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Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga

Dydd Mawrth, 26 Tachwedd 2024

Dear Cyngorwyr,

CABINET

Gofynnir i chi fynychu cyfarfod **Cabinet** a gynhelir yn **Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk** ar **Dydd Mercher, 4ydd Rhagfyr, 2024**, am **4.30 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Ymddiheuriadau am absenoldeb
2. Datganiadau o Fuddiant
3. Adborth gan y Pwyllgor Perfformiad a Throsolwg 1 - 8
4. 2024/25 CYLLIDEB REFENIW - Y SEFYLLFA ARIANNOL DDIWEDDARAF 9 - 64

Rhanbarthau/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Pob Un

Diben: Rhoi diweddariad i'r Cabinet ar y cynnydd yn erbyn cyllideb refeniw'r Cyngor ar gyfer blwyddyn ariannol 2024/25.

Awdur: Jonathan Davies, Pennaeth Cyllid (Swyddog Adran 151 Dros Dro)

Manylion Cyswllt: jonathandavies2@monmouthshire.gov.uk

5. LLYTHYR BLYNYDDOL OMBWDSMON GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS 65 - 80
CYMRU 2023/24

Rhanbarthau/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Pob Un

Diben: Y pwrpas yw cyflawni disgwyliad Ombwdsmon Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus Cymru bod ei adroddiad yn cael ei ddwyn i sylw'r Cabinet a'r Pwyllgor Llywodraethiant ac Awdit.

Awdur: Annette Evans, Rheolwr Cysylltiadau Cwsmeriaid

Manylion Cyswllt: annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk

6. Cymeradwyo'r Strategaeth Atal NEET 81 - 154

Rhanbarthau/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Pob Un

Diben: Cyflwyno Strategaeth Atal NEET ddrafft Sir Fynwy i'w chymeradwyo i'r Cabinet ar 5ed Rhagfyr 2024.

Awdur: Louise Wilce - Arweinydd Cyflogaeth a Sgiliau Ieuentid

Manylion Cyswllt: louisewilce@monmouthshire.gov.uk

7. Hen Ysgol Mounton House, Cas-gwent 155 - 170

Rhanbarthau/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Pob Un

Diben: Cyflwynir yr adroddiad hwn i ddatgan nad oes angen safle hen Ysgol Mounton House, Cas-gwent, ar y portffolio Sgiliau Dysgu a'r Economi a bydd yn cael ei drosglwyddo i'r Gwasanaethau Landlordiaid.

Awduron: Cath Saunders, Rheolwr Cymunedau Cynaliadwy ar gyfer Dysgu - Dysgu, Sgiliau a'r Economi
Nicholas Keyse, Pennaeth Dros Dro Gwasanaethau Landlordiaid

Manylion Cyswllt: cathsaunders@monmouthshire.gov.uk
nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

8. Asesiad Risg Strategol 171 - 200

Rhanbarthau/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Pob Un

Diben: Rhoi trosolwg i'r Cabinet o'r risgiau strategol presennol sy'n wynebu'r awdurdod.

Awduron: Richard Jones, Rheolwr Mewnwelediad Perfformiad a Data
Hannah Carter, Dadansoddwr Perfformiad

Manylion Cyswllt: richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk
hannahcarter@monmouthshire.gov.uk

9. Diweddariad ar Berfformiad y Cynllun Cymunedol a Chorfforaethol 201 - 246

Rhanbarthau/Wardiau yr effeithir arnynt: Pob Un

Diben: Rhoi diweddariad i'r Cabinet ar y cynnydd sydd wedi'i wneud i gyflawni'r ymrwymadau a nodir yn y Cynllun Cymunedol a Chorfforaethol 2022-28.

Awduron: Richard Jones, Rheolwr Perfformiad a Deallusrwydd Data
Hannah Carter, Dadansoddwr Perfformiad

Manylion Cyswllt: richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk
hannahcarter@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

PORTFFOLIOS Y CABINET

Cynghorydd Sir	Maes Cyfrifoldeb	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Arweinydd Swyddog Arweiniol – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean</p> <p>Strategaeth a Chyfeiriad Awdurdod Cyfan Adolygu a gwerthuso perfformiad awdurdod cyfan, gan gynnwys DDAT Perthynas â Llywodraeth Cymru, Llywodraeth y DU a chymdeithasau llywodraeth leol Perthnasoedd Rhanbarthol gan gynnwys Cydbwyllgorau Corfforedig, Byrddau Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus a Chynllunio Argyfwng trawsffiniol</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Aelod Cabinet dros Gynllunio a Datblygu Economaidd a'r Dirprwy Arweinydd Swyddog Arweiniol - Frances O'Brien</p> <p>Strategaeth Economaidd Cynllun datblygu lleol a chynllun datblygu strategol gan gynnwys safleoedd tai strategol Digartrefedd, darpariaeth dai fforddiadwy a thai sector preifat (cartrefi gwag, cynllun prydlesu, benthyciadau gwella cartrefi, grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl a thechnoleg addasol) Cefnogi Canol Trefi gan gynnwys parcio ceir a gorfodi Rheoli Datblygu a Rheoli Adeiladu Sgiliau a Chyflogaeth Cysylltedd band eang Meysydd parcio a gorfodaeth sifil safonau masnach, iechyd yr amgylchedd, iechyd y cyhoedd, trwyddedu</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	<p>Aelod Cabinet dros Adnoddau Swyddogion Arweiniol – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse</p> <p>Cyllid gan gynnwys y CATC a'r cylch cyllideb blynyddol Refeniw a Budd-daliadau Adnoddau Dynol, cyflogres, iechyd a diogelwch Tir ac adeiladau Cynnal a chadw a rheoli eiddo Caffael strategol</p>	Llanfoist & Govilon
Martyn Groucutt	<p>Aelod Cabinet dros Addysg Swyddogion Arweiniol – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Addysg Blynyddoedd Cynnar</p>	Lansdown

	<p>Addysg statudol pob oed Anghenion dysgu ychwanegol/cynhwysiant Addysg ôl-16 ac addysg oedolion Safonau a gwelliant ysgolion Dysgu cymunedol Rhaglen cymunedau cynaliadwy ar gyfer dysgu Gwasanaeth ieuenctid Cludiant ysgol</p>	
Ian Chandler	<p>Aelod Cabinet dros Ofal Cymdeithasol, Diogelu a Gwasanaethau Iechyd Hygyrch Swyddog Arweiniol – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Gwasanaethau plant Maethu a mabwysiadu Gwasanaeth Troseddau Ieuenctid Gwasanaethau oedolion Diogelu awdurdod cyfan (plant ac oedolion) Anableddau Iechyd meddwl Lles Perthynas â darparwyr iechyd a mynediad at ddarpariaeth iechyd</p>	Park
Catrin Maby	<p>Aelod Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd a'r Amgylchedd Swyddogion Arweiniol – Debra Hill-Howells, Craig O'Connor, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Datgarboneiddio Cynllunio Trafnidiaeth gan gynnwys cludiant o'r cartref i'r ysgol Priffyrdd a Fflyn Cyngor Sir Fynwy Rheoli gwastraff, gofal strydoedd, sbwriel, manau cyhoeddus a pharciau Palmentydd a lonydd cefn Lliniaru Llifogydd Isadeiledd Gwyrdd, Bioamrywiaeth ac Iechyd Afonydd</p>	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	<p>Aelod Cabinet dros Gydraddoldeb ac Ymgysylltu Swyddogion Arweiniol – Matthew Gatehouse, Ian Saunders, Jane Rogers, James Williams</p> <p>Datblygu cymunedol, anghydraddoldeb a thlodi (iechyd, incwm, maeth, anfantais, gwahaniaethu, ynysu ac argyfwng costau byw) Ymgysylltu â dinasyddion a hybu democratiaeth gan gynnwys gweithio gyda sefydliadau gwirfoddol Profiad y dinesydd - hybiau cymunedol, canolfan gyswllt, gwasanaeth cwsmeriaid a chofrestryddion, cyfathrebu, cysylltiadau cyhoeddus a marchnata Canolfannau hamdden, chwarae a chwaraeon Cyfleusterau cyhoeddus Gwasanaethau Etholiadol ac adolygiad o'r cyfansoddiad Moeseg a safonau</p>	Y Dref

	<p>Iaith Gymraeg Safonau Masnach, Iechyd yr Amgylchedd, Gwarchod y Cyhoedd, a Thrwyddedu</p>	
Sara Burch	<p>Materion Gwledig, Tai a Thwristiaeth Swyddog Arweiniol – Craig O'Connor, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Cynhyrchu a bwyta bwyd yn lleol, gan gynnwys amaeth- goedwigaeth a garddwriaeth leol Digartrefedd, Llety dros dro, tai sector preifat, (cynlluniau prydlesu cartrefi gwag, benthyciadau gwella cartrefi, grantiau cyfleusterau i'r anabl a thechnoleg ymaddasol), Dyrannu tai cymdeithasol Cysylltedd band eang Teithio Llesol Mynediad i Gefn Gwlad a Hawliau Tramwy Datblygu Twristiaeth a Gwasanaethau Diwylliannol</p>	Cantref

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

Ein Pwrpas

- i ddod yn sir ddi-garbon, gan gefnogi lles, iechyd ac urddas i bawb ar bob cam o'u bywydau.

Amcanion rydym yn gweithio tuag atynt

- Lle teg i fyw lle mae effeithiau anghydraddoldeb a thlodi wedi'u lleihau;
- Lle gwyrdd i fyw a gweithio gyda llai o allyriadau carbon a gwneud cyfraniad cadarnhaol at fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng yn yr hinsawdd a natur;
- Lle ffyniannus ac uchelgeisiol, lle mae canol trefi bywiog a lle gall busnesau dyfu a datblygu;
- Lle diogel i fyw lle mae gan bobl gartref maen nhw'n teimlo'n ddiogel ynddo;
- Lle cysylltiedig lle mae pobl yn teimlo'n rhan o gymuned ac yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi;
- Lle dysgu lle mae pawb yn cael cyfle i gyrraedd eu potensial.

Ein Gwerthoedd

Bod yn agored. Rydym yn agored ac yn onest. Mae pobl yn cael cyfle i gymryd rhan mewn penderfyniadau sy'n effeithio arnynt, dweud beth sy'n bwysig iddynt a gwneud pethau drostynt eu hunain/eu cymunedau. Os na allwn wneud rhywbeth i helpu, byddwn yn dweud hynny; os bydd yn cymryd peth amser i gael yr ateb, byddwn yn esbonio pam; os na allwn ateb yn syth, byddwn yn ceisio eich cysylltu gyda'r bobl a all helpu - mae adeiladu ymddiriedaeth ac ymgysylltu yn sylfaen allweddol.

Tegwch. Darparwn gyfleoedd teg, i helpu pobl a chymunedau i ffynnu. Os nad yw rhywbeth yn ymddangos yn deg, byddwn yn gwrando ac yn esbonio pam. Byddwn bob amser yn ceisio trin pawb yn deg ac yn gyson. Ni allwn wneud pawb yn hapus bob amser, ond byddwn yn ymrwymo i wrando ac esbonio pam y gwnaethom weithredu fel y gwnaethom.

Hyblygrwydd. Byddwn yn parhau i newid a bod yn hyblyg i alluogi cyflwyno'r gwasanaethau mwyaf effeithlon ac effeithiol. Mae hyn yn golygu ymrwymiad gwirioneddol i weithio gyda phawb i groesawu ffyrdd newydd o weithio.

Gwaith Tîm. Byddwn yn gweithio gyda chi a'n partneriaid i gefnogi ac ysbrydoli pawb i gymryd rhan fel y gallwn gyflawni pethau gwych gyda'n gilydd. Nid ydym yn gweld ein hunain fel 'trefnwyr' neu ddatrys swyr problemau, ond gwnawn y gorau o syniadau, asedau ac adnoddau sydd ar gael i wneud yn siŵr ein bod yn gwneud y pethau sy'n cael yr effaith mwyaf cadarnhaol ar ein pobl a lleoedd.

Caredigrwydd – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

Performance & Overview Scrutiny 19th November 2024

1. Apologies for Absence

Jill Bond, Su McConnel substituting. Rachel Garrick, Phil Murphy substituting. Steven Garratt.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Open Forum

None.

4. School Exclusions

Cabinet Member Martyn Groucott and Morwenna Wagstaff introduced the report. Dr Wagstaff answered the members' questions with Keeva McDermott:

- The Chair asked for clarity between the numbers of children excluded in 5.2 and 5.3 of the report. It was clarified that the table in the report refers to instances of fixed-term exclusions, which can range from half a day to a longer period. The number 520 represents the unique learners who experienced exclusions, while the 1810 instances include repeat exclusions for some learners. Therefore, some children had multiple exclusions, leading to the higher number of instances.
- A member asked for how long problems can be attributed to the pandemic, and if the problem will be generational. Dr Wagstaff emphasised the anxiety and stress caused by the pandemic and explained that, for children, its impact varied depending on their age and the protective factors in their lives. The pandemic disrupted key developmental stages, affecting social skills, emotional regulation, and behaviour. While the hope is that the impact will phase out, some children, especially the more vulnerable, may experience long-lasting effects.
- It was asked if the number of FSM children who are currently absent on any given day (1 in 4) might get worse. Dr Wagstaff noted that many children who were educated at home during the pandemic now find it challenging to return to the busy and noisy school environment, and some children, particularly those with complex needs or barriers to learning, preferred the online learning style and find it difficult to re-acclimate to traditional schooling. There has been an increase in the population of children receiving education other than at school (EOTAS) due to mental health and emotional needs, particularly anxiety about attending school. The hope is to enable these children to move on to positive post-school options and prevent them from becoming not in education, employment, or training (NEET).
- A member asked if it would be possible to have a detailed breakdown of exclusions by school, including the stories behind them, possibly in a closed session. It was explained that while detailed breakdowns of exclusions by school are scrutinised through various checks and balances, including Pupil Disciplinary Committee meetings and independent appeals, sharing such detailed information publicly could risk identifying individuals. However, it might be

possible to provide this information in a closed session for scrutiny purposes. The Chair suggested that for a particular concern, members pick up directly with the team.

- Clarity was sought about the connection between the appointment of the CYP Data officer and exclusions. It was clarified that the appointment of the Data Officer has improved the capture and use of data around exclusions, making the recording process more robust and streamlined. A lot of work has gone into how reintegration is managed safely, using learner behaviour risk assessments.
- Further detail was sought about managing pupils coming back mainstream education from the Pupil Referral Unit, especially given the reductions in school staff. It was explained that a comprehensive risk assessment and management process is in place. This involves multi-agency collaboration to ensure that the risk has been sufficiently reduced before reintegration. The process includes phased returns, increased support during high-risk times, and continuous monitoring to ensure safety and well-being.
- A member asked about the availability of data prior to 2021 and national comparable data. The officer explained that national comparable data is provided by Welsh Government, but it is typically a year and a bit in arrears. The local authority also looks at comparison with consortia partners, but consent to share this data was not obtained from other partners. Therefore, the most recent national data is not yet available for the period in question.
- It was asked if it is possible to quantify the long-term cost of an exclusion, and therefore quantify the savings made by an intervention. Officers responded that Welsh Government's three-year trend data is still incomplete for the period in question so it is challenging to provide a comprehensive analysis. The analysis of exclusion data involves looking not just at the exclusion numbers but considering internal sanctions that might not be recorded in the same way but still affect the child's education. NEET data is not readily available and would be difficult to ascertain. However, efforts are being made to consider various pathways and mixed offers to prevent exclusions and support reintegration, though there are challenges in resourcing, such as reduced support for work experience.
- A member asked if there is a profile over time looking at issues that were underpinning even before the pandemic, such as adverse childhood experiences, neurodevelopmental challenges, etc. Dr Wagstaff explained that the data analysis is now more robust, and the local authority monitors and has a strong profile of vulnerable learners, including those with barriers to learning, additional learning needs, contact with social care, and those living in poverty. The analysis reflects that these groups are more likely to be excluded, and there is a focus on ensuring schools make reasonable adjustments to support these learners.
- It was further asked about the viability of the additional capacity to support pupils, families, and schools given the significant deficit for the Pupil Referral Unit. Dr Wagstaff responded that the capacity of the PRU has been a concern, with the population within the units doubling. The local authority is responding by increasing capacity and moving into new bases to provide better provision. The aim is to offer preventative interventions to avoid permanent exclusions and manage reintegration safely.

