

Public Document Pack



County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 11 September 2024

Notice of meeting

County Council

**Thursday, 19th September, 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 1.50pm. 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	1 - 2
4.	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18th July 2024	3 - 14
5.	Petition to Council - Restore Night Shelter in Monmouth	15 - 34
6.	Reports to Council:	
6.1.	Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2023/24	35 - 40
6.2.	Appointment to Outside Body	41 - 42
6.3.	Self-Assessment 2023/24	43 - 144
6.4.	People with Care Experience	145 - 162
7.	Motions to Council:	
7.1.	Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor	

That this Council recognise the significant concern of Magor with Undy residents about the curtailment of local GP practice services and the afternoon closure of Magor Surgery.

This Council notes that the Health Board's "Change to Service Provision Policy" has previously not made provision for patient engagement or wider stakeholder engagement such as local councillors, and welcomes that following recent discourse, the Health Board has recognised the value and importance of such engagement and will update the policy for future changes.

Furthermore, that this council agrees to write to Aneurin Bevan Health Board and other relevant organisations such as Llais and NHS Wales to seek clarification on the relevant appeal process for the decision on Magor Surgery, and to secure detail of the proposed changes to the service change policy with particular reference to engagement and communication, Integrated Future Generations/Equalities Impact Assessment requirements.

7.2. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

Regrets the UK Government's decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit.

Notes the estimated impact of this decision on over 20,000 Monmouthshire pensioners, some of whom are just above the threshold for Pension Credit and need the money to stay warm this winter.

Agrees to bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign about eligibility for Pension Credit may help our poorest residents to access the Winter Fuel Payment.

Agrees that the Leader will write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer requesting a review of the decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.

7.3. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

Notes that over 12% of school age pupils residing in Monmouthshire attend independent schools.

Expresses concern about the disruption to children's schooling that is likely to be caused by the UK Government's policy of charging VAT on school fees.

Instructs the administration to publish plans to mitigate the impact of this policy on Monmouthshire children including providing local school places and supporting children whose education has been disrupted.

8. Members Questions:

8.1. From County Councillor Jackie Strong to County Councillor Paul Griffiths Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader

Can the Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development give an update on work done by MCC to facilitate the opening of a Post Office in Caldicot Town Centre?

<p>8.2.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Fay Bromfield to County Councillor Catrin Maby Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member please confirm what steps she is taking to combat the issue of Ragwort?</p>	
<p>8.3.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Fay Bromfield to County Councillor Catrin Maby Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on any discussions that the administration is having with Welsh water regarding the health of our rivers?</p>	
<p>8.4.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Paul Griffiths Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member update Council on the proposed Countywide review of car park charges?</p>	
<p>8.5.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Paul Griffiths Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader</p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member advise of the current allocation of parking enforcement officers around Monmouthshire and the basis of the allocation?</p>	
<p>8.6.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt Cabinet Member for Education</p> <p>Could the Cabinet Member advise the reasons for the overcrowding on the school busses from Usk to Monmouth Comprehensive school this term?</p>	
<p>8.7.</p>	<p>From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Paul Griffiths Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on what the Council is doing to relieve traffic congestion in and around Chepstow?</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>Date of next meeting - 24th October 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

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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 10th July – 8th September

Wednesday 10 th July 2 p.m.	VIP Visit to Llantilio Pertholey Primary School Llantilio Pertholey Primary School, Hill Grove Avenue, Abergavenny
Thursday 11 th July	Annual Youth Conference County Hall, Usk
Sunday 14 th July 3 p.m.	Monmouth Town Civic Service The Priory Church of St Mary the Virgin, Monmouth
Monday 29 th July 1 p.m.	Windrush Event County Hall, Usk
Thursday 1 st August 10 a.m.	Invitation to licensing of Revd. Elizabeth Gregory, Anglican Prison Chaplain H M Prison, Usk
Tuesday 6 th August 11 a.m.	Citizenship Ceremony Registrar's Office, Usk
Saturday 14 th August 10 a.m.	Judging at Usk Show Usk Showground
Thursday 22 nd August 1 p.m.	HMP Eisteddfod HMP, Usk
Saturday 31 st August 11 a.m.	Abergavenny Civic Service Gateway Church, Abergavenny
Tuesday 3 rd September 11 a.m.	Citizenship Ceremony Registrar's Office, Usk
Saturday 7 th September 7 p.m.	Caldicot Male Voice – Gala Concert Caldicot Choir Hall
Sunday 8 th September 3 p.m.	MCC Civic Service St Mary's Priory Church, Abergavenny

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 18th July, 2024 at 2.00 pm

PRESENT: County Councillor Su McConnel (Chair)
County Councillor Peter Strong (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, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, 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:

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
Jonathan Davies	Head of Finance
Frances O'Brien	Chief Officer, Communities and Place
Ian Saunders	Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.
Wendy Barnard	Democratic Services Officer
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance
Julie Anthony	Human Resources (HR) Advisor

APOLOGIES:

County Councillors Emma Bryn and Maria Stevens

1. Declarations of interest

Item 11: To establish a Remuneration Committee: Senior Leadership Team Officers made a declaration of interest and withdrew from the meeting.

2. Chair's Announcement

The Chair's Announcement was noted.

The Leader of the Opposition paid tribute to the life and service of former County Councillor Sheila Woodhouse who has sadly passed away. He reflected on her outstanding contribution to public life and on her love of Abergavenny.

Councillor Groucutt paid respects on behalf of the Labour Group recalling how Sheila Woodhouse was admired and respected across the Chamber and will be greatly missed.

Councillor Taylor on behalf of the Independent Group remembered Sheila's passion for her ward, Abergavenny and the whole county. She served with compassion, kindness and caring.

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Councillors Powell and Lane shared fond memories of Sheila Woodhouse and spoke of her dedication to her community.

*County Councillor Christopher Edwards from 2.03pm
County Councillor Tomos Davies from 2.16pm*

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th May 2024 were confirmed as an accurate record.

4. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented the Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2024-2029.

Upon being put to the vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations

Council considered and approved the Council's medium term financial strategy (MTFS) for the period 2024-2029, providing the strategic framework for the medium-term financial plan (MTFP) to adapt over time to changing context and circumstances subject to changes resulting from scrutiny feedback.

Council approved the associated delivery plan and performance framework, delegating authority to the Cabinet Member for Resources and the Deputy Chief Executive (s151 officer) to keep its implementation under continual review.

Council agreed that Cabinet receives a six-monthly update of the MTFP to Cabinet, including formal progress against the performance framework and delivery plan, and that will be subject to scrutiny by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=JNXqIpAZzoUYdtrg&t=1408>

*County Councillor Sue Riley from 2.31pm
County Councillor Phil Murphy from 2.37pm*

5. Older People's Champion

The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services presented a report proposing that Council approve nomination of Cllr Jackie Strong to the role of Older People's Champion.

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

Council approved the nomination of Cllr Jackie Strong to the role of Older People's Champion.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=UkGMN6-VzOgPB8rN&t=3165>

6. Chief Officer Report – Children and Young People

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The Chief Officer for Children and Young People presented his Annual Report. The report provided members with an overview of the status and performance of the education system in Monmouthshire. It sought to provide the Chief Officer's perspective of the relevant strengths and areas for development in the system, the risks that the service faces and the opportunities that exist to improve.

Council resolved to note the report.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=sqpwU0-r9JbEf9tc&t=3832>

*County Councillor Jane Lucas from 3.32pm
County Councillor Jayne McKenna left at 3.33pm*

7. Motions to Council

8. Submitted by County Councillor Lisa Dymock

Upon being put to a recorded vote, Council resolved to reject an alteration to the motion.

Recorded Vote: Acceptance of alteration to motion.

Votes For: 18

Votes Against: 23

Abstentions: 0

Councillor J BOND		X	
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY		X	
Councillor F BROMFIELD	X		
Councillor L BROWN	X		
Councillor E BRYN	-		
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 A 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		

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Councillor M HOWELLS		x	
Councillor R JOHN	x		
Councillor D. W. H. Jones	x		
Councillor P. Jones	x		
Councillor T KEAR	x		
Councillor M LANE	x		
Councillor J LUCAS	x		
Councillor C MABY		x	
Councillor S MCCONNEL		x	
Councillor J MCKENNA	-		
Councillor P MURPHY	-		
Councillor A NEILL	x		
Councillor P PAVIA	x		
Councillor M POWELL	x		
Councillor S RILEY		x	
Councillor D ROOKE		x	
Councillor A SANDLES		x	
Councillor M STEVENS		-	
Councillor J STRONG		x	
Councillor P STRONG		x	
Councillor F TAYLOR	x		
Councillor T THOMAS		x	
Councillor A WATTS		x	
Councillor A WEBB	-		
Councillor L WRIGHT		x	
	18	23	0

This council:

Calls upon the Prime Minister to continue the work of the former Conservative govt and to appoint a dedicated Veterans Minister within the government to address the unique needs and challenges faced by our veterans.

Upon being put to the vote the Council resolved to accept the motion.

https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=2HxXf4rBnZFVIA_W&t=9680

County Councillor Frances Taylor left at 3.04pm

9. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John

This Council:

Congratulates Cllr Fookes on her election as the Member of Parliament for Monmouthshire and notes her promise to be 'a full-time MP'.

Notes that the Welsh Labour Government has legislated to prevent parliamentarians from double jobbing as county councillors.

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Notes the significant disruption and challenges in Town ward including town centre footfall, roadworks and parking, which require a strong voice on this Council for residents and traders.

Calls on Cllr Fookes to resign from MCC so residents in Town ward can elect a new county councillor.

Upon being put to a recorded vote the Council resolved to reject the motion.

Votes For: 16

Votes Against: 22

Abstentions: 1

Recorded Vote: Call for County Councillor Catherine Fookes to resign following her election as Member of Parliament

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NAME	For	Against	Abstain
Councillor J BOND		X	
Councillor M A BROCKLESBY		X	
Councillor F BROMFIELD	X		
Councillor L BROWN	X		
Councillor E BRYN	-		
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 A 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			
Councillor M HOWELLS		X	
Councillor R JOHN	X		
Councillor D. W. H. Jones			X
Councillor P. Jones	X		
Councillor T KEAR	X		
Councillor M LANE	X		
Councillor J LUCAS	X		
Councillor C MABY		X	
Councillor S MCCONNEL		X	
Councillor J MCKENNA	-		
Councillor P MURPHY	X		
Councillor A NEILL	X		
Councillor P PAVIA	X		
Councillor M POWELL	X		
Councillor S RILEY		X	
Councillor D ROOKE		X	
Councillor A SANDLES		X	
Councillor M STEVENS		-	
Councillor J STRONG		X	
Councillor P STRONG		X	
Councillor F TAYLOR			
Councillor T THOMAS			
Councillor A WATTS		X	
Councillor A WEBB	-		
Councillor L WRIGHT		X	
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<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=aOpCqhvAV0fZkTs0&t=11471>

County Councillor Simon Howarth left at 5.28pm
County Councillor Phil Murphy left at 5.53pm

10. Members Questions

11. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader

What changes has the Council made to the documents for the re-tender of the dairy contract and can the Leader confirm that smaller businesses will be able to compete on a level playing field?

The Leader confirmed that anyone who tenders will be able to compete on a level playing field.

A “meet the buyer” event was held which was attended by several small businesses.

A Prior Information Notice (PIN) has been posted on Sell2Wales, which includes details of the lots and financial values based on recent expenditure. The PIN invited the marketplace to submit written submissions on the proposed lotting strategy, contract duration and any suggestions as to how the proposed procurement process could be improved. Six responses were received including four local businesses and two from outside of the county. The responses will be used to develop the final specification and lotting structure.

There are ten lots: five for the north and five for the South of the county. Lots can be tendered separately or in collaboration making the process more accessible for micro and small businesses.

At the event, Council officers discussed how to reduce the burden on suppliers for the tender submission documentation to avoid the need to appoint consultants. The feedback was that they use consultants to give us answers e. g. on policy aspects of decarbonization. This feedback is being used to ensure that our questions are proportionate and suitable for smaller suppliers to complete themselves. Access to free business support was provided.

The process has been designed to ensure that the procurement exercise is more accessible to micro and small enterprises with a 5-year commitment contract proposed to enable businesses to invest in any technologies required for the delivery of contracts. Feedback was that they needed to know anticipated quantities and this data is being collated as a tender exercise progresses. The tender documentation will be issued on 13th August with the submission date on 16th September.

Consortia bids are welcome which should make the process more accessible for micro and small businesses.

Supplementary Question:

I wanted to ask about one of the requirements in the last set of tendering documents was that bidding companies have a third-party food safety accreditation.

Now for small independent businesses, which already have regular food safety inspections from Monmouthshire’s own food hygiene inspectors.

Third party accreditation is extremely expensive and unnecessary when standards have already been verified by our own trusted inspectors, so will you agree to look at removing barriers like

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this so that small businesses have fair access to bid for Council tenders such as this dairy contract.

There are two national wholesalers, one based in Wales and the other based in London that want to tender. The Welsh supplier indicated it would be keen to identify work with local small and micro businesses if successful in the tender process.

There are four local suppliers able to supply all the products identified in the lotting structure. One supplier suggested it can source UK manufactured plant-based alternatives. All have confirmed that they would be able to meet the proposed delivery requirements, and several have elaborated on the ability to deliver multiple products at the same time, products that will have different temperature-controlled requirements which would save emissions. Locally based suppliers are keen to promote their locally sourced and production credential, and the positive impacts on reducing emissions and supporting local jobs. The Welsh based wholesaler promoted priorities around local job growth and supporting Community initiatives. One local supplier indicated that they were able to support visits to their bottling facilities based in Monmouthshire.

All supported the proposed 5-year contract as it provides certainty and enables them to build their business model to support our requirements. Largely there was a support for an external accreditation scheme with only one challenging the cost. One supplier explained its net zero journey and its use of renewable energy in its manufacturing processes.

For next steps, there is sufficient interest and willingness to fit in with the requirements and with the lotting structures as proposed. There are more opportunities to be more accessible to micro and SME. The ten lots over the two geographical areas will be progressed. The specification buying design is not completed as consultation is still in progress and feedback from the expressions of interest is expected.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=qf0CHwSJymbAc6i&t=14883>

County Councillor Tomos Davies left at 5.59pm
County Councillor Laura Wright left at 6.05pm

12. From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

Please can the Cabinet Member explain the reduced opening hours at Usk Post Office?

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement explained that Usk's Post Office, operating from the Community Hub, is the first in the UK to be managed by a local authority. Initially it opened on Mondays, Wednesdays, late night Thursdays and Saturday mornings. To support the local authority postmaster and these hours, 2 staff members were recruited each on 17-hour contracts. In February 2021 one staff member resigned, leaving the postmaster and another trained colleague to manage the service until the lockdown.

When Services resumed, reduced opening hours were implemented due to staffing constraints and operational data analysis. During the lockdown, a thorough review of the operational data was conducted which revealed that to balance the revenue and expenditure it was needed to adjust the operating hours. Consequently, it was decided to cease operations on Wednesdays due to low footfall and income, and to close at 5:00pm on Thursdays, reinvesting the additional 2 hours into the broader Hub service.

The extended Thursday hours that were intended to support local businesses with banking were underutilised despite the best promotional efforts of the Council.

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The authority's mandate was to cover staff expenses through the income generated by the Post Office. Unfortunately, the income projections provided at the time of establishing the service never materialised, therefore reducing staffing by 17 hours a week and cutting opening hours by 10 hours a week was necessary to ensure a sound budgetary position.

Saturday opening for four hours is sustained through the core Hub budget. Monday and Thursday opening continues although sometimes it is necessary to close on an ad hoc basis at lunchtimes. If it was financially viable, we would certainly be considering restoring Wednesday openings.

We know that residents value having a Post Office, even at reduced hours. Usk Town Council contributes the sum of £4000 a year to its running and this helps it stay viable. All of these measures are essential to maintaining the current and future viability of Usk Post Office under the given financial constraints. Staff have not received any complaints from customers and the Town Council is unaware of any objections from residents.

Supplementary question:

You probably are aware of the changes happening at Raglan Post Office which is closing and being technically downgraded to a Local. Footfall in Usk is increased when Raglan Post Office is shut. Is there a possibility that we could look at reopening on a Wednesday based on the statistics showing increased trade potentially coming back to Usk from Raglan and continue to work with Usk Town Council to do so? It is a very popular service, appreciated by elderly people and there are concerns that the reducing opening hours was a path towards closure.

The Cabinet Member stated that if footfall vastly increases then the viability of further opening hours would be looked as it is a valued service.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=6VzZtyonwQlfzFlr&t=15666>

13. From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment

Could the cabinet member provide an update on the work taking place at St Thomas' roundabout in Monmouth?

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment confirmed that the work at St. Thomas's roundabout is complete.

Supplementary Question:

It was a great shame that during the work, the hand carved kerbstones have been removed and replaced with constitute concrete. Have the kerbstones been saved to for use elsewhere? Also, in making the roundabout smaller, there is a very strange step system which is about to drop away within the soil that's holding up the Cenotaph in the middle. In the past there has been wonderful flower displays that our ground staff have taken great delight in and done an amazing amount of work looking after it. The residents would like to see that retained. Is it possible for a kerb to be nicely placed to hold the soil up where it's been cut away and reinstate the flower beds.

The Cabinet Member described the work completed at St. Thomas's roundabout. As part of the active travel route into Monmouth from the Wonastow Road end from Rockfield there was a need to alter the track of vehicles around the roundabout, so the central reservation is now an oval rather than a round; only very recently completed, so the planting has not yet been done.

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Consideration is ongoing about the correct way to plant. It was confirmed that the kerbstones are not listed, only the Cenotaph.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=HXf2JkKJ6WFBjBli&t=16040>

14. Urgent Question from County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development

Please can the Cabinet Member provide clarification on the recent proposal to establish a third site within the small hamlet, while I appreciate the importance of providing adequate accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community, I am concerned about the concentration of multiple sites in one small area. Specifically, I would like to understand the rationale behind this decision and why a more distributed approach across the entire county, has not been considered?

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy welcomed the question as an opportunity to share with Council and the wider community how we are responding to the assessed need for Gypsy and Traveller pitches.

In October, Cabinet initiated a consultation and technical appraisal of three potential sites to provide 11 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller households.

The Cabinet Member was reviewing the responses of the consultation and the technical studies whilst awaiting the decision of the Planning Committee on an application relating to a site in Llancayo. That decision was made on Tuesday and has resulted in a reduction to the assessed need from 11 to 7 pitches.

It is proposed, on that basis, to take forward only one of the three sites for inclusion in the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP); the site which has the most advantages and the least disadvantages, Bradbury Farm. That proposal has been published in the report to be considered at a Special meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee on the 24th July 2024. At that meeting, the evidence base for this preferred site will be provided.

Following the Place Scrutiny Committee meeting, any points made and those raised by Councillor Dymock, will be taken into account in a report for a Special Cabinet meeting on the 21st August 2024. If there is Cabinet support for this proposal, it will be included in the RLDP which, in October, Council will be asked to accept as the basis for public consultation throughout November and December.

The residents of Portskewett and Caldicot would have a further chance to comment on this proposal if it were included in that RLDP and was subject to that consultation at that time.

Supplementary Question

Considering the proposed dual development for the RLDP and Gypsy and Traveller site provision, what plans are in place to enhance the local infrastructure, in particular, road safety. This road has reduced visibility on the blind bend, so access and egress will be challenging, noise levels in particular for those living in static accommodation and preserving the nearby area of SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest), the Neddern Brook Wetlands in Caldicot, which is only a few hundred metres away.

The Cabinet Member agreed that the existing highway (Crick Rd) would not provide suitable

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 18th July, 2024 at 2.00 pm

access and egress to a Traveller site in that area. Given the process of a future planning application and following the RLDP, by the time the pitches are in place plans will be advanced to develop housing on the strategic site in Portskewett or Caldicot East. The planning for that development will have to include a safe walking and cycling route from the Gypsy and Traveller site through the residential site to local amenities in Caldicot.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=rafdaLabgazBtqkE&t=16287>

15. Urgent Question from County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education

How will the Cabinet Member ensure that the proposed consultation on changes to the Council's school transport policy engages widely with those affected?

The Cabinet Member for Education explained:

- To maximize awareness of the consultation, all parents and guardians of children who currently receive transport, schools and transport operators have been notified of the proposals and online survey.
- A press release has been published and a social media campaign has commenced.
- To date, only one request for a hard copy of the consultation document has been received. By noon yesterday, there were 180 survey responses and 176 of those from parents and guardians.
- The Cabinet Member will attend People Scrutiny Committee.
- Drop-in sessions at each of the Hubs have been arranged.

Supplementary Question:

What you're proposing is quite significant changes to school transport eligibility changing from transporting children their nearest or catchment school(for primary from 1.5 miles or above and for secondary from two miles). You are proposing to change those to two miles for primary and three miles for secondary so a significant number of families will be affected by the changes. Do you know how many pupils will be affected? And will the Council be writing specifically to those families to enable them to take part in the consultation?

- The Cabinet Member confirmed that every family that currently receives school transport has been notified, also, where possible, future pupils if notified by nurseries.
- It was accepted that there will be a fairly wide impact in some areas of the county. If the proposals are accepted, it would bring us into line with nineteen of the 22 Welsh authorities. Numbers affected are not yet available.

https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=gl1Br9_vYr_GyG_&t=14887

16. Next Meeting 19th September 2024

17. To establish a Remuneration Committee (paper to follow)

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held
on Thursday, 18th July, 2024 at 2.00 pm**

The Cabinet Member for Resources presented a report to establish a Remuneration Committee to determine the remuneration for the Council's Senior Leadership Team which consists of the Chief Executive and 7 Chief Officers.

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

That Council establishes a Remuneration Committee

<https://www.youtube.com/live/UhmH18Q9ego?si=jSbjY-JIV51eRqSE&t=16675>

The meeting ended at 6.48 pm



PETITION

RESTORE NIGHT SHELTER IN MONMOUTH

PETITION TO THE COUNCILLORS OF MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (MCC)

We, the undersigned, are supporting There's NO PLACE Like Home proposal to reinstate the Night Shelter based at Market Hall, Priory St, Monmouth NP25 3XA, under the management of Churches In Monmouth Housing Group, for the purpose of providing emergency, temporary accommodation, and 'out of hours' advice and support, to vulnerable people.

Churches In Monmouth Housing Group had responsibility for the management of Monmouth Nightshelter until the Covid Pandemic lockdown in 2020 when the building was taken back under the control of Monmouthshire County Council. Prior to the pandemic, Churches in Monmouth Housing Group had provided furniture, equipment (kitchen, dining, etc.,) through fundraising and community donations. These resources are still stored within the building, but have not been used for nearly 4 years.

Given the increasing level of hidden and recorded homelessness in Monmouth, it is a travesty that the Nightshelter building and resources are no longer used, forcing homeless and vulnerable people to sleep out on the streets, in subways and churchyards or other unsuitable accommodation e.g. fleeing abusive relationships. Returning the management of the property to the Churches in Monmouth Housing Group would provide a much needed warm and safe accommodation at very little cost to MCC as the Nightshelter was staffed by qualified volunteers. In addition, it would demonstrate community compassion, potentially reducing criminality, antisocial behaviour and restoring dignity and hope to homeless and vulnerable people.

NAME	ADDRESS & POSTCODE	SIGNATURE
Alison Ellis	NP25 3PX	
SHEILA CROFTY	NP25 54J	
WOODWARD	NP25 54J NP25 54J	

There's NO PLACE Like Home – Night Shelter Petition

Gail Buckley	2# , NP25 5DW	Gail Buckley
I Price	NP18 2AM	I Price
A PARKER	NP16 6TD	A Parker
L THORNCROFT	NP25 4GG	L.m. Thorncroft
K WILLIAMS	NP18 1CU	K Williams
D Cooper	NP16 6PY	D Cooper
J Brockley	HR9 6HD	J Brockley
E. BIGGS	NP25 5RU	E. Biggs
T HAMILTON-JONES	NP25 5AT	T Hamilton-Jones
MARY CARD	NP25 5BA	Mary Card
FRANK BRADLEY	NP25 5AZ	Frank Bradley
Jana Liskovakova	HR9 6HB	Jana Liskovakova

There's NO PLACE Like Home – Night Shelter Petition

ADAM MOSS	NP15 1BY	
C Miller	NP 25 SBE	
C. Hendy	NP 25 3DB	C.M. Hendy
Ian Hendy	NP 25 3DB	
M. STANFEE	NP 25 5PB	M. Stanfer
D. VANCE SILLMAN	NP 25 5EU	
M. BOASE	NP 25 3AX	Mary Boase
OWEN NIBLOCK	NP 25 3PW	
Tony Jones	NP 25 3PA	
GILL WATERS	MARIGOLD COTTAGES HR9 6EX	

There's NO PLACE Like Home – Night Shelter Petition

SHELLEY MCNALLY	NP10A2	Sa McNally.
PAUL DIMOND	WR14 2SE	PJ Dimond
SUSAN MOSS	NP15 1BX	S. Moss
Kirsty Angus	NP25 5UW	Kyr
J. Meares	NP25. 5FT	WJ Meares
Receir thider	NP25 5UQ	Pattall
Bethan Powell	NP25 5FH	B. Powell
Sara CLARK	NP25 5TN	S Clark
Reslyn furney	NP25 3FY	R Reslyn
Brigid Hamilton-Jones	NP25 5AT	B.M. Han-Jones
Samuel Perry	NP25 5FG	Samuel Perry
Ray THORNTON	NP7 6HX	RJ Thornton

There's NO PLACE Like Home – Night Shelter Petition


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There's NO PLACE Like Home – Night Shelter Petition

B. MILLER	NP25 3CP	B. Miller
M. Ruck	NP 25 5BN	M. Ruck
Jasmine Niblock	NP25 3PW	Jasmine

Sageppon Niblock	NP25 3PW	Sageppon
MARIE MORELL	GL7 9QU	Marie Morell
CATHERINE BENTLEY	B74 4X2	C Bentley
BRIAN BENTLEY	B74 4X2	B M Bentley
Rosie Lane	NP25 3NS	Rosielane
Hannah Bradley	NP25 5DR	HLB radley
LORNA BEST	NP25 5DT	LM Best
John Davies	NP 25 3EX	John Davies
Helen Richards	NP25 75DN	H. Richards

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Lina Robbins	NP25 STA	
Jim Newcomb	HR9 bDJ	Newcomb
Hazel Howell	NP25 4JG	H Howell
Louise Jones	NP15 ISH.	hejanes.

REBECCA ROWLANDS	NP25 3PR	R G Rowlands
LOLA	646 70W	
VIVIEN MATTHEWS	NP25 SDK	
SANDRA NEHOLLOD.	TAB-1H2.	S. N 
WONN BURLEY	NP25 5BN	w Burley
Micheline Baines	NP16 6TY	
ANDREW ANDERSON-DIXON	GL16 8EX	
Deborah Anderson-Dixon	GL16 8EX	D Anderson Dixon.

There's NO PLACE Like Home -- Night Shelter Petition

Jaekie Burkey	Josephine Clark LOREAN NP253JZ	J. Burkey
PATRICIA MILLING	NP16 6QZ	Patricia Milling
Marlin Milling	NP16 6 QZ	<u>(Milling)</u>
Chris Higgins	NP25 50W	Chris Higgins
AMANDA PHILLIPS	NP7 8NA	Amanda Phillips

P. A. POWDRILL	NP25 34S	P. A. Powell
JC MORGAN	NP25 35R	J. C. Morgan
J. K. FENWICK	NP25 3IX	J. K. Fenwick



Lucy Butler	Firwood NP25 Manson Lane JRD	L. Butler
Dave Sampson	NP25 5GB	_____
GARETH HOPKINS	NP25 3EX	G.
ANNE CRIFFITHS	NP25 SAT	A.C.
DAVID WICKS	NP25 3DZ	D.W.
Ash Smith	NP25 4PT	A.S.

