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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Monday, 15 January 2024

Notice of meeting :

People Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday, 23rd January, 2024 at 10.00 am,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK and Remote attendance**

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

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum	
	Scrutiny Committee Public Open Forum ~ Guidance	
	<p>Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council website</p> <p>If you would like to share your thoughts on any proposals being discussed by Scrutiny Committees, you can submit your representation in advance via this form</p> <p>Please share your views by uploading a video or audio file (maximum of 4 minutes) or; Please submit a written representation (via Microsoft Word, maximum of 500 words)</p> <p>You will need to register for a My Monmouthshire account in order to submit the representation or use your log in, if you have registered previously.</p>	

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

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

If you would like to attend one of our meetings to speak under the Public Open Forum at the meeting, you will need to give three working days' notice by contacting Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers, we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes.

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

4.	Scrutiny of the budget proposals	1 - 20
	Scrutiny of the budget proposals relating to the Committee's remit. 20240117 Cabinet - Draft 2024-25 Budget - Covering report Final.pdf (monmouthshire.gov.uk)	
5.	To note the People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List	21 - 24
6.	To confirm the minutes of the following meetings: 1 st December 2023 (Special) 14 th November 2023 Joint Performance and Overview and People Scrutiny Committees	25 - 32
7.	Next Meeting: 6 th February 2024 (Special) 5 th March 2024	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Fay Bromfield, Llangybi Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor John Crook, Magor East with Undy;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Simon Howarth, Llanelly Hill;, Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones, Raglan;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell, Pen Y Fal;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Sue Riley, Bulwark and Thornwell;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Maria Stevens, Severn;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

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

Welsh Language

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

Our purpose

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.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Question Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues) 2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve? 3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this? <p>- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member</p>	
Questions for the Meeting	
<p><u>Scrutinising Performance</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why? 2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why? 3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why? 4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic? 5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service? 6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings? 7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives? 8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve? 	<p><u>Scrutinising Policy</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least? 2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome? 3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective? 4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say? 5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence? 6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities? 7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards? 8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications

9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?
- 10.
11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?
- 12.
13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated

General Questions:

Empowering Communities

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

Service Demands

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

Financial Planning

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

Making savings and generating income

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

actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

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

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

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

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

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



SUBJECT:	2024/25 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS
MEETING:	PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	23rd January 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To allow Committee scrutiny of Cabinet's draft revenue and capital budget proposals for the financial year 2024/25.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.1 That the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for 2024/25 are considered as part of the Committee's role to scrutinise policy and services delivered to adults, children and young people that promotes their health, education and well-being.
- 2.2 That Committee relay any resultant observations and recommendations back to the executive (Cabinet), to inform the wider ongoing budget consultation process.

3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Cabinet's draft budget proposals are available for formal public consultation and member scrutiny, including the requirement to consult businesses. The formal consultation period will run for a period of four weeks ending on 15th February 2024.
- 3.2 Cabinet are interested in consultation views on the draft proposals and the underlying budget strategy adopted. The consultation period provides the opportunity for Members, the public, community groups, and other key stakeholders (e.g. town and community councils) to consider the budget proposals and make comments on them. Cabinet will not however, be prepared to recommend anything to Council on 29th February that has not been subject to a Future Generations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment, and therefore a deadline to receive alternative proposals has been set as 15th February 2024.