- Clarity was sought about the authority's offer for education other than in school (EOTAS). The EOTAS offer is broad and complex, including PRU, medical provision for children too unwell to attend school, and small group learning. The provision is person-centred and varies based on the child's needs, with the aim always being to reintegrate the child back into school.
- It was asked if the quality assurance procedures for EOTAS stand up to the rigour mentioned in the Estyn report. Dr Wagstaff explained that the local authority has developed more robust quality assurance processes for EOTAS, including a commissioning officer and a structured review cycle. There is ongoing work to ensure the provision meets the needs of learners and complies with the ALN Act requirements.
- A member asked how much capacity there is within the schools for children to be excluded from the classroom but still kept in the school, being taught within the school, rather than being excluded and sent home. The officers explained that schools have various interventions and provisions for children excluded from the classroom but still within the school. This includes emotional literacy support assistants, in-house support, and other targeted support to address specific needs. The approach varies by school, and there is an expectation that schools make reasonable adjustments to support these learners.
- A member asked how the authority ensures the welfare of staff who are dealing with risky, disruptive behaviour and distress from vulnerable children. The officers explained that the welfare of staff is a significant focus, with various projects and pilots in place to support their well-being, including supervision pilots. The health and safety of staff are considered in risk assessments and reintegration plans for students. The local authority acknowledges the impact on staff and works to ensure their safety and well-being through comprehensive processes and support mechanisms.

Chair's Summary:

Members expressed gratitude about the usefulness of the recent Members' Seminar on this topic and thanked staff in all schools for their work. The Chair noted that the skillsets required for staff now are broader and more complex than previously, and recognised the difficult judgements Heads need to make regarding exclusions. He wishes to remind all parents that the best place for their child is in school, particularly given the high correlation between complex problems in life and non-attendance. The report and recommendations were moved.

5. Planning Annual Performance Report

Phil Thomas delivered a presentation, introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Craig O'Connor and Andrew Jones:

- Members asked about the timescale for digitising all the microfiches and tree records and were advised that the digitisation process is quite complicated and largely dependent on budget constraints. The process may take a few years to complete and that there is no definite timeline at the moment. The process might be expedited if secure funding through the migration of Land Registry data could be secured, but this is not guaranteed.

- A member enquired about the figures and percentages related to the pre-application advice service, noting its potential as a revenue earner and was advised that during the period 2023-2024, they closed 263 applications seeking pre-application advice and received 282 new submissions. Of those that had pre-application advice, 35 led to planning applications, with 34 approved and one withdrawn, resulting in a 100% success rate. The revenue from this service was around £55,000.
- Concern was expressed about the low percentage (4.5%) of enforcement cases resulting in notices served, out of 286 cases. Officers explained that enforcement action is only taken for serious breaches of planning control in the public interest. Many breaches are resolved through negotiation or retrospective planning applications, and some cases do not warrant enforcement action due to minor breaches or lack of expediency. Informal negotiations often resolve breaches without the need for formal notices, and all decisions go through a delegated panel process for scrutiny.
- A member asked about the target for member decisions against officers' recommendations, noting that the target was less than 5% and enquiring what "good" would look like in this context. Officers explained that the target of less than 5% is set by Welsh Government, and the range of 5-9% is considered fair. They emphasised that planning officers and committee members should generally align in their decisions, but acknowledged that the Planning Committee exists to make balanced judgments in the public interest. They noted that the current figure of 6% sits comfortably within the fair range and reflects the collaborative working between officers and committee members.
- A member suggested improving public understanding of how planning works, possibly through a statement at the beginning of each planning meeting. Officers acknowledged the complexity of planning processes and the need for better communication. They mentioned that there is a preamble in the agenda with key principles and policies, but agreed to take the suggestion away and consider how to make the information more concise and accessible to the public.
- A question was asked about the £800,000 collected in fees and how often this is reviewed. Members were advised that the fee structure and planning services are currently under review by Welsh Government, with a consultation running until January 17th. This review aims to make planning services more resilient and cost recoverable.
- An enquiry was made about the low action rate (4.5%) from 286 enforcement complaints and whether this highlights the need for improved training for Community and Town Councils. Officers explained that many enforcement cases are resolved through informal negotiation or retrospective planning applications, and only serious breaches result in formal notices. They emphasised the importance of communication and training for Community and Town Councils to better understand the enforcement process.
- A question was asked about the sources of enforcement reports and whether the current level of reporting is appropriate. Officers stated that reports come from a mix of residents, town councils, and county councillors. They noted that the current level of reporting is manageable and necessary to address various concerns, even if some cases do not result in formal enforcement action.

- A member asked about benchmarking, noting the absence of national figures from Welsh Government and suggesting the need for a more standardised approach to data collection and benchmarking across local authorities. Officers acknowledged the frustration with the lack of benchmarking data since 2019 and explained that Welsh Government is currently consulting on a new planning performance framework. They mentioned that the Council has continued to review its performance annually despite the lack of statutory requirement and expressed hope that the new framework would address benchmarking issues. The Chair will consider a way to push for more benchmarking data to be made available to officers and members – **ACTION**
- Concerns were raised about the capacity for enforcement and the need for improved communication with Community and Town Councils. Officers acknowledged the need for better communication and training for Community and Town Councils. They emphasised the importance of explaining the enforcement process and the legal complexities involved. They also mentioned the action plan to improve these relationships and provide updated training.
- A member suggested setting a day to invite members of Community and Town Councils for a session to improve understanding and communication. The suggestion was well-received, and it was agreed that organising such sessions could be an effective way to disseminate information and improve the understanding of planning processes among Community and Town Councils.
- It was questioned whether service users are encouraged to provide formal feedback or if feedback is primarily received in the form of customer complaints. Officers explained that while they used to have a customer feedback form, it was discontinued due to a low response rate. However, they do receive both positive and negative feedback through complaints and compliments. They mentioned that they are considering reintroducing a feedback mechanism, possibly by sending out questionnaires with decision notices.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair acknowledged the good performance in several areas, including the high percentage of applications determined within eight weeks (93%), the high approval rate of applications (97%), and the success of the pre-application advice service (100% approval for those who followed the advice). He emphasised the importance of improving communication and relationships with Community and Town Councils, particularly regarding enforcement. He also highlighted the gap between public expectations and the actual enforcement process, stressing the need for better explanation and transparency. The Chair highlighted the need for better customer feedback mechanisms and the importance of benchmarking against other authorities and suggested exploring peer-to-peer reviews and sharing performance data with neighbouring authorities to improve transparency and performance evaluation.

The committee supports the plan to improve communication and provide updated training for Community and Town Councils and suggests organising sessions to invite members of these councils to improve understanding and dissemination of information. The committee wished to thank the officers for the reports and for the team's continuing hard work.

6. Community & Corporate Plan progress update

Leader Mary-Ann Brocklesby introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Richard Jones and Matthew Gatehouse:

- The Chair asked if more could be done to remove the perception of the Council 'marking its own scorecard', given the lack of benchmark information and regional or national comparisons in the report. He asked further if neighbouring authorities could form working clusters. Councillor Brocklesby acknowledged the need for benchmarking and agreed that it is important to include such comparisons where data is available. She mentioned that the Council is committed to improving this aspect and highlighted the upcoming peer assessment in 2025, which will provide an objective external evaluation. She also noted that the Council is already engaging in cross-learning with neighbouring councils and looking at ways to improve data management and analysis.
- An explanation was sought for the number of businesses assisted declining by 75%. It was explained that this is primarily due to the reporting period: the current figure of 42 businesses covers only six months, whereas the previous period's figure was an annual total for the full 12 months of 23-24. However, even if the current six-month figure is projected forward, it would still be lower than the target but, in any case, it is expected that the number will increase by the end of the full year, making the comparison more meaningful. The progress update acknowledges the ongoing efforts to support businesses and plans to continue these efforts in the next six months.
- A member asked why the work that Monmouthshire Partnerships is doing with the three farms on regenerative farming was not included in the report. The officer responded that while the work on regenerative farming is important, the report focused on significant areas related to the measurement framework. He assured members that the outcomes from the regenerative farming project would be included in future reports, particularly in the self-assessment report at the year-end.
- The Chair enquired as to whether there was any understanding of why Free School Meals uptake is lower in areas of deprivation. The officer acknowledged the question and mentioned that the team is monitoring and tracking the uptake of free school meals. He suggested that the relevant team would be best placed to provide a fuller understanding of the reasons behind the lower uptake in areas of deprivation – **ACTION**

Chair's Summary:

The Chair highlighted the need for benchmarking information, whether regional or national, to provide a more objective view of the Council's performance, emphasising the importance of removing the perception that the Council is marking its own scorecard, and reiterating the idea of exploring peer reviews with neighbouring authorities. He appreciated the Leader's engagement on this matter and acknowledged the ongoing efforts to work more closely with other councils and share best practices. The Chair thanked the Leader and officers, and moved the report.

7. Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme 2024 and Action List

Officers noted that the first point in the Action List has been addressed, with the amount of Consultancy spend clarified as being £1,277,584 for 2023-24. Members were reminded about

invitations to briefing sessions on Corporate Insurance and Emergency Planning on 28th November and 15th January, respectively.

8. Cabinet and Council Planner

9. To confirm the minutes of previous meetings:

- 7th October 2024 (Special)
- 8th October 2024 (Special)
- 15th October 2024

The minutes were agreed.

10. Next Meeting: 3rd December 2024

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SUBJECT:	2024/25 REVENUE BUDGET – FINANCIAL UPDATE
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	4th December 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update of the progress against the Councils revenue budget for the 2024/25 financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 That Cabinet note the forecast revenue budget deficit of £4,353,000 which is a deterioration of £964,000 since the previous update.

3.2 That Cabinet note a forecast 80.1% delivery of the £10,940,000 budgeted service savings required for the year. This results in a shortfall in savings of £2,176,000 that is included in the above deficit.

3.3 That Cabinet note the budget recovery action of £1,019,000 drawn up by services that if delivered will reduce the forecast deficit to £3,334,000.

3.4 That Cabinet note that the negotiation of national pay agreements for Local Government employees has concluded, and that the outcome is expected to be within budgeted allocations.

3.5 That Cabinet note the budgetary risks that are inbuilt into the forecast, namely;

- The volatility of demand for high-cost services, particularly in Adults & Children’s Social Care and with Additional learning needs;
- The risk of the increase in the rate of the employers contribution to the teacher’s pension scheme not being fully funded;

- The potential impact upon the Council's financial resilience from the forecast increase in the cumulative schools reserves deficit that is being carried on the Council's balance sheet.
- The risk of further non-delivery of the £10,940,000 of budgeted savings targets;
- The trend of reducing debt recovery, particularly within Council tax where there is a significant increase in the number of discounts and exemptions awarded, and a slowing down in collection rates;
- The severely limited reserve cover available to the Council.

3.6 That Cabinet note the forecast increase in the deficit on cumulative schools reserves as outlined in **Appendix 3** of this report of £4,887,000. This would result in school balances ending the financial year in a deficit of £5,791,000, with twenty (59%) of thirty-four schools forecast to be in a deficit balance.

3.7 That Cabinet note that schools which are forecasting to end the 2024/25 financial year in a deficit balance have brought forward recovery plans outlining the proposed actions to address their budget shortfalls.

3.8 That Cabinet note a forecast Capital budget underspend of £93,000, alongside an indication of slippage in capital schemes of £9,298,000. The minor underspend is related to the Crick Road care home scheme and due to being financed by specific borrowing and does not subsequently represent a usable surplus budget.

4 KEY ISSUES:

Context

4.1 The first half of the 2024/25 financial year has seen the continuation of financial headwinds which are having a significant impact upon the Council's service operating environment:

- The wider and longer lasting impact of the pandemic, both economically and socially, continues to impact the Council, particularly in the areas of Homelessness, Children's services, Adult social care and Children's additional learning needs.
- The cost of living challenges continue to have an impact on our communities, with a consequential increase in demand for Council services, and impact upon income generating services;

- Whilst headline inflation has fallen, some discrete areas of Council services continue to experience cost pressures on supplies and services, alongside supply chain issues.
- In continuing efforts to combat inflation, interest rates have remained high, with revised forecasts suggesting that they will remain higher for longer than anticipated at the time of setting the budget;
- The Council continues to deal with a shortage of staff resources in some areas;

4.2 At the October 2024 meeting Cabinet received a financial update reporting a forecast budget deficit of £3,388,000. This position has since deteriorated by a further £964,000, to an updated forecast budget deficit of £4,353,000.

Current revenue budget forecast position

Table 1: Revenue budget forecast summary

Directorate	In-year budget Pressures / (Savings) £000's	Shortfall in saving target £000's	Total budget deficit / (surplus) forecast £000's	% Variance to budget
Social Care & Health	2,829	1,068	3,897	5.7%
Children & Young People	139	534	673	1.0%
Communities & Place	338	370	708	2.6%
Monlife	(262)	140	(122)	-1.5%
Chief Executives Units	94	0	94	2.9%
Law & Governance	48	0	48	1.6%
Resources	(209)	64	(145)	-1.8%
Corporate, Treasury & Financing	(799)	0	(799)	-0.4%
Forecast budget deficit	2,177	2,176	4,353	

4.3 The total forecast deficit against budget of £4,353,000 is made up of in-year budget pressures of £2,177,000 that have developed since the budget was set in February 2024, alongside a forecast shortfall in meeting required budgeted savings targets of £2,176,000.