Andrew Davidson	NP25 3LL	A.D.
RICHARD GRANTON	NP25 SAT	R.G.
LESLEY GANN	NP25 50R	L. Gann
Iwan Hughes	NP25 3TH	I.H.
Swadlow AMARCIOTT	NP25 5ET NP26 3LF	S. Swadlow Amarciott

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RACHAEL DAWES	BH88GS	
Lesley ROSS	NP25 3AT	
CR STANGL	NP25 5QB	
M. Cox	NP25 5FD.	
BRIAN ATKINS	NP25 3NU	
Barbara ATKINS	NP25 3NU	B S Atkins
CAROL CLOSE	NP25 5FN	
NATIE DELOJDE	NP25 3HF	
ALICE KAMAN	NP25-5TR	
HELEN YOUNG	NP15 1DL	HR Young
Harlie Davies	NP25 5RW	HD Davies
RICHARD WOOD	NP25 5DF	Richard Wood

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<p>Hannah Modgett</p>	<p>NP25 SEU</p>	
<p>AMANDA PRITCHARD</p>	<p>NP25 SAQ</p>	<p>A R Pritchard</p>
<p>CHRISTINE VAN STEENIS.</p>	<p>NP25 3NS.</p>	<p>C. T. van Steenis.</p>
<p>RUCH DAVIS</p>	<p>NP25 5QJ</p>	


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Rev Tim Ostling	NP25 34A	
MELINDA SHAW-PENMAN	NP25 80N	Mds. P.
Carole Gardenhays	NP25 5HA	CGH
STEVE SHORE	NP25 5AJ	
JACQUEL HUTLEY	Monmouth NP25	Hutley
Mam EAVES	"	
MAIE PITCHARD	"	m Pitchard
NICOLA HERSEY	NP25-53G	
JANE GEORGE	NP 15 100W	J.R. George
PHILIP BARRY	NP16 6LT	

Angela JONES	NP25 5AG	AJ
MARTIN SUTER	NP25 5AX	

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Carol Pirie	NP25 3EA	
SHARON MITCHELL	NP25 5FF	S Mitchell,
KYNNIE PARKER-HARRIS	NP25 4TH	
LEE BAILEY	NP25 5EF	
Erika van Gestel	NP25 5AE	
Jenny Weston	NP25 3NW	JAWAT
WILL WRIGHT	CF23 8NG	
EMMA YORK	NP25 4TL	EMMA YORK
MATT STEWART	HR9 6EY	MS
GORDON KLSMAR	GL15 4NLK	
DIANA WEBSTER	NP25 5DS	
NADINE LEWIS	NP26 4PZ	

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BA WATERS	MARIGOLD COTTAGE HR9 6EX	BA Waters
NELLY PENNY	HIGHLAND COTTAGE HR9 6DY	Nelly
ELAINE LOE	NP25 3LZ	E Loe

Oscar di ne Smeth	Wyesham NP25 3JU	Oscar di ne
DARREN POWELL	NP25 5BE	D. Powell
ALISON O'NEIL	NP25 5FN	Alison
Tim Jack	NP25 3PA	Tim Jack
KAREN JACK	NP25 4SE	K. Jack
A S J	NP25 5EA	A S J
C Woodman	NP25 5EA	C. Woodman
Eulanwy Rogers	NP7 5DB	Eulanwy
Pet Stewart	NP25 5UT	P. Stewart.

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Yvonne Mason-Roberts	NP25 5GD	Yvonne-Roberts
AMY DUNSTALL	CF37 2VZF	A Dunstall
MICHELLE PARIKER	NP25 4NB	M Parker
CLEA WOL HUMER	WOODGATE HOUSE NP25 5NG	Clea Wether
Louise Wooley	NP25 5BG	Louise Wooley
hannah wooley	NP25 5BG	hwooley
Carla Boyle	NP25 5EL	C. Boyle
M. NEEDHAM	NP25 5UW	M. N.
Lin Morris	NP7 5LL	Lin Morris
Ann Lewis	NP7 5LG	Ann Lewis
Kathy Price	K. Price	NP25 5EG.

There's NO PLACE Like Home – Night Shelter Petition



**SUBJECT: GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

DIRECTORATE: Resources

MEETING: Governance and Audit Committee

DATE: July 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

Foreword by Andrew Blackmore, Chair of the Governance & Audit Committee

I am pleased to present the Annual Report of the Governance & Audit Committee which outlines the Committee's work and conclusions for the year ending 31 March 2024.

The Governance & Audit Committee is a key component of the Council's overall governance framework and exercises oversight of its governance, internal control and risk management arrangements and its financial affairs.

I would like to thank all of the officers who have supported the work of the Committee by attending meetings, presenting papers and addressing concerns raised by the Committee. Similarly, I would like to thank committee members for their valued contribution throughout the period.

I am satisfied that the Committee has, over the period, met its terms of reference and has made a positive difference to the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements. Nonetheless, it is clear that the unprecedented financial challenges facing all local authorities alongside heightened demand for services will give rise to material financial sustainability concerns requiring public bodies to develop and implement effective financial strategies alongside further embedding robust financial disciplines. Monmouthshire County Council clearly recognises these challenges and has already taken steps to address these matters.

**Andrew Blackmore,
Chair Governance & Audit Committee, June 2024**

1. PURPOSE

To set out the 2023/24 Annual Report from the Chair of the Council's Governance & Audit Committee which the Committee endorsed at its meeting on 6 July 2024.

2. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee concluded that it had discharged its responsibilities during the 2023/24 period and as a consequence the Council can be reasonably assured over its work, outputs and conclusion that the Authority's overall governance, risk and control arrangements are broadly effective. Notwithstanding this conclusion, these arrangements will likely need to continue evolving to reflect developments in its financial position and consequential changes to how the Council re-shapes its service delivery.

During the year, the Committee considered all material elements of the Council's governance, risk, financial control, and internal and external auditing arrangements. Given the critical importance of independent control assurance and effective financial management, the Committee has taken a keen interest in ensuring that the proposed target operating models (TOM) for the Council's Internal Audit and Central Finance functions were appropriate, and are being implemented promptly. It is the Committee's expectation that the TOM for these functions will have been substantively implemented by the Autumn.

In discharging its responsibilities the Committee has legitimately challenged officers over the design and operating effectiveness of its risk and control infrastructure with officers generally responding positively to these challenges.

The Council is invited to consider the conclusion and observations set out within this Annual Report and endorse this Report.

3. THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 The core responsibilities for the Governance & Audit Committee are set out in summary form at section 10.2 within the Council's Constitution (18 May 2023 version) with further information on responsibilities and expectations dispersed throughout the remainder of what is a very lengthy document. Section 10.2 states the Committee's responsibilities are to:

- ensure that there are effective relationships between external and internal audit, inspection agencies and other relevant bodies, and that the value of the audit process is actively promoted.

- review and approve the annual statement of accounts, external auditor's opinion and reports to members, and monitor management action in response to the issues raised by external audit.
 - maintain an overview of the Council's constitution in respect of contract procedure rules and financial regulations.
 - make recommendations, as appropriate, to Cabinet and Council on any matters reported through the Governance and Audit Committee
- 3.2 The Committee also has the following functions as required by s81, Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011) noting that these functions are not explicitly reflected in the Constitution (paragraph 3.1 above):
- review and scrutinise the authority's financial affairs,
 - make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's financial affairs,
 - review and assess the risk management, internal control, performance assessment and corporate governance arrangements of the authority,
 - make reports and recommendations to the authority on the adequacy and effectiveness of those arrangements,
 - review and assess the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively,
 - make reports and recommendations in relation to the authority's ability to handle complaints effectively,
 - oversee the authority's internal and external audit arrangements, and
 - review the financial statements prepared by the authority.
- 3.3 In practice it is acknowledged that the Committee's responsibilities extend to those matters set out in paragraph 3.2 above (and to other matters such as whistleblowing). The Committee understands that the Constitution is being updated but notes that it appears to have no formal role in proposing, reviewing or recommending revisions to this critical element of the Council's governance infrastructure. This is a clear omission that needs addressing.
- 3.4 Over the year the Committee has carefully considered the work of the Internal Audit function and noted the increased incidence of limited audit opinions which the Committee believes is reflective of a more assertive internal auditing approach, but also is symptomatic of some emerging strain across elements of the Authority's internal control environment, which is unsurprising given the scale of the ongoing financial and operational pressures. In response, the Authority's Senior Leadership Team has quite rightly taken a more visible and forceful role in holding officers to account for promptly and fully implementing audit recommendations and more generally maintaining control disciplines. Continued vigilance in this area remains essential.

- 3.5 The Committee previously expressed a preference for more collaborative working with officers which provides an opportunity to make more timely and constructive interventions reducing levels of required re-work. Officers constructively engaged with the Committee in relation to proposing significant improvements to the Authority’s overall strategic risk management framework. At its meeting in April this year the Committee congratulated officers on the work completed and duly endorsed the revised risk policy and appetite framework, noting that fully embedding this throughout the Authority should provide greater confidence in achieving the Community and Corporate Plan. The Committee will carefully monitor progress being made in implementing this framework.
- 3.6 In response to previous concerns expressed by the Committee in respect of, for example, the quality and timeliness of papers and the pace at which officers responded to the Committee’s concerns, it is pleasing to note significant improvements across all areas.

4. COMMITTEE CONSTITUTION, MEMBERSHIP & ATTENDANCE

- 4.1 Following the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 coming into effect the Council’s former Audit Committee was re-named as the Governance & Audit Committee with other changes as required by the legislation, such as an increase in the number of lay members to comprise one third of the Committee were made with three lay members (including the Chair) appointed meaning that the Committee has a total of 12 members (comprises eight elected and four lay members).
- 4.2 There have been minor changes to membership over the period with all new members, along with existing members, offered an appropriate training and support programme which ensures that all members feel able to contribute effectively and to do so in a non-partisan manner. This training and support programme continues to be available to all members.
- 4.3 The Committee is supported by Democratic Services with the, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Resources, the Head of Finance and the Chief Internal Auditor, Performance and Data Insights Manager in attendance at most meetings. Representatives from our external auditors (Audit Wales) are invited to, and attend meetings as appropriate.
- 4.4 The Committee met on seven occasions during 2023/24. For each meeting, the Committee was quorate and there were sufficient members to enable an informed discussion on the matters raised. The high attendance rate by members demonstrates their continued commitment to the work of the Committee.

Governance & Audit Committee meetings 2022/23
29 June 2023
27 July 2023

20 September 2023
19 October 2023
4 December 2023
11 January 2024
22 February 2024

4.5 During late 2023 the Committee undertook a self assessment exercise which aimed to identify the extent to which members felt equipped to make an effective, individual contribution and then to consider whether collectively, the Committee was operating effectively. A small number of improvement areas were identified which have been implemented. The output from this exercise has informed the ongoing programme of training and development for members.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

None.

7. CONSULTEES

- Governance & Audit Committee members
- Deputy Chief Executive/ S151 Officer
- Monitoring Officer.

8. RESULTS OF CONSULTATION:

Report agreed.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Papers for the Governance & Audit Committee meetings during 2023/24.

10. AUTHOR AND CONTACT DETAILS

Andrew Blackmore, Chair, on behalf of the Governance and Audit Committee

Andrewblackmore@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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SUBJECT:	APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY
MEETING:	Council
DATE:	19 October 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Grofield

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To appoint a Monmouthshire Councillor to be a representative on the Rachel Herbert's School Endowment Charity.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the appointment of the member for the Grofield Ward as representative to the outside body.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The council has received a request from the Rachel Herbert's School Endowment Charity to appoint a councillor to sit as a trustee of the charity.
- 3.2 The charity ("the School Charity") has not operated for over 30 years but needs to be revitalised because it owns the Holy Trinity Hall in Trinity Square, Baker Street, Abergavenny which is operated by the Holy Trinity PCC under a lease from the School Charity which needs to be reviewed. Also in the Square are 8 almshouses owned and operated by the sister Charity Miss Rachel Herbert's Church Parsonage and Almshouse Charity ("the Almshouse Charity").
- 3.3 The charity operates wholly within the Grofield Ward and therefore, following consultation with the Grofield ward councillor and political group leaders, it is recommended that the ward member for Grofield be appointed as the representative to this charity.

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

- 4.1 None identified

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Not applicable

6. CONSULTEES

Political Group Leaders
Grofield Ward Councillor

7. AUTHOR

John Pearson, Local Democracy Manager

8. CONTACT DETAILS

E-mail: johnpearson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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SUBJECT: Self-Assessment 2023/24

MEETING: County Council

DATE: 19th September 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2023/24 to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2024 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the self-assessment for 2023/24 be approved.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Self-assessment is a vital part of our performance management arrangements. It's a way of evaluating, critically and honestly how well the authority is delivering the objectives set in the Community and Corporate Plan and the effectiveness of our supporting arrangement such as finance, workforce and asset management.
- 3.2 The first years of activity set out in the Community and Corporate Plan included work to develop new strategies. With the majority of these now in place it should be anticipated that future years will see more progress being made against delivery. An evaluation score of between 1 (unsatisfactory) and 6 (excellent) has been applied to each of the council's six objectives for the year ending March 2024. Five of these have been assessed as level 4 (good) and one as level 3 (adequate). The report also describes the progress that has been made following the recommendations made in last years' evaluation as well as highlighting future areas of development.
- 3.3 As well as being an incredibly useful tool for councillors and officers, the production of a self-assessment report is a legal requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act requires each local authority in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements' defined in the Act. This means the extent to which: it is exercising its functions effectively; is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively and its governance is effective for securing these.
- 3.4 The Act creates a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. This informs decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework (appendix 1 of the assessment). This ensures it can help the council continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. Our self-assessment began with a desk-based evaluation of available evidence. The initial findings were tested refined through a series of workshops with Directorate Management Teams before being subject to challenge by Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet and then presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee.

- 3.5 The financial year 2023/24 saw a continuation of numerous wider pressures that are resulting in challenges for many local authorities. Monmouthshire is no exception. The council is facing rising costs, alongside increasingly complex demand pressures. The objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan strive to address complex issues within an increasingly uncertain environment. The ambition outlined in the document looks to the long-term and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations.
- 3.6 As mentioned above, the self-assessment report evaluates the council's performance under each of the six Well-being Objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan, and the programme of work that supports their delivery. The report focusses on the 'what we want to achieve' outcome statements that are each underpinned by specific actions for each objective.
- 3.7 To support the delivery of the objectives, it's important that all teams are working efficiently and effectively. The report assesses the effectiveness of the enabling functions that support front line delivery to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability. These include corporate planning, performance and risk management, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, digital and data.
- 3.8 Alongside the assessment of the delivery of our objectives, the report assesses how well we have achieved the areas for development identified in the 2022/23 self-assessment report. This can be found in the 'our actions' section. This section also sets out additional areas for development that have been identified as part of the 2023/24 assessment.
- 3.9 The self-assessment report demonstrates the progress the council has made in achieving its intended outcomes and identifies any further areas for development to be addressed in 2024/25. These include:
- We have continued to support those on low-income and address inequality in the county through working with partners to provide cost-of-living support sessions across Monmouthshire and implementing universal free school meals for all primary school pupils. We need to develop a joined-up whole-authority approach to sustain the impacts of our interventions.
 - We have shown our commitment to reducing our impact on the planet through developing a refreshed Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy, underpinned by four delivery plans which set out the action we will take. However, we recognise these are complex challenges and unless there is an increase in the public finances available for this, the evidence that we are gathering suggests that reaching our net-zero ambitions will be extremely challenging.
 - Through Rapid Rehousing we are preventing an increasing number of households from becoming homeless and are decreasing the number of homeless households in costly B&B accommodation. We have begun the process of acquiring properties to transform into temporary accommodation to address the issue of limited availability.
 - We are focused on understanding barriers to learning, particularly for vulnerable pupils, and ensuring suitable wellbeing support is available. We are facing challenges in returning attendance figures to pre-pandemic levels, and are seeing an increase in behaviours that challenge.
 - We are developing a Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The financial strategy is key to realising the aims and ambitions set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. The strategy explains how the council will respond to the challenges ahead, and the principles that will be adopted in managing and using financial resources.

- 3.10 This report is primarily an evaluation of what did in 2023/24. It informs our future work but it does not purport to set out detailed action or delivery plans. That work sits elsewhere, including in the service business plans that are produced annually by teams across the authority. Nor does not cover the authority's budget position which is considered in more detail in financial monitoring reports.
- 3.11 A draft of the self-assessment report was provided to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, who used the report to scrutinise the council's performance during 2023/24. The committee provided helpful feedback, emphasising the importance of using a range of evidence to assess the impact of our actions. The report has been developed to set out the conclusions drawn from the work of regulators in the year and consultation and engagement undertaken. Next year's assessment will be able to use evidence gathered from a survey that is being run to gain a further understanding of residents' views of their local place and council services. Several other areas for improvement were identified such as the inclusion of more performance comparisons and clarifying or amending parts of the assessment. Feedback has been used to refine the current assessment where feasible with other comments being used to improve the process for future years. There was also a discussion about the transformation of services to meet budget challenges. The committee was reminded that this formed part of the planning being developed following the recent agreement of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 3.12 The draft self-assessment report was also presented to Governance and Audit Committee, which has a statutory role to review the final draft of the assessment. The report was used by the committee to seek assurance on the effectiveness of the council's governance and assurance arrangements. Governance and Audit Committee are also able to make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take as set out in paragraph 2.40 of the statutory guidance. The committee reviewed the report and were satisfied with the assurance provided on the process followed for the self-assessment exercise and the structure and content of the report completed. The committee noted how these arrangements had evolved to strengthen the process. The committee did not make any specific recommendations for change ahead of its consideration by Council. Some areas for further improvement were suggested for consideration in the process and report for future years. The committee also noted the importance of communicating the findings of the report to residents and staff. The summary attached will be used to communicate the main findings of the report.
- 3.13 The self-assessment is a public document and should be accessible to a wide audience. Once approved the assessment and summary will be published on the council's website and shared with key partners in accordance with paragraph 2.42 of the statutory guidance.
- 3.14 The annual self-assessment report is, by its very nature, carried out by local authority officers drawing on a range of evidence including reports produced by external organisations like regulators. Once every five years, the Local Government and Elections Act requires us to conduct a panel performance assessment which will be chaired and conducted by external peers including an independently appointed chair. Our Improvement work is also examined by Audit Wales who undertake audits of our performance management work. The findings of these are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee who use them to seek assurance about the effectiveness of our arrangements.
- 4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

- 4.1 This report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on these areas. The progress the council has made on the Well-being of Future Generations Act, equalities and safeguarding is set out in the report. Any action the Council takes that requires further decision will be evaluated in line with the decision-making process.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The self-assessment report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision on a future policy direction. The report provides an analysis, using a range of information, on the council's performance in 2023/24. The structure of the report has been informed by the legislation it is required to meet.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 The report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of the council in 2023/24 using a range of performance information and evidence.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that the council can be held to account for performance and can demonstrate progress towards delivering better outcomes for citizens.
- 7.2 To comply with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act and the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 This report is a review of performance in 2023/24. This report does not commit the council to any explicit actions which result in additional resource commitments. Any resource implications of action the Council takes in future in response to the assessment will be dealt with in accordance with the usual decision-making rules.

9. CONSULTEES:

Directorate Management Teams
Strategic Leadership Team
Cabinet

The draft self-assessment report has been scrutinised by Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee and reviewed by Governance & Audit Committee. The feedback from the committees is set out in this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Local Government and Elections \(Wales\) Act 2021](#)

[Performance and governance of local authorities: statutory guidance](#)

[Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28](#)

[Self-assessment Report 2022/23](#)

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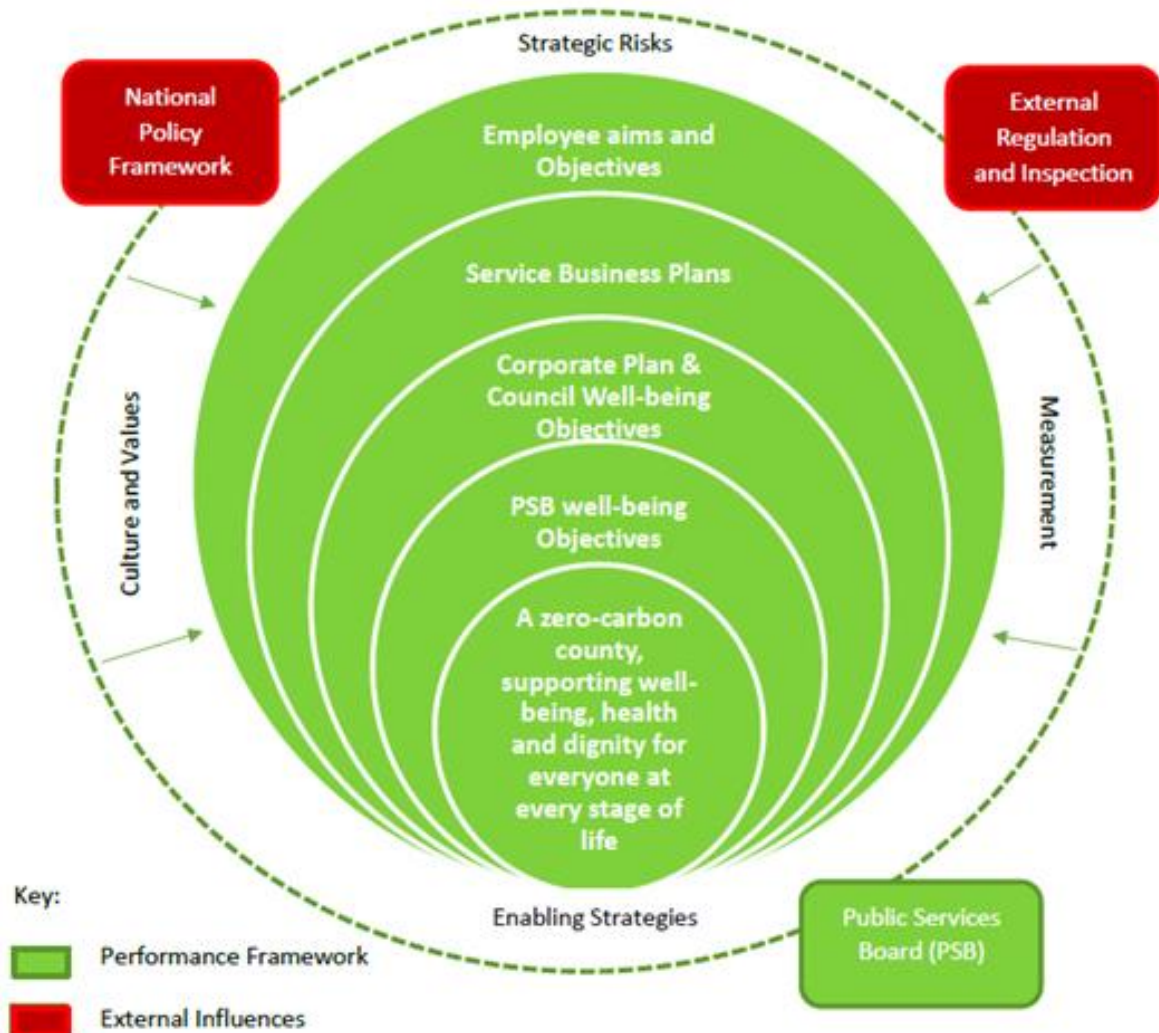
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Appendix 1

Performance Management Framework

Our performance management framework makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes.

Building a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The council's own well-being objectives are set by Council and form the backbone of our Community and Corporate Plan. Each of our teams has a service business plan that aligns to these objectives. We have a range of performance measures that we use to keep track of our progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values.



Self-assessment Report 2023/24



Version Control

Title	Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2023/24
Purpose	To self-assess the Council's goals and arrangements as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
Owner	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships
Approved by	Monmouthshire County Council
Date	02/09/24
Version Number	0.5
Status	Draft – Informal Cabinet & SLT Consultation
Review Frequency	Annual
Next review date	2025
Consultation	Cabinet Strategic Leadership Team Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Governance and Audit Committee

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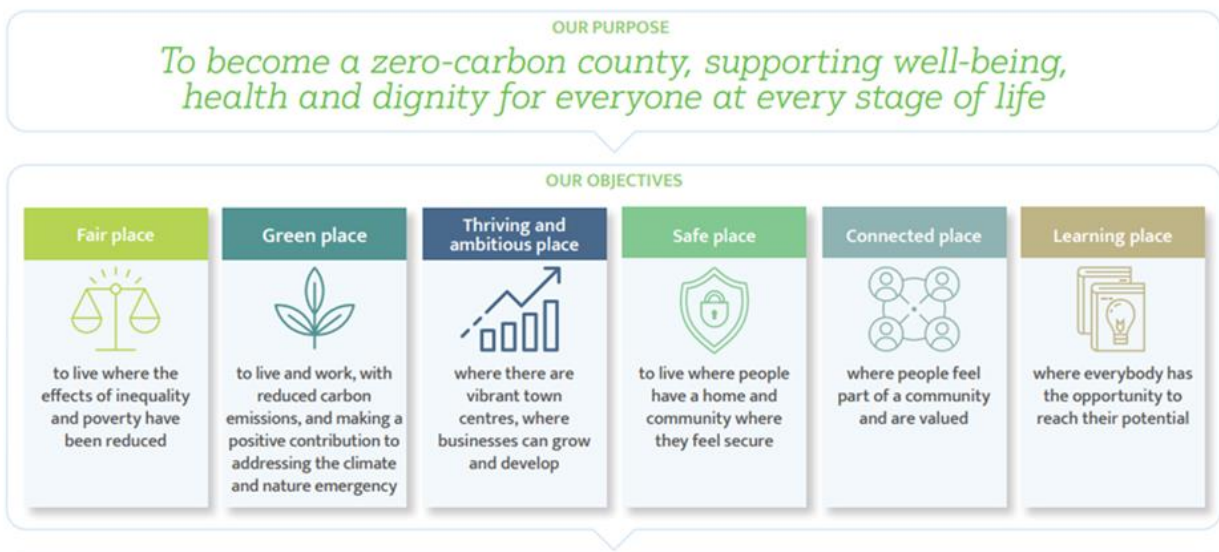
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Introduction

We are clear about what we want to achieve, and this self-assessment is a critical tool in helping us achieve that. Our ambition for Monmouthshire County Council and the people it serves is set in our Community and Corporate Plan. We want to be a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. We will do this working with, and alongside, our communities. These are ambitious goals and it's vital that we track and evaluate our progress. This will make sure we can respond to changing circumstances and opportunities and, most importantly, be held accountable for how well we are doing.

Local councils deliver hundreds of different services. Every household will have some experience of waste collection and highways. You may never need support from social services but, with an ageing population, it is vital part of everyday life for many thousands of residents when they are at their most vulnerable. Other services, such those delivered by our environmental health teams, will be less visible but work hard every day to keep us all safe. This evaluation cannot cover every single service. We have scrutiny committees and business plans in place to allow our councillors to hold senior officers and Cabinet members to account for those. Instead, it focuses primarily on how well we have delivered the six well-being objectives described in the Community and Corporate Plan.

Our Community and Corporate Plan – at a glance



The report also evaluates some of the key governance aspects that underpin our work such as the effectiveness of our workforce planning, use of assets and our financial management arrangements. It dovetails with the Annual Governance Statement, which is coordinated by our Chief Internal Auditor on behalf of the leadership team, and draws on audit and inspection work carried out by regulators including Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales.

Like many public services we are facing real terms reductions in our budgets as a result of external economic pressures. We have made over £70M of savings in recent years. We sometimes have to take difficult decisions to balance our books. This Authority has a good track record of developing proposal to deliver within its budget. This evaluation helps us understand the impact of the changes we make and allows us to learn from these changes so we can strive to continually improve what we do.

Our Self-Assessment

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, requires councils to keep their performance under review through self-assessment. We need to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once every financial year. This report looks back over the period from April 2023 to March 2024.


Effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and to achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. This is focused on three questions:

- How well are we doing?
- How do we know?
- What and how can we do better?

This is integrated with our annual reporting arrangements on the progress and impact we have made in meeting our well-being objectives, which is a requirement under the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Further details on the process of the self-assessment are shown in Appendix 2. We also produced a short summary of this assessment.

We welcome views from residents on this assessment along with any areas of our work that you think should be considered by the scrutiny committees that hold decision-makers to account. Please get in touch via:

 improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk

 Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Usk, NP15 1GA

 @MonmouthshireCC

Understanding our local place

Monmouthshire is a diverse county. As a council we need to ensure we are meeting the needs of a wide range of groups, from residents to businesses. We strive to better understand the challenges facing our residents.

The context that we operate in is complex. Having a clear and current understanding of the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being in Monmouthshire is essential for the council to inform its purpose and priorities.

Local place

How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities?	How do we know?
<p>The council has a good understanding of the well-being of its residents. We have access to and analyse a range of statistical information including but not limited to health, income levels and the local economy. We also get qualitative feedback about residents' perceptions of our area from the National Survey for Wales. Some services, such as social care, libraries and building control also gather feedback from service user surveys. However, we recognise that we do not have a comprehensive understanding of how well services and policies are meeting the needs of the people who use them given the breadth of services provided.</p> <p>A study by Audit Wales concluded that, like other councils, we needed to do more to understand the impact of our services on residents.</p> <p>We have 46 ward councillors who represent the interests of their communities and bring forward local intelligence. This is supplemented by the use of a public open forum at scrutiny meetings and Council to allow residents to raise matters of concern.</p> <p>We also consult directly when we are planning service changes or considering action in a particular area, for example, we engaged with over 1,200 people to understand how we could make our communities more age friendly.</p> <p>The Community and Corporate Plan sets a clear commitment to work with and alongside communities, empowering people to support each other and come up with long-term solutions.</p> <p>We have engaged extensively during the production of the replacement Local Development Plan. This will shape land use in the county. It will increase opportunities for the younger people to both live and work within Monmouthshire, creating a more balanced demography and socially and economically sustainable communities. We are also working in partnership on the production of town centre masterplans.</p> <p>Once every five years we also conduct an extensive well-being assessment and population needs assessment with partners across Gwent. The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) has engaged widely in the development of the well-being assessment and plan for the area.</p>	<p>National Survey for Wales</p> <p>Customer Surveys</p> <p>Audit Wales Report - <i>Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes</i></p> <p>Informational from the National Statistics Office and other sources</p> <p>Population Needs Assessment</p> <p>Gwent Well-being Assessment & Plan</p> <p>Community and Corporate Plan</p> <p>Replacement Local Development Plan</p> <p>Town centre masterplans</p>

Our Outcomes

The Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 contains six well-being objectives which focus on the longer-term future of the county and aims to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act.