- 3.3 Given the nature and extent of the budget challenge faced for 2024/25 and the range and extent of the budget savings proposals, it is important that the Council reaches out, engages and listens to feedback. This will in turn inform the final budget proposals that are to be considered in February.
- 3.4 Final budget proposals following consultation and receipt of the final settlement will go to the Cabinet meeting on 28th February 2024 and approval of Council Tax and final budget proposals will take place at full Council on 29th February 2024.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	2024/25 Budget consultation presentation
Appendix 2	Cabinet meeting 17 th January 2024 – 2024/25 Draft Budget papers

BACKGROUND PAPERS

List of full Future Generations Evaluations:

[Budget cost pressures](#)

[Budget cost savings](#)

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Y GYLLIDEB BUDGET

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monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Gyda'n gilydd, ar gyfer ein dyfodol
Together, for our future

- Local government funding has not kept pace with increased service demand and inflationary pressures. 2024/25 will be no different
- Councils have been underfunded for over a decade – and the future prognosis is challenging
- Brexit, Pandemic, Economic stagnation, War, Challenging Job Market

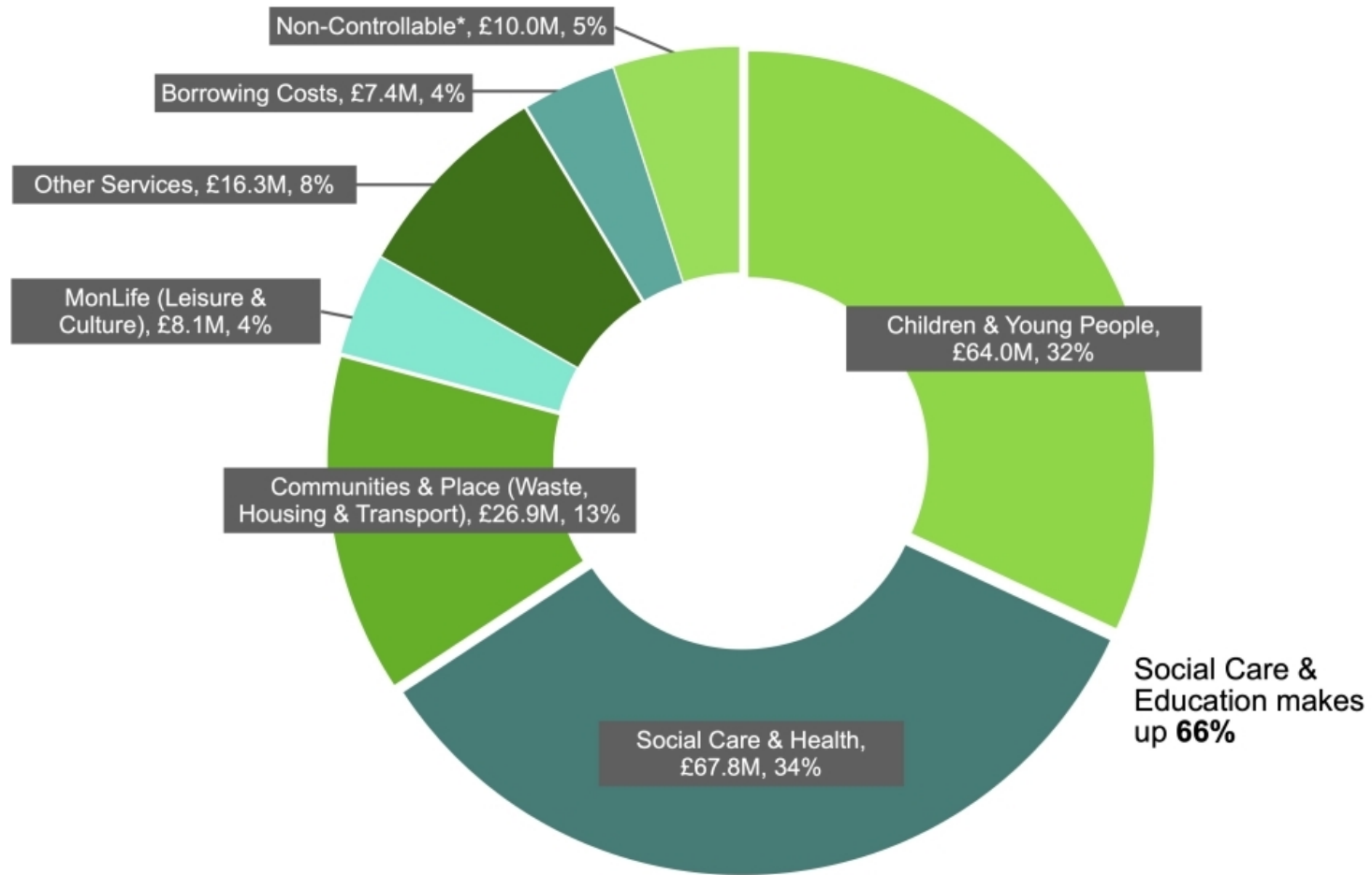
A challenging financial backdrop and outlook

