium term unless suitably mitigated through much needed additional funding from Welsh Government.

7. Assumptions for Developing the Medium-Term Financial Plan

7.1. The Authority has developed a MTFP model which is reviewed annually and is continually updated through the budget process. The financial model contains the base budgets of the

Authority. This is updated each year in the light of a review of assumptions and known sensible changes to enable the gap between resources and expenditure to be highlighted.

7.2.   The revenue financial planning assumptions in the roll over MTFP from 2022/23 were as follows:

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS - INCREMENT FACTORS	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Expenditure:				
Pay award (non-teaching staff)	2.50%	2.30%	2.30%	2.30%
Pay award (teaching staff)	3.13%	2.38%	2.30%	2.30%
Superannuation rates	25.10%	26.10%	27.10%	28.10%
Non-pay inflation	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Income and Efficiencies:				
Staff vacancy factor (non-schools)	(2.00)%	(2.00)%	(2.00)%	(2.00)%
Staff vacancy factor (schools)	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Funding:				
Aggregate External Funding (AEF) RSG/NDR	(3.50)%	(2.40)%	(2.00)%	(2.00)%
Council Tax (MCC) - Band D increase	(3.95)%	(3.95)%	(3.95)%	(3.95)%
Council Tax Collection Rate	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%	99.00%

7.3.   A first review of the assumptions contained in the MTFP has been undertaken and a number of prudent and proposed changes are advocated:

- To maintain the anticipated cash increase in core funding from Welsh Government in line with indicative increases communicated by the Minister and subsequent to the UK Government at that time publishing a three-year comprehensive spending review. The UK government has cancelled the 2022 comprehensive spending review and it remains unclear what impact this may have on those indicative funding settlements. More will be known and understood when the Chancellor announces his Autumn budget statement on 17th November. There is further concern that consequently, the inflationary impacts noted above will not be recognised which may lead to difficult decisions around the size and shape of service delivery moving forward.

- Increase pay award assumption for non-teaching staff to 6.25% - Pay awards for non-teaching staff have most recently increased sharply from a 2.75% pay award for the last financial year (2021/22) to a proposed pay award and increase of £1,925 at each pay grade. Given the nature and profile of the workforce this represents a 6.25% increase and is seen as a response to levels of inflations that are now facing the UK economy. Bank of England forecasts are indicating that inflation will remain at high levels through 2023 before coming back down. At this stage it is reasonable to assume that any pay award for 2023/24 will be at a level consistent with the current 2022/23 pay offer.

  Pressure will be put on the NJC to communicate early its intentions with regards to any proposed pay award for 2023/24 and to ensure that councils can make reliable estimates for pay awards as part of the budget setting process. It is also worth noting that UK Government have not passed any consequential funding through to Welsh Government in recent times to enable them to fund these pay award increases though it

remains a Welsh Government decision to consider and adequately fund the pressures facing local government in Wales.

- Increase pay award assumption for teaching staff to 4.13% - Pay awards for teaching staff have similarly seen increases in recent years and the current expectation is that such pay award levels will continue for 2023/24. The 4.13% increase reflects a pay award assumption of 5% from September 2022 and a 3.5% from September 2023. Welsh Government do have delegated responsibility for setting pay levels for teachers, unlike with non-teaching (LGE) staff. Welsh Government has funded pay award increases in recent years but there is no guarantee that this will continue and therefore the prudent assumption taken is that this remains unfunded or is incorporated into the settlement assumption.

- Superannuation rate change – no change is advocated but to note that after two years that have seen a freeze in the employer's pension contribution rate at 23.1% for staff in the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) stepped contribution rates revert to a 1% year-on-year increase in the contribution rate for 2023/24. The most recent 2022 actuarial assessment has presented some potential options to affect the increase in the contribution rate over the next three years. Conclusions reached will subsequently be factored into the budget proposals and MTFP.

