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County Hall
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Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 28 September 2021

Notice of meeting

Strong Communities Select Committee

Wednesday, 6th October, 2021 at 10.00 am
County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance

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

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
PART A: SCRUTINY AND CRIME DISORDER MATTERS		
No matters to discuss.		
PART B STRONG COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE		
1.	Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum. Select Committee Public Open Forum ~ Guidance Our Select Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council website If you would like to share your thoughts on any proposals being discussed by Select Committees, you can submit your representation via this form Please share your views by uploading a video or audio file (maximum of 4 minutes) or; Please submit a written representation (via Microsoft Word, maximum of 500 words)	

You will need to register for a [My Monmouthshire account](#) in order to submit the representation or use your log in, if you have registered previously.

The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

If representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the Select Committee meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting.

If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Select Committees, please do so by emailing Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk

4.	Covid Pandemic Review	1 - 20
	To scrutinise a review of the learning from the covid pandemic and to consider implications for future strategic direction.	
5.	Budget Monitoring - Month 2	21 - 48
6.	Burials and Cremations Member Report	
	To consider a request from County Councillor V. Smith to table an item to the next meeting ~ Burials and Cremations.	
7.	To confirm minutes of the previous meeting	49 - 54
8.	Action list	
9.	Strong Communities forward work programme	55 - 56
10.	Cabinet & Council forward work programme	57 - 68
11.	Date and time of next meeting: Thursday 18th November 2021	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Peter Clarke	Llangybi Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tony Eason	Dewstow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Christopher Edwards	St. Kingsmark;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Linda Guppy	Rogiet;	Liberal Democrats
County Councillor Roger Harris	Croesonen;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Val Smith	Llanbadoc;	Independent Group
County Councillor Jamie Treharne	Overmonnow;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Ann Webb	St Arvans;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Sheila Woodhouse	Grofield;	Welsh Conservative Party

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Watch this meeting online

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Welsh Language

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

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting

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

Questions for the Meeting

Scrutinising Performance

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

Scrutinising Policy

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

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

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

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

(iii) Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

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SUBJECT: Coronavirus Response – Strategy Review

MEETING: Strong Communities Select Committee

DATE: 6th October 2021

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an update of activity and progress made against the commitments in the council's Coronavirus strategic aims

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are invited to scrutinise how well the authority performed in meeting the commitments made in the various iterations of the Coronavirus strategic aims up to September 2021

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Coronavirus pandemic caused an unprecedented amount of disruption in March 2020, when the government announced a full lockdown in the UK. The need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus, while continuing to support communities, meant we paused or re-purposed a lot of our usual work and reduced focus on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan, as capacity was directed towards the emergency response effort. To ensure clarity of purpose and to maintain accountability, Cabinet approved a series of short-term Coronavirus strategies, or 'Plans on a Page', that would provide direction over the different stages of the pandemic.
- 3.2 The strategies focus on core aims and appendix 1 contains a summary of the activity undertaken against each, and identifies measures used to monitor progress. Some of the key points include:
- Swift adaptation of our working practices to reinstate the decision making process, making Monmouthshire County Council one of the first in Wales to hold a virtual meeting of Cabinet, just six weeks after lockdown.
 - Adjustments in schools to adapt to the changing nature of the pandemic, including providing childcare hubs for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, implementation of a distance learning offer, and development of a new process for determining students' grades to accommodate the cancelled GCSE, AS and A Level examinations.
 - Rapid deployment of support grants to help safeguard local businesses through lockdown closures, and an extensive communication programme to provide guidance, assistance and support to business owners.
 - Established a Test, Trace and Protect system that successfully followed up on 100% (3,645) of eligible COVID-19 cases and 99.5% (6,661) of eligible close contacts (up to June 2021).
 - Establishing a number of platforms to assist the wonderful volunteers in our county by providing guidance, support and a means of connecting active citizens wishing to contribute to their communities with those needing assistance.
- 3.3 To date, four iterations of the strategy, and associated aims, have been developed in accordance with the changing pandemic situation and emerging priorities. These are included in appendix 2. At the start of the pandemic, the pace of change was unrelenting, with hundreds of staff re-deployed, new services created almost overnight, and tens of millions of pounds re-

directed towards preserving life and helping local businesses remain viable. The impact this had on the workings of the council was considerable, and as such, the initial plan on a page focussed on protecting life and supporting communities to be sustainable and resilient.

- 3.4 As the incidents of infection started to decline during the summer of 2020, Cabinet developed a new purpose. This focused on making everyone feel safe in their communities, to continue to support each other and to reach out to those who need help, and agreed an update of the strategic aims in the Coronavirus 'Transition' strategy.
- 3.5 As winter started, the number of cases in some parts of Wales began to increase. Initially, during this time, the incidents in Monmouthshire remained below the important threshold of 50 cases per 100,000 population and 5% infection rate, and as a result, the county was not subject to the local lockdowns seen in other areas of Wales. However, as the numbers increased across the whole of the country, another national lockdown was announced in December, and our main purpose, and associated aims, identified in the Winter Strategy, returned to protecting health, employment, the community and our public services.
- 3.6 Finally, the latest plan starts to look at re-emergence, and promoting Monmouthshire as an ambitious place, full of hope and enterprise, which is fair and sustainable, where people can feel safe. COVID-19 rates initially fell as the spring months progressed, with Monmouthshire having some of the lowest infection rates in the United Kingdom. The vaccine roll-out continues and we are working with ABUHB to support this. The virus has not gone away and as cases rise once again, the occurrence of COVID-19 mutations, variants of concern, and concerns about the impact these could have on vaccination efficacy and case rates emphasises the ongoing risk to residents and communities, which needs to be managed.
- 3.7 The impact of the pandemic required us to act at pace, setting up new services and making rapid changes to how others were delivered. This has accelerated our learning process and upon reflection, some of the changes implemented are being retained for the longer term as they have had a positive impact on service provision. In some cases, we need to do more work to understand how we can adapt and take forward other changes. For example:
 - The Library 'Request and Collect' system has been positively received and will continue
 - Recycling rates improved during the year so changes to our Household Waste Recycling Centres have been retained, such as the booking system
 - The response by volunteers in our county has been remarkable and initially, we implemented mechanisms to assist in connecting people and supporting their activities. This has since developed and groups have been established throughout the county to continue this work independently, and beyond the needs initially identified to support those shielding. We continue to provide a platform that offers support, but active citizens are contributing to their communities in different ways, and establishing their own networks of support and assistance, where they identify a need.
 - Remote meetings of Cabinet, Council and committees assisted members to balance their attendance, alongside other commitments such as family life and careers. This will not only help councillors going forward, but may also make the role more appealing to more diverse groups in the future.
 - More people were walking and cycling during lockdown, resulting in increased interest levels in active travel. Considerable work is underway in this area, and will continue going forward to build upon the interest shown, and to widen the benefits it brings.
 - More staff were enabled to work remotely when council buildings were closed, reducing our carbon footprint and providing increased flexibility for staff. This has yielded wider benefits to service provision, for example, during the floods of December 2020, we were able to establish a call centre team during the evening within 30 minutes of the need being identified, as staff were able to do this from their own homes.

3.8 Challenges from the pandemic continue to arise, and we are facing difficulties on a national scale. Work is underway to monitor these challenges, and their impact. These include:

- A shortage of HGV drivers, which is impacting on waste collection services as a number of driving posts remain unfilled
- Despite the initial boost in our ability to recruit carers into Social Care, staff shortages are causing considerable pressures on service delivery. This is exacerbating the problem of bed availability in hospitals as patients are unable to be discharged without a suitable care plan in place
- Building supplies have seen a considerable hike in cost, which could impact on the affordability of future capital projects, and materials needed to build IT equipment is in short supply, resulting in price increases and delays in our ability to procure digital hardware
- Energy prices are increasing, which could result in a considerable increase in the costs to run our council buildings

4. REASONS

4.1 To ensure that members have an understanding of council performance against the strategic aims during 2020/21 and into 2021/22, and can scrutinise how well the authority has performed.

5. AUTHOR

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Appendix 1: Summary of activity against the core aims

Core aim	Update
Decision making and civic leadership	<p>As council buildings were closed in the first lockdown, decision-making was impacted as members were unable to meet in person. When legislation changes were implemented to allow remote meetings to take place, we swiftly adapted our working practices to reinstate the decision making process. Following a vast digital overhaul, the first virtual meeting of Cabinet was held just six weeks after lockdown, making Monmouthshire County Council one of the first in the Wales to do so. Council meetings followed, and by July, all committees were meeting remotely to ensure robust scrutiny and decision-making was taking place. Training and support was provided to members to assist in utilising digital meeting technology. The system is proving successful and all attendance at meetings is now possible via remote means. Work continues to capture the learning from the new arrangements, and some changes will remain or will be built on where they are working well. Work is currently underway to develop the technical ability to deliver hybrid meetings, which will accommodate both remote and physical attendance at meetings, in line with any ongoing restrictions.</p> <p>An Emergency Response Team was established very early in the pandemic to ensure our overall response to the emergency was coordinated and managed. This involved linking into wider formal Gwent response structures, and directly into Welsh and UK Government.</p> <p>We focused on communicating timely and relevant service updates and information to residents across our communication platforms, and quickly became a trusted source of information. Public events were livestreamed to share business advice, financial engagement events were hosted online, and digital videos and illustrations have been used to convey local and national messages. Since the start of lockdown, the ChatBot and Contact Centre staff have dealt with over 143,000 wide-ranging customer service enquiries, the council’s Twitter followers increased from 17,000 in March 2020 to 18,400 by September 2021, and Facebook followers have increased by 41% over the same period. Data became a valuable resource as case numbers and the R-rate became a staple part of our dialogue, so we started producing data maps and a weekly Coronavirus data pack to keep officers and members abreast of changes. These were quickly adopted as a source of information sharing for the public, and there has been a positive reception on our social media platforms for the graphics and statistics shared by the Chief Executive and Media team.</p> <p>Lockdown meant that many services were closed so digital technology has been developed to safely open up access. This includes a booking system for appointments at household waste recycling sites when they were permitted to reopen, which worked well</p>

	so has been implemented as a permanent change. Hubs and libraries were required to close so a Request and Collect service was introduced to allow members of the public to loan books.
Measures	
Number of customer service enquiries received (Contact Centre phone calls & ChatBot)	143,712 (March 2020 – September 2021)
Number of appointments booked for the Request and Collect library service	2,411 (September 2021)
Twitter followers Facebook followers Instagram followers	18,400 (September 2021) = 8% increase* 15,055 (September 2021) = 41% increase* 1,347 (September 2021) = 27% increase (since February 2021) <i>*% increase based on figures at start of pandemic</i>

Core aim	Update
Childcare and education	<p>During the first lockdown, childcare was provided for vulnerable learners and the children of key workers via childcare hubs. At their peak, the hubs provided childcare for over 400 pupils in a day. Special Needs Resources Bases remained open, and a weekly multi-agency Stable Lives and Brighter Futures meeting was established to discuss and review support and provision for vulnerable pupils. This helped to ensure that identified pupils were regularly monitored, and provision was flexible to meet their needs. MonLife provided ‘Summer Hub’ provision for children, with a total of 4,170 attendances, an average of 166 children per day.</p> <p>During the winter closures, schools adopted a remote learning approach for the majority of pupils, which was developed into a blended learning approach when restrictions allowed. The Education team worked closely with schools and the Digital Programme Office to understand the requirement for IT equipment amongst learners. We provided laptops and MiFi units to pupils without access to equipment or internet access so they could continue to learn.</p> <p>Schools prioritised the wellbeing of all their pupils as a pre-requisite for effective learning; this included the adoption of a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, and the availability of additional support to raise standards for priority groups. The Educational Psychology Service and Healthy Schools Team provided advice and support to schools to support the well-being of children and young people impacted by COVID-19.</p>

	Following the announcement that there would be no GCSE, AS and A Level examinations in summer 2021, schools were provided with a range of support to prepare them for the new process for determining students' grade.
Measures	
Number of key workers' children and vulnerable children attending hub schools	400+ per day at their peak
Number of attendances at MonLife summer 'Hub' provision	4170
Number of vulnerable pupils and pupils eligible for free school meals attended summer 'Hub' provision	200
Number of families supported through free school meal payments	1655

Core aim	Update
Support for businesses and town centre re-opening	<p>Support has been provided to businesses throughout the year to help them through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, and we have issued almost 6,500 payments of grants amounting to almost £40 million. There has been an ongoing communications campaign, aligned to the changing legislation and requirements for businesses through the year, and regular meetings of the Monmouthshire Business Resilience Forum have been held. Livestream events were used to share support and guidance to local businesses, and following the announcement of a national lockdown in December, 176 small businesses signed up to ask questions about grant availability and eligibility criteria. For those businesses not able to access funding, we have liaised with Welsh Government to ensure that they were supported as much as possible.</p> <p>We ran various tourism campaigns throughout the year, initially promoting the message to 'stay at home' and 'Visit Monmouthshire – later'. This developed into 'Visit Monmouthshire. Safely.' to make it as easy and safe as possible for visitors to the county. As restrictions began easing in March, and Wales moved from alert level 4 to alert level 2, we promoted our Visit Monmouthshire campaign to highlight the services and attractions available for visitors. We promoted businesses as they prepared to reopen via a new spring 'Shop Local' campaign to encourage visitors back to our town centres. More recently, following the move to alert level 0, local events have been held, such as the Usk Show and the Abergavenny Food Festival, further encouraging visitors to safely visit our towns.</p> <p>The 're-opening towns' projects sought to make our high streets safer during the pandemic, via mechanisms such as one way streets, widened pedestrianised areas and changing traffic flows. Considerable consultation took place to seek the opinions of</p>

	our residents and to gather ideas about how Monmouthshire's town and village centres could look in the future to inform this. Work continues in this area, in close consultation with residents and businesses.
Measures	
Total number of support payments made to businesses, incl. support during Covid-19.	6,478
Total number of businesses supported via grant payments	2,530
Total amount of grant payments made	£39.18 million

