

Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 10 April 2024

Notice of meeting

County Council

**Thursday, 18th April, 2024 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA**

AGENDA

Prayers will be said prior to the Council meeting at 1.45pm. All members are welcome to join the Chair for prayers should they wish to do.

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Chair's Announcement	
4.	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th February 2024	1 - 10
5.	URGENT CABINET DECISION TAKEN ON 6th MARCH 2024	11 - 12
6.	DEVELOPING CHILDREN'S RESIDENTIAL AND 16+ SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION PLACEMENTS	13 - 42
7.	MOTIONS TO COUNCIL:	
7.1.	Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor That this council agree that it is of concern that the chair of Standards Committee has resigned citing that the proper functioning of the Committee, and his role as Independent Chair, has been undermined to the extent that he is not prepared to continue as a member. That this Council commits to upholding standards of conduct in public life to supporting the committee in addressing the issues the independent members of the committee identify as undermining the proper functioning of the committee.	

7.2. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

This Council:

Recognises the significant public support for local procurement to back Monmouthshire businesses, reduce food miles and minimise the county's carbon footprint.

Deeply regrets the decision of the administration to award a contract for dairy products to a business based over 100 miles away, so Monmouthshire schools, care homes and leisure centres can no longer use milk from Monmouthshire farms.

Instructs the administration to take urgent steps to restore local provision of dairy products.

7.3. Submitted by County Councillor Tony Kear

This Council:

Believes that elected members should aspire to the highest possible standards in public life.

Expresses concern that opportunities for scrutiny, engagement and public consultation have been eroded over the past two years.

Agrees to set up a cross-party working group to review current arrangements and make recommendations to improve accountability in council decision-making.

8. MEMBERS QUESTIONS:

8.1. From the Independent Group and County Councillor Simon Howarth to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

When will the work on the Melville Theatre in respect of the My Day My Life Base be commenced and when is it anticipated to be concluded?

8.2. From the Independent Group and County Councillor Simon Howarth to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

Please provide an update on the work to support The Gathering's business plan and the projected timeline for The Gathering to occupy Tudor Street?

8.3. From County Councillor Frances Taylor to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader

Please provide an update on the Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision process in respect of the timelines and the relationship with the timeline for consultation on the Replacement Local Development Plan?

<p>8.4.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Simon Howarth to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p>Would the cabinet member please update the council and the public on the ongoing repairs required to the section off carriageway the A40 from the Hardwick roundabout to the Raglan roundabout? There are many rumours around with reference to the speed reduction.</p>	
<p>8.5.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p>Has the Cabinet Member considered introducing free parking in Monmouth at key times to encourage residents to support local businesses through the duration of current disruption?</p>	
<p>8.6.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the work taking place at the junction of Wonastow Road and Rockfield Road?</p>	
<p>8.7.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p>What public consultation and scrutiny has taken place on proposals to partially close Goldwire Lane to traffic?</p>	
<p>8.8.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services</p> <p>Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Cabinet decision to purchase a property in Monmouth for a residential children's home?</p>	
<p>8.9.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader</p> <p>Will the Cabinet Member provide an update regarding improving Chepstow's transport infrastructure?</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Next Meeting 16th May 2024</p>	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY**

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Rachel Buckler	Devauden;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Laura Wright	Grofield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tony Kear	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Catrin Maby	Drybridge;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jan Butler	Goetre Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Ian Chandler	Llantilio Crossenny;	Green Party
County Councillor Sara Burch	Cantref;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Alistair Neill	Gobion Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Su McConnel	Croesonen;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby	Llanelly Hill;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Fay Bromfield	Llangybi Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jane Lucas	Osbaston;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Emma Bryn	Wyesham;	Independent Group
County Councillor Peter Strong	Rogiet;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent
County Councillor Paul Griffiths	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong	Caldicot Cross;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Garrick	Caldicot Castle;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Maria Stevens	Severn;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Steven Garratt	Overmonnow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Angela Sandles	Magor East with Undy;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Ben Callard	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor John Crook	Magor East with Undy;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Dale Rooke	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Catherine Fookes	Town;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Sue Riley	Bulwark and Thornwell;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jayne McKenna	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jill Bond	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Lisa Dymock	Portskewett;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tony Easson	Dewstow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Christopher Edwards	St. Kingsmark;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Simon Howarth	Llanelly Hill;	Independent Group
County Councillor Richard John	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor David Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	Mardy;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Phil Murphy	Caerwent;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Paul Pavia	Mount Pleasant;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell	Pen Y Fal;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Frances Taylor	Magor West;	Independent Group

County Councillor Tudor Thomas
County Councillor Armand Watts
County Councillor Ann Webb

Park;
Bulwark and Thornwell;
St Arvans;

Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
Welsh Conservative Party

Public Information

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Watch this meeting online

This meeting can be viewed online either live or following the meeting by visiting www.monmouthshire.gov.uk or by visiting our Youtube page by searching MonmouthshireCC.

Welsh Language

Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd trwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn yn barchus i chi roi rhybudd digonol i ni er mwyn darparu ar gyfer eich anghenion. The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public through the medium of Welsh or English. We respectfully ask that you provide us with adequate notice to accommodate your needs.

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

- to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

Objectives we are working towards

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our Values

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

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

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

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

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

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Chair's Report 24th February – 10th April

Saturday 24 th February 11 a.m.	Friends of Usk – Unveiling of plaque for the completed renovation of Jubilee Clock Twyn Square, Usk
Sunday 25 th February 6 p.m.	Ross-on-Wye Town Council Civic Service St Mary's Church, Ross-on-Wye
Thursday 29 th February	There's NO PLACE Like Home Monmouth
Friday 1 st March 11.30 a.m.	Lord Mayor's St David's Day Civic Service The City Parish Church of St Joh the Baptist, Cardiff
Friday 1 st March 2.30 p.m.	St David's Day, Bilingual Church Service Priory Church of St Mary, Usk
Sunday 3 rd March 7 p.m.	Usk Choral Festival St Mary's Church, Usk
Tuesday 5 th March 11 a.m.	Citizenship Ceremony Registrar's Office, Usk
Monday 11 th March 10 a.m.	An Observance for Commonwealth Day 2024 - Magor with Undy Community Council St. Mary's Church, 1 Priory Court, Magor
Monday 11 th March 12 p.m.	Severn View Park Residential Home Visit Severn View Park Residential Home, Clos Griffen, Portskewett
Tuesday 12 th March 6 p.m.	Gwent Music – Chair's Charity Showcase Monmouth Comprehensive School
Friday 15 th March 5 p.m.	Ramadan Community Iftari Event County Hall, Usk
Saturday 16 th March 10 a.m.	Gwent Music Centre Spring Concert Rougemont School, Malpas Road, Newport
Tuesday 19 th March 5 – 7 p.m.	Private Viewing of Exhibition – Understanding Collections, Uncovering Stories, Behind scenes MonLife Museum 2019 - 2025 Shire Hall, Monmouth
Friday 22 nd March	Chair's Spring Fling Usk Memorial Hall
Friday 5 th April 7.45 p.m.	New Business Opening Event Burlesque Hair Salon, Usk
Tuesday 9 th April 5 – 7 p.m.	Celebration of the 75 th Anniversary of the Opening of Chepstow Museum
Wednesday 10 th April 12 p.m.	Care & Repair Cymru Online Lunch & Learn Session
Wednesday 10 th April 3 p.m.	Chair's Charity Afternoon Tea The Three Salmons, Usk

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Meirion Howells (Chair)
County Councillor Su McConnel (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Peter Strong, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Catherine Fookes, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Martyn Groucutt, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer, Resources
Jane Rodgers	Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Matthew Gatehouse	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
Ruth Donovan	Assistant Head of Finance
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance

1. Declarations of Interest

County Councillor Jayne McKenna declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 12.1.