- The Council is facing significant cost pressures of £21.9m in 2024/25
- Cost pressures consist of:
 - New demand and inflation £5.5m
 - Recurrent demand and inflation £6.2m
 - Pay inflation £6.4m
 - Unwinding one-off reserve usage £2.7m
 - Increased precepts £1.2m

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What it costs to deliver services

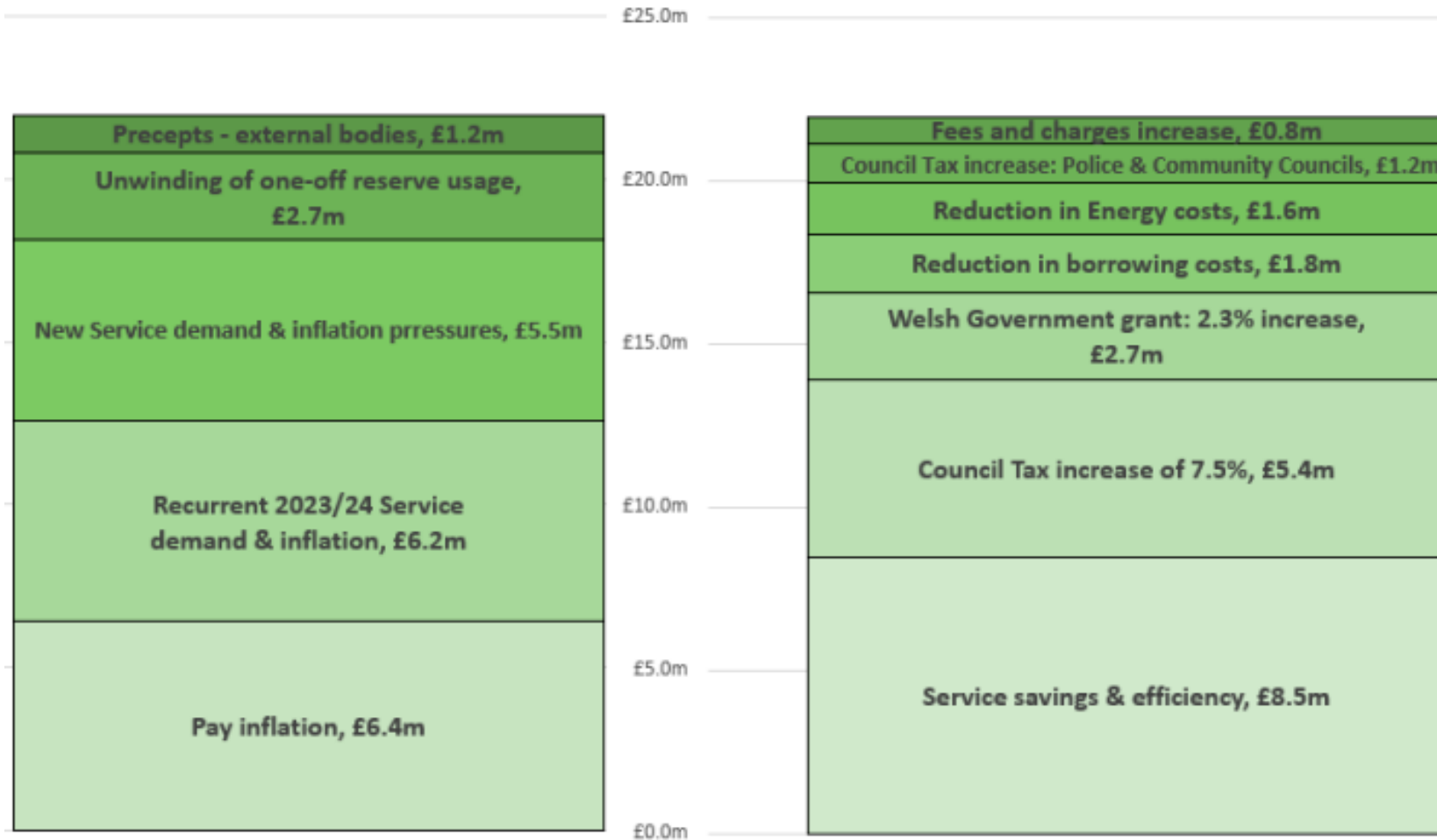
How the Council will spend £198m to deliver services to residents