In assessing each of the areas for development from our previous assessment under the six objectives, we have considered the extent to which:

- Our objectives contribute to the achievement of the seven well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- We are taking all reasonable steps to meet them.
- They remain consistent with the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working. More detail on the how the five ways of working are applied is provided in the progress on each goal later in this report.

It is important that outcomes are not considered in isolation since they can affect each other and need to be considered in an integrated way. How they integrate with each other is shown in Appendix 1.

We have included the following icons to illustrate each objectives contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals:



The long-term nature of our objectives means that the effects of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will only have an impact over the longer term. Informed by the evidence gathered, we have assessed progress against each of our objectives on a scale of 1-6 based on the following principles:

Level	Definition	Description
6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding – all performance measures have achieved the target set and all actions have been delivered
5	Very Good	Major strengths – a significant majority of actions and measures are on track. No more than one or two falling short
4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – the majority of measures and actions have not been achieved
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weakness – in most areas, performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction and the vast majority of actions have not been delivered

Objective template explained.

Evaluation Score: This provides our assessment of performance against the objective using the evaluation scoring mechanism

Why we focused on this?

Why we are focusing on this objective to improve well-being in Monmouthshire.

How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?

How do we know?

Row 1 - This sets 'What we want to achieve' from the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28

Column 1 - This provides the self-assessment of our performance during 2023/24 based on 'what we want to achieve'

Column 2 - The evidence sources we have used to inform our assessment.

Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment

These are specific conclusions from the self-assessment that inform our action plan.

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

This provides an explanation of how our activity contributes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act well-being goals and ways of working. It also identifies the council's well-being objective(s) that were in place during 2022/23, revised well-being objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan were subsequently set in April 2023.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2023/24	Comment
This provides an update using the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan.	Previous data is 22/23 unless otherwise stated	Latest data is 23/24 unless otherwise stated	This is the target we set for 23/24	Any further explanation on the performance measure



A Fair Place to Live

What we want to achieve:

- Improved life chances for people regardless of income or background.
- Residents have better access to council services and support needed to live a healthy life.
- Citizens are able to participate in council and community decision-making and take actions which enable them to shape their own futures.


Strategic Assessment

Monmouthshire, on average, is a prosperous and affluent county. None of our communities are in the most deprived 10% in Wales, and we have some of the highest levels of disposable income. However, we have high levels of income inequality, and headline figures can mask pockets of deprivation that are all the more stark when seen alongside areas of relative wealth. We want to see improved life chances for people irrespective of their income or background. It will take time for us to see the impact of our work. In the meantime, we have put in place solutions to mitigate the effects of inequality on different groups of people.

We have gone above our statutory duty to provide breakfast and freshly cooked meal at lunchtime to all primary school pupils to ensure everyone has access to a healthy meal, no matter their background. Wider economic issues including the rising cost-of-living are causing more people to fall into financial difficulties. 12% of people in Monmouthshire live in households in material deprivation. We do not want anyone to feel left behind. We're supporting our residents through our Money Matters campaign which signposts to additional support, and we have also teamed up with Mind and Citizens Advice to set up cost-of-living support drop-in sessions across the county.

We want all our residents have equal opportunity in life chances. We have developed a Strategic Equality Plan which sets objectives that value, and aim to make the most of, the abilities and contributions of everyone in our communities, irrespective of age, gender, race, sexual orientation or any of the other characteristics that make us who we are. We want to celebrate the diversity of our communities and make sure everyone feels welcome. We're committed to becoming a county of sanctuary for those fleeing war and persecution and will meet these individuals with compassion and understanding. We're lucky to have excellent social capital with many community networks working to support the place they live, as shown by our high volunteering rate. We have continued to support our fantastic volunteers and are working with community groups to help them access small grants to fund projects that matter to them.

Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Fair Place to Live

A Fair Place to Live		
<div style="background-color: #92d050; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold;">Fair place</div> 	<p>Evaluation Score: Level 4 Good - Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have increased the support we provide to residents to improve their life chances and enabled our communities to develop the places they live. We have set plans to deliver most of what we to achieve. Our assessment shows we need to ensure all our interventions to achieve this objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact.</p>	
Why we focused on this?		
<p>Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire or feel their voice does not count. Many of our residents are prosperous and very capable of looking after themselves and their loved ones. However, this is not the case for all and in a rural county inequality is often more hidden than in urban places. We will increase the intensity of our work to help those who need support to live the lives they want.</p>		
Pages 58	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
What we want to achieve: Improved life chances for people regardless of income or background		
<p>Support for residents and families on low income</p> <p>We have implemented universal free school meals for all 6,000 primary school children in Monmouthshire. We have gone beyond the statutory requirements and are providing a breakfast and healthy freshly cooked meal at lunch time enhancing pupils’ well-being and learning. Uptake of meals overall has increased from 64% of pupils accessing free school meals in April 2023 to 75% in April 2024. This has varied in different areas of the county and has been lower in more deprived areas. Schools who have some of the highest rates of pupils eligible for free school meals (eFSM) (an average eFSM rate of around 30%) are seeing the lowest uptake rates of around 60%, whilst those with the lowest rates of eFSM pupils (around 5%) are experiencing the highest uptake at over 80%. We are working with schools, parents and learners to understand and remove any barriers that may face those in less deprived areas from accessing universal free school meals. This includes reviewing how meals are ordered, adjusting the types of food provided and assessing an opt-out rather than an opt-in approach to free school meals provision.</p> <p>We have continued to support those affected by the rising cost-of-living through a range of methods including the Money Matters campaign which signposts residents to sources of support; working with Mind Monmouthshire and Citizens Advice Monmouthshire to set up cost of living support drop-in sessions across the county which offer advice on ensuring people are getting all the money and benefits they are entitled to; and help and advice on getting back into work or more secure employment as well as emotional and well-being support.</p> <p>We have promoted the local advice and support from our Benefits service on Housing Benefit, Universal Credit, Discretionary Housing Payments and Council Tax Reduction so people get the maximum financial support they are entitled to. There has been a slight reduction in the number of</p>		<p>Universal free school meals roll out</p> <p>Money Matters campaign, drop-in sessions, help and advice</p> <p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme</p>

<p>Council Tax Reduction claims, which provides increased financial support to households. There remain some households who are still unlikely to be receiving the full financial support they are entitled to.</p>	
<p>What we want to achieve: Residents have better access to council services and support needed to live a healthy life</p>	
<p>Provide low-cost play provision</p> <p>We have supported pupils in the school holidays with free or low-cost play provision. In the 2023 summer holidays, 3,363 hours of play provision were provided, 10,605 sessions were attended of which 2,821 were children eligible for free school meals. These sessions provided play and physical activity opportunities to young people. Through the sessions, 816 meals and 413 food parcels were provided to families, providing access to food through the summer holidays to some families who need it.</p> <p>We have delivered Food and Fun schemes in five primary schools across the county. The scheme provides healthy meals and activities for children during the summer holidays. Attendances have increased from 2,005 in 22/23 to 4,316 in 23/24 and 8,632 healthy meals were provided. Youth Centres provided access to healthy meals on days the centres were open in the summer, with take-home food parcels also available for those who needed them. This is part of our commitment to reduce food insecurity ensuring all children and young people have access to a healthy meal.</p> <p>We are working with headteachers to identify those pupils who will most benefit from free or low-cost provision. We have increased the number of schools we work with from 11 in 22/23 to 21 in 23/24 and have begun to provide secondary as well as primary school provision. The offer of school holiday play sessions and meals is not taken up for every pupil who may benefit from them. We need to understand the potential barriers and develop the offer to increase uptake. We are also reviewing how we capture feedback from these sessions to ensure we are meeting the needs of the children attending.</p>	<p>School Holiday Play provision</p> <p>Food and Fun scheme</p>
<p>Work with partners to reduce food insecurity, develop cultural and community services</p> <p>We have developed and opened the new £2.9 million Magor and Undy Community Hub in partnership with The Magor and Undy Community Hub project (MUCH). The development was based on extensive involvement of the community and is designed based on residents' feedback. The site provides spaces for community use and commercial events, as well as potential for small business growth. The MUCH group now occupies and manages the community hub for the direct promotion of community use including social, culture, leisure, sporting and other community activities.</p> <p>We held a Celebration of the Arts which showcased how artists, performers, musicians and others contribute to Monmouthshire's vibrant culture and economy. We have worked with artists from across the county to provide access to funding and locations to showcase their work, including developing a 'Creative Cluster' of local artists. This is supporting our creative industry to provide new perspectives on communities, place, and their history, and play a vital role in the local economy. This is part of our commitment to create a new cultural strategy. The feedback</p>	<p>Celebration of the Arts</p> <p>Cultural Strategy development</p>

<p>will inform its development. The strategy will provide a focal point for networking, support, and inclusion for cultural activity across our communities.</p> <p>We have developed approaches to local and community food growing, including the procurement of food and networks with local suppliers. Every primary school has a kitchen where freshly cooked, nutrition-rich meals are produced five days a week. We also support a countywide Food Partnership. An example of partnership working are community fridges which provide indirect support for those experiencing food insecurity. They currently operate in Monmouth, Abergavenny, Caldicot, Goytre, Chepstow and Magor with Undy. These provide local access to food and each fridge saves around two tonnes of food going to landfill per month. Around 540 people visit a community fridge each week; this is an increase of around 480 on the previous figure.</p> <p>We have identified that residents who are accessing services such as community fridges may not be receiving the wrap-around support they need. We have appointed a food security engagement officer who is signposting families to wider financial support services, gathering data on demand and working with community food projects to ensure their sustainability. We need to develop a joined-up whole-authority approach to sustain the impacts of our interventions. We must focus on the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities. This will be a key focus of our tackling poverty and inequality action plan.</p> <p>We have developed a Local Food Strategy that demonstrates the council's recognition of Monmouthshire as the 'Food Capital of Wales'. The strategy has been informed by evidence and consultation with the local experts, partners and stakeholders. It has three core themes: Improving local and ethical supply chains; Developing food as an economic sector; Community food: access, education, participation. It will enable a whole-authority approach focused on long-term sustainability and health and well-being.</p>	<p>Community Fridges</p> <p>Number of people accessing community fridges</p> <p>Local Food Strategy</p>
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What we want to achieve: Citizens are able to participate in council and community decision-making and take actions which enable them to shape their own futures

<p>Empowering citizens and communities</p> <p>We have implemented a small grant scheme, You Decide, which provided £80k to 75 local schemes to focus on projects they deemed important to their local areas. Around 7,000 citizens were involved, and projects included developing a small community growing area and addressing holiday hunger. We have reached out to communities of interest and provided support to build their own resilience. This includes supporting care leavers and young carers with £25k in funding and supporting diverse communities, which included members of Monmouthshire's Muslim and Ukraine communities, with £10k. We have worked with established community groups who have experience reaching 'hard-to-reach' groups; and provided £5k to support community activity including cost of living support and family fun days.</p> <p>We ran the annual Make Your Mark survey that offered young people the chance to have a voice and make a difference in matters that affect them. Concerns raised included cost of living, health and well-being, climate change and loneliness. The youth service has worked with young people to understand and adjust provision to respond to the issues raised. Responses rates to the survey were lower than we targeted, with 43% of secondary school pupils taking part in the survey. We have identified recommendations to increase the response rate to the next survey including engagement with secondary schools and digital options to increase accessibility.</p>	<p>You Decide scheme</p> <p>Make Your Mark survey</p> <p>Volunteering Good Practice Guide</p>
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<p>We have developed a Volunteering Good Practice Guide to enhance the growth of volunteers, provide continuous assistance, and to ensure a high-quality volunteering experience. We have run events and provided opportunities within our services, such as in museums. We have received over 100 responses to our annual volunteer survey. This has allowed us to identify what is working well, what improvements can be made and what additional resources we can provide to assist our volunteers in their roles.</p> <p>Volunteer programmes in the county have contributed to a range of benefits including reducing isolation, helping with mental health, educating visitors to the county, and providing volunteers with new skills. The latest data shows around 39% of residents in the county volunteer in some capacity, the second highest percentage in Wales. This demonstrates the commitment from residents in the county to provide their time in a whole range of volunteering capacities benefiting people, places and communities.</p>	<p>Annual volunteer survey</p> <p>Percentage of residents in the county who volunteer</p>
<p>Promoting Equality</p> <p>Council has approved a new Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2024-28. The plan sets objectives that value, and aim to make the most of, the abilities and contributions of everyone in our communities, irrespective of age, gender, race, sexual orientation or any of the other characteristics that make us who we are. The plan includes the things we will do to contribute to national action plans including: The Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan; LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales; Advancing Gender Equality in Wales Action Plan and the Action on Disability Action Plans. We have held events in County Hall including Iftar and Black History Month celebrations to promote the diversity of our county and demonstrate to colleagues and the wider community that our workplace is inclusive and welcoming.</p> <p>We recognise that we need to increase the employment opportunities within the council for disabled people. We have made the disability confident pledge and have been accredited with Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status. The Disability Confident 3-year action plan sits alongside the accreditation. This will be implemented and monitored by the Accessibility Inclusion Group who meet on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>We committed in our Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28 to encourage local firms to become accredited disability confident employers. The number of local employers who have made the disability confident pledge has increased from 24 (March 2023) to 59 (April 24). This is helping to reduce the inequalities experienced by disabled people in accessing employment in the county.</p> <p>We passed a motion in September 2023 committing us to formally becoming a county of sanctuary. We have submitted an application to the UK-wide City of Sanctuary network and are awaiting confirmation that we have met the criteria for accredited membership.</p> <p>We have been successful in helping those fleeing the war in Ukraine to find properties in the area. Hosting, under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, has remained stable, with residents going above and beyond what was initially asked of them. We have exceeded the ‘population share’ of refugees identified by Welsh Government. Recognising the challenges faced by this community, we have established a specialised team comprising two homeless prevention workers, two Community and Well-being Officers, complemented by dedicated translation and administration support. Our approach involves close collaboration with local landlords to cultivate strong local networks and access to properties, addressing concerns related to affordability and financial assessments. This is part of our commitment to ensuring Monmouthshire is a place where all feel welcome.</p>	<p>County of Sanctuary status</p> <p>Support for those fleeing Ukraine</p> <p>Strategic Equality Plan 2024-28</p> <p>Iftar and Black History Month Celebrations</p> <p>Disability Confident Employer Level 2 status achieved</p> <p>Number of local employers who have made the disability confident pledge</p>

Supporting the Welsh Language

We have provided opportunities for our staff to participate in Welsh language courses from beginner level to advanced level. We have 40 members of staff undertaking Welsh language courses. We completed a staff survey to determine the Welsh skills of the workforce. This shows 323 members of staff have some level of Welsh language skills and use these to provide a service in Welsh to residents. We are using the survey to target the development of Welsh language skills in designated roles. This is contributing to our Welsh Language Strategy objective to increase opportunities for the public to interact with public services in Welsh.

Latest national data shows an increase in the percentage of the population in Monmouthshire who can speak Welsh at 18.4%, up from 16.6%. We will continue to evaluate our role in developing the use of the language in the county in our 2023/24 annual report on our Welsh language strategy and will further develop the strategy to continue the growth of the language.

Number of staff taking part in Welsh language courses
Number of Welsh speakers employed by the council

Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment

Carried over from the 2022/23 self-assessment: Ensure interventions to achieve a Fair Place to Live objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact.

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓		✓	✓		✓	



Well-being Objective: A Fair Place to Live

Adopting community-focused approaches promotes **collaboration** which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, empowering people and ensuring they can access support we hope to **prevent** problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county, so it is vital that everyone can be **involved** to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a **long-term** benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an **integrated** benefit for many aspects of the act, they will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous ¹	Latest ²	Target for 2023/24	Quick View	Comment
Number of children receiving universal free school meals ⁱ	2,583	6,064 (All primary school age children)	All primary school age children	↑	All primary school age children now have access to universal free school meals.
Number of attendances at MonGames ⁱⁱ	4,070	4,419	4,102	↑	
Number of attendances at Food and Fun ⁱⁱⁱ	2,005	4,316	3,840	↑	
Number of attendances at Active Play ^{iv}	249	544	312	↑	
Percentage of people who feel they are able to influence decisions in their local area ^v	20	33	34	↑	Latest figure is for 2021/22, and the previous figure is for 2018/19 – this was not measured as part of the National Survey for Wales 2019/20 or 2022/23. 2023/24 data will be included when available.
The percentage of secondary school pupils who take part in the national Make Your Mark survey and Monmouthshire-specific ballot ^{vi}	71	43	72	↓	The reduction can be attributed to restrictions on carrying out the survey in one of our schools and difficulties in acquiring responses from sixth form students.
Percentage of people who volunteer ^{vii}	32	39	40	↑	Latest is 2022/23, previous is 2019/20. 2023/24 data will be included when available.
Number of local employers who make disability confident employer pledge ^{viii}	24	59	50	↑	
Percentage of the population who can speak Welsh ^{ix}	16.6	18.4	16.9	↑	Previous is 2022/23, latest is year ending December 2023. 2023/24 data will be included when available.
Number of Welsh speakers employed by the council	278	323	303	↑	

Quick View of Trend: ↑ Improving performance; ↓ Declining Performance; ↔ Unchanged Performance

Quick View of Target: Green – Target achieved; amber – just missed the target; red – fell some way short

¹ Previous data is 2022/23 unless otherwise stated.

² Latest data is 2023/24 unless otherwise stated.



Green Place to Live

What we want to achieve:

- Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint
- Nature recovery, improved environmental and river health
- Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce

Strategic Assessment


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The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to life in Monmouthshire. We need to celebrate the outstanding beauty of our county, but also need to ensure we are doing all we can to protect and conserve it. The need for nature recovery in Monmouthshire is clear; 34% of species show a decline in their numbers. We're committed to addressing this issue. We have delivered 14 projects as part of Nature Isn't Neat which reduced mowing and let wildflowers grow in green spaces. The health of our rivers has suffered in recent years. Phosphate targets for the Usk are being failed at a rate of 88% and the Wye at 68%. We have worked with partners to address this and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is now installing phosphate stripping plants at two areas in the county to improve the health of our rivers.

Carbon emissions per head of population in Monmouthshire are above the average for the UK. We want to support residents to reduce their own emissions. Our circular economy projects are doing just this. Our Bentyg libraries have resulted in a carbon saving for residents of 9,755kg, and during this year alone our reuse shops have diverted 33 tonnes of waste from going to landfill. We have also continued to reach above target recycling rates, and thanks to the efforts of residents, we recycled over 71% of waste during the year.

We are committed to becoming net zero by 2030. We know that this is an important, but complex challenge. We're undertaking a range of work to better understand the scale of the issue, including commissioning costed decarbonisation plans for our estate. We have also refreshed our Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and have separated this into four clear action plans, including a decarbonisation plan. This better reflect the breadth of work being undertaken as we strive to meet our goal.

Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Green Place to Live


A Green Place to Live	
<p>Green place</p> 	<p>Evaluation Score: Level 3 - Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets.</p> <p>We have delivered specific projects that are contributing to achieving our objective, however we will need to do more and quicker to meet our ambition. The range of work that we are undertaking is helping us to understand the scale of the challenge and the path we need to take to reach our goal. We remain ambitious in our aim of becoming net zero by 2030. However, unless there is significant public investment, the evidence that we are gathering suggests that reaching our target will be extremely challenging.</p>
Why we focused on this?	
<p>We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. We will work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding and promote the circular economy. We also recognise that these are complex issues and it will take decades rather than years to see the full impact of the changes we are making.</p>	
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
What we want to achieve: Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint	
<p>Reduce the carbon emissions generated from the council's operations.</p> <p>We have implemented a range of measures to reduce emissions from our properties. Examples of schemes completed this year include installing outstanding solar car ports from Phase 1 (132kWp) and the development of a large-scale roof mounted system being installed as a part of the new Abergavenny school project.</p> <p>We have completed surveys on a number of buildings to fit LED lighting, solar PV, and heat pump installation. We are developing the Refit phase 2 programme and progressed funding applications. This programme of energy efficiency works on our public buildings will make building under the scheme more energy efficient, reduce carbon emissions and save energy costs. We are sharing energy data with schools and leisure centres to monitor and forecast their energy use to inform changes to reduce their consumption.</p> <p>We are transitioning to Ultra Low Emission vehicles at the point of renewal and where services need and funding permits. We currently do not have the additional funding required to transition our fleet at the pace we planned. We have commissioned a costed decarbonisation plan for our built estate and fleet transition which will allow us to make evidence-informed decisions on the use of assets and financial investment to reduce our carbon emissions.</p>	<p>Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy</p> <p>Carbon emission reporting data</p>

<p>We have strengthened the way in which we communicate with our supply chains to support the achievement of our carbon reduction plans. We have worked in collaboration with councils across the Cardiff Capital Region and agreed a standardised approach to tender questions asked at selection and award stage. We have developed carbon reduction guidance and shared it with staff procuring goods in the council.</p> <p>We have achieved a 17.8% reduction in our own emissions in 2022/23 (latest available data, equates to 44,248 tonnes of CO2 emissions) from the 2019/20 baseline (44,248 tonnes). This is largely due to a reduction in supply chain spend; indicative estimates show a reduction from 34,547 tonnes in 2021/22 to 29,780 in 2022/23. This method will not factor in any efforts to reduce supply chain emissions as an average factor is applied to each product group. Operational emissions for energy and fleet increased between 21/22 and 22/23 (13,889 tonnes to 14,527 tonnes). This can be attributed to the increase in the staff base and the inclusion of an additional reporting category for emissions arising from home working.</p> <p>We purchase our energy through a green tariff (100% renewable). In 22/23 we purchased 7,826,198 kWh of energy and generated 4,783,567kwh of renewable energy, 4,217,524kwh of which was exported to the grid. We avoided 1124 tonnes of CO2 through renewable energy generation, from solar panels on council buildings and from the council's solar farm at Oak Grove Farm in Crick.</p> <p>We have developed and agreed an updated Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. This includes an updated action plan on how we will reduce the council's carbon emissions. Progress will be monitored regularly by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group. The range of work that we are undertaking is helping us to understand the scale of the challenge and the path we need to take to reach our goal. We remain ambitious in our aim of becoming net zero by 2030. However, unless there is significant public investment, the evidence that we are gathering suggests that reaching our target will be extremely challenging.</p>	
<p>Support communities to reduce their carbon emissions.</p> <p>We have completed research to identify potential Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure requirements and assess on-street charging options. This will inform our future plans for electric charging infrastructure. We have made limited progress in installing electric charging infrastructure, partly due to a limited collective agreement on the best approach.</p> <p>We have increased the percentage of municipal waste in the county that was sent for recycling, reuse or composting in 23/24 to 71.7% (provisional data). This is above the statutory target of 64% and our own target of 70%. This is due to continued participation of residents with household recycling. The overall amount of waste generated per person has decreased from 125kg in 22/23 to 119kg 23/24 (provisional data). This shows the commitment of our residents to reducing our impact on the environment.</p> <p>We are a bronze accredited carbon literate organisation. We have offered carbon literacy training to staff and elected members, with additional spaces being offered to community groups through the Community Climate Champions. During 23/24 we delivered carbon literacy training to 28 officers, 18 elected members and 5 residents. We have not been able to target businesses or wider residents due to limited officer capacity and resources. We need to increase the reach of our carbon literacy to allow more staff to gain a better understanding of what it means to be carbon literate and embed our climate commitment in all areas of our work. We are developing a carbon literacy training video to extend our reach.</p>	<p>Carbon literacy training</p> <p>Circular economy projects</p> <p>Waste & Recycling rates.</p>

<p>We have continued to support the running of 3 Benthys library of things in the county. Since opening, these have lent 1,638 items to residents, resulting in a cost saving of £18.9k and a carbon saving of 9,755kg. We also supported three Repair Cafes run by our communities, and reuse shops which during the year diverted 33 tonnes of waste from going to landfill. These circular economy projects have contributed to our commitment to reducing the impact on our environment in the county. We have faced challenges finding key volunteers to support the running of these projects. We have achieved funding for two Circular Economy Project Officers to develop, expand and support our circular economy projects and the volunteers and community groups that drive them.</p>	
<p>What we want to achieve: Nature recovery, improved environmental and river health</p>	
<p>Enhance nature recovery and biodiversity</p> <p>We delivered 14 projects across Monmouthshire for Nature Isn't Neat which reduced mowing and let wildflowers grow in green spaces. These mini meadows are vital for supporting biodiversity and give residents the chance to experience nature. We have faced some challenges in participation in nature recovery. We need to secure collective agreement on what needs to be done to preserve and support nature and biodiversity in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>We have reviewed and updated our Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy to include a biodiversity and ecosystems resilience action plan. This sets out how we will maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems resilience through the council's operations. We have also reviewed our Green Infrastructure Strategy and Delivery Plan. This guides how we will improve the health and well-being of our residents through enhancing our green spaces.</p> <p>We continue to lead the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP). We have delivered £1.4m of work to improve and develop green infrastructure. This work is addressing nature and climate emergencies. We supported a range of work in Wye Valley AONB including green skills training and Youth Rangers. We are continuing to lead Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) to share best practice and resources. This partnership developed the Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP). The action plan provides practical and achievable actions to help reverse the decline in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in the county.</p>	<p>Nature Isn't Neat project</p> <p>Gwent Green Grid Partnership</p> <p>Biodiversity and ecosystems resilience action plan</p>
<p>Improvements to river quality</p> <p>We have developed an action plan on how we will work in partnership to improve the health of our rivers and oceans. Progress will be monitored regularly by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.</p> <p>We are a member of the Wye Nutrient Management Board Technical Advice Group which is identifying and analysing options for delivering improvements in water quality. We are continuing our involvement with the Wye Catchment Partnership to protect water quality, water quantity and biodiversity. An Usk Catchment Partnership Core Group has been established. We have completed an Usk Catchment Farm Engagement Scoping Study and a review of partners resources to inform the action plan. A knowledge hub has been established with two council ecologists participating. We continue to assess Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) proposals associated with new developments requiring SuDS Approving Body (SAB) approval, against Welsh Government's National SuDS Standards.</p>	<p>Rivers and oceans action plan</p> <p>Rivers partnerships</p>

<p>Natural Resources Wales’ (NRW) announcement of water quality issues in Riverine Special Areas of Conservation, including the River Wye and River Usk, has significant implications for the progression of the RLDP. We have worked with partners to address this issue, which has caused significant delay and restriction to development within the county. There is strategic phosphate mitigation work underway in the form of phosphate stripping being installed in Abergavenny and Monmouth to serve their settlements. This is enabling appropriate development to be permitted within these areas where it was previously restricted. A comprehensive review of the Environmental Permits of wastewater treatments across Monmouthshire has been complete; this will enable further development proposals to be permitted. We will ensure the candidate sites proposed within the Deposit Plan will not have an adverse impact on water quality within the River Wye or Usk.</p>	
<p>Flood alleviation</p> <p>We have continued to support our communities at risk of flooding. We have developed and updated emergency flood response plans for numerous sites across the county. We continue to respond to and investigate land drainage and flooding related issues daily and apply to Welsh Government for grant funding to deliver flood alleviation schemes in areas most at risk, with recent schemes completed in Tintern, Llantrisant, Llangwm, Llanbadoc, Shirenewton and Usk. We regularly engage with our communities through one-to-one sessions and community meetings.</p> <p>We aim to take a proactive rather than reactive approach to flood management. We’re working with partners such as Natural Resources Wales to progress Natural Flood Management at three high priority sites in the River Trothy. We also conduct proactive land drainage inspections and forecasting/responding to regular tidal flooding at Tintern. This activity is helping to limit the impact of flooding on our communities.</p> <p>We’re developing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and action plan. This will assess flood risk on a catchment-based approach and will identify Strategic Flood Risk Areas (SFRA). The Strategy will contain a County Wide Action Plan as well as specific Actions for each SFRA. This catchment-based approach will enable closer collaboration with wider flood risk management partners such as NRW.</p>	
<p>What we want to Achieve: Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce</p>	
<p>Promote community growing and access to local produce</p> <p>We have drafted a Local Food Strategy; the accompanying action plan sets out how we will facilitate access to council land for growing food, including continuing to work with Allotment Associations to bring empty plots back into use and create new plots through the Allotments Support Grant. We created 32 allotment plots in the year through our own land and through private sites. We need to ensure that the values of our Local Food Strategy are embedded across the organisation. For example, we recently re-tendered our contract for school milk when we were unable to secure all of our environmental policy aims through a collaboration with other councils.</p> <p>We awarded 10 grants as part of the second round of Monmouthshire Food Partnership’s small grants for community growing. These are providing community groups with resources to meet their ambitions. These include providing low-cost food, education and skills development and outdoor activity and well-being provision.</p>	<p>Local Food Strategy</p> <p>Monmouthshire Food Partnership</p>

<p>We have launched a Monmouthshire Food Partnership website, providing an inclusive information resource on the local food system and activity across the county. A Spring Food Fair was held in March. The fair was attended by 20 local traders and around 1500 members of the public and promoted local produce available in the county.</p>	
<p>Support farmers to adopt sustainable farming practices</p> <p>We are committed to transforming our agriculture to be more regenerative and sustainable. We are supporting the Regen Ben mentoring scheme, with three farms receiving mentorship. This is helping participating farms to develop a plan to move their operations onto more regenerative lines, building soil health and improving water quality. Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire continues to attract support from volunteers in the local farming community.</p> <p>We have worked with local farmers as part of the Welsh Veg in Schools pilot scheme to bring more local produce into schools. This has provided pupils in 10 participating schools with nutritious, local food no matter their socio-economic background. The project has also supported the development of new safety standards and new logistics. Growers are expanding their enterprises, and new farmers are diversifying into organic horticulture in order to participate.</p> <p>We continued to work in collaboration with Hartpury University as part of their TaLK UK SPF project which supports agricultural businesses increase productivity through Agri-Tech. During 2023/24, 94 businesses received support through this project.</p>	<p>Welsh Veg in Schools pilot</p> <p>Agri-tech collaboration with Hartpury university</p>
<p>Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	

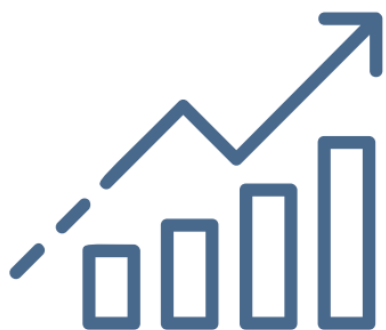
<p>Well-being of Future Generations Act impact</p>						
<p>Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals</p>						
<p>Prosperous Wales</p>	<p>Resilient Wales</p>	<p>Healthier Wales</p>	<p>More equal Wales</p>	<p>Wales of cohesive communities</p>	<p>Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language</p>	<p>Globally responsible Wales</p>
	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>		<p>✓</p>
<p><i>Well-being Objective: A Green Place to Live</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>						

Monmouthshire is a beautiful place, with a stunning natural and built environment. We have a collective responsibility to ensure this is available for future generations to enjoy so our plans must be focused on the **long-term** and look to **prevent** problems from occurring in years to come. **Involvement** is required with partners and communities to maximise the potential of the environment within the county. Working in **collaboration** with organisations who can enhance our environment will provide expertise in all aspects of our work, for example this will allow us to trial the latest technologies in renewable energies. Creating a healthy and resilient area for people to enjoy demands the **integration** of this objective as the environment within Monmouthshire forms such an important part of achieving a range of goals.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2023/24	Quick View	Comment
Carbon emissions (kgCO ₂ e) from the council's assets and operations ^x	48,576	44,248	40,500	↑	Latest figure is 2022/23, previous is for 2021/22. 2023/24 data will be included when available.
Capacity (MW) of renewable energy equipment installed on the council's estate	6.224	6.598	6.640	↑	Latest figure is 2023/24, previous is for 2021/22. 2023/24 data will be included when available.
Percentage of municipal waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting ^{xi}	70.0	71.7	70	↑	Latest figure is provisional data for 2023/24.
The number of allotment plots created by the council and through private sites supported by the council	New measure	32	31	↔	We have refocused this measure to provide clarity on where the council can implement action.

