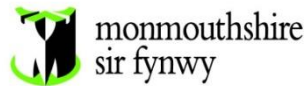


# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 12 July 2022

## Notice of meeting:

### People Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 20th July, 2022 at 10.00 am  
The Council Chamber, County Hall, Usk, NP15 1GA and 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
1.	Election of Chair.	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chair.	
3.	Apologies for Absence.	
4.	Declarations of Interest.	
5.	Public Open Forum.	
6.	Gypsy and Traveller Site Selection - To consider a proposal for assessing the suitability of Council owned land for the potential purpose of addressing the Council's statutory obligation, to meet the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller sites.	1 - 14
7.	Forward Work Programme - To consider the Forward Work Programme Report and identify areas for future scrutiny, and in doing so, to agree a draft Forward Work Programme.	15 - 34
8.	To confirm the following minutes:	
8.1.	Adults Select Committee dated 2nd March 2022.	35 - 42
8.2.	Children and Young People Select Committee dated 3rd March 2022.	43 - 46

**9.**

**Next Meeting: Tuesday 27th September 2022 at 10.00am.**

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Fay Bromfield, Llangybi Fawr; Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark, Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor David Jones, Crucorney, Independent Group  
County Councillor Jayne McKenna, Mitchel Troy and Trellech United; Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Maureen Powell, Pen Y Fal; Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Sue Riley, Bulwark and Thornwell, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
County Councillor Angela Sandles, Magor East with Undy, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
County Councillor Maria Stevens, Severn, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

## Public Information

### Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

### 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.

## 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 Question Guide**

### **Role of the Pre-meeting**

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?

- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
- Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

### **Questions for the Meeting**

#### *Scrutinising Performance*

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

#### *Scrutinising Policy*

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? Do they believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?
6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards?
8. 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?
9. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?
10. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated?

## **General Questions:**

### *Empowering Communities*

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?
- Is the service working with citizens to explain the role of different partners in delivering the service, and managing expectations?
- Is there a framework and proportionate process in place for collective performance assessment, including from a citizen's perspective, and do you have accountability arrangements to support this?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? If so, can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers provide members with copies and a detailed explanation of the EQIA conducted in respect of these proposals?
- Can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers assure members that these proposals comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation? Do the proposals comply with the Local Authority's Strategic Equality Plan?

### *Service Demands*

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?
- Have you identified and considered the long-term trends that might affect your service area, what impact these trends could have on your service/your service could have on these trends, and what is being done in response?

### *Financial Planning*

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

### *Making savings and generating income*

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

### *Questions to ask within a year of the decision:*

- Were the intended outcomes of the proposal achieved or were there other results?
- Were the impacts confined to the group you initially thought would be affected i.e. older people, or were others affected e.g. people with disabilities, parents with young children?
- Is the decision still the right decision or do adjustments need to be made?

### **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:

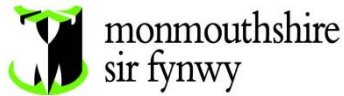
- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report



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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PROPOSED APPROACH – GYPSY &amp; TRAVELLER SITE SELECTION</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>20<sup>TH</sup> July 2022</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to make provision for sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people where there is an identified need. The 2020 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment identified a need for nine pitches by 2025 and a further four pitches by 2033 (the Replacement Local Development Plan period). The Council needs to identify and provide sites to meet the identified need. These sites should be included in the PLDP.
- 1.2 The purpose of the report is for the People Scrutiny Committee to consider a proposal for assessing the suitability of Council owned land for the potential purpose of addressing the Council's statutory obligation, to meet the identified need for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee agrees to include Gypsy & Site identification into the Committees work programme and participates in Officer-led workshops.
- 2.2 That the Committee scrutinises the proposed methodology for identifying and evaluating Council owned land for the purpose of providing a Gypsy & Traveller site.
- 2.3 That the Committee invites Travelling Ahead - Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice & Advocacy Service to support the Council with the agreed approach.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 All Council's in Wales have a duty under Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014 to undertake a Gypsy & Traveller Assessment every five years. Where an unmet need for mobile home pitches is identified, the necessary pitch provision needs to be made. The most recent Assessment was adopted by [Cabinet](#) on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2021.
- 3.2 The summary conclusions of the most recent Assessment are:
  - The assessment finds that there is an unmet need of nine pitches under the assessment period 2020 to 2025.
  - Beyond 2025, there is a further unmet need of four pitches over the remaining length of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2026-33).
- 3.3 The Council is now required to meet this identified pitch need, which also needs to be factored into the Replacement Local Development Plan. Unmet need can be met either by facilitating households (who possibly may own or wish to purchase land to meet their own needs) through planning permission. Or alternatively, through the provision of public Council owned pitch(s).
- 3.4 Of the above thirteen, it is proposed that one pitch is facilitated by supporting a private household with acquiring planning permission for an additional pitch on their existing site. This effectively reduces the pitch requirement to twelve.

3.5 The Council has adopted the following approach to making provision for unmet need for mobile home pitches:

- An officer Gypsy & Traveller Working Group has been established which includes officers from Housing & Communities, Planning and Estates.
- Officers have undertaken an initial high level 'sifting' exercise to review and appraise **all** Council owned land for potential use as Gypsy & Traveller sites.

3.6 The next step is to continue to sift and refine the sites identified to date to effectively create a short-list applying agreed and approved criteria.

3.7 The proposed procedure is detailed in **Appendix One**

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

4.1 There are no negative implications with this proposal. **See Appendix Two.** Indeed, the proposal has positive impacts in terms of meeting housing duty for recognised ethnic group, social justice, a home and therefore access to health and education services.

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

5.1 The following options are available:

Option	Benefit	Risk
<b>Option 1:</b> The <u>recommended option</u> is to agree the proposed process for identifying MCC owned land for the purposes of establishing a G & T Site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This supports and aligns with the Council's broad responsibilities to meet and address identified needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No risks identified.</li></ul>
<b>Option 2:</b> To do nothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are no benefits with this option</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Council will be in breach of its legal duties.</li></ul>

#### 6. **REASONS:**

6.1 Under Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014, the Council is required to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller accommodation assessment and to make provision for sites where the assessment identifies an unmet need for mobile home pitches.

6.2 Whilst not directly applicable to this report, it is appropriate that the Committee is also aware that the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 homeless legislation places statutory duties on Local Authorities in respect of homeless Gypsy & Traveller households or those threatened with homelessness.

#### 7. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no resource implications with this proposal to agree a process for identifying and agreeing Council owned land for use as a Gypsy & Traveller site/pitches.

7.2 Although not applicable to this current report, there will, however, be resource implications associated with the development of any agreed public site provision.

For example, this could include foregoing a capital receipt on the sale of Council land for development or lost opportunity to use sites for the delivery of affordable housing or other aspirations, design costs, construction, management and maintenance of a potential site. Welsh Government capital funding is available for actual site development only, which would need to be bid for. Resource implications will need to be considered on a site-by-site basis in due course.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

8.1 Cabinet; Senior Leadership Team; Head of Enterprise & Community Animation; Head of Head of Placemaking, Highways and Flooding; Head of Planning; Development Manager; Travelling Ahead; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice & Advocacy Service.

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None

**10. AUTHOR:** Ian Bakewell, Housing & Communities Manager

**11. CONTACT DETAILS:** Ian Bakewell **Tel:** 01633 644479 **E-mail:** [ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

## Appendix

### Proposed Procedure & Timeline for Identifying Land and Agreeing Use as A Gypsy & Traveller Site\*

\* Travelling Ahead; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice & Advocacy Service to be invited to support and steer officers and to attend and participate in Place Scrutiny and Cabinet meetings

**20<sup>th</sup> July 2022** - consider proposed process for identifying site including member and Committee involvement in site identification.

**July 2022** – date to be confirmed

- **All member seminar** – to introduce and communicate the Gypsy & Traveller responsibilities to all members, advise of the need and provide an update on work undertaken to date.