What it costs to deliver services

Expenditure pressures for 2024/25 (£21.9m)

How the pressures will be met



£11.8m of key service pressures

- Children's social care (£0.4m)
- Adult social care (£4.1m)
- Real living wage impact - social care (£2.7m)
- Children with additional learning needs (£0.5m)
- School transport (£0.7m)
- King Henry 3-19 (£0.3m)
- Recycling and waste (£1m)
- Transport and fleet (£0.3m)
- MonLife income shortfalls (£0.2m)
- Insurance costs and levies (£0.6m)

The balance therefore to be struck...

- The cost of delivering our existing services increases next year by £21.9m
- Income increases of £10.1m (Government Grants, Council Tax – MCC and Police, and Charges)
- Borrowing costs will reduce by £1.8m
- Energy costs will reduce by £1.6m
- Revenue reserves not available to support budget
- The balance is met by savings brought about by service changes of £8.4m





**Gyda'n gilydd, ar gyfer ein dyfodol
Together, for our future**

Overall increase in our Children & Young People budget by 2.5% next year, but with savings identified as follows:

- **Schools funding (835k)** - funding will increase by 2.5% for 2024/25. But this will not fully fund schools for all inflationary related pressures - requirement for schools to make efficiency savings
- **Additional learning provision (£534k)** - reduction in the cost of out-of-county and independent specialist placements
- **Gwent Music Service (£39k)** – A reduction in subsidy with support for pupils from low-income families to remain.
- **Before school clubs (£70k)** - Breakfasts remain free for all and an increase in charge of £1 for childcare
- **EAS contribution (£35k)** - A reduction in the core contribution to the Education Achievement Service of 10%

Overall increase in our Social Care budget by 5.8% next year, but with savings identified as follows:

- **Adults social care staffing review (£1.5m)** - consolidating existing vacancies within direct care, ceasing the in-house residential respite provision for adults with learning disabilities, reorganising the My Day, My Life and Individual Support Service, and replacing some social workers with social care assessors
- **Adults social care practice change (£1.1m)** - Applying consistent eligibility criteria, reviewing current care packages, pursuing health contributions, re-commissioning services, expanding reablement and direct payments, and aligning with community and housing support
- **Children's services practice change (£1.3m)** - reviewing children's care plans in high-cost placements and developing appropriate services and placements to support their long-term needs
- **Fees and charges (0.4m)** – An increase in a range of fees and charges that are subject to an individual financial assessment.