Core aim	Update
Support for vulnerable people	<p>Very early in the pandemic, we set a goal of ensuring that every person or family in crisis that we were aware of received support. To achieve this, Social Care moved to a seven day working week initially to support our frontline delivery in Adults Services, and adapted our delivery of Children's Services. We also developed a redeployment strategy to ensure staff were available to provide support, where needed.</p> <p>Front-door services are a priority and remained fully operational. The process for receiving and responding to referrals did not change; arrangements have been adjusted, and where required, different solutions have been identified to deal with situations. We have received an average of 117 contacts per week relating to supporting children and young people in Children's social services (May 2020 – September 2021), an average of 27 requests per week in Adults social services (May 2020 – August 2021), and 556 families accessed the therapeutic services advice line for support, advice and guidance (April 2020 - June 2021). As pressure on care at home services and reablement services has increased, all referrals have been triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Staff shortages are causing significant pressures on service provision, and hospital discharge times are being affected due to the lack of home care packages available for those who need them. This is a problem that is being reflected nationally, and local authorities in Gwent have established a strategic coordination group to formulate a strategy to address this going forward.</p> <p>The volume, type and source of referrals to Children's Services has been monitored continually to identify any changes as Coronavirus restrictions have changed. Risk assessments were undertaken where any direct working/home visiting was required to follow up on protection concerns, or to provide interim safeguards as part of a care and support plan.</p>

To safeguard residents in care homes, a testing programme has been established for all staff members, administered by the council. Staff have worked with Public Health Wales and ABUHB, to establish clear parameters for residents in care homes being discharged from hospital to minimise the risk of further cases. Residents and staff in care homes for older adults, along with front line health and social care workers, were in the top priority groups for the COVID-19 vaccine roll out and, as such, were all offered vaccinations early in the rollout process.

We have experienced unprecedented housing demand from some of the most vulnerable citizens in our county, at a time when identifying suitable and safe premises has been challenging. In May 2020, Cabinet agreed to the temporary use of Gilwern Outdoor Education Centre as a venue for COVID-related emergency homeless accommodation until August 2020. We are currently supporting 161 households in temporary accommodation. New Welsh Government guidance issued in 2020 expands our duties with regards to our homelessness offer, and the need to provide suitable long term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing. This, alongside the increasing demand, has placed considerable pressure on our services and work is ongoing to meet this requirement.

To help those facing financial uncertainty, an online resource has been compiled in conjunction with partners, which gathers information on the support available into a single place. Information covers areas such as financial support available, and advice on council tax and the option to spread payments over longer periods. This has been successfully promoted on social media and has been shared with partners and all schools. We continued to provide direct free school meal payments until schools reopened following the Easter break, which had increased to 1655 pupils being supported.

Measures	
Average number of requests for Adult's Services per week: May 2020 – August 2021	27
Residential	3
Care at home	11
Reablement	13
Average number of Children's Services contacts per week: May 2020 – September 2021	117
Number of families accessing the Therapeutic Services advice line: April 2020 – June 2021	556
Number of households in temporary accommodation	161

Core aim	Update
<p>Safe and clean neighbourhoods</p>	<p>We reconfigured our services early on in the pandemic to ensure domestic waste and recycling collections could continue by increasing vehicles and facilitating social distancing for staff. To assist our communities, recycling bags were distributed to supermarkets and to residents shielding, where possible. Garden waste collections were stopped for a period, but work was quickly undertaken to re-start collections.</p> <p>Following the closure of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC), provisions were introduced that initially allowed for the reopening of two sites; Llanfoist and Five Lanes, which was then extended to Mitchel Troy. A booking system for slots meant that numbers attending the sites could be maintained at a safe and manageable level to maintain social distancing, and this continues to operate effectively today. The recycling rate for 2020/21 was 68.88%, an increase from 65.57% in 2019/20. Data is being reviewed to determine any learning that can be taken from this period to further improve recycling figures going forward.</p> <p>We were forced to reduce many of our grounds maintenance services in order to redeploy staff into waste and recycling roles. Despite this, we kept our roads and cemeteries safe by retaining an essential grounds maintenance team operation. We prioritised the maintenance based on public safety and road visibility requirements, ensuring areas such as grass verges, road junctions and roundabouts were kept clear and safe for road users and pedestrians. When grass mowing resumed, almost a third of areas within our parks and open spaces were left uncut, which saw a positive impact on the flora and fauna of our county, with many areas seeing an abundance of wildflowers and wildlife. This has caused some concern with residents, who have been unhappy with the lack of maintenance in some green spaces within the county. We are considering the learning from the changes to our grounds maintenance services to inform how we can enhance the biodiversity and ecology of our open spaces going forward, whilst maintaining the standards of green spaces expected by our residents.</p>
Measures	
Percentage of waste recycled	68.88
Number of Fly tipping reports collected	737
Tonnes of waste and recycling collected	40,098
Number of household waste and recycling sites slots booked	159,362

Core aim	Update
<p>Trusted partners and collaborative working</p>	<p>As the first lockdown was implemented, we worked with our public sector partners via the Gwent Strategic Co-ordinating Group (SCG) to provide a joined up response across our area. We also developed closer working relationships with other agencies who supported the social care system to ensure a joined up and efficient approach to care provision for some of our most vulnerable residents.</p> <p>Alongside our Gwent partners, we contributed to the COVID-19 Test, Trace and Protect scheme, which aims to trace and contact residents who have been in contact with the virus to provide advice, and request they self-isolate to try and minimise the spread of the virus and minimise the reproduction rate (R-rate). In October 2020, 13 staff were redeployed to the TTP service, which increased in mid-January 2021 to the peak of 27 redeployees. Following this, the redeployed gradually returned to their services due to a fall in cases, but this is under constant review in line with case numbers and demand.</p> <p>The vaccination strategy, being delivered by Aneurin Bevan UHB, has successfully administered almost 870,000 vaccinations in our health board area, and we continue to support and add value where required. By 12 September 2021, 92.0% (72,830) of Monmouthshire residents aged 18 years and older had received one dose and 89.5% (70,875) two doses.</p> <p>Volunteers have been at the forefront of the effort to keep our communities safe. We established the Community Action Volunteer Team (CAVT) to assist requests for help being coordinated with the offers of support. Part of this process was establishing lists of businesses delivering food supplies locally and supporting those providing cooked food/meals. We also provided access to emergency food parcels for shielded people who could not leave home, and created a contact centre who proactively called 2,300 shielded vulnerable people in our communities to check on their well-being and to offer the delivery of food parcels, where these were needed. The active citizens involved in these activities have now broadened their networks and are working in partnership with other like-minded individuals to contribute to their communities in different ways. We have established a Community Support Network to support them in their actions by providing guidance and a mechanism for interacting with others for mutual benefit and maximum impact.</p> <p>The Connect Monmouthshire community networking platform has since been implemented to provide the digital tools for active citizens to support each other in their communities. We are providing direct specialist support to volunteer groups, advising on the support available to the volunteers and community members, and to date, 738 requests for support have been made. Meetings are now taking place across the county, aimed at linking community members, groups and organisations to maximise collaboration and to pool resources.</p>
<p>Measures</p>	

Number of calls made to shielding individuals in the county	2,300
Number of requests for direct specialist support by volunteer groups	738
Percentage of eligible cases successfully followed up by Test Trace Protect (TTP)	100% (3,645, June 2021)
Percentage of eligible close contacts of new cases successfully contacted by Test Trace Protect (TTP)	99.5% (6,661, June 2021)
Percentage of residents in Monmouthshire aged 18 years and older who have received two vaccinations	89.5% (September 2021)

Core aim	Update
Safe, healthy and productive workforce	<p>Throughout the entire pandemic response, staff have embraced new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe while delivering the many services our communities rely on. We have ensured staff have a range of support on wellbeing, have access to the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing, if they display symptoms. We have distributed approximately 6.7 million items of PPE for the provision of social care in the county. The number of days per full-time equivalent employee lost due to sickness during the year averaged 11.0, which is lower than the figure seen in the previous year.</p> <p>The Logistics Group ensured that staff and resources were allocated to priority services, and that staff being re-deployed had the necessary training, equipment and guidance for them to undertake their new roles in a safe manner. The Digital Group aided business continuity through the use of digital tools and remote working facilities, and quickly rolled out further technology to improve how our 1875 office-based staff worked from home. We secured licences for 700 staff who previously did not have access to digital communications so our whole organisation could be kept up to date.</p> <p>Where required, we have maintained cleaning services in buildings that have remained open, ensuring safe distances and cleanliness for the safety of our staff. The directive remains that working from home is the safest mechanism for staff where possible, and working in council buildings should only be undertaken where essential to do so. For those wishing to work from County Hall, a desk booking system is in place to ensure the numbers attending remain safe, and social distancing can be assured at all times.</p> <p>During this difficult time, we have provided a range of support services to all colleagues to support their wellbeing via the Health, Welfare & Information group. Communication and engagement with staff has continued throughout, and the SupportAll portal was developed, which allows staff to access information on a range of subjects, such as testing, protecting homeworkers and</p>

	bereavement. The weekly staff Digital 'Cwtch' continues and averages more than a hundred viewers each week, and a weekly Managers Q&A continues to answer any questions or discuss general workplace issues.
Measures	
Number of staff who offered their skills for redeployment	1000+
Number of items of PPE distributed to for the provision of Social Care	6.7 million
The average number of days per full-time equivalent employee lost due to sickness during the year	11.0
Number of FTE days lost due to COVID-19:	
COVID-19 sickness	3,034.5
Short term	1,913.8
Long term	1,120.6
Long COVID sickness	68.0
Short term	6.2
Long term	61.7
Self-isolation TOTAL	6,016.1
Able to work remotely	885.9
Unable to work	917.2
Not specified	3,509.1
COVID positive – well and able to work remotely	426.4
COVID positive – well and unable to work remotely	277.4
Shielding TOTAL	3,627.3
Personally vulnerable and able to work remotely	1,273.2
Personally vulnerable and unable to work	1,813.0
Household member vulnerable and able to work remotely	232.0
Household member vulnerable and unable to work	199.1
Not specified	109.9

Core aim	Update
Council finances	<p>The council was already facing significant financial challenges heading into the 2020/21 financial year, prior to the start of the pandemic. The onset of the pandemic presented its own additional financial challenges and uncertainty, both in terms of additional costs and significant losses of income across services. A detailed financial sustainability assessment was undertaken, and a budget recovery plan was created, which re-evaluated financial commitments and funding forecasts.</p> <p>A balanced net revenue budget position was achieved for 2020/21, after accounting for transfers to earmarked reserves, which was primarily as a result of £5.29m of Welsh Government COVID-19 hardship funding since month 9 to support the increased costs of service delivery and loss of income as a direct result of COVID-19 impact. There were also significant underspends across many service areas as a result of the pandemic, where services were reduced or stopped, travel requirements were reduced, office and buildings remained closed and substantial staff vacancies remained unfilled.</p> <p>The medium term prognosis is still of concern; there are no indicative settlement figures published, which significantly impacts on the forward planning of budgets over the medium term. There is a need to think differently about the challenges of the medium term, and this work and engagement will continue in the coming months, particularly with other local authorities, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association, where funding distribution and projections are concerned. Internally, closer alignment between service's business planning arrangements and financial planning arrangements continues to be developed to improve the quality of service planning and financial planning, which also aligns to the delivery of the Corporate Plan to ensure its aspirations are sustainable.</p>
Measures	
Amount lost in income due to the pandemic	£8,382,000 (covered by WG funding)
Amount spent on our response to the coronavirus pandemic	£11,254,000 (covered by WG funding)

Core aim	Update
Re-emergence	<p>The Re-Emergence strategy, published in June, focuses on both the ongoing response and the tentative re-emergence of a focus beyond COVID-19. Safeguarding our most vulnerable, and protecting businesses are still some of the key aims, but tourism and promoting our county as a tourist destination has also become a focus, along with decarbonisation and promoting an active and healthy lifestyle for our residents and visitors.</p>

Progress to date includes the launch of a new re-use shop at Five Lanes Recycling Centre, and four Benthylg Libraries of Things in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, with associated Repair Cafes. Over 8,000 trees have been planted this year, and schools have been provided with raised beds to plant seeds, which will then be regrown on sites when more mature. We are also liaising with 'Stump Up for Trees', a community organisation with aspirations to plant 1 million trees across the Brecon Beacons, about how we may be able to support this initiative. Other projects include 'Neglected Grasslands' and 'Resilient Grasslands' schemes, aimed at regenerating green areas and promoting biodiversity.