Quick View of Trend: ↑ Improving performance; ↓ Declining Performance; ↔ Unchanged Performance
 Quick View of Target: Green – Target achieved; amber – just missed the target; red – fell some way short



A Thriving and Ambitious Place

What we want to achieve:

- Vibrant town centres which bring people together and attract investment
- People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business
- Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure


Strategic Assessment

Monmouthshire has a strong local economy and is well placed for growth in Welsh terms. Employment in our county is strong, with an employment rate of 76.2%, higher than both the UK (75.7%) and Wales (74.1%). We also have a highly qualified population, with over half of Monmouthshire's working age population qualified to level NVQ4 and above. However, the lack of higher education establishments in the county, combined with high property and rental prices, results in many young people leaving the county. We are building relationships with schools, local colleges and local businesses to enable more of our school leavers to progress into opportunities with local businesses, including through apprenticeships. Ensuring our young people are entering the labour market with the skills they need is vital to the success of our economy. This is a key focus of our Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy.

Our towns and high streets have faced many challenges in recent years, including the cost-of-living crisis. Our town centre vacancy rate currently stands at 13%. We are committed to supporting our local businesses through these challenges and promoting the creation of new business; we provided support to 165 pre-starts and existing businesses throughout this year. It's important that we support the amenities that attract people to our towns. We have continued to make improvements to the accessibility of our visitor sites as part of our Heritage Strategy, and are working to understand and address barriers for those not attending.

Public transport is limited in the county. This results in an over-reliance on cars, which creates barriers to accessing training and employment for those who do not drive. We have developed a Local Transport Strategy which sets a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire. We're also continuing to develop and improve our active travel network, with access to town centres and key destinations across Monmouthshire sitting at its heart.

Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place

A Thriving and Ambitious Place	
<p>Thriving and ambitious place</p> 	<p>Evaluation score: Level 4 – Good - Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have developed our strategies to deliver the objective. We have provided support for residents and businesses to gain new skills, develop and grow and delivered projects to enhance connectivity. We are building from a strong economic and skills base. Our assessment shows we need to grow this base and provide targeted support and projects for people, business and places that need them most.</p>
<p>Why we focused on this?</p>	
<p>Our starting point is a comparatively strong one. Monmouthshire has a strong local economy and is well placed for growth in Welsh terms. There is strength in a number of key sectors which are highlighted and supported at a national level. Employment rates are high, as are qualification levels. But more can be done. Monmouthshire can be more vibrant. The conditions exist to achieve this. We will work with national, regional and local partners to increase investment, improve connectivity and continue the development of an economy which is thriving, ambitious and enterprising.</p>	
<p>72</p>	<p>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: Vibrant town centres which bring people together and attract investment</p>	
<p>Support vibrant town centres</p> <p>We are working in partnership with town councils and other key stakeholders to drive and oversee the development of the placemaking plans in Monmouth, Abergavenny and Magor with Undy. Initial discussions have taken place with local stakeholders about a new placemaking plan for Caldicot. Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding has been secured to support the development of the plans. There remains a challenge to resourcing the delivery of the full ambitions of these plans. We are focussing delivery on specific projects, in agreement with partners, within the resources available.</p> <p>We undertook a detailed audit of town centre vacancies in Chepstow and Monmouth to understand factors affecting higher vacancy rates in these areas and how the council and partners can best give support to minimise vacancies. This found that 13% of premises were vacant. We are working to decrease this figure through the town centre building improvement grant scheme which is being used to help bring empty/underused properties back into use. We are also working with Usk Town Council on the development of proposals for public realm improvements in Bridge Street and Twyn Square.</p>	<p>Placemaking plans</p> <p>Audit of town centre vacancies</p>

<p>There is limited employment land remaining within our existing LDP. This is limiting the opportunities available for businesses to settle and grow in Monmouthshire. We have allocated 43 hectares of employment land within our Replacement Local Development Plan to ensure and encourage business growth and opportunity within the county.</p>	
<p>Continue to support the tourism sector</p> <p>We are implementing our Heritage Strategy. As part of this we are committed to improving the accessibility of our sites. We have commissioned an accessibility audit of MonLife attractions and visitor sites and have launched a small grants programme to support access improvements at visitor attractions and events in Monmouthshire. We are also developing pre-visit access information for all MonLife attractions to make it easier for people with specific access needs to check whether a certain site is accessible to them.</p> <p>We need to do more to attract visitors to our heritage sites. We have completed a visitors’ survey to understand how we can make the experience better for those attending and understand the barriers to why some do not attend. This will inform action moving forward. We continue to provide concessionary prices at our attractions, including for foster carers, to reduce the financial barriers to attending.</p> <p>We have supported our visitor economy businesses to access UK and overseas group travel and travel trade markers to help them even out peaks and troughs in demand and provide a source of advanced bookings and guaranteed income. The number of FTE jobs supported by tourism has increased by 7.6% between 2019 and 2022 (3,356); visitor numbers also increased by 2.3% (2.34m) and the economic impact of tourism increased by 3.9% (£285m). This demonstrates the tourism sector has continued to grow beyond the challenges of the pandemic and the importance of the tourism sector in supporting employment and the economy in the county. We need to continue to assist the tourism sector through difficult economic times and ensure an excellent experience for visitors.</p>	<p>Heritage Strategy</p> <p>Accessibility audit</p> <p>Visitor’s survey</p> <p>Tourism impact data</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business</p>	
<p>Provide employment support and advice for businesses</p> <p>We continued to provide support to anyone interested in starting their own business via the Business Monmouthshire Project, making our residents more prepared for the challenges and equipping them with the knowledge they need to start a business. 165 pre-start and existing businesses were provided with assistance in 23/24, above our combined target of 160. This includes 80 potential entrepreneurs, which was above our target of 30, and 85 existing businesses in the county, which is below our target of 130. We have improved our relative competitiveness, measured by the UK Competitiveness Index, increasing from 94.6 in 2019 to 96.3 in 2023.</p> <p>There is a decreasing number of self-employed people in our county; the current self-employment rate is 9.4%, compared with 14.1% pre-pandemic. We need to increase the uptake of support for those wishing to start or grow their own business to ensure a thriving local economy. We are developing a customer relationship management system that will enable us to strengthen our relationship with local pre-starts and existing businesses and ensure that they are aware of the range of support that is available and how they can access this.</p>	<p>Entrepreneur and business assistance</p> <p>Self-employment rate</p> <p>Employment support</p>

<p>We work with a range of partners to promote innovation and share best practice. The Leader and Chief Executive of our council continue to play an active role in the Western Gateway. This partnership is helping us to collaborate with local government, business and academic partners to drive the local economy and promote our collective goal of net-zero. The Leader also oversees matters relating to research and innovation as part of the Cardiff Capital Region. A range of projects across a number of these are also being delivered through the Marches Forward Partnership, including development and the visitor economy, led by Monmouthshire.</p> <p>We have provided employment support to individuals who are economically inactive, ready for work or those in work looking to upskill; 115 people have been supported into employment throughout this year. Ready for work (Communities For Work+) has supported 108 people in to work and 36 people to gain qualifications, which has improved their economic chances. We have also provided counselling for 38 residents who are economically inactive and facing mental health barriers into work. Following support we need to improve the pathway to employment opportunities. This is a focus of our Economy, Employment & Skills Strategy.</p> <p>We continue to support Monmouthshire’s food and drink business network and facilitate networking events every 8 weeks. Businesses attending have reported they appreciate the talks and networking opportunities to share challenges and learning and to make new connections. We provided support to 54 enterprises during 23/24, and 50 people have attended training or information sessions focusing on collaboration, business growth and routes to market.</p>	
<p>Support residents to gain the skills they need</p> <p>We are continuing to support our residents to gain the skills they need; during this year, 720 achieved new skills or upskilled. The Multiply programme has helped 146 participants to gain new numerical skills and is currently supporting 40 individuals to gain a GCSE mathematics qualification. We have also focused on vocational training, establishing weekly drop-in sessions to support those looking to gain a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card – we have supported 30 people to gain one throughout the year. Budget constraints are limiting further courses that we can fund to meet demand. We are strengthening relationships with training providers to ensure residents can access more in-county training opportunities. We need to improve the pathway to employment in sectors facing regular recruitment challenges such as construction. This is a key focus of our Economy, Employment & Skills Strategy.</p> <p>We are building relationships with schools and local businesses to enable more of our school leavers to progress into opportunities with local businesses, including through apprenticeships. We have developed a STEM strategy that draws together the new STEM curriculum with the skill needs of current and potential businesses, and are working with these to further develop vocational opportunities and pathways. We have developed a Post-16 Transition Guide to share with our schools which provides an overview of transition for every young person in Monmouthshire and includes ideas around post-16 transition activities that schools and post-16 settings can do to enhance the experience for our young people. This guide aims to help prevent young people from becoming NEET (Not in Education Training or Employment).</p> <p>We have revised our Early Identification Tool, which helps us to identify those pupils most at risk of becoming NEET and cross references high risk young people across caseloads to ensure that provision and support is in place. This has been shared with schools and with teams supporting vulnerable learners. We have continued to work with Coleg Gwent to support our local NEET prevention partnership, Keeping in Touch Group. We</p>	<p>Skills programmes</p> <p>NEET strategy</p>

carried out engagement with all local colleges as part of our Youth Engagement & Progression Framework responsibilities. Monmouthshire has a significant number of colleges as post-16 destinations; we need to develop strong relationships with partners to support post-16 transition. The percentage of school leavers not in education, employment or training has remained unchanged at 1.8%, slightly above our 1.6% target. We need to use our learning to develop our NEET strategy.

Our Care Leavers support workers regularly attend Keep in Touch meetings to ensure that any care leavers who are Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) and in need of support can access it via NEET prevention programmes. The percentage of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training since leaving care was 52.5% in 23/24. We will improve our engagement with care leavers to reduce the number who become NEET.

What we want to achieve: Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure

Support the development of a sustainable transport system

We have developed a Local Transport Strategy which sets out a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire over the next five years. We will develop a future facing integrated transport network that meets the transport needs of our communities in a sustainable way, with needs of both our residents and the environment at its heart. We know that having a transport system that meets the needs of our communities is vital in addressing the isolation and inequality that can occur as a result of the rural nature of our county.

We are improving bus stop infrastructure as funding becomes available, with the aim of providing frequent core bus services that are designed to best fit our towns. We want to ensure services that are reliable and direct with improved journey times to get people where they need to be. Lower frequency secondary, on-demand and community services will be formed around this core network.

We are lobbying Network Rail to make train stations physically accessible for all, supporting the South Wales Metro proposals, and continue to campaign for enhanced services frequencies. We endorsed proposals for a new station at Magor and service frequency to two trains per hour to Chepstow. We are also working on proposals to improve bus access to Abergavenny, Chepstow, and Severn Tunnel Junction stations.

We are working with a provider to explore options of implementing a pool car pilot that will improve access to pool vehicles. Procurement is being undertaken to launch an initial scheme of 10 electric/hybrid vehicles. This scheme will help to reduce the carbon emissions produced in county and to help those facing difficulties in travelling around the county.

We have continued to maintain our key highways and ensured that the travelling public has a safe and efficient strategic road network. Throughout this year, 100% of planned programme maintenance was achieved. There remain a considerable number of backlog pressures for our highways infrastructure that we cannot afford to fund in our capital budget. These have varying levels of risk associated with them and impact on the condition of our road network. Independent condition assessments of key highways infrastructure are completed as required depending on condition, and these inform prioritisation of available capital budget to fund maintenance.

Local Transport Strategy

Highway planned programme maintenance


Develop active travel routes

<p>We have expanded our active travel network this year through the utilisation of £500k core funding and an additional £6.9m of funding achieved through the active travel fund. This is the second year in a row we have leveraged the most funding in Wales. We have used this to make improvements around the county, including dropped kerb installation to improve the active travel network. We also created or enhanced 20 active travel routes throughout the year, achieving above our target of 18. We currently have over 100 active routes in place and an additional 20 in development. This is increasing the opportunities to use active travel in the county and supporting residents and visitors to walk and cycle.</p> <p>An active travel live counter dashboard is now fully operational, with 6 live counter sites uploading information twice daily. We now have baseline data measurements and will be able to monitor the usage of our network in comparison. Countryside counters have also been incorporated to provide a single source of foot and cycle traffic within MonLife. We are working to ensure future Local Development Plan sites have maximum active travel potential prior to habitation, with access to town centres and key destinations across Monmouthshire sitting at the heart of active travel development.</p>	<p>Number of active travel routes created or enhanced</p>
<p>Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

Well-being Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place 

This goal is aimed at the **long-term** viability of Monmouthshire as a thriving place to live, work and visit. The location of Monmouthshire as the gateway to South East Wales means we must embrace working with neighbouring areas to maximise opportunities. Keeping Monmouthshire thriving and well-connected promotes **integration** and impacts on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the county. This requires **collaboration** with local businesses and other organisations, and **involvement** from the local community to maximise opportunities. Considering the global well-being of Wales is also important and this goal focuses on ensuring decisions are made with future generations in mind and takes a **preventative** approach to enable the retention of young people.

Measures of progress					
Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2023/24	Quick View	Comment
Annual economic impact of tourism (£) ^{xii}	182.79m	285.08m	3.8% growth pa	↑	Latest is 2022, previous is 2021. 2023 data will be added once available.
Number of pre-starts and existing businesses assisted during the year by the local authority and its partners	55	165	160	↑	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Number of working age people supported into employment during the year through action by the local authority	142	115	90	↓	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Percentage of school leavers not in education, employment or training ^{xiii}	1.8	1.8	1.6	↔	
Percentage of care experienced young people who have completed at least three months in education, training or employment	-	52.5	74.5	Newly adjusted measure	Measure amended in line with Welsh Government Performance Improvement Framework to include care leavers up the age of 21 from 19. Target will be revised in line with this change.
Percentage of local authority vehicle fleet which is ultra-low emission	8.4	10.2	9	↑	
Number of active travel routes created or enhanced	17	20	18	↑	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Number of active travel routes in development ^{xiv}	16	20	16	↑	

Quick View of Trend: ↑ Improving performance; ↓ Declining Performance; ↔ Unchanged Performance

Quick View of Target: Green – Target achieved; amber – just missed the target; red – fell some way short

A Safe Place to Live



What we want to achieve:

- Increased supply of good quality affordable housing
- Reduce the number of people who become homeless
- A more energy efficient housing stock with a lower carbon footprint
- Communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other


Strategic Assessment

Monmouthshire is a really good place to live, but we recognise that this isn't the case for everyone. We are working with our partners to make sure everyone has a safe place to live. House prices here are some of the highest in Wales, with the average property costing over £350k which is nine times average earnings in the county. This makes it difficult to buy or rent in Monmouthshire. That's why affordability is at the heart of our ambition in our proposed replacement Local Development Plan for our county. The delays in adopting this plan have limited the progress we have made in increasing the supply of affordable homes.

High property prices, a shortage of affordable private rented accommodation and the rising cost of living have all contributed to a rising homelessness problem in the county. Working collaboratively with housing partners we have implemented a Rapid Rehousing. This has increased homeless prevention. We have worked with social and private landlords and started to re-purpose our own properties to increase the availability of temporary and settled homes for homeless households which has led to reduced use of use of B&B accommodation.

We want everyone to feel safe in Monmouthshire. Residents have voiced concerns about safety and rates of anti-social behaviour have increased slightly. We have worked with young people to address their concerns about knife crime and anti-social behaviour and have extended public space protection orders to prevent anti-social behaviour. We have worked with the Police and partners across the region to develop a strategy aimed at preventing the most serious types of violence across Gwent.

Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Safe Place to Live

Objective: A Safe Place to Live		
Safe place 	Evaluation Score:	<p>Level 4 – Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have drafted our ambition for development in the county and implemented projects and support to deliver our objective. Our assessment shows that the delay in progressing our plans has limited the impact we have made to deliver our objective in the short term.</p>
Why we focused on this?		
<p>For most people, Monmouthshire is a really good place to live, but not for everyone. This needs to change. We will work with partners to create a safe place that people are proud to call home, increase the availability of good quality affordable housing, reduce homelessness and promote approaches to help homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.</p>		
	How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
	What we want to achieve: Increased supply of good quality affordable housing	
<p>Page 80</p>	<p>Produce a Replacement Local Development Plan</p> <p>We have drafted our Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) which will set the ambition for development within our county. We have ensured affordable housing sits at the heart of this plan by allocating 50% affordable housing on each site and introducing enabling policies which will allow for further affordable housing developments to come forward. This includes facilitating more single person accommodation in the county which is currently extremely limited and is a factor contributing to homelessness.</p> <p>We have refreshed the Local Housing Market Assessment 2022-37 that has identified a net need for 499 additional affordable homes per year until 2027. The continued delay in progressing the RLDP has meant that the delivery of affordable housing has been limited in the short term due to limited remaining development land; just 46 affordable homes were approved during 23/24. We are focused on ensuring the RLDP can address as much of this identified need as possible within wider policy constraints, whilst also being flexible to adjust to the needs of the market as they adapt.</p> <p>There is a risk that we will be unable to proceed with the Deposit RLDP if appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites are not identified. Potential sites have been identified for consultation by Cabinet following assessments by officers of council owned land. Cabinet’s decision on those which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites will be included in the Deposit Plan and will be informed by the findings of the detailed public consultation.</p>	
	<p>Work with partners to develop more empty properties back into use</p>	
		<p>Draft RLDP</p> <p>Local Housing Market Refresh 2022-37</p>

<p>We have increased action to reduce the number of empty properties across the county and have taken an approach which seeks to positively engage with owners to offer advice and support to help and encourage them to bring their home back into use. This includes letters advising of various grants and loans available, including the Empty Homes Grant. These efforts have resulted in 36 applications to the Empty Homes Grant and four enquiries on leasing a property as temporary homeless accommodation. We have also introduced more formal mechanisms to help tackle high numbers of empty properties within the county. This includes a Council Tax premium on long-term vacant properties. Overall, our approach has reduced the number of recorded long-term empty homes from 541 to 447 as at the 2024/25 billing stage; of these, 366 have been recorded as vacant for over 12 months and will now be subject to the Council Tax premium.</p>	<p>Number of applications received to Empty Homes Grant and temporary housing use Number of long-term empty homes</p>
<p align="center">What we want to achieve: Reduce the number of people who become homeless</p>	
<p>Prevent homelessness through rapid rehousing</p> <p>Through Rapid Rehousing we have facilitated increased resources into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. We are working with partner agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Shared Benefit Service to support more people at risk of homelessness. A total of 261 awards were given during the 2023-2024 financial year to both households at risk of homelessness to help tackle arrears/debt and households experiencing homelessness to enable them to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives.</p> <p>We have remodelled our Housing Support service to include dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and resettlement support. This also includes dedicated support for young people with higher need through the recent expansion of the Housing First scheme with Pobl and the introduction of MoYo – dedicated housing floating support for young people. These initiatives have contributed to the increase in the percentage of homeless applications who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless from 50% at year-end 22/23 to 71% at year-end 23/24. There is demand for further support, particularly for younger people and those with mental health and substance misuse needs.</p> <p>We need to address remaining challenges including the lack of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation. The focus of our RLDP on affordable housing provision will help us to address some of this need, particularly the demand for single person accommodation, of which there is a limited supply. We are striving to provide more settled accommodation for the increasing number of homeless households in temporary accommodation, of which there were 161 at year-end 23/24.</p> <p>We collaborate across council services to prevent care leavers from becoming homeless. We regularly hold a Corporate Parenting Panel with a range of teams from across the organisation that coordinate and provide support to care leavers. Some care leavers are still experiencing homelessness. During the year, 8 care leavers experienced homelessness within 12 months of leaving care, an increase from five the previous year.</p>	<p>Number of grants awarded</p> <p>Homelessness data</p>
<p>Reduce the use of B&B accommodation</p> <p>We are increasing the availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households through a range of means including partnerships with private landlords through Monmouthshire Lettings and more homes through new build developments and acquisitions. We have worked with housing association partners to make additional general needs social housing available for homeless households, and the proportion has increased</p>	<p>Homelessness data</p>

<p>from 47% in 2021/22 to 57% at year-end 23/24. We need to determine how much scope there is to allocate further social housing to homeless applicants without being overly detrimental to other housing need groups.</p> <p>We have started to acquire accommodation for temporary accommodation use and the first approval has been given to re-purpose a council owned agricultural property. We have developed a proposal to re-purpose Severn View residential home for temporary accommodation. The increased support for those at risk of homelessness, combined with the increase in availability of both temporary and settled accommodation, have contributed to the reduced use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation. The number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation has decreased from 92 at year-end 22/23 to 46 at year-end 23/24. The number of 16 and 17 year olds in B&B accommodation has remained at zero for 23/24.</p>	
<p>What we want to achieve: A more energy efficient housing stock with a lower carbon footprint</p>	
<p>Work with partners to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock</p> <p>We continue to support low-income households access grant funding to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. We are working with partners to promote Eco4, a scheme which provides funding to allow low-income households and individuals living with medical conditions worsened by damp or cold to access energy efficiency improvements. We have completed the first round of installer procurement and during 23/24 we provided 10 Eco4 declarations confirming eligibility for the scheme. We are working with ABUHB to identify residents with respiratory or immune suppression illnesses who may be eligible for this scheme to ensure that they are able to get the maximum support to which they are entitled.</p> <p>We have drafted the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) which will set the ambition for development within our county. Each home developed under this plan will be net zero carbon. This will not only help to lower our carbon emissions but will also help to reduce energy costs for our residents.</p>	<p>Number of people supported to access Eco4</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: Communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other</p>	
<p>Work with partners to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)</p> <p>We are working to improve the relationship between young people and local police by regularly inviting police to our youth centres to engage with young people and understand what is important to them. We have been working with young people in Monmouth to address concerns of knife crime and anti-social behaviour in the area; £10k of grant funding has been secured from the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office to target young people involved in ASB. The rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population has increased from 10.6 to 13.1.</p> <p>We extended three Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs) in Bailey Park, Abergavenny Lower and Monmouth Town to further tackle and prevent anti-social behaviour in the area to ensure our towns are safe and welcoming environments.</p> <p>We have worked with partners to develop a Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25. This has helped in identifying and addressing the serious violence priorities across the county of Monmouthshire. The Safer Monmouthshire Group is working with key partners and agencies to</p>	<p>Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy</p> <p>VAWDASV strategy</p>

ensure interventions and activity are delivered across the county. This includes understanding the causes of serious violence to enable us to focus on preventing violence. There are data and intelligence gaps that have limited the development of the delivery plan. Addressing these is a priority and the strategy will be refreshed for 2025 onwards, informed by further evidence gathered.

A Gwent regional violence against women and domestic sexual violence (VAWDASV) strategy has been developed and agreed. The strategy is now being implemented through partnership arrangements.

Work with communities to keep our county clean

We, along with town and community councils, held a dog fouling awareness day at Abergavenny and Goytre to reinforce the messages for dog owners to clean up after their pets. We developed and consulted on a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for dog fouling, that provides several controls to protect everyone’s enjoyment of open spaces and all public land in Monmouthshire. Informed by the consultation we have agreed and introduced stricter dog controls in public spaces across the county to help tackle dog fouling. These are supporting our public spaces to be clean, with limited impact on the environment.

We investigated 619 Environmental Protection incidents (fouling, littering, fly tipping etc) during 2023/24 and responded to 84% of them in 3 days. This included investigating 276 cases of fly tipping to gather evidence and inform proactive action to reduce fly tipping affecting our local environment. Evidence gathered resulted in one fixed penalty notice being issued and a cross-border prosecution case which included four fly tipping incidents in Monmouthshire.

We worked with community groups and Keep Wales Tidy to provide support for local litter picks and implement litter picking hubs. We worked with the Keep Abergavenny Tidy litter campaign targeting businesses in Abergavenny; six businesses signed up to be a Litter Free Zone.

PSPO orders

Environmental Protection incidents

Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
	✓		✓	✓		✓

Well-being Objective: A Safe Place to Live 

It is important the council **collaborates** with partners and **integrates** with their plans to reduce homelessness and ensure people can stay in their own homes and communities wherever possible. **Involving** and working with partners and community members is essential to develop communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other. The Replacement Local Development Plan has a focus on **long term** and has affordable housing and a well-connected net zero carbon development at its heart. A focus on **preventing** problems occurring is essential to creating a safe place that people are proud to call home.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2023/24	Quick View	Comment
Number of affordable homes granted planning permission in year	50	46	N/A	↓	This is an annual target with the latest figure reflecting land availability in the legacy LDP and limitations resulting from phosphates. This target is currently under review to ensure alignment with the RLDP.
Average time (months) homeless households spend in Band 1 with a homeless duty before moving on to settled/permanent accommodation	10.2	11.5	<10	↓	
Percentage of homeless applications who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless	50	71	55	↑	
Number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation	92	46	75	↑	Data as at 31 st March.
Number of 16 and 17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation	0	0	0	↔	Data as at 31 st March.
Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation	117	161	176	↓	Data as at 31 st March.

Quick View of Trend: ↑ Improving performance; ↓ Declining Performance; ↔ Unchanged Performance

Quick View of Target: Green – Target achieved; amber – just missed the target; red – fell some way short

A Connected Place Where People Care



What we want to achieve:

- High quality social care which enables people to live their lives on their terms
- A healthy and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded
- A professional and passionate social care workforce


Strategic Assessment

Monmouthshire has a track record of delivering innovative approaches and rich partnership working in health and social care. Working in this way remains vital to meet pressures on services, that will only grow with a forecast increase in the older population in Monmouthshire. We have worked to ensure timely hospital discharge, helped vulnerable older people regain their independence, developed a longer-term strategy for domiciliary care and opened a new purpose-built specialist care home. These have already increased the availability of care for residents who need it and set out our path for a longer-term strategy to meet increased demand. We have also developed a recruitment and retention strategy to maintain the social care workforce we need.

Early help is vital to prevent children coming into local authority care. That's why we have been establishing a coordinated approach to early intervention in children's social services and overseen a reduction in the number of children looked after. We have produced a new strategy to develop more in-county residential and supported accommodation placements. This will ensure that children can maintain local connections and much needed stability in their lives.