County Councillor Jane Lucas declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 12.1.

County Councillor Rachel Buckler declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 12.1.

County Councillor Ann Webb declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 12.1.

County Councillor Tony Kear declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in relation to item 12.1.

2. Chair's Announcement

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm

Noted.

Council observed a moment of silence as a mark of respect and to reflect on the passing of former County Councillor, Pauline Watts.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th January 2024

Council resolved to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2024 as an accurate record.

4. STRATEGIC EQUALITY PLAN 2024-28

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report to seek approval of the authority's Strategic Equality Plan and objectives for the period 2024-28.

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

That Council approve the Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=941>

5. 2023/24 MRP POLICY REVISION, 2024/25 CAPITAL STRATEGY, 2024/25 TREASURY STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the report to seek approval of a revision to the Council's MRP policy for 2023/24, and to approve the Council's 2024/25 Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy.

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

That Council approves the revision to the 2023/24 Minimum Revenue Provision policy relating to supported borrowing as outlined in Appendix 1.

That Council approves the Capital strategy for 2024/25 as found at Appendix 2.

That Council approves the Treasury management strategy for 2024/25 as found at Appendix 3, including the:

- 2024/25 Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement
- 2024/25 Investment & Borrowing Strategies

That Council agrees that Governance & Audit Committee should continue to review the Council's treasury activities for 2024/25 on behalf of the Council by receiving and considering quarterly treasury update reports and a year-end report.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=1634>

6. COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the Council Tax Resolution Report in order to comply with specific timescales for Council Tax setting and to make certain defined resolutions.

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm

The recommended resolutions also draw together the Council Tax implications of precepts proposed by the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent and Town and Community Councils, thereby enabling the County Council to establish its headline Council Tax levels at the various property bands within each Town or Community area.

Upon being put to a recorded vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations as set out in the report.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=2417>

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND	X		
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY	X		
Councillor F BROMFIELD		X	
Councillor L BROWN		X	
Councillor E BRYN			X
Councillor R BUCKLER		X	
Councillor S BURCH	X		
Councillor J BUTLER		X	
Councillor B CALLARD	X		
Councillor I CHANDLER	X		
Councillor J CROOK	X		
Councillor T DAVIES		X	
Councillor L DYMOCK		X	
Councillor <u>A</u> EASSON	X		
Councillor C EDWARDS		X	
Councillor C FOOKES	X		
Councillor S GARRATT	X		
Councillor R GARRICK	X		
Councillor P GRIFFITHS	X		
Councillor M GROUCUTT	X		
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth		X	
Councillor M HOWELLS	X		
Councillor R JOHN		X	
Councillor D. W. H. Jones		X	
Councillor P. Jones		X	
<u>Councillor T</u> KEAR		X	
Councillor M LANE		X	
Councillor J LUCAS		X	
Councillor C MABY	X		
Councillor S MCCONNEL	X		
Councillor J MCKENNA		X	
<u>Councillor P</u> MURPHY		X	
Councillor A NEILL		X	
Councillor P PAVIA		X	
<u>Councillor M</u> POWELL		X	
Councillor S RILEY	X		
Councillor D ROOKE	X		
Councillor A SANDLES	X		
Councillor M STEVENS	X		
Councillor J STRONG	X		
<u>Councillor P</u> STRONG	X		
<u>Councillor E</u> TAYLOR		X	
Councillor T THOMAS	X		
Councillor A WATTS	X		
Councillor A WEBB		X	
Councillor L WRIGHT	X		

7. DIARY OF MEETINGS FOR 2024/25

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report in order for Council to approve the diary of meetings for 2024/25.

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

That the diary of meetings for 2024/25, as attached, be approved.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=9386>

8. STANDARDS COMMITTEE - APPOINTMENT OF COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEMBER

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report to confirm the appointment of a Community Council member to the Council's Standards Committee.

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

Council approves the appointment of Mr Michael John as a Community Council Member of the Council's Standards Committee

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=9859>

9. APPOINTMENT OF MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report in order to appoint members of the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum for the next 3-year period.

Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations, noting the amendments highlighted:

That the applicants set out in Appendix 1 be appointed as members of the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum for the next 3-year period, with the exception of Mr Barry who has withdrawn his application. Together with the Council's appointed member that provides a forum of 17 members.

That Councillor Sara Burch be appointed as the Council's member.

That following discussion with the forum at its first meeting to identify any under-represented interests, the appointment panel make further recommendations on additional appointments up to the statutory maximum of 22 members.

That the retiring members of the Forum be thanked for their valuable contribution.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=9942>

10. TO AGREE THE NAME OF THE WELSH MEDIUM SEEDLING PRIMARY SCHOOL IN MONMOUTH

The Leader presented the report in order for Council to agree the name of the new Welsh Medium Seedling Primary School in Monmouth which is due to open in September 2024.

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

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm

That the school should be named Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy, translated as Monmouth Welsh School.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=10246>

11. **MOTIONS TO COUNCIL:**

12. **Submitted by County Councillor Lisa Dymock**

Monmouthshire is proud of its heritage and considers food and farming to be of huge importance now and in the future. Everyone here will be more than aware of the pressures on our farmers from various policies from TB to NVZ regulations and the most recent is causing an immeasurable amount of worry is the SFS - the criteria farmers will need to meet is unachievable and will add an astronomical amount of pressure on our farmers.

I ask this council to call on WG to pause the current consultation and work with farmers, farmers unions and other stakeholders to find a way forward that works for everyone and does not penalise our farmers and their communities but supports them.

We understand the importance of protecting our environment and this must be equally considered but without risking our food security from farmers being pushed out of the industry.

Seconded by County Councillor Rachel Buckler

The following County Councillors declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest:

Jayne McKenna; Jane Lucas; Rachel Buckler; Ann Webb; Tony Kear; David Jones; Su McConnel.

Upon being put to a recorded vote the motion was carried.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=11028>

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND			X
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY			X
Councillor F BROMFIELD	X		
Councillor L BROWN	X		
Councillor E BRYN			X
Councillor R BUCKLER	X		
Councillor S BURCH			X
Councillor J BUTLER	X		
Councillor B CALLARD			X
Councillor I CHANDLER			X
Councillor J CROOK			X
Councillor T DAVIES	X		
Councillor L DYMOCK	X		
Councillor <u>A</u> EASSON			X
Councillor C EDWARDS	X		
Councillor C FOOKES			X
Councillor S GARRATT			X
Councillor R GARRICK			X
Councillor P GRIFFITHS			X
Councillor M GROUCUTT			X
Councillor S.G.M. Howarth	X		
Councillor M HOWELLS			X
Councillor R JOHN	X		
Councillor D. W. H. Jones	X		
Councillor P. Jones	X		
<u>Councillor T</u> KEAR	X		
Councillor M LANE	X		
Councillor J LUCAS	X		
Councillor C MABY			X
Councillor S MCCONNEL			X
Councillor J MCKENNA	X		
<u>Councillor P</u> MURPHY	X		
Councillor A NEILL	X		
Councillor P PAVIA	X		
<u>Councillor M</u> POWELL	X		
Councillor S RILEY			
Councillor D ROOKE			X
Councillor A SANDLES			X
Councillor M STEVENS			X
Councillor J STRONG			X
<u>Councillor P</u> STRONG			X
<u>Councillor E</u> TAYLOR	X		
Councillor T THOMAS			X
Councillor A WATTS			X
Councillor A WEBB	X		
Councillor L WRIGHT			X

13. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**14. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Angela Sandles ,
Cabinet Member for for Equalities and Engagement**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm

What engagement did the council undertake with leisure centre users during the 24-25 budget consultation?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=17864>

15. From County Councillor Fay Bromfield to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Can the Cabinet Member please advise of any planned repairs to Usk Road, especially the section from Llanybi to Usk.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=18162>

16. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

How will the Council be supporting vulnerable school pupils in the financial year 24-25?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=18290>

17. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development, Deputy Leader

What steps is the Council taking to support town centre businesses in Monmouth during the current disruption?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=18874>

18. From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

In light of the flooding seen last Winter and again since the New Year period, can I ask the Cabinet Member what forward thinking and proactive actions are being taken to tackle rural / localised flooding in Monmouthshire.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=17051>

19. From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

Given the proposed cuts to school budgets for 24/25, what reassurances can the Cabinet Member give the pupils and their parents in Usk Church In Wales Primary School, which is situated in my Ward, that the quality of the children's lunch time meal and portion sizes will not be affected?