4.4 **Appendix 1** to this report outlines the service variances in detail. At a summary level these primarily relate to the following areas:

Service	(Surplus) / Deficit £000's	Summary
Adults care services	2,505	<p>Deterioration of £971k. External residential care home placements have increased by 19 since the budget was set, causing £620K of cost pressures.</p> <p>A shortfall of £1.25m against budgeted savings targets is currently forecast.</p> <p>Significant increase in domiciliary care demand in July and August equating to a 10% increase in externally commissioned packages of care, at an additional cost of £500k.</p>
Children's care services	1,536	<p>Deterioration of £402k. The pressure of new referrals and more complex needs has generated additional unbudgeted costs of £1.5m.</p> <p>A higher than usual number of children's placements have broken down, with higher cost alternative provision required.</p>
Additional learning needs	614	<p>Deterioration of £174k. An unexpected increase in ALN placements at Independent Schools; increasing numbers receiving EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) bespoke packages; an ALN pupil staying on for Year 14, and additional support for 2 existing ALN pupils.</p>
Neighbourhood Services	304	<p>Deterioration of £41k. Waste & Grounds Maintenance £384k – The volatility and reduced values of recyclate; revised Workplace recycling regulations resulting in a reduction in trade waste collection income; delay in the rollout of the polyprop service due to vehicle supply chains.</p> <p>Offset by Highways External (£100k surplus) - income from external works will exceed budget.</p>
Home to School & Passenger & transport	583	<p>Improvement of £40k. Home to school - Increased demand (a 10% increase since 3 years ago) has resulted in additional contracts. A scarcity of operators in this area is resulting in contract premiums or the Council undertaking contracts ourselves.</p> <p>Passenger transport - A reduction in grant and public service bus funding for some routes has added to overall pressures.</p>

Fleet Maintenance	110	Improvement of £160k. Inflation, supply chain issues, vehicle hire growth and increased borrowing rates have driven operating costs over and above available budget. Additional requirements for EV charging points and a new vehicle management system.
Housing & Homelessness	222	Deterioration of £13k. £320k shortfall in the rapid rehousing transition saving due to a delay in occupancy of new accommodation; additional damage and maintenance costs; offset by one-off grant income.
People	75	Deterioration of £7k. People Management & occupational health pressures from additional employee costs, and lower SLA income, . This has been offset by staff and system cost reductions in payroll.
Legal	67	Deterioration of £6k. A projected shortfall in rechargeable income, and an over spend in staffing due to some regrading and temporary cover arrangements.
Commercial & Corporate Landlord	67	Improvement of £165k. Rental income from commercial, industrial & county farms is lower than budgeted due to some staggering of rent increases, and some vacant units remaining to be filled (£196k). There is a shortfall of £151k in the asset rationalisation savings target due to delays in progressing some of the required changes to accommodation. This has been partially offset by staff savings of £200k and one-off income of £70.
Public protection	(147)	Deterioration of £28k. Staff vacancies, 2 posts having external funding and expected income above budget
Business growth, enterprise mgmt	(361)	Improvement of £105k. Senior staff vacancies and additional grant funding
Monlife	(122)	Improvement of £76k. Delayed implementation of the area management restructure, delayed staffing savings in museums service and reduced income at our attractions has been more than offset by increased income from our leisure services and markets.
Finance	(197)	No change. Staff savings and the ability to passport core service costs into grants
Treasury costs	(480)	Improvement of £197k. Estimated saving as a result of unbudgeted recoupment of borrowing costs from services for vehicle purchases at the end of the 2023/24 financial year
Council Tax	(350)	No change. CTRS caseloads are running slightly below historical levels.
Other variances	(73)	Other smaller net variances.
Total	4,353	

Budgeted savings targets

4.5 Services are currently forecasting a shortfall of £2,176,000 or 19.9% in meeting the service savings targets that were set as part of the original budget for 2024/25 (£2,055,000 or 18.8% as at Update 1). Full details can be found at **Appendix 2** to this report, however the main variances are as follows:

Table 2: Progress against budgeted savings targets

Savings proposals by Directorate	Budgeted Saving	Current Forecast	Variance	Percentage met	Comment
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Social Care & Health	(4,972)	(3,904)	1,068	78.5%	Adult's services - £1,268k shortfall against £3,159k target due to the complexity and level of demand for care needs restricting progress, some savings being dependent upon third party negotiation, and challenges resourcing some of the service change required. The Welsh Government review of the legal non-residential weekly charge cap is not currently being progressed and £375k of savings will therefore not be generated. Offset by out-performance of Children's service placement and practice change which have targeted high cost placements.
Children & Young People	(3,172)	(2,638)	534	83.2%	ALN placements - Unexpected increase in new starters at Independent Schools, and additional support for existing pupils
Communities & Place	(927)	(557)	370	60.1%	£320k shortfall in the rapid rehousing transition due to a delay in occupancy of new accommodation. £50k shortfall in planning income saving target as early indications show lower levels of activity than expected.
Monlife	(1,079)	(939)	140	87.0%	A delay in progressing some staff restructuring means that savings will not be fully met in year
Chief Executives Unit	(86)	(86)	0	100.0%	To be fully met
People & Governance	(33)	(33)	0	100.0%	To be fully met

Resources	(595)	(531)	64	89.2%	Increased rental income is currently below targets following some staggering of rent increases, and some vacant units remaining to be filled
Corporate Costs & Levies	(77)	(77)	0	100.0%	To be fully met
Totals	(10,940)	(8,765)	2,176	80.1%	

Budget recovery action

4.6 The budget planning framework for 2024/25 was clear that there is a need to progress the Council on a path towards financial sustainability including conserving an appropriate and prudent level of financial resilience, of which the Council's reserves are a key component. As a consequence, the final revenue budget proposals for 2024/25 did not include any use of reserves to meet recurrent revenue expenditure.

4.7 The delivery of a balanced budget position for 2024/25, alongside substantial budget recovery action within schools remains fundamental in maintaining financial stability and limiting any further impact upon the Council's reserves.

4.8 The ongoing financial position of the Social Care & Health directorate remains the key risk within this forecast, making up nearly 90% of the overall budget deficit. The level and complexity of demand for both Adult's and Children's care continues to trend upwards and is far outstripping the progress being made in placement and practice change. The ongoing programme of reviewing existing Adults care provision remains challenging because of the pressure of managing new referrals and assessments. Equally, as the NHS re-trench around their own cost pressures, there has been little progress in successfully pursuing Continuing Health Care costs.

4.9 The positive Autumn budget statement delivered by the Chancellor provided significant support for the Welsh Government budget, with indications that part of this funding will be available to support in-year budgetary pressures. It is vital that strong representations for further funding are therefore made to Welsh Government, both directly through the WLGA and via other Council networks that aims to recognise the unsustainable position of Social care within the Local Government sector in Wales.

4.10 Given the significance of the adverse Social Care & Health budget position, and the impact this has on the Council's overall financial position, it is essential that this service maintains financial discipline and mitigates further cost wherever possible. This will include delivering upon the placement and practice change and reform that was fundamental in the services agreed budget savings.

4.11 Given the forecast budget deficit of £4,353,000, it is essential that all Council services maintain the same financial discipline and engage in similar collective budget recovery action that saw significant improvement in the second half of 2023/24 financial year.

4.12 In order to deliver this, a range of mitigation measures will need to be implemented, including, but not limited to:

- Maximising all grant and income opportunities, including the transfer of core costs into grant where conditions allow;
- Vacancy management with a targeted freeze on filling vacant posts;
- Bearing down on all non-essential expenditure;
- Service reduction and efficiency;
- Maximising the opportunity to meet the costs of organisational reform from capital receipts where regulations allow;
- A review of the capital budget with a view to repurposing budgets, or pausing some capital investment.

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4.13 To date services have indicated potential budget recovery measures of just over £1 million which continue to be developed and currently sit outside of the forecasts in this report. Should these be delivered in full, the overall budget deficit would reduce to £3,334,000.

Type	Children & Young People	Social Care & Health	Communities & Place	MonLife	Law & Governance	Chief Executives Unit	Resources	Corporate	Total
Increase Grant / Income	74	0	50	20	0	0	0	0	144
Freeze vacant posts	0	0	0	14	0	10	0	0	24
Expenditure reduction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	250	250
Transfer of eligible costs to Capital	15	0	498	28	0	0	60	0	601
Total	89	0	548	62	0	10	60	250	1,019

School budgets and reserves

4.14 The overall level of school reserves are currently forecast to move further into deficit by £4,887,000 by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, to a collective deficit balance of £5,791,000. This is broadly in line with the budgets schools have set for the year.

School reserve balances at 31 st March (Surplus) / Deficit	2022 £000	2023 £000	2024 £000	2025 (Forecast) £000
Comprehensive schools	(2,253)	(1,259)	976	2,480
Middle schools	0	0	329	1,035
Primary schools	(4,622)	(3,027)	(1,142)	816
Special schools	(79)	31	742	1,459
Total	(6,955)	(4,255)	905	5,791

4.15 The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision. Higher than budgeted pay awards for both teaching and non-teaching staff have also impacted upon budgets.

4.16 It is currently anticipated that twenty (59%) of the Council's thirty-four schools will be in a deficit balance by the year-end. Those schools forecasting to end the 2024/25 financial year in deficit balance have brought forward recovery plans that are being considered by officers and Cabinet. Close monitoring and support will continue to be given to these schools, as well as those at risk of entering a deficit position over the medium term, to ensure that the proposed actions to address the budget challenges are instigated.

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Remaining budgetary risks

4.17 There remain key specific budgetary risks that have the ability to further impact upon the revenue budget during 2024/25:

- **Teacher's pension contributions** - Formal confirmation of funding is still awaited from Welsh Government that will confirm if full funding has been made of the increase in the employer pension contribution rates for the centrally administered Teacher's pension scheme. To the extent that it is not fully funded, or allocation of funding does not meet full costs, this presents a budget risk not currently factored into forecasts.
- **Increasing demand for services** – particularly around Social care as we move into the winter period, and with pressure on the NHS to speed up patient pathways and the potential impact on discharge into social care settings.
- **Further non-delivery of budget savings**, especially where these involve income generation, changes to structures, alternative delivery models or those involving community or other partners.

- The trend of **reducing debt recovery**, particularly within Council tax where there is a significant increase in the number of discounts and exemptions awarded which has a negative impact on overall income. There is also a slowing down in collection rates as households continue to struggle with the cost of living crisis. Social services debt recovery remains challenging and is being monitored closely.
- **Schools reserve balances** – the forecast further in-year deficit would significantly increase the cumulative reserve deficit that is being carried on the Council’s balance sheet. This consequently impacts upon the Council’s overall financial resilience and increases its risk exposure by reducing available balance sheet resources.

Financial implications and future focus

- 4.18 The continuing financial headwinds, increasing demand for services, funding uncertainty, and the need for £10.94m of service savings to be delivered within a challenging operating environment present tangible ongoing budget risks for the year.
- 4.19 When this is considered alongside a significant budget gap needing to be resolved for 2025/26, and a challenging and uncertain funding outlook over the medium term, it presents a significant challenge to the financial resilience of the Council. There therefore remains a requirement for all services to bear down on avoidable cost and identify further income opportunities wherever possible for the remainder of the year, in order to limit the call on severely limited useable revenue reserves.
- 4.20 A targeted vacancy freeze continues, and enhanced financial monitoring arrangements remain in place. The Financial Management Board arrangements continue to focus on high budget risk areas and in regularly assessing the progress being made against budgeted service savings, as well as additional budget recovery action.
- 4.21 As we move towards the next formal monitoring period, work will continue to deliver on the structured approach to tackling the underlying budget pressures, with particular importance assigned to tackling costs which have the ability to be recurrent for 2025/26 and beyond.
- 4.22 Further funding clarification over the in-year budget and the medium term remains vital, both in being able to manage significant upward trends in demand for Council services, but also in being able to adequately plan for service delivery over the medium term with a reduced emphasis on more costly short-term emergency solutions.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5.1 The report itself covers the resource implications of the entirety of the revenue budget activity during the year. There are no further resource implications as a result of the recommendations in this report.

6 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

6.1 This report provides Members with an update on the progress being made against the revenue budget of the Authority and carries no decisions. There are therefore no equality and future generations' implications directly arising from this report.

CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Detailed service commentaries
Appendix 2 – Progress against budgeted savings
Appendix 3 – Individual school balance forecasts

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Section 1	Revenue budget summary forecast
Section 2	Detailed service commentary
Section 3	School balances update
Section 4	Capital programme update

Section 1 - Overall Revenue Position (Update 2)

Table 1: 2024/25 Revenue budget forecast by directorate

Service Area	Original Budget 2024/25	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1	Variance
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	68,410	(114)	68,296	72,193	3,897	2,494	1,403
Children & Young People	64,853	3	64,856	65,529	673	468	205
Communities & Place	27,249	264	27,513	28,221	708	963	(256)
MonLife	8,088	(115)	7,973	7,851	(122)	(46)	(76)
Chief Executives Unit	3,288	(8)	3,279	3,373	94	68	26
Law & Governance	2,894	0	2,894	2,942	48	51	(3)
Resources	8,344	(62)	8,282	8,137	(145)	18	(163)
Corporate Costs & Levies	29,476	0	29,476	29,508	32	6	26
Net Cost of Services	212,603	(32)	212,571	217,754	5,183	4,022	1,162
Appropriations	7,301	32	7,333	6,853	(480)	(283)	(197)
Expenditure to be Financed	219,904	0	219,904	224,607	4,703	3,739	965
Financing	(219,904)	0	(219,904)	(220,254)	(350)	(350)	(0)
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	4,353	4,353	3,389	964

Table 2: 2024/25 Revenue budget forecast by service

Service Area	Original Budget 2024/25	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1	Variance
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Adult Services	42,816	(63)	42,753	45,258	2,505	1,534	971
Children Services	22,450	(50)	22,400	23,936	1,536	1,134	402
Public Protection	1,982	(0)	1,981	1,834	(147)	(175)	28
SCH Support	1,162	0	1,162	1,165	3	1	2
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	68,410	(114)	68,296	72,193	3,897	2,494	1,403
Emergency Planning	170	0	170	186	16	16	0
Individual Schools Budget	52,459	0	52,459	52,459	0	(4)	4
Resources	1,032	0	1,032	1,075	43	17	26
Standards	11,192	3	11,195	11,809	614	440	174
Children & Young People	64,853	3	64,856	65,529	673	468	205
Enterprise, Housing & Community Animation	3,250	(31)	3,218	3,080	(138)	(107)	(31)
Facilities & Fleet Management	11,608	241	11,848	12,475	627	867	(240)
Neighbourhood Services	10,521	87	10,608	10,912	304	263	41
Placemaking, Highways & Flood	1,870	(32)	1,838	1,754	(84)	(58)	(26)
Communities & Place	27,249	264	27,513	28,221	708	963	(256)
Communications	218	0	218	218	0	0	0
Countryside & Culture	1,142	(2)	1,139	1,100	(39)	(6)	(34)
Finance & Business Development	4,336	(31)	4,305	4,479	174	62	112
Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure	2,393	(82)	2,311	2,054	(257)	(102)	(155)
MonLife	8,088	(115)	7,973	7,851	(122)	(46)	(76)
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service	1,415	0	1,415	1,433	19	0	19
People	1,873	(8)	1,865	1,940	75	68	7
Chief Executives	3,288	(8)	3,279	3,373	94	68	26
Democratic Services	1,847	0	1,847	1,828	(19)	(22)	3

Service Area	Original Budget 2024/25	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1	Variance
Legal and Land Charges	1,047	0	1,047	1,114	67	73	(6)
Law & Governance	2,894	0	2,894	2,942	48	51	(3)
Commercial, Corporate & landlord Services	1,320	(91)	1,229	1,296	67	232	(165)
Corporate Health & Safety	92	0	92	92	0	0	0
Finance	3,936	29	3,965	3,768	(197)	(199)	2
Information Communication Technology	2,996	0	2,996	2,981	(15)	(15)	(0)
Resources	8,344	(62)	8,282	8,137	(145)	18	(163)
Precepts & Levies	26,532	0	26,532	26,535	3	0	3
Coroner's	278	0	278	278	(0)	0	(0)
Archives	213	0	213	219	6	6	(0)
Corporate Management	398	0	398	421	23	0	23
Non Distributed Costs (NDC)	577	0	577	577	(0)	0	(0)
Strategic Initiatives	(350)	0	(350)	(350)	0	0	0
Insurance	1,828	0	1,828	1,828	0	0	0
Corporate Costs & Levies	29,476	0	29,476	29,508	31	6	26
Net Cost of Services	212,603	(32)	212,570	217,754	5,183	4,022	1,162
Interest & Investment Income	(1,176)	0	(1,176)	(1,191)	(15)	48	(64)
Interest Payable & Similar Charges	7,252	0	7,252	7,077	(175)	(42)	(133)
Charges Required under Regulation	6,230	0	6,230	6,189	(41)	(41)	0
Other Investment Income	0	0	0	(1)	(1)	(1)	(0)
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	(3,883)	0	(3,883)	(4,131)	(248)	(248)	0
Contributions to Reserves	833	0	833	833	0	0	0
Contributions from reserves	(1,955)	32	(1,923)	(1,923)	(0)	0	(0)
Appropriations	7,301	32	7,333	6,853	(480)	(283)	(197)

Service Area	Original Budget 2024/25	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1	Variance
Expenditure to be Financed	219,904	0	219,904	224,607	4,703	3,739	964
General Government Grants	(91,149)	0	(91,149)	(91,149)	0	0	0
Non Domestic Rates	(34,871)	0	(34,871)	(34,871)	0	0	0
Council tax	(102,295)	0	(102,295)	(102,295)	0	0	0
Council Tax Benefit Support	8,410	0	8,410	8,060	(350)	(350)	(0)
Financing	(219,904)	0	(219,904)	(220,254)	(350)	(350)	(0)
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	4,353	4,353	3,389	964

Section 2 - Directorate – Service Variance Comments

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & SAFEGUARDING	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	2,494	3,897	0	0
<p>The directorate projected overspend position at Update 2 has seen a further deterioration of £1,403k. This is largely attributable to new demand pressures within both Adults and Children’s services that have arisen over the preceding 2 months.</p> <p>Adult division is forecast to overspend at Update 2 by £2.505M, an increase of £971K since the previous forecast.</p> <p>Further pressure has arisen through a £230K shortfall against the budgeted cost of in-year fee increases for provider services (including domiciliary care, residential care and support service contracts).</p> <p>External residential care home placements in Adult services have increased by 19 since the budget was set, causing a £620K pressure on the budget (with 12 of these placements being made in the last 2 months. Care at home placements are not made without management oversight and where all other options for care provision have been explored. In the first 4 months of the year, the number of care home placements was increasing by 1 per week on average, this has increased to 1.5 per week/6 per month over the last 2 months. However, it is hard to predict whether care home placements will continue</p>				

to increase and at what rate, particularly as we head in to the winter months and in light of the pressure being exerted on speeding up hospital discharge. The service will continue to monitor the net effects of movement within the care home population over the rest of the year.