Lockdown saw a considerable reduction in driving and increased walking within areas local to home. Numerous projects have been supported in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny to improve the active travel offer in the county, and a total investment of £1.4m has been made in the last financial year, the biggest investment into Active Travel in Monmouthshire. Cycling capacity has been increased in town centres, public bike pumps have been installed, and a contraflow cycle lane has been introduced in Abergavenny through COVID-19 response funding. A clear strategic focus is now set, primary routes identified and a clear vision established to develop future routes in order to encourage a change in transport mode for citizens.

20mph schemes have been implemented in Raglan, Caldicot, and Tintern as part of the COVID-19 response to make town centres safer; it is anticipated that these will be maintained on a permanent basis, and further 20mph zones will be implemented during 2021/22.

We held a summer full of outdoor activities for our children and young people, starting with the Monmouthshire Games, which provided outdoor play schemes for children throughout the summer holidays. The School Holiday Enrichment Programme was also delivered during summer holidays, which helps disadvantaged children with specific needs. Other events included activity packs at Caldicot Castle and Old Station Tintern, and outdoor theatre events at Abergavenny Castle grounds for children through August, including the Horrible Histories open air show.

We will continue to deliver against the direction set in the strategic aims, to help our communities and businesses through the summer months, and into autumn. There is still considerable uncertainty around the pandemic and the potential for increasing numbers of cases, but we are in a strong position to face the possible challenges that lie ahead. Cabinet have committed to the development of a more fundamental medium term planning document by late autumn, which will provide the strategic vision to take us beyond the pandemic, as long as it remains under control.

Measures

Number of trees planted

8146

Appendix 2: The four iterations of the Coronavirus Strategic Aims - 'Plan on a Page'

OUR CORONAVIRUS STRATEGY

The Coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to our way of life. By clearly setting our strategic aims we will focus on the things that matter most to our residents and businesses, shaping our immediate response and our transition into a re-launch.



OUR PURPOSE

To protect life and support our communities to be sustainable and resilient in these challenging times

OUR VALUES

OPENNESS

We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.

FAIRNESS

We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.

FLEXIBILITY

We are flexible, enabling 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. We'll make the best of the ideas and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

OUR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Working with and alongside local communities
- Being innovative and creative
- Learning and adjusting in real time
- Considerate of short-term response and medium-term recovery

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

- Provide clear purposeful civic leadership
- Provide childcare for children of key workers and ensure continuation of learning for all young people
- Help vulnerable young people and adults who need our support
- Help local businesses to survive
- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and tidy whilst managing waste as sustainably as we can
- Be a trusted partner for other agencies / organisations
- Sustain a safe, healthy and productive workforce
- Ensure we remain financially sustainable as an organisation

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Ensure that every person or family in crisis that we're aware of receives support
- Provide vital social care services for all those who need them, including child protection, care at home and residential care, 24/7
- Deliver our part in COVID contact testing, tracing and community surveillance
- Provide hub schools enabling childcare for key workers' children
- Provide digital technology and connectivity so all pupils can access learning, minimising any potential digital 'gap'
- Ensure all our staff who have the need can access the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Provide access to emergency food parcels for shielded people who cannot leave home
- Coordinate community volunteering and support local food banks
- Support local businesses wherever possible and specifically through timely payment of COVID-19 grants
- Reconfigure our services so we can continue domestic waste and recycling collections
- Keep our roads and cemeteries safe by maintaining our levels of grounds maintenance
- Maximise our use of technology so our organisation can keep delivering the things that matter
- Influence and inform legislation changes so we can work effectively in our new context

OUR CORONAVIRUS 'TRANSITION' STRATEGY

The Coronavirus pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to our way of life and the way we provide services. We are transitioning out of the first wave now and this plan sets our actions to re-build community confidence. This is not our Recovery Plan – that will follow when we are confident that COVID19 is manageable into the medium term.



WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Continuing to provide vital social care services, including child protection, care at home and residential care, 7 days a week
- Remodelling our town centres and encourage people to shop safely and shop local
- Supporting our hospitality and tourism sectors to re-open as soon as possible
- Maximising the time that learners can safely spend in school from September onwards;
- Ensuring that consistent, high quality distance learning is in place to support children when they are not in school
- Delivering with partner agencies an effective Test Track and Protect system so we can identify virus outbreaks quickly and contain them
- Preparing to provide services which support individuals and families that lose their job / income
- Preparing those services that support vulnerable / high risk groups for an increase in demand as 'lockdown' eases
- Ensuring our staff working in all services are safe
- Providing a full waste management service and continue to develop our approaches to enhance the biodiversity and ecology of our open spaces
- Digitising services where possible to make them readily available to citizens
- Preparing for the re-opening of all leisure / cultural services as soon as guidelines allow
- Supporting our community volunteering network to provide long-term benefit to our communities
- Beginning our financial recovery programme

OUR PURPOSE

We want everyone to feel safe in their community, to continue to support each other and to reach out to those who need help

OUR VALUES

OPENNESS

We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.

FAIRNESS

We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.

FLEXIBILITY

We are flexible, enabling 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. We'll make the best of the ideas and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

OUR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Working with and alongside local communities
- Being innovative and creative
- Learning and adjusting in real time
- Considerate of short-term response and medium-term recovery

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

- Provide clear purposeful civic leadership
- Maximise the time children can safely spend in school and have consistent, high quality distance learning in place when they can't be in school
- Help vulnerable young people and adults who need our support
- Assist local businesses to reopen and ensure our towns are safe places for traders and visitors
- Keep our neighbourhoods clean and tidy whilst managing waste as sustainably as we can
- Be a trusted partner for other agencies / organisations
- Keep a safe, healthy and productive workforce
- Ensure we remain financially sustainable

OUR WINTER STRATEGY

December 2020 - March 2021

OUR PURPOSE

To protect your health, your employment, your community and your public services.

OUR VALUES

OPENNESS

We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.

FAIRNESS

We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.

FLEXIBILITY

We are flexible, enabling 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. We'll make the best of the ideas and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.



We will continue our work with the citizens and communities of Monmouthshire to reduce the spread of COVID-19. We will continue to support and protect vulnerable people. We will give attention to rebuilding a local economy that reduces inequalities within and between communities.

OUR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Working with and alongside local communities
- Being innovative and creative
- Learning and adjusting in real time
- Focus on short-term response, medium - term recovery and long term sustainability

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

- Provide clear purposeful civic leadership
- Keep our communities, our people and our partners safe and healthy
- Provide direct support to those suffering from tragedy, loneliness, poverty and loss
- Ensure all vulnerable young people and adults are safeguarded
- Ensure quality teaching and learning is available in school / out of school for all learners
- To be environmentally and ecologically responsible in all of our actions
- Support our local businesses and town centres
- Maintain a competent, motivated organisation with the capability and capacity to deliver

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Ensuring that the democratic decision making process is fully operational with key decisions being taken in a timely way
- Communicating clearly with citizens, representing their interests to others, including Welsh Government, and delivering on the priorities we have set for the county
- Protecting / promoting our environment and ecology through investment where necessary and carbon reduction activity where possible
- Delivering an excellent Test, Trace & Protect System
- Working with the NHS to roll-out a COVID vaccination programme
- Encouraging citizens to exercise, eat healthily, spend time safely with others and get outdoors
- Responding to winter emergencies, such as snow and flooding
- Supporting those that are lonely, lose their job, their home and / or cannot access food
- Maintaining our social care services including child protection, support at home and residential care
- Providing high quality teaching and learning to all, whether in school or out
- Ensuring learners are well prepared for the assessment processes that replace GCSE, AS level or A level examinations in 2021
- Supporting businesses to trade safely and signposting them to financial support that can assist their survival
- Helping businesses with the BREXIT transition process highlighting regulatory changes that create obstacles / opportunity
- Distributing monies from national business support schemes to qualifying local businesses
- Setting a budget for the financial year 2021/22 capable of delivering these priorities

RE-EMERGENCE SUMMER 2021

It's been a tough 18 months for everyone. We have lived apart for too long. We change that now. This strategy is centred on bringing people safely back together by supporting friendship circles, neighbourhoods and communities to feel safe, confident and happy together.



OUR PURPOSE

We want Monmouthshire to once again be an ambitious place full of hope and enterprise. We want your county to be a fair and sustainable place where people care about each other and you feel safe. We want Monmouthshire to be a place you are proud to call home.

OUR VALUES

OPENNESS

We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.

FAIRNESS

We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.

FLEXIBILITY

We are flexible, enabling 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. We'll make the best of the ideas and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

OUR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Working with and alongside local communities
- Being innovative and creative
- Learning and adjusting in real time
- Keeping our communities and people safe
- Being kind

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

- Provide clear and purposeful civic leadership
- Promote Monmouthshire as a beautiful destination for visits and staycations
- Champion the interests of local businesses
- Market our town centres as wonderful places to shop or spend time with friends
- Encourage people to be active and improve their health, fitness and general wellbeing
- Provide direct support to those suffering from loneliness, hardship and loss
- Ensure all vulnerable young people and adults are safeguarded
- Ensure quality teaching and learning is available for all learners
- Decarbonise our own operations and help communities take positive action on climate change
- Maintain a competent, motivated organisation with the capability and capacity to deliver

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Taking care of our workforce so they can support you
- Ensuring our democratic process is fully operational
- Communicating clearly with you and always representing your interests to others
- Improving infrastructure by fixing roads, investing in active travel, 20mph zones and high-speed broadband
- Having a summer full of outdoor activities for children and young people
- Promoting and protecting our natural environment to encourage walking and outdoor sports
- Improving our leisure centres in Abergavenny, Caldicot and Chepstow
- Helping local businesses trade successfully and safely
- Creating employment/apprenticeships for local people
- Protecting / promoting our environment and ecology through investment and carbon reduction activity
- Introducing Repair Cafes and Library of Things to increase sharing and re-use of everyday items
- Prioritising our excellent Test, Trace & Protect System
- Providing support and creating opportunities for volunteers making a difference in their community
- Maintaining social care services including child protection, support at home and residential care
- Ensuring learners are prepared for the assessment processes that replace GCSE, AS level or A level examinations in 2021
- Preparing schools for the new curriculum that will be launched in 2022

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SUBJECT:	REVENUE & CAPITAL MONITORING 2021/22 FORECAST OUTTURN STATEMENT – MONTH 2
MEETING:	Strong Communities Select Committee
DATE:	30th September 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Select Members with information on the forecast revenue and capital outturn position of the Authority, accommodating capital slippage and approved reserve usage.
- 1.2 The financial information appropriate to this Select Committee is outlined in **Appendix 5**, with the remainder of this report being included for completeness, and following the format presented to Cabinet on the 28th July 2021.
- 1.3 This report is also to be considered by Select Committees as part of their responsibility to:
 - assess whether effective budget monitoring is taking place;
 - monitor the extent to which budgets are spent in accordance with agreed budget and policy framework;
 - challenge the reasonableness of projected over or underspends, and;
 - monitor the achievement of predicted efficiency gains or progress in relation to savings proposals

2. RECOMMENDATIONS (TO CABINET):

- 2.1 That Cabinet recognises an overall net revenue forecast deficit at month 2 of £9.02m, which can be attributed to forecast deficit of £6.48m that is directly associated with the extraordinary financial pressures attached to Covid-19, with a further £2.53m relating to the pressures on the Council's core service delivery.
- 2.2 That the forecast deficit on core service delivery of £2.53m is managed through an immediate budget recovery plan recognising the risk that targeted and planned cost reductions will be challenging in the current operating environment and given that the Council will as always look to minimise impact on service delivery.
- 2.3 That Cabinet can be reasonably assured based on continued dialogue with Welsh Government and the funding received since the outbreak of the pandemic, that all Covid-19 associated cost pressures and income losses eligible to be met by the Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship fund will be funded to the end of September 2021.

- 2.4 That Cabinet note that there remains significant Covid-19 related cost pressures and income losses forecast after the end of September 2021 of approximately £2.5m which presently have no funding commitment from Welsh Government. The Council prudently set aside reserve funding at the end of 2019/20 and 2020/21 totalling £2.6m for specific Covid-19 related pressures which were yet to materialise and in the event that funding commitments from Welsh Government fall short of meeting the additional expenditure and income losses incurred. Given the Councils comparatively low level of reserve cover, and the financial challenges over the medium term and beyond, recourse to this funding should be seen as an absolute last resort after exhausting all other alternative possibilities.
- 2.5 Whilst the Council is grateful for the funding commitments made to date by Welsh Government through the Covid-19 Hardship fund to the end of September 2021, Cabinet will look to make strong representations to Welsh Government for further clarity on funding for the ongoing pressures post September both in the form of continuing to respond to the direct impact of the pandemic but just as importantly, the wider and longer lasting indirect impact of the pandemic on Council services, particularly where this is now becoming evident in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional learning needs.
- 2.6 That Cabinet recognise the ongoing risk of the awaited outcome of pay negotiations for both teaching and non-teaching staff and that this will present a further pressure if pay awards are over and above the 1% budgeted for. Current indications are that we will see at the very least a 1.75% increase in pay for teachers with effect from September 2021, and a full year effect of at least a 1.5% increase in non-teaching staff. Welsh Government have been clear that no compensating funding is anticipated and given that the Minister confirmed via the final settlement that this already took into account any subsequent pay award.
- 2.7 Cabinet recognises the extraordinary nature of the current Council operating environment as a result of the pandemic and accepts that it will be some time until the wider and lasting impact on service delivery fully establishes itself.
- 2.8 That Members note the forecast 95% delivery of the budgeted mandated savings as detailed in **appendix 3** and as agreed by full Council previously and the implicit remedial action/savings included in the financial outturn to compensate for circa 5% savings (£229k) reported as delayed or unachievable by service managers.
- 2.9 Cabinet notes the extent of forecast movements in Schools reserve usage contained in **appendix 1** which is informed and driven by the school investment plans that were supported by the significant and unprecedented late grant support provided by Welsh Government to schools at the end of 2020/21.
- 2.10 Cabinet considers the forecast capital outturn spend of £79.2m as outlined in **appendix 1**, noting the difficulties in forecasting capital expenditure plans so early in the financial year and the probability that slippage will materialise as the year progresses due to the ongoing restrictions and impact in relation to Covid-19.