**7<sup>th</sup> September**

- **Cabinet** – agree process for process for site identification

**WC 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

- **Member Workshop 1** - share site sifting work to date; consider and make recommendation on RAG rating sites
- **Planning Team** – apply Workshop agreed RAG to sifted sites

**WC 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022**

- **Member Workshop 2** - Planning report on outcome of applying RAG; Members recommend consulting on determined site(s)

**9<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

- **Cabinet** – agree proposal to consult on identified site(s)

**Mid November 2022 – January 2023**

- **Housing & Communities** - consult on identified site(s)

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2023**

- **Place Select** – report on outcome of consultation and make site(s) recommendation for proceeding.

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

- **Cabinet** – agree site(s) to develop

**Mid-March 2023 onwards**

- **Planning** – progress with incorporating identified site into Local Development Plan
- **Housing & Communities** - engage with Travelling Ahead; Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Advice & Advocacy Service, MCC Estates and Welsh Government.

## APPENDIX 4



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

## Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation Ian Bakewell</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 01633 644479 <b>E-mail:</b> ianbakewell@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>Meeting The Unmet Pitch Needs of the Gypsy &amp; Traveller Assessment Jan 21</p>
<p><b>Name of Service area</b></p> <p>Housing &amp; Communities</p>	<p><b>Date</b></p> <p>31.08.21</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The service will positively contribute	There are no negative impacts in relation to this proposal	The Council has and will continue to do so, engage with the Travelling Ahead advocacy service
Disability	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Gender reassignment	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Marriage or civil partnership	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Pregnancy or maternity	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Race	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Religion or Belief	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Sex	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Sexual Orientation	Ditto	Ditto	Ditto
Welsh Language	No impact	Ditto	Ditto
Poverty	Positive – all Housing activity helps to mitigate against poverty.	Ditto	Ditto

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

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Meeting the pitch needs of Gypsy &amp; Traveller households creates stability for households and enables them to establish firm links with local communities eg schools, employment.</p> <p>It reduces the likelihood of unauthorized encampments and the associated resource implications of dealing with such.</p>	<p>We will involve and liaise with Travelling Ahead G &amp; T advocates</p>
<p><b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>There may be a possible opportunity to give consideration to this in respect of the design of a possible public provision</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Facilitating pitch provision supports good quality accommodation for G &amp; T households which is conducive to good health and well-being.</p> <p>It also supports households being able to access health services eg GP's, dentists, opticians etc</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Good pitch provision remain living at home and within their home communities. It eliminates the need for G &amp; T to b</p>	<p>A pitch waiting list policy is already in place</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>




Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
social, economic and environmental wellbeing		
<b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	Public pitches provide the opportunity to promote the Welsh Language	N/A
<b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The proposals directly supports equality and protected and or disadvantaged groups.	Ditto


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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal is informed by a Gypsy &amp; Traveller Assessment Jan 21, which makes population projections up to 2033.</p> <p>Planning for pitch provision helps to reduce the likelihood of unauthorised encampments. If the resulting outcome to meet need is public provision, households will be able to apply to live there</p>	The continued engagement with Travelling Ahead advocacy service



Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<p>The proposals will be developed with Welsh Government and Gypsy &amp; Traveller advocates including a Travelling Ahead and potentially a specialist planning consultant.</p> <p>Although not applicable at present, but there could be scope to include other organisations eg RSL's, although no decision has been made at present,</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p><b>Involvement</b></p>	<p>The proposal facilitates greater involvement with local G &amp; T households.</p> <p>There is a particular opportunity for involving families in the design of new sites</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p><b>Prevention</b></p>	<p>The proposal supports preventative activity from the perspective of households having a stable homes (eg pitches) enabling them to better access facilities eg employment, education, health etc and community links</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>Through additional staffing the proposal supports increased access to good quality housing that is secure, warm, safe etc supports all aspects of well-being eg physical health, medical health etc</p> <p>The direct benefits this has for the service users is that accommodation supports the priorities of wider agencies such as health services</p>	<p>The proposal will build upon existing services that support we-being eg disabled adaptations; Careline; homelessness etc</p>

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

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	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Social Justice	<p>The Social Justice strategy focuses on three main areas: tackling loneliness and isolation; tackling poverty and promoting equitable economic prosperity; and giving children the best start in life.</p> <p>This proposal supports tackling of potential poverty in terms of providing stable living and the ability to better access employment and/or support.</p> <p>For children it helps avoid the need for families being displaced from their home communities and supports maintaining continuity of schooling.</p>	None.	<p>Housing and homelessness is a cross cutting priority of the Social Justice Strategy with a multi-agency involvement.</p> <p>It will be an on-going action to identify opportunities to strengthen homeless prevention, improve homeless provision and support homeless actions through social poverty actions and partnership arrangements</p>

Safeguarding	Ditto	None.	N/A.
Corporate Parenting	None	None.	N/A.

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

Gypsy & Traveller Assessment January 2021

Feedback from advocacy support services

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

09/11

The main benefits of the proposal are:

- It seeks to address unmet pitch need identified by the Gypsy & Traveller Assessment Jan '21
- The Council will be meeting its legal responsibilities under Part 3, Housing (Wales) Act 2014
- It supports the Gypsy & Traveller requirement relating to the development of the replacement Local Development Plan

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Officer Meeting – Site identification	13 <sup>th</sup> Aug 21 – completed	Mark Hand,
Officer Meeting – Site identification	19 <sup>th</sup> Aug 21 - completed	Mark Hand





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**SUBJECT: SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

**MEETING: People Scrutiny Committee**

**DATE: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022**

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All**

## **1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 Scrutiny Committees are required to agree an annual work programme to outline their work commitments for the year (Local Government (Wales) Measure 2010). The work programme should as far as possible be agreed at the beginning of each year, however, it can be updated during the year to accommodate urgent items if agreed by the Committee. This report recommends a 'planned approach' to developing the work programme to maximise the effectiveness of the scrutiny activity within the timescale.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committees utilise the process outlined in Appendix 1 of this report to assist them in developing focussed work programmes, taking into account:
- (i) The respective remits of the four Scrutiny Committees and the need to avoid duplication.
  - (ii) The Committees' capacity/resources when prioritising topics for scrutiny and agreeing their inclusion into the work programme.
  - (iii) The need to demonstrate added value and to contribute to the Council's strategic direction.

## **3. KEY ISSUES:**

### **3.1 The Roles of Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Committees**

- 3.2 Monmouthshire's scrutiny arrangements have recently been reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and enable members to effectively perform the statutory scrutiny roles expected of them. The new structure provides:

- Strengthened decision-making and informed policy development through engaging the public on major issues that affect them ~ People and Place Scrutiny Committees.
- An involved and evidenced role in ensuring the Well-being of Future Generations, by identifying potential effects of decisions on the public before decisions are made ~ People and Place Scrutiny Committees.

- Clear accountability for the Cabinet/Executive and robust challenge ~ Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee.
  - Democratic accountability of partnership activity and collaborative service delivery to local people ~ Public Services Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.3 The new Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 (sections 39-41) places strong emphasis on public participation in decision-making and creates a duty to engage the public in the design of policy and the debate of major decisions that will affect them. Developments in live-streaming and the ability for people to send videos and contribute to meetings from their home or workplace serve as a reminder that the conventional public open forum, with residents sitting in the gallery of the council chamber, is no longer the most effective way to involve people in the democratic process.
- 3.4 Two 'Policy' Scrutiny Committees (People and Place) conduct pre-decision scrutiny on key topics affecting residents, seeking public participation as part of the decision-making process. These committees will typically scrutinise two topics per meeting to enable them to dedicate the necessary time to reflect on the views of the public and stakeholders. Whilst the public are welcome to attend scrutiny meetings and to submit audio, video and written contributions on subjects being debated at the committees, Members can also hold informal meetings in communities and hold conversations with service users, stakeholders and expert witnesses to gather their views.
- 3.5 The Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee is responsible for challenging the Executive/the Cabinet and holding them to account for the performance of all services, risk management and robust financial monitoring.
- 3.6 The Public Services Scrutiny Committee is responsible for scrutinising the effectiveness of strategic partnerships (including the Public Service Board) and other public service providers to ensure that services delivered in partnership with other bodies are accountable and deliver improved outcomes for residents. Given its partnership focus, this scrutiny committee also has responsibility for Crime and Disorder Scrutiny in line with the Police and Justice Act (2006) and Welsh Government Guidance published in 2010.
- 3.7 The Scrutiny Chairs hold regular meetings with the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee to discuss workstreams and to avoid duplication.
- 4.0 Determining Topics for Scrutiny**
- 4.1 The Scrutiny Forward Work Programme should be planned and reflect the Council's key priorities in the corporate plan and its strategic risks. This will ensure that scrutiny adds value to the Council's strategic direction and may mean that Scrutiny Committees choose not to scrutinise some things, in order to focus on topics where they can add value.
- 4.2 Topics for the work programme can derive from a wide range of sources, including:



- The Cabinet and Council Forward Plan (attached as Appendix 2) – topics on the Cabinet Forward Plan can be considered by a Scrutiny Committee in advance to enable the committee to inform the Cabinet's decision by reflecting public opinion and making evidence-based recommendations. The People and Place Scrutiny Committees would play a key role in considering the effects of decisions on the public in advance of decisions being made, taking into account the Well-being of Future Generations and equality impact assessments (Monmouthshire has an Integrated Impact Assessment which accompanies all decisions).
  - Suggestions made by: Committee Members, other members, officers, the public, partners and stakeholders – a topic may be identified for scrutiny because of changes to legislation/government guidance. A policy may be recognised as being in need of review, or a new policy or service is needing to be introduced.
  - The Corporate Plan and the Corporate Assessment which provide the Council's strategic direction and outline its key priorities.
  - The Risk Register – the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee has responsibility for considering key risks and, where appropriate, challenging the performance of the Cabinet/Executive and the actions being taken to mitigate the risks.
  - Performance monitoring and budget monitoring reports – the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee will undertake regular monitoring of the Council's performance and progress in implementing previously agreed actions.
  - Issues highlighted in audit and inspection reports.
  - Outcomes of public consultation.
  - Petitions by the public.
- 4.3 Members and Officers may suggest topics which they feel warrant scrutiny, however, it remains the committees' prerogative to set and agree the work programmes. Once a committee has assembled its work programme, it will be important for them to identify and agree the highest priority topics, which are those that will add most value through their work and deliver outcomes.
- 4.4 Topics requiring long and detailed examination can be looked at in detail via Scrutiny Workshops ~ these are scheduled for major topics that are complex and multi-faceted, requiring significant policy development over several months, complementing the formal scrutiny that takes place in Scrutiny Committees. The workshops enable officers to discuss the context with members, and members to suggest the strategic direction whilst officers lead on the delivery. They also enable members who do not sit on the hosting Scrutiny Committee to lend their expertise as a witness or to participate in scrutiny activity. Whilst the workshops are for members to engage in policy at a formative stage, external witnesses and stakeholders can be invited as necessary, and community engagement can be scheduled alongside the process.

## **5.0 PRIORITISING TOPICS FOR SCRUTINY**

5.1 Some key principles for Members to consider when setting the work programme are:

- Topics should add value and support corporate priorities.
- The timing of scrutiny activity should achieve maximum impact.
- Where appropriate and possible, partners, stakeholders and the public should be involved.
- Allowing some flexibility in the work programme will enable urgent topics to be included if they arise.
- The aim should always be to seek improvement in service provision.
- The work programme should be achievable within available resources.

5.2 The criteria to determine topics for scrutiny (Appendix 1) is designed to assist the Committee in selecting appropriate topics for scrutiny by encouraging Members to consider the anticipated outcomes and impact of any scrutiny activity. Members are advised to ensure that there are clear outcomes for any scrutiny activity. Any topics chosen for an in-depth review via Scrutiny Workshops will be scoped by the Scrutiny Officers to assess their feasibility, the likely objectives, and potential lines of enquiry and Terms of Reference prior to their commencement.

5.3 The June / July scrutiny committee cycle will primarily focus on familiarising new Members with the scope and remit of their committees and discussing topics for inclusion into the forward work programme. Members are encouraged to think carefully about what the scrutiny role would be and to identify the intended outcomes of the scrutiny. The meetings will also include some reports which are timely and require scrutiny.

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

6.1 This report offers guidance to committees to assist members in setting their work programme and as such, does not require an assessment of Equality, Well-being of Future Generations, Social Justice, Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting considerations.

## **7.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Not applicable.

## **8.0 REASONS:**

8.1 The requirement to produce and publish a Scrutiny Forward Work Programme is a legislative requirement, however, it is also good practice.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no direct resource implications associated with this report.

**10.0 CONSULTEES:**

None.

**11.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 ~ Determining Topics for Scrutiny Criteria  
Appendix 2 ~ Cabinet and Council Forward Plan

**12.0 AUTHOR:**

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager

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# Determining Topics for Scrutiny

The following criteria can be used to determine whether topics are appropriate topics for scrutiny and which committee would be best placed to scrutinise them. It is the decision of the Scrutiny Committee as to what topics they will include in their work programme. Members and officers in suggesting items for scrutiny should consider:

## Is there a role for Scrutiny?

### Is this a new policy being developed or are changes proposed to an existing service?

➡ Such topics should be considered by either of the policy scrutiny committees, who can assess the impact on the public, service users and relevant stakeholders.

### Is this a review of a service's performance? Are there resource issues or risks to consider?

➡ Such topics should be considered by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee with the relevant Cabinet/Executive Member invited when necessary to attend and answer questions.

### Does the topic relate to a service that is provided in collaboration with others?

➡ These topics should be scrutinised by the Public Services Scrutiny Committee.

### Are elected members needing to be informed or updated about this topic?

➡ These topics should be discussed with all members via a 'Member Seminar'.

## Public Interest Test

- Is this a "high profile" topic?
- Is there significant public interest?
- Is this an area where a lot of complaints are received and/or bad press?
- How will the scrutiny activity provide opportunities for local people to have their say?
- Is survey / research work required?

## Impact of Scrutiny

- Will this review have a significant impact on the "well-being" of people in Monmouthshire?
- Does a local community or interest group have much to gain or lose?
- To what extent can we effect change? Is this a national issue?
- Would this make a big difference to the way services are delivered?
- Would this make a big difference to the way resources are used?

# Determining Topics for Scrutiny

## Performance issues

- Are the Council and other organisations under-performing in this area?
- Is performance poor compared to others and do we understand why this is the case?
- Are we performing well, but spending too much of our resources in this area?
- Are there local or national performance targets by which to measure our performance?

## Influence of scrutiny

- Has this service been recently reviewed or inspected?
- Will this topic be part of an improvement review or external inspection in the next two years?
- If the service is to be reviewed or inspected soon, can a Scrutiny Committee make a positive contribution by focussing on specific aspects and making recommendations?
- Are there any current or future major changes forecasted which reduce the value of undertaking scrutiny?
- Are changes to this service planned and can Scrutiny positively influence change?

If scrutiny cannot add value by scrutinising a particular topic based on the above criteria, then the Scrutiny Committee should think carefully about whether to include it in their work programme. Requests from Members for updates on topics should be referred to a 'Member Seminar'. Similarly, requests from officers to brief Members on topics should be managed via 'Member Seminars'.

