

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 25 January 2023

**Notice of meeting:**

## **Special Meeting Place Scrutiny Committee**

**Thursday, 2nd February, 2023 at 2.00 pm  
The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA with  
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**

<b>Item No</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Pages</b>
1.	Apologies for Absence.	
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Public Open Forum.	
4.	<b>Budget Scrutiny: Scrutiny of the Budget proposals for 2023/24 (Presentation attached).</b>  Please use this link to access the papers for this item - available as part of the 18th January 2023 Cabinet agenda.  <a href="https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&amp;MIId=4984">https://democracy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=144&amp;MIId=4984</a>	1 - 18
5.	<b>Next Meeting: Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 10.00am.</b>	

**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Emma Bryn	Wyesham;	Independent Group
County Councillor Ben Callard	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Ian Chandler	Llantilio Crossenny;	Green Party
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Lisa Dymock	Portskewett;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jane Lucas	Osbaston;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Su McConnel	Croesonen;	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.

# Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

## Our purpose

Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities

### Objectives we are working towards

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

## Our Values

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

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

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

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

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

## Monmouthshire Scrutiny Question Guide

### Role of the Pre-meeting

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

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

### Questions for the Meeting

#### Scrutinising Performance

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

#### Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? 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...



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# BUDGET

**2023/24 DRAFT BUDGET  
PROPOSALS**

**BUDGET CONSULTATION  
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2023**

Rachel Garrick, Cabinet Member for Resources



**HAVE  
YOUR  
SAY**

- This is an unprecedented year
- Councils have been underfunded for over a decade
- Inflation – Brexit, Pandemic, Gas Prices, War, Spiralling Job Market.

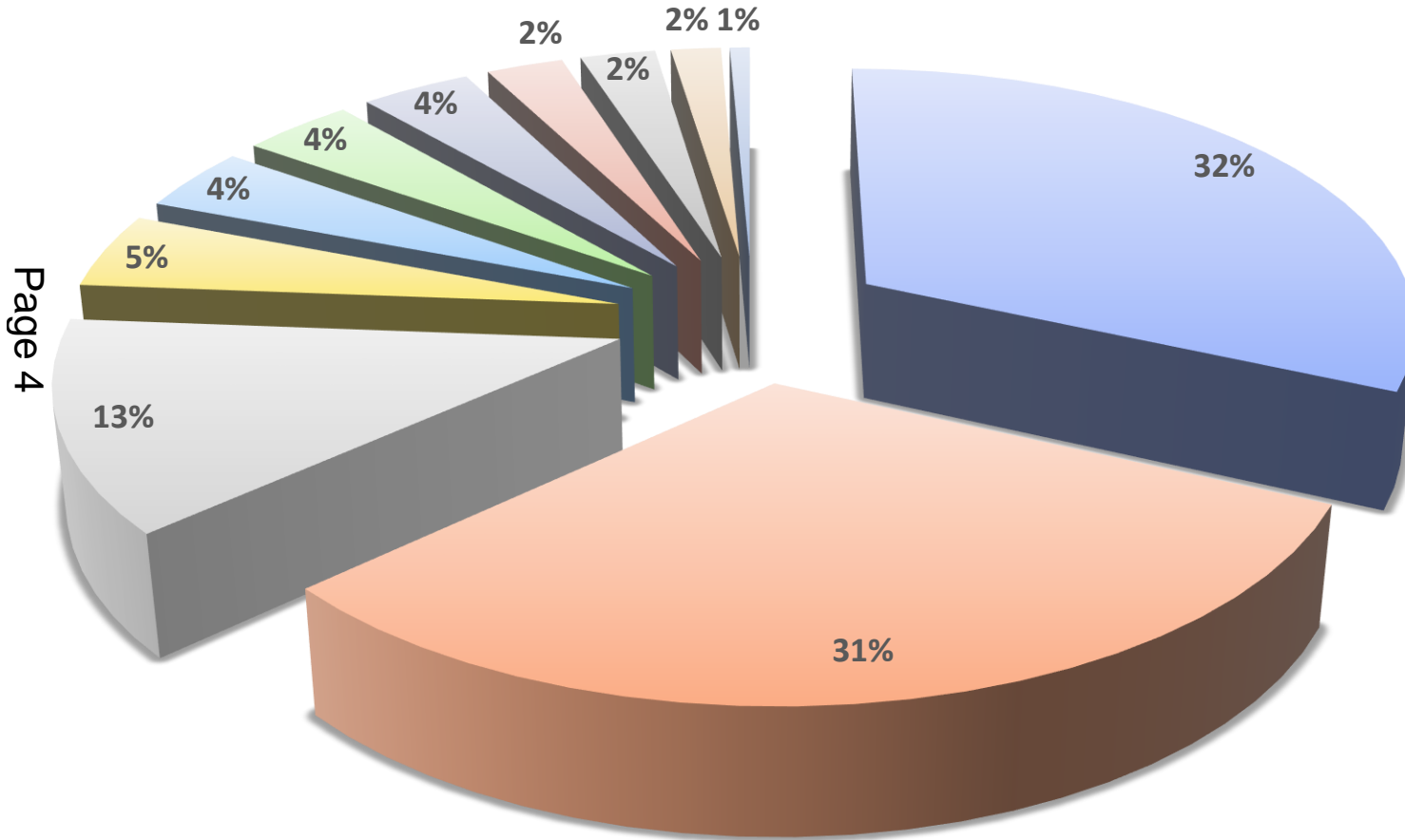




- The Council is facing unprecedented cost pressures of £26m in 2023/24.
- Cost pressures consist of:
  - Pressures upon services £11.9m
  - Energy costs £4.5m
  - Pay awards £7m
  - Treasury costs £3.2m