2.11 That Cabinet approve the Capital budget revisions as listed in **appendix 4** to this report resulting from the notification of external capital grant awards to the value of £3.58m.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Assessing the financial impact of the pandemic on the Council

3.2 The 2021/22 budget was set against the backdrop of an unprecedented period of uncertainty, both in Local Government and in the wider context. The Covid-19 pandemic continues to have a major impact on all local authorities and wider public services across Wales. From a financial perspective, the response to the pandemic has required the Council to incur significant additional expenditure, for example, costs relating to infection control measures, safeguarding the public and employees and support for elderly and vulnerable residents. In addition, income losses have also been substantial, during the period where services either have been closed or have experienced significant reductions in demand or footfall due to restrictions in place.

3.3 The Council has been given clear commitments of the proposed Welsh Government support to meet the Covid-19 pressures and significantly the announcement of further funding for local authorities via the Local Government Covid-19 hardship fund to the end of September 2021. Cabinet can be reasonably assured that all such Covid-19 related pressures will be funded during this period.

3.4 **Table 1** below indicates a total forecast net over spend for the Council at year end of £9.02m and how this variance is broken down into that due to core service delivery and that relating directly to the response to the pandemic.

Table 1: Council Fund 2021/22 Outturn Forecast as at Month 2

Directorate	Total forecast variance at Month 2	Of which due to core service delivery:	Of which due to Covid-19 Expenditure Increase:	Of which due to Covid-19 Income Loss:
Children & Young People	832	832	0	0
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	1,665	1,665	0	0
Enterprise	2,469	267	1,248	954
Monlife	3,010	0	0	3,010
Chief Executives Unit	52	52	0	0
People & Governance	(7)	(7)	0	0
Resources	1,108	208	628	272
Corporate Costs & Levies	21	21	0	0
Appropriations	0	0	0	0
Financing	(130)	(500)	370	0
Total forecast	9,020	2,538	2,246	4,236
WG funding expected to end of Sep-21 but not included above	(3,916)		(1,057)	(2,859)

Pressure to be managed for the year based on current WG C-19 funding commitments	5,104	2,538	1,189	1,377
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- 3.5 The forecast comprises expected additional costs of £2.246m and income losses of £4.236m directly related to the impact of Covid-19 on the Council, alongside a forecast 2.538m forecast over spend on core Council service delivery.
- 3.6 It is important to note that the combined forecast overspend of £6.482m relating specifically to the Covid-19 impact is presented on a prudent basis in so much that it displays a worst case scenario that does not take into account any of the further Welsh Government Hardship funding anticipated to partially meet the additional costs or reimbursement of income losses that have equally resulted.
- 3.7 The Council can be reasonably assured based on continued dialogue with Welsh Government and their current funding commitments, that all Covid-19 associated cost pressures and income losses eligible to be met by the Welsh Government Covid-19 Hardship fund will be funded to the end of September 2021. This would represent further funding of circa £3.916m, meaning a risk that a forecast sum of £2.566m would potentially need to be met by core Council funding if, as expected, Covid-19 related costs and income losses continue during the second half of the financial year.

Table 2: Projected shortfall in income to fund Covid-19 pressures

	£000
Forecast expenditure directly attributable to Covid- 19 for 2021/22	2,246
Forecast shortfall in income due to Covid-19 impact for 2021/22	4,236
Total forecast pressure due to Covid-19 impact for 2021/22	6,482
Expected funding from WG Hardship fund to end of September 2021	(3,916)
Projected shortfall in funding to meet Covid-19 pressures	2,566

- 3.8 Whilst the Council is grateful for the funding commitments made to date by Welsh Government through the Covid-19 Hardship fund, it is imperative that the Council will look to make strong representations for further clarity on funding for the ongoing Covid-19 pressures post September 2021. As Covid-19 restrictions continue to ease some of these pressures are expected to fall away quickly, others will take some time to unwind and stabilise, whilst others will be of a more permanent nature brought about by strategic policy change enacted by Welsh Government.
- 3.9 The Council prudently set aside reserve funding at the end of 2019/20 and 2020/21 totalling £2.6m for specific Covid-19 related pressures which were yet to materialise, and in the event that funding commitments from Welsh Government fall short of meeting the additional expenditure and income losses incurred post September, this reserve funding will be available to mitigate the impact. Given the Councils comparatively low level of

reserve cover, and the financial challenges over the medium term and beyond, recourse to this funding should be seen as an absolute last resort after exhausting all other alternative possibilities. Therefore, it remains of critical importance that services manage budgets and expenditure tightly and take all opportunities to maximise income generation and bear down on cost. It is important that services do not become reliant upon WG support and develop strategies that allow them to emerge from the pandemic on a firm financial footing.

3.10 Just as importantly as managing the direct impacts of the pandemic on the Council, the wider and longer lasting indirect impact on Council services need to be considered, particularly in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional learning needs. There remains significant latent demand in these areas as a result of the ongoing societal impacts of the Covid-19 response and restrictions, and some of these impacts will take a significant period of time to unwind and the Council therefore needs to engage in careful discussions with Welsh Government around the management of this in the medium term. Alongside this Council services need to prepare to be adaptable and innovative in their response to these pressures materialising and not simply rely on traditional methods of mitigation or solely place reliance on further funding coming forward.

3.11 **Financial assessment of core service delivery**

3.12 As the Council continues to transition from the response phase of the pandemic it is important that Cabinet is kept informed as impacts are being assessed. The Council had already faced significant financial challenges in setting a balanced budget for 2021/22 and the pandemic has only accentuated the challenge. The budget round saw £10.3m of budget pressures accommodated, notably:

- In full, all pay and pension-related spending pressures in our schooling system;
- The increasing demand placed on children's social care services, adult social care and our children with additional learning needs budgets;
- Significant service pressures within the passenger transport unit and within recycling and waste and that look to ensure that the Council supports and sustains key service delivery;
- Investment that ensures that homeless people are provided adequate support, advice and accommodation in their time of need;
- An ongoing commitment to recognise and value the contribution made by the workforce and ensuring that local government staff are paid no less than the minimum wage set by the Living Wage Foundation. And that as a result of the Cabinet decision in January 2021 is also extended to apprenticeship roles within the Council.

3.13 Despite accommodating the above pressures into the 2021/22 budget, at month 2 there are already significant in year core service pressures forecast of £2.54m, with many of these pressures developing in the same key areas that have been provided additional support in the budget. The principal pressures are within the areas of:

- **Children’s services £1,127k** – Despite stabilisation in Children looked after numbers, new children have required high cost residential placements, as opposed to those leaving which have been more in the lower cost fostering/kinship/family placements. A recent legal case has also led to the need to pay kinship carers in line with foster carer rates, along with the increase in payment to foster carers due to increasing skills training.
- **Adults Services £536k** – largely as a result of additional carer recruitment to our in house care at home service, and increased care packages in the South of the County.
- **Transport & Passenger Transport Unit (PTU) £470k** - The cost of maintaining the authority’s fleet has exceeded available budget and within PTU pressures remain that continue to be worked on as part of the PTU review and where implementation has been impacted by the pandemic.
- **Additional Learning Needs £830k** – primarily due to a reduction in income from other LAs (£197k), additional support for pupils attending our own schools (£223k), and placement costs outside of our own schools (£373k).
- **Landlord services £158k** - a shortfall against additional commercial income targets as an indirect consequence of the impact of Covid-19 and the current level of market and economic uncertainty.

These pressures are in part mitigated by out-performance of budgeted Council tax collection of £500k and importantly the overall outturn position continues to be supported by £2.2m of identified eligible expenditure to be funded from capital receipts under the flexible use of capital receipts directive. Reliance on these mitigations is a short term measure only and is clearly not sustainable over the medium term.

- 3.14 As the financial year progresses there will inevitably be further forecast budget savings identified and added to the budget forecast to mitigate those pressures outlined above. **Appendix 2** provides an analysis of both the significant forecast pressures and savings already identified at month 2.
- 3.15 It is important to note that the majority of the savings identified during the year to assist the in-year budget recovery are one-off savings and will not bring any further benefit to future year’s budgets. Conversely, the majority of those pressures highlighted above are recurrent pressures and will need to be considered as part of the wider budget process for 2022/23 and beyond.
- 3.16 As we look to the remainder of the financial year, the key financial risk and uncertainty continues to be the amount of compensatory Welsh Government funding that the Council will receive for Covid-19 pressures. However, alongside this the outcome of pay negotiations for both teaching and non-teaching staff are awaited and will present a further pressure if pay awards are over and above the 1% budgeted for. Current indications are that we will see at the very least a 1.75% increase in pay for teachers with effect from September 2021 and a full year effect of at least a 1.5% increase in non-teaching staff. Welsh Government have been clear that no compensating funding is anticipated and given

that the Minister confirmed via the final settlement that this already took into account any subsequent pay award.

3.17 To that end the Senior Leadership Team will immediately look to implement a budget recovery plan recognising the risk that targeted and planned cost reductions will be challenging in the current operating environment and given that the Council will as always look to minimise impact on service delivery. As such, the early implementation of the recovery plan will be critical in enabling the Council to reduce the overall forecast deficit especially in light of the challenging budgetary position it finds itself in leading into 2022/23.

3.18 Progress against mandated savings

3.19 The 2021/22 budget included mandated savings totalling £4.734m and the progress against these is summarised in **table 3** below and in more detail in **appendix 3**.

Table 3: Progress against mandated savings

Directorate	2021/22 Budgeted Savings £0	Saving achieved £0	Delayed Savings £0	Savings Unachievable £0	% Achieved
Children & Young People	(1,510)	(1,313)	(197)	0	87%
Social Care & Health	(874)	(874)	0	0	100%
Enterprise	(821)	(821)	0	0	100%
Monlife	(100)	(80)	0	(20)	80%
Resources	(165)	(165)	0	0	100%
Chief Executives Unit	(32)	(20)	(12)	0	63%
Corporate Costs & Levies	(1,508)	(1,508)	0	0	100%
Appropriations	275	275	0	0	100%
Total	(4,734)	(4,506)	(209)	(20)	95%

3.20 It is pleasing to note the forecast 95% delivery of mandated savings, especially in light of the ongoing challenges faced by services in the current operating conditions. Finance officers will continue to work with services to ensure that these savings are fully delivered as the year progresses and to look at options for delivering on savings indicated as delayed.

3.21 School balances

3.22 From a financial perspective, 2020/21 was an unprecedented year for schools who received several significant Welsh Government grants to support them and their pupils during a period of significant disruption to learning, and alongside this sustained periods of enforced closure during the financial year resulted in spending on core budgets being significantly curtailed. This resulted in the majority of schools bringing forward significant surplus balances into the 2021/22 financial year.

3.23 The Authority required schools carrying significant surplus balances that were above levels guided by Welsh Government (£50k for a Primary, £100k for a Secondary) to provide investment plans setting out how they intended to spend the significant balances being held. These plans have subsequently been completed and assessed and has informed the budget monitoring process for month 2, with schools forecasting to draw on £1.782m of balances during the year, as shown in **table 4** below.

Table 4: Forecast movement school balances for 2021/22

Draft Council Fund Outturn 2021/22 – School Balances Summary outturn position at Month 2	Opening Reserves (Surplus) / Deficit Position 2021/22 £000's	Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 2 £'000	Forecast Reserve Balances at 2021/22 Outturn £'000
Cluster			
Abergavenny	(1,158)	309	(849)
Caldicot	(1,091)	539	(552)
Chepstow	(349)	516	167
Monmouth	(794)	457	(338)
Special	(26)	(39)	(65)
Total	(3,418)	1,782	(1,636)

3.24 Irrespective of the significant one-off funding given to schools at the end of 2020/21, it is clear that the inherent structural budget deficits that have led to a significant number of schools being in deficit over the past few years remain and these will require resolution regardless. It is expected that the additional funding made available to those schools will allow a period of transition and as to allow those underlying budgetary issues to be rectified without impacting on educational standards.

3.25 Capital outturn forecast

3.26 The capital expenditure outturn detailed in **appendix 1** shows a balanced budget with currently no under or over spends being forecast mainly due to expenditure plans still needing to be refined given the early stage in the financial year. Given the significant budget of £79.2m there is clearly a risk of slippage in the programme as the year progresses. This risk is enhanced by a change in Senior Management positions within the Property Management structure and continuing delays in contracting work due to Covid-19 restrictions which are expected to have an impact on investment plans during the year, however this will take some time to become apparent.