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=17441>

20. PUBLICATION OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT AS REQUIRED BY THE LOCALISM ACT

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 29th February, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented to the report in order for Council to approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.

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

That Council approves the Pay Policy for the year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

<https://www.youtube.com/live/dFN0Us-dKdA?feature=shared&t=19373>

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm

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SUBJECT: Urgent decision of Cabinet taken on 6th March 2024

MEETING: Council

DATE: 18th April 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Monmouth

EXEMPT REPORT

Appendix 2 to this report is exempt by virtue of the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 4, paragraphs 12 and 21 in that it is information relating to a particular individual and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. To update members on a decision taken by Cabinet on 6th March 2024, where call-in was disappplied due to urgency.
- 1.2. To explain why the decision was urgent in accordance with paragraph 31.15.3

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Council notes the decision of Cabinet on 6th March 2024 and the reasons for urgency as set out in the recommendations of the Cabinet report attached at Appendix 1.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1. On 6th March 2024 Cabinet resolved to acquire and refurbish a property for the purpose of developing an in-house a residential children's home. The background and detail to this decision is contained within the Cabinet report at Appendix 1.

- 3.2. Paragraph 31.15.1 of the Council's constitution states:

'The call-in procedure...shall not apply where the decision being taken by the Cabinet is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would, for example, seriously prejudice the Council's or other public interests...'

- 3.3. The decision to purchase the property was urgent because:

The Local Authority had applied to the Housing with Care Fund (HCF) for £1,175,500 spread over two years – up to £875,500 (2023/24 for the acquisition) and up to £300,000 (2024/25 for the refurbishment). The HCF would provide for the cost of the acquisition (up to an independent

market valuation), together with land transaction fees and associated costs only if we are able to complete the purchase before year end.

3.4. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of People Scrutiny Committee, considered the reasons for urgency and agreed that the decision was urgent.

3.5. The decision and the reasons for urgency are being reported to Council in accordance with paragraph 31.15.3 of the Constitution.

4. CONSULTEES:

- Paul Matthews – Chief Executive
- James Williams – Chief Officer of Law & Governance
- John Crook – Chair of People Scrutiny

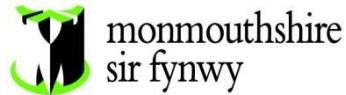
5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

5.1. Appendix 1 – Cabinet Report dated 6th March 2024

6. AUTHOR:

Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health

janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk



SUBJECT: Developing children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements

MEETING: Council

DATE: 18th April 2024

DIVISIONS/WARD AFFECTED: All

1. Purpose

1.1 This report sets out our proposed approach for the development of children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements based on an analysis of current and predicted need.

1.2 The report considers two distinct elements of developing placements, these being i) the building-based / accommodation element of the provision; and ii) the provision of direct care and support.

1.3 The report locates the development of residential and supported accommodation placements within the context of national and local policy objectives.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Council endorses the approach to developing ‘in-house’ residential placements and 16+ supported accommodation placements for children who are looked after and young people who are care experienced or homeless.

2.2 Council endorses the proposal that, in the first instance, Children’s Services will look to re-purpose existing assets available to the Council in order to provide children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.

2.3 Where re-purposing is not viable Council endorses the direct acquisition from the open market of suitable properties or land for the purpose of developing children’s residential provision or 16+ supported accommodation, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.

2.4 Council agrees that borrowing headroom is increased to up to £3 Million to support the direct acquisition from the open market of suitable properties or land; and / or to support refurbishment or repurposing costs, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval.

2.5 Council agrees that the any decisions to draw on the borrowing headroom for the purposes set out within this report will be made by Cabinet.

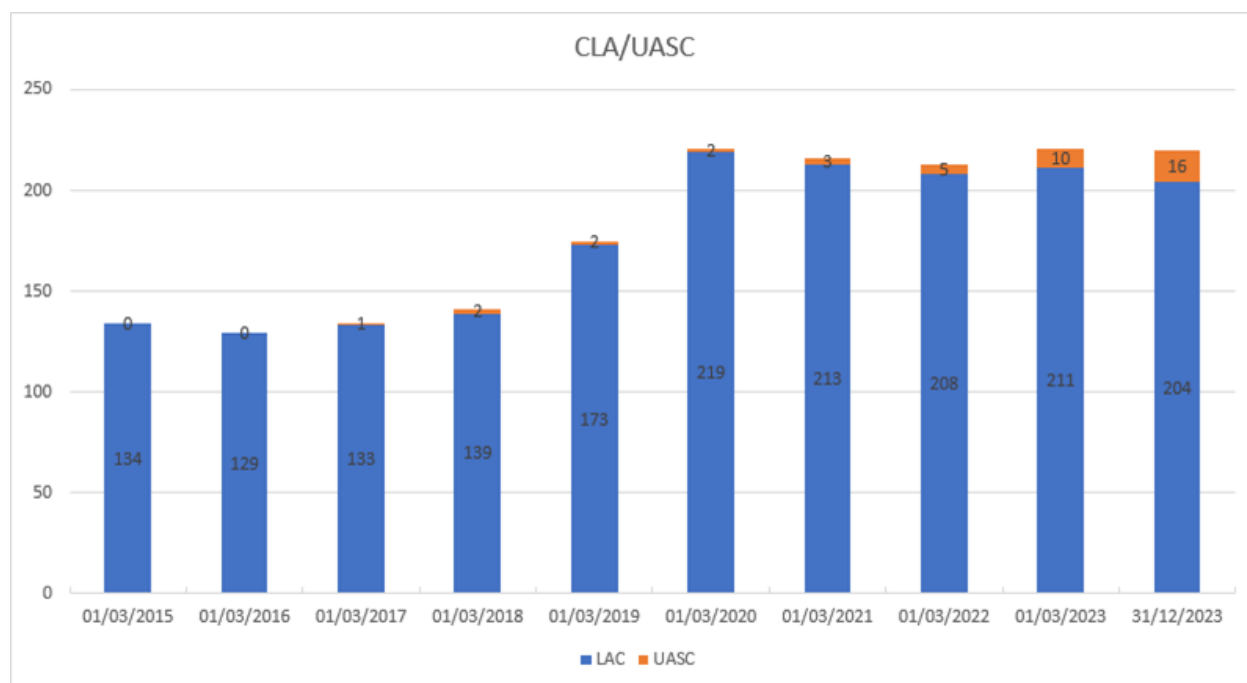
2.6 Council agrees that a report is provided to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee on a six-monthly basis for assurance that we are obtaining value for money with specific acquisitions and that the policy approach is delivering the impact and outcomes expected.