Over the last 2 months there has been a significant increase in non residential (care at home) with a sharp uptake since July adding a further £500K of overspend. The detail of this is set out below.

The service is finding it challenging to achieve savings set out within the practice change and partnerships mandates resulting in £838K of pressure. The service has put in additional controls around how new care services are provided, which is helping to ensure that care is provided with parity across the area and allocated according to the most pressing needs. As and when opportunities arise, care at home is being re-brokered to ensure that costs are minimised as far as possible without compromising people's care and support needs. However, where reviews result in a reduction of services delivered in-house, this does not result in a case saving. The ongoing programme of reviewing existing care remains challenging because of the pressure of managing new referrals and assessments. Equally, as health are re-trenching around their own cost pressures, we have been unable to make progress in successfully pursuing Continuing Health Care costs.

A further pressure of £375K has arisen as contrary to previous indications, it appears unlikely that the potential increase to the non-residential weekly care charging cap will be considered in time to have an effect this year.

A workforce pressure of £112K has arisen within our Frailty service (which falls under a Section 33 arrangement with health). The frailty service supports frail older people in the community and avoids unnecessary hospital admissions.

Debt due to non-payment of adult care charges stands at £2.3M which has increased the bad debt provision by £20K.

There are ongoing risks around increased costs of care and the complex needs of an ageing population and processes are in place to manage new demand and reduce the cost of existing packages via a program of reviews. Efforts to embed practice change are ongoing with a recognised need to contribute to support the workforce to understand budget impact whilst also maximising opportunities to re-provision resource firmly around prevention of escalation throughout the care pathway and work closely with providers to maintain quality and cost effectiveness of provision. In response to the ongoing challenges there is a comprehensive practice change agenda in place across the service covering domiciliary care commissioning, service delivery models particularly reablement and ensuring there is a robust and co-ordinated preventative/community wellbeing offer in place. Reviewing the structure of the workforce remains a priority, ensuring that our resources are used to best effect, and it is pleasing to note that the staffing mandate in place for this year has been fully achieved.

With Children's service the Head of Service commentary sets out the challenges arising from the number of children entering the care system and the pressure on the service, placements and costs this creates. There is a comprehensive suite of family support services in place that helps to mitigate risks, and to ensure that children come into care only when there is absolutely no alternative. Equally work continues around supporting children to return to family care or move to semi-independence at the earliest opportunity (where is safe and, in the child's, best interests). The progression planning for children takes dedicated resource and a carefully implemented multi-agency approach. This period has included the step down of 2 children from residential care which is to be commended. Nevertheless, despite achieving £900K against the saving mandate, with another £600K being projected, the pressure of new referrals has generated a £1,536M projected overspend. There are risks associated with the projected savings of £600K because of the dynamic nature of care

planning for children. Equally it is hard to predict whether the current rate of children entering care or requiring intensive services in the community will continue.

As in previous years, the directorate bottom line, continues to benefit from a number of Welsh Government grants approximately £3M including Workforce grant, Regional Integration Fund and the Radical/Eliminate grants, used to bolster core service provision. This creates an additional risk and potential pressure for the service in that there is little certainty over the extent to which these grant streams will be maintained.

ADULT SERVICES

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	1,534	2,505	0	0

There are ongoing risks around increased costs of care and the complex needs of an ageing population and processes are in place to manage new demand. There is a general trend being experienced not only by this Authority but across the region on the uptake in demand for care, both residential and non-residential.

Residential placements on average have a net increase of 6 per month as opposed to 4 per month previously, with the numbers at the end of Update 2 closed at 327 costing an additional £100K. For non-residential care we had a significant uptake in July and August equating to a 10% increase in externally commissioned packages of care, closing at a number of 452 at the end of September, at an additional cost of £500K.

Since update 1 of the increase in external non-residential care, there has been demand for half hour care packages which attract a 60% proportionate hourly charge. Now that the provider fee reviews exercise has been concluded, a £230K cost pressure has arisen from the outcome of the review. Efforts to embed practice change are ongoing with a recognised need to contribute to support the workforce to understand budget impact whilst also maximising opportunities to re-provision resource firmly around prevention of escalation throughout the care pathway and work closely with providers to maintain quality and cost effectiveness of provision.

The Frailty regional pooled fund is projected to overspend, for our contribution into the pool fund, by £112K due to budget savings as part of agreeing a regional pooled fund for this year.

CHILDREN SERVICES

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	1,134	1,536	0	0

The first quarter of this year saw an increase in the population of Children Looked After (CLA) which rose from 199 at 2023/24 year end to 208 at the end of July including an increase in the number of residential placements from 21 to 23. This created creating a pressure of £1M.

As at end of Sept the number of children looked after was 205 a reduction of 3. A further net pressure of £403K has arisen due to a further 4 new placements being required 2 of which were costly parent and baby placements. Some anticipated movements in placements were delayed in accordance with the needs of the children thereby reducing the amount of savings that could be achieved.

It has been a particularly pressurised period for the service with 30 children becoming looked after and 24 children ceasing to be looked after. The new entrants have included a family of 5 siblings, a family of 3 siblings and 5 families of 2 siblings. The needs of the children and the lack of suitable alternative in house placement options has resulted in 2 new entrant children being placed in residential care and 5 in For Profit Foster care. In addition, 8 of these children have entered "Parent and Child" assessment placements which includes a parent with 4 siblings and 3 individual children with their respective parents. Whilst such placements are time limited (approx. 12 weeks) they are high cost with each placement mandated by Family Court during proceedings.

In addition, during the first part of the year, a higher than usual number of children's placements have broken down, such that there is then no option but to place in high-cost placement.

Lack of placements for children remain a significant challenge within the service with ongoing instability and uncertainty within external providers of both residential and IFA placements, resulting in increased costs for external placements, more competition for placements and less movement. The recruitment of in house foster carers also remains a challenge. The service is continuing to develop its own provision including a step-down provision for young people aged 16+ expected to be operational from November and a children's residential home expected to be operational by the end of this financial year.

The service continues to review all CLA children's placements with a focus on high-cost placements. The service is able to utilise the suite of family support services that are in place to ensure that all opportunities for children to remain in family care or return to family care are maximised.

In this way, £900K of the £1.3M saving target has already been achieved with a further projected saving of £600K profiled into the rest of the year. This does present some ongoing risk of achievability, in that the current cohort of children looked after having longer standing histories of being in care and more complex trauma presentations, making it harder to achieve step down placements.

Alongside the pressure arising from children's placements, there is a further pressure of approximately £200K within the Family Time team out of hours service. The establishment of the out of hours service in 2023 was in response to the significant costs of using private nursing agencies to manage risk in the community (keeping children at home or under supervision in a hospital whilst safeguarding investigations are ongoing). This is a cost avoidance (overspend management) strategy which has seen a reduction of up to 60% in the use of external agencies despite the service supporting 2 children to step down from residential care placements.

PUBLIC PROTECTION

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	(175)	(147)	0	0

The underspend is mainly as a result of staff vacancies, including the head of service role. 2 posts having external funding and expected income above budget.

SCH SUPPORT

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	1	2	0	0

This budget area is broadly in line with budget, with a small £2k variance.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	468	673	0	0

The Directorate's current position is a forecasted overspend of £673k.

This is largely due to additional learning needs (ALN), with an unexpected increase in ALN placements at both Independent and Out of County Schools. There has also been a large increase of ALN pupils receiving EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) Bespoke packages, costing an estimated £143k. However, this is considerably more cost effective than the pupils attending Independent Schools. CYP have also been liable for £56k of the Post-16 Specialist Placement Costs for 23-24, as the Joint Contribution was not funded, as previously thought.

Further additional costs across the Directorate are £30k of employee related savings, which are unlikely to be met (although grant funding may be able to meet these costs), a forecasted overspend of £33k for ALN transport, mainly due to a 2% increase in external contracts from September and £45k of additional costs for the Premature Retirement Contributions.

We have been able to mitigate some costs using part of a grant to offset a salary, not filling a vacancy immediately and through income generation.

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Emergency Planning	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	16	16	0	0

The overspend of £15,736 is due to employee related savings not being met (although, as previously advised, grant funding may be able to meet these costs)

Individual Schools Budget	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(4)	0	0	0

The division is currently forecasting in line with budget.

Resources	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	17	43	0	0

The overspend of £43k is due to receiving a revised estimate for the Premature retirement contributions.

Standards

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	440	614	0	0

The overspend of £613,655 is due to the following:

- £510k ALN – Independents (5 new starters at Independent Schools (£254k) + 1 pupil staying on for Year 14 (£49k) + additional support for 2 existing pupils (£7k) + liable for £56k of Post-16 Specialist Placement Costs for 23-24 (as we had thought the Joint Contribution was being funded) + an increase in the number of pupils receiving EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) Bespoke packages (£143k)
- £53k ALN – OOC (6 new starters in out of county schools (£73k), reduced by estimated costs for another pupil being less than expected (-£19k))
- £33k ALN Transport -£12k invoice received regarding 23-24. Estimated £20k increase due to 2% increase in external contracts from September
- £14k Employee Related Savings not met (although grant funding may be able to meet these costs)
- £47k Expansion of Early Years Grant – an increase in the number of nursery places being taken up, particularly in non-maintained settings
- £35k Primary Breakfast Initiative Grant – an increase in catering and staff costs
- £5k ALN Equipment Budget – additional funding required for ALN Equipment

We have been able to mitigate some of the costs above by using a grant to offset a salary (£51k), as well as a saving on staff costs due to a vacancy not being filled immediately (£13k) and income generation (£19k)

COMMUNITIES & PLACE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	963	708	0	0

COMMUNITIES & PLACE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY:

The directorate is forecasting to overspend by £708k, an improvement of £256k since Update 1. A detailed explanation for each service area is provided below but we continue to see budget strain within our services with the main pressures falling within School & Passenger Transport, Housing, Fleet Maintenance and Waste services.

We are currently on course to make £557k (60.1%) of our £927k saving target. As at Update 1 the main reason for this shortfall is due to the delay in the relocation of tenants into Severn View resulting in £320k of the £400k saving not being met this year, although this has mostly been offset by unbudgeted discretionary housing grant.

Enterprise, Housing & Community Animation

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(107)	(138)	0	0

Enterprise & Community Animation is forecasting to under spend by £138k, this is mainly due to: -

- **Enterprise Mgt** - £130k underspend – Employee savings due to senior staff vacancies of £147k have been offset by a £17k overspend on our City Deal contribution.
- **Community & Partnership Development** - £43k underspend – Staff savings as we can use grant funding to pay for core staff costs.
- **Housing** - £222k over spend, this can be broken down into these main areas: -
 - **Housing** - £270k net overspend – an increase of £60k since Update 1 – pressure continues across our B&B and leased accommodation portfolio where annual operating costs are projected to exceed available budget. The relocation of tenants to Severn View is still on track for February, the delay has impacted on the ability to make the £400k saving built into the budget, it is anticipated that only an £80k saving will be generated this year resulting in a shortfall of £320k. It is fortunate this year that this pressure has been mostly covered by the receipt of one-off WG discretionary homelessness grant, resulting in an overall net budget overspend of £270k for 24-25. The increase in overspend since Update 1 is due to the receipt of some late B&B invoices that relate to a previous financial year that was not factored in original forecast.
 - **Careline** – £48k under spent – due to the ability to offset staff costs against grant funding and also in the reduction in equipment spend as stocks were replenished last year (via grant) reducing the need for in-year spending this year.
- **Business Growth & Enterprise** – £188k under spend – a £77k improvement from Update 1 - this is due to the ability to offset core costs with grant funding, a £38k saving in employee costs as a senior officer post currently on maternity has not been backfilled and a recent IT systems post that became vacant in September will not be filled, and a £9k saving on professional & specialist fees.

Facilities & Fleet Management

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	867	627	0	0

Facilities, Fleet & De-carbonisation are forecasting a £627k overspend, this is due to :-

- **Decarbonisation** - £72k net overspend – this can be attributed to the following factors :-
 - Corporate Mileage Saving - £100k over spend – £20k adverse swing from Update 1 – latest projections are that the required changes to the current corporate travel and disbursement policy will not be made this year so we won't be able to implement the roll-out of the Pool car scheme and other initiatives resulting in all of the £100k budget saving not being achieved.
 - Solar Farm - £115k deficit – updated projections are now forecasting that income will improve on what was reported at Update 1 but will still be down due to poor weather and grid outages, the surplus has increased slightly to £288k but this is still £115k less than the budgeted surplus of £403k.
 - De-Carbonisation Team - £134k under spend – this is due to staff vacancy savings, recruitment into the team is proving difficult with only 2 (Decarbonisation Mgr and 1 Project Officer) of the 5 posts filled. We are currently in the process of recruiting into 2 of the 3 remaining posts with the one energy officer vacancy frozen until April to aid with in-year budget recovery.

- **Schools Catering** - £91k under spent – mainly due to staff savings caused by the delay in recruiting into vacant posts, this has been part offset by a £30k cost of providing laptops into the kitchens.

- **Building Cleaning & Public Conveniences** - £56k under spent – a £48k underspend in Building Cleaning mainly due to staff savings from vacant posts and a £8k rates and maintenance saving in Public Conveniences.

- **Passenger Transport** – £583k net over spend– as per Update 1 we are projecting a major budget pressure within the PTU section, this can be attributed to increased service demand as pupil numbers have increased, increases in external operator contract costs due to rate increases and a shortfall in public bus service funding. These have been part offset by an underspend in our Regional Transport Team due to the receipt of funding linked to the administration of the regional Bus Network Grant.

- **Fleet Maintenance** - £110k overspend – continuing pressures through parts inflation, supply chain delays, vehicle hire growth and increased borrowing spend. In addition, we have had to invest in more EV charge points and a new vehicle management system.

Neighbourhood Services

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	263	304	0	0

Neighbourhood Services is forecasting to overspend by £304k, due to :-

- **Streetlighting** - £20k overspend – due to an increase in the number and cost of repairs resulting in the budget being exceeded, this is a £10k improvement from Update 1 due to contract inflation coming in less than expected helping to reduce the overspend.
- **Highways Operations** – On Budget – Current indications are that our 24-25 programme of works will come in within budget, a bad winter will potentially impact on costs, but officers will look to mitigate this through adjusting the programme accordingly.

- **Highways External** - £100k underspend - current projections indicate that income from external works will exceed original targets. The partnership works we do for SWTRA (South Wales Trunk Road Agency) will be on budget as per the cost recovery arrangement.
- **Waste & Grounds Maintenance** - £384k overspend – The volatility and reduced values of recycle continues to negatively impact the waste budget. The introduction of Workplace recycling regulations and the associated changes in charging structures to accommodate this has seen a large reduction in trade waste collection income plus additional recycling collection costs. These coupled with the volatility of end market values has resulted in an increasing pressure on the bottom line. In addition, the 24/25 budget was built on the premise that our polyprop service would be fully operational from the 1st April, delays in vehicle delivery have meant that the service won't start until early Autumn resulting in our early year disposal costs being higher than originally anticipated. Our Grounds service is currently forecasting a break even budget.