3.27 The forecast movement in capital receipts balances for the year is shown below. Whilst overall balances on the face of it are healthy, there remains the risk that forecast receipts

for 2022/23 onwards are at comparatively low levels, and combined with the fact that receipts are continuing to be used to subsidise the revenue budget through capitalisation direction means that the scope for further capital investment will be limited.

Table 5: Forecast movement in capital receipt balances

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Balance as at 1st April	9,581	15,550	15,162	14,076	12,989
Capital receipts used for financing	(2,059)	(684)	(684)	(684)	(684)
Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(2,208)	(2,208)	(507)	(507)	(507)
Capital receipts Received or Forecast	10,236	2,504	104	104	104
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	15,550	15,162	14,076	12,989	11,902

4 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the current financial situation and the challenges facing the Council now and over the medium term. It has been prepared at a time of great uncertainty as the Council still transitions from the emergency response phase of the Covid-19 pandemic towards a period of recovery.
- 4.1 The outturn forecast that has been prepared for consideration is predicated on assumptions that have been independently assessed by budget holders and subsequently reviewed as part of the budget monitoring process. These assumptions don't look to represent a policy position that Cabinet is looking to take on when services are re-opening, either fully or in a more limited capacity, or how services are looking to respond to the changing demands. Rather they represent a reasoned assessment of the impact on services in year based on known information, anticipated future changes and estimates.
- 4.2 By far the greatest uncertainty that exists is the level of Welsh Government funding to be received to offset additional costs incurred in responding to the Covid-19 emergency response and the significant income losses that have resulted where services have ceased as a result of the lockdown restrictions in place. Current funding commitments from Welsh Government are due end in September 2021 and the council will continue to will look to make strong representations for further clarity on funding for the ongoing Covid-19 pressures for the remainder of the financial year.

5 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 This forecast outturn report represents an assessment of the forecast for the 2021/22 financial year based on only two months of data. More so than ever the combination of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the fact that it is only part way through the financial year, and combined with the uncertainties on the level of Welsh Government funding support, means that a level of risk uncertainty should be attributed to the forecast.

- 5.2 There is an increased level of comfort that Welsh Government funding will meet additional costs and losses of income brought about by the response to and the impact of the pandemic to the end of September 2021. However, this continues to represent a risk that will only be mitigated by monthly and quarterly submissions to Welsh Government being agreed. And furthermore and beyond those impacts resulting from Covid-19 there exists a number of significant cost pressures that need to be managed regardless.
- 5.3 The Council has traditionally maintained formal reporting to Cabinet at month 2, month 5 and outturn, with more frequent budget monitoring information being undertaken at a departmental level and reported to management and the Strategic Leadership Team. More regular formal reporting to Cabinet is considered necessary only where circumstances necessitate it. Therefore, and as a result of the continuing significant financial challenges facing the Council as a result of the pandemic, there will be more frequent reporting of the in-year revenue and capital outturn forecast. Formal reporting will take place at months 2, 5, 7, 9 and outturn. There will be no formal reporting of the month 11 outturn forecast as the financial year-end will have already taken place by the time the report has been prepared.
- 5.4 The update of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and the development of the budget proposals for 2022/23 and the medium term are expected to be significantly challenging. There remains funding uncertainty given that the UK Government has only undertaken a one-year Comprehensive Spending Review which consequently does not enable Welsh Government to provide any additional certainty around indicative budget settlements for Welsh local authorities in future years.
- 5.5 The Council will also need to consider the wider and longer lasting indirect impact on Council services, particularly in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional learning needs. There remains significant latent demand in these areas as a result of the ongoing societal impacts of the Covid-19 response and restrictions, and some of these impacts will take a significant period of time to unwind and the Council therefore needs to engage in careful discussions with Welsh Government around the management of this in the medium term.

6 REASONS:

- 6.1 To ensure that the gravity of the financial challenges facing the Council are understood and that reasonable actions are being taken to safeguard the ongoing financial sustainability of the Council.
- 6.2 To provide a timely update on the current financial circumstances and challenges resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and that will in turn lead to the Council needing to plan and plot a revised course to ensure it remains financially sustainable into the future.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The resource implications of the current in-year forecast outturn are contained in this report and the attached appendices. At its worst the forecast outturn exhibits an over spend of £9.02m. However Welsh Government Covid-19 support funding is expected to cover a significant amount of this although it remains unclear as to how far that will extend.

- 7.2 The financial challenges facing the Council and resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic are significant in the current year and will undoubtedly be a feature of the next 4 years of the MTFP. Not just for this Council but all councils across Wales and the UK. The Council is having to incur significant costs in its response effort and this will continue as it transitions towards recovery. Furthermore and resulting from the restrictions that UK Government and Welsh Government have had to put in place to contain the spread of the virus we are suffering significant shortfalls in our income levels. Some of these will return more quickly than others as services are able to be safely turned back on.
- 7.3 In terms of how the Council will respond to the challenges faced in the current year and over the medium term this will very much depend on the level of compensating funding received from Welsh Government and the flexibilities afforded to Welsh local authorities to spread the impact over more than one financial year.
- 7.4 The Council is working on the basis that it will be fully funded by Welsh Government. However, there is clearly a risk that this will not happen and beyond this there are significant non Covid-19 pressures being managed.
- 7.5 The more immediate step will be to engage a budget recovery plan recognising the risk that targeted and planned cost reductions will be challenging in the current operating environment and given that the Council will as always look to minimise impact on service delivery. As such, the early implementation of the recovery plan will be critical in enabling the Council to reduce the overall forecast deficit especially in light of the challenging budgetary position it finds itself in leading into 2022/23.
- 7.6 There are resultant consequences for the MTFP and the budget process for 2022/23 and these will be developed in parallel and feed into the normal budget cycle and process.

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

- 8.1 This report provides Members with information on the forecast revenue and capital outturn position of the Authority and carries no decisions. There are therefore no equality of future generations' implications directly arising from this report.
- 8.2 Any such impacts will be fully considered subsequently when Council receives details the budget recovery plan and revised budget proposals.

9 CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Detailed revenue and capital forecast outturn statement – month 2

Appendix 2 – Service variance analysis

Appendix 3 – Progress against budgeted savings

Appendix 4 – Capital external financing budget revisions

Appendix 5 – Select Committee summary

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SCOMM SELECT

Overall Revenue Position

Table 1: Council Fund 2021/22 Outturn Forecast Summary Statement at Month 2

Service Area	Original Budget 2021/22	Budget Adjustments Months 1-2	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M2
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	52,825	(182)	52,643	54,308	1,665
Children & Young People	56,526	23	56,549	57,381	832
Enterprise	21,852	(206)	21,646	24,115	2,469
MonLife	3,951	17	3,968	6,978	3,010
Chief Executives Unit	2,745	(105)	2,640	2,692	52
People & Governance	3,359	(11)	3,348	3,341	(7)
Resources	7,457	(453)	7,004	8,112	1,108
Corporate Costs & Levies	23,415	823	24,238	24,259	21
Net Cost of Services	172,130	(94)	172,036	181,186	9,150
Appropriations	5,836	94	5,930	5,930	0
Expenditure to be Financed	177,966	0	177,966	187,116	9,150
Financing	(177,966)	0	(177,966)	(178,096)	(130)
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	9,020	9,020

Table 2: Council Fund 2021/22 Outturn Forecast Detailed Statement at Month 2

Service Area	Original Budget 2021/22	Budget Adjustments Months 1-2	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M2
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Adult Services	8,341	(34)	8,307	8,596	289
Children Services	16,147	(138)	16,009	17,136	1,127
Community Care	24,386	(73)	24,313	24,711	398
Commissioning	1,431	(2)	1,429	1,295	(134)
Partnerships	436	0	436	436	0
Public Protection	1,524	18	1,542	1,543	1
Resources & Performance	560	47	607	591	(16)
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	52,825	(182)	52,643	54,308	1,665

Service Area	Original Budget 2021/22	Budget Adjustments Months 1-2	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M2
Individual Schools Budget	46,488	43	46,531	46,531	0
Resources	1,167	(21)	1,146	1,149	3
Standards	8,871	1	8,872	9,701	829
Children & Young People	56,526	23	56,549	57,381	832
Enterprise & Community Animation	2,837	72	2,909	4,052	1,143
Facilities & Fleet Management	5,487	(54)	5,433	5,984	551
Neighbourhood Services	11,233	(180)	11,053	11,398	345
Placemaking, Highways & Flood	2,295	(44)	2,251	2,681	430
Enterprise	21,852	(206)	21,646	24,115	2,469
Countryside & Culture	1,422	0	1,422	1,476	54
Finance & Business Development	1,735	(1)	1,734	1,734	0
Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure	794	18	812	3,768	2,956
MonLife	3,951	17	3,968	6,978	3,010
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service	2,745	(105)	2,640	2,692	52
Chief Executives	2,745	(105)	2,640	2,692	52
People & Governance	3,359	(11)	3,348	3,341	(7)
People & Governance	3,359	(11)	3,348	3,341	(7)
Finance	3,526	(130)	3,396	4,152	756
Information, Communication Technology	3,136	(387)	2,749	2,749	0
Commercial & Corporate Landlord	795	64	859	1,211	352
Resources	7,457	(453)	7,004	8,112	1,108
Precepts & Levies	21,362	0	21,362	21,375	13
Coroner's	147	0	147	147	0
Archives	182	0	182	182	0
Corporate Management	339	0	339	315	(24)
Non Distributed Costs (NDC)	643	0	643	675	32
Strategic Initiatives	(836)	823	(13)	(13)	0
Insurance	1,578	0	1,578	1,578	0
Corporate Costs & Levies	23,415	823	24,238	24,259	21

Service Area	Original Budget 2021/22	Budget Adjustments Months 1-2	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ M2
Net Cost of Services	172,130	(94)	172,036	181,186	9,150
Fixed Asset Disposal Costs	30	0	30	30	0
Interest & Investment Income	(134)	0	(134)	(134)	0
Interest Payable & Similar Charges	3,736	0	3,736	3,736	0
Charges Required under Regulation	6,404	0	6,404	6,404	0
Other Investment Income	0	0	0	0	0
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	(3,619)	0	(3,619)	(3,619)	0
Contributions to Reserves	163	0	163	163	0
Contributions from reserves	(744)	94	(650)	(650)	0
Appropriations	5,836	94	5,930	5,930	0
Expenditure to be Financed	177,966	0	177,966	187,116	9,150
General Government Grants	(69,465)	0	(69,465)	(69,465)	0
Non Domestic Rates	(32,017)	0	(32,017)	(32,017)	0
Council tax	(83,636)	0	(83,636)	(84,136)	(500)
Council Tax Benefit Support	7,152	0	7,152	7,522	370
Financing	(177,966)	0	(177,966)	(178,096)	(130)
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	9,020	9,020

DIRECTORATE – DIVISION VARIANCE COMMENTS

ENTERPRISE	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	2,470	0	0	0	

ENTERPRISE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The Enterprise Directorate is forecasting a £2.47m adverse variance at month 2. The impacts of COVID are still having a pronounced effect upon the services provided within Enterprise along with increased demand for services across the portfolio. Both a projected loss of income and additional costs incurred continue to feature at this time and are currently forecast at £2.2m.

Each service area sets out the detail behind these projections within the next sections of the report and the key financial issues, risks and implications are described.

Across all Service Area's we are looking to ensure that all eligible additional costs and income losses will be claimed against any Welsh Government funding being made available.

FACILITIES & FLEET MANAGEMENT

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	551	0	0	0	0

Facilities & Fleet management are forecasting a £551k overspend, due to :-

- **Schools Catering** - £81k overspend, covid restrictions are impacting on meal uptake and current levels are 30% of 19-20 numbers, this is affecting turnover. We will be claiming the lost income from the WG income loss fund upto end of September, we are hopeful that restrictions will be eased in the new academic year and uptake will improve.
- **Building Cleaning** - £25k overspend – the requirement to replace and repair essential equipment has pushed the supplies budget overspent. The unit will look to mitigate this as we go through the year.
- **Passenger Transport** – £181k overspend :-
 - **Home to School Transport** - The section is forecasting to overspend by £69k due to an increase in vehicle finance costs of £57k (due to the need to upgrade ageing vehicles to ensure they remain safe and efficient) along with increased staffing costs.
 - **External Commissioning** - The section is forecasting to overspend by £74k due to lower than anticipated income from concessionary and post 16 fares of £31k and increased contract prices.
 - **Private Hire** - The section is forecasting a deficit in private hire income of £38k due to a reduction in external school contracts from September.

Fleet Maintenance - £263k overspend – The cost of maintaining the authority's fleet has exceeded available budget, current forecasts predict a £256k shortfall. In addition the number of members of the car salary sacrifice scheme have reduced meaning savings are below budgeted levels by £6k

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	346	0	0	0	0

Neighbourhood Services are forecasting to overspend by £346k, this is due to :-

- **Highways, Swtra & Streetlighting** – Break-even budget reported.
- **Waste & Street Scene** - £346k overspend – this is due to additional staffing and vehicles required in waste to ensure we adhere to social distancing guidelines, it is anticipated that these costs will be covered by WG Covid-19 grant.