3. Key Issues

Demand

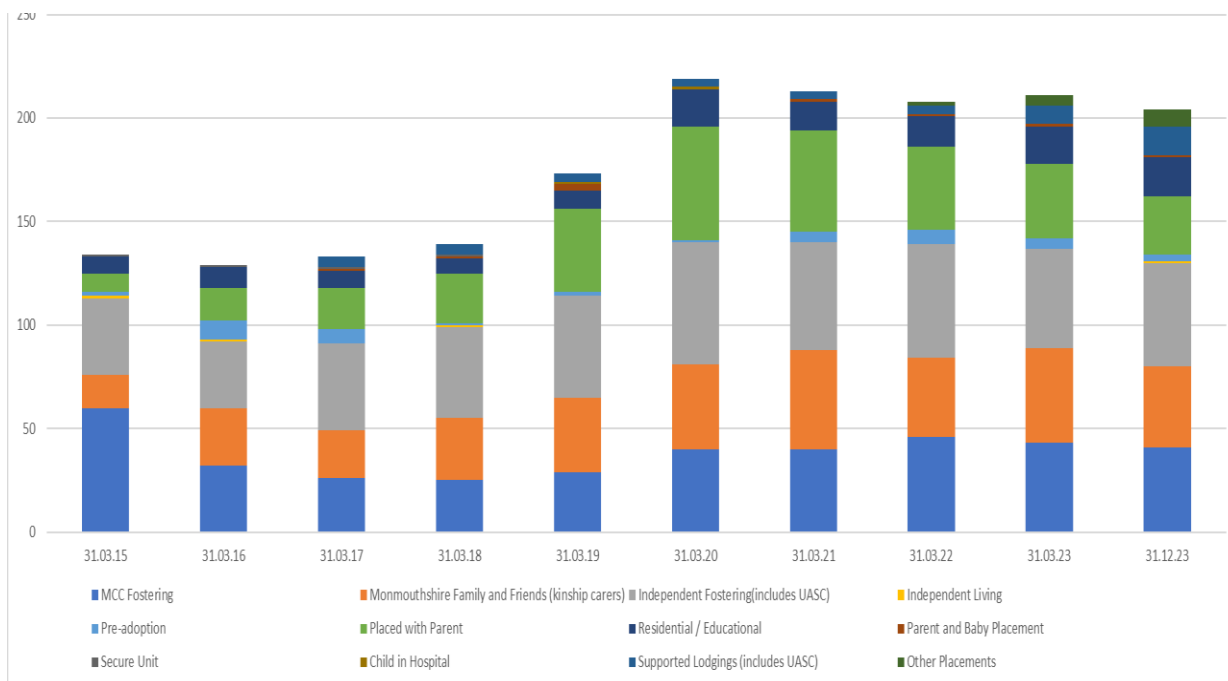
3.1 A primary objective within Children’s Services is to prevent the need for children to come into care and to remain living safely within their families and communities. In situations where prevention is not possible our aim is to provide safe and appropriate care with kinship carers, foster carers or in residential settings. We work with children who are in care, and their families, so that as soon as it is safe and practicable to do so children are enabled to leave care in a planned way. Our operational drive over recent years has been to ensure that the right services are in place at every tier of need to support these objectives. As a result, the numbers of children in care have started to stabilise, albeit that the number of children looked after has increased significantly over the last 8 years.

Fig.1 Child Looked After population between year-end 2015 to year end of December 2023, denoting the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)



3.2 The increased capability within the service to support children remaining with their families means that those children who are in care are more likely to have complex needs such that require specialised placements including residential care. This graph shows an ongoing use of residential placements and a continued reliance on independent fostering agencies. Both placement types are very costly and are not always in the best interests of children.

Fig.2 Distribution of placement types over the last 8 years



Placement Sufficiency

3.3 When children come into care an assessment is made of their holistic needs so that we can find the most suitable placement for them. Ideally, there should be a range of options available to help us find a good match for each child or sibling group, preferably within a family placement or with a foster carer, and where this cannot be achieved within a residential setting. In recent times, choice over placements has been extremely limited because the availability and suitability of looked after child placements in general have not kept pace with the requirements of the service.

3.4 There are insufficient suitable foster placements for Monmouthshire children and a continued over-reliance on the use of carers that offer placements via Independent Fostering Agencies, many of which are located outside of the County and therefore not always ideal from a child's perspective. The service remains committed to increasing the number of placements we can make with Monmouthshire carers. There is a comprehensive fostering strategy in place that seeks to support the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers.

3.5 There is a national shortage of residential placements, which is exacerbated by the insufficiency of foster placements, and more recently by the instability of the provider market following the Welsh Government policy initiative to drive profit out of children's care.

3.6 These shortages place considerable pressure on resources and sometimes mean that we are unable to place a child in the right setting that best meets their needs, and in some situations has forced us to look after a child in an unregistered placement.

3.7 Similarly, we do not have sufficient supported accommodation placements for older children and what we do have quickly becomes saturated because of difficulties in securing move-on accommodation. A lack of throughput can mean that young people remain in foster care or residential settings for longer than is in-keeping with their need for increased independence; and simultaneously blocks placements for other children.

3.8 Within this context, our current commissioning data and analysis indicates that Children's Services must significantly increase the number of all placement types that are available to ensure that children's needs are consistently met; and to provide increased stability and certainty in our care planning for children.

The Number of Placements Required

3.9 The predicted number of additional residential and supported accommodation placements that we need, based on current demand, are as follows:

Residential Children's Home (Standard)		
Current Demand	Existing Provision	Further placements required
19	0 All placements are currently spot purchased externally	12
Residential Children's Home (Bespoke)		
Current Demand	Existing Provision	Further placements required
6	4 Woodview and Skirrid View	2
Supported Accommodation		
Current Demand	Existing Provision	Further placements required
Approx 37	15 Pobl X 2 provisions for UASC	20

Residential Children's Home (Standard)

3.10 Residential Children's Homes (standard) should provide a homely setting, usually with a maximum of 4 / 5 children with good access to local amenities and facilities. A positive match between the children is critical, as is the provision of a skilled and stable workforce. Residential Children's Homes are registered with CIW (Care Inspectorate Wales) and come under a regulatory framework through RISCA (Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016).

- As at the end of Dec 2023, there were 17 children in spot-purchased, for-profit residential placements plus an additional 2 children who were not in regulated provision making the total demand 19.
- The Local Authority does not have any in-house provision for these types of placements.
- We are currently seeking to develop 12 in-house placements via 3 properties either through re-purposing an existing asset or through acquisition from the open market.
- This would guard against the risk of over-provision and allow some flexibility to continue to procure placements from 3rd sector (not-for-profit). We would review demand and the need for any additional placement development on an annual basis as the local, regional and national picture continues to evolve.

Residential Children's Home (Bespoke)

3.11 Residential Children's Homes (bespoke) allow for a residential placement to be designed around the specific needs of an individual child/ren. Bespoke placements are needed where children present with complex disability or psychological difficulties often

arising from adverse childhood experiences, trauma or abuse. Placements are supported by a multi-agency team and to provide a therapeutic care plan in accordance with a child's needs. Such placements are often located in non-residential areas with access to some secure outside space. Bespoke placements are also registered with CIW. Finding placements for children who require this sort of specialised residential provision is the most challenging and can be extremely costly, and often results in children being placed away from their homes and communities.