Placemaking, Highways & Flood

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(58)	(84)	0	0

Placemaking, Highways & Flooding is forecasting to under spend by £84k, due to :-

- **Building Control** – £73k over spent – a £3k adverse swing from Update 1 - forecasts continue to indicate a similar position to last year where fee income was impacted by the economy resulting in reduced applications. In addition, the introduction of the Building Safety Act 2022 has increased the amount of statutory non-chargeable works having to be undertaken adversely affecting staff and income budgets.
- **Planning & Development Control** - £72k over spent – a £27k adverse swing from Update 1 – application fee income projections still indicate that we will not meet our budgeted targets this year, in addition we now think our Fast Track application targets will not be met and is the reason for the downturn in position since update1. As stated previously councils are lobbying WG to increase the planning fee rate given that they have not risen with inflation and have remained fixed since 2020. WG are currently reviewing this matter.
- **Car Parks & Civil Parking Enforcement** - £60k under spent – no change from Update 1 - Underspend is mainly due to improved income as our annual pay & display projection is currently exceeding budget, in addition the position has been helped by employee savings due to full year vacant posts.
- **Highways management & flooding** - £169k under spent – an improvement of £58k from Update 1 - Employee under spend due to full and part year vacancies coupled with improved income mainly from additional development fees and capital programme fees. The development fees were not confirmed at update 1 but we have now received them and is the reason for the improvement.

MONLIFE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(46)	(122)	0	0

The directorate is forecast to underspend by £122k an improvement of £76k on financial update 1.

Delayed implementation of the area management restructure, delayed staff savings within the museums service and reduced income at our attractions have been offset by increased income from our leisure services and markets. This is due to increased income from our marketing campaigns along with the sections hard work improving the customer experiences leading to new members joining and better membership retention.

There is still a significant risk around income predictions in both a leisure services, outdoor adventure centre and Borough Theatre, update 2 forecast relies on £5.1m of income generation from these 3 services alone, we will continue to monitor income closely as the year continues.

(Monlife) Countryside & Culture

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(6)	(39)	0	0

Countryside & Culture section is forecast to underspend by £39k an improvement of £33k from update 1 this is due to additional grant income and confirmed income that has previously been unknown.

(MonLife) Communications

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

Central communications are forecast to achieve a balanced position.

(Monlife) Finance & Business Development

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	62	174	0	0

The Finance, Business and Development sections is forecast to overspend by £174k, we continue to see income pressure.

Attraction sites are forecast to overspend by £56k due to lower than anticipated visitor numbers this has been caused by the adverse weather experience during the summer. The section has look to mitigate the reduction of income through one off events and grant opportunities.

The **Borough Theatre** is expected to overspend by £60k due to lower than anticipated income, the section is still recovering post-pandemic and the site closures, the site has seen a reduction of 50 seats which is limiting the opportunity for larger performances to use our site.

Learning is forecast to overspend by £20k due to reduced income.

Museums are expected to overspend by £47k due to delayed staff savings and higher than anticipated expenditure, the section will look to use any grant opportunities or reserve balance to mitigate this where possible.

Management is forecast to overspend by £42k due to delayed implementation of the area management structure, this process is underway, and we are likely to see the changed structure being implemented in the final quarter of 24-25.

This has been offset by small underspends in grants and an underspend in the contact centre of £50k due to staff vacancies.

(Monlife) Leisure, Youth & Outdoor Adventure

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(102)	(257)	0	0

Leisure, Youth and Outdoor Adventure are forecast to underspend by £257k, this is due to increase income at our four leisure facilities, we have seen continued growth in our monthly Direct Debit memberships, improved membership retention due to improving our customers journey and investing in digital and site improvements. Along with additional grants which have been used where applicable to offset core staffing costs whilst still delivering the outcome of the grant.

The Outdoor Adventure Centre has improved its residential income position on 23-24 but we continue to see some pressure on the income budgeted from our re-engage program, we will need to continue to monitor this closely over the rest of the budget year.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S UNIT DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	68	94	0	0

Chief Executives is forecasting to overspend by £94k.

The People function is in the middle of a period of change following the approval of the People Strategy and appointment of our new Head of HR. We are introducing automation into recruitment and payroll, improving customer experience and back-office efficiency. However, this is taking longer than anticipated due to challenges with system integration and as a result savings will not be realised until 2025-26. We have taken the steps we can to lower costs, including entering a collaborative arrangement with other authorities for our new training system which has reduced license costs. However, there have been some one-off costs attached to entering the collaboration meaning the financial benefits of collaboration will not be seen until next year..

The biggest financial pressure in Policy, Scrutiny and Customer Relations is for Welsh language translations. This is a statutory obligation. While we can do little about demand, a business case has been developed to provide the service in a different way which would help reduce supply side costs from 2024-25 onwards. We are also trialling the use of new AI driven translation software to try and reduce the overspend position in the current year.

Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Relations

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	19	0	0

Policy, Scrutiny & Customer is forecasting to overspend by £19k, this is due to :-

- **Corporate** - £24k under spent – no change from Update 1 - mainly because of core staff costs being funded by Ukraine grant funding as capacity is diverted to manage this situation.
- **Customer Relations** - £25k overspent – the volume and cost of undertaking independent investigations has increased this year with current projections estimating spend will exceed available budget. This was not known at Update 1 and is the main reason for the adverse swing for the division.
- **Scrutiny** - £6k over spent – due to the inability to make staff vacancy factor savings.
- **Policy & Partnerships** – £11k over spent – Equalities and Welsh Language is forecasting to overspend by £65k due to translation demand outstripping available budget and our corporate subscriptions costs are expected to exceed budget by £20k. These overspends have been part offset by underspends in GIS (£32k) and Community Safety (£14k) due to part year vacant posts and a £29k staff saving in Performance & Data as we have passported core staff costs to capital.

People	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Outturn Forecast				
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	68	75	0	0

People Services is forecasting to over spend by £75k, the main variances are as follows:

- **Payroll** - £46k under spent – no change from Update 1 - Net underspend mainly due to staff secondment savings and system costs being lower than budgeted for this year. This underspend is being used to partly off-set a temporary increase in capacity in People Management.
- **People Management** - £84k over spent – Employee costs are currently forecasting to exceed budget by £68k, this is mainly due to interim arrangements put in place to cover service demand whilst awaiting the appointment of the new HR manager. In addition, SLA income is expected to come in £40k lower than budgeted and supplies and services have increased due to software increases and the purchase of IT equipment for additional staff.
- **Occupational Health** - £31k overspend – current forecasts are indicating that occupational health appointment costs will exceed available budget mainly due to an increase in activity.
- **Corporate Training** - £1k over spent – £6k improvement from Update 1 as income projections have improved.
- **Organisational Development** - £4k over spent – Inability to meet staff vacancy savings.

LAW & GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE (PG)	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
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Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	51	48	0	0
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The overspend in legal is, as was the case at the previous update, a result of a significant shortfall in expected income for the commercial law team. As was reported previously, avenues for increasing this income were to be explored, which has resulted in a £6k improvement since Update 1. This will continue to be monitored to ensure we recoup income where possible, and to ensure future target setting is realistic. As previously reported there has been an increase in staffing costs following the regrading of a post to ensure the Council has a deputy monitoring officer as required by law, as well as honoraria payments made at the appropriate grade in the interim before re-grading was finalised.

Democratic Services

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(22)	(19)	0	0

Democratic Services is forecasting to underspend by £19k, this is due to :-

- **Members** - £21k under spend – resulting from a reduction in payroll costs due to savings from a part-year vacant position due to a councillor becoming an MP and a reduction in co-opted member costs.
- **Committee & Elections** – £2k overspend – due to an overspend in supplies and printing costs.

Legal and Land Charges

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	73	67	0	0

Legal and Land charges is forecasting to overspend by £67k, this is due to :-

Legal Services - £67k overspend – a £6k improvement from Update 1 – overspend is due to a shortfall in rechargeable income, and an overspend in staffing due to a post regrading and honoraria payments.

Land Charges – On Budget.

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	18	(145)	0	0

The Resources directorate is forecasting an underspend of £145k, primarily due to savings within finance that are offset by pressures within the corporate & commercial landlord budget.

Within Landlord services there remains a shortfall against budgeted savings targets of £50k where rental income is currently below targets following some staggering of rent increases, and some vacant units remaining to be filled. There has been significant improvement since the first update in rental income which is pleasing and reflective of the ongoing work to maximise the potential of our asset base.

Commercial investments continue to fall short of budgeted net income targets though this is expected to improve as lettings are secured through the last half of the financial year.

Work continues into the review and rationalisation of our buildings portfolio, but this has been slower than originally anticipated and we are projecting a shortfall of £151k against the previous year's £215k budget saving requirement. Officers continue work in this area and there is a possibility that this will change before year end.

These overspends have been part managed by employee savings due to staff vacancies only being filled part way into the year in both finance and commercial and landlord services.

The directorate will continue to support the wider budget recovery action and is exploring all opportunities of limiting expenditure, holding vacancies, and maximising all avenues of income and grants.

However the scope to introduce significant further levels of savings within the Resources budget at this stage of the year is very constrained, given the limited amount of controllable budget. However, work will continue to secure further savings which will be reported in future reporting periods.

Finance

Return Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(199)	(197)	0	0

Finance is forecasting to return a £197k underspend, this is mainly due to -

- **Revenues** - £16k net overspend :-
 - Benefits - £14k overspend – due to anticipated subsidy and debt costs. It is still too early to accurately forecast this budget and will remain subject to change as placements and caseloads move throughout the year.
 - Council Tax - £17k overspend – there are a number of factors that make up this position. There is a £16k residual staff budget pressure, the current debt profile for council tax and business rates indicates that the bad debt provision for court costs will need to be topped up by £17k. However these additional costs have been offset by one off admin grant of £17k from WG. The £9k increase from Update 1 reflects an anticipated increase in running costs for the shared service plus an increase in the bad debt provision as the number of summonses issued increases.
 - Charity Relief & Debtors - £16k underpend – due to staff vacancy savings in debtors and charity relief payments coming in under budget.
- **Systems & Exchequer** – £31k under spend – an increase in annual contract costs and essential system development for the revenue and benefits system has been offset by managed staff vacancies, holding system development in cashiers and systems support and an increase in in-year

recharge income. The increase in underspend of £8k is mainly due to the decision to freeze a cashiers post until April to aid with in-year budget recovery.

- **Finance** - £182k under spend – Underspend due to a combination of staff vacancies and the ability to recharge core staff costs to other sources of funding.
- **Audit** – On Budget.

Future Monmouthshire

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

Future Monmouthshire is forecasting to return a balanced budget.

Corporate Health & Safety

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

Corporate Health & Safety is forecasting to return a balanced budget.

Information, Communication & Technology

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(15)	(15)	0	0

The ICT division is forecasting a £15k under spend, this is due to :-

- **Digital Programme Office** – On Budget.
- **SRS Contribution** – £11k over spend - SRS have informed us that early year forecasts are indicating an overspend against our contribution budget, this is mainly due to increases in Checkpoint Firewall costs and PSBA line costs.
- **Digital Design & Innovation** - £22k under spent - due to savings from managed staff vacancies.
- **Cyber Security Team** - £4.5k under spent – Due to staff savings through part year vacancy and a managed reduction in non-essential spend.
- **Telephony** – On Budget.

Commercial & Corporate Landlord

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	232	67	0	0

Commercial & Corporate Landlord services is forecasting to over spend by £67k, due to :

- **Investment Properties** - £142k over spend, due to –
 - **Newport Leisure Park** - £112k over spent – NLP is forecasting to achieve a surplus position of £234k after borrowing costs (an improvement of £143k on 23-24 outturn) but a variance of £112k on the budgeted target due to changes in some of the existing tenancy agreements reducing the expected annual rental. The variance from Update 1 relates to increased electricity standing charges following the surrender of previous tenants.
 - **Castlegate Business Park** - £29k over spent – No change from Update 1 - Castlegate is forecasting a £29k overspend due to increased rates and service charges relating to vacant units.

- **Landlord Services** - £115k under spend – an improvement of £193k since Update 1 – this is because of employee savings of £200k due to staff vacancies only being filled part way through the year. There has been a major improvement in income since we reported last and we have been able to use some of this to offset our Property Rationalisation saving so that the shortfall is now only £151k of the original £215k, there are a number of reasons for the income increase 1) we now have a more accurate position as rental agreements have been confirmed for the year 2) we are receiving new rental streams from re-purposed properties 3) the return of a £68k one-off retainer relating to the Cattle market works that was not factored in at Update 1.
- **County Farms & Industrial Units** - £55k overspend – a £12k improvement from Update 1 - Income budgets were increased as part of the 24/25 MTFP to reflect the uplift in rent from filling our vacant farm properties and industrial units. Further progress has been made in finding tenants but with new rental agreements and existing rental uplifts staggered in-year we will only see a part year receipt of additional rent, also as we currently have vacant properties we are now liable to cover the council tax - current forecasts have assumed a full year liability but this could change if we find tenants in-year.
- **Cemeteries** - £5k underspend – Income projections are indicating that burial income will exceed budgeted targets.
- **Property Services** – On Budget.

CORPORATE COSTS & LEVIES DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	6	31	0	0
Precepts & Levies				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	3	0	0

Slight increase in drainage levies (£2,950) at update 2 than budgeted

Archives (Gwent Joint Records)

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	6	6	0	0

Final fees slightly above budgeted precept at budget setting.

Corporate Management

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	23	0	0

The joint Crematorium service dividend is expected to be £44k lower than budgeted due to net service income being lower than anticipated. This is offset by other minor under spends.

Non-Distributed Costs

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

No variance forecast

Strategic Initiatives

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

No variance forecast

Insurance

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

No variance forecast currently at Update 2

TREASURY & RESERVES

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(283)	(480)	0	0

Interest & Investment Income					
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	48	(15)	0	0	
The combination of a higher investment balance and a slower-than-anticipated reduction in interest rates has led to an improvement in interest income returns since the last quarter.					
Interest Payable & Similar Charges					
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(42)	(175)	0	0	
Reduced market interest rates have led to small saving which has been further improved due to short-term balances being higher than anticipated.					
Charges Required Under Regulation					
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(41)	(41)	0	0	
underspend due to capital expenditure financed by borrowing in 23/24 being less than budgeted for.					
Other Investment Income					
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	(1)	0	0	
Minor unbudgeted income.					
Borrowing Cost Recoupment					
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(248)	(248)	0	0	
Budget was set before additional capital financing for 2023/24 vehicle purchases was finalised. Partially offset by additional MRP charges.					
FINANCING					
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(350)	(350)	0	0	

Council Tax Reduction Scheme				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(350)	(350)	0	0
Caseload currently remains below the budget set.				
Council Tax				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance currently forecast, as It is too early in the financial year to accurately determine the outturn position. The council tax base remains healthy and is close to the tax base set for the year. However council tax discounts and exemptions continue to grow, which have a negative impact on the tax base. It remains unclear how much income will result from council tax premiums. Properties continue to move in and out of the lists. There is some evidence that the premiums are starting to bring properties back into use.				
General Government Grants				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
Income received to budget.				

2. Section 3 – School Balances

- 2.1. A Board of Governors who are responsible for managing the school's finances, directly governs each of the Authority's Schools. However, the Authority also holds a key responsibility for monitoring the overall financial performance of schools. Below is a table showing the forecast Schools' balances position, for each Educational Cluster.

School Reserves	(A) Opening Reserves (Surplus) / Deficit Position 2024/25	(B) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Update 1	(C) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Update 2	(D) Draw / (Contribution) from / (to) School Balances @ Update 3	(E) Draw/ (Contribution) to Reserves at Update 4	(A+CB) Forecast 2024/25 Reserves
Cluster	£000's	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Abergavenny	143	1,133	1,278	0	0	1,421
Caldicot	(87)	1,152	776	0	0	689
Chepstow	658	800	949	0	0	1,607
Monmouth	(552)	1,066	1,165	0	0	614
Special	741	778	719	0	0	1,459
Total	904	4,929	4,887	0	0	5,791

2.3. Collective School balances at the beginning of the Financial Year amounted to a deficit of £903,636. The anticipated further draw on reserves at Update 1 was £4,928,604, against a budgeted draw on reserves of £5,015,104, which resulted in a forecast deficit balance of £5,832,251 by year end. At Update 2, the draw on reserves has reduced slightly to £4,886,770, resulting in a forecast deficit balance of £5,790,406 by year end.