People live for longer and are healthier here than in most other places in Wales. Healthy life expectancy is above both the average for Wales and the UK. This hides inequalities at a local level with a gap in healthy life expectancy between those living in the most and least affluent parts of the county. We know that there are many factors that affect our health and well-being. For this reason, we committed to work with others across Gwent and the Institute of Health Equity to tackle these by becoming what is known as a Marmot Region. While we have continued to deliver schemes to support residents to be physically active and access healthy food, particularly targeted at those who need it the most.

Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Connected Place Where People Care

A Connected Place Where People Care		
<p>Connected place</p> 	<p>Evaluation Score:</p>	<p>Level 4 – Good - Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have increased access to care and support in the county and provided services to support health and well-being of residents. Our evidence shows we are supporting higher levels and greater complexity of demand. Resourcing the preventive approaches required while meeting existing demand is a challenge to the delivery of our objective.</p>
<p>Why we focused on this?</p>		
<p>Monmouthshire will be a place where people’s contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. The health and social care system is facing significant challenges, and statutory services across the UK are struggling to cope with the volume and complexity of demand. Monmouthshire has a track record of delivering innovative approaches and rich partnership working. We recognise that well-being is about far more than treating people when they get sick. There are many factors that can affect our health including the environment, housing, what we do for work, how much we earn, our lifestyles, transport and community cohesion. These wider determinants of health, sometimes called the social determinants, can affect physical and mental health in either a positive or negative way.</p>		
<p>Page 27</p>	<p>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
	<p>What we want to achieve: High quality social care which enables people to live their lives on their terms</p>	
<p>Provide early help and preventative services for families</p> <p>We have established a co-ordinated approach to early intervention and prevention in Children’s Social Services providing support to children and families who need it as soon as possible. Our multi-agency panel arrangements provide a co-ordinated approach to referrals. Support offered includes community-based services such as School Based Counselling and The Integrated Families and Community Together teams. Support also includes a clear pathway to accessing emotional and mental health support for young people. A recent Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection of children’s services identifies there is a coherent approach to early help and prevention to support children and families. This enables families to receive support and provide their children with the safety, nurture and care they need. Services have been developed that enhance the support available for children, young people, and their families. The report also identifies some areas for improvement to strengthen prevention in children services.</p> <p>Demand remains high across all early help services. We have put significant effort in to reducing waiting times. This includes volunteers and students being used to build capacity and resilience, and group work approaches being used to reach more young people. We have increased capacity and reduced wait times. For example, Building Stronger Families has reduced the waiting list from around 6 months to a few weeks. Evaluation and feedback of family support services indicates clear and positive outcomes for families. For example, during 2023/24, 100% of families reported a positive outcome following a Building Stronger Families team intervention.</p>	<p>Early help service evaluations</p> <p>Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection of children’s services</p>	

<p>Early help services are the foundation for our long-term strategy to prevent and reduce the need for children to come into care. We have seen an ongoing reduction of children looked after that indicates the potential impact of preventative services. A lot of our prevention work is grant funded. We continue to review demand and work with partners to provide accessible and coordinated early help support.</p>	
<p>Increase placements available for children requiring support</p> <p>We have produced a Placement Development Strategy which sets out our planned expansion and development of in-county children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements. The strategy is based on an analysis of current and predicted need. This sets out our plan to support the transition to not-for-profit care for children in Wales and our response to the associated risks and challenges, including a national shortage of residential placements.</p> <p>The number of children who are placed outside of the county is increasing. We need to support children to remain closer to their communities. We review demand for placements on a regular basis. We predicted we need 32 additional residential and supported accommodation places based on current demand. We have commissioned two children’s residential homes this year and a further residential home for 16-18-year-olds to support their independence. This will help to ensure children and young people can remain close to their communities and the benefits this brings with maintaining local connections. There remains a shortage of suitable placements for children who require them, especially those who require additional support or who are not able to be placed with foster carers.</p> <p>We have recruited 7 new foster carers during 2023/24. We have improved our offer for foster carers through aligning our allowances with other local authorities in Wales and through offering further financial support. However, our offer remains lower than other local authorities in Wales. This can make increasing the number of in-house foster carers in Monmouthshire challenging. There has been a decrease in the percentage of placements of children who are looked after with in-house foster carers to 36.5%. We need to reshape our thinking about what support foster carers need both now and in the future as an integral part of providing placements in the county.</p> <p>A recent Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection of children’s services recognised we are developing more opportunities for residential and supported accommodation placements and are working to recruit and retain foster carers.</p>	<p>Placement Development Strategy</p> <p>Children Social care performance data</p> <p>Care Inspectorate Wales Performance Evaluation Inspection of children’s services</p>
<p>Support adults to return and stay at home</p> <p>We have worked with partners in both primary and secondary health to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and support timely discharges. The regional Home First team provides support at the hospital front-door wherever possible. In Monmouthshire we have extended this and piloted an integrated practice approach between ward staff and community practitioners to promote discharge planning earlier in the patient's journey following admission. We are working with Age Cymru Gwent to pilot a new model for hospital discharge which focuses on shorter term intervention, seeking to enable individuals to return to live at home with no support (or the same level of support as pre-admission). This model is helping to reduce unnecessary re-admissions and to avoid delays in hospital discharge, while also allowing those who leave hospital to regain their independence.</p> <p>Despite these measures, ensuring well-coordinated and timely discharges and managing the pressure within the hospital system remains challenging. We convene weekly multi-disciplinary meetings to try to identify and unblock delays when they arise. The number of patients waiting</p>	<p>Hospital discharge monitoring information</p> <p>Reablement service performance information</p>

<p>for discharge from hospital for social care reasons varies during the year. In March 2024, 15 patients were waiting, the same number as in March 2023.</p> <p>We are growing the use of reablement wherever possible to support people to relearn how to do daily activities and to reduce their need for further support. Reablement provides intensive short-term interventions to support people to retain their independence. We provided 331 packages of reablement throughout this year, a significant increase on 184 for 22/23. Of the packages we delivered last year, nearly 70% of cases reduced or mitigated the person's need for support, 14.2% reduced the need for support, whilst 55.3% mitigated the need for support.</p>	
<p>Ensure timely assistance is available for adults requiring support</p> <p>We have multi-disciplinary professionals available as the first access point for people who contact adults' social care. We received a slight decrease in reports for adults' social care (8,085 contacts) last year, although this remains high. Almost three quarters of these (5,951) were from people not already in receipt of care and support. Professionals provided advice and assistance to 3,635 contacts or, where appropriate, a decision was made for further assessment to be undertaken by the most relevant practitioner. Feedback from adults' social care services users shows 77.6% of adults reported that they received the right information or advice when they needed it; this is an increase from 75% for 22/23.</p> <p>We have focused on reducing the hours of unmet need in Adults' Social Care through a range of activities and support working with care providers and our partners. For example, we have developed a micro-care project to increase the availability of care in the county. The project supports self-employed carers to develop their businesses as well as providing the opportunity for greater oversight and governance of self-employed care workers operating within Monmouthshire. The number of micro-carers is steadily increasing. There are currently 24 carers registered (an increase from 9 previously). These are supporting 81 people in their local community, delivering 368 hours of care and support in total each week.</p> <p>There has been a significant reduction in the hours of unmet need from 804 hours in March 2023 to 306 hours in March 2024 (this equates to 3.5% of the 8,714 hours of care provided each week). This reduction is due to a combination of our activities and external factors resulting in the demand and market for care at home stabilising across the region. This has improved access to care and support for those who need it. Feedback from adults' social care services users shows an increase in the percentage of adults happy with their care and support from 83.5% in 22/23 to 84.6% in 23/24. There remain challenges to respond to all people's care and support needs in as timely a manner as we would want due to continuing pressure across the social care and health system.</p> <p>We have analysed our existing commissioned domiciliary care arrangements, assessed future need and explored future options for development. We have an ageing population in Monmouthshire with an increased risk of comorbidities that will pose challenges to meeting and financing future care demand. Informed by this, we have developed a 10-year strategy for commissioned domiciliary care. We are focused on supporting the provider market and at the same time ensuring that wherever possible our in-house provision is supported for reablement as this is where we utilise our expertise to support residents to retain independence. The strategy supports developing place-based care through meeting the varying requirements in differing localities. This aims to support carers and those receiving care to be more engaged in their local community. The strategy will need to be regularly evaluated.</p>	<p>Adults Social care performance information</p> <p>Micro-care project</p> <p>Strategy for commissioned domiciliary care</p> <p>My Day, My Life</p>

<p>We have completed a review of the My Day, My Life Service to inform how we support adults with a diagnosed learning disability to access day opportunities and activities. We used the recommendations from the review report, the comments made from people involved in the service and the wider public to develop a vision for the future development of the My Day, My Life Service and an implementation plan. There was a strong response from residents highlighting the need for, and importance of, services and support for people with learning disabilities and other vulnerable people. The changes are being implemented with people with learning disabilities and their families being central to how services are developed. We committed that people using the service have access to a home base and a full range of meaningful day opportunities. We have agreed a new base for the My Day, My Life service in Monmouth and Abergavenny.</p>	
<p>What we want to achieve: A healthy and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded</p>	
<p>Support residents living with dementia</p> <p>In March 2024 we opened Severn View Park, a specialist care home for people living with dementia. The home provides 32 bedrooms for long-term support and short-term support in the form of respite based on a relationship-centred care model. The new care home aims to maintain connections with the surrounding community. By creating opportunities for the residents through events and shared spaces, residents can maintain a sense of personal identity and inclusion.</p> <p>We have delivered two programmes as part of the National Exercise Referral scheme to support the well-being of people living with dementia and their carers. We have trained 12 community volunteers to deliver object reminiscence and memory cafes for older people and people living with dementia. This has helped to reduce feelings of loneliness and has increased the self-esteem and confidence of those living with dementia.</p>	<p>Severn View Park Care Home</p> <p>National Exercise Referral scheme participation</p>
<p>Work with partners to develop the social determinants of health</p> <p>We, as member of the Gwent Public Services Board (PSB), have formally agreed to become a ‘Marmot Region’, and to work in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) to use the social determinants of health approach as the basis for the response to well-being and health inequalities in Gwent. The Gwent PSB has adopted the eight Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce inequalities as part of its Well-being Plan.</p>	<p>Building a Fairer Gwent Report Gwent PSB Well-being Plan.</p>
<p>Develop the county’s early years offer</p> <p>We growing our early years offer to ensure families can access good quality childcare. Since April 2023, three new full day care providers have been registered, offering an additional 109 places for children under 5. Two of these settings have registered with Flying Start and are offering funded places for eligible two year olds. Many of our existing settings have also signed up to offer Flying Start childcare places and we currently have four maintained settings, 28 non-maintained settings and 6 childminders approved to offer Flying Start childcare places across Monmouthshire.</p> <p>This increased provision has resulted in all children eligible for Flying Start childcare who wish to take up the offer being able to access childcare in a setting of their choice. It also means that working families are now able to access Flying Start provision in day nurseries, enabling them to take up provision and continue/return to work. Children are often able to stay in the same setting for their early education and wrap around childcare, resulting in fewer transitions. We will continue to grow this offer to keep up with increasing demand.</p>	<p>Childcare Sufficiency assessment</p>

<p>Promote healthier lives and increased physical activity.</p> <p>We have developed and implemented schemes to support residents to be physically active and access healthy food for those who need it. The National Exercise Referral scheme has provided pathways to positive lifestyle and exercise choices. Case studies of those participating has shown a positive impact, with reports of increased mobility, improvements in mood and a reduction in anxiety. Through the year 1,084 referrals were made to the scheme; 72% of those referred took up the scheme and the latest data shows 64% of people who took up the scheme continued until the 16-week review. The take up and continued participation rate in the scheme has fluctuated through the year. We have not been able to complete more interventions to increase continued participation in the scheme due to capacity constraints. We will continue to work with healthcare professionals to explore ways of increasing participation in the scheme.</p> <p>We supported over 145 members of the 60+ programme in Monmouthshire with a FIT4LIFE membership that includes gym, fitness classes and swimming. The Members on the 60+ programme have reported that thanks to attending they have met friends and created social networks, as well as improving their health.</p> <p>We provided 91 youth service sessions throughout the summer with 407 hours of engagement achieved. During these sessions, which included open-access sessions at our four youth centres, trips, events, residential and outreach sessions, the Youth Service made 2598 contacts. This service provided young people, including vulnerable young people, with the opportunity to foster social connections, try new skills and find new hobbies.</p>	<p>National Exercise Referral scheme participation</p> <p>FIT4LIFE membership</p> <p>Food and Fun scheme attendance</p> <p>Youth Service provision</p>
<p>Support carers and young carers' needs</p> <p>We support a total of 168 carers and young carers and continue to work with them to understand their needs and how best to support them. We're working with regional partners across Gwent as part of the Bridging the Gap Gwent (BTGG) programme to provide a short-term respite service to carers; referrals have increased, particularly among parent carers and young carers, partly due to increased promotion. This service allows carers of all ages to have a short break from their caring responsibilities.</p> <p>We need to do more to engage with our young carers, particularly those under the age of 14 who are not able to receive emails directly and so are sometimes missing out on information or events. We will use all forms of social media available to us to promote our young carers' events to ensure we reach the maximum number of young carers.</p>	<p>Carers and Young Carers service</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: A professional and passionate social care workforce</p>	
<p>Develop our social care workforce</p> <p>We have developed a recruitment and retention strategy for our social care workforce. This has a particular focus on addressing areas where there is high demand. The workforce market remains volatile; however, we have been successful in reducing the number of vacancies across social care from 53 in March '23 to 23 in March '24. We are prioritising recruitment to essential posts in social care, although recruiting to social care roles in both adults' and children's social services remains a challenge. We are contributing to the development of a Gwent workforce strategy, aligned to which we are developing a five-year Monmouthshire workforce plan. This is vital to ensure we have a workforce to deliver the care that our residents require.</p>	<p>Social care workforce recruitment and retention strategy</p>

Uplift fees for care providers

We have provided an uplift in fees for care providers as part of our budget setting process to increase the placements available for people who require care. We allocated £2.7 million to recognise the budget pressure from the review of care provider fees across Children's and Adults' social care. This ensures that providers can continue to pay the real living wage to attract and retain key staff to meet increasing demand. We need to ensure our fee rate remains a viable and attractive option for care home providers. This aims to ensure that residents have the opportunity to choose the best support for them. We need to evaluate whether residents are able to access the care they need.

Fees for care providers

Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment

Ensure early and help prevention services are effectively able to meet current and prevent, as far as possible, future demand

Increase the focus of council activities on improving the social determinants of health

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals

Page 92	Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
			✓	✓	✓		



Well-being Objective: A Connected Place Where People Care

Adopting community-focused approaches promotes **collaboration** which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, we hope to **prevent** problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county, so it is vital that everyone can be **involved** to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a **long-term** benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an **integrated** benefit for many aspects of promoting a healthier Wales. They will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales. There is also strong integration with our responsibilities under the Social Services & Well-being Act.

Measures of progress					
Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2023/24	Quick View	Comment
Percentage of adult service users who have had the right information or advice when they needed it ^{xv}	75	77.6	77.5	↑	
Percentage of child assessments completed within statutory timescales	92.3	95.9	92	↑	
Percentage of families reporting a positive outcome following a Building Stronger Families team intervention	87.5	100	88.1	↑	
Number of new in-house foster carers recruited in the year	1	7	5	↑	
Percentage of placements of children who are looked after by the local authority made with in-house foster carers	42.2	36.5	42.9	↓	
Number of patients waiting for discharge from hospital for social care reasons (measured on an agreed census date each month)	15	15	14	↔	As at Census date
Percentage of people successfully completing the exercise referral scheme at week 16 ^{xvi}	48	64	50	↑	
Percentage of adult service users who are happy with the care and support received ^{xvii}	83.5	84.6	90	↑	
The percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year that mitigated the need for support/ achieved a positive outcome	57.6	55.3	60	↓	

Quick View of Trend: ↑ Improving performance; ↓ Declining Performance; ↔ Unchanged Performance

Quick View of Target: Green – Target achieved; amber – just missed the target; red – fell some way short

A Learning Place



What we want to achieve:

- Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils
- The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning
- A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs
- Continue our programme of school modernisation

Strategic Assessment


Monmouthshire should be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential. The pandemic caused significant disruption to the education of our pupils. We are still seeing the consequences of this today. School attendance has declined since the pandemic. Our Education Welfare Officers have worked with vulnerable learners and we have a specific programme targeted at those with very low attendance levels.

We are seeing an increase in the need for mental health and emotional well-being support for children and young people. There has been a rise in behaviours that challenge in our schools, with permanent exclusions becoming more common. This has required us to evolve and grow the learning and well-being support for our children and young people. We have restructured our education inclusion service and have worked with all schools with targeted training and regular Q&A sessions.

We provide monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Learners in our secondary schools score higher than elsewhere in Wales. Our disadvantaged learners continue to experience lower attainment than those less disadvantaged, an achievement gap that was worsened by the pandemic. We have developed targeted support for these learners from education advisors and the wider community focused schools approach. This is aimed at ensuring all pupils can succeed irrespective of their socio-economic background.

The environment children and young people learn in is important to their development and well-being. We have been building a new 3-19 school in Abergavenny, and we have also developed plans and secured funding to increase our Welsh medium provision.

Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Learning Place

A Learning Place		
<p>Learning place</p> 	<p>Evaluation Score:</p>	<p>Level: 4 - Good - Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved</p> <p>We have developed our approaches and increased our support to schools and pupils to achieve our objective. Our evidence shows the demand and complexity of support children and young people require, particularly vulnerable learner, has grown. Our assessment identifies the need to further adjust, develop and target our support to achieve our objective.</p>
<p>Why we focused on this?</p>		
<p>Monmouthshire will be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential. The pandemic has had a substantial effect on schools and pupils. The two years of uncertainty and significant disruption to learning have inevitably left a legacy. Before the pandemic we knew that our disadvantaged learners did not achieve the outcomes we would wish. The pandemic has worsened the learning experiences of many vulnerable students such as those eligible for free school meals. The emotional and mental well-being of pupils was often affected, with many experiencing increased uncertainty, anxiety and loneliness. In line with our guiding principles, it is vital that we develop more opportunities to listen and learn from our pupils and students. Since schools have reopened the education system in Wales has continued to evolve with reforms and developments including the new curriculum for Wales and the introduction of a new Additional Learning Needs Act.</p>		
<p>95</p>	<p>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils</p>		
<p>Improve attendance and reduce exclusions</p> <p>We have focused on improving school attendance following a decline due to the pandemic. We have implemented a range of measures to improve attendance across our schools. For example, our education welfare officers are working with vulnerable pupils to bring them back into the educational setting, where possible, and are holding attendance consultations with schools regularly to promote attendance and provide bespoke support to families. We continue to grow Inspire Outreach to deliver support to young people identified with attendance of less than 50%. We have also supported 17 pupils throughout the year through the re-engage programme, which resulted in improvements in attendance for 92% of pupils engaged.</p> <p>This has resulted in an improvement in overall the attendance level which means more children and young people are being provided with learning and support within our schools. Attendance in primary schools is increasing steadily; during 22/23 attendance was 92.9%. At the end of the Spring term 2024, attendance was up to 93.9%. This is near to pre-pandemic levels; we aim to increase this further. Secondary school attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels and has not increased in the last academic year. Attendance during 22/23 was 88.4%. At the end of the Spring term 2024 it was 89.1%. This is significantly below the pre-pandemic figure of 95.1%. We need evaluate our attendance support and develop our activity to improve secondary attendance.</p>		<p>Education Welfare Service</p> <p>School Attendance and exclusions</p>

<p>Attendance figures for those eligible for free school meals (eFSM) has also been significantly affected by the pandemic. During 22/23, attendance of eFSM pupils was 5.7 percentage points lower than pre-pandemic figures in primary schools, and 11.3 percentage points lower in secondary schools. The low attendance of those eFSM has been identified by Estyn as an area for concern in one of our secondary schools. We need to increase attendance for those eFSM to ensure no pupil is left behind.</p> <p>We have appointed a vulnerable learner lead officer to provide a more focused universal offer of advice, guidance and monitoring to managing exclusions and supporting learners at risk of exclusion and supporting their inclusion and admissions. We need to further develop and resource this offer to ensure a consistent approach to supporting vulnerable learners at risk of exclusion, to prevent exclusions as far as possible. The number of permanent exclusions is increasing. During 22/23 there were 12 permanent exclusions across our secondary and primary schools, an increase from 5 for the previous year.</p>	
<p>Support pupils' well-being</p> <p>We have implemented the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being which helps schools to understand how they are best placed to promote well-being. We have introduced this in a phased approach and increased the number of schools engaged in the approach from 43% to 74%. This is increasing the support available for the well-being needs of our pupils and has a significant effect on children's attendance and achievement in school. All schools and settings are engaged with Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), and we currently have 67 practicing ELSAs who access regular supervision, operating across all but one school in the county, making a positive impact on the emotional literacy of pupils.</p> <p>We have delivered Trauma Informed Schools Training to over 500 staff during this year. This approach focuses on understanding children/young people presenting with behaviours of concern, and raising the awareness and capacity of adults supporting vulnerable pupils. We have also developed and shared a Children Looked After (CLA) and former CLA policy with schools to ensure clarity in our approach to supporting children looked after learners. These are helping us to deepen our understanding of what vulnerable learners need and to ensure an aligned and strengthened approach to supporting them. There has been an increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic. This is challenging for schools, staff, and learners. There is a risk that this will also result in a worsening of educational attainment. We need to continue to develop and evolve our support to reduce and prevent behaviour that challenges.</p>	<p>Whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being</p> <p>Trauma Informed Schools Training</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning</p>	
<p>Support excellent teaching and learning</p> <p>We have worked with the Education Achievement Service to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools. All schools are provided with a bespoke support package that complements the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs), in line with the levels of support they require. These are regularly reviewed, and support is adjusted if required.</p> <p>Learners in our secondary schools score higher than elsewhere in Wales. On average, 26% of pupils across Monmouthshire are achieving 5 or more GCSE at levels A*-A, compared with 20.3% for Wales. We also have fewer pupils leaving school with no qualifications, at 0.8%, compared with 1.4%</p>	<p>Attainment data</p> <p>School Development Plans (SDPs)</p>

<p>of pupils across Wales. When schools evaluate their own performance, they assess this against similar schools. This is a more informative and detailed assessment of attainment and wider progress, given the varying make up and individual plans of schools, than comparing against Wales averages. When comparing our comprehensive schools with those of similar size and linguistic delivery across Wales, two schools outperform those similar in every category, and one outperforms in most categories (including literacy, numeracy, science, no qualifications, 5+ A*-A). One of our schools underperforms in most categories compared to similar schools.</p> <p>We have been working with two of our schools who were placed in statutory categories following Estyn reviews in 22/23. Follow-up reviews conducted during 23/24 found that both schools have made significant progress in addressing the recommendations set out by Estyn and have now been removed from statutory categories. Two of the schools inspected have been selected to produce case studies for dissemination by Estyn, the first on its approach to developing the Curriculum for Wales and the integration of the specialist resource base, and the second on its promotion of the Welsh language within the school community and beyond.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of listening and learning from our pupils. We are developing a participation policy and toolkit to fully involve children and young people and their parents or guardians in ALN developments, initiatives and evaluations. A Pupil Panel has been established in all secondary schools and parental engagement activities have been completed. These are supporting pupils to contribute to teaching and learning approaches in schools.</p>	<p>Estyn inspection reports</p> <p>Participation policy and toolkit</p> <p>Pupil Panel</p>
<p>Develop opportunities for children and young people to learn and speak Welsh</p> <p>We are working with childcare providers to expand the availability of Welsh medium childcare provision. We have improved the range and quality of information available on the benefits of a Welsh language education, to allow parents to make more informed decisions. We have worked with Welsh medium childcare settings in Monmouthshire to make Welsh Flying Start places available at all settings. This has expanded the offer for parents. We need to expand the reach of our promotion on the benefits of the Welsh language and the opportunities available to our young people.</p> <p>We have established an immersion class at Ysgol Y Ffin and have secured funding to grow this provision across the county over the next three years. By opening Welsh medium education to all primary aged pupils through the provision of an immersion class, parents can choose a Welsh medium education for all their children with confidence, in the knowledge they will be well supported to develop their Welsh language skills. At the end of April 2024, 23 pupils have benefitted from Welsh medium immersion provision. This immersion class is also having a positive effect on the number of applications to Welsh medium schools. In April 2024, Ysgol Y Ffin allocated 26 pupils to the reception class, the highest number for the school.</p>	<p>Welsh language promotion</p> <p>Flying start places</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners’ starting points, strengths and educational needs</p>	
<p>Supports all learners to achieve their potential</p> <p>We have restructured our inclusion services to create a broader Inclusion Team. This has supported the delivery of the Additional Learning Need (ALN) Strategy, which aims to build sustainable and resilient provision. Our Inclusion support is now embedded as part of interconnected strategies and related toolkits, resources and policies for ALN, relationships, children looked after and reducing exclusions. We have worked collaboratively to ensure all schools and early years settings were prepared for their new responsibilities under the ALN Act through targeted training and regular</p>	<p>Additional Learning Need (ALN) Strategy</p>

<p>online Q&A sessions. A framework is being developed for the management of specialist resource bases (SRB) provision which will ensure a consistent, equitable approach across all settings.</p> <p>We are developing our Inclusion Strategy. This will outline our collective principles, approaches and service offer, and will help us to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery of inclusion services across Monmouthshire.</p> <p>We have established an ALN Quality Assurance system for mainstream schools to support excellent practice in the identification and management of pupils with ALN. A task and finish group has been established, protocols agreed, and training provided. We need to further develop the consistency of ALN provision across the county.</p>	
<p>Improving outcomes for children eligible for free school meals</p> <p>We have worked with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools. This has particular focus on vulnerable learners, which includes those eligible for free school meals. There remains a gap in attainment between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those not. Latest data shows that, on average, pupils eFSM are performing below their peers not eFSM by over 1.5 GCSE grades. This is a significant gap. We need to do more to support pupils eFSM and ensure that each pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed no matter their socio-economic background.</p> <p>Our Community Focused Schools lead continues to provide a vital role in working with schools and partners to develop activities and relationships for the benefit of the whole school community. This has included building relationships, signposting to support and benefits entitlements, poverty proofing schools and providing cost of living support. We are working with the EAS on tackling all aspects of poverty and developing a whole authority strategy on supporting disadvantaged learners.</p>	<p>Attainment data</p> <p>School Development Plans (SDPs)</p> <p>Community Focused Schools</p>
<p>Improve accessibility of adult education courses</p> <p>We are reducing financial barriers to our adult education courses to make them more accessible to our residents. We have reviewed our course funding model and have shifted to a grant subsidised model; this now means that all our community education courses are directly subsidised. We have also continued our partnership with Coleg Gwent to offer low-cost foundation-level learning, costing £10 for access to all franchise courses provided in Monmouthshire. We recognise the importance of removing any barriers to involvement in adult education and the effect it can have on adults gaining new skills and knowledge. In 23/24, 937 learners enrolled in our community education courses, an increase of 377 on 22/23 and above our target of 718.</p>	<p>Adult education courses participation</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: Continue our programme of school modernisation</p>	
<p>Build a new 3-19 school in Abergavenny</p> <p>We are progressing with construction of the new King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny. The new building will be net zero in line with our commitment to decarbonise our operations. The school replaces Deri View Primary School and King Henry VIII Comprehensive School and will have the capacity for 1,200 secondary school age pupils, 420 primary age pupils and 200 places for post 16 education. There will also be suitable</p>	<p>King Henry VIII all-through school</p>

accommodation for 71 pupils with complex neurodevelopmental and learning needs within the school. It is anticipated that the development will reduce the number of pupils attending an out of county secondary school. The school is scheduled to be completed by April 2025.

Increase Welsh medium primary school provision

We are expanding our provision of Welsh medium education. We have secured a new site for Ysgol Y Fenni which will increase the capacity of the school from 210 to 420 pupils. We have secured funding and a site in Monmouth for a new Welsh-medium primary school. We have continued the development of this school which will open to Nursery, Reception and Year 1 pupils in September 2024. We were unable to open a satellite class in September 2023 due to low numbers of applications and difficulties in securing staff, particularly a headteacher. To continue the expansion of our Welsh medium provision, we need to focus on promoting Welsh medium education and securing appropriate staff to ensure a high-quality education for our young people.

Welsh in Education Strategic Plan

Develop a strategic review of all schools and their catchment areas

We have reviewed secondary school catchment areas which were in place for the latest admission round, and we are undertaking a review of primary school catchment areas across the county. Both reviews have resulted in young people in Usk having improved access to attending a primary and secondary school within the county.

We have engaged with staff and pupils to establish the most appropriate way to develop education in the Chepstow area. We have developed a masterplan for the education estate in Chepstow, and with feedback from those attending, have created a vision for a new building on the Chepstow School site as part of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme. We will continue to engage regularly with Chepstow cluster headteachers to review options for consideration, and will also engage with residents to understand their views on education provision in the area.