## 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
ICMD	14-Dec -22	Council Tax Base report		Ruth Donovan	31-May-22	
Council	01-Oct-23	RLDP for Adoption		Mark Hand	23-Jan-20	
Cabinet	07-Jun-23	2022/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Month 12		Jon Davies		
Cabinet	05-Apr-23	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 7 held on 9th March 2023		Dave Jarrett		
Council	09-Mar-23	Capital Strategy & Treasury Strategy		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Council	09-Mar-23	Final Budget Sign Off including Council Tax Resolution		Jon Davies		
Cabinet	01-Mar-23	2022/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Month 9		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	01-Mar-23	2023/4 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	01-Mar-23	2023/4 WCF/Trust Treasury Fund Investments		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	

Cabinet	01-Feb-23	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 6 held on 19th January 2023		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	
Council	01-Feb-23	LDP submission for examination		Mark Hand	23-Jan-20	
ICMD	25-Jan-23	Community Council and Police Precepts - final		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Council	19-Jan-23	Council Tax Reduction Scheme		Ruth Donovan	31-May-22	
Cabinet	18-Jan-23	Draft Revenue & Capital Proposals		Jon Davies		
Cabinet	04-Jan-23	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 5 held on 1st December 2022		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	
ICMD	14-Dec-22	2023/4 Community Council & Police Precepts - draft		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	07-Dec-22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 4 held on 27th October 2022		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	
Cabinet	07-Dec-22	2022/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - Month 6		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	07-Dec-22	MCC Statement of Accounts		Jon Davies	17-May-22	



Council	01-Dec-22	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-Jul-21	
Cabinet	09-Nov-22	Revenue & Capital MTFP update and process		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	09-Nov-22	MonLife Heritage Strategy (or ICMD)		Matthew Lewis	10-Feb-22	
Council	04-Nov-22	Final Statement of Accounts		Peter Davies	7-May-21	
	27-Oct-22	Social Care & Health: Directors Report 2021/22		Jane Rodgers	6-Jul-22	
Council	27-Oct-22	2021/22 Final Statement of Accounts		Peter Davies/Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Council	27-Oct-22	ISA 260 report - MCC accounts		Peter Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	05-Oct-22	22/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - Month 4		Jon Davies	17-May-22	
Cabinet	05-Oct-22	Welsh Church Fund working group - meeting 3 held on 22nd September 2022		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	
Cabinet	05-Oct-22	Monmouthshire Destination Management Plan		Matthew Lewis	10-Feb-22	

Council	22-Sep-22	Rivers and Ocean		Hazel Clatworthy	9-Jun-22	
Council	22-Sep-22	RLDP Preferred Strategy endorsement post consultation	Endorsement of preferred strategy to inform deposit plan	Mark Hand /Craig O'Connor	20-May-20	
Council	22-Sep-22	Monmouthshire County Council self - assessment report 2021/2		Richard Jones	23-May-22	
Cabinet	07-Sep-22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 2 held on 21st July 2022		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	
ICMD	03-Aug-22	Designation of Secondary Catchment Areas		Matthew Jones	6-Jun-22	
ICMD	03-Aug-22	Additional Resources in Educations Strategy	Resources required to develop and maintain schools education systems and the implementatin of WG Ed Tech Programme	Sian Hayward	14-Jun-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Shared Prosperity Fund Local Investment Plan and Regional Lead Authority Arrangements		Hannah Jones	23-May-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Levelling Up?				
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	2021/22 Revenue and Capital Monitoring outturn		Peter Davies/Jon Davies	17-Feb-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 1 held on 23rd June 2022		Dave Jarrett	17-May-22	

Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Wye Valley Villages Future Improvement Plan		Mark Hand	1-Jul-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Regen Three Year Programme		Mark Hand	1-Jul-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Review of Chepstow High Street closure		Mark Hand	1-Jul-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	MUCH (Magor & Undy Community Hall) report		Nick Keys	9-Jun-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Home to School Transport Policy 2023-24.		Deb Hill Howells	27-Jun-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 22/23		Matthew Lewis	10-Feb-22	
Cabinet	27-Jul-22	Housing Support Programme Strategy (Homeless Strategy)		Ian Bakewell		
ICMD	13-Jul-22	Non Moving Traffic Regulation Orders (Amendment No 4)		Paul Keeble	17-Dec-21	
Cabinet	29-Jun-22	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 9 held on 10th March 2022		Dave Jarrett		
Cabinet	29-Jun-22	Cost of living discretionary scheme		Jude Langdon	13-Jun-22	

Council	23-Jun-22	Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics	To approve an Agreed Syllabus for Religion, Values and Ethics for Monmouthshire Schools	Sharon Randall-Smith/ Hayley Jones (EAS)	14/04/2022	
Council	23-Jun-22	21st Century Schools Band B Programme		Cath Saunders	8-Feb-22	
Cabinet	15-Jun-22	Review of Monmouthshire's Destination Management Plan 2017-2020	Deferred	Matthew Lewis	22-Sep-20	
Council	19-May-22	Tudor Rd - Playing Field and Play Area	Petition - to be presented to Council (in view of the delay until the petition can be presented - events may overtake its relevance so review nearer the time)	Ian Saunders	3-Oct-22	
Council	19-May-22	Constitution Report		Matt Phillips		
Council	19-May-22	Political Balance		Matt Phillips		
Council	19-May-22	Appointment to Committees		John Pearson / Nicola Perry		
Council	19-May-22	Appointment to Outside Bodies		John Pearson / Nicola Perry		

# Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference	
<b>Number of Committees:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Frequency of Meetings:</b> (Additional meetings called as appropriate)	<b>People Scrutiny Committee</b> ~ 6 annually <b>Place Scrutiny Committee</b> ~ 6 annually <b>Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee</b> ~ 5 annually <b>Public Services Scrutiny Committee</b> ~ 5 annually
<b>Committees and Terms of Reference:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two thematic Scrutiny Committees, '<b>People</b>' and '<b>Place</b>', engage the public in the design of policy and services, reflecting the public voice to the Cabinet in advance of decisions being taken. These committees are vehicles through which the public can voice their opinion on major decisions, assisting the committees in drawing conclusions and making recommendations to the Cabinet. Members may engage with their communities by holding informal face-to-face meetings in the community or conducting surveys in their local area. The public is also able to submit audio, video and written submissions to these Scrutiny Committees and attend their meetings.</li> <li>The '<b>Performance and Overview</b>' Scrutiny Committee provides constructive challenge to the Cabinet, holding them to account for the performance of service delivery and risk management. It also conducts robust financial monitoring and scrutinises the Council's performance in delivering the corporate objectives outline in its Corporate Plan.</li> <li>The '<b>Public Services</b>' Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the effectiveness of strategic partnerships (including the Public Service Board) and other public service providers to ensure that services delivered in partnership with other bodies are accountable and deliver improved outcomes for residents.</li> <li>Topics suggested for scrutiny are assessed against the 'scrutiny topic criteria' to determine the committee best placed to undertake the scrutiny. The Scrutiny Committees are role-based, so policy or service changes are scrutinised by the two thematic policy development committees, and performance reports or reports on risks or financial matters are scrutinised by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. Work programmes are planned and agreed by the Scrutiny Committees.</li> </ul>	

# Monmouthshire Scrutiny

People Scrutiny Committee	Place Scrutiny Committee	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Public Services Scrutiny Committee
<p>To scrutinise policy and services delivered to adults, children and young people that promotes their health, education and well-being and can include scrutiny of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education (schools and adult learning), Additional Learning Needs, Pupil Support Services, Learning Disability Services.</li> <li>• Safeguarding vulnerable adults and children, children in care.</li> <li>• Family Support Services, support for carers and young carers, respite provision.</li> <li>• Social care and health; including domiciliary, residential, nursing home and community care, occupational therapy, reablement, assistive technology, Disability</li> </ul>	<p>To scrutinise policy and services delivered to residents that promotes community safety and well-being and supports sustainable, resilient communities.</p> <p>To ensure that policy and services are responsive to the needs of businesses and visitors and promote economic activity.</p> <p>This can include scrutiny of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing (Jointly with People Scrutiny Committee).</li> <li>• Public Health, Environmental Health and Trading Standards.</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Highways, Transport and Traffic Management.</li> <li>• Street Lighting.</li> <li>• Grounds Maintenance.</li> </ul>	<p>To scrutinise the ongoing performance of all Council services and ensuring that the Cabinet is held to account.</p> <p>To scrutinise the Council's delivery against its corporate objectives, corporate risks and to conduct budget monitoring for all services.</p> <p>Scrutiny also includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Planning Function: Building Control, Development Control.</li> <li>• Asset Management.</li> <li>• Corporate Procurement.</li> <li>• School Performance, Scrutiny of the Educational Achievement Service (EAS)</li> <li>• Management of Individual Schools Budgets, Schools Delegated Budgets, the</li> </ul>	<p>To constructively challenge (where powers allow) the work and effectiveness of strategic partnerships (including the Public Service Board) and other public service providers to ensure public accountability of collaborative services, value for money and improved outcomes for people in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>To influence the decisions, policy and practice of public service providers by gathering evidence to make recommendations on effective multi-agency action to improve public service delivery.</p> <p>This can include scrutiny of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key services provided in partnership to local communities, such as those</li> </ul>