2.3. The movement of individual schools forecast to be in deficit at the end of the year is shown below:

Start of year	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Total: 13	Total: 19	Total: 20	Total:	Total: 0
Chepstow Comprehensive	Chepstow Comprehensive	Chepstow Comprehensive		
Pupil Referral Service	Pupil Referral Service	Pupil Referral Service		
The Dell	The Dell	The Dell		
Our Lady & St Michael's RC	Our Lady & St Michael's RC	Our Lady & St Michael's RC		

Primary School (VA)	Primary School (VA)	Primary School (VA)		
Ysgol y Fenni	Ysgol y Fenni	Ysgol y Fenni		
Caldicot School	Caldicot School	Caldicot School		
Ysgol y Ffin	Ysgol y Ffin	Ysgol y Ffin		
Osbaston	Osbaston	Osbaston		
Overmonnow	Overmonnow	Overmonnow		
Gilwern	Gilwern	Gilwern		
Rogiet	Rogiet	Rogiet		
Thornwell	Thornwell	Thornwell		
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	King Henry VIII 3-19 School	King Henry VIII 3-19 School		
	Goytre Fawr	Goytre Fawr		
	Llantilio Pertholey	Llantilio Pertholey		
	Dewstow			
	Monmouth Comprehensive	Monmouth Comprehensive		
	Llandogo	Llandogo		
	Usk	Usk		
		Castle Park		
		Cross Ash		

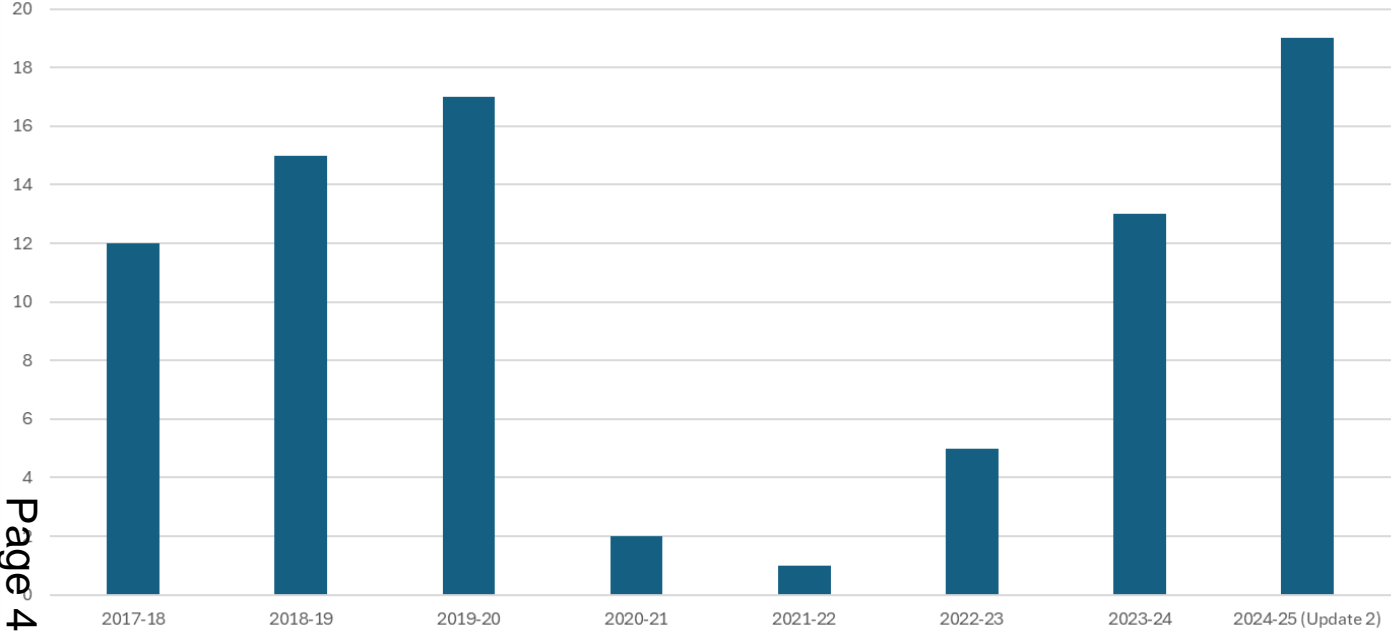
- 2.4. The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision. Higher than budgeted pay awards have also impacted upon budgets.

2.5. All schools that are budgeting to register a deficit balance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year are required to bring forward budget recovery plans. These recovery plans will be confirmed with both the Local Education Authority, each School's Governing Body and, in some cases, the plans will need to be agreed by the relevant Cabinet Member. All recovery plans are expected to be received by October Half Term.

Financial Year-end	Net level of School Balances (Surplus) / Deficit in £000's
2015-16	(1,156)
2016-17	(269)
2017-18	(175)
2018-19	232
2019-20	435
2020-21	(3,418)
2021-22	(6,956)
2022-23	(4,257)
2023-24	904
2024-25 (forecast)	5,791

2.6. The decrease in school balances has resulted in an increase in the number of schools in deficit, as illustrated in the following table:

Number of Schools in Deficit



3. Section 4 – Capital budget Forecast Outturn

3.1 The forecast summary Capital position at Update 2 is as follows:

Category	Slippage B/F	Original Budget	Budget Adjustments	Provisional Slippage to 2024/25	Revised Budget 2024/25	Forecast Outturn	Over / (Under) spend
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Expenditure							
Capitalisation Directive	387	3,357	0	0	3,744	3,744	0
Development Schemes Over £250k	8,222	100	4,590	(3,579)	9,333	9,247	(86)
Development Schemes Under £250k	2,012	590	390	(1,714)	1,278	1,278	0
School modernisation programme	8,604	19,507	(12,087)	(42)	15,982	15,981	0
Infrastructure	3,250	6,345	250	(3,367)	6,478	6,478	0
ICT Schemes	765	303	(230)	0	838	838	0
Property Maintenance	1,279	2,140	86	0	3,505	3,505	0
Renovation Grants	110	900	158	0	1,168	1,168	0
LCHO	27	0	148	0	175	175	0
Section 106	1,159	0	850	(596)	1,413	1,406	(7)
Regeneration - Specific Grant Funded	2,791	500	10,092	0	13,383	13,383	0
Vehicles	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	1,500	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	28,606	35,241	4,247	(9,298)	58,796	58,703	(93)
Financing							
Supported Borrowing	0	(2,436)	0	0	(2,436)	(2,436)	0
General Capital Grant	0	(2,502)	0	0	(2,502)	(2,502)	0
Grants and Contributions	(3,596)	(13,850)	(9,408)	250	(26,604)	(26,604)	0
S106 Contributions	(1,122)	0	(850)	638	(1,334)	(1,327)	7
Unsupported Borrowing	(22,325)	(10,553)	5,929	8,230	(18,720)	(18,633)	86
Earmarked Reserve & Revenue Funding	(148)	(253)	0	0	(401)	(401)	0
Capital Receipts	(1,415)	(4,147)	82	180	(5,300)	(5,300)	0

Leasing	0	(1,500)	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	0
Total Financing	(28,606)	(35,241)	(4,247)	9,298	(58,796)	(58,703)	93

3.2 The forecast capital expenditure at update 2 is demonstrating a net underspend £93k, primarily due to the following variances identified:

Scheme	Over / (Under) spend £000's	Comment
Crick Road Care Home	(86,085)	Scheme completed and facility is operational slightly below budget.
S106 - Star Road/School Lane Zebra Crossing	(6,729)	Works completed below original estimated cost

3.3 Capital Slippage

3.4 Provisional Capital slippage forecast at update 2 is £9,298m:

Scheme Category	Scheme Name	Slippage £000's	Comment
Economic Development	Capital Region City Deal	1,472,762	Based on capital funding profile from CCRCD
Economic Development	Asset Investment Fund	1,852,738	Budget held for any required capital improvements at commercial investment sites. No works currently anticipated for 2024/25
Economic Development	Caerwent House, Major Repairs	50,800	Listed Heritage building requires further legal and planning clearance before the scheme can progress
Economic Development	Wye Bridge Chepstow works	257,703	Reconstruction works delayed to 2025/26 – Construction phase has been delayed with survey, investigation & design works ongoing – construction phase to start next year.
Economic Development	Wye Bridge Monmouth works	2,142,231	Reconstruction works delayed to 2025/26 – Construction phase has been delayed with survey, investigation & design works to potentially start in 25-26. However indications from Highways officers that construction won't start until 26-27 at earliest.
Highways	Carriageway improvements	667,000	Works rescheduled for early 2025/26 to allow for better planning of maintenance projects.

Scheme Category	Scheme Name	Slippage £000's	Comment
Highways	Clydach Gateway Reinstatement and Devil's Bridge Associated Works A465	250,000	Works to be undertaken in 2025/26 – delay has been caused by the grant awarding body (LEI) and resolving concerns over safety at the site due to potential landslide.
Children's Services	Property Acquisition for Children and Young People with Complex Needs	202,824	Multi-year scheme for asset acquisition to alleviate out of County Children's supported housing provision
Housing	Housing Purchasing Provision	1,585,252	Assessing potential housing acquisitions will lapse into 2025/26 financial year
Transport / Highways	Feasibility study: Transport Depot South of County	129,202	Ongoing feasibility work to identify suitable south of County depot for operational depot
Environmental	Structural Repairs – Public Rights of Way	50,000	Essential works being completed, some schemes, due to bad weather, will slip into 2025-26
Leisure Schemes	Monmouth Leisure Centre Redesign	42,089	Delays to improvements at Monmouth Leisure Centre
S106	Various S106 schemes	596,001	Completion of schemes delayed due to bad weather and delays in the acquisition of new playground equipment
		9,298,466	

3.5 Useable Capital Receipts Available

3.6 The table below outlines the latest forecast of capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments. All banked and forecast capital receipts have been committed to funding the indicative forward capital programme. Therefore any further use will be dependent upon forecast capital receipts being realised.

Capital receipt balances	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Balance as at 1st April	9,984	4,877	3,157	941	460
Capital receipts used for financing	(1,556)	(640)	(460)	(460)	(460)

Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(3,744)	(3,358)	(2,358)	(324)	0
Capital receipts Received	91	0	0	0	0
Capital receipts Forecast	103	2,278	603	303	0
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	4,877	3,157	941	460	0

Budget savings progress 2024-25 - Update 2

	Savings proposals by Directorate	Budgeted Saving	Update 2 Forecast	Variance to Budgeted Savings	Percentage met	Comment
			£000	£000		
	Social Care & Health	(4,972)	(3,904)	1,068	78.5%	
	Children & Young People	(3,172)	(2,638)	534	83.2%	
	Communities & Place	(927)	(557)	370	60.1%	
	Monlife	(1,079)	(939)	140	87.0%	
	Chief Executives Units	(86)	(86)	0	100.0%	
	Law & Governance	(33)	(33)	0	100.0%	
	Resources	(595)	(531)	64	89.2%	
	Corporate Costs & Levies	(77)	(77)	(0)	100.1%	
	Totals	(10,940)	(8,765)	2,176	80.1%	

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Ref	Social Care & Health	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance	Comment
		£000	£000	£000	
SCH3/4	Childrens services - Placement and Practice Change - Reviewing high-cost placements and developing in house placement	(1,300)	(1,500)	(200)	Savings to date of identified placements totals £900K, with a further projected savings of £600K but these attract risk in deliverability
SCH2/5/7/16	Adults services - Directorate staffing review - reducing the workforce within adult services	(1,464)	(1,464)	0	
SCH6/8/9/10 /14/15	Adults services - practice change agenda by managing demand, strengthening oversight and controlling costs	(1,130)	(292)	838	Review work is ongoing and we are looking at a plan to introduce some short term additional resource to accelerate this area of work. In addition, we are still actively pursuing CHC opportunities as they arise

SCH11	Adults services - Reduction in Adult partnership arrangements for Gwent service delivery models - Shared lives, Emergency duty, Frailty, Regional partnership team	(55)	0	55	We are currently in negotiation with Caerphilly CBC who host a regional Shared Lives partnership and partners are requesting a refund on built up reserves by Caerphilly from years of unspent partner funding.
SCH12	Adults services - Transformation Team structure - reduction in core workforce	(30)	(30)	0	
SCH13	Adults services - Savings from service relating to borrowing to afford Severn View replacement	(105)	(105)	0	
SCH18	Review and increase of directorate schedule of fees and charges across Social Care & Health	(388)	(388)	0	
SCH19	Public protection - Hold vacant Environmental Health Officer post	(23)	(23)	0	
Energy	Year-on-year change in energy cost	(102)	(102)	0	
SCH17	Review the legal non residential weekly charge cap from £100 to £120	(375)	0	375	Current indication is that this won't be progressed by WG
	SCH Totals	(4,972)	(3,904)	1,068	

Ref	Children & Young People	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance	Comment
		£000	£000	£000	
CYP2	CYP support - Release expected reserve from rebates for solar panel on schools	(120)	(120)	0	
CYP3	CYP Support - Freeze vacancy in student access team	(34)	(34)	0	Vacancy being held

CYP4	Net saving on ALN placements. Reduce the cost of out-of-county and specialist placements by investing in the quality and capacity of local, community and specialist resource basis.	(534)	0	534	Unexpected increase in new starters at Independent and Out of County Schools + additional support for existing pupils + liable for £56k of the Post-16 Specialist Placement Costs for 23-24 + an increase in pupils receiving EOTAS (Education Other Than At School) Bespoke packages
CYP5	ALN & Standards - Continue to hold a vacancy open in the Most team	(20)	(20)	0	Vacancy being held
CYP6	ALN & Standards - Reduction in Education Achievement Service contribution of 10%	(35)	(35)	0	Contribution reduced
CYP7	Stop contributions to Gwent Music, leaving hardship fund in place	(39)	(39)	0	Contribution reduced
CYP8	Increase Breakfast club charges	(70)	(70)	0	Charges increased
Energy	Year-on-year change in energy cost	(820)	(820)	0	
CORP2	Teachers pension grant funding	(1,500)	(1,500)	0	Funding risk - dependent upon amount of funding WG receive from central government and how this is distributed to LA's
CYP Totals		(3,172)	(2,638)	534	

Ref	Communities & Place	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance	Comment
		£000	£000	£000	
C&P1	Savings from the disposal of street sweepings through Siltbuster recycling plant	(20)	(20)	0	Achievable
C&P2	Fees & charges - Uplift in garden waste collection costs 10%.	(75)	(75)	0	Prices increased, indications are that target will be met.

C&P3	Waste and street services - Restructure to reduce staff costs and not replace frozen post	(50)	(50)	0		Post removed - achieved
C&P5	Reduce EPA numbers to reflect uptake of Town Team approach	(25)	(25)	0		Post removed - achieved
C&P6	Remove Council Car	(8)	(8)	0		Car returned last year - achieved
C&P10	Review the provision of small vehicle home to school transport contracts with a view to bringing in house	(93)	(93)	0		Even though pressure overall in PTU this change has generated the required saving.
C&P11	Increase the cost of concessionary transport seats from £440 to £484 (10% uplift)	(3)	(3)	0		Prices increased, assume that target will be met.
C&P14	Decarbonisation - Increase renewable energy generation opportunities across our estate to reduce demand on grid supply	(50)	(50)	0		Updated forecasts now show that the generation target will be met.
C&P14	Planning income target increased	(50)	0	50		Mid year projections are indicating that our planning fees will not increase enough to hit this saving target.
C&P16	Fees & Charges - Increase fees by 10% for street naming and numbering, licences, road closures and S.38 inspections	(33)	(33)	0		Prices increased, assume that target will be met.
C&P18	10% Uplift in Car Parking Charges	(66)	(66)	0		Prices increased, assume that target will be met.
C&P20	Fees & charges - Increase SAB pre-application charges by 10% and increase the income target to reflect increased service uptake	(2)	(2)	0		Prices increased, assume that target will be met.