Overall increase in our Communities & Place budget by 6.3% next year, but with savings identified as follows:

- **Garden Waste collection (£75k)** – Increased cost by 10% in line with the Cabinet decision taken in January 2023 to ensure the service undertakes full cost recovery
- **Food waste bag provision (£50k)** - Stop the free provision of food waste bags. Available for purchase at cost price at outlets in Council buildings & some local independent stores
- **Council car (£8k)** – Cessation of lease
- **Home to school transport (£96k)** – In house delivery of 8 seat or fewer contracts. Increase cost of discretionary seats by 10%
- **Planning (£98k)** - Increase statutory planning application fees by 25%
- **Car parking (£66k)** - To increase car parking charges and charges for permits by 10%
- **Trade waste (£30k)** - Increase in Trade waste fees, sale of bags & bins
- **Homelessness (£400k)** - To reduce the number of people in unsuitable and costly temporary accommodation

Overall decrease in our MonLife budget by 3.2% next year, but with savings identified as follows:

- **Museums (£40k)** - Realign the museums services by closing two museums for an additional day per week and reviewing business support
- **Attractions (£10k)** - Close Old Station Tintern for one day a week on Mondays from 1st April 2024, except for four bank holidays
- **Countryside & Culture (£10k)** - Withdraw the MCC contribution to Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre.
- **Outdoor adventure (£70k)** - Move to a more sustainable model for the outdoor adventure service, which is part of the MonLife directorate based at Gilwern
- **Leisure centres (£140k)** - Leisure centres - Change closing times: Weekday closure 21:30, Weekend closure 16:30
- **MonLife (£120k)** - Introduce a phased area management structure

Overall increase in our Resource budget by 6.3% next year, but with savings identified as follows:

- **Commercial investments (208k), Investment properties (£100k)** Reflection of the forecast improvement in rental income across the portfolio as a result of revised tenancies agreed

A planned increase in Council Tax of 7.5%

- Striking the balance between council tax rises and the reduction of services that support the most vulnerable is not easy
- Provides £5.4m of much needed funds to sustain service delivery
- Vigorous help and support for low income households

Bands	Current 2023/24	7.5% increase	Proposed 2024/25 Charge	Increase per month	Increase per week
A	£1,043.11	£78.23	£1,121.34	£6.52	£1.50
B	£1,216.96	£91.27	£1,308.23	£7.61	£1.76
C	£1,390.81	£104.31	£1,495.12	£8.69	£2.01
D	£1,564.66	£117.35	£1,682.01	£9.78	£2.26
E	£1,912.36	£143.43	£2,055.79	£11.95	£2.76
F	£2,260.06	£169.50	£2,429.56	£14.13	£3.26
G	£2,607.77	£195.58	£2,803.35	£16.30	£3.76
H	£3,129.32	£234.70	£3,364.02	£19.56	£4.51
I	£3,650.87	£273.82	£3,924.69	£22.82	£5.27

All Local Authority budgets carry risks every year

- This year's budget has again overheated as budgetary risks have materialised. Budget recovery action has had to be taken
- Use of revenue reserves to cover risks no longer available

Capital programme oversees maintenance and enhancement of our roads, schools, leisure centres, farms and much more.

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We propose:

- Continued support for Council priorities in line with the community and corporate plan
- Tackling the longer-term challenges communities are facing
- Significant investment in the new Abergavenny 3-19 school and a new care home at Crick Road this year

4 weeks of public consultations:

- Face to face and virtual engagement events –
Countywide and targeted
 - Special Budget page on Council website
 - Online survey and social media campaign
-
- **Council Scrutiny meetings** – Jan-Feb 2024
 - **Final Budget Cabinet** – 28th February 2024
 - **Council tax setting and budget** – 29th February 2024

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ANY QUESTIONS?

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2024

People Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
23 rd January 2024	Scrutiny of the Budget Proposals	Scrutiny of the budget proposals relating to the Committee's remit.	Peter Davies Jonathon Davies Councillor Garrick/Callard	Budget Scrutiny
Special Meeting 6 th February 2024	Development of Residential Provision: Accommodation and Delivery Model for Care	To scrutinise a model to increase in-county placement options and provide care without profit.	Jane Rodgers	Policy Development
	Scrutiny of the Strategic Equality Plan	Scrutiny of the Strategic Equality Plan following the consultation period.	Matthew Gatehouse Angela Sandles	Policy Development
5 th March 2024	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	To receive a progress report.	Rebecca Creswell	Policy Review
	Primary School Catchment Areas	To scrutinise Cabinet's plans and contribute to the consultation arrangements.	Will Mclean Matthew Jones	Policy Development
16 th April 2024	Empty Homes Update (To be confirmed)		Clare Hamer	Policy Update
	TBC ~ Local Housing Market Assessment		Sally Meyrick	Pre-decision Scrutiny