- As at the end of Dec 2023, 5 children needed a bespoke placement.
- The Local Authority has 2 provisions (Woodview and Skirrid View) with the capacity for 2 placements in each (although both provisions are required for solo-use placements currently).
- Woodview is a Local Authority owned property and there is a contract in place with Action For Children to provide the care.
- Skirrid View is owned by Monmouth Housing Association who lease the property to the Council and there is a contract in place with a for-profit organisation to provide the care.
- We are currently seeking to develop 2 further in-house placements via 1 additional property, either through re-purposing an existing asset or through direct acquisition.

Supported Accommodation

3.12 16+ Supported Accommodation is intended to help and support young people over the age of 16 and up to 24 years to develop their independent living skills as they navigate the transition into young adulthood. Supported accommodation provides a stepping stone to young people leaving care, who may not be fully ready to take on their own tenancies. At the same time supported accommodation can be accessed by 16+ young people who are homeless; or who are unaccompanied asylum seekers. The provision does not come under RISCA and there is no requirement for the provision to be registered with CIW.

- Currently there are 37 young people aged 16-17 who will leave care within the next 2 years and 13 more who are turning 16 in the next 12 months, making the total projected demand approximately 50.
- The Local Authority has the capacity for up to 15 supported accommodation placements currently.
- This comprises 2 partnership schemes (with a for-profit organisation) specifically for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children and a jointly developed project and Service Level Agreement with Pobl for Supported Accommodation Placements for care leavers.
- We are currently seeking to develop approximately 20 additional placements via re-purposing and existing asset or through direct acquisition.
- This would guard against the risk of over-provision, particularly as not all care experienced children need support accommodation placements. We would review the situation annually to check demand against proposed developments.

Developing Placements - Accommodation

3.13 To provide residential placements for children and young people two elements must be considered:- i) the accommodation / building element and ii) the workforce element i.e. the care and support that is provided to children.

3.14 With regards to the accommodation element of developing residential children's homes, there are stringent regulatory requirements under RISCA which must be met including such matters as room size, suitability of communal and outdoor space, fire, health and safety issues together with environmental and location considerations.

3.15 In the first instance our approach to securing properties is to consider the suitability of re-purposing existing assets within the Council or through our RSL (Regional Social Landlords) partners.

3.16 Alongside of this, and because it is unlikely that the Council's existing asset base will fully meet our requirements, we are continuing to search for suitable properties via the open market.

3.17 All properties that we have considered so far require works to be undertaken to ensure compliance with RISCA and render them suitable for their intended purpose. Children's Services are working in partnership with Property Services to draw-up the relevant specifications so that refurbishment costs are properly represented within business-cases for each project.

3.18 Our approach, in either re-purposing existing assets or acquiring properties from the open market, has the potential to take full advantage of any available Welsh Government grants and ensures that assets remain with the Council. To this end, the Council continues to work in partnership with Welsh Government, the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Registered Social Landlords and other Local Authorities, such as to secure funding and/or suitable alternative provision that would look to mitigate or avoid the need for the borrowing headroom to be drawn upon.

Developing Placements – Providing Care and Support

3.19 In respect of the provision of care and support for **residential children's homes** in the context of the eliminate agenda, there are essentially 2 service delivery models: - either through an in-house Local Authority residential service; or via a procurement route where the Local Authority tenders for a not-for-profit organisation to provide the care.

3.20 From a Monmouthshire Children's Services perspective, our current preferred approach is for a combination of both these delivery models. This would see us develop an in-house residential provision whilst leaving the procurement route open, with the right approach being determined on a project-by-project basis via a cabinet decision. This recognises that there are benefits and risks associated with each delivery model, and that as each project develops there will be a number of variables to be taken into consideration. Given the uncertainty and instability of the external context, the service will need to be flexible and adaptive in order to respond to circumstances as they evolve during this development phase. The benefits and risks for the service associated with each delivery model are set out at Annexe 1 and are discussed in summary below.

3.21 A **procurement route** allows the service to seek to enter into a partnership relationship with a not-for-profit provider, who would then take over the management and operational delivery of the provision on a contractual basis, including meeting all the associated regulatory requirements.

3.22 There is concern within the sector that the not-for-profit provider market is not yet sufficiently developed to move into the gap that is currently filled by profit making companies. Equally, there is little indication at this point, of any appetite within profit making organisations for a change of business model. Within this context we are concerned that our ability to secure a partnership arrangement with a not-for-profit organisation to provide residential care might be extremely limited.

3.23 The service is equally aware, however, that maintaining partnership relationships with not-for-profit providers can create opportunities and brings with it the advantages of having a mixed economy approach to providing residential care for Monmouthshire children.

3.24 An **in-house model** would require the Service to develop a residential care workforce and management structure. Establishing an in-house service would be a significant step for the service and would present various strategic and operational risks and challenges including workforce, financial / commissioning risks as well as managing performance and quality assurance issues against a statutory regulatory framework. However, we feel that the knowledge and experience gained within the service over the last two years having already supported the development of two projects, the service is well-placed to manage these challenges.

3.25 To take forward the development of an in-house residential service the intention is to recruit a suitably skilled and experienced person at Service Manager level. The revenue costs for this post would be financed through a Welsh Government grant for the first year and would subsequently be brought into the Children's Services budget structure. Children's Services recognises that there are risks associated with this option, particularly as we have not yet *tested the market* for suitable candidates.

3.26 Having carefully considered the associated benefits, dis-benefits and risks (see Annexe 1) the service has concluded that an in-house residential service should be established at this point to ensure the future sustainability of the service and to ensure that moving forward, we have the right provision in place to meet the needs of children and young people. The over-riding factor in reaching this conclusion is that an in-house service would support an integrated practice model with the rest of children's services including a shared ethos and practice base resulting in better outcomes for children. Importantly, it would support broader care planning for children looked after as placements and matching would remain wholly within our control. Additionally, once the infra-structure of a residential provision is established it should be easier to scale up as required with increased flexibility depending on the needs of the service. An in-house service model would align with the ambition to take profit out of children's care and protect the service from escalating charges within external providers.

3.27 The option of seeking partners to provide both the care and accommodation element of a residential children's home has been discounted at this point, as recent market intelligence suggests that the ability to attract tenders would be extremely limited. Furthermore, the option would have less potential to generate cost savings for the authority.

3.28 By way of contrast, in respect of the provision of **16+ supported accommodation**, the service is not intending to develop in-house support with the preferred model being to work in partnership with a not-for-profit provider, such as an RSL. Expertise in providing housing-based support exists within the not-for-profit / RSL arena and there are already established models in place for Monmouthshire children / young people. On this basis, we are confident that we will have a positive response to a tendering exercise such that will meet our requirements for the support element of 16+ support accommodation schemes.

Legal & Policy Context

3.29 Under Section 75 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Wales Act the Local Authority has a duty to ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate placements for children who are Looked After. The Act also requires the Local Authority to provide suitable accommodation and support to care experienced young people and the same duty applies to 16 / 17-year-olds who present as homeless.

3.30 The Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health is able to act under powers within the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014 to ensure that suitable accommodation is secured to meet care needs.

National Level

3.32 In its Programme for Government, Welsh Ministers have made a commitment to eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children by the end of the Senedd term. This is a top priority commitment for the Government and one which requires a range of partners and expertise to deliver. This business case supports this policy initiative.

Local Level

3.33 Providing high quality placements that support children to remain closer to their homes and communities features in the community and corporate plan. The ambition to reduce the costs associated with the provision of placements for children who are looked after, with an emphasis on proactive care planning, accords with the savings proposals put forward within this Council's 2024 – 2025 provisional budget.

3.34 The proposal accords with the Council's Asset Management Strategy which was approved by Full Council on 17th January 2024. The strategy commits the Council to having fit-for-purpose assets and to make maximum use of vacant space.