C&P21	Fees & Charges - Increase SAB application budgeted income target by £25k each year for the next two years	(25)	(25)	0		Mid year forecasts are predicting that this figure will be achieved this year.
Energy	Year-on-year change in energy cost	3	3	0		
C&P22	Fees & Charges - Trade waste fees, sale of bags & bins etc... 10%	(30)	(30)	0		Prices increased, assume that target will be met.
C&P23	Homelessness - Rapid rehousing transition - reduce the number in unsuitable and costly accommodation	(400)	(80)	320		Change of use planning now approved but delay has meant occupancy will not start until Feb 2025 creating a £320k shortfall. This pressure has been part offset by windfall grant funding within the wider Housing budget.
C&P Total		(927)	(557)	370		

Ref	Monlife	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
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ML1	Realign services within the Town/Market Hall in Abergavenny to improve their potential and ensure continued service delivery	(20)	(20)	0		Achievable
ML2	Museums - Close Abergavenny and Chepstow museums an additional day a week and review business support	(40)	0	40		Delayed restructure has lead to the sections inability to achieve the full savings
ML3	Close Old Station Tintern for one day a week on Mondays from 1st April 2024, except for four bank holidays	(10)	(10)	0		Achievable

ML4	Attractions - To use £60k from SPF grants for 2024/25 to cover core staffing whilst delivering Today's Heritage Tomorrow and Creative Futures.	(60)	(60)	0	Achievable
ML5	Countryside & Culture - Additional income for additional project management and project delivery costs from grants assumption of £25k	(25)	(25)	0	Achievable
ML6	Countryside Access Income Generation - realign the Countryside Access team to maximise the ability to recover project management and related costs from project budgets and increase income generation.	(35)	(35)	0	Achievable
ML7	Countryside & Culture - Stop contributing to Abergavenny TIC as part of Market Hall reconfiguration.	(10)	(10)	0	Achievable
ML8	Countryside & Culture – Recover officer time and project management costs directly associated with the delivery of section 106 funded green infrastructure and recreation schemes.	(15)	(15)	0	Achievable
ML9	Leisure, Sports & Outdoor Adventure - Move to cost neutral services, creating a multi-function site with re-engage PRU and social services	(70)	(70)	0	Achievable - Summer residential income is on target, need to watch re-engage program as this is volatile
ML10	Leisure centres - Change closing times - Weekday Closing 21:30 weekend closure 16:30	(140)	(140)	0	Achievable

ML11	Reduced Youth club provision - Explore alternative delivery models for open access youth provision, including community youth clubs	(20)	(20)	0	Achievable
ML12	Marketing and Memberships Service Redesign - achieve efficiencies by realigning services between departments, reviewing and realigning posts and enhancing the front-of house software provision for collecting membership payments.	(50)	(50)	0	Achievable
ML13	High level management restructure – Area management model	(120)	(20)	100	In progress, delay to structure implementation due to consultation - Income generation should offset shortfall in staff savings
Energy	Year-on-year change in energy cost	(437)	(437)	0	Controlled corporately - All pool covers installed
F&C	Increase in fees and charges for discretionary services in line with the increase costs of delivering these services	(27)	(27)	0	Prices increased, assume that target will be met.
Monlife total		(1,079)	(939)	140	

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Ref	Chief Executive's Unit	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance	Comment
		£000	£000	£000	
CEO2	Policy - Training & Workforce Development - Staffing re-alignment (£65k) Partnership working in online training delivery (£10.5k)	(76)	(76)	0	Post removed - achieved

CEO3	Payroll & HR - Release of contingency budgets for implementation of e-recruitment	(10)	(10)	0	Achieved
CEO Totals		(86)	(86)	0	

Ref	Law & Governance	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance	Comment
		£000	£000	£000	
LG2	Vacancy Freeze - Paralegal post	(33)	(33)	0	Post frozen - achieved
LG Totals		(33)	(33)	0	

Ref	Resources	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance	Comment
		£000	£000	£000	
RES1	Commercial Investments – Reversal of income pressure to reflect the forecast improvement in rental income across the commercial investment portfolio (excludes NLP and Castlegate)	(208)	(208)	0	Latest projections indicate that this will be achieved.
RES2	Income - industrial units, cemeteries, County farms - consistently exceeded their income targets over the last number of years, so budgets are being increased to reflect this	(100)	(50)	50	Original saving was based on vacant units being filled and a rent increase coming into effect from April. Rental increases have been staggered through the year so we will not receive the full year benefit this year, in addition some units remain vacant or are on agreements that provide an initial rent free period.

RES3	Property services - Gwent police collaboration - Increasing Income to reflect projections	(50)	(50)	0		Indications are that this will be achieved.
Energy	Year-on-year change in energy cost	(220)	(220)	0		
RES5	SRS Contribution reduction following identification of efficiency savings	(17)	(3)	14		Current figures from SRS indicate that we will not make all of this saving due to increases in licences fees and firewall costs.
Resources Totals		(595)	(531)	64		

Ref	Corporate Costs & Levies	Total Saving / Recovery	Update 2 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
COR33	Fire SCAPE pension	(77)	(77)	(0)		Awaiting confirmation of funding from Welsh Government
Corporate Costs & Levies Totals		(77)	(77)	(0)		

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	Opening Reserves 2024-25 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Month 6 (Surplus)/Deficit	Projected carry forward at year end 2024-25 (Surplus)/Deficit
Abergavenny cluster			
King Henry 3-19 School	329,196	705,484	1,034,680
Cantref Primary School	(110,417)	49,577	(60,840)
Gilwern Primary School	22,923	96,146	119,069
Goytre Fawr Primary School	(7,344)	30,157	22,813
Llanfoist Fawr Primary School	(125,485)	78,954	(46,531)
Llantillio Pertholey CiW Primary School (VC)	(60,748)	81,090	20,342
Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School	(96,867)	47,027	(49,840)
Our Lady and St Michael's RC Primary School (VA)	21,255	24,119	45,374
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	170,465	165,483	335,948
Caldicot cluster			
Caldicot School	352,437	267,804	620,241
Archbishop Rowan Williams CiW Primary School (VA)	(26,821)	(4,696)	(31,517)
Castle Park Primary School	(75,047)	84,661	9,614
Dewstow Primary School	(57,559)	47,856	(9,703)
Durand Primary School	(58,704)	35,121	(23,583)
Magor CiW Primary School (VA)	(161,519)	98,533	(62,986)
Rogiet Primary School	65,421	38,277	103,698
Undy Primary School	(141,509)	129,643	(11,866)
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin	16,663	78,724	95,387
Chepstow cluster			
Chepstow School	853,038	693,275	1,546,313
Pembroke Primary School	(171,076)	15,314	(155,762)
Shirenewton Primary School	(129,943)	57,591	(72,352)
St Mary's Chepstow RC Primary School (VA)	(70,003)	69,635	(368)
The Dell Primary School	80,993	43,895	124,888
Thornwell Primary School	95,190	69,087	164,277
Monmouth cluster			
Monmouth Comprehensive	(229,657)	543,104	313,447
Cross Ash Primary School	(58,467)	65,409	6,942
Kymin View Primary School	(76,867)	67,373	(9,494)
Llandogo Primary School	(17,655)	37,344	19,689
Osbaston CiW Primary School (VC)	73,488	4,149	77,637
Overmonnow Primary School	124,404	140,872	265,276
Raglan CiW Primary School (VC)	(175,381)	84,360	(91,021)
Trellech Primary School	(100,053)	51,117	(48,936)
Usk CiW Primary School (VC)	(91,419)	171,607	80,188
Special School			
PRU	742,161	718,678	1,460,839
Total	905,093	4,886,770	5,791,863

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Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 3rd December 2024

Report Item 4: Financial Update

The Cabinet Member introduced the report, together with Jonathon Davies, Head of Finance/Section 151 Officer.

Key points raised by the Committee Members:

Discussion took place, the following questions and key points raised by the Committee for consideration by the Cabinet Member:

- A member asked about steps to prevent further financial deterioration and ensure sustainable recovery, addressing issues like schools' growing deficits and underfunded services. The Cabinet Member responded that the deficit is about 2% of the revenue budget, and they are working with schools through recovery plans to manage the situation gradually. They are also looking to other areas of the authority to support increased demand in health and social care. Measures include implementing a programme of change for service delivery, focusing on cost mitigation, and enhancing financial scrutiny.
- The Committee asked for clarification on financial risk and measures to address the budget deficit. The Cabinet Member explained that financial risk is secondary to the risk of harm, and the Council is spending the necessary money to provide care, leading to an overspend in social care. Measures include controlling the front door of services and managing care packages effectively.
- A member enquired about the number of schools close to deficit and why Pembroke Primary has quite a high surplus when compared to other schools. Officers advised that the deficits of all schools are outlined in Appendix 3 of the report, and Pembroke Primary's higher surplus is due to recent staffing changes and additional learning needs income allocated to support pupils.
- A member asked about being creative with resources, mentioning Castle Park School. The Cabinet Member responded that while the Council maximizes resource use, some funding is specifically allocated for certain projects, such as active travel, and cannot be redirected.
- A question was asked about the performance of leisure centres, specifically membership relative to each town and the situation with Newport Leisure Park and Castle Gate. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that MonLife is performing well, with membership data available for all centres. Caldicot has the lowest membership, and efforts are ongoing to improve facilities. Newport Leisure Park is performing adequately, while Castle Gate remains challenging, but efforts are ongoing to increase occupancy.
- Another question was asked about measures to mitigate supply teaching costs in schools. The Cabinet Member responded that supply teaching costs are a significant pressure on school

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

budgets, and the Council is focusing on this area, with the auditor conducting work to help manage these costs.

- The committee enquired about the increase in domiciliary care costs and whether it is related to improvements in the health board reducing bed blocking. The explanation given was that there has been a 10% increase in externally commissioned domiciliary care packages, resulting in an additional cost of £500k. The Cabinet Member added that improving pathways of care to get people out of hospitals transfers the financial burden to local authorities, and discussions with the Welsh Government are ongoing.
- A question was asked about the breakdown of children's placements and measures to review and prevent future breakdowns. The response was that each case of placement breakdown is reviewed to understand the reasons, which can include changes in the child's needs or the foster placement's circumstances. The Council aims to place children in the best possible environment and continuously reviews and learns from each case.
- A member asked for clarification on the status of the Castle Park Primary School project, specifically regarding the allocation of Section 106 money and issues delaying the project. The Cabinet Member for Education clarified that plans are being drawn up and will be completed by the end of December. Delays were due to the discovery of asbestos panels, but the project is now back on schedule.
- The committee enquired about the £2.3m in social care debt payments that have not been recovered, asking for details on the expected recovery amount, processes for collecting this debt, and measures to prevent future accrual. The Cabinet Member explained that the Council has increased the bad debt provision by £20k, reflecting the amount they do not expect to recover. Officers commented that the finance team works closely with families and representatives to ensure financial assessments are done upfront and takes legal advice when necessary, focusing on improving the collection process.
- A member asked about the additional learning needs (ALN) overspend of £510k, specifically the £256k overspend on new starters in independent schools. Officers explained that the overspend is due to pupils who were expected to leave school but continued their education, and new starters requiring bespoke support packages. The £256k overspend is due to new pupils coming into the county that were not anticipated.
- The Chair asked how the Council plans to manage the rising overspend, given the budget principle against using reserves to balance the budget, and whether external support will be required. The Cabinet Member responded that the Council plans to manage the rising overspend by offsetting it with outperformance in other services, seen as effective budget management. The use of Treasury gains is considered a valid tool to protect services, even if short-term. The Council aims to avoid using reserves for recurrent expenditure. The overspend has increased by just under £1m from Update 1 to Update 2 but is expected to decrease towards the end of the year. There is a possibility of an in-year injection of funding from the government's budget in October, and the Council is pursuing in-year budget recovery measures to further reduce the overspend.

**SUBJECT: PUBLIC SERVICES OMBUDSMAN FOR WALES ANNUAL LETTER
2023/24**

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 4 DECEMBER 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose is to fulfil the expectation of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales that their report is brought to the attention of Cabinet and Governance & Audit Committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the content of the Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) annual letter (Appendix 1) and inform the PSOW of their considerations and any proposed actions. The PSOW is aware that due to the scheduling of meetings there would be a delay in responding to them.
- 2.2 That the authority continues to engage with the PSOW complaints standards work, access training for staff and provide the PSOW with complaints data. We have also fully implemented the Ombudsman's model complaints policy.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Public Sector Ombudsman for Wales sends every Council an annual letter which provides a summary of the complaints received and investigated. This compares the number of complaints against the local authority which were received and investigated by the PSOW during 2023/24, with the local authority average during the same period.
- 3.2 The PSOW annual letter provides:
 - a breakdown of the number of complaints about the local authority broken down into subject categories.
 - shows the complaint outcomes for the local authority and the volume and proportion that each outcome represents for the local authority.
 - the numbers and percentages of cases received in which an intervention has occurred.
 - a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against councillors.
 - a breakdown of all Code of Conduct complaint outcomes against town or community councils.

3.3 The PSOW received 29 complaints about Monmouthshire County Council. This is 6 more than they received in the previous year, although they closed 32, some complaints were carried over from the previous year. They did not investigate any complaints although they requested early resolutions in 3 cases which was agreed. Comparisons are shown below, noting that the categories used by the commissioner differ between years.

Complaints received by subject: (PSOW definition)	Complaints Received	
	22/23	23/24
Adult Social Services	1	0
Children Social Services	6	7
Complaints handling	3	5
Environment and Environmental health	2	0
Licensing	0	0
Finance and Taxation	1	1
Housing	1	3
Planning and Building Control	6	4
Roads and transport	0	4
Community Facilities, Recreation & Leisure	0	0
Covid 19	0	0
Benefits Administration	0	1
Education	0	0
Various Other	4	4

PSOW Comparison of complaint outcomes

Local Authority	Out of Jurisdiction	Premature	Other cases closed after initial consideration	Early resolution/voluntary settlement	Discontinued	Other report – not upheld	Other report – upheld in whole or in part	Public interest reports
Monmouthshire	6	10	13	3	0	0	0	0

The PSOW sought early resolution on three complaints which we agreed.

Compliance performance comparison

The PSOW's annual letter now includes the number of recommendations made to individual local authorities and the timeliness of our response. The PSOW made four recommendations and 25% of them were complied with on time. Three of the four

were not responded to on time. Two of these were one day late and one was eleven days late.

Code of Conduct complaints

There were 15 complaints that the PSOW decided not to investigate and one where it was decided no action was necessary.

Town/Community Council Code of Conduct complaints

There was one complaint that was referred to the Standards Committee and one complaint where it was decided not to investigate.

- 3.4 This report and the PSOW Annual letter 2023/24 will also be presented to the Standards Committee and Governance & Audit Committee.

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

This report provides feedback information from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The report does not seek to divert from the Council's corporate priorities and the continued delivery of the wide range of services provided through the Council to the public. As the report deals solely with feedback information, a Future Generations and Equality Impact Assessment is not considered appropriate in this instance.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

This section is not relevant as the work of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is outside of our control.

6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

We will continue to work with the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales office to resolve as many issues as possible at an early stage and monitor the number of complaints the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales receives and deals with.

7 REASONS:

- 7.1 The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) role is to consider complaints about public services providers in Wales and to consider complaints that members of local authorities have broken the Code of Conduct. The PSOW has requested that Cabinet and Governance & Audit Committee considers the complaints that the PSOW has received.

8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

There are currently no extra resource costs identified.