# Monmouthshire Scrutiny

<p>Services, Community Meals Service and Sensory Impairment Services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health Services.</li> <li>• Homelessness prevention and housing.</li> <li>• Poverty prevention and Social Justice.</li> <li>• Youth Services.</li> <li>• Youth Justice and youth offending service.</li> <li>• Leisure services (in terms of health outcomes).</li> <li>• Welfare Rights.</li> <li>• Community Legal Service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Countryside management.</li> <li>• Climate Change and Sustainability</li> <li>• Waste and Recycling.</li> <li>• Tourism and Destination Management</li> <li>• Public realm – Culture, libraries, museums, and theatre.</li> <li>• Economic growth, Place shaping and enterprise.</li> <li>• Local Development Planning, Economic Development Planning</li> <li>• Digital Infrastructure</li> <li>• Job creation and vocational skills.</li> <li>• Estates Management</li> </ul>	<p>Authority's Schools Individually Managed Budgets.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Executive's Function.</li> <li>• Revenues, Council Tax, Non-Domestic Rates and Finance.</li> <li>• Corporate Costs and Levies.</li> <li>• Facilities and Accommodation Management.</li> </ul>	<p>delivered by the Regional Partnership Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council's interface with the Voluntary Sector.</li> <li>• Any collaborative initiatives, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared Resource Service (SRS)</li> <li>- Integrated Adults Services with Health Partners.</li> <li>- Domestic Violence Service, Drug and Alcohol Services.</li> <li>- Public health and well-being.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Crime and Disorder Scrutiny in line with the Police and Justice Act (2006) and Welsh Government Guidance published in 2010.</li> </ul>
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## **The Scrutiny Chairs Group**

The Scrutiny Chairs Group comprises the four Scrutiny Chairs and the Chair of the Governance and Audit Committee and meets every 9 weeks to discuss forward Work Programmes to ensure a coordinated approach. The group will also consider periodically: Scrutiny Member Development, Scrutiny Self-evaluation, Public Engagement, Corporate Assessments, Corporate Planning, Risk Management, and other relevant scrutiny matters as appropriate.

# Monmouthshire Scrutiny

**Terms of Reference:**

- To ensure clear purpose and role for topics being tabled to Scrutiny Committees;
- To co-ordinate scrutiny and audit workstreams to avoid duplication, whilst recognising scrutiny has a clear and distinct role in the accountability for performance and scrutiny of budgets from that of the Governance and Audit Committee.

## Diarised Scrutiny Committee Dates

People	Place	Performance and Overview	Public Services	Scrutiny Chairs Group
12 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	18 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	8 <sup>th</sup> July 2022
27 <sup>th</sup> September (pm)	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2022	10 <sup>th</sup> October 2022 (pm)	20 <sup>th</sup> October 2022
15 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	10 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	29 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	28 <sup>th</sup> November 2022	8 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
10 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	12 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	15 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	20 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023
28 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2023	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2022	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2023 (pm)	6 <sup>th</sup> April 2023
18 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	13 <sup>th</sup> April 2023	27 <sup>th</sup> April 2023		



# Monmouthshire Scrutiny

## Role Description for a Scrutiny Committee Chair

### Leadership outside the Committee:

- To be familiar with the key issues facing the Council, its priorities, and its responsibilities to be able to inform the work of scrutiny.
- To understand the performance management framework and the Scrutiny Committee role in ensuring ongoing performance evaluation.
- To build effective relationships with the Chief Executive, Cabinet, service areas and stakeholders that is mutually trusting, so that scrutiny is respected and viewed a resource to the organisation.
- To develop realistic and balanced work programmes which address the key risks facing the Council and ensure a balance between policy development and the 'holding to account' role. To monitor progress of Scrutiny Workshops, and to ensure that agreed topics are given the necessary time to enable effective scrutiny.
- To undertake the necessary preparation prior to Committee meetings to lead the Committee effectively, ensuring the objectives of the meeting are fulfilled and that scrutiny is outcome-focussed.
- To involve users of services and key stakeholders in the business of Scrutiny Committees to effectively challenge the Council's performance.
- To represent scrutiny at meetings of the County Council and Cabinet on behalf of the Committee and to feedback to the Committee on the outcomes of such meetings.
- To determine arrangements for special meetings of the Committee.
- To ensure that the work of Scrutiny Committees is publicised and communicated to build understanding of its role both within and outside the Council.
- To contribute to the continuing development of scrutiny in Monmouthshire through learning from best practice elsewhere.

# Monmouthshire Scrutiny

## **Leadership at the Committee:**

- To manage the meeting to ensure the objectives of the meeting are fulfilled and that the scrutiny is outcome-focussed.
- To provide leadership to the Committee, recognising the varied contributions of individual Members of the Committee to ensure a positive group dynamic.
- To ensure effective questioning of the relevant Cabinet Members, officers, service providers and stakeholders on policy and performance relating to areas within the Committee's remit.
- To lead the Committee in commissioning research, gathering evidence, questioning internal and external witnesses to ensure that scrutiny recommendations are robust and evidence-based.
- To define and manage appropriate member and officer conduct at the meeting to ensure effective scrutiny.
- To ensure clear actions are agreed through Chair's 'summing up' to enable the work of the Scrutiny Committees to make a timely and relevant contribution to the Council.
- To ensure that the scrutiny process is transparent and that the Committee's obligation to engage with service users, the public and key stakeholders is reflected in the way the Committee undertakes its' business.
- To lead and oversee the proper process of call-in in accordance with the constitution.
- To ensure Standing Orders are applied impartially.

## Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Adults Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on  
Wednesday, 2nd March, 2022 at 10.00 am

### Councillors Present

County Councillor S. Howarth, (Chairman)  
County Councillor L. Brown (Vice Chairman)  
  
County Councillors: R. Edwards, M.Groucutt,  
R. Harris, M. Powell, S. Woodhouse and M.Lane

### Officers in Attendance

Eve Parkinson, Head of Adult Services  
Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager  
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
Stephen Griffiths, Strategy & Policy Officer  
Jonathan Davies, Acting Assistant Head of Finance  
Cath Fallon, Head of Economy and Enterprise  
Tyrone Stokes, Accountant  
Ian Bakewell, Housing & Regeneration Manager  
Rebecca Creswell, Homeless Project Officer

**Also present:** T. Crowhurst

**APOLOGIES:** None

### 1. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Public Open Forum.

No public submissions were received.

### 3. Domiciliary Care

Eve Parkinson delivered the presentation and answered the members' questions with Tyrone Stokes.

#### **Challenge:**

*Are there differences between care packages and domiciliary care? Are we working in hand with health authorities or separately?*

Predominantly, packages of care and domiciliary care are the same thing. We would assess someone; the majority sits with the local authority unless it's continuing health care. Following assessment, the package of care is provided either by our in-house domiciliary care services or commissioned providers. In-house tends to be a lot of enablement, reablement and the more complex cases.

*Are we partly responsible for bed blocking if we don't have the staff numbers to do the assessments more quickly?*

Our staff go into the hospitals to do the assessments. But it's following the assessment, whereby it's decided that that person needs a package of care, we hit a stumbling block where we can't provide what the assessment has determined. The whole system is very complex. It's not as simple as someone being admitted to hospital but then we can't get them out because

we haven't got a package of care. From Welsh Government's perspective sometimes people shouldn't have been admitted into hospital – there is a level of risk adversity around admissions – and the evidence is very stark that as soon as someone with several conditions, or who is older, is admitted they deteriorate very quickly. There are people who go into hospital needing nothing, and by the time they are ready for discharge they need a lot of support.

*So, at a critical care hospital i.e. The Grange, the assessment will be done when they transfer from there to another hospital, e.g. Nevill Hall?*

No, we assess in The Grange as well.