PLACEMAKING, HIGHWAYS & FLOOD

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	576	0	0	0	0

Highways & Flood is forecasting to overspend by £576k, this is as a result of :-

- **Car Parks** - £719k overspend – Covid-19 restrictions are impacting on parking and enforcement income and early indications are that we will could see a pressure of £670k in 21-22 - in addition there are overspends in expenditure primarily transport, premises & software costs. We will be claiming back part of the lost income from WG grant but if support ends in September, there could be a shortfall of £359k that will need to be managed.
- **Highways dev & flooding** - £143k underspend – Staffing underspend and improved income

CHIEF EXECUTIVES UNIT	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	52	0	0	0	

CEO DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The Policy, Scrutiny and Customer Experience division is forecasting a £52K overspend. This is partly due to the inability to deliver income targets in community hubs, which include the library service in all towns and Usk Post Office. The over spend has been partly offset by posts which have been held vacant during the pandemic but which need to be filled to maintain the service as we re-open. The contact centre is also forecasting an overspend resulting from the need to bring in temporary staff to cope with a sustained increase in phone calls, primarily dealing with a high volume of enquiries for waste and recycling, and in particular HWRC bookings. Community Education is presently forecasting a break-even position. However, there remains a high degree of uncertainty in this area as grant provider may require clawback of income as the service has been unable to achieve learner targets due to the pandemic.

POLICY, SCRUTINY & CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	52	0	0	0	0

Policy, Scrutiny & Customer service is forecasting a £52k overspend, mainly due to :-

- **Community Hubs** - £21k overspend – shortfall in income due to unachievable income budgets.
- **Contact Centre** - £7k overspend – Increase in staff costs to cope with increase in customer demand.
- **Corporate CEO** - £9k overspend – due to inability to meet staff vacancy factor saving and an increase in license costs.

SLT Support - £12k overspend – staff costs have exceeded available budget due to an increase in hours within the team.

PEOPLE & GOVERNANCE	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(7)	0	0	0	

People & Governance DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

People & Governance is reporting a £7k underspend, this is due to :-

- £4k overspend in **Democratic services** due to the inability to make staff vacancy savings.
- £11k underspend in **Land Charges** – this is due to staff savings from a vacant post.

All other services are reporting break-even.

RESOURCES	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	1,080	0	0	0	

RESOURCES DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The Resources Directorate is showing signs of early budget pressure. Departments will now redouble their efforts to reduce or contain pressures and to identify cost savings that can be achieved by ceasing non-essential spend and where this is practicable and does not have an unacceptable impact on core service delivery.

The pressures across the directorate of £1.107m are represented by:

- £207k of non-COVID net pressure and notably relate to income losses in markets; anticipated early projections on B&B housing benefit claims that cannot be recovered via housing benefit subsidy or through Welsh Government's COVID Hardship Fund; offset by staff vacancies caused by a delay in restructure proposals being implemented.

- b) Full year forecast pressures of £900k relating to COVID and that have previously been recovered in full from Welsh Government's COVID Hardship Fund. £628k of this relates to cost pressures relating to B&B housing benefit claims that cannot be recovered via DWP and the housing benefit subsidy mechanism. The remaining £272k relates to income losses relating to COVID and that relate to income losses in relation to investment properties, markets and summons income.

The risk relates to Welsh Government not bringing further funding forward post 30th September, and where funding commitments currently extend to, to meet anticipated pressures contained in b) above and that relate to the last six months of 2021/22 and beyond. In a worst-case situation this could result in £392k of pressures not funded by Welsh Government. And that when added to the £207k forecast non-COVID pressures above would represent a £599k pressure to be managed in year.

FINANCE

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	756	0	0	0	0

Finance is forecasting to overspend by £756k, this is due to :-

- **Revenues** - £888k overspend, this is due in the main to :-
 - **Housing Benefits** - £756k overspend - It is too early in the financial year to provide an accurate forecast for this volatile budget. What is clear is that the budget pressure that emerged last year through the pandemic remains. £627k of this can be linked to Homeless B&B placements made as a result of the Covid-19 crisis (for which we are unable to claim Housing Benefit subsidy) e. We are able to claim some of these costs back through Welsh Government's hardship scheme. However currently this scheme only runs until September 2021, with no certainty of funding for the second half of the financial year so there could be a £314k pressure here to be managed post September. The remaining £128k over spend relates to a £55k increase in the bad debt provision (likely to improve as the year progresses) and £73k resulting from a general increase in caseloads and awards made.
 - **Council Tax** - £146k overspend – This is due to a £60k over spend against salary costs caused by the movement of budget to Finance as part of Resources restructure (this has been offset by a corresponding underspend within Finance). Also, a £79k anticipated shortfall in summons income. We are still awaiting confirmation of court dates for this year and therefore it is currently unclear how much we will be able to recover/process this way. Last year we received funding from Welsh Government to offset some of this lost income. However, it is unclear whether this funding will also be available into 2021/22.
 - **Debtors and Charity relief** - £13k underspend – mainly due to staff savings in debtors and grant income from Welsh Government for the ongoing administration of Business Support Grants.
- **Finance** - £122k underspend – This is a result of senior management vacancies, we are anticipating that these positions will be filled from September.
- **Systems & Cashiers** – a net £11k underspend – we have seen an over spend in Cashiers, our budget includes a £20k saving that was brought in for the implementation of a scheme to remove cheques from the authority's day –to--day business. The roll-out of the new system has been delayed due to the covid-19 pandemic so we have incurred a budget pressure. In addition, we have seen a £6k increase in card handling fees as more people are paying online for services. This has been offset by a £37k underspend in Revenues & Systems Support due to savings in systems development.
- **Payroll Systems & Support** – On Budget

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	0

ICT is forecasting a break-even budget.

COMMERCIAL & CORPORATE LANDLORD

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	352	0	0	0	0

Commercial & Corporate Landlord is forecasting to overspend by £352k :-

- **Investment Properties** - £50k overspend. Newport Leisure Park is forecasting to return a £350k surplus but this is £50k below budgeted level, the shortfall can be attributed to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Castlegate Business Park is reporting a break-even position.
- **Landlord Services** - £97k overspend. This is due to an estimated £142k shortfall in income as we have lost rental income of £77k from the vacant spaces in our Magor office and a £65k loss of service charge, in addition there is a £14k overspend in supplies & services. This has been offset by a £51k saving in staff costs due to vacant posts only being filled part way through the year. We are anticipating that some of the lost income can be claimed via the WG through the income loss grant scheme, but this will only be to September so there will be a pressure to manage later in the year.
- **Markets** - £205k overspend. This is due to an increase in waste disposal costs (£35k) and a forecast shortfall in income of £170k, this has been caused by 2 things, reduced charges due to disruption caused by Market Hall refurbishment (£92k) and reduced numbers of stalls imposed by Covid-19 restrictions (£78k). An element of lost income due to Covid-19 can be reclaimed up to end of September.
- All other services are reporting a break-even position.

CORPORATE COSTS & LEVIES	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	21	0	0	0	

PRECEPTS & LEVIES

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	13	0	0	0	

National parks levy notified after budget produced - increase in levy of circa 10% based on increased staff and project work required

CORONERS SERVICES

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(24)	0	0	0	

Small unbudgeted surpluses on Creditors refunds, apprenticeship levy

NON DISTRIBUTED COSTS

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	32	0	0	0	

Additional pension strain costs notified since the budget has been set

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

INSURANCE

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

APPROPRIATIONS	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

FIXED ASSET DISPOSAL COSTS

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

INTEREST & INVESTMENT INCOME

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

INTEREST PAYABLE & SIMILAR CHARGES

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

CHARGES REQUIRED UNDER REGULATION

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

OTHER INVESTMENT INCOME

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

BORROWING COST RECOUPMENT

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0	

No variance at month 2

FINANCING	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(130)	0	0	0	

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT SUPPORT

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	370	0	0	0	

As with the last financial year this budget is under particular pressure as a direct result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Late last financial year, the Welsh Government agreed funding to cover the majority of these additional costs. However, we have yet to receive confirmation of similar support for this year.

COUNCIL TAX

Outturn Forecast	Month 2	Month 5	Month 7	Month 9	Outturn
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(500)	0	0	0	

Currently the overall position for council tax income looks healthy. We continue to see new properties being added to the tax base, a review of exemptions and discounts has seen a drop in the number awarded and despite Covid-19 collection rates remain relatively strong. The position will be monitored closely, especially the potential impact of court availability which may affect recovery in later months.

2. SCHOOLS

- 2.1. A Board of Governors who are responsible for managing the school's finances directly governs each of the Authority's Schools. However, the Authority also holds a key responsibility for monitoring the overall financial performance of schools. Below is a table showing the outturn forecast Schools' balances position based on month 2 projections for each Educational Cluster.

Draft Council Fund Outturn 2021/22 – School Balances Summary outturn position at Month 2	(A) Opening Reserves (Surplus) / Deficit Position 2021/22	(B) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 2	(C) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 5	(D) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 7	(E) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Month 9	(A+B) Forecast Reserve Balances at 2021/22 Outturn
Cluster	£000's	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Abergavenny	(1,158)	309				(849)
Caldicot	(1,091)	539				(552)
Chepstow	(349)	516				167
Monmouth	(794)	457				(338)
Special	(26)	(39)				(65)
Total	(3,418)	1,782				(1,636)

- 2.2. Collective School Balances at the beginning of the financial year amounted to a £3,418,120 surplus. The Schools month 2 forecast anticipated draw on reserves is £1,781,648, which results in a forecast surplus balance of £1,636,472. (The majority of the surplus balance brought forward is due to two grants being awarded to schools at 2020/21 year end; the Schools Revenue Maintenance Grant and Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards).
- 2.3. The movement of individual schools forecast to be in deficit since the start of the financial year is shown below:

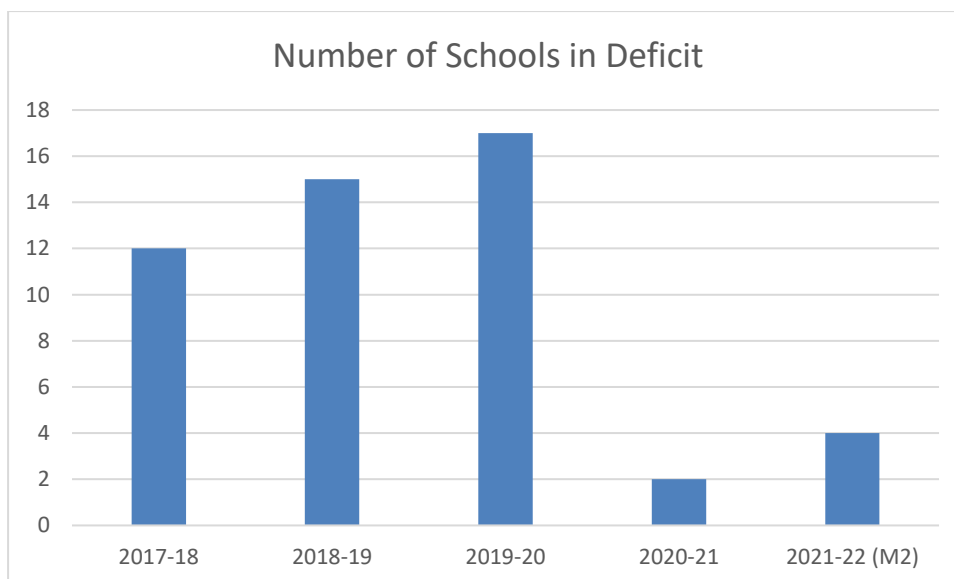
Start of year	Month 2 (Forecast)
2	4
Chepstow Comprehensive	Chepstow Comprehensive
Llandogo Primary	Llandogo Primary
	Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni
	Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin

- 2.4. All schools in a deficit budget have, or are in the process of agreeing recovery plans. These recovery plans will be confirmed with both the Local Education Authority and each School's Governing Body. Once finalised the schools with significant deficits will be monitored by the Cabinet member for Children and Young People and Resources on a termly basis.

2.5. Total schools balances have been exhibiting a fluctuating trend with some schools showing a continuing reduction in schools balances, which is of concern, and others a more balanced trend. However, as previously advised, grants awarded to schools at 2020/21 year end has resulted in a large increase in school balances.