- Council tax – the council tax rises built into the MTFP are solely for modelling purposes and remain at 3.95% over the MTFP period. Council tax rises are a matter for Cabinet to preside over. Cabinet have not yet considered the level at which Council Tax will be set for 2023/24, and the rate of increase used is for illustrative purposes only at this stage. In proposing the final level of increase for the 2023/24 budget, consideration will need to be given to local context, such as the affordability for communities, balanced against the ongoing need to meet increasing demand and cost pressures of essential local services.

- Non-pay inflation – whilst a non-pay inflation factor of 0% is used for modelling purposes this does not mean that inflationary pressures are not factored into the budget process. Such pressures are introduced into the budget process by way of the pressure mandate process and to ensure that there is robust challenge of evidence-based pressures, whether inflationary or otherwise.

7.4. Evidence based pressures - Historically pressures tend to be volunteered by services through the budget process. Provision is initially made in the MTFP, for modelling purposes, for "unidentified pressures" of £5m in each of the 4 years of the MTFP and based on the level of pressures that have historically presented themselves and been accommodated as part of the budget process.

7.5. The most recent month 4 forecast has reported a forecast £8.8m over spend this year and where immediate budget recovery action is now being taken. Upon undertaking an initial review of recurrent budget pressures contained within the most recent month 4 forecast the £5m provision for evidence-based pressures has been updated and replaced for 2023/24 with £10.4m of net recurrent pressures. These pressures will be the subject of rigour

review and challenge as part of the budget process with the aim of reducing and mitigating their impact.

7.6.   There are also other significant pressures that are being caused by the current economic circumstances and for which forecasts have been prepared on the basis of latest information and planning assumptions:

- The most recent energy forecasts indicate that electricity prices will increase by 167% and gas by 342%. The energy budget is therefore forecast to increase from £2.97m to £8.40m, representing a £5.43m budget pressure. Clarification is awaited on whether UK Government will extend its energy support scheme for businesses beyond March 2023 and furthermore whether local authorities will be eligible to access the scheme. The consequences of the Council not being insulated from this level of energy price rise is significant.

- As a consequence of the market turmoil caused in part by the 'mini budget' announced by UK Government, together with the Bank of England taking steps to slow and curb inflation through interest rate rises, the Council's treasury budgets have had to be quickly reassessed and to understand the impact on the cost of the borrowing to the Council. Initial estimates indicate a potential increase in treasury costs of £2.5m for 2023/24 on top of already budgeted for increases in treasury budgets of £945k.

- The Council is also required to pay a levy and annual contribution towards the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority. A planning assumption of a 10% increase has been modelled ahead of the process of consultation and engagement with constituent Councils. This introduces a potential £487k pressure for 2023/24.

7.7.   Finally, whilst the budget for 2022/23 continues to be supported by £2.65m of identified eligible expenditure to be funded from capital receipts, under the flexible use of capital receipts directive, reliance on this mitigation was not sustainable and was a short-term measure only. To that end the use of capital receipts for this purpose for 2023/24 has been reduced by £2.14m.

7.8.   The effect of these revised assumptions and pressures being incorporated into the updated MTFP model is shown below for 2023/24. This unprecedented set of circumstances is impacting so significantly on the Council's finance in the current year and next year that updated modelling suggests a budget shortfall needing to be managed in 2023/24 of £23.2m. Whilst the budget process is as always a dynamic one the funding outlook remains bleak and the budget shortfall a very real one. The Council will need to bring forward significant savings proposals and cost reduction measures in order to balance the budget. It is clear as a consequence that impacts will be felt across Council's services, albeit it every effort will as always be made to minimise the impact on front line services through innovation and service redesign where possible.