*Presumably occupational therapists in hospital do an assessment? Is the Social Services assessment part of that? How does it work in terms of discharge from wards?*

It varies across the county: there is a slightly different model at Nevill Hall in that Health Board OTs transfer into our team – so we 'in reach' into Nevill Hall, and work with our own people. So, for the most part, our own social workers, OTs and nurses in-reach into the hospital. In the Royal Gwent the model is different. We have a Rehabilitation Support Worker and a Discharge Liaison nurse from our Chepstow team who go into the Gwent to identify people who are from Monmouthshire and bring them out. In our Chepstow and Monnow Vale community hospitals our integrated team works completely.

*In the table on p7, there are 104 people with no care at home who are waiting for it. How are they supported in the interim?*

It is often family and carers who support them. It is a case of any extra support, respite or day service provision but it is very challenging. If the situation deteriorates, we try to do our best to pull something together, but we don't have the staff. We have daily conversations with the hospital to ascertain what risk people are put in when discharged.

*Regarding domiciliary care at home, in Wales there is a cap limit on what a family has to contribute. There might be financial implications for going into a care home as, presumably, the caps then don't apply? How would that work out financially for people who are struggling?*

The financial assessment is laid down as an act of law in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014. Someone identified as having a care need undergoes a financial assessment. For non-residential services (which covers domiciliary care), there is a maximum charge that we can levy of £100 per week. That will be maintained by Welsh Government in the next financial year, so the most someone will have to pay is £100. There is no cap with residential. So, someone might have an identified need, where they need to go into a care home, but if the financial assessment determines that they can afford to pay for that care themselves, they won't be entitled to any local authority funding support. This is sometimes an area of conflict i.e. when someone is fit to be discharged from hospital the financial assessment says they need to go into a care home, but they can afford to pay for themselves. Services from health are free but as soon as social care intervention is needed then they are chargeable under the Act.

*Even in care homes there's an element of support that should be contributed to by the health board.*

Yes. With care homes there are two avenues: residential care or nursing care, which is what you're referring to. Continuing health care is 100% health funded. If someone needs to go into a care home but with a small element of nursing provision, that is called 'free nursing care'. The health authority will pay for the nursing care element, and there's a supplement that the health

board pays, but the accommodation cost is payable by the local authority, which is where the financial assessment comes in.

*As the process is so complicated, does it cost more money? Could it be made simpler?*

Yes, it is complicated, and has always been though it has become more so since the Act came in in 2014. We have differing rates for the cap compared to England, which means English residents accessing Monmouthshire care homes, which creates extra complexity.

*But this can take time, especially if there are appeals against the financial assessment, coming back to bed blocking. Are we saying that the process is not as straightforward as it should be?*

We have to ensure that we are compliant with the law, part of which is performing a means-tested assessment to determine if people can afford to pay for their own care. We try to turn that around as quickly as possible, but we need to make sure that it is robust, equal and fair. Good engagement with the family is very important, including sometimes being frank. There is the right to reject the financial assessment but that means that if the person goes into residential care, they forego any financial support from the local authority. Those who are in hospital waiting for residential or nursing care homes are usually those who don't have the capacity to make that decision themselves, which adds another layer of complexity. Reaching the decision in that person's best interest involves the family, and when there is no lasting power of attorney it ends up in courts – we can't facilitate the discharge until the court has made a decision.

*Do we get many appeals?*

We get a lot, even more so recently. Law firms and financial advisers are increasingly involved. Pre-2014, there were perhaps 1-2 appeals per month, now it is 3-4 per day. This is time-consuming and expensive, but people have the right to challenge.

*Is it not time to look at how complex things are, and go back to a simpler system, particularly in providing things ourselves rather than buying services from private companies?*

Although we outsource some of our care, it is a way for us to carry out our duties. A carer who goes in does so on behalf of MCC. We have been employing more in-house carers over the last few years, so much so that in the Month 9 forecast, it is one of the reasons we continue to overspend in Adult Social Care. Pension contributions are a factor here: in the private sector the employer contribution is 3% but in MCC it is more like 23-4%, so immediately there is a greater overhead from employing our own carers. Also, if the external sector is struggling to recruit and retain carers then we will too. It comes back to social care not being seen as an attractive industry for people to enter – jobs in supermarkets and bars often pay more, for example. Furthermore, a carer has to be registered i.e. qualified, whereas those better paid jobs don't require a qualification.

*Do we know that the private companies we use are financially sound, or are any at risk of going under?*

At this time we aren't aware of any companies that are on the brink. However, they are under extreme financial pressures currently masked by the Covid Hardship Fund – once that ceases in 29 days' time we will get a clearer picture of the challenges. We are in constant dialogue with the providers to understand any difficulties that they have. We have sometimes had significant handbacks from companies that aren't on the brink but have decided that working in Monmouthshire is no longer viable for them; they have therefore given us notice on some packages of care, some of which are significant, creating a lot of stress to address them. It is

often not cost-effective for companies to bring their carers into Monmouthshire from, say, Blaenau Gwent, rather than have them stay in that county to work.

*Is it really the case that someone can leave hospital without having had an assessment?*

We have eyes on all of our hospital patients: we know who is admitted and when, with lists sent to us daily. We are very active in the conversations about the risks when discharging, what support they have at home, etc. We actively work to ensure that we can put in the best resources possible.

*Can training for family members who provide care be provided? Stepdown facilities have been provided for patients leaving the Royal Gwent. What about those in Monmouthshire?*

We work closely with family members, particularly around manual handling and equipment. There is currently a scheme called Step Closer To Home in which the health board funds people going into a residential setting as a stepdown from hospital. So, the hospital will discharge the person into a home, not necessarily in Monmouthshire. The health board provides the funding for 6 weeks, after which time if we still haven't found a package of care, we try to assess the person to understand their long-term needs, whether they need to stay in the residential setting or look at other options. It is a very complex situation. Funding for Step Closer To Home finishes at the end of March; we will have to consider then what the other options will be. We have many discussions with colleagues about how to stop someone going into hospital in the first place: if we were to have a more proactive and robust offer in the community then we could prevent a lot of this.

**Chair's summary:**

Thank you to officers for this report and their continuing efforts in a very difficult area. The committee has great concerns about recruitment and the ability to attract staff to social care. Members have strongly expressed their dissatisfaction with the system's complexity but are very grateful to officers for their hard work and dedication in working within it.

Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources, drew attention to the affordability challenge. Putting Adult Social Care on a sustainable footing features in the draft budget proposals. MCC carries a significant budgetary risk because of the system's fragility. It is right that those providing care are paid at a suitable rate; there are clear efforts from Welsh Government to do this, and to try to attract and retain the right supply of quality labour. There is targeted work to be done/continue in our commissioning arm. We have tried to get the Society of Welsh Treasurers, local government finance and WLGA more closely aligned with the work of the Association of Directors of Social Services, with the aim of working collectively to shape what a sustainable system for Adult Social Care would look like. We want to bring a very informed business case forward to Welsh Government, to engage in a meaningful conversation about moving ASC to a sustainable future.

#### **4. Housing Support Programme Strategy and Homelessness**

Stephen Griffiths presented the report and answered the members' questions with Ian Bakewell and Rebecca Creswell.

**Challenge:**

*This draft will go to a full draft and then to a full council decision?*

Yes, we have permission from Welsh Government for it to be agreed in retrospect (in the new council term, June or July).

*Would early intervention operate in association with registered social landlords? How would you identify those at risk, in order to intervene at an early stage?*

Identifying households that are experiencing problems that could lead to homelessness is the great challenge. We are looking at ways of data collection and intelligence gathering from many organisations, for example, the vulnerability of households experiencing rent arrears. Those in receipt of local housing allowance will be asked for a Discretionary Housing Payment – that is a flag of a situation that could result in homelessness. If that is flagged to us at an early stage, then we can perform an early intervention to identify needs and the requisite support. We have also contacted every estate agent in Monmouthshire to give them the opportunity to flag up any of their tenants who are beginning to experience low-level risk. We want to link with the Council's poverty campaign too to encourage anyone experiencing a problem to talk to us.