School Catchment areas

Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment

Develop the support offer for schools and pupils to reduce and prevent exclusions

Develop the support offer for disadvantaged learners to achieve their potential

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓		✓	✓		✓	



Well-being Objective: A Learning Place

The **long-term** nature of this goal is intrinsic to its success. Working with and **involving** children and young people, as early as possible, to identify their needs will give them the best chance of achieving their maximum potential. **Preventing** problems before they start will provide our young people with the best chance to develop. Using a

collaborative approach and aligning services provides a rounded resource that works in harmony for the young person. Overall, this approach **integrates** the needs of our young people, ensuring they have the best opportunity to achieve their goals.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2023/24	Quick View	Comment
Percentage pupil attendance at primary level (figure for those eligible for free school meals shown in brackets)	91.8 (88.1)	92.9 (89.3)	94.6 (92.6)	↑	Data measures in academic years. Previous is 2021/22 academic year. Latest is 2022/23 academic year. Target is for 2022/23 academic year.
Percentage pupil attendance at secondary level (figure those eligible for free school meals shown in brackets)	88.4 (80.9)	87.7 (78.7)	91.2 (82.4)	↓	Data measured in academic years. Previous is 2021/22 academic year. Latest is 2022/23 academic year. By Spring 2024 attendance was at 89.1%. Target is for 2022/23 academic year.
Number of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools	5	12	<5	↓	
Total number of enrolments by adult learners on community education courses including Coleg Gwent franchise courses	560	937	718	↑	

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Quick View of Trend: ↑ Improving performance; ↓ Declining Performance; ↔ Unchanged Performance

Quick View of Target: Green – Target achieved; amber – just missed the target; red – fell some way short

Using Our Resources

The council needs to remain relevant and viable for the next generation, while continuing to meet the needs of residents, visitors and businesses in the here-and-now. To support the delivery of our goals, we must make sure that all aspects of the council are working efficiently, effectively and in line with the sustainable development principle set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The Act specifies core areas in an organisation that need to adapt to meet the changing demands on our services and ensure their longevity and sustainability. We have evaluated our arrangements for these areas and included digital and data as another important enabler of how we deliver the council's services. The areas we have assessed are:

- Corporate planning, performance and risk management
- Financial planning
- Workforce planning (people)
- Procurement
- Assets
- Digital & Data
- Democracy & Scrutiny

Annual Governance Statement

The council has a governance framework, our Code of Corporate Governance, for the year end March 2024. The framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

We have produced an Annual Governance Statement for the year 2023/24 that demonstrates that we have appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. The draft statement was presented to Governance & Audit Committee in July 2024. This self-assessment of our resources integrates with the findings from the Annual Governance Statement and will also contain further actions and recommendations related to these arrangements.

Corporate Planning, Performance and Risk Management – Evaluation Score: Level 4 Good

How effective is corporate planning?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed and agreed a Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28. This sets a clear direction for the council. An Audit Wales review of our objective setting in the Community and Corporate Plan has found ‘The council has set its well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle and is aligning its key strategies and business plans to support their delivery, but it could further strengthen its approach by increasing the diversity of citizen involvement in future’.</p> <p>We have developed an accompanying performance measurement framework. This is allowing us to measure our performance on areas that can be directly affected by the council and the progress of wider outcomes that are not directly in the council’s control. We have set targets against these measures that demonstrate the ambition of the council to residents. This is allowing us to be held to account for performance and identifies where services are not performing as planned. We need to develop the measurement framework to increase the focus on outcomes, where possible. An Audit Wales review on our use of performance information found ‘The council provides some performance information to enable senior leaders to understand the perspective of service users, but information on outcomes is limited restricting their ability to manage performance effectively.’</p> <p>Supporting and enabling strategies are being developed to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. These will be important to enable the delivery of the ambitions of the plan. We need to ensure there are clear mechanism and arrangements to monitor the impact of these strategies and regularly evaluate performance against outcomes.</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 and measurement framework.</p> <p>Audit Wales reports</p> <p>Enabling strategies</p>
How effective is performance management?	How do we know?
<p>The approval of the Community and Corporate Plan has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council. This has been embedded in our performance management framework. Regular reporting on ensures accountability at all levels and demonstrates progress to residents. The self-assessment process has been embedded in the council’s performance management framework. The self-assessment process has facilitated the completion of a robust evaluation of performance. These performance management arrangements have helped to clearly identify areas of progress and areas for development. The performance of the council objectives has been assessed as ‘good’ for five objectives and ‘adequate’ for one objective.</p> <p>Service business planning principles, supporting templates and guidance are in place and regularly reviewed. Service business plans are facilitating services to plan for the next three years, assess what went well, learn from what did not and measure the impact their service has made on people and places of Monmouthshire. Service business plan completion rates and quality have improved. Although these remains varied and require improvement. Latest monitoring shows 50% were updated within timescales and there is an increase in compliance with principles. Quality assurance on service business plans has shown that managers do not always consistently apply a self-evaluative mindset when updating service business plans. Strengthening self-evaluation within plans will be vital to information gathering to inform the self-assessment report.</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan progress report</p> <p>Draft Self-assessment report</p> <p>Service business plans & quality assurance</p>

How effective is risk management?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed an updated strategic risk management policy and guidance. This defines the approach, process and responsibility for managing strategic risk in the council. This also defines risk tolerance and a risk appetite for the council. The revised policy received positive endorsement from Governance & Audit Committee. The policy is being implemented in a phased approach to develop and strengthen risk management arrangements.</p> <p>The strategic risk register is updated regularly and available to all members and officers to view at any time. There are arrangements to formally review the whole strategic risk register and report it six monthly to scrutiny, Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet. This facilitates and demonstrates that risk management is embedded in the council and strategic risks facing the council are being robustly identified and managed. The risk assessment in service business plans is not always fully completed. This limits the ability of services to use their service business plans to robustly manage and mitigate risks and may impact the escalation of risks onto the strategic risk register.</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy, appetite statement and guidance.</p> <p>Strategic risk register</p>
How has the area for development from the last report been addressed?	How do we know?
<p>Embed the delivery of the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 within the council's performance framework.</p> <p>The approval of the Community and Corporate Plan has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council. Our self-assessment of the performance framework shows the actions in the Community and Corporate Plan have mainly been embedded in the performance management framework. This also shows there is a need to further strengthen the alignment in some service business plans.</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan progress report</p> <p>Service business plans & quality assurance</p>
Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment	
<p>Increase the focus on outcomes in the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan</p>	

Financial Planning – Evaluation Score: Level 4 Good

<p>How effective is financial monitoring?</p> <p>We have closely monitored our finances at regular intervals throughout the year. Cabinet received an early financial update in July 2023 indicating significant pressures on the budget of £2.6 million. We implemented a structured approach to tackling the deficit through budget recovery proposals developed by services.</p> <p>Our financial monitoring at Month 9 indicated an overspend of £314k, due to a combination of a shortfall in services being able to meet their budgeted savings and pressures across frontline directorates. Improvements in service budget positions, driven by the budget recovery action enacted by services during the year, as well as improvement in the costs of capital financing as areas of the capital programme have experienced delays, have resulted in a net revenue budget surplus at outturn of just over £1.7m. This has resulted in less needing to be drawn from reserves to support the budget than budgeted.</p> <p>There remain significant areas of cost pressure within Adult social care, Children’s additional learning needs, Waste, and Homelessness/Housing. These services recorded a cumulative overspend of £5m for the year, and whilst a significant aspect of these cost pressures were accommodated in the 2024/25 budget, this continues to present an ongoing area of financial risk for the council in the new financial year.</p> <p>At outturn, no capital schemes reported material over or under spends that require additional financing from the council’s own resources. Capital slippage requests totalled over £28m. An Audit Wales review of our capital programme management found that our monitoring arrangements focus on budget and timescales with limited consideration of impact or learning.</p> <p>There is variability in the quality of our budget monitoring and forecasting across service areas. We have also not always completed budget forecasting reports in a timely way during the last year. This has impacted on the effectiveness of our in-year budget management.</p>	<p>How do we know?</p> <p>Financial monitoring reports</p> <p>Audit Wales reports</p>
<p>How effective is financial planning?</p> <p>We established a clear process and timetable to set a budget for the 2024/25 financial year. Our financial modelling identified an initial budget gap of £14.4m that needed to be addressed. We developed a range of proposals in line with a set of budget principles. The proposals were subject to public engagement, robust scrutiny and an assessment of their potential impact. This informed the development of the final budget proposals. This planning resulted in us setting a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year which included accommodating £13.5 million of budget pressures, making a planned £10.8 million of savings and introducing a council tax increase of 7.80%.</p> <p>Our capital planning is based on an established prioritisation process informed by evidence and assessment of risk to develop a programme within the financial constraints on the council. We have reviewed and agreed a current and forward capital programme for £35million of expenditure in for 2024/25. The core capital programme is being sustained and sets planned investment in the</p>	<p>How do we know?</p> <p>Budget setting reports 2024/24</p> <p>Audit Wales reports</p>

<p>council’s infrastructure. There remains a considerable number of backlog pressures that sit outside the core capital programme. These have varying levels of risk associated with them. An Audit Wales review of our capital programme management found that planning arrangements are generally robust, but the capital programme lacks clear outcomes.</p> <p>Despite setting a balanced budget, current and future budget pressures pose a risk to the deliverability of our objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. The one-off use of revenue reserves to support the 2023/24 budget means our reserves are at minimum prudent levels to provide sufficient cover. We need to strengthen our financial modelling and develop our financial planning over the medium term. This will assist us to develop a proactive plan to address ongoing budget pressures and align our budget, as far as possible, with our objectives.</p>	
<p>How has the area for development from the last report been addressed?</p> <p>Develop a financial strategy and robust Medium Term Financial Plan which identifies how we will address the budget shortfall of £23m by 2026/27</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>We have developed a Medium-Term Financial Strategy that aligns with delivering our commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. This was presented to Council for approval in July 2024. The medium-term financial plan to deliver the strategy will subsequently be developed and will inform the 2025/26 budget setting process</p>	<p>Medium-Term Financial Strategy</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	

Workforce Planning – Evaluation Score: Level 3 Adequate

<p>How effective is workforce management?</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>We have a loyal, dedicated and talented workforce that continue to deliver our services and objectives for residents. This is demonstrated by our performance in 2023/24 and feedback we received in engaging on our recent people strategy.</p> <p>We have an established set of policy and procedures that guide our Human Resources function. These support standards and behaviours we expect employees to deliver. They also allow flexibility and opportunity for our workforce to develop their careers in Monmouthshire. If employees do not meet these standards, we have arrangements to manage and resolve these issues.</p> <p>We have strong well-being offer, including the ‘Go To’ group, Leaders Q&A, Digital Cwtch, free counselling and a well-regarded occupational health service. We have received feedback this supports the well-being of those who use these services. Our sickness figures are broadly unchanged in recent years, although these are marginally above industry average. 25% of absences were down to mental health in 2019-20 compared to 24% in 2022-23. We need to understand if our well-being services are accessed by everyone</p>	<p>People Strategy</p> <p>Workforce management data</p>

<p>who needs them. We also need to ensure our workforce management support is targeted and applied consistently to support our colleagues.</p> <p>We lack a coherent approach to staff appraisal and mechanisms to assure these are happening consistently. This means some colleagues may not have a clear understanding of their contributions to the delivery of our priorities and a mechanism to feedback their views. We have learnt that a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective for the varying services the council delivers. We also need to capture the outcome of these appraisals to give us a clear understanding of training and development needs. We are applying this learning to develop a new approach to staff appraisal.</p>	
<p>How effective is workforce planning?</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>We have a flexible approach to workforce planning to attract and retain people to roles in the council. This includes long-standing agile working arrangements, for jobs that do not require employees to travel to their base every day and targeted recruitment campaign for certain jobs. These have had some success for example a reduction in vacancies within our social care workforce. We do not yet have all the arrangements in place to facilitate the organisation to plan the workforce it needs to meet current and future demands. The development and delivery of our new People Strategy identifies the actions will take to improve the effectiveness of our workforce planning.</p> <p>We are experiencing recruitment challenges in specific sectors, most of which match wider national recruitment issues. We need to evolve our recruitment process to become a genuine talent acquisition process. We are developing an e-recruitment system, based on feedback from our recruiting managers. This will benefit recruiting managers who want speed, simplicity and agility.</p> <p>Our turnover was higher in recent years than we have typically seen. We need to understand the reasons for this and use this to develop our workforce planning. We need to develop our training offer to equip the workforce with the skills its needs for now and the future. We have implemented a new learning management platform in the social care directorate. This has improved the effectiveness of training management in the directorate. We have experienced technical and capacity restraints in rolling this out to other directorates. This has restricted our ability to improve how we plan, deliver and manage training consistently across the organisation.</p>	<p>People Strategy</p> <p>Workforce management data</p>
<p>How has the area for development from the last report been addressed?</p> <p>Develop a people strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>We have developed a People Strategy that creates the framework for us to support and develop our colleagues so that everyone's contribution can be maximised. The strategy highlights the opportunities and challenges we face. It also describes the things that need to be in place for our colleagues to thrive and succeed.</p>	<p>People Strategy</p>
<p>Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	
<p>Strengthen arrangements that support workforce planning and management</p>	

Procurement – Evaluation Score: Level 3 Adequate

How effective is strategic procurement?

We have developed a Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28. This sets an enabling platform for the development of progressive policies that will achieve greater and more targeted social, economic, environmental, and cultural gains through working with our supply chains. We have not yet developed the supporting policies and procedures needed to set clearer expectations of what we require from our staff and suppliers to meet our ambitions in the strategy.

We are developing a Socially Responsible Procurement Policy in collaboration with Cardiff City Council to implement our ambitions in the strategy. We need to accelerate its completion to provide clear guidance to officers and our supply chains. The policy will provide a well-being framework to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of ‘Socially Responsible Procurement’ that encapsulates UK and Welsh Government legislative requirements and the council’s priorities. It will identify several measures to allow us to evaluate progress within each well-being theme.

We need to develop the knowledge and skills of officers procuring goods, services and works so they deploy the necessary thinking and processes that are required to ensure value for money in procurement and deliver the aims of the strategy. We are providing a series of workshops and training for officers. We are also putting together a series of guidance notes. These will develop the thinking and processes officers require around the principles of “Buying Responsibly” and ensuring value for money procurement outcomes.

We have commissioned a procurement technology review to automate and standardise as many manual interventions as possible. To achieve this will be a complex process and will require agreement on direction and resources to deliver it.

How do we know?

Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-27

Draft Socially Responsible Procurement Policy

“Buying Responsibly” Guidance

Procurement technology review

Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment

Strengthen arrangements that support officers undertaking procurement to meet the ambitions of the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy.

Assets – Evaluation Score: Level 4 Good

How effective is strategic Asset Management?

We have developed an Asset Management Strategy 2023-2027 that informs the way decisions and day-to-day management of council land and property is undertaken. It sets five clear objectives for land and property to deliver the council’s objectives. It also establishes the supporting policy framework from which the strategy is implemented. The Asset Management Strategy is supported by an Asset Management Plan which identifies the actions to deliver the strategy. This will need to be evaluated annually to assess progress and impact.

We have completed significant building projects in the last year improving services to residents and supporting community activity. For example, we have developed and opened in March 2024, Severn View Park, a specialist care home for people living with

How do we know?

Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan

Severn View Park

Magor and Undy Community Hub

<p>dementia. The care home provides a bespoke environmental design, based upon innovating best practice standards for people with dementia and a relationship-centred care model. We have also developed and opened the new £2.9 million Magor and Undy Community Hub in partnership with The Magor with Undy Community Hub project (MUCH). The development was based on extensive involvement of the community and is designed based on resident's feedback. The site provides spaces for community use and commercial events, as well as potential for small business growth. The MUCH group now occupy and manage the community hub for the direct promotion of community use including social, culture, leisure, sporting and other community activities.</p> <p>We need to strengthen our governance arrangements to deliver the strategy to improve decision making and take a more proactive approach to our management of assets. Revised and updated governance arrangements set out in the strategy need to be implemented. We also need to evaluate the outcome and impact of our capital programme, as identified by Audit Wales.</p>	
<p>How effective is operational Asset Management?</p> <p>We are undertaking feasibility studies, technical assessments and surveys on property, infrastructure, and assets. These are informing our capital budget planning and maintenance schedules in line with established processes. Decision making on managing our assets will need to be strengthened in line with the mechanisms established in our Asset Management Strategy. We have considerable number of maintenance pressures for our assets, including property and highways infrastructure and public rights of way, that sit outside any potential to fund them within the capital medium term financial plan. These carry significant risk.</p> <p>We have improved the coordination of property and facilities management activity in the organisation. For example, in developing agricultural cottages to alternative accommodation. Collaboration between departments can be further strengthened, and expectations managed to coordinate property and facilities management across council service areas.</p>	<p>How do we know?</p> <p>Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan</p> <p>Capital medium term financial plan</p>
<p>How has the area for development from the last report been addressed?</p> <p>Develop an updated asset management strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28</p> <p>We have developed an updated Asset Management Strategy. The strategy is supported by an Asset Management Plan which outlines the actions to be undertaken in accordance with the strategy. The Asset Management Plan includes the agreed actions and objectives relating to the land and property functions and portfolios, including the governance arrangements under which the Investment Portfolio will continue to be monitored and evaluated. The Asset Management Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure it continues to provide the appropriate assurance that value for money and best consideration is being achieved.</p>	<p>How do we know?</p> <p>Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan</p>
<p>Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	

Digital & Data – Evaluation Score: Level 3 adequate

How effective is the development of digital?	How do we know?
<p>We have followed our digital roadmap to deliver digital projects that are focused on improving services for residents and customers. For example, we have developed our assistive technology services to provide technological solutions to support and enable people to live comfortably and securely in their own homes.</p> <p>We have strong partnership arrangements in place for digital with the Shared Resource Service (SRS), neighbouring Local Authorities and national partners. These have led to the development of five collaborative digital and data projects led by the SRS, focused on customer services, use of Artificial Intelligence and data insight. These projects are utilising the knowledge and skills within this field in our partnership network and enabling sharing of learning on common issues across Local Authorities.</p> <p>We have not been able to fulfil all our digital ambitions in the year, particularly due to reductions in our digital team's capacity. We have ambitions to use digital solutions as a means to transform the way we work and deliver our ambitions in the Community and Corporate Plan. An Audit Wales, review identified 'The council does not have a clearly articulated strategic approach to digital'. We are developing a digital and data strategy to focus our strategic direction to deliver our actions. We also need to strengthen how we priorities projects based on the outcomes they can achieve and how we subsequently evaluate impact of digital, including efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>We have established information security and technology arrangements ensuring that information held by the council to ensure that information remains confidential, maintains its integrity and is available to those who need to access it as part of our work. We actively support, advise, and train our workforce. Mandatory training is provided for GDPR and cyber security, alongside comprehensive guidance, and policies for all aspects of data management.</p> <p>We have developed a range of training for officers to improve digital literacy across the organisation. These included an essential skills framework for foundational digital skills and a digital induction which will be rolled out on our corporate training platform. We know that continuous development in digital skills is essential to achieve our ambition. We need to continue to develop digital training resources to allow staff to continue to improve their digital skills.</p>	<p>Digital Service Business Plan</p> <p>Digital and Data Strategy</p> <p>Information security and governance arrangements.</p>
How effective is the development of data?	
<p>We have followed our data action plan in the year to deliver projects that are focused on providing insight using our data to inform our service delivery and policy development. For example, we have developed new performance dashboards for each directorate and our Community and Corporate Plan. We have also developed data analysis on poverty and inequality, workforce, our budgets, and energy use. We have supported the use of geo-spatial to be automatically updated from internal systems and external sources through our Geographical Information Systems (GIS). These are providing data insights to inform future planning and service delivery.</p> <p>We have not been able to fulfil all our data ambitions in the year. We need to further harness and connect data as council-wide asset. We also need to improve our data maturity across the organisation. We have ambitions to use data to inform how we</p>	<p>Performance & Data Insight Service Business Plan</p> <p>Digital and Data Strategy</p>

<p>transform the way we work and deliver our ambitions in the Community and Corporate Plan. We are developing a digital and data strategy to focus our strategic direction to deliver our actions. We also need to strengthen how we prioritise projects based on the outcomes they can achieve and how we subsequently evaluate impact of data, including efficiency and effectiveness.</p> <p>We do not have all the skills we require to deliver our actions within the council. We need to build on existing partnership working and further develop our collaborations to achieve our data aspirations. We have developed training for officers to improve data skills. These include training on the use of business intelligence tools. We need to continue to develop training resources to allow staff to continue to improve their data skills.</p>	
<p>How has the area for development from the last report been addressed?</p> <p>Develop a Digital Strategy aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>We have developed a Digital and Data Strategy that sets our integrated ambition and priorities for using digital and data to improve services and outcomes for residents. It sets our longer-term aims and initial actions to deliver them. Our approach will grow in line with advancements we make and developments in the digital and data field.</p>	<p>Digital and Data Strategy</p>
<p>Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	
<p>Strengthen the capacity and capability to deliver the ambition in the digital and data strategy.</p>	

Democracy & Scrutiny – Evaluation Score: Level 4 - Good

<p>How effectively are resources being used?</p>	<p>How do we know?</p>
<p>The use of remote attendance at Council, Cabinet and committee meetings is fully embedded. This brings positive benefits for those with work or family commitments who are able to participate in meetings they would otherwise not be able to attend. Attendance at meetings was 94% in the 22-23 civic year compared in 86% in the previous year and 86% during the first year of the previous council term. Revisions to the changes of scrutiny committees have reduced duplication, for example budget and performance reports are now presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee rather than having the same report presented to four separate meetings.</p>	<p>Attendance Figures</p> <p>Annual Governance statement</p>
<p>Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment</p>	

Our work with others

To deliver the outcomes required for the county we need to work together with a range of partners, stakeholders and our communities. The council will not have all the answers to solve the challenges facing the county and we will not be able to deliver the outcomes required on our own. Working collaboratively with others increases the likelihood of us developing effective and sustainable solutions.

Stakeholders and partnership working

How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes?	How do we know?
<p>Working in partnership is one of the ways we can achieve our objectives while delivering value for money. We enter into collaborative arrangements thoughtfully and with a clear articulation of how they can help us achieve our objectives. Regionally we work with many large organisations in partnership including Welsh Government, Cardiff Capital Region, Regional Partnership Board and the Gwent Public Services Board to fulfil our commitments on, for example, decarbonisation, transport, health and social care, housing and regeneration. An Internal Audit review identified a reasonable level of assurance was in place for the authority’s governance arrangements based on a sample of partnerships. The audit identified we need to strengthen our guidance on the arrangements that partnerships need to have in place and assure ourselves these are subsequently adhered to. We have developed a partnership toolkit and need to complete its implementation. The audit focussed on assessment and planning. Our lead council officers for partnerships need to evaluate if the expected outcomes of the partnerships are being realised.</p> <p>The South East Wales Corporate Joint Committee (CJC) was given the legal responsibility for preparing Regional Strategic Development Plans, Regional Transport Plans and for doing whatever is deemed necessary to enhance or promote the economic well-being of the area. The committee is made up of the leaders of the ten local authorities in South East Wales. All governance papers are published on the Cardiff Capital Region website. The arrangements are overseen by a joint committee comprising representatives from the ten local authorities with additional regulatory activity undertaken by Audit Wales</p> <p>Partnerships and collaborations of all scales and important to deliver improved outcomes in the county. We are committed to strengthening our collaboration with community and town councils and lean into the expertise and enthusiasm of the many volunteers and community groups that make this county so special.</p>	<p>Internal Audit review of Partnerships and collaborations.</p>
Further areas for development identified through our 2023/24 self-assessment	
<p>Evaluate if the expected outcomes of partnerships are being realised and impact on delivering the council’s objectives.</p>	

Our Actions

Through the self-assessment, we have identified how well we are doing and what we can do better. Identifying these is not the end of the self-assessment process. We will look to build on and learn from the areas that are going well and address areas that we can do better.

The action plan focuses specifically on what, and how, we can do better for the significant conclusions of the assessment. All of the findings will inform the development of the council's well-being objectives and delivery plans. They will inform how internal processes and procedures should change to support more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes, and ways to deliver the council's functions. These also integrate with further actions identified in the council's Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.

The actions will be monitored through the year as part of the council's performance management arrangements. The next self-assessment report will also include an assessment of the progress made on these actions.

Progress with 2022/23 Actions?

We have provided an update on progress against the actions we identified in the 2022/23 self-assessment report. A more detailed assessment of these arrangements is provided in the relevant section of the report.

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
Outcomes	Ensure interventions to achieve a Fair Place to Live objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact	Develop clear plans to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	A poverty and inequality action plan is being developed to provide a clear focus for the council's activity to deliver the Fair Place to live objective. This is due to be completed in December 2024. This action will be carried forward to the 2023/24 action plan.
Outcomes	To accelerate the delivery of the council's Decarbonisation Strategy	Revise the council's plans to deliver its commitment to be net-zero by 2030.	A revised Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy has been developed, aligned with the Community and Corporate Plan. The strategy will be delivered by four action plans on decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change. How the strategy will be evaluated has been established. Our self-assessment concludes there are challenges to meeting our decarbonisation aims. The progress and impact of the strategy will need to be evaluated regularly.

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
Outcomes	Use economic analysis commissioned to inform the development of an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy	Develop an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	<p>An Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy and Action Plan has been developed and approved, aligned with the Community and Corporate Plan.</p> <p>How the strategy will be evaluated has been established. The progress and impact of the strategy will need to be evaluated regularly</p>
Outcomes	Clearly articulate and evaluate plans to deliver high quality Adults and Children’s social care	Develop clear plans to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	<p>Plans have been created for significant parts of our Social Care provision that required development. These include a strategy for commissioned domiciliary care 2024 – 2034, including an implementation plan and the approach for developing children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements.</p> <p>The Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health also produced an annual report for Council evaluating performance in Children and Adults Social Care and setting priority action for the future.</p> <p>The progress and impact of these strategies and priorities will need to be evaluated regularly.</p>
Outcomes	Ensure the delivery of the action plan which aims to address recommendations identified by Estyn	Deliver and assess progress on the Estyn recommendation Action Plan	<p>The themes from the inspection included pursuing excellence, creating a holistic vision and strategy for learners with additional learning needs, securing better outcomes for our learners eligible for free school meals (FSM) and improving the way we use data in our evaluations.</p> <p>The action plan to address the recommendations from the Estyn inspection is being implemented. The Community and Corporate Plan now provides a clear framework for action and evaluation of services to ensure that we are working most effectively in the areas of need. The progress against the Estyn recommendations will be included as part of the Chief Officer for Children & Young People’s annual report to Council . It is harder to form an overall view against our Estyn</p>

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
			<p>recommendations due to their areas of focus: progression of FSM learners and excellent standards requiring more extensive access to schools to understand and evidence their progress. This action will be carried forward to the 2023/24 action plan.</p>
Resources	Clear enabling strategies aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Develop enabling strategies aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	<p>Enabling strategies have been developed are: The Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy, Medium-Term Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, People Strategy and Digital & Data Strategy. These are aligned to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28. A Customer Strategy is being developed.</p> <p>The progress and impact of these strategies will need to be evaluated regularly in line with the reporting arrangements established in the strategy.</p>
Resources	Embed the delivery of the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 within the council's performance framework	<p>Embed actions within service business plans.</p> <p>Review the self-assessment process to inform the development of service business plans and the next self-assessment report</p>	<p>The approval of the Community and Corporate Plan has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council. Our self-assessment of our performance framework shows the actions in the Community and Corporate Plan have mainly been embedded in the performance management framework. This also shows there is a need to further strengthen the alignment of some service business plans.</p> <p>The Self-Assessment process has been embedded in the council's performance management framework. The self-assessment process has facilitated the completion of a robust evaluation of performance. Quality assurance on service business plans has shown that managers do not always consistently apply a self-evaluative mindset when updating service business plans. Strengthening self-evaluation within plans is a continuing action, this will inform evidence in the self-assessment report.</p>

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
Stakeholder and Partnership	Strengthen how we work with and alongside communities in line with the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan.	Develop a clear plan for involvement aligned to the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	<p>We have developed a portal that seeks to set out some of the key interfaces and ways that every citizen affected by what the council does has the ability to shape and influence their community and County to work together for a fairer, greener, more successful County.</p> <p>Our self-assessment identifies many areas where we have involved residents in delivering our community and corporate plan in the last year. For example, we have engaged extensively during the production of the Replacement Local Development Plan and we are also working in partnership on the production of town centre masterplans.</p> <p>We recognise that we still need to strengthen involvement and co-produce a different approach to public participation.</p>

New Areas for Development: What and how can we do better?