	Cost Pressures £000's	Saving/ Income £000's	Total 2023/24 £000's
WG Core Funding (AEF) assumption 3.5%		(3,930)	(3,930)

Council Tax increase of 3.95%		(2,483)	(2,483)
Reversal of capitalisation direction	2,142		2,142
Non-teaching pay award increase to 6.25%	5,758		5,758
Teaching pay award increase to 4.13%	1,387		1,387
Superannuation increase 1%	543		543
Re-current pressures/savings (Month 4 monitoring)	10,387		10,387
Fire levy increase 10%	487		487
Borrowing costs year on year increase	3,445		3,445
Energy forecast	5,430		5,430
Updated budget shortfall	**29,579**	**(6,413)**	**23,166**

7.9. So following the described revisions above, the medium term financial plan at this early stage of the budget process is built upon the following assumptions for modelling purposes:

- 6.25% pay award for non-teaching staff
- 4.1% pay award for teaching staff, representing a 5% pay award from September 2022 and 3.5% from September 2023
- 0% non-pay expenditure inflation – pressure mandates to be considered separated through the budget process
- 0% income inflation – discretionary fees and charges increased to be considered by service managers through the budget process
- 2% staff vacancy factor for services and a 0% staff vacancy factor for schools
- 1% increases in the employer's superannuation contribution over the MTFP period, to be reviewed in line with the latest 2022 actuarial valuation
- 3.5% cash uplift in Welsh Government settlement (AEF) in line with indicative increase previously notified, 0% thereafter to take account of UK Government public spending cuts
- 3.95% increase in Council tax receipts

7.10. The medium-term outlook remains very uncertain. Budget assumptions have been revised and based on the premise that inflation will be brought under control, that energy prices will normalise to lower levels and that public spending reductions by UK Government and that impact on local government in Wales are no worse than modelled. There are a lot of downside risks that could still play out and that could adversely impact further the budget shortfalls modelled over the medium term. These shortfalls are shown for illustrative purposes below:

Budget Shortfall	In-Year £000's	Cumulative £000's
2023/24	23,166	23,166
2024/25	4,296	27,462
2025/26	6,070	33,532
2026/27	6,303	39,835
	39,835	

8. Workforce and Trade Union Engagement

8.1. The scale of the financial challenge facing the Council is considerable. Whilst the Council will do all that it can to protect jobs, as a significant percentage of the Council's gross expenditure is on employee costs, the need to reduce costs on such a significant scale will inevitably affect employee budgets and the shape of the workforce.

8.2. Through the Council's Joint Advisory Group with trade unions and separate Trade Union partnership meetings, trade unions will be briefed on the scale of the 2023/24 budget gap and will continue to be consulted in advance of wider public consultation on any budget proposals and their likely impact on employees, particularly where posts are at risk of redundancy. Under the law relating to unfair dismissal, all proposals to make redundancies must involve reasonable consultation with the affected employees and their trade unions. Given the size of the budget gap, it is likely that there will be redundancies within the Council's workforce in the lead up to, and during the financial year commencing 1 April 2023, notwithstanding every effort being made to avoid them.

8.3. Where the number of employees likely to be made redundant exceeds certain thresholds, the law specifically sets out a minimum length of time and minimum content for the consultation with the trade unions, including ways of avoiding, reducing or mitigating the consequences of the numbers of employees being made redundant. As the Head of Paid Service, the Chief Executive is responsible for all staffing matters and has the authority to implement all necessary consultation in relation to proposed redundancies (statutory or otherwise), and make associated staffing decisions.

9. Financial Planning Methodology

9.1. Pragmatically in terms of financial planning, the basic premise is to assume that existing grants will continue at levels as currently, unless notified explicitly otherwise. If grants are transferred into core Welsh Government settlement funding (Aggregate External Financing (AEF)) then these will not be automatically hypothecated to the purpose for which the grant was given. If specific grants cease, it is expected that the activity will cease. Continuance of an activity following grant funding ceasing, would require the service providing a business case to assess each case on its merits.

9.2. It is planned for a revised reserves and capital receipts protocol to be produced as part of the MTFP process and to ensure that earmarked reserves and capital receipts can also adequately support financial planning over the medium and long term.

9.3. Services are expected to manage their own pressures in the first instance, ensuring that any significant impact on the public, council policy objectives or performance is explicitly identified

and approved. Pressures that are introduced into the budget process will undergo a rigorous challenge process consistent with that for any savings proposals introduced.