4. Equality and Future Gens Assessment

4.1 Children who are looked after and care experienced children are more likely to have experienced disadvantage and adversity including poverty; poor housing; poor parental health and disability. It is well known that the life chances and outcomes for care experienced children are poorer than their counterparts and that in adulthood they are at increased risk of experiencing ill-health, homelessness and having lower employment and educational opportunities. Adverse experiences within their birth families can be aggravated by poor experiences within care, particularly for those young people with more complex needs and disabilities.

4.2 In line with the Council's corporate parenting and safeguarding responsibilities, this proposal seeks to overcome some of these challenges by expanding the Council's capacity to place children closer to their homes and communities. This helps to maintain vital relationships and support networks which otherwise may become fragmented. The provision of an in-house or partnership model will allow for increased integration and multi-disciplinary which helps to support good outcomes for children.

5. Options Appraisal

Option 1 Do nothing

5.1 The council could choose not to seek to develop any further residential or supported accommodation placements. This would potentially release leadership capacity within Children's Services and other directorates; and at least in an immediate sense would protect the council from the financial risk of borrowing.

5.2 The Local Authority would remain heavily reliant on external provision, with little control or influence over being able to place children appropriately in the way that best meets their needs. Reliance on an insufficient provider market can mean that children are placed away from their homes and communities. The fragility of the market could either mean that we have no available placements and that such placements as are available are disproportionately expensive.

5.3 Current information is that the for-profit provision will continue to be under-developed in the near term and therefore will not be able to respond to the insufficiency challenges currently playing out; and that similarly provisions being stood up by other LAs again at least

in the near term are being predominantly designed to solve their own issues. Any release of leadership capacity would be overtaken by the operational risks and challenges associated with placement searching and, as a last resort, the use of un-registered (illegal) placements. The impact of being in situations where the service has had no choice but to set up an unregulated placement is incredibly stressful and demoralising for the workforce and causes significant service disruption.

5.4 For these reasons, the option of 'doing nothing' is too risky; is not a viable or sustainable option at this point and has therefore been discounted.

Option 2

Develop residential and supported accommodation placements specifically for Monmouthshire children as set out within this report

5.5 Developing our own residential and supported accommodation placements would go some way to ensure that moving forward, we are able to place children appropriately. The aspiration is to have an in-house residential provision which more closely replicates family life and meets the placement requirements of children and young people with complex needs which cannot be met through foster care or other family placements. Equally, our ambition, to expand supported accommodation placements for care experienced young people through a partnership model, will support good outcomes for children as they prepare for living independently as young adults.

This option would deliver a range of benefits:

For children

5.6 The benefits for children are that they are more likely to be able to remain within or close to their community. This means that they are more likely to be able to attend the same school, continue with hobbies, talents and interests, have more meaningful and engaging time with their birth families, relatives and friends, which ultimately could result in a quicker return home or a placement with a friend or family member.

5.7 Children also benefit from continuity of care and relationships within their professional network and support can be more accessible and flexible. Similarly, an in-house provision can support close integrated working across a multi-disciplinary network enabling better outcomes for children.

5.8 Children who are placed some distance away from their families and networks, are at far greater risk of becoming isolated and can begin to dissociate themselves from their local community. This can result in significant difficulties when their care ends – with young people finding it difficult to establish a sense of belonging and experiencing challenges in re-building fragmented relationships.

Operational and financial benefits include:

5.9 Option 2 will reduce reliance on profit-based solutions to providing residential placements. It will allow the service to have greater control over matching and placement decisions and to determine the wider aspects of care planning across the cohort of children who are looked after.

5.10 Reducing the number of children who are placed away from the area will save childcare practitioner time and cost in travelling to establishments and increase job satisfaction.

Expanding the available provision into 16+ supported accommodation will increase the service ability to step-down children from residential provision to support their transition as care leavers.

5.11 There will be a greater level of control over the financial outlay relating to residential provision.

Option 2 is the recommended option.

6. Evaluation Criteria

The overall evaluation method associated with the proposals are as follows:

Criteria	Baseline
Total number of children who are looked after	204
Number of children in for-profit residential placements	18
Number of children in non-LA not-for-profit residential placements	1
Number of council / RSL owned properties that are being utilised to provide residential / supported accommodation	2
Number of children in residential placements provided via the LA	0
Number of not-for-profit supported accommodation placements	3
Number of for-profit supported accommodation placements	12

Evaluation criteria will be established for individual projects set against the intended specifications and in accordance with an identified timeline.

7. Reasons

7.1 In summary this report looks to respond to the current external context and challenges associated with the provision of children's social care in a proportionate and flexible way, and in a way which is both sustainable and does not leave the Council wholly dependent on an uncertain provider market. This meets the wellbeing and safeguarding needs of children and young people and provides an affordable means by which the Council can deliver against care needs and when set against the cost that the Council would have had to face in securing provision through the provider market.

7.2 The proposals will support the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to provide sufficient and suitable placements for children who are looked after and is in keeping with national and local policy direction.

7.3 The recommendation for Cabinet to approve any draw-down on borrowing headroom will provide balance and transparency within decision making, whilst still allowing operational objectives to be achieved in circumstances where speed of decision making may be critical.

8. Resource Implications

8.1 On 27th January 2022, the Council agreed that borrowing headroom of up to £2 Million could be used to support the development of children's residential provision. This supported the purchase and subsequent development of Woodview children's home. A successful grant application allowed this borrowing to be reduced so that there is now £1.86 Million remaining within the original borrowing headroom. This report proposes that this is now extended up to £3 Million to support the further acquisition and repurposing of assets to support the development of the Council's residential provision. The borrowing will only be required at a time when business cases are submitted and initially approved by the S151 officer of the Council prior to a cabinet decision, in line with the report's recommendations. The borrowing costs will be met from existing Children's Services budgets.

8.2 The borrowing headroom being created will only support property acquisition costs and any resultant costs to modify the property to make it fit for purpose; or the costs associated with modifying an existing council asset. All associated revenue costs, including on-going building maintenance and repair, will be met from existing Children's Services budgets.

8.3 Any use of the borrowing will result in the acquisition and/or development of property. The Council's Landlord Services teams will look to provide ongoing support and to ensure that any assets acquired are well maintained and to ensure that asset values are retained such that best value is derived upon any subsequent disposal. However, it is worth noting that any accommodation being vacated might not automatically lead to disposal as it might be retained at that point for future use.

8.4 The Council will work in partnership with Welsh Government, the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, Registered Social Landlords and other Local Authorities, such as to secure funding. The Council will seek to acquire properties for residential children's homes and 16 plus supported accommodation schemes (either through direct purchase or through partnership with RSL) on the basis that this maximises available grants and so that the Local Authority or RSL retains the asset. If successful, such bids will allow us to greatly reduce the borrowing cost to the council.

8.5 The business case required to justify any acquisition will need to outline an independent valuation being undertaken by a qualified valuer. Revenue business cases will then detail the overall costs (and unit cost) of each provision which would include workforce and leadership costs, building, amenities, food and recreation costs, insurance, and any provision for voids.

8.6 At month 6 we were forecasting to spend annually the sum of £5,337,030 to purchase 19 beds, which equates to an annual cost per bed of £280,896. The 3 options below look at facilities for 12 beds, so the current cost as a comparator for basing savings would be an annual equivalent cost of £3,370,752. This shows that there are potential opportunities for savings to be made by moving away from spot-purchasing residential placements. Comparatively, the cost of providing an in-house residential service is more than commissioning a not-for-profit organisation. However, to rely solely on this approach would be too risky both financially and operationally because it is unlikely that there will be sufficient interest or capacity within the not-for-profit provider market to meet our requirements. Although comparatively an in-house service costs more, there are advantages around ensuring good outcomes for children and allowing the Council to reduce its dependency on the external market, that make it worthwhile.