Section	What can we do better	How	Who	When
Outcomes	Ensure interventions to achieve a Fair Place to Live objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact	Develop a poverty and inequality action plan to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Chief Officer Communities & Place	December 2024
Outcomes	Ensure early and help prevention services are effectively able to meet current and prevent, as far as possible, future demand	Complete an evaluation of the performance of early help and preventive services, as part of the Director of social care annual report and use the findings to inform future action	Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health	November 2024
Outcomes	Increase the focus of council activities on improving the social determinants of health	Use the recommendations in the Building a Fairer Gwent: Improving health equity and the social determinants report to inform the council's service planning	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	April 2025

Outcomes	Ensure the delivery of the action plan which aims to address recommendations identified by Estyn	Deliver and assess progress on the Estyn recommendation Action Plan	Chief Officer Children & Young People	As per action plan
Outcomes	Develop the support offer for schools and pupils to reduce and prevent exclusions	Develop an Inclusion Strategy for delivery of inclusion services across Monmouthshire	Chief Officer Children & Young People	November 2024
Outcomes	Develop the support offer for disadvantaged learners to achieve their potential	Developing a whole authority approach on supporting disadvantaged learners, including working with the EAS.	Chief Officer Children & Young People	November 2024
Enablers	Increase the focus on outcomes in the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan	Review and revise the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	September 2024
Enablers	Strengthen arrangements that support workforce planning and management	Develop and deliver the action plan in the People Strategy	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	As per action plan
Enablers	Strengthen arrangements that support officers undertaking procurement to meet the ambitions of the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy	Develop consistent guidance, training, and support for officers undertaking procurement	Chief Officer Communities & Place	October 2024
Enablers	Strengthen the capacity and capability to deliver the ambition in the digital and data strategy.	Develop and deliver the action plan in the Digital and Data Strategy	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Resources	As per action plan
Stakeholder and Partnership	Evaluate if the expected outcomes of partnerships are being realised and impact on delivering the council's objectives.	Implement the partnership toolkit to facilitate lead council officers for identified partnerships to evaluate if the expected outcomes of the partnerships are being realised.	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships & partnership lead officers	March 2025


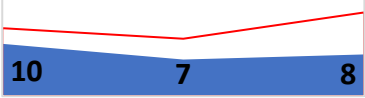


Performance Measures

The use of performance measures is one of the important mechanisms we use to assess our performance. Each of our objectives has specific performance measures set to monitor progress. Some further relevant performance indicators we use to assess our services' performance are set out in this section.

National indicators have been set as part of the Future Generations Act for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals in Wales as a whole. While the national indicators will not measure the performance of individual public bodies or public services boards, it is important that they are considered to track the progress being made to improve well-being in Monmouthshire. Some of the national indicators that are relevant to the objectives we have set, where an update is available at a county level, are included in the table below.

Longer term measures in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28



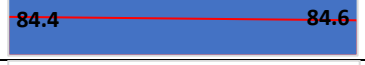


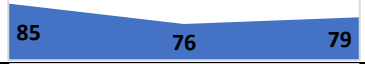






Alongside the specific measures included under each objective The Community and Corporate Plan also includes measures for each objective that we want to track because they will inform our work. We want to see positive movement in these measures, but they are things where our input is only part of a much bigger picture. The latest update of the measures can be seen below. The red comparator line in some graphs seen below displays the Wales average data, where available.


Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Monmouthshire trend ³ (Wales trend in red where available)	Latest
A Fair place to live		
Percentage of children living in relative low-income families ^{xviii}		17.4
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation ^{xix}		8
Difference in average pay between men and women working in the county (£)		100
A Green place to live		
Food waste captured from the waste stream and sent to Anaerobic Digestion (tonnes)		5,062

³ Annual trend data for the previous 5 years, where available. Some dips in data trends are a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Monmouthshire trend ³ (Wales trend in red where available)	Latest
Average annual residual waste produced per person (kilograms) ^{xx}		125.39
Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the air ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$), measured at Air Quality Management Areas in Monmouthshire ^{xxi}		6
Number of properties at medium or high risk of flooding ^{xxii}	Trend data not available	1825
Percentage of the Special Area of Conservation river catchment waterbodies that fail the phosphorus targets ^{xxiii}	Trend data not available	88 for Usk 67 for Wye
A Thriving and Ambitious place		
Average hourly town centre footfall ^{xxiv}		288
Percentage of vacant town centre premises ^{xxv}		8.8
Number of rail passengers using Monmouthshire train stations ^{xxvi}		625,374
Motor vehicle traffic by local authority (million miles) ^{xxvii}		947
Gross disposable household income per head (£) ^{xxviii}		22,720
A Safe Place to Live		
Median house prices compared to median workplace-based earnings ^{xxix}		9.22
Rate of households unintentionally homeless and in priority need per 10,000 households		67
Percentage of social housing allocated to homeless households		57

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Monmouthshire trend ³ (Wales trend in red where available)	Latest
Average carbon emissions per capita in Monmouthshire (tonnes) ^{xxx}		9.1
Rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population		13.1
Number of rapes and sexual offences committed ^{xxxi}		200
Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling ^{xxxii}		75
Percentage of homes that have an energy efficiency rating of C or above ^{xxxiii}		50.5
The percentage of those referred to the youth offending service who subsequently re-offend		18.4
A Connected Place Where People Care		
Percentage of children supported to remain living with their family (not including children looked after)		60.2
Number of children who are rehabilitated after a period of being looked after		15
Percentage of people who are lonely ^{xxxiv}		12
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need ^{xxxv}		86
Percentage of people satisfied with local area as a place to live ^{xxxvi}		95

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Monmouthshire trend ³ (Wales trend in red where available)	Latest
Healthy life expectancy at birth (women) ^{xxxvii}		69.3
Healthy life expectancy at birth (men) ^{xxxviii}		68.7
Life expectancy at birth (women) ^{xxxix}		84.6
Life expectancy at birth (men) ^{xl}		81.6
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week ^{xli}		43
Percentage of people who attend or participate in arts culture or heritage activities three or more times a year ^{xlii}		79
Number of carers and young carers supported by the carers team		164
Number of job vacancies in social care workforce		23
A Learning place		
Rate of fixed term exclusions of less than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Primary Pupils ^{xliii}		15.3
Rate of fixed term exclusions of less than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Secondary Pupils		194.6
Rate of fixed term exclusions of more than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Primary Pupils		0.3
Rate of fixed term exclusions of more than 5 days per thousand pupils (days) -Secondary Pupils		5.2

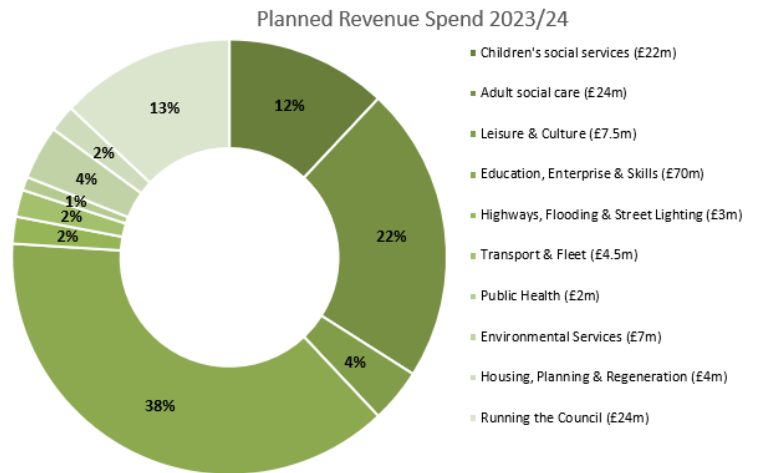
Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Monmouthshire trend ³ (Wales trend in red where available)	Latest										
Percentage of adults with qualifications at Level 4 and above of the National Qualifications Framework	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2017</td> <td>47.9</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2018</td> <td>48</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2019</td> <td>48.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2020</td> <td>52.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2017	47.9	2018	48	2019	48.5	2020	52.6	52.6
Year	Percentage											
2017	47.9											
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2020	52.6											

The use of mechanisms such as the Office of National Statistics’ Measuring National Well-being programme (diagram 7 in What Citizens Said section below) are ways in which we are trying to broaden our understanding of well-being in Monmouthshire, in addition to service specific performance measurement.

What we spent in 2023/24

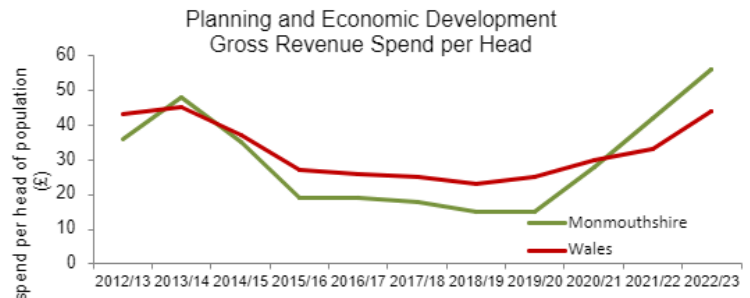
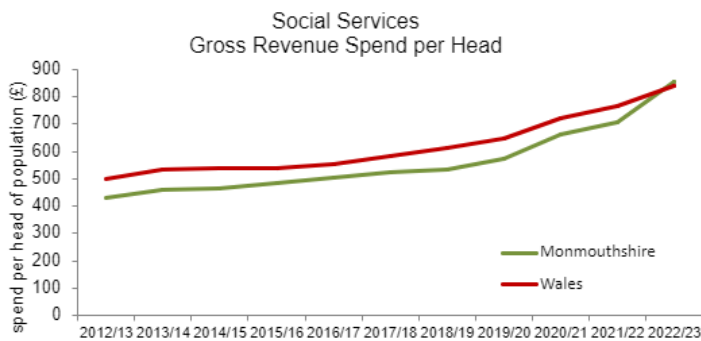
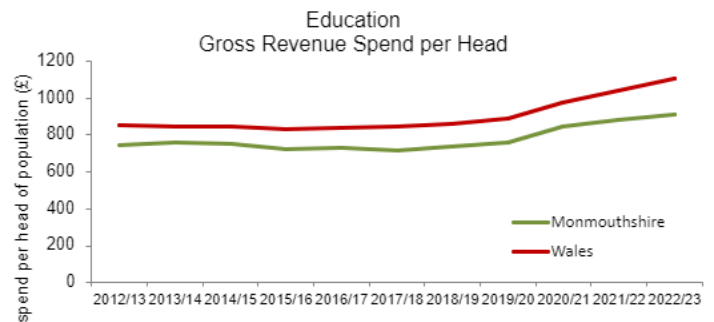
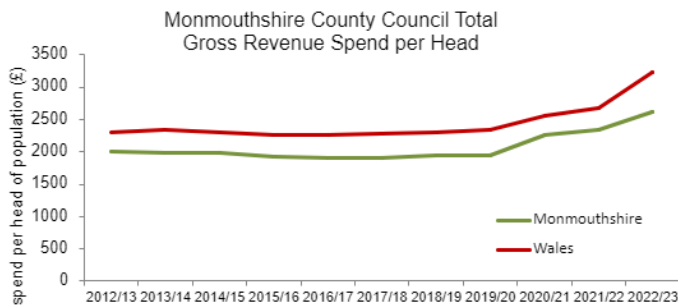
In 2023/24, the council's planned spend was £168 million to provide services for Monmouthshire residents.

The proportion of our spending on different services in 2023/24 is shown in the diagram. These services are paid for by a combination of central government grants, council tax, non-domestic rates and a contribution from the council Fund.



How our revenue spend compares with other areas

The graphs below show how much we spend per head of population in some of our priority areas. In 2022/23, we had the lowest gross revenue spend per head of all councils in Wales and spent less per head on education services. However, we have increased our per head social services spending to above the Wales average and continue to spend above the average on planning and economic development. We have continued to work hard to make sure this money goes where it matters. For 2023/24 we received an increase in core funding, however our budget settlement from Welsh Government continues to be the lowest per head of population of councils in Wales.



What citizens said

Involvement and working together with residents and communities in Monmouthshire is essential to develop and deliver solutions to achieve outcomes and ensure residents are involved in the decisions that affect them.

Through our self-assessment we have used the views of service users and residents to inform our assessment. Some of the specific engagement exercises we undertaken to involve citizens this year include:

Budget engagement: Monmouthshire County Council launched its draft budget proposals for 2024-2025 in January 2024. Communities were invited to share their views on these possible changes in an open consultation process. A range of information on the proposals and their potential impacts was shared. Face-to-face budget consultation events took place, as well as online budget sessions. For those unable to join the livestream, the session was uploaded to the website to watch after the event. As part of the consultation process, residents were also asked to share their thoughts via a feedback survey on the budget proposals, which were shared across our social media platforms.



Regeneration Proposals: We are working in partnership with town councils and other key stakeholders to drive and oversee the development of placemaking plans in Monmouth, Abergavenny and Magor with Undy, and a Transforming Chepstow Masterplan. To inform these plans a range of consultation events were held including face-to-face engagement opportunities, displays were held in the local area on plans and designs and surveys provided. Initial discussions have taken place with local stakeholders about a new placemaking plan for Caldicot. We have invited expression of interest from eligible businesses in Monmouthshire town centres for the Monmouthshire Town Centre Property Improvement Grant. This is funded through the Welsh Government's Transforming Town Placemaking Grant and Monmouthshire County Council. The grant provides financial support for improvements to properties in the designated town centres of Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth.

Education Provision: We recognise the importance of involving residents and partners in discussions around the education provision for our young people. We engaged with residents as part of our review of primary school catchment areas, which has allowed more of our children and young people to attend a school within the county. We also engaged with residents as part of our proposals to relocate Ysgol y Fenni to the Deri View site which will double the capacity of the school; almost 90% of responders were in support of the proposal. 145 individuals engaged with us as part of our consultation to establish a new Welsh medium primary school in Monmouth. This included children and young people, teachers, governors, parents and partner organisations.

Age-Friendly Monmouthshire: We have committed to working towards Monmouthshire becoming an Age-Friendly County and joining the World Health Organisation's global network of Age-Friendly Communities. We invited all residents aged 50 or over to participate in a survey, sharing their experiences

and thoughts on everyday life in Monmouthshire and held sessions at community hubs across the county to discuss the experience of residents. We have engaged with over 1,200 people. This voice of our older residents will be at the centre of efforts to create an age-friendly county. We will be working with local businesses, third sector organisations, statutory partners and the wider community to foster healthy and active ageing, making Monmouthshire more attractive to people of all ages, whether they be residents or visitors

Local Transport Strategy: Ensuring residents and stakeholders are involved in the development of strategies that will affect them is incredibly important. We held a public consultation for our draft Local Transport Strategy between November 2023 and January 2024 to allow residents and stakeholders to feed back on the proposed vision, objectives and strategic framework for the future development of Monmouthshire's transport network. The consultation received 336 responses, and found that in most cases, the majority of respondents agreed with the policy ambition set out in the draft strategy. The needs of our communities sit at the heart of the Local Transport Strategy and will drive the ambition moving forward.

Strategic Equality Plan: Making Monmouthshire a fairer place to live is a key priority for the organisation and sits at the heart of all we do. Throughout this year we developed our Strategic Equality Plan which sets out the seven key objectives we will focus on to ensure our county is a fair place to live for all. This draft strategy was subject to public consultation during January and February 2024. As well as a website survey, the consultation was sent to local groups with members possessing protected characteristics defined by the Equality Act 2010. Responses received were largely supportive of the objectives and actions proposed.

Customer Complaints and Compliments: We monitor and learn from feedback received from customers. These are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee. Issues included the length of time we can take to respond to people. Not only is it important to deal with complaints effectively, investigating and putting things right for the complainant where necessary, it is also vital to learn from them to minimise the chances of the same problem occurring twice. Twelve complaints were referred to the Public Service Ombudsman for Wales in 2022-23, the last year for which data is available, a decrease from twenty during 2021-22. Monmouthshire has one of the lowest levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.25 per 1,000 residents. This ranges from 0.17 to 0.49 with an average of 0.33.

Measuring Individual well-being

The Office of National Statistics' Measuring National Well-being programme also assesses personal well-being as part of the Annual Population Survey. The survey asks the questions:

- **Life Satisfaction** – overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays?
- **Worthwhile** – overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
- **Happiness** – overall, how happy did you feel yesterday?
- **Anxiety** – on a scale where 0 is 'not at all anxious' and 10 is 'completely anxious', overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday?

- The latest full annual results for Monmouthshire (from 2022/23) for these questions are shown in diagram below alongside the UK and Wales averages. This shows that the responses from Monmouthshire residents score slightly better than both the UK and Wales for almost all measures.



Staff engagement

As part of our process to collate the self-assessment, we held directorate and enabling-service workshops to provide an opportunity for staff to directly feed into the self-assessment via identification of their own strengths and areas for development. Workshop attendees were presented with evidence packs, collated from existing information sources such as scrutiny reports, external regulator feedback, and service business plans, and were facilitated to self-assess their performance. A range of evidence was gathered from the workshops, both in terms of successes and areas for development associated with our strategic goals and our enabling functions, but also on how to strengthen the self-assessment process.

We have also used evidence gathered from a range of staff events and groups. These include the Digital Cwtch and in-person staff engagement sessions, along with fortnightly People Leaders Q&A session and the engagement on the development of our People Strategy. The use of networks and digital communication, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce.

Businesses

We have established stronger engagement networks with businesses in our area since the pandemic and are working to maintain and improve these connections. We have a better understanding of the types of businesses in our area. We have continued to engage with businesses through our new customer relationship management system which acts as a database of Monmouthshire businesses and a tool to promote the advice and guidance services that we can provide to pre-starts and existing businesses. Our Business Data & Communications Officer has continued to improve our links with businesses and has

helped to improve feedback loops with businesses to ensure we are capitalising on the conversations that are taking place and can improve our service as a result. This feedback will continue to inform our self-assessment.

Trade Unions

We engage well with Trade Unions to achieve our outcomes. We have briefed them on the process we undertake to complete our self-assessment and shared our initial findings with them as part of our self-assessment process.

What Regulators and Inspectors Said

We work closely with our regulators and inspectors to quality-assure our activities as this is vital to ensuring improvement. Their feedback is valued, and we use their assessments to help us focus on the things we need to improve across the council.

Each year, Audit Wales publishes an Audit Plan setting out the work they plan to undertake at the council. As part of the plan they have undertaken a range of audits during the year. These included:

- Well-being Objective Setting Examination: The report concludes the council has set its well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle and is aligning its key strategies and business plans to support their delivery, but it could further strengthen its approach by increasing the diversity of citizen involvement in future.
- Use of Performance Information, Service User Perspective and Outcomes: The report concludes the council provides some performance information to enable senior leaders to understand the perspective of service users, but information on outcomes is limited restricting their ability to manage performance effectively.
- Capital Programme Management: The report concludes capital programme management arrangements demonstrate some strengths but lack focus on outcomes and impact. This conclusion was reached because: planning arrangements are generally robust, but the capital programme lacks clear outcomes; and monitoring arrangements focus on budget and timescales with limited consideration of impact or learning.
- Digital Strategy Review: The report concludes the council does not have a clearly articulated strategic approach to digital. The report recognises the council currently does not have a digital strategy and its current digital work is detailed within individual service business plans and some project work. It also acknowledges the council intends to develop a new digital strategy to help clarify the role that digital technology will play in the council. We have now developed a digital and data strategy for 2024-2027.
- Assurance and Risk Assessment work in the council during 2023/24. This focused on the council's financial sustainability, capital programme management and governance arrangements.

We have developed responses to the recommendations in these reports and the progress in delivering these is regularly reported to the council's Governance & Audit Committee. Reports produced by Audit Wales are available to download on their website (www.audit.wales/publications). This includes local government national reports.

We underwent an Estyn Inspection into Local Government Education Services in February 2020. The inspection recognised the clear vision and strong focus on ensuring 'the best possible start in life' and also identified the commitment to partnership working that has resulted in a good track record of improvement. It also identified areas for development, such as the performance of children eligible for free school meals, and a lack of clarity in how services for learners with special educational needs will be strengthened. The progress in addressing the four recommendations in the report has been evaluated in the Children and Young People's Chief Officer's Report 2023/24, with all four being assessed as making 'good progress'. The progress report can be found here [Children and Young People's Chief Officer's Report 2023/24 \(monmouthshire.gov.uk\)](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk). The full Estyn report, and other Estyn reports related to Monmouthshire and schools in the county, can be found on www.estyn.gov.wales

Care Inspectorate Wales carried out a performance evaluation inspection of children's services in the council in February 2024. The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, on behalf of Welsh Ministers. The findings recognise strengths and areas for improvement:

- Strengths recognised include, family support, and children’s participation. Positive leadership and good morale within the service were also highlighted and the inspection confirmed that the service had a good understanding of its relative strengths and difficulties.
- Areas for improvement identified included the impact of increased demand; ensuring that a strengths-based approach informs the initial stages of child protection process when appropriate; ensuring that direct work with children forms part of the case record and strengthening quality assurance.

We are taking action to address the areas for improvement and CIW intend to monitor progress through routine engagement with the service.

The full inspection report, and other inspection reports about Monmouthshire social services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), can be found on www.careinspectorate.wales

Equality and Diversity

The council has a long-standing commitment to equality and diversity. Our fourth Strategic Equality Plan, produced under the Equality Act 2010 sets the council’s objectives to ensure we deliver better outcomes for people with protected characteristics. This is clearly aligned with the evidence provided by the Well-being Assessment, and evidence provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission’s report “Is Wales Fairer 2023”.

As well as this, it is important to us as it is the right thing to do. We produce annual monitoring reports that provide updates on progress on the action plan in the Strategic Equality Plan and evidence good practice being carried out across the council departments. These can be found [here](#).

The Welsh Language

The Welsh language is central to the goals introduced as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, particularly for our contribution to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It also makes an important contribution to the Welsh Government goal of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and accompanying Welsh Language standards, place a legal duty on councils to treat Welsh and English equally, to promote the Welsh Language and provide services to the public through the medium of Welsh. There are 176 standards that apply to the council. This is a significant challenge, but systems have been put in place to comply with these. We have a Welsh Language Strategy for 2022-2027, which identifies a vision of how the language will look in Monmouthshire in five years and is accompanied by targets to help achieve it. Our annual monitoring report 2023/24 reflects our progress against our Welsh language commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards. The report can be found [here](#).

Appendix 1 – Self-assessment process

Legislation

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 provides for a new and reformed legislative framework for local government elections, democracy, governance and performance. The Act replaces the previous improvement duty for councils set out in the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009. The Act requires each council in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the ‘performance requirements’, that is the extent to which it is exercising its functions effectively; it is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively; its governance is effective for securing these.

The performance and governance provisions in the Act are framed within the context of the well-being duty in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, which sets out a legally binding common purpose for public bodies to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales.

The mechanism for a council to keep its performance under review is self-assessment, with a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. Self-assessment will be complemented by a panel performance assessment once in an electoral cycle, providing an opportunity to seek external insights (other than from auditors, regulators or inspectors) on how the council is meeting the performance requirements.

Why?

Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly, the current position to make decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. It is about the council being self-aware, understanding whether it is delivering the right outcomes, and challenging itself to continuously improve. It needs to be embedded as effective self-assessment helps the council to continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce.

The WLGA have identified draft principles for self-assessment for councils to ensure that they have arrangements in place that:

- demonstrate self-awareness derived from evidence-based analysis that focuses on outcomes;
- are owned and led at a strategic level and are not an exercise in compliance;
- further develop a culture of challenge to facilitate improvement as part of an ongoing process;
- are integrated as part of the council’s corporate planning, performance and governance processes; and
- enable an organisation-wide assessment rather than an assessment of individual services.

Further developing this culture and embedding an evaluative mindset will be a key development point through the continued production of the self- assessment report.

Process

The council has developed a process to undertake its third self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2023/24 financial year. The main component parts of the process and timeline are:

April - May	May - June	June - July	July - September	September
Desk-based evidence gathering	Directorate self-assessment Workshops	Council self-assessment report drafted	Draft report to Scrutiny and Governance & Audit Committee	Self-assessment agreed in line with council process.

This timeline ensures that the self-assessment can inform and be informed by the policy direction of the council and how it uses its resources efficiently and effectively, particularly the budget setting process.

Evaluative evidence to inform the assessment has been compiled at a directorate level. Most of the evidence has been collated by using intelligence already held corporately in an insightful way; this includes, for example, the Annual Governance Statement, audit and inspection reports, and service level business plans.



The evidence gathered has been explored further, and challenged where necessary, at directorate and enabling function based self-assessment workshops, to determine if the objectives (outcomes) of the council are being achieved.

Self-assessment workshops

Directorate workshops	Enabling functions workshops
Children & Young People	People, Performance & Partnerships – Performance, Data, Scrutiny & Workforce planning
Social Care & Health	Resources – Financial planning, Assets & Digital
Communities & Place	
MonLife	

The workshops were facilitated through the following questions:

- How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes? (Community & Corporate Plan objectives)
- How do we know? (Evidence)
- How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities? (Enablers)
- How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes? (Partnership working)
- What could we do better? (Actions – including a review of actions from the previous report)

The full evidence and conclusions from workshops have been collated and will be used by directorates and enabling functions to inform their services business plans.

Following the workshops, the evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. This has been integrated with the council’s requirement to

report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year (2023/24) under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The report is structured under these headings:

- Understanding our local place
- Outcomes (progress against our objectives):
 - How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?
 - How do we know?
 - Areas for development
- Enabling functions
 - Corporate planning, performance and risk management
 - Financial planning
 - Workforce planning
 - Procurement
 - Assets
 - Digital & Data
 - Democracy & Scrutiny
- Our work with partners
- Our Actions (including progress against previous actions)

The self-assessment report will be scrutinised by the council's Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. A draft of the self-assessment report will be made available to Governance and Audit Committee to review the draft report in line with the requirements of the legislation. The self-assessment will be presented for approval at a meeting of full Council.

ⁱ This measures primary school pupils who receive Universal Free Primary Schools rather than the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals

ⁱⁱ MonGames is a skills and sports activity programme, usually run in the school holidays, aimed at children aged between 5-11

ⁱⁱⁱ This is externally grant funded so risk that this model could change or stop

^{iv} Active Play is a two-hour programme designed for children aged between 5-11 where they are able to take part in a range of physical activities and also arts and crafts

^v National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{vi} Make Your Mark: Monmouthshire's Local Ballot is an annual consultation for young people ages 11-25. See <https://www.monlife.co.uk/connect/youth-service/make-your-mark/make-your-mark-monmouthshire/> for more details

^{vii} National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{viii} Disability Confident is a UK Government scheme designed to encourage employers to recruit and retain disabled people and those with health conditions.

^{ix} Measured by the Annual Population Survey for Wales. While this is not considered as accurate as the Census, it has the benefit of being updated more frequently allowing the authority to track progress.

^x This includes both emissions from the council's operations and land-based and supply chain operations

^{xi} Amount of municipal, or 'everyday' waste, set to be recycled, reused or composted as a percentage of total waste generated. [Annual reuse/recycling/composting rates by local authority \(gov.wales\)](#)

^{xii} Measured using the STEAM which is a tourism economic impact modelling process

^{xiii} Percentage of Year 11 school leavers who are NEET. [Pupil destinations | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

^{xiv} Active travel means getting about in a way that makes you physically active, like walking or cycling. It usually means short journeys, like walking to the shops or school or cycling to work.

^{xv} Adult Social Care Service User Questionnaire

^{xvi} The National Exercise Referral Scheme is an evidence-based health intervention incorporating physical and behavioural change to support clients to make a lifestyle change to improve both health and well-being

^{xvii} Adult Social Care Service User Questionnaire

^{xviii} Relative low income refers to people living in households with income below 60% of the median in that year

^{xix} Material deprivation is a measure of living standards. A person is considered to be living in material deprivation if they are unable to access a certain number of goods or services. Further information can be found here: [Material deprivation and low income | GOV.WALES](#)

^{xx} [Annual residual household waste produced per person \(kilograms\) by local authority \(gov.wales\)](#)

^{xxi} [Air Quality Indicators, by Local Authority \(gov.wales\)](#)

^{xxii} Measures combined numbers at risk from rivers, tidal and surface water. Source:

[Medium Risk; Less than 1 in 30 \(3.3%\) but greater than or equal to 1 in 100 \(1%\) chance in any given year for rivers and surface water flooding and less than 1 in 30 \(3.3 per cent\) but greater than or equal to 1 in 200 \(0.5 per cent\) for the sea.](https://stats.wales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Flooding/High Risk; Greater than or equal to 1 in 30 (3.3%) chance in any given year. Data in baseline is for 2019.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Low Risk; Less than 1 in 100 (1%) for rivers and surface water flooding and 1 in 200 (0.5 per cent) for the sea but greater than or equal to 1 in 1,000 (0.1%) chance in any given year.

^{xxiii} Compliance Assessment of Welsh River SACs against Phosphorus Targets Report No: 489.

<https://naturalresources.wales/evidence-and-data/research-and-reports/water-reports/compliance-assessment-of-welsh-river-sacs-against-phosphorus-targets/?lang=en>

^{xxiv} <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/annual-monitoring/retail/>

^{xxv} <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/annual-monitoring/retail/>

^{xxvi} Measure of entries and exits. Source: <https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>

^{xxvii}

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1144656/tra8902.ods

^{xxviii} Gross Disposable Household Income (GDHI) is the amount of money individuals or households have for spending or saving. [Gross Disposable Household Income by area and measure \(gov.wales\)](#)

^{xxix} [House price to workplace-based earnings ratio - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

^{xxx} Includes territorial emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O). Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2020>

^{xxxi} Source: Gwent Police

^{xxxii} National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{xxxiii} [Energy efficiency of Housing, England and Wales, local authority districts - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

^{xxxiv} National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{xxxv} [Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access facilities and services they need \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales)

^{xxxvi} National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{xxxvii} Healthy Life Expectancy is the number of years lived in self-assessed good health

^{xxxviii} Healthy Life Expectancy is the number of years lived in self-assessed good health

^{xxxix} Source:

<https://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/healthandsocialcare/generalhealth/tabular?viewId=47&geold=1&subsetId=>

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<https://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/healthandsocialcare/generalhealth/tabular?viewId=47&geold=1&subsetId=>

^{xli} National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{xlii} National Survey for Wales - <https://www.gov.wales/national-survey-wales>

^{xliii} Exclusions are split by the length/type of exclusion, into 3 categories: i) Fixed term exclusions: 5 days or less; ii) Fixed term exclusions: over 5 days iii) Permanent exclusions. These are measured for all pupils and those eligible for free school meals. Further detail can be found at <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/pdf-versions/2022/10/4/1666254621/permanent-and-fixed-term-exclusions-schools-september-2020-august-2021.pdf>

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Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment Summary

2023-24

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monmouthshire
sir fynwy



Summary

We want to be a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. We will do this working with, and alongside, our communities. This is the ambition set in our Community and Corporate Plan.