Directorate / Service Expenditure Budgets 2022-23 (Total £185.7m)



- Children and Young People (£59.0m)
- Social Care and Health (£58.4m)
- Communities & Place (£24.1m)
- Precepts and Levies (£8.6m)
- Council Tax Reduction Scheme (£7.4m)
- Borrowing Costs (£7.1m)
- Resources (£7.0m)
- MonLife (£4.9m)
- Democracy, Planning & People (£4.8m)
- Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service (£3.2m)
- Corporate management & insurance (£1.3m)

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- Children's social care (£4.4m)
- Adult social care (£1.8m)
- Real living wage implications (£1m)
- Homelessness (£1.9m)
- Children with additional learning needs (£0.6m)
- Recycling and waste (£0.2m)
- Passenger transport and fleet (£0.6m)
- Income shortfalls (£0.8m)
- Community safety (£0.1m)

# **BUDGET** the balance therefore to be struck....

- The cost of delivering our existing services increases next year by £26.6m, or 14%
- Income increases of £15.7m, or 7.5% (Government Grants, Council Tax and Charges)
- Low reserves which we need to hold as contingency.
- The balance is met by savings brought about by service changes of £11.4m.





- **Policy and Priority led:** Putting people first and looking at ways to maintain quality and improve services now and in the future
- **Meet the challenge head on:** draft budget proposals risk assessed - impacts and mitigations were understood

**Proposal:** a 5% net increase in school budgets next year. 2.8% efficiency savings needed to close resource gap - schools to tap-in to reserves.

- **Savings (£0.3m) for school support services:**

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- Gwent Music Service – continues with reduced class based provision and charges to parents. Support for pupils from low-income families to remain.
- **breakfasts remain free for all and** an increase in charge for before school breakfast clubs
- **Rigorous Grant funding strategy** to offset reduced staffing levels for the school psychology service and the support service for children with additional learning needs



## Increasing our social care budget by 7% next year

### Increase adult social care budget by £1million

- **Investment in changing the way services are provided alongside** Proposed savings of £2m in adult social care. Review of care packages to ensure that they remain fit for purpose.

### Increase Children's Services by £3.4million

- **Resource gap met through proposed savings of £1.4m** - reviewing service delivery and implementing a more cost-effective service.
- **Savings of £0.3m released by a remodelling of our Learning Disability and Mental Health teams** focus on local provision for young people with learning disabilities.

**Keeping our leisure and cultural services open and increasing the budget for Monlife by 22%. But** savings (£0.6m) proposed will impact on some staffing levels and opening hours.

- A reduction in our mowing schedule which will reduce costs and increase biodiversity.
- Savings of over £1.3million through
  - by a one-year reduction in the level of spend on maintenance on the Council's buildings and vehicles,
  - Reducing running costs - lowering energy consumption and mileage,
  - a further rationalisation of our property estate.

- **Fairer price for services we provide bringing additional income of £1.4m** - increases in some discretionary fees and charges
- **Keeping our Community Hubs, Libraries and Contact Centre open.** Proposed savings (£0.3m) by some reduction to opening hours and changes impacting on the speed at which we can respond.

## An increase in Council Tax of 5.95%.

- Well below inflation
- Vigorous help and support for low income households
- Provides much needed funds for service delivery



<b>Bands</b>	<b>Current 2022/23</b>	<b>5.95% increase</b>	<b>Proposed 2023/24 Charge</b>		<b>Increase per month</b>	<b>Increase per week</b>
<b>A</b>	£984.53	£58.58	£1,043.11		£4.88	£1.13
<b>B</b>	£1,148.61	£68.34	£1,216.95		£5.70	£1.31
<b>C</b>	£1,312.70	£78.11	£1,390.81		£6.51	£1.50
<b>D</b>	£1,476.79	£87.87	£1,564.66		£7.32	£1.69
<b>E</b>	£1,804.97	£107.40	£1,912.37		£8.95	£2.07
<b>F</b>	£2,133.14	£126.92	£2,260.06		£10.58	£2.44
<b>G</b>	£2,461.32	£146.45	£2,607.77		£12.20	£2.82
<b>H</b>	£2,953.58	£175.74	£3,129.32		£14.65	£3.38
<b>I</b>	£3,445.84	£205.03	£3,650.87		£17.09	£3.94

## All Local Authority budgets carry risks every Year

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- This year's budget had over £9M of risks appear within four months.
- £3M of reserves to be used to cover risks.

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

We propose:

- Continued support for Council priorities in line with our draft strategic 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 2023
- **Final Budget Cabinet** – 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023
- **Council tax setting and budget** – 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

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**Any  
questions?**



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**HAVE  
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**SCAN HERE  
TO FIND  
OUT MORE**