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2024

People Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
11 th June 2024	Planning and Provision of School Places TBC	To scrutinise data and projections for pupil places and the impact of future housing development.	Will Mclean Matthew Jones	Policy Development
23 rd July 2024	TBC ~ Revised NEET Reduction Strategy	To scrutinise the revised strategy prior to Cabinet decision.	Hannah Jones Louise Wilce	Policy Development
24 th September 2024				
12 th November 2024				
21 st January 2025				
18 th February 2025				
1 st April 2025				
To be confirmed	Young Carers Strategy and the Carers Strategy	Pre-decision Scrutiny of the strategies.	Kim Dolphin Councillor Chandler	Pre-decision Scrutiny

Action List for People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting	1st December 2023	
Minute:	Action	Officer / Member
5	<p><u>Developing the Future of My Day My Life Bases</u></p> <p>Difficulty in accessing Dentures: ACTION – To refer the matter to the next full Council.</p>	Hazel Ilett

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA with remote attendance on Friday, 1st December, 2023 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor John Crook (Chairman)
County Councillor Jackie Strong (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Fay Bromfield,
Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth,
Penny Jones, Sue Riley, Ian Chandler, Tony Kear
(substituting for Maureen Powell), Peter Strong
(substituting for Maria Stevens)

Also in attendance County Councillors: Frances
Taylor, Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social
Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health
Services and Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member
for Education

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People,
Performance and Partnerships.
Clare Morgan, Service Manager, All Age Disability
and Mental Health
Paige Moseley, Solicitor
Ceri York, Group Manager Service Development
and Commissioning
Jenny Jenkins, Head of Adult Services

APOLOGIES: County Councillors Richard John, Maureen Powell and Maria Stevens, and Jane Rogers Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

Note: Minutes do not serve as a verbatim record of the meeting. They provide a summary of the Committee's discussion. For the full debate, please access the recording of the meeting [Agenda for People Scrutiny Committee on Friday, 1st December, 2023, 10.00 am \(monmouthshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/agenda-for-people-scrutiny-committee-on-friday-1st-december-2023-10.00-am)

1. Declarations of Interest.

None

2. Public Open Forum.

Two written representations had been received in advance of the People Scrutiny Committee meeting and these had been distributed to committee members, the Cabinet Member and Officers. A video submission had also been received from Professor David Abbot, which was played at the meeting.

3. Call-in of the decision by Cabinet of 15th November 2023 in relation to developing the future of My Day My Life Bases.

The Scrutiny Manager explained the Call-in process, as outlined in the Council's Constitution. Councillor Kear spoke as the Call-in Lead, detailing the reasons for calling in the decision, as stated in the Call-in request. Councillor Howarth also outlined his reasons for the call-in.

Key points raised by Call-in Members:

- Concerns about the consistency and thoroughness of the consultation process.
- Concern about the evidence base for the decision and a feeling the process is flawed.
- Concerns about the suitability of the venue proposed for the service in Abergavenny and concerns around the funding plans for ensuring the accessibility of the building.
- Concern around the robustness of the strategy overall.
- Concern that the decision is being rushed and that scrutiny members have not had the opportunity to inspect wider background information that they feel is relevant to their scrutiny of the decision.

Cabinet Member Ian Chandler responded to the points of the call-in and answered the members' questions with Jenny Jenkins, Head of Adult Services. The Cabinet Member addressed the specific grounds for the call-in of the decision, outlining the pre-decision scrutiny that had been undertaken by the committee on 18th July prior to the Cabinet consideration of the matter on 11th October 2023, prior to the decision taken on 15th November 2023. He recognised the commitment by elected members in scrutinising the decision, but commented that the scrutiny process had been robust. He also provided an explanation of the consultation process undertaken and the positive engagement of service users in the process.