This self-evaluation is one of the ways in which we hold ourselves to account. We track the progress against our priorities, identify lessons and assess where improvements can be made so we can stay on track. Every council in Wales is required to do the same under the requirements of The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This report captures the conclusions of our self-assessment covering the period 2023-24.

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Local authorities deliver hundreds of services. This evaluation cannot cover every single one of them. Instead, it's structured around the six objectives of the Community and Corporate Plan set out below. That doesn't mean we don't actively manage performance in the other areas. We have scrutiny committees and business plans in place to allow our councillors to hold senior officers and Cabinet members to account for delivery of all aspects of our work.

The report also looks at some of key governance arrangements and enabling functions that support our work. This includes things like workforce planning, use of assets and our financial management arrangements. We also rely on the work of our Internal Audit team and external regulators such as Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales.

Our objectives

- 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 & ambitious place**
Where there are vibrant town centres, where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place**
To live where people have a home and community where they feel secure
- Connected place**
Where people feel part of a community and are valued
- Learning place**
Where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential



How well do we understand our local context and place?

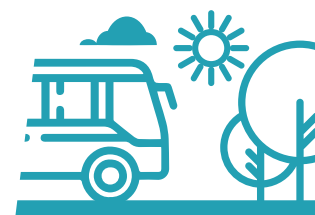
Monmouthshire is a great place and one which we are rightly proud of. Our county has the second most competitive economy in Wales after the capital city of Cardiff and has improved its UK ranking since 2019. People here enjoy, on average, longer and healthier life expectancy than in other parts of Wales. We have vibrant towns, great visitor attractions and enjoy good connections to other parts of the UK. However, we also face significant challenges. We know that many people are struggling. High house prices and rents relative to wages make it hard for some people to live here. We also have a carbon footprint which is above the average for Wales and the UK, caused in part by the rural nature of the county. Headline measures can also mask the diversity, and some of the inequality that exists within our communities. We have an older population, which brings huge benefits in terms of experience and social capital but can also place pressure on public services.

We have a good understanding of our place. We analyse a range of statistical information on things such as health and the local economy. We also get qualitative feedback about

residents' perceptions of our area from the National Survey for Wales and our own surveys. However, we recognise that we don't have comprehensive understanding of how well all of our services and policies are meeting the needs of the people who use them.

We have 46 ward councillors who help us have an understanding of local issues local communities. We also consult directly when we are planning service changes or considering action in a particular area.

Once every five years we conduct an extensive well-being assessment and population needs assessment with partners across Gwent. We have sought active participation in decision-making, for example through promoting attendance at the public open forum we hold before our committee meetings. We recognise there is more to be done to understand people's lived experiences as part of our commitment to work with and alongside residents, enabling them to shape their futures.



How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?

We've assessed our progress against the six objectives of our Community and Corporate Plan using a six-point scale that rates each one from **1 (unsatisfactory) through to 6 (excellent)**. In the early years of this plan a lot of the activity has been about understanding challenges and developing our approach. More of the delivery actions will fall in the second half of the plan. Many of the things we've set out to do, such as improving river health and achieving net zero are complex societal challenges and will take time to deliver. As a result, some of the activities we will be reporting on now are the building blocks and milestones on the way to achieving our intended outcomes rather than outcomes themselves. These give us the foundations and set the trajectory for future improvements.



A fair place to live

Our rating:
4 (Good)

We want to see improved life chances for people irrespective of their income or background. It will take time for us to see the impact of our work. In the meantime, we have put in place solutions to mitigate the effects of inequality on different groups of people.

Healthy meals at school help all children to learn and thrive. We've rolled out universal free school meals in primary settings. We are developing an understanding of the barriers to take up so we can take action to reduce these. The proportion of children accessing this free service increase from 64% to 75% in the 12 months to March 2024. Research shows that children from low-income families can often fall behind over the summer holidays. We have provided healthy meals and activities in the holidays to try and overcome this.

We are working with headteachers to target this at those who will benefit most and doubled the number of people taking up this offer.

A good diet and being active are vital parts of improving health life expectancy for all people. We know that achieving these can be harder for people on low incomes. We've developed a new food strategy that includes a commitment to increasing access to healthy, sustainable and affordable food. We have also worked with partners to develop and open the new £2.9M Magor and Undy Community Hub based on the needs identified by local people.



Green place

To live and work, with reduced carbon emissions, and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency



Our rating:
3 (Adequate)

A green place to live

We are committed to taking local action to reducing our carbon emissions and playing our part to tackle global warming. The score we've allocated reflects the complex nature of the challenge we are facing.

One of the things we can influence is the level of emissions from our own operations. We are presently building a new carbon neutral school in Abergavenny. We've also refitted a lot of our public buildings with LED lighting, solar panels and heat pumps. This has reduced energy use and carbon emissions. We have developed plans for the next phase of this work. We've been upgrading our fleet to ultra-low emission vehicles when they need replacing. The costs involved mean we cannot do this as quickly as we would like. We also want to help communities to reduce their emissions. We've secured grant funding and worked with partners and volunteers to develop 'libraries of things', reuse shops and repair cafes to reduce the amount of waste in the county. Our residents have also recycled 71.7% of household waste. This is well above the national target of 64% and our local target of 70%.

The level of phosphates levels in the Wye and Usk rivers remains a major problem. We have worked with partners to develop an action plan to

tackle this. Welsh Water/Dŵr Cymru is installing phosphate stripping technology in Abergavenny and Monmouth. We are in the process for approving a new Local Development Plan. This will ensure that new developments do not have an adverse effect on water quality.

The way in which we grow, transport and consume food has an effect on the environment. We've produced a new food strategy and have awarded grants to support community growing to increase access to healthy local produce with lower food miles. We've worked with local farmers to trial the use of new technologies to increase food production and supported a scheme to provide mentoring to farmers to enable them to move towards more regenerative farming methods.

The range of work that we are undertaking is helping us to understand the scale of the challenge and the path we need to take to reach our goal. We remain ambitious in our aim of becoming net zero by 2030. We are making good progress with our actions. However, unless there is significant public investment, the evidence that we are gathering suggests that reaching our target will be extremely challenging.



Thriving & ambitious place



Where there are vibrant town centres, where businesses can grow and develop

A thriving and ambitious place

Our rating:
4 (Good)

We want a diverse economy, generating sustainable employment growth and creating the conditions for shared prosperity in which businesses and workers can thrive. We have produced a new Economy, Employment and Skills strategy which will guide this work.

We want to see vibrant town centres throughout our county. We have secured funding and are working with town councils, communities, and other stakeholders to develop placemaking plans to shape this work.

We want people of all ages and backgrounds to have the skills to do well in work or start their own business. We provided support to 165 pre-start-up and existing local businesses. We have also provided employment advice to unemployed people and have helped 115 people into work.

Transport and connectivity are vital to any economy. We have developed a new local transport strategy. We are working with other stakeholders to make the case for the new Magor Walkway station and have begun to develop proposals to improve bus access to existing train stations in the county. Meanwhile, we have continued to maintain our road network and delivered 100% of our planned maintenance programme.

We recognise that we are part of a global economy and have played an active role in regional economic partnerships including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, The Western Gateway and Marches Forward. These collaborations helping us attract and retain innovative companies, attract inward investment and grow exports. We have seen an upward trend in the number of businesses in the county. We have also improved our ranking in the UK competitiveness index.





Our rating:
4 (Good)

A safe place to live

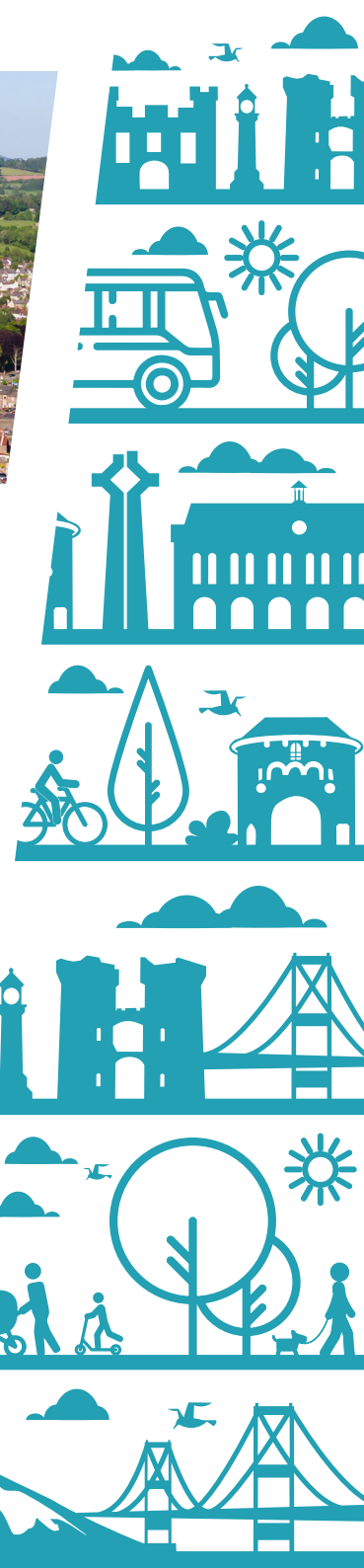
We want Monmouthshire to be a safe place that people are proud to call home with an increased supply of good quality, energy efficient homes. We have prepared a replacement Local Development Plan which will set out the detailed policy framework for land use up to 2033. The adoption of the plan has been delayed by a range of factors. This has limited the ability of developers and housing associations to deliver sufficient numbers of affordable homes.

We have introduced a Council Tax premium on vacant properties to encourage landlords to bring these back into use. Homeowners can secure grant funding to assist with this. We received 36 applications for this funding in 2023-24. This has contributed to a 17% reduction in empty homes from 541 to 447.

High property prices, a shortage of affordable private rented accommodation and the rising cost of living have all contributed to a rising homelessness problem. We are working with partners to support people at risk of becoming homeless. We helped 261 people last year which helped people to remain in their own homes or find new accommodation. We have also acquired

more properties to reduce the use of costly and unsuitable B&B accommodation for homeless households. Overall, we have reduced the use of B&Bs by 50% from 92 to 46 by March 2024. As a corporate parent, we are particularly mindful of the needs of those leaving care. We provide support through our corporate parenting panel, however, despite the work of the panel, 8 young care leavers experienced homelessness in 2023-24 compared to 5 in the previous year.

The rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population has increased slightly from 10.6 to 13.1. We have worked with young people to address their concerns about knife crime and anti-social behaviour and have extended three public space protection orders to prevent anti-social behaviour. We have also responded to 619 environmental protection incidents, such as littering and fly-tipping, dealing with 84% of these within 3 days. Overall, 95% of people in Monmouthshire who responded to the National Survey for Wales said they were satisfied with the area as a place to live which compares positively with other parts of the nation.



Connected place



Where people feel part of a community and are valued

A connected place where people care

We want Monmouthshire to be a place where people's contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. Across the UK social services are facing increased demand and more complex cases. It is taking an increasing proportion of our budget each year. We know that there are many factors that affect our health and well-being. We have committed to working with others across Gwent and the Institute of Health Equity to tackle these by becoming what is known as a Marmot Region.

Early help is vital to prevent children coming into local authority care. We have established a coordinated approach to early intervention in children's social services. We have increased capacity and reduced waiting times for early help services. Our evaluation has shown that 100% of people are reporting a positive outcome from our Building Stronger Families service.

We have produced a new strategy to develop more in-county residential and supported accommodation placements. So far, we are working to deliver the 32 placements we need and have commissioned two new residential homes.

Our rating:
4 (Good)

This will ensure that children can maintain local connections and much needed stability in their lives.

We are working with Age Cymru and NHS colleagues to ensure timely hospital discharge. However, delayed transfers of care from hospital in March 2024 were at the same level as twelve months earlier. We also want to help vulnerable older people regain their independence. We provided 331 reablement care packages in 2023-24, an increase of 80% on the previous year. In 70% of cases this mitigated or reduced peoples' need for long-term support. When people do need care, it can sometimes be hard to put this in place due to the limited availability of carers. We've addressed this through a number of solutions including support for self-employed 'micro-carers'. This has contributed to a 62% reduction unmet care need from 804 hours to 306 hours per month. We have also opened a new purpose-built specialist care home for people living with dementia and have trained community volunteers to support those living with dementia in the community to increase their confidence and reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation.



Learning place



Where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential

Our rating:
4 (Good)

A learning place

Monmouthshire should be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential.

School attendance has declined since the pandemic. Our Education Welfare Officers have worked with vulnerable learners and we have a specific programme targeted at those with very low attendance levels. Attendance improved for 92% of pupils who participated. Overall primary school attendance improved between the 2021/22 and 2022/23 academic years in primary schools but declined from 88.4% to 87.7% in secondary schools and remains below pre-pandemic levels.

We're introducing a phased approach to pupil well-being. We have increased the number of schools on the programme from 43% to 74%. We have seen a worsening of behaviours which is challenging for schools, staff and learners. In response we delivered Trauma Informed Schools training to over 500 staff during the year. We recognise that we have more to do to develop our approach in this area.

We have worked with our regional school improvement service, called the EAS, to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Learners in our secondary schools score higher than elsewhere in Wales, on average. 26% of pupils across Monmouthshire are achieved 5 or more GCSE at levels A*-A, compared with 20.3% for Wales. We also have fewer pupils leaving school with no qualifications at 0.8%, compared with 1.4% of pupils across Wales. We evaluate schools against those of

similar size and linguistic delivery across Wales. On that basis, two secondary schools outperform those similar in every category, and one outperforms in most categories (including literacy, numeracy, science, no qualifications, 5+ A*-A). One of our schools underperforms in most categories compared to similar schools.

We have been working with two of our schools who were placed in statutory categories following Estyn reviews in 22/23. Follow-up reviews were conducted during 23/24; these found that both schools have made significant progress in addressing the recommendations have been removed from statutory categories. Two of our schools inspected have been selected by Estyn to produce good practice case studies.

Our work has a particular focus on vulnerable learners including those eligible for free school meals. This includes targeted support from education advisors and wider support as part of our community focused schools work. This is aimed at ensuring all pupils can succeed irrespective of their socio-economic background. There remains a gap in attainment equal to 1.5 GCSE grades and we recognise that we have more work to do in this area.

We have restructured our education inclusion service and have worked with all schools with targeted training and regular Q&A sessions. We recognise a need to improve the consistency of ALN provision for those with additional learning needs across the county and have established a new quality assurance system to improve how we identify and manage those with additional learning needs.



How effectively does the council work with stakeholders and partners on agreed outcomes?

Partnership is core to how we work. The council has effective relationships in place with a multiplicity of stakeholders that help us achieve our purpose. These range from large scale strategic partnerships like the Cardiff Capital Region and the Gwent Public Services Board to bi-lateral shared services with other councils for services such as youth offending, procurement and revenues and benefits. We have positive working relationships in place with Welsh Government. We recognise that we can and must do more to develop and build on our relationship with community and town councils.

Areas for Development

Through the self-assessment, we've identified how well we are doing and what we can do better. This is our starting point. We will look to build on and learn from the things we are doing and seek to improve areas where we can do better. You can see the areas for development that we've identified at the end of each section in the full assessment.

Measuring Progress

We use a wide range of performance measures to track our progress against our priorities. These are found throughout the assessment. This assessment uses the targets set for 2023-24. We also track progress against a range of metrics that track outcomes at a population level. Key measures will be presented regularly to Cabinet and the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee so that we can actively manage performance and adjust delivery where we're falling short of our expectations.

What do you think?

We've included some of the feedback we've received from other organisations and would be delighted to hear your views to help us inform future assessments.

Please e-mail us: improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk





SUBJECT: People with Care Experience

DIRECTORATE: Social Care & Health

MEETING: Council

DATE: 19th September 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider proposed measures that the Council may implement to help care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old) overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That 'care experienced people' is added to the Council's Integrated Impact Assessment, so that any impact of policy decisions on people with care experience is identified and taken into account when those decisions are made.
- 2.2 In relation to recruitment, currently the Council guarantees an interview to individuals who have been in the care of the Monmouthshire County Council provided they meet the selection criteria set out in the job description. It is proposed that this be expanded to individuals who have been in the care of other Local Authorities.
- 2.3 When setting and reviewing the Council's Strategic Equality Objectives, it is proposed that the Council include consideration of how it might overcome the disadvantages and discrimination experienced by care experienced people.

3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Care experienced people are one of the most vulnerable groups of people across our society, often facing lifetime stigma and discrimination. Whilst the experience of coming into care and being looked after as a child will be unique to every individual, the fact that it leaves a lasting legacy and influences life-trajectory, is indisputable. For many people, particularly when they have had a restorative experience of being in care, childhood adversity is easier to overcome. However, for many others, outcomes remain much poorer than the general population. For example:
- a. 25% of the homeless population are estimated to be care experienced;
 - b. Care experienced people are three times less likely to access higher education;
 - c. care experienced people have one of the highest pay gaps at over 25%; and
 - d. care experienced people are 70% more likely to die prematurely.
- 3.2 Care experienced people report being stigmatised and discriminated against. When giving evidence in the Independent Review of Children’s Social Care in England, Care experienced people spoke of being refused employment and accommodation, and of assumptions being made about their potential educational ability or even about their parenting ability when they had children of their own.
- 3.3 The Independent Review of Children’s Social Care in England headed by Josh McCallister published in May 2022 contained a number of recommendations including the recommendation that Government should extend the protected characteristics of the Equality Act to include care experience. Although this review

was of Children's Social Care in England, the Radical Reform Summit Declaration saw similar expressions of support with regard to recognising the particular needs of care experienced young people within a Welsh Government context.

- 3.4 Increasingly local authorities across the UK are recognising the unique discrimination and disadvantage that people with care experience face and the actions that can be taken by councils to help overcome these. Some councils have expressed this as treating care experience '*as if it were a protected characteristic*'.
- 3.5 In line with this, it is proposed that Monmouthshire County Council takes some specific actions to ensure that the Council is recognising and helping to address the challenges faced by care experienced people. These proposals are set out in paragraph 2.2 of this report and are designed to help care experienced people to overcome the discrimination and disadvantages they face.
- 3.6 There are already a number of measures in place within the Council and wider across Wales that support care experienced people. These include:
 - a. Through its Corporate Parenting responsibilities, the Council considers the impact of its decisions on Monmouthshire's Children Looked After which equally extends to the care leaver population (up to the age of 25);
 - b. Under the Social Services and Well-being Act, Monmouthshire care leavers are entitled to statutory support up until the age of 25 including advice, assistance, support and access to personal advisers;
 - c. Monmouthshire care leavers have priority access to housing;
 - d. Care leavers across Wales have a 100% council tax exemption (up to the age of 25);
 - e. Through its Corporate Parenting Strategy and Corporate Parenting Panel, the Council seeks out the views and perspectives of care experienced people;

- encourages other bodies and partner organisations to recognise and address disadvantages arising from having care experience; and celebrates and promotes the contributions and achievements of care-experienced individuals.
- 3.7 Whilst all these measures would remain, the current proposals would take a step further in formally recognising and addressing the real and life-long disadvantages and discrimination faced by people with care experience.
- 3.8 The Council currently produces an Integrated Impact Assessment for all policy decisions taken by Council, Cabinet or individual Cabinet members. This ensures decision makers consider the impact of decisions on people with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, the National Well-being Goals and ways of working established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act and the Welsh Language Standards applying to the authority. It also requires an assessment against some key areas of work such as safeguarding and corporate parenting. Completing the Integrated Impact Assessment ensures that report authors take these factors into account when developing proposals and making recommendations. In addition to the impact on decision making, adding care experience to the Integrated Impact Assessment sends an important signal to those who have been in care as well as officers, councillors and wider communities.
- 3.9 The authority offers guaranteed job interviews to several groups of people providing they meet the criteria for a job. This is about taking positive action and giving people the opportunity to demonstrate their talents and knowledge at the interview stage. This presently applies to disabled people, veterans and those who care been in the care of Monmouthshire County Council. The proposal to expand this to all people with care experience is a small but significant change which is aligned with the aspirations of our recently approved People Strategy to be inclusive and attract the widest possible range of talent to work for the organisation.

- 3.10 The proposed changes we have identified are intended to go some way in tackling the disadvantages that many care experienced people can face by:
- a. Improving the life chances and opportunities of people who have care experience;
 - b. Raising awareness about the inequality and prejudice faced by care experienced people;
 - c. Promoting the wellbeing of care experienced people within Monmouthshire (and wider) through listening and responding to their views and opinions.

4 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION

- 4.1 By taking steps to overcome prejudice, discrimination and disadvantage faced by people with care experience, this proposal is intended to make Monmouthshire a fairer and more equitable county. Implementing the proposals will provide a framework for Monmouthshire County Council to promote the social, psychological and economic wellbeing of care experienced people.
- 4.2 Local councils play a crucial role in ensuring that all members of their community are treated fairly and equitably. By putting in place additional measures to support the life chances of people with care experience, Monmouthshire County Council will be taking an important step towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for everyone. In addition, these measures will help to break down the barriers that care experienced people often face when it comes to accessing education, employment and housing. Raising the profile will also help to ensure Council officers and elected members are aware of the unique challenges and strengths of care experienced people and encourage them to incorporate this awareness into their policies and practices.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Description	Costs	Benefits	Disbenefits/risks	Recommended
Do nothing	Cost neutral	No additional work needed to implement policy	Missing significant opportunities for MCC to improve how it fulfils its role as a Corporate Parent and improving outcomes for care experienced people.	No
Take steps as proposed to help address discrimination and disadvantage faced by care experienced people.	Cost neutral	<p>Improved recognition of the challenges faced by care experienced people.</p> <p>Improved identification of ways to challenge these and therefore improve outcomes for care experienced people.</p> <p>Demonstrate that we are responding to the wishes and feelings of care experienced young people within Monmouthshire.</p>	<p>Consideration would need to be given to adjusting the current impact assessment.</p> <p>This would have an operational impact and require a minor change in practice. This could be achieved through a practice note and awareness raising so that report writers understand the potential discrimination faced by people with care experience.</p> <p>Consideration would need to be given to included care experience within the next Strategic Equality Plan and Annual Monitoring Report.</p>	Yes

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 There are a number of performance measures in place for Monmouthshire Care Leavers who have recently left care:

- a. Number of care experienced young people re-connecting with support (up to age 25;)
- b. Numbers of care experienced young people who are outside of education or employment;
- c. Numbers of care experienced young people experiencing episodes of homelessness.

7. REASONS

- 7.1 Monmouthshire County Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out a range of priorities and commitments to children Looked After to promote their overall health and wellbeing. A core intention of the Corporate Parenting Strategy is to enable Children Looked After to achieve their potential as independent and fulfilled members of society according to their own personal outcomes and ambitions. The strategy recognises that children in care have already been disadvantaged by the experiences that brought them into the care system and states that care experience should not add to this but provide children with the stability and security they need to flourish. The aspirations of the Corporate Parenting Strategy extends to those young people who have recently left our care and are on their pathway to independence as young adults.
- 7.2 Any good parent would continue to have a continued interest in their child throughout their adulthood and seek to promote and safeguard their lifelong wellbeing. Recognising this extended duty in a proportionate way will help to validate the experiences of those with care experience including their childhood 'relationship' with local government, and publicly demonstrates a Council that takes seriously its responsibility as a Corporate Parent.
- 7.3 In taking forward this proposal Monmouthshire County Council will be joining an increasing number of councils across the UK who recognise the value that such steps will bring. Whilst it is a relative cost neutral, it has the potential to bring significant value in terms of promoting inclusion, addressing stigma and discrimination faced by care experienced people and helping build a more

connected, compassionate and cohesive community for all with improved long-term outcomes for care experienced people.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct resource implications of adopting this however, there may be implications at an operational level which would require a review of Local Authority policies/procedures across directorates and the inclusion of care experience in strategic planning as part of the fairness and equality impact assessments.

9. Consultees

- 9.1 To a large extent, this proposal has been generated by the expressed wishes, feelings and opinions of people in Monmouthshire with care experience through the Council's Corporate Parenting Panel.
- 9.2 The panel hosts regular engagement events to listen directly to young people with care experience with the purpose of developing a collaborative approach to improving services.
- 9.3 At recent events care experienced young people have voiced strong support for the proposal as put forward within recent national reports, that care experience should be recognised as a protected characteristic. Discussions within the Corporate Parenting panel have reflected this and have sought to identify ways which the council could take supportive action whilst recognising the legal constraints under the Equalities Act. Young people are consequently very much in support of the proposals and see it as a step forward in supporting and promoting positive outcomes for care experienced people.
- 9.4 On the 17th July 2024, the proposals were considered by People Scrutiny Committee. The minutes from that meeting state: *The Chair confirmed that there was full support from the Committee for the direction of the report.*

9.5 Other consultees include:

- Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel
- Cllr Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding & Health
- Children's Services Leadership Team
- SLT

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

11. AUTHOR: Charlotte Drury

CONTACT DETAILS

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<p>Name of the Officer Charlotte Drury</p> <p>Phone no: 07811 234244</p> <p>E-mail: chalottedrury@monmouthsire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>To consider how the Council can help to overcome disadvantage and discrimination experienced by people who have spent time in care.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>All directorates</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>11/03/2024</p>

1 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	<p><i>Consider the impact on our community in relation to this e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p> <p>Whilst care experience can impact on any age, this is particularly important for young people who may be leaving care as well as for older, care experienced people who have experienced long term consequences from being care experienced. Adopting this seeks to actively address the needs of this vulnerable population.</p>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

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?
Disability	N/A None identified at this point	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Gender reassignment	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Marriage or civil partnership	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Pregnancy or maternity	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Race	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Religion or Belief	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Sex	<i>N/A None identified at this point</i>	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point
Sexual Orientation	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point	N/A None identified at this point

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>Socio-economic outcomes for many care experienced people are often poorer than for the general population. 25% of the homeless population are estimated to be care experienced, care experienced people are three times less likely to access higher education and this gap is widening, care experienced people have one of the highest pay gaps at over a 25% and care experienced people are 70% more likely to die prematurely. Adopting this policy seeks to address this in promoting their outcomes and reducing the likelihood of them experiencing socio-economic</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
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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
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	<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>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Operational Recruitment & Training of Workforce	<u>None identified at this point</u>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	<u>None identified at this point</u>	None identified at this point	None identified at this point




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	Adopting this policy will promote the economic interests of a marginalised group potentially reducing their negative experiences and promoting their long term outcomes.	None identified at this point
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	Care experience people have poorer health outcomes than the general population, this proposal goes some way to recognising that and in taking steps to promote the interests of this marginalised group potentially reducing their negative experiences and promoting their long term outcomes.	None identified at this point
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Adopting this proposal will assist in reducing the prejudice and stigma that care experienced people can face and promote a more cohesive Wales for all.	None identified at this point
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	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

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?
protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation		
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	By taking steps to overcome the disadvantages and discrimination faced by people with care experience, the proposal attempts to make Monmouthshire a fairer and more equitable place to live.	None identified at this point

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>Adopting this policy recognises the long term impact of care experiences on this population seeking to support their wellbeing and promote their outcomes in the long term as well as the short term.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Adopting this as a council policy promotes a collegiate approach across the council and opportunities to raise the profile of this issue with partners.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</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>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The voices of Care Experienced people were sought as part of the review that this policy is based on. Adopting this policy will promote the interests of this marginalised group including enabling their voices to be heard and needs considered in all decisions, service development and policy implementation across the council as part of impact assessments.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>This policy is designed to mitigate the negative impact including stigma, prejudice and discrimination of being care experienced and in this way it seeks to be preventive.</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>Adopting this as a council policy promotes a collegiate approach across the council and opportunities to raise the profile of this issue with partners.</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	This policy is designed to mitigate the negative impact including stigma, prejudice and discrimination of being care experienced and in this way it seeks to safeguard care experienced children and young people as well as vulnerable adults.	<i>None identified at this point</i>	None identified at this point
Corporate Parenting	This policy speaks directly to the councils corporate parenting responsibility.	None identified at this point	None identified at this point

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

<p>1. The Independent Review of Children's Social Care' in England</p>  <p>Care Experience</p> <p>2. Protected Characteris</p>

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

- Implementing this proposal has the potential to challenge discrimination, inequality and prejudice faced by care experienced people.
- Implementing this proposal will provide a framework for Monmouthshire County Council to promote the wellbeing of care experienced people and therefore improve their outcomes

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
Monitor the implementation of the policy.	Annually as part of the review of MCC Corporate Parenting Strategy	C Drury

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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
1	People Scrutiny	17th July	<i>No amendments made</i>
2	Council	19th Sept	