*Is it worth surveying the youngsters and those with complex needs, as to how they ended up in a homeless situation, to assist with prevention?*

We are looking at a system to identify those who might become homeless in order to get a housing pathway in place to anticipate possible homelessness.

*Is it possible to change the circumstance so that landlords are paid directly out of benefits, rather than by the person in receipt of benefits?*

This is harder now because DWP changed the rules relating to universal credit. There is a direct payment arrangement but it's harder than it used to be.

*Regarding prevention, can we compare our picture with other authorities, and collaborate on particular areas of experience?*

The previous homeless strategy was a Gwent one but the issues a year ago were so acute that each local authority wanted to focus on its own situation and response, which led to the strategies being individual. But we network very closely with our neighbours – there is a meeting today between the local authorities, for example – which are opportunities for sharing and comparing notes. There is a Gwent scheme to support prison leavers. As things begin to settle down post-Covid joint working will increase further.

*There is a lot of pressure on families now from the cost-of-living problem. Perhaps if there is mediation, they wouldn't need to progress from temporary to permanent accommodation?*

We have financial inclusion workers in the housing options team to support people with outgoings and income maximisation. The Housing Support Gateway also does a lot of this work, as does Citizens Advice, so it is a key part of what we do. When trying to find someone accommodation we do an affordability assessment, in order to put them in accommodation that is financially sustainable. There is a Monmouthshire Mediation Service which has dropped off the radar somewhat but based on this suggestion we will pick it back up and ensure that it is part of the prevention toolkit.

*How much accommodation has been lost due to private rented accommodation being taken off the market to let as Air BnB? Is this increasingly a problem?*

We aren't aware of landlords defaulting to Air BnB, but our study from a year ago showed a decline in the market. Anecdotal feedback that the housing options team gets is that landlords are selling. The trend therefore does feel as though it's down, rather than getting better.

*Has any assessment or modelling been done concerning the cost-of-living crisis that we're entering, particularly the long-term effects?*

This sort of modelling is a focus of the Community and Partnerships team, looking to better understand the situation. Modelling is at the heart of the rapid rehousing project; the Welsh Government is asking us to define the gap between housing need and housing supply. Once we've completed it, we should have a definitive number of how many properties we are short of, in terms of homelessness, and will be a number for us to work towards constructively. Poverty and affordability work will inform how we articulate the gap.

*Has there been any development in the Welsh Government initiative to buy up old properties e.g. Mulberry House? Wouldn't we be in a much better position if we didn't have to rely on private landlords, but could build our own units?*

Mulberry House was discussed previously in relation to our Empty Property Enforcement action plan, which gives us a stronger enforcement position if owners won't interact or work with us properly. We can purchase properties directly through that route. But the point about the council owning accommodation and having more direct provision is a key conversation that has been going on for some time. It is being given serious consideration, and we have been looking at accommodation with that potential in mind.

*Has a rise in interest rates and cost of living been factored in?*

We won't lose sight of this. We've had a period of relatively low interest rates, and mortgage repossessions aren't a big feature of our current demand. We are notified of them when they occur. But going forward this is something to be mindful of, in addition to fuel bills and other household pressures increasing.

**Chair's summary:**

The committee thanks the team for its hard work. In addition to the main questions, members have expressed concern about the number of houses in the county being sufficient and reiterated their wish for the use of vacant properties in high streets to be explored for homeless and affordable housing. The Chair asked that the rise in interest rates and cost of living be included in the report as a key risk. The team will next bring the Rapid Rehousing Proposal to the committee.

## **5. Budget Monitoring**

Tyrone Stokes and Jonathan Davies presented the report and answered the members' questions.

**Challenge:**

*How do we forecast the grants that we receive for the overall budget?*

It is difficult this year, given the amount of one-off grant funding that we have had. These have come in for a specific purpose, with a particular start and end date. The most recent was just shy of £1.25m to fund overspends in social care, which is why the overspend in adult social care has been almost entirely wiped out from Month 6-9. Other grants are more long-term, such as the Social Care Workforce Sustainability grant, detailed as part of the budget pressures. The short-term grants are welcome but don't alleviate the long-term pressures that we have.

*2021/22 has been very hard. Will things be a bit more normal next year? Could things delivered by grant be noted more clearly, i.e. itemised, in the reports? Why apply for a grant when it*



*means we then have to find the money from elsewhere to continue the service after the grant period expires?*

We have a comprehensive central grants register, so we can look at how we feed that into these reports. The Chief Officer's director's commentary references the effects on those grants, saying that without those one-off grants the bottom-line position would be £3m worse. Sometimes grants are delivered in such a way that we don't need to apply for them. It has been more complicated during Covid because the Covid Hardship Fund has propped up a lot of areas throughout the council – moving away from that will present a significant challenge.

*Instead of grants, would it not be better to have more core funding?*

Yes, that would give us more financial stability. Once a grant goes, we have to decide if we can step down from that expenditure or not, or do we need to meet that expense from core services. It presents a challenge.

*What sort of savings have there been, and can we be reassured that they won't affect services?*

We must applaud the service in coping with Covid. Delivering the savings that it has is a significant achievement. We must ensure that there is no effect on the end user. Moving forward, we are responsible when putting savings forward – we aren't putting any forward for next year, in fact, as the well has run dry on those.

*On homelessness, there will be a further grant to September to help with B&Bs but what will happen after that?*

As with social care, when the Covid Hardship Fund is removed at the end of this month, there will be a challenge to continue supporting that marketplace moving forward. Once the fund ends there are other avenues for us to explore for homeless funding, from a revenue perspective. It is too early to say whether those will meet all of our pressures for next year. We've included headroom of £2m in the capital budget for next year, put forward as investment that will allow the needs to be met when we encounter emergency situations. But it is a risk that we carry into next year and will need to be monitored carefully.

*What is the 'Winter Pressures grant unbudgeted for'?*

This refers to wiping out the overspend from month 6-9, as mentioned earlier. It was a last-minute grant announced by Welsh Government for those authorities whose social care departments were forecasting overspends. We have benefitted from this, taking us from an overspend in adult social care down to a slight underspend, changing our position by almost £1m in one quarter. But it is a one-off grant.

*Staff vacancies will need to be filled, given the pressure on departments?*

Again, it's difficult to get carers and we are competing with external contractors. But, fundamentally, not enough people want to enter the care sector.

*Are we understaffed?*

The major vacancies aren't social workers but care staff. Looking wider in the directorate around social care, in children's services for example, the vacancies are social workers. It is always difficult to recruit them for children's services. In Adult social care the vacancies mainly relate to getting carers in-house.

*What about long-term sickness etc.?*

This is a challenge, particularly related to Covid – long Covid, self-isolating periods, etc. Care has to continue despite staff being off. We sometimes have to go to agency to ensure this, but they are struggling to recruit carers too.

**Chair's summary:**

Many thanks to the officers. The coming year is going to be difficult. We will have a better idea of what's to come by the time we sign off the final budget in July, and once the grants come in for 22/23, we will have a better idea of where the pressures will be. The continuing pandemic makes the picture more complicated.

**6. Confirmation of Minutes**

The minutes were confirmed and signed as an accurate record, proposed by Councillor Brown and seconded by Councillor Edwards.

**7. Adults Select Committee Forward Work Programme**

Things will change somewhat if/when the new committee structure is agreed. The Gypsy and Travellers site issue needs to stay on the agenda; this piece of work is ongoing.

**8. Cabinet, Council and ICMD Forward Work Plan**

**9. Next Meeting**

It will be in June but is to be determined specifically once the Council's new diary is approved.

The meeting ended at **1.00 pm**

## Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee held at County Hall, Usk - Remote Attendance on Thursday, 3rd March, 2022 at 10.00 am

### Councillors in attendance

County Councillor L. Brown (Vice Chairman)  
County Councillors: L.Brown, C.Edwards, M.Groucutt, D. Jones, M.Lane, M. Powell and J.Watkins

### Officers in attendance

Will McLean, Chief Officer for Children and Young People  
Nikki Wellington, Finance Manager  
Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager  
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
Tyrone Stokes, Accountant

**Apologies:** County Councillor T.Thomas

### 1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 2. Public Open Forum.

No public submissions were received.