The Head of Adult Services confirmed that service users are still receiving the service, but that there is a need to move toward an inclusive and vibrant service as soon as possible.

Key points raised by Committee Members:

- The suitability of the Melville Theatre building was raised and some members spoke of concerns around accessibility.
- Some members expressed their desire that the decision be accepted and that the transformation of the service be progressed with a pace.
- A member expressed doubt that the remit of My Day, My Life fits with a building such as the Melville Theatre.
- There were continuing concerns of various members about the consultation process and the decisions relating to the My Day My Life bases, indicating a fault

in the administration's decision-making.

- There were concerns about the communication with service users.

Formal Outcome of the Scrutiny (Chair's Summary):

Following significant debate which can be (in significant part) accessed via the live stream, the Committee proceeded to a vote:

Four Members agreed to accept the Cabinet decision. Five Members agreed to refer the decision to full Council, for the following reasons:

Members have reservations about the decision and concerns about the robustness of the consultation process carried out with service users.

The decision to refer the matter to Council was carried.

The meeting ended at **11.28 am**

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Joint Select Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Tuesday, 14th November, 2023 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Alistair Neill, (Chairman)
County Councillor John Crook, (Vice Chairman)

County Councillors: Jill Bond, Fay Bromfield, Rachel Buckler, John Crook, Christopher Edwards, Catherine Fookes, Simon Howarth, Meirion Howells, Penny Jones, Alistair Neill, Maureen Powell, Jackie Strong, Peter Strong, Ann Webb, Laura Wright and Steven Garratt (substituting for Sue Riley)

Officers in Attendance

Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Diane Corrister, Head of Children's Services
Kelly Turner, Child Protection Co-Ordinator
Claire Robins, Service Manager - Transformation

APOLOGIES: County Councillor Sue Riley substituted by Steven Garratt

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from Members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting is at

www.youtube.com/watch?v=IIPzZcsupnk&list=PLLMqn4nAaFJDsC93C-EKJZrFkDEQBdiXK&index=12

1. Election of Chair

Councillor Neill was nominated by Councillor Powell, seconded by Councillor Webb. Councillor Crook was nominated by Councillor Bond, seconded by Councillor Peter Strong.

The vote was tied at 7-7. Councillor Crook proposed that Councillor Neill chair the meeting, which he accepted.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chair

Councillor Crook was nominated by Councillor Peter Strong, seconded by Councillor Buckler.

3. Declarations of Interest

None.

4. Public Open Forum

None.

5. Safeguarding Performance report

Cabinet Member Ian Chandler and Jane Rodgers introduced the report. Jane Rodgers answered the members' questions with Diane Corrister and Kelly Turner.

Key Questions from members:

- What is the significance of the numbers relating to Practitioner concerns on p15? The raw number doesn't give a sense of a weighting between concerns – does that impede our ability to judge things year to year?
- There are some typos and errors that could be corrected – **ACTION (Councillor Bond to send to officers)**
- Are there any ideas as to why more males are coming through for child exploitation?
- Could we have an explanation of what 'VOLT' is?
- What are the plans and blockers for improving the 50% homelessness prevention success rate?
- How many young people are in the temporary accommodation shared home?
- What is the tendering for, regarding the Hub evaluation (p28)?
- How will the Thinqi scores be made to improve from 4 to 5 once it's implemented?
- Why have the RAG ratings stayed at green and not gone up to Level 6?
- Is Thinqi training particularly useful for interim and agency staff to quickly assess what their capabilities are?
- How closely do you work with Police regarding child exploitation?
- It would be useful for both committees to have a session with the officers and Police to go into further detail, and get a fuller understanding – **ACTION (officers to take forward and look at dates)**
- What is the explanation of the drop from 43 down to 20 of child exploitation cases?
- Why has the number of SPACE panel referrals gone down but now seems to be rising again?
- Is there any way to measure the impact of the training on VAWDASV?
- Can you further explain the sentence about 'consistent attendees at MARAC' on p19?
- P33, the chart seems to be flipped relative to the data – this perhaps needs to be altered? – **ACTION (officers will check)**
- P14, regarding safeguarding training, is feedback given to participants? – **ACTION (officers will check)**
- Regarding p33, do we get a lot of asylum-seeking children in this county?
- What is the proportion of young people who are homeless?
- Can we see more of the children's voices in next year's report, particularly as it would give greater objectivity to our performance?
- For greater objectivity, would there be a benefit from a team from another authority looking over our services, and us doing likewise?
- Could next year's report incorporate an examination of the link between young adults leaving the care system and older age homelessness?