9.4. Budget assumptions are based on the best information available at the current time and will be subject to variation as new information comes to light, notably upon receipt of the funding settlement from Welsh Government.

10. Capital programme

10.1. The Council's Capital strategy gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. Demand for capital resources remains high and therefore inevitably, prioritisation of projects, leveraging in other sources of funding and working with partners remain key to meeting this demand.

10.2. The Council has strengthened its scrutiny and challenge of the Capital Programme through the established Capital and asset management working group (CAMWG). The process in place looks to ensure that projects are prudent, affordable and will deliver tangible benefits to core policy objectives over the long term.

10.3. The Capital Programme for 2023-2028 will be reviewed and reconsidered during the budgetary process to ensure that the revenue implications of capital expenditure are accurately reflected in the revenue MTFP and that the capital expenditure plans of the Council remain affordable, prudent and sustainable.

10.4. Alongside this, the Capital strategy will be refreshed and brought alongside final budget proposals to Council in March 2023.

11. Process

11.1. In the context of all the above, setting a balanced budget for 2023/24 will be significantly challenging and will involve difficult decisions that will allow Cabinet to align and deliver the aims and aspirations set out in its revised Corporate and Community plan, and within the confines of available funding. The work required needs to involve Members and Monmouthshire communities as early in the process as possible.

11.2. The proposed milestone dates in developing the budgetary process for 2023/24 is as follows:

Refresh of MTFP model using updated assumptions	September 2022
Outline pressure & saving mandates produced for Cabinet scrutiny	November 2022
Report on budget process and timetable - Cabinet	9th November 2022
Final pressure & saving mandates to be produced	December 2022
Budget assumptions, pressures and savings to undergo further Cabinet scrutiny	December 2022
Consideration of Welsh Government Provisional settlement	13th December 2023
Set Council tax base - ICMD	14th December 2022
Consideration of draft revenue & capital budget proposals - Cabinet	18th January 2023
Scrutiny of Proposals - Select Committees	January 19th to 15th February 2023

Public Consultation for 2023/24 budget	January 19th to 15th February 2023
Consideration of scrutiny, consultation, final pressures, savings & assumptions	21st February 2023
Consideration of Welsh Government Final settlement	28th February 2023
Final budget proposals - Cabinet	1st March 2023
Formal Council Tax Resolution & Budget Proposals	9th March 2023

11.3. The MTFP model and underlying budget assumptions have been updated based on most up to date information and estimates. A full assessment is being undertaken of budget pressures that services will be required to manage next year and over the medium term and that draws on:

➢ Most up to date budget monitoring information, and most recently the month 6 budget monitoring exercise.

➢ Consequences of legislative changes that impact on service delivery

➢ Demand projections based on trend analysis and data analysis

11.4. Building upon the success of the most recent budget processes, equal rigor and process will be applied to any new pressure that is added into the MTFP and budget process, as it is anticipated it may in fact be easier to avoid or mitigate a pressure than it is to find an equivalent saving. Efforts to identify savings will continue to be made whether through service efficiencies, transformation, reduction, or via limited scope for increases in fees and charges.

11.5. Welsh Government intends to publish the draft provisional funding settlement for local authorities on the 12th December 2022. It is hoped that the settlement will provide both a level of certainty and a sufficiency of funding that in turn will result in the Council minimising the need to draw on limited one-off reserves to assist the 2023/24 budget process.

11.6. Where necessary up-front engagement with key stakeholders will take place ahead of draft budget proposals being released for consultation.

11.7. The underlying MTFP model will also be updated to include new information as it becomes available, specifically information from Welsh Government on the settlement. The modelling will inform a Medium term financial strategy and plan that will be presented to Cabinet in January 2023.

11.8. Formal scrutiny of the draft budget proposals will take place through the normal Select committee cycle in January and February, including if necessary one overall scrutiny meeting to consider the budget proposals as a whole.