### 3. Family Support Services

Charlotte Drury delivered the presentation and answered the members' questions with additional comments from Tyrone Stokes.

#### **Challenge:**

*What involvement was there with debt referral, so that families are managing their budgets?*

This is one of the real values of the helpline that we set up – the worker is trained to give basic welfare rights advice. Welsh Government did this work in 2020/21, in which they offered training opportunities to help upskill people who might be in a position to offer advice. We also have very good links between the Early Help panel and the Housing Intervention panel; the latter has lots of opportunities for people to seek advice concerning welfare rights, benefits advice, income maximisation, debt management and debt advice. We have a worker sitting on both of those panels to ensure that we are joining up in the right way and that people are getting the right support.

*There is a concern about children who haven't connected with working online, who are still at home now. Are there ways of encouraging them to come to school?*

Because education is so important, all of the different services are picking up supporting children back into education and supporting their access to learning. There is an underpinning theme of social pedagogy across the landscape. Almost all of the children whom ACT works with improve their educational attendance. In terms of specific things, a big piece of work is

taking place between the educational psychologists and school risk counselling to look at emotion-based school avoidance – in fact, most school avoidance is rooted in emotional wellbeing i.e. children not being happy in school. I also sit on the management committee of Monmouthshire's Pupil Referral Service, which helps me to make useful connections. Improving children's learning and learning outcomes has to be at the heart of everything we do, but it is not a quick fix. In Monmouthshire, the difference between children from more and less affluent communities is more visible than in other authorities, and we know that this affects their emotional wellbeing.

*Have the referrals been particularly because families are confined to one house?*

To the degree to which that was a factor, we are largely through that now, as children are back in school, and adults are back at work. Space is always an issue: having access to the outside, green space, etc. is always important to people's wellbeing so the answer is both yes and no.

*It is excellent to see that we are doing a lot of work on intervention.*

We can never do enough. The direction of travel, in the sense of taking a preventative approach, is now unrecognisable compared with 7 or 8 years ago. The local authority taking children into care should always be the last resort. If we can do more 'downstream' work to ensure that, then that is the direction in which we will continue. And we also need to ensure that we are making best use of our resources: if we are to even scratch the surface of demand, we need to reach into our communities to grow the resource and resilience there. Our next focus will be on how we do that.

*Regarding the neurodevelopmental panel, parents feel that if they don't get through that panel and passed on to an eye scan referral, they feel dropped. What can we do to support those who don't get a referral to get their children diagnosed?*

If parents aren't accepted there, then they automatically come to the Early Help panel. So, they aren't dropped, but it might feel that way as they aren't getting the answer that they want. The EH panel tries to look at the child's needs, the family's needs and what is available, which might include support to go back into the eye scan process.

*Concerning poverty: after 2 years of Covid, and now with a cost-of-living crisis, does the service have the flexibility to respond to future, unexpected, changes?*

Monmouthshire has always been good at pivoting quickly. When we went into Covid, our school-based counselling service was already exploring a digital platform, so that happened almost immediately. We set up an advice line that went live before the end of March 2020. We offered virtual engagement, which works really well for some children, so we are keeping that and other developments that add value as part of a blended approach. We are also worried about what the future will bring for our more vulnerable families; the best that we can do is to have the right lines of communication and advocate for the families with whom we work as best we can. I have met with the MCC team that deals with poverty; it is a matter of joining up services and the community-based work that is taking place, so that each aspect can add value to the other.

*How does the service work with other areas of the service provided by MCC, under CYP?*

There is a range of place where liaison between the services occurs. The Early Help panel is a key one. Someone gets a seat at the panel if they can take a referral away and do something useful with it. We also work very closely with the school-based multi-agency meetings, and there is a link between those and the EH panel, which is very valuable, as the schools will look

at the needs of individual pupils and we then link in to the EH panel where a range of services are available. Another ongoing piece of work, which sits in CYP, is the early years Transformation Pioneer work. This involves setting up community-based hubs that will enable every child aged 0-7 to have a professional who is interested in them. It is a multi-disciplinary approach that concerns supporting family resilience, child welfare and child development at a very early stage. We are excited about the opportunities that it will bring.

*Are you working as hard with specialist school governors as with professionals, or is there more that you could do?*

We can always do more. I am more than happy to have a conversation about this to explore ideas. As mentioned earlier, my next focus will be on how to work more closely with community-based activity and how to develop the resource in that way. Partnership working isn't about having everyone around the same table but having the right people around the right tables, and having the right lines of communication between those tables. I am always open to hearing of something we missed or of another connection that we could make.

*Children didn't get the same pastoral support during Covid. How are schools making up for that gap?*

Pastoral care is a central pillar for all of our schools in Monmouthshire, but I can't speak about this specifically. I know from the multi-agency meetings that take place in most of the secondary schools that pastoral care of pupils is paramount. The Early Help panel in particular covers all of the different services (e.g. shift, Primary Care Mental Health, etc.) that promote emotional wellbeing.

*Concerning the gap in listening and support for pupils, is there capacity to increase the volunteer base?*

We have quite a few volunteers across our system. We offer student placements and are working with colleges. We have counselling, social work and youth work students volunteering with us, as well as some parent volunteers. Some parents who had received the service are now working in it, in paid employment. We have a good track record across early help services to bring people in and expand, but there is more potential there – in order to scratch the surface of demand we need to look at how we grow capacity using volunteers and placements. Proper training and support are important: once brought in, they need to be in a structure in which they can be provided with support and key contacts.

#### **Chair's Summary:**

Thank you for this report and the excellent work done by the team, particularly setting up the Early Help panel – the early help approach is the best one. Councillor Watkins also wished to commend the Achieve Change Together team, whose outcomes have been excellent.

#### **4. Budget Monitoring**

Tyrone Stokes and Nicola Wellington presented the report and answered the members' questions.

#### **Challenge:**

*Are most of the grants Covid-based or for particular aspects? What are the time limits on them being spent?*

There are grants for specific items not related to Covid. For example, the Additional Learning Needs grant of £184k, which is there for the new additional learning needs act, which is coming in, and the Revenue Maintenance grant, £1.1m, which we have had for a number of years. That grant will be spent this year; in fact, it has been spent, to offset existing school expenditures. We have agreed with Welsh Government that a number of the other grants can be rolled into the next financial year, which will allow schools to plan and make proper provision for them.

Although the report shows a favourable financial position, one-off grants have masked the real pressures moving forward. So, there is still a £1.3m pressure for the children's element in social care. The new numbers that come in are those who require high-cost support. The grants are very welcome, but we still go into next year with a challenge.

*In terms of pressures on social care, is that due to children who are in care – the numbers or the complexity of their needs increasing?*

Not necessarily. The main pressure is the looked-after population that we serve. But we are also trying to get finances where we have exhausted all of the opportunities to make use of the scarce resources that we have – we are trying to bolster and have preventative support downstream, as mentioned in the previous item, as the last resort is to bring someone into care. It's a case of trying to supplement the preventative approach that we have.

*When going for innovative approaches, you are looking for the appropriate grants to supplement that work?*

Yes, and there's a question of legacy, as when the grants are retracted we can't 'turn off the tap' – we are left trying to carry on that work, otherwise it is lost.

**Chair's Summary:**

Thank you for the report. It is good to see that the school balances are improving. Thank you to the staff for their hard work in a very difficult area.

**5. Children and Young People Select Committee Forward Work Programme**

Given political considerations during the pre-election period, ALN should be considered by the next administration – therefore, the next meeting will cover the Myst Project only. Following the next meeting, the new committee (post-election) will decide the work programme.

**6. To confirm the minutes of the previous meetings:**

- 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022
- 31<sup>st</sup> January 2022 (Special)

The minutes were confirmed and signed as an accurate record, proposed by Councillor Powell and seconded by Councillor Groucott.

**7. To confirm the date and time of the next meeting as 7th April 2022 at 10.00am**

The meeting ended at **11.15 am**