Chair's Summary:

Thank you to officers. The report was moved.

6. Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health Annual Report

Jane Rodgers introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Diane Corrister, Claire Robins and Cabinet Member Ian Chandler.

Key Questions from members:

- What can be done to mitigate the vacancies? Are they mostly caused by stress?
- What factors are causing demand for new adults services?
- Is “uncertainty owing to the ‘eliminating profit’ agenda” tied to the lack of suitable placements for children?
- What do you mean by becoming “more competitive as ‘for profit’ providers”?
- Can you elaborate on the responding to government policy drive?
- What pressures do the staff see as particularly difficult in achieving the aim of keeping children at home and in their communities?
- What is your positive learning culture and practice?
- Why do you see recruitment as being so difficult?
- How much are the domestic abuse factors rising and do we have a programme of cooperation with schools and teachers for educating the next generation? Can we help to prevent the next cycle of this?
- What are we doing to increase the percentage of children with in-house foster carers, from 42%?
- What are we doing to achieve more in-house carers? Do we need a big recruitment drive in Monmouth, as the report says none re situated there?
- 73% of care leavers are in employment – what are we doing to support the remaining 27%?
- Most of the unmet care hours are in the community, rather than those coming out of hospital – can we be reassured that we are getting the balance right between getting people back home and some needing to be in hospital?
- What is the current situation regarding physios, occupational therapists, etc.? Are we able to recruit and retain staff?
- What is the current state of the Care And Repair budget? – **ACTION** (officers will provide further information)
- What are the waiting times for the Strong Families team and counselling in schools, and what can be done about it?
- The inspection report suggested documentation should be reviewed – will the new system coming in be an answer to that?
- Management oversight, working to principles of the Care Act 2014 – is there an action relating directly to that?
- Foster carers, utilising local businesses to help with recruitment – have there been enquiries about that? There’s more that we can do to drive recruitment ourselves – utilising community councils, websites, etc.
- How advantageous is GWICES (Gwent Wide Integrated Community Equipment Service)? Does the Adult Safeguarding team have access to it?
- Is providing a fair living wage for foster carers something that has been or is being considered?

- The infographics are very helpful – it would be useful to have the information in a dashboard format at the start of the document
- It would be useful to reference the remaining percentages when one is given e.g. 73% – what about the remaining 27%?
- P39, looking ahead to the number of over-65s in the county: in ten years the UK population over 65 will be greater than those under 15, leading to questions about finance and stability. Microcarers and the engagement of volunteers sounds like a very important development in the sustainability of services – it will be very interesting to see how this progresses
- P47, the number of contacts made in a week and p53, weekly unmet care needs having declined, give an insight to the public of what's so essential
- How are we doing relative to other authorities – would it be useful to get objectivity by looking at this?

Chair's Summary:

Thank you to officers. The recommendations were moved.

7. Next Meetings:

Performance & Overview committee next meets on 22nd November. People committee will next meet on 23rd January, with the 19th December meeting having been cancelled.

The meeting ended at **12.07 pm**