11.9. Public consultation will also take place subsequent to the special Cabinet meeting in January 2023 and will run until the 15th February 2023. Feedback from the 2022/23 exercise highlighted that virtual and online consultation was welcomed and these options will again be explored to ensure that nobody is disproportionately disadvantaged in their ability to respond during the budget consultation period.

11.10. Final budget proposals will be presented back to Cabinet on 1st March 2023 after consideration of consultation feedback. The budget will then go to Council on the 9th March 2023 to meet the statutory requirement to set a Council Tax for the following year. This

presents a challenge for setting next year's budget, as Welsh Government intends to only release final settlement information shortly before this date on 28th February 2023. This date may change, but where necessary may involve the final budget proposals containing potential options to mitigate the potential for any adverse final settlement revision.

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

12.1. There is a requirement placed on Local Authorities to comply with the general equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010 and the specific equality duties such as the statutory responsibilities to assess the equality impacts of their budgetary decisions. The Equality Act 2010 places a General Duty on Monmouthshire County Council to eliminate discrimination according to nine "protected characteristics" (age, belief and non-belief, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, and sexual orientation). Also we need to comply with the Welsh Language Act 1993 and the Welsh Language Measure 2011 through which the Welsh Language Commissioner has shaped the Welsh Standards in force from 30th March 2016.

12.2. The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requires public bodies to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing, by taking action in accordance with the sustainable development principle aimed at achieving the Wellbeing Goals. The authority was an early adopter of The Act and re-shaped its pre-decision evaluation tool to reflect the well-being goals and the principles which it sets out.

12.3. Whilst there are no significant impacts identified at this stage it is important to outline the process by which the Council intends to respond to these issues by building considerations of equality, diversity and sustainability into the planning and delivery of its budget process by:

- Requiring Chief Officers to undertake a Future Generation evaluation of all savings proposals that are offered for their service area to contribute towards the Council's overall savings target.

- Producing an overall FGE assessment of the revenue budget proposals and publishing this as part of the revenue budget proposals for consultation.

- Undertaking a FGE assessment of the capital budget proposals and publishing this as part of the capital budget proposals for consultation.

- Enabling the Council's Cabinet Members to consider initial savings proposals with the benefit of the FGEs, and to make initial decisions based on this information.

- Deciding that once the final shape of the budget is agreed by Council in March 2023, Council service areas carry out continued detailed work to mitigate and manage any equalities or Future Generation issues that have been identified.

- Including the FGEs as part of both draft and final budget proposal reports and published on the Council's website so that residents can understand the factors that went into the planning of the 2023/24 budget.

- Ensuring that where proposals will be the subject of further reports it is expected that further FGEs will be undertaken at that time and where savings are being made from decisions already taken then those implementing those decisions should consider mitigating any negative impacts where necessary.

12.4. There is a continued intention to enhance the impact assessment process going forward with profiles of typical Monmouthshire residents being used to better anticipate the compounded effect of multiple proposals.

13. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

13.1. This report looks to provide an overview of the process for the budget setting process. When budget proposals are developed and brought forward for consultation an option appraisal will be completed for each substantive saving and pressure.

14. EVALUATION CRITERIA

14.1. Whilst the nature of this report does not require any evaluation, the annual budget process is reviewed on an ongoing basis and based on feedback received from the public, members and officers. Cabinet and the Strategic Leadership Team review the process and feedback and recommendations for improvement.

14.2. The changes incorporated as a result of this year's approach are referenced throughout the report.

15. REASONS:

15.1. To provide the opportunity for full and informed engagement, consultation on and scrutiny of budget proposals and processes.

16. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

16.1. There are no resource implications arising directly from this report. Resource implications will subsequently arise from the draft revenue and capital budget proposals considered by Cabinet at its meeting in January.

16.2. The budget process will see draft budget proposals developed and brought forward to Cabinet for consideration and ahead of release on consultation and to ensure that feedback is sought and appropriately reflected in final budget proposals considered by Cabinet next March. Council tax and the final budget proposals will be approved by Council next March.

17. CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team
All Cabinet Members

18. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Nil

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