Model	Average Annual Cost Per Bed (£)	Projected Annual Cost (£) (based on 12 units)	Projected Annual Savings (£) (based on 12 units)
Current Model External residential children's home placements as at month 6 2023/24	280,896	3,370,752	
LA owned accommodation with care and support provided through an in-house residential service	201,795	2,421,540	949,212
RSL owned accommodation with care and support provided through an in-house residential service	210,770	2,529,240	841,512
LA owned accommodation with care and support provided through a 'not-for-profit' organisation	163,450	1,961,400	1,409,352

8.7 The savings proposal of £1.3 Million put forward by Children's Services within the Council's budget setting process for 2024 / 2025 assumes that some of these savings will be achieved through placement changes that are proposed as set out within this report.

8.8 The Service is intending to create a post and recruit a permanent service manager with responsibility for developing an in-house residential provision. This would cost £85K inclusive of on-costs and assuming a 4.25% pay increase in line with the MTFP. For the first year this post would be financed through a Welsh Government grant (and therefore cost neutral to the Local Authority) with subsequent yearly costs being built into the Children's Services budget. The expectation would be that as in-house provisions are developed; salary costs would be recoverable against any savings made.

9. Consultees

Social Care and Health DMT
Senior Leadership Team, Monmouthshire County Council
Nicholas Keyse, Head of Landlord Services, Monmouthshire County Council

9.1 The draft report was presented at People's Scrutiny Committee on 6th February 2024.

The committee scrutinised the report in depth and agreed to offer the following points as a summary:

Members discussed the sufficiency and suitability of bespoke placements and how adequate and flexible they would be. They also discussed the likelihood of securing Welsh government grants and the exchange of placements with other local authorities. Members ask questions around the possibility of joint projects for neighbouring authorities, and also talked about learning from other councils. Questions were asked around the issue of sibling room sharing. Also, the impact of bringing children young people back to their communities. Many Members ask questions about property type and location. The committee questioned how consultation had been held with young people and there were also questions about the types and numbers of placements needed, the revenue implications and the acquisition of repurposing properties. They discussed the borrowing headroom and the governance and transparency around the purchase of assets.

9.2 The committee endorsed the proposal and requested the opportunity for post decision scrutiny.

10. Background Papers

None

11. Author

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Annexe 1

Considerations regarding the benefits, dis-benefits and risks of i) establishing an in-house residential service and ii) procuring care via a not-for-profit organisation

Establish an in-house residential service - Benefits
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall management of service quality, design and the operation of the homes, together with an integrated practice model• Residential care staff would be recruited and trained to work alongside other Children's Services' staff, with a shared ethos and practice base• Potential for some flexibility of workforce across services and provisions (e.g. residential care staff would retain links and offer support to children moving on from residential services.)• Greater control over which children access the provision with more ability to positively risk manage and match children• Better opportunity to align the child's social worker and the in-house residential provision to facilitate and promote family and community connections.• Potential improved MDT working and connection with internal resources such as education and specialist family support• Once established potential for scaling up (into new provision) quicker than through a procurement route• An in-house provided residential care service will be supported by the Regional Eliminate Team, in setting up and running of a residential care home.• Mitigation of voids through partnership with other Gwent Local Authorities, or other Welsh Local Authorities on a reciprocal arrangement.
Establish an in-house residential service - Dis-benefits and Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The service has a lack of experience in developing and managing in-house children's residential care homes.• There is limited capacity and no established infrastructure (at present) to support a residential service (e.g. responsible individual / service manager, care home manager, project manager, managing recruitment, finance, human resources).• The service would need to work closely with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to achieve Good or Outstanding rating• Children's Services would be solely responsible for the effective management and delivery of the service, with reputational risk should there be poor delivery / adverse CIW inspections• Recruitment will be challenging• An in-house provision may prove to be more expensive, due to what the Council pays its staff (staffing costs account for approximately 80% of cost of providing the service); however, increased control and management of voids may off-set that• There will be resource implications in setting up and managing an in-house provided residential care home (both financial resources and human resources). <p>MITIGATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Over the last two years the service has gained some experience of supporting residential developments through establishing Woodview

- The service intends to establish a service manager post to build the infra-structure required as projects are developed
- For the next year the service is benefiting from additional capacity and expertise through a regional resource to support Local Authorities with the challenges associated with eliminate agenda.
- There is experience of providing regulated services under RISCA within adults' services.

Tender for care - Benefits

- Being a good partner and supporting the not-for-profit provider arena (the timing of a change in approach is good; the voluntary/third sector is keen to explore different ways of working with local authorities).
- External Providers have experience in developing and managing children's residential care homes
- The administrative and managerial responsibility for recruiting, training and supervising a residential workforce will not rest solely with the LA.
- The Council holds less risk in terms of redeploying staff or paying redundancy should it decide it no longer requires the externally provided residential care home at a later date.
- The responsibility of registering and maintaining the provision in line with CIW regulations will remain with the provider.
- As a commissioner, the service will be able to hold the provider to account for service quality
- External providers can mobilise and set up a service quicker than the Council, and may be able to pull in additional benefits and resources
- Block contracts may help reduce cost
- The Council will have the contractual ability to negotiate voids, packages of care with an externally provided residential care home partnership.

Tender for care - Dis-benefits and risks

- Externally provided residential care home partnership providers can still reject referrals, set out their own matching criteria and give notice to discharge children and young people which could result in finding new, possibly more expensive placements.
- The Council has less control over an external provision in terms of matching and risk plans around individual children - although this could be mitigated to some extent within the contract. There will be less flexibility.
- At the same time the LA would be responsible for voids
- There is reputational risk to the Council if service standards decline within the externally provided residential care home (ultimately it will fall back on us, but the risk is more shared)
- The provision would be managed via the organisation's management structure, with its own separate governance arrangements, staff development and training, which could in turn lead to different values/cultures.
- There is an under development of not-for-profit providers and there is a sense that not-for-profit organisations are starting to over-extend – there is a real risk that a partnership orientated provider would not come forward or find this partnership arrangement an attractive offer.

- Some for-profit providers are seeking to change to meet the new legal requirements but are likely to want to remain on a spot-purchase basis.
- Each project would likely require a separate procurement process which could lead to arrangements with different providers, therefore loss any economies of scale and resource intensive

MITIGATIONS

- The service has experience of procuring organisations to provide care and of working in partnership with 3rd sector organisations
- The procurement process would establish whether organisations were viable to contract with
- The Local Authority can chose whether to contract for care (particularly given the aspiration to develop an in-house provision)
- If contracts are in place there would be on-going contract monitoring for quality assurance independent of CIW.