Financial Year-end	Net level of School Balances
2014-15	(1,140)
2015-16	(1,156)
2016-17	(269)
2017-18	(175)
2018-19	232
2019-20	435
2020-21	(3,418)
2021-22 (Forecast)	(1,636)

2.6. The increase in school balances has resulted in a reduction in the number of schools in deficit, as illustrated in the following table:-



3 CAPITAL OUTTURN

3.1 The summary forecast Capital position at Month 2 is as follows:

Forecast Capital Outturn Position 2021/22 at Month 2

Select Portfolio	Slippage B/F	Original Budget	Budget Adjustments	Provisional Slippage	Revised Budget 2021/22	Forecast	Variance
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Expenditure							
Children & Young People	15,381	14,423	1,261	0	31,065	31,065	0
Economic & Development	19,244	546	606	0	20,396	20,396	0
Adult	5,964	0	0	0	5,964	5,964	0
Strong Communities	8,554	11,545	1,708	0	21,807	21,807	0
Total Expenditure	49,143	26,514	3,575	0	79,232	79,232	0
Financing							
Supported Borrowing	0	(2,431)	0	0	(2,431)	(2,431)	0
General Capital Grant	0	(2,438)	0	0	(2,438)	(2,438)	0
Grants and Contributions	(19,096)	(13,160)	(3,575)	0	(35,831)	(35,831)	0
S106 Contributions	(711)	0	0	0	(711)	(711)	0
Unsupported Borrowing	(27,031)	(4,094)	0	0	(31,125)	(31,125)	0
Earmarked Reserve & Revenue Funding	(241)	0	0	0	(241)	(241)	0
Capital Receipts	(2,064)	(2,891)	0	0	(4,955)	(4,955)	0
Leasing	0	(1,500)	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	0
Total Financing	(49,143)	(26,514)	(3,575)	0	(79,232)	(79,232)	0

3.2 The capital expenditure forecast outturn at month 2 shows a balanced budget as currently no under or over spends are being forecast mainly due to expenditure plans still needing to be refined given the early stage in the financial year. A change in Senior Management positions within the Property Management structure and continuing delays in contracting work due to Covid-19 restrictions are expected to have an impact during the year, however this will take some time to become clear.

3.3 Useable Capital Receipts Available

3.4 In the table below, the effect of the changes to the forecast capital receipts on the useable capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments are illustrated.

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
£000	£000	£000	£000	£000

Balance as at 1st April	9,581	15,550	15,162	14,076	12,989
Capital receipts used for financing	(2,059)	(684)	(684)	(684)	(684)
Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(2,208)	(2,208)	(507)	(507)	(507)
Capital receipts Received or Forecast	10,236	2,504	104	104	104
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	15,550	15,162	14,076	12,989	11,902

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Strong Communities Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Thursday, 29th July, 2021 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor S. Woodhouse (Chairman)
County Councillor A. Webb (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: A. Easson, C. Edwards, V. Smith and J. Treharne,

Officers in Attendance

Frances O'Brien, Chief Officer, Enterprise
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Emma Davies, Performance Officer
Jonathan Davies, Acting Assistant Head of Finance
Mark Hand, Head of Place-making, Housing, Highways and Flood
Carl Touhig, Head of Neighbourhood Services
Stacey Jones, Senior Accountant

APOLOGIES: County Councillor P. Clarke

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Open Public Forum

A submission was received from one of the community councils regarding joint working between Monmouthshire County Council and National Resources Wales, and water pumps, but unfortunately too late for it to be sent to officers for their response today – there needs to be 3 clear working days between the submission and the meeting. Officers will read the submission and provide the appropriate response outside this meeting. Members will be included in the response.

3. Performance Reporting

Emma Davies presented the report and answered the members' questions with Carl Touhig and Frances O'Brien.

Challenge:

We have a Progress Evaluation of 3, which is 'adequate' – what is the top rating possible?

Ratings range from 1-6, with 6 being 'excellent', where all performance measures have achieved the targets set, and all actions have been delivered. Reaching 6 is possible, and therefore a potential aim.

How are we faring with recycling?

Last year we achieved 68.4% recycling, which is 4.4% ahead of the target. The re-use shops in Llanfoist and Five Lanes are now open and doing very well. Re-use is growing in the county and is making an improvement in keeping materials separate when people use the sites.

Newport City Council have received a national award for their recycling centres – were we in the running for this?

We didn't put ourselves forward for any awards this year due to the resources in the team, and trying to keep the services running. We focussed on getting shops open and applying for bids. We also started the Library Of Things and Repair Cafes this year, so didn't have the capacity to also apply for awards.

On p12, the report mentions the percentage of roads in poor condition, which is always a concern for the public. How are the percentages qualified/measured?

This is one of our national performance indicators, so there is a range of areas included that are stipulated to us.

How are we measuring the council's reduction in carbon emissions?

There are no officers from MonLife in this meeting so we will request that the Green Infrastructure team provides a response to members after the meeting.

The My Monmouthshire app is brilliant. Can we follow up on the reports we put on there, if work hasn't been done?

We are currently seeing an unprecedented demand coming through all channels: call centre, My Monmouthshire, letters, etc. The volume of enquiries has been phenomenal. We are going to undertake a review of that with the Digital Programme Office as we are finding that people are coming to us through lots of different mechanisms, and we are struggling to respond to all of them or close them down. The mechanism for providing closure and feedback in My Monmouthshire needs to be improved. We will pick a few key areas relevant to the Strong Communities portfolio such as Highways and Waste to see if we can start to improve that communication and customer engagement.

There is a reference to new working arrangements – do we have any feedback on that?

Chief Officer for People & Governance, Matt Phillips, is overseeing this project, which we are still working through. Staff engagement sessions are ongoing to feed into that process. In the forthcoming period, we will test out different places and spaces, and how we can work in a different way. We are thinking about how we can have collaborative working spaces, project-working spaces. Our workers fall into different categories: 'on the go' workers who aren't fixed in one location, fixed workers who are place-based, and 'anywhere' workers. These all need to feature in how we operate in the future. The work is ongoing but not yet concluded.

Regarding communication with community and town councils, is there a specific officer dedicated to dealing with concerns?

It might be useful if a committee member were part of those conversations – it would be valuable to have that input as we review and refresh how customer engagement works.

Do our staff sickness figures include Covid-related issues – isolation days etc.?

Sickness recorded for Covid-19 has only been for associated illness, so not due to shielding or non-symptomatic absences e.g. self-isolating.

If shielding isn't included in the sickness figures, how do we relate that to work performance?

We don't know at this time what the HR mechanism has been for recording shielding information but can check and feed back to the member after the meeting. Coronavirus strategy is being considered in September, so this matter can be discussed in that context too.

Chair's Summary:

Councillor Webb volunteered to be the member representative to community and town councils.

This report has been brought to the committee in order for us to consider the Council's progress in meeting its five priority goals as set out in our Corporate Plan. We recognise that the pandemic has led to some delays on projects and some work having been paused temporarily, as the Council focussed its attention on delivering key services in challenging times. We developed a Coronavirus Strategy that was adopted by the cabinet and has ensured that activities have been focussed and coordinated. This committee will consider a detailed analysis of the Council's response to the pandemic and the lessons learnt that will shape our future service delivery at our next meeting on 30th September. Thank you to Emma for preparing this report. Unless there are any specific recommendations members wish to make, I am content that the committee is satisfied with the performance of the services that fall within our remit.

4. Budget Monitoring

Jonathan Davies presented the report and answered the members' questions with Stacey Jones, Frances O'Brien, and Mark Hand.

Challenge:

Besides Audit Manager (shared with Newport), are there other areas that we share with other councils?

Yes, there are several examples of shared service arrangements throughout the authority. The most recent example is the decision to amalgamate with Cardiff Council's procurement service. If there is a benefit to be had then we explore the possibility. When we collaborate with other councils or bodies we are able to capitalise that cost, allowing us to meet the costs from capital resources, rather than burdening the revenue account. We're looking to do this for procurement for the current financial year: £208k pressure that would have been in the revenue budget is being capitalised.

Does the collaboration with Cardiff on procurement include shared salaries?

That included a transfer of the service and secondment of officers to Cardiff. We would then pay a fee for that service, effectively. So, in effect, we pay the salary but through a fee arrangement rather than directly.

Passenger transport unit and civil parking enforcement: has the new scheme of civil parking started, and will the pressures be resolved in the coming years?

The PTU service has a number of pressures. We've seen increased maintenance costs, additional staffing costs, increased pupil numbers requiring transport, etc. The modelling of those numbers is very complex in terms of applications coming in for home to school transport each year. We often get late applications and it is difficult for us to predict where pupils will go. We're looking at putting a recovery plan in place for PTU for next year; last year we received a substantial amount of Welsh Government funding that helped mitigate some of the issues in the services, but they still exist. We're looking at the current staffing structure and doing a comparison between internal and external operations to see if there is any leeway there for reducing costs. But they mainly relate to fluctuations in numbers – when we receive the new numbers in September, the direction we need to take will be clearer, and there will be another review.

Civil parking enforcement has been in place for just under two years but between staff vacancies, sickness and the pandemic, we have probably only had about three months of full activity. There's currently a shortfall in income against the target; we have started a review to ascertain whether the target is realistic in the first place. We weren't enforcing during the flood events and staff were redeployed during the pandemic, so we're only now getting the service bedded in. This will be an area for the committee to watch as we move along, and we can report back in the coming year.

Have our private contracts been affected?

Yes, we've reduced our private hire because of Covid. We are now starting to get back into the private hire market and getting jobs in on that end. Hopefully, as the year goes on, income will steadily progress. We need to ensure that we have the staffing structure to deliver our core services, i.e. children to school, and the first point of call will be picking up swimming lessons once they start again. We will watch the market very closely and develop our service to match the needs and produce income from private hire as it does offset our overall costs.

Could there be further training in reading accounts, and perhaps members could suggest ways of phrasing things, etc.?

Officers will consider this and get back to the committee.

Chair's Summary:

We thank the officers for a detailed report on the revenue and capital outturn position and we are grateful for the concise explanation of the key budgetary issues in the service areas that fall within our remit. We recognise that reports need to be detailed, however, local government finance is complex and we would like some further training on analysis of the finance reports in due course. Our role is to satisfy ourselves that effective budget monitoring is taking place and as a committee, we feel fairly

confident that this is the case. We recognise that the 2 winter storms had significant implications for the financial position together with the already challenging service area positions, notably children's services, Passenger Transport Unit and Waste and Recycling, the increased pay award and the late settlement from Welsh Government further compounding a challenging situation. We particularly thank officers for providing us with an overview of the financial implications of the Covid pandemic, which will help us in our scrutiny of the pandemic learning that we will undertake in September. Thank you officers for your time this morning and your hard work in collating these reports.

5. To confirm minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

6. Action list

7. Strong Communities forward work programme

Training on budget monitoring is requested. Councillor Webb requested that a subgroup covering the communications with town and community councils be added to the work programme. Councillor Smith's Burials and Cremations report will hopefully be covered in September, along with Coronavirus strategy. Depending on the response from officers to the Public Open Forum submission, flooding could possibly be covered in November. It is proposed that an update on County Lines be added to the work programme, perhaps in conjunction with a review of CCTV. January will include a significant piece on dog controls.

8. Cabinet & Council forward work programme

9. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday 30th September 2021.

The meeting ended at **10.50 am**

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Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2021

Strong Communities Select Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
30 th September 2021	Covid Pandemic Review	To scrutinise a review of the learning from the covid pandemic and to consider implications for future strategic direction.	Emma Davies Frances O'Brien Cath Fallon Mark Hand	Policy Review
	Burials and Cremations Member Report ~ To be confirmed	To consider a report produced by Councillor Val Smith in relation to burials and cremations.	Councillor Val Smith	Member Report
18 th November 2021	To be Confirmed. Flooding Update.	TBC		
	To be confirmed. CCTV	TBC		
	Strategic Equality Plan	Scrutiny of the Annual Monitoring Report 2020-2021.	Alan Burkitt	Performance Monitoring
6 th January 2022	Public Spaces Protection Order on Dog Controls	To consider the findings of a 3 month public consultation on a Public Spaces Protection Order for Dog Controls (dog fouling, dog exemption areas, dogs on leads areas) and make recommendations to Cabinet.	Huw Owen David Jones	Policy Development
	Welsh Language	To discuss the new 5 year Welsh Language Strategy.	Alan Burkitt	Policy Development
10 th February 2022				
24 th March 2022				
19 th May 2022				

Future Agreed Work Programme Items: Dates to be determined

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2021

- × **Workshop on Highways Matters ~ date to be confirmed**
- × **Annual monitoring of Public Protection in May, a half year exception report, highlighting any gaps in service delivery, to be scheduled in November of each year.**
- × **Registrars Service ~ annual monitoring in May**
- × **CCTV**
- × **Digital Solutions to improve access to rural transport**
- × **Air Pollution Monitoring Report**
- × **Social Justice Policy**
- × **Electric Vehicles and Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy ~ learning form Oxfordshire County Council**
- × **Open Space Review**
- × **Climate change and decarbonisation**
- × **County Lines ~ Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**
- × **Report on the activities of CCTV**
- × **County Lines**
- × **Budget training**

Cabinet, Council and Individual Cabinet Member Decisions (ICMD) Forward Plan

Monmouthshire County Council is required to publish a forward plan of all key decisions to be taken. Council and Cabinet items will only be considered for decision if they have been included on the planner no later than the month preceding the meeting, unless the item is considered urgent.

Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Subject	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner	Date item originally scheduled for decision
Council	04/11//2021	Final Statement of Accounts		Peter Davies	07/05/21	
Council	01/12/2022	RLDP Deposit Plan for submission to WG for examination	Approval of Deposit Plan post-consultation for submission to WG for independent examination	Mark Hand / Craig O'Connor	30/07/21	
Council	01/10/23	RLDP for Adoption		Mark Hand	23/01/20	
Council	01/02/23	LDP submission for examination		Mark Hand	23/01/20	
Council	01/07/22	RLDP Deposit Plan endorsement for consultation	Endorsement of Deposit Plan	Mark Hand	23/01/20	
Cabinet	06/04/22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 9 held on 10th March 2022		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
Council	10/03/22	2022/23 Treasury Policy		Jon Davies	07/05/21	
Council	10/03/22	2022/23 Final Budget sign off including Council Tax Resolution		Peter Davies	07/05/21	

Cabinet	02/03/22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 8 held on 27th January 2022		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
Cabinet	02/03/22	2022/23 WCF/Treasury Fund Investments		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
Cabinet	16/02/22	2022/23 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals		Peter Davies	27/04/21	
Cabinet	16/02/22	2021/2 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - month 9		Jon Davies	27/04/21	
Council	27/01/22	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		Ruth Donovan	07/05/21	
IMCD	12/01/22	2022/23 Community Council and Police Precepts - final		Jon Davies	07/05/21	
Cabinet	05/01/22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 7 held on 16th December 2021		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
Cabinet	05/01/22	2021/2 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - month 7		Peter Davies/Jon Davies	27/04/21	
IMCD	18/12/21	2022/23 Community Council and Police Precepts draft		Jon Davies	07/05/21	
Council	16/12/21	Capital Strategy		Jon Davies	20/05/21	

Cabinet	15/12/21	2022/23 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals		Peter Davies	27/04/21	
IMCD	08/12/21	Council Tax Base and associated matters		Ruth Donovan	07/05/21	
Cabinet	01/12/21	Consultation on the proposals to establish an all-through school, Abergavenny.	Cabinet to receive objection report and decide whether to proceed with the proposal.	Debbie Graves	26/05/21	
Cabinet	01/12/21	Review of Monmouthshire's Destination Management Plan 2017-2020	Purpose: to approve the revised Destination Development Plan	Matthew Lewis	22/09/20	
Cabinet	01/12/21	Welsh Church Fund Working group - meeting 6 held on 4th November 2021		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
ICMD	24/11/21	SPG S106 Supplementary Planning Guidance	Adoption of SPG clarifying how S106 contributions are calculated following consultation	Mark Hand / Phillip Thomas	26/04/21	
Council	04/11/21	Climate and Decarbonisation Strategy	To endorse an updated climate strategy and action plan which will introduce new programmes of activity to achieve the council's clear policy commitment to reduce carbon emissions.	Matthew Gatehouse / Hazel Clatworthy	19/05/21	
Council	04/11/21	RLDP Preferred Strategy endorsement post consultation	Endorsement of preferred strategy to inform deposit plan	Mark Hand / Craig O'Connor	20/05/20	
Council	04/11/21	Corporate Parenting Strategy		Jane Rodgers	20/07/21	
Council	04/11/21	ISA260 - MCC Accounts				

Council	04/11/21	LDP Preferred Strategy endorsement post consultation		Mark Hand	20/05/20	
Cabinet	03/11/21	Active Travel Plan		Paul Sullivan	05/08/21	
Cabinet	03/11/21	2021/22 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - month 5		Peter Davies/Jon Davies	27/04/21	
ICMD	27/10/21	Museum object disposal		Rachael Rogers	09/06/21	
ICMD	13/10/21	'Leave Averaging & Holiday Pay		Katherine Cameron		
ICMD	13/10/21	LDP Annual Monitoring Report and Development Management Annual Performance Report	Endorsements of reports for submission to WG	Mark Hand / Craig O'Connor	26/04/21	
Cabinet	06/10/21	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 5 held on 23rd September 2021		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
Cabinet	06/10/21	Revenue and Capital MTFP update and process		Peter Davies	27/04/21	
Cabinet	06/10/21	Active Travel Network Maps		Paul Sullivan	13/11/20	
Cabinet	06/10/21	Consultation on the proposals to establish an all-through school, Abergavenny.	Cabinet to receive the consultation report and consider recommendations on proposed way forward / whether to publish statutory notices.	Debbie Graves	26/05/21	

Cabinet	06/10/21	Abergavenny Velo Park	CM	Mike Moran	14/10/20	
Council	23/09/21	Director of Social Services Annual Report		Julie Boothroyd		
Council	23/09/21	Borough Theatre Funding Proposal		cath Fallon		
Council	23/09/21	Corporate Plan Annual Report		Emma Davies	17/08/21	
Council	23/09/21	Audit Committee Annual Report		Phillip White	29/06/21	
ICMD	22/09/21	Leave Averaging & Holiday Pay	Deferred to 13th October	Katherine Cameron		
Cabinet	15/09/21	Placemaking Charter	Council signs up to the Placemaking Charter	Mark Hand / Craig O'Connor	28/04/21	
Cabinet	15/09/21	Borough Theatre Funding Proposal	Needs to go 15 th Sept as won't be ready for 1 st Sept – Cabinet want to endorse this before it goes to Council for funding to be secured on 23 rd Sept	Cath Fallon		
Cabinet	15/09/21	Code of Corporate Governance		Andrew Wathan	20/07/2021	
Cabinet	15/09/21	Welsh Church Fund Working group - meeting 4 held on 22nd July 2021		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	

Cabinet	15/09/21	Regeneration projects and Placemaking grant submission	To endorse the indicative Placemaking Grant submission for £791,429 made under the Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding	Mark Hand	29/07/21	
Cabinet	15/09/21	Afghan National Relocation Scheme	To re-state Cabinet's commitment to continued participation in the Home Office Afghan National Relocation scheme in line with the desire for Monmouthshire to be a county of sanctuary for those fleeing persecution.	Lisa Dymock/Matt Gatehouse	6/2021 - amended 20/8/21	
ICMD	08/09/21	Abergavenny Town Floodlights		Mike Moran	26/06/21	
ICMD	18/08/21	Consultation on the review of school places in Caldicot town		Matthew Jones	21/07/21	
ICMD	18/08/21	SPG S106 Supplementary Planning Guidance		Matk Hand / Phillip Thomas	01/05/21	23/06/21
ICMD	18/08/21	Procurement of PaybyPhone as an additional payment service for our car parks (Jane Pratt)	Agree to procure PaybyPhone	Mark Hand	29/07/21	
ICMD	04/08/21	Planning Policy discretionary service charges (Bob Greenland)	Agree Candidate Site assessment charges	Rachel Lewis	29/07/21	
Cabinet	28/07/21	Securing resources for ICT resilience	To provide appropriate investment for security resilience in ICT systems	Sian Hayward	30/06/21	
Cabinet	28/07/21	Regional Collaboration: Gwent Public Service Board		Richard Jones	14/07/21	
Cabinet	28/07/21	2021/22 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report		Peter Davies/Jon Davies	27/04/21	

Council	22/07/21	investments in Leisure Centres		Marie Bartlett / Ian Saunders		
ICMD	14/07/21	Museum object Disposal		Rachael Rogers/Lisa Dymock	19/05/21	
Cabinet	07/07/21	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 3 held on 24th June 2021		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	
Cabinet	07/07/21	Capital Slippage		Jon Davies	11/06/22	
Cabinet	07/07/21	•Mutual Delegation of Strategic Procurement Services		Cath Fallon		
Council	24/06/21	Chief Officer's Report		Will Mclean	19/05/21	
Council	24/06/21	Shire Hall / Monmouth Museum		Matthew Lewis	24/05/21	
Council	24/06/21	LDP Preferred Strategy endorsement for consultation		Mark Hand	21/09/20	
Cabinet	09/06/21	2020/21 Revenue and Capital Monitoring outturn	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2020/21 financial year	Peter Davies/Jon Davies	27/04/21	
Cabinet	09/06/21	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 1 held on 15th April 2021 and meeting 2 held on 13th May 2021		Dave Jarrett	27/04/21	

Cabinet	09/06/21	Digital and Data	To seek approval for the creation of a new Digital Design and Innovation Team, to strengthen our information governance arrangements and to broaden the remit of the existing performance team to include data analytics'.	Emma Jackson	13/05/21	
Cabinet	09/06/21	Shire Hall / Monmouth Museum – to consider the outcome of the feasibility study		Matthew Lewis/Ian Saunders	05/02/21	
Council	13/05/21	Outside Bodies		John Pearson		
Council	13/05/21	Appointment to Committees		John Pearson		
Council	13/05/21	Political Balance		Matt Phillips		
Council	13/05/21	Freedom of the Borough		Joe Skidmore	22/04/21	
Council	13/05/21	Climate and Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan		Hazel Clatworthy	14/04/21	
ICMD	12/05/21	A Nation of Sanctuary - Asylum Dispersal Scheme - Moved to Cabinet	To provide Council with an progress update on the Climate and Decarbonisation Strategy and Action Plan which was developed following the passing of a motion to declare a climate emergency.	Matt Gatehouse	19/04/21	
ICMD	12/05/21	Play Action Plan	Cabinet Member Richard John Report originally on Cabi	Matthew Lewis/Mike Moran/Ian Saun	16/03/21	
Cabinet	14/04/21	Leisure Centre Investments		Marie Bartlett	22/03/21	

Cabinet	14/04/21	Statutory Consultation to establish 4-19 school in Abergavenny		Cath Saunders	03/03/21	
Cabinet	14/04/21	Welsh Church Fund Working Group meeting	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2020/21 - meeting 6 held on 11th March 2021	Dave Jarrett	02/04/20	
Cabinet	14/04/21	Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment		Richard Jones	02/03/21	
ICMD	07/04/21	Strategic Procurement		Cath Fallon/P Murphy	09/03/21	
ICMD	24/03/21	SPG S106 Supplementary Planning Guidance	To Clarify how S106 contributions are calculated/ deferred from 13/1/21 and 24/02/21 deferred UFN	Phil Thomas/Mark Hand	01/05/19	
Council	11/03/21	Appointments to outside bodies	To appoint a representative to the Wye Navigation Advisory Committee	Matt Gatehouse	08/02/21	
Council	11/03/21	Council Tax Resolution Report		Ruth Donovan	02/04/20	
Council	11/03/21	Treasury Strategy report		Jon Davies	15/12/20	
Council	11/03/21	Constitution Review		Matt Phillips	14/08/19	
Council	11/03/21	The Annual Pay Policy		Sally Thomas	11/02/21	

ICMD	10/03/21	disposal of land for consideration	Awaiting notification re inclusion DEFERRED UFN	by Cllr Murphy/ Ben Thorpe	09/02/21	
ICMD	10/03/21	Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2021-26		Matthew Lewis/Richard John	10/02/21	
Cabinet	03/03/21	•EAS Business Plan		Sharon Randall Smith	21/09/20	
Cabinet	03/03/21	Final revenue and capital budget proposals		Peter Davies	21/09/20	
Cabinet	03/03/21	Social Justice Strategy Update		Cath Fallon	17/09/20	
Cabinet	03/02/21	Welsh Church Fund Working Group meeting	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications 2020/21 - meeting 5 held on 14th January 2021	Dave Jarrett	02/04/20	
Cabinet	03/02/21	Apprenticeship Pay Rates		Gareth James	08/01/21	
Cabinet	03/02/21	Outdoor Adventure Provision at Gilwern		Marie Bartlett	30/11/20	30/11/20
Cabinet	03/02/21	Proposed Disposal of MCC Cottages		Nicola Howells	15/12/20	
ICMD	27/01/21	Approval on Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 - The Local Authorities (Precepts) (Wales) Regulations 1995	Deferred from 13/1 to 27/1	Jon Davies		

Cabinet	20/01/21	•Draft revenue and capital budget proposals for consultation		Peter Davies	21/09/20	
Cabinet	20/01/21	Chippenham Mead Play Area, Monmouth		Mike Moran	15/12/20	
Cabinet	20/01/21	Play Area Assessments and Future Play Area Policy	to advise members of play area assessments carried out last year and suggest a rationalisation of provision	Matthew Lewis	22/09/20	
Cabinet	20/01/21	BUS EMERGENCY SCHEME (BES) – REQUEST TO ALL COUNCILS TO SIGN UP TO THE BES2 SCHEME		Roger Hoggins	24/12/20	
Council	14/01/21	Council Diary 2021/22		Nicola Perry		
Council	14/01/21	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		Ruth Donovan	07/04/20	
Council	14/01/21	Annual Safeguarding Report		Jane Rodgers	21/09/20	
ICMD	13/01/21	Minerals Regional Technical Statement Second Revision (RTS2)		Rachel Lewis	17/12/20	
ICMD	13/01/21	Museum Service Collection Review	To propose the deaccessioning of and disposal actions for the proposed items in line with Section 4 of the Museums Association Disposal Toolkit	Matthew Lewis/Rachael Rogers	22/09/20	
ICMD	13/01/21	Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards in the Private Rented Sector		Gareth Walters	15/12/21	

ICMD	13/01/21	Staffing Changes: Business Support	To seek approval for the voluntary redundancy of the Chief Executive's Personal Assistant, reducing the cost of administrative support arrangements for the senior management team and contribute to budget savings during the 2021-22 financial year./Paul Jordan	Matt Gatehouse	15/12/21	
Cabinet	06/01/21	Budget Monitoring Report - month 7 (period 2)	The purpose of this report is to provide Members with information on the forecast outturn position of the Authority at end of month reporting for 2020/21 financial year.	Peter Davies/Jon Davies	02/04/20	
Cabinet	06/01/21	RIPA Policy		Matt Phillips	21/10/20	
Cabinet	06/01/21	Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2020		Mark Hand	23/06/20	