Integrated Impact Assessment document

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

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Jane Rodgers Phone no: E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To develop 'in-house' residential placements and 16+ supported accommodation placements for care experienced children
Name of Service area Children's Services	Date January 2024

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The proposal seeks to support children and young people who are looked after or care experienced to live closer to their homes and communities and to be appropriately supported to develop their independence. Children of any age between 0 - 17 years can need to be cared for by the Local Authority. Currently the impact of the operating context, where there is a significant shortage of placements is having an adverse impact on children: Children may be impacted by the lack of placement choice and availability Children may feel that there is an expectation that they leave placements before they are ready.	None identified at this point	<p>Individual care planning for children is in place which takes into account children's individual needs and personal outcomes in line with the stage of development.</p> <p>Schemes such as supported lodgings and When I Am Ready are encouraged</p> <p>Support services are in place to help children develop skills and personal resilience.</p> <p>This proposal concerns the expansion of placement choice and availability.</p>
Disability	Children with more complex needs and disabilities are disproportionately impacted by the lack of suitable placements – this proposal is seeking to address this through the development of bespoke services and provision.	None identified at this point	<p>Individual care planning for children is in place which takes into account children's individual needs and personal outcomes in line with the stage of development.</p> <p>Schemes such as supported lodgings and When I Am Ready are encouraged</p> <p>Support services are in place to help children develop skills and personal resilience.</p> <p>This proposal concerns the expansion of placement choice and availability.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Pregnancy or maternity	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Race	<p>When matching placements for children who are looked after this should take account of race, religious, cultural and identity needs – the proposal seeks to continue to ensure that suitable placements are available for children in line with their race, culture and identity needs including Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. <i>Think about what the proposal will do to promote race equality with the aim of: eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between persons of different racial groups. Also think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Issues to look at include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy & Traveller, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc</i></p>	None identified at this point	Increase training and awareness across the service to ensure that services, practitioners and carers are skilled and trained to support all children in their race, religious, cultural and identify needs.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief	.When matching placements for children who are looked after this should take account of race, religious, cultural and identity needs – the proposal seeks to continue to ensure that suitable placements are available for children in line with their race, culture and identity needs. <i>What the likely impact is e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days</i>	None identified at this point	Increase training and awareness across the service to ensure that services, practitioners and carers are skilled and trained to support all children in their race, religious, cultural and identify needs.
Sex	None identified at this point	None identified at this point	
Sexual Orientation	When matching placements for children who are looked after this should take account of their sexual orientation and identity needs – the proposal seeks to continue to ensure that suitable placements are available for children in line with their identity needs. <i>.Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbian, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training</i>	None identified at this point	Increase training and awareness across the service to ensure that services, practitioners and carers are skilled and trained to support all children in their race, religious, cultural and identify needs.

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</p>	<p>Children who are looked after and care experienced young people often face social economic disadvantage and a paucity of support networks – the proposal seeks to provide the best support for young people as they approach adulthood through the provision of appropriate accommodation, support and services.</p> <p>The proposal seeks to arrest the amount of money that is being spent on profit-making organisations and encourage the development of not-for-profit provision, including in-house services, so that further investment can be kept in Wales and retained for the benefit of children.</p> <p><i>Under the Welsh Language measure of 2011, we need to be considering Welsh Language in signage, documentation, posters, language skills etc. and also the requirement to promote the language</i></p>	<p>None identified at this point</p> <p><i>Describe any negative impacts that your proposal/s will have on people or groups of people who suffer socio-economic disadvantage.</i></p>	<p>Ensure that practitioners and carers understand the impact of socio-economic disadvantage on individuals who are care experienced and how these may be overcome.</p> <p>Work with the corporate parenting panel to consider ways in which the whole council can support children who are looked after and care experienced.</p> <p><i>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage.</i></p>

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
<p>Policy Making</p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p>	<p><i>The proposal will allow for more children to remain in Wales which will support their Welsh culture and identify and support their Welsh language skills</i></p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>Ensure that workforce is trained in the Welsh active offer</p>
<p>Operational</p> <p>Recruitment & Training of workforce</p>	<p><i>Any recruitment activity as a result of the proposal will be shared in Welsh. There are Welsh language learning opportunities for the workforce and some training is offered in Welsh medium. Consideration will be given as to Welsh speakers are specifically required depending on the needs of children who are looked after.</i></p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
<p>Service delivery</p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>	<p>We will continue to ensure that the Welsh active offer is made for all children and their families who require services.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>Continue to promote the use of Welsh and Welsh language skills within the service</p>




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



Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The proposal seeks to support young people who are care experienced to develop the skills and personal resilience required to live prosperously	Further development of supported living accommodation
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and land, river and coastal ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	The proposal seeks to support children who are looked after and care experienced young people to develop healthy lifestyles and to be placed in safe and nurturing environments that support their overall physical and emotional health. The development of increased in-house placement options supports an integrated approach to ensure that children's needs are met.	Further development of placements and support services available to carers and children
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	The proposal recognises that children and young people particularly those with more complex needs are often those who are placed away from their homes and communities, and sometimes outside of Wales. This is disruptive and potentially damaging to the young persons long-term needs and sense of belonging. The placement seeks to address this by developing placements where children can be closer to their homes and communities.	Further development of in-county placements and the support services available.

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37

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	The proposal recognises that children and young people particularly those with more complex needs are often those who are placed away from their homes and communities, and sometimes outside of Wales. This is disruptive and potentially damaging to the young persons long-term needs and sense of belonging. The placement seeks to address this by developing placements where children can be closer to their homes and communities.	Further development of in-county placements and the support services available.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The proposal seeks to address some of the disadvantages experienced by children and young people who are looked after by providing them with the right services and support to allow them to overcome early adversity and go on to lead fulfilled lives as adult citizens.	Further development of in-county placements and the support services available.

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal is focused on developing sustainable support and accommodation services for children who are looked after</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The proposal includes working together with a range of partners at a local and regional level, including the other Gwent LAs, Foster Wales, Regional Social Landlords and not-for-profit organisations.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The views, wishes and feelings of Children and young people are at the centre of their care planning, and are always taken in to account. The proposal seeks to ensure that children have increased and better options in terms of their personal goals including where and with whom they want to live.</p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p>	<p>Children have the right to independent advocacy – the service needs to ensure that training is up to date so that all practitioners are aware and support an active offer of advocacy.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The proposal supports the on-going development of preventative family support and support for care experienced young people</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>. The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, requires local authorities to provide a range of services designed to promote all aspects of wellbeing (as defined by the Act) and prevent the need for care and support. The proposal is made in accordance with and in partnership with the Regional Partnership Board and together with Foster Wales and the WG programme board for eliminating</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Children's safeguarding needs are prioritised in their placements and care planning	<i>None identified at this point .Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and vulnerable adults, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those</i>	None identified at this point
Corporate Parenting	This proposal supports the work of the corporate parenting board in ensuring that the council works to get the best outcomes for children and young people who are looked after and care experienced young people through the development of placements and support accommodation	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

Page 4

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

This will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Data sources include for example:

- Quantitative data - data that provides numerical information, e.g. population figures, number of users/non-users
- Qualitative data – data that furnishes evidence of people's perception/views of the service/policy, e.g. analysis of complaints, outcomes of focus groups, surveys
- Local population data including the census figures
- Household survey data
- Service User Data e.g. from My Monmouthshire, FLO, PLANT, Mayrise, ONE etc
- Evidence and data from Monmouthshire's Well-being Assessment
- Recommendations from Scrutiny or following consultation
- Comparisons with similar policies in other authorities
- Academic publications, research reports, consultants' reports, and reports on any consultation with e.g. trade unions or the voluntary and community sectors
 - Equalities dashboard link. [Equality data dashboard for EQIA's 2020.xlsx](#)

Data includes – placement types and numbers of children who are looked after gathered through PLANT

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

.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template

It is a statutory requirement to provide appropriate and sufficient placements for children who are looked after that meet their holistic needs. National shortages of placements lead to some children being inappropriately placed and separated from home and communities – this affects children with more complex needs disproportionately. The proposal seeks to address this through the further development of placements, particularly those within Monmouthshire.

The proposal is expected to have a positive impact on care-planning and placement provision for children who are looked after and care experienced children.

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

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
Acquire suitable properties that can provide residential placements and 16+ accommodation schemes	By March 2025	Jane Rodgers
Develop an in-house residential service to provide care and support	By March 2025	Jane Rodgers

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration

	People Scrutiny	6th Feb	No amendments made

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