9 CONSULTEES:

Strategic Leadership Team

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2023/24

11 AUTHOR:

Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager

12 CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644647

E-mail: annetteevans@monmouthshire.gov.uk



**Ombwdsmon
Ombudsman**
Cymru • Wales

Ask for: Communications



01656 641150



Caseinfo@ombudsman.wales

Date: 6 September 2024

Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby
Monmouthshire County Council

By email only

maryannbrocklesby@monmouthshire.gov.uk
paulmatthews@monmouthshire.gov.uk
JamesWilliams@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Annual Letter 2023/24

Dear Councillor Brocklesby

Role of PSOW

As you know, the role of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is to consider complaints about public services, to investigate alleged breaches of the councillor Code of Conduct, to set standards for complaints handling by public bodies and to drive improvement in complaints handling and learning from complaints. I also undertake investigations into public services on my own initiative.

Purpose of letter

This letter is intended to provide an update on the work of my office, to share key issues for local government in Wales and to highlight any particular issues for your organisation, together with actions I would like your organisation to take.

Overview of 2023/24

This letter, as always, coincides with my Annual Report – “A New Chapter Unfolds” – and comes at a time when public services continue to be in the spotlight, and under considerable pressures. My office has seen another increase in the number of people asking for our help – a 17% increase in overall contacts compared to the previous year, with nearly 10,000 enquiries and complaints received. Our caseload has increased substantially - by 37% - since 2019.

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ombwdsmon.cymru
holwch@ombwdsmon.cymru
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
Rydym yn hapus i dderbyn ac
ymateb i ohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg.

ombudsman.wales
ask@ombudsman.wales
0300 790 0203
1 Ffordd yr Hen Gae, CF 35 5LJ
We are happy to accept and respond
to correspondence in Welsh.

During 2023/24 we considered and closed more enquiries and complaints than we ever have done before, and we reduced the average cost for each case and investigation. We started the year with a focus on reducing our aging cases, those over 12 months old, by 50% by the end of the year. These cases are often the most complex and distressing for the people making the complaint. I am extremely pleased to say we exceeded this target, reducing our aged investigations by over 70%. We are now well on track to meeting our objective to complete investigation of complaints within 12 months.

Public Services Complaints and compliance with recommendations

In total 1,108 complaints about local authorities were made to us last year – broadly the same number as the previous year. During this period, we intervened in (upheld, settled or resolved at an early stage) 14% of local authority complaints – a similar proportion to recent years.

We received 29 complaints about Monmouthshire County Council in 2023/24 and closed 32 - some complaints were carried over from the previous year. Monmouthshire County Council's intervention rate was 9%. Further information on complaints about your organisation can be found in the appendices.

We made 4 recommendations to your council during the year. To ensure that our investigations and reports drive improvement, we follow up compliance with the recommendations agreed with your organisation. In 2023/24, 4 recommendations were due and 25% were complied with in the timescale agreed. The remainder were complied with, but outside the timescales agreed or remain outstanding as at 9 April 2024.

Recommendations and timescales for complying with recommendations are always agreed with the public body concerned before being finalised, and we therefore expect organisations to comply within the timescales agreed.

Our Code of Conduct work

My role is to investigate allegations that councillors have breached their Code of Conduct. Where an investigation finds evidence to support the complaint on a matter which is serious enough to require a referral in the public interest, these cases are referred either to the local Standards Committee or to the Adjudication Panel for Wales for consideration.

In 2023/24, we received 16% more Code of Conduct complaints than the previous year, relating to both Principal Councils and Town and Community Councils. My office made 21 referrals – to Standards Committees or the Adjudication Panel for Wales, an increase from 12 the previous year.

I am grateful to your Monitoring Officer for their positive engagement with my office over the last year. We will continue to engage with them on matters relating to the ethical standards framework, including Local Resolution Procedures this year.

Independent Review

As you will be aware, I became aware of inappropriate comments, of a political nature, made by a member of my staff via social media. These comments were widely reported in the media. The member of staff in question was suspended and subsequently resigned. However, the comments prompted questions about my office's work on councillor Code of Conduct cases.

In view of the seriousness of the matter, I commissioned Dr Melissa McCullough to conduct an independent review of our Code of Conduct work, and I have published the full [Terms of Reference](#) for that review. I and my staff are engaging closely with the Monitoring Officer Group and the National Forum for Standards Committee Chairs in relation to this matter. I will be publishing Dr McCullough's final report on completion of the review and sharing it with the Senedd's Finance Committee this Autumn.

Supporting improvement of public services

We continued our work on supporting improvement in public services last year and worked on our second wider Own Initiative investigation. The investigation includes four local authorities and considers carers' needs assessments. I am grateful to the investigated authorities for their co-operation and candour throughout the year, and we look forward to sharing our finalised report this Autumn. This will make recommendations to the investigated authorities and will ask all local authorities across Wales to make similar improvements.

We have continued our work on complaints handling standards for public bodies in Wales and now have 56 public bodies following our model complaints handling policy. These public bodies account for around 85% of the complaints we receive. We have continued our work to publish complaints statistics, gathered from public bodies, with data published twice a year.

We continued our work to publish complaints statistics into a third year, with data now published twice a year. This data allows us to see information with greater context – for example, last year 15% of complaints made to Monmouthshire County Council's went on to be referred to PSOW.

Action we would like your organisation to take

Further to this letter can I ask that your Council takes the following actions:

- Present my Annual Letter to the Cabinet and to the Governance and Audit Committee at the next available opportunity and notify me of when these meetings will take place.
- Consider the data in this letter, alongside your own data, to understand more about your performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and your organisation's compliance with recommendations made by my office.

- Inform me of the outcome of the Council's considerations and proposed actions on the above matters at the earliest opportunity.

I would like to thank you, and your officers, for your continued openness and engagement with my office. Our information shows that local authorities are looking into more complaints than ever before and are using information from complaints to deliver better outcomes for the people of Wales.

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michelle Morris in black ink.

Michelle Morris
Public Services Ombudsman

Cc. Paul Matthews, Chief Executive, Monmouthshire County Council
James Williams, Monitoring Officer, Monmouthshire County Council



Factsheet

Appendix A - Complaints Received

Local Authority	Complaints Received	Received per 1,000 residents
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	15	0.22
Bridgend County Borough Council	59	0.41
Caerphilly County Borough Council	56	0.32
Cardiff Council*	149	0.41
Carmarthenshire County Council	69	0.37
Ceredigion County Council	32	0.45
Conwy County Borough Council	36	0.31
Denbighshire County Council**	31	0.32
Flintshire County Council	51	0.33
Cyngor Gwynedd	38	0.32
Isle of Anglesey County Council	38	0.55
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	12	0.20
Monmouthshire County Council	29	0.31
Neath Port Talbot Council	35	0.25
Newport City Council	52	0.33
Pembrokeshire County Council	40	0.32
Powys County Council	54	0.41
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	64	0.27
Swansea Council	81	0.34
Torfaen County Borough Council	14	0.15
Vale of Glamorgan Council	77	0.58
Wrexham County Borough Council	76	0.56
Total	1108	0.36
* inc 2 Rent Smart Wales		
** inc 1 Wales Penalty Processing Partnership		



Appendix B - Received by Subject

Monmouthshire County Council	Complaints Received	% share
Adult Social Services	0	0%
Benefits Administration	1	3%
Children's Social Services	7	24%
Community Facilities, Recreation and Leisure	0	0%
Complaints Handling	5	17%
Covid-19	0	0%
Education	0	0%
Environment and Environmental Health	0	0%
Finance and Taxation	1	3%
Housing	3	10%
Licensing	0	0%
Planning and Building Control	4	14%
Roads and Transport	4	14%
Various Other	4	14%
Total	29	



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Appendix C - Complaint Outcomes (* denotes intervention)

Monmouthshire County Council		% Share
Out of Jurisdiction	6	19%
Premature	10	31%
Other cases closed after initial consideration	13	41%
Early Resolution/ voluntary settlement*	3	9%
Discontinued	0	0%
Other Reports - Not Upheld	0	0%
Other Reports Upheld*	0	0%
Public Interest Reports*	0	0%
Special Interest Reports*	0	0%
Total	32	



Appendix D - Cases with PSOW Intervention

	No. of interventions	No. of closures	% of interventions
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	16	6%
Bridgend County Borough Council	8	59	14%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	3	48	6%
Cardiff Council	28	144	19%
Cardiff Council - Rent Smart Wales	0	3	0%
Carmarthenshire County Council	8	60	13%
Ceredigion County Council	7	32	22%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	37	0%
Denbighshire County Council	2	32	6%
Denbighshire County Council - Wales Penalty Processing Partnership	0	1	0%
Flintshire County Council	8	57	14%
Cyngor Gwynedd	6	39	15%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	10	41	24%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	3	14	21%
Monmouthshire County Council	3	32	9%
Neath Port Talbot Council	5	34	15%
Newport City Council	5	51	10%
Pembrokeshire County Council	7	38	18%
Powys County Council	7	53	13%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	11	63	17%
Swansea Council	12	77	16%
Torfaen County Borough Council	2	14	14%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	15	71	21%
Wrexham County Borough Council	7	79	9%
Total	158	1095	14%



Appendix E – Compliance performance comparison

Local Authority	Number of recommendations made in 2023-24	Number of recommendations falling due in 2023-24	% of recommendations, complied with on time
Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council	1	1	100%
Bridgend County Borough Council	18	20	35%
Caerphilly County Borough Council	9	9	11%
Cardiff Council	74	75	92%
Carmarthenshire County Council	25	25	52%
Ceredigion County Council	23	23	78%
Swansea Council	29	32	63%
Conwy County Borough Council	0	1	0%
Denbighshire County Council	5	6	67%
Flintshire County Council	17	17	59%
Cyngor Gwynedd	12	19	74%
Isle of Anglesey County Council	26	24	92%
Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council	11	9	56%
Monmouthshire County Council	4	4	25%
Neath Port Talbot Council	14	14	29%
Newport City Council	10	7	43%
Pembrokeshire County Council	24	23	96%
Powys County Council	18	16	31%
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	26	26	77%
Torfaen County Borough Council	3	3	67%
Vale of Glamorgan Council	50	48	92%
Wrexham County Borough Council	16	19	42%



Appendix F - Code of Conduct Complaints

**Monmouthshire County
Council**

Decision not to investigate	15
Discontinued	0
No evidence of breach	0
No action necessary	1
Refer to Adjudication Panel	0
Refer to Standards Committee	0
Total	16



Appendix G - Town/Community Council Code of Complaints

Town/Community Council	Decision not to investigate	Investigations				Total	
		Discontinued	No evidence of breach	No action necessary	Refer to Adjudication Panel		Refer to Standards Committee
Caerwent Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Llantilio Pertholey Community Council	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Monmouth Town Council	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Raglan Community Council	1	0	0	0	0	0	1



Information Sheet

Appendix A shows the number of complaints received by PSOW for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. These complaints are contextualised by the population of each authority.

Appendix B shows the categorisation of each complaint received, and what proportion of received complaints represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix C shows outcomes of the complaints which PSOW closed for the Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the volume, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix D shows Intervention Rates for all Local Authorities in 2023/24. An intervention is categorised by either an upheld complaint (either public interest or non-public interest), an early resolution, or a voluntary settlement.

Appendix E shows the compliance performance of each Local Authority.

Appendix F shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Local Authority in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for the Local Authority.

Appendix G shows the outcomes of Code of Conduct complaints closed by PSOW related to Town and Community Councils in the Local Authority's area in 2023/24. This table shows both the number, and the proportion that each outcome represents for each Town or Community Council.



SUBJECT: Approval of NEET Prevention Strategy

DATE: 5th December 2024

MEETING: Cabinet

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To present the draft Monmouthshire NEET Prevention Strategy for approval to Cabinet on 5th December 2024.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the final draft of the revised Monmouthshire NEET Reduction Strategy.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 This draft Monmouthshire NEET Prevention Strategy demonstrates our commitment as a Council to address NEET prevention in our county in order to create better opportunities and outcomes for our young people, through collaborative work with our valued stakeholders.
- 3.2 This revised NEET Prevention Strategy replaces the previous strategy A Great Start for All: NEET reduction Strategy 2018-2021.
- 3.2 The Inspire programme is currently funded by UK Governments Shared Prosperity Fund, which will come to an end in March 2025. In addition, the Engagement & Progression Coordination function is funded by Welsh Government via the Youth Support Grant, with the current funding ending in March 2025.
- 3.3 Senior Leadership Team have previously been made aware of Welsh Government Youth Engagement and Progression Framework 2013 and 2022 and the local authority's responsibility to provide a delivery model centred on individual need. The key areas of the framework are embedded in the draft Monmouthshire NEET Reduction Strategy and reflect added value whilst addressing the needs and aspirations of Monmouthshire's young people.

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

- 4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been included. The decision will be evaluated by Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, which will make recommendations of any proposed changes to Cabinet.
- 4.2 The NEET Strategy and Action Plan will be monitored through the following local forums;
- Learning, Skills and Economy Departmental Management Team

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken in Table One below.

Table One: Options Appraisal

Option	Benefits	Risks
1) Do Nothing	None identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of direction and vision for NEET prevention in Monmouthshire. • Increase in the number of young people at risk or who are NEET
2) Implementation of the Monmouthshire NEET Reduction Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve young people’s skills and future employment opportunities • Increased partnership working and co-delivery of projects • Shared expertise and resources • Reduced numbers of NEET young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of buy –in from partners • Loss of externally funded programmes that support NEET reduction

6. REASONS:

6.1 The previous Monmouthshire NEET Reduction Strategy 2018 -2021 is out of date and a new strategy for the next 3 years is essential to ensure continued improvements year on year in the number of young people who have entered and sustained education, employment or training at the Post 16 Transition Point.

6.2 We wish to demonstrate our commitment to the NEET prevention agenda as a Council with stakeholders, to implement the strategy action plan and improve outcomes for our young people and communities.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 Currently the Engagement & Coordination Function and NEET prevention programme (Inspire) are funded by Welsh Government and UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund respectively. These funding streams are unclear beyond April 2025.

7.2 The strategy will be used as a tool to inform and align good practise within existing resources through a partnership approach.

8. CONSULTEES:

- NEET Strategy Working Group: Louise Wilce – Youth Employment & Skills Lead, Tim Bird – Sustainable Education Adviser, CYP, Huw Thomas – Team Manager, Children’s Services, Mark Foster – Equality, Inclusion and Activities Lead, MonLife, Sarah Rees – Manager, Careers Wales and Sian Farquharson - Professional Learning Lead Partner (Post 16, SEREN and More Able), Education Achievement Service.

Frances O'Brien – Chief Officer for Communities & Place
Paul Griffiths – Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Will McLean – Chief Officer for Children & Young People
Martyn Groucutt – Cabinet Member for Education
Hannah Jones – Head of Economy, Employment and Skills

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Draft NEET Prevention Strategy



2024%20Neet%20Prevention%20Strategy

Appendix 2: Integrated Impact Assessment



Integrated%20Impact%20Assessment%20

10. AUTHOR:

Louise Wilce – Youth Employment & Skills Lead

10. CONTACT DETAILS:

Email: LouiseWilce@monmouthshire.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1:

Monmouthshire County Council

NEET Prevention Strategy

2024

FOREWORD

Young people contribute significantly to their families, communities and economy and it is crucial we collectively work together to optimise the opportunities they have to learn, earn and upskill in their chosen pathways. As our young people leave compulsory education, those that become NEET (not in education, employment or training) between the ages of 16 and 18 are more likely to be unemployed in the future, receive low income, suffer from poor physical and mental health, depression and possibly find themselves involved in crime.

Our strategy for Monmouthshire sets out our commitment in creating better outcomes for young people through increasing engagement and progression in education, training and employment. We will continue to be ambitious in driving this strategy and work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure that the challenges and barriers our young people face are minimised through shared action whilst always seeking to identify, enhance and develop opportunities in our county.

Despite the upheaval recent years has presented to our children and young people, and the lasting effects we see from it, the number of young people not entering education, employment or training have remained consistently low and often below the Welsh average. However, the economic challenges we face currently will contribute and impact on the choices our young people have when making decisions about their next steps. We have a collective responsibility to ensure young people secure and sustain a positive destination after leaving compulsory education whether that involves remaining in school, transitioning to college or work based learning or seeking employment.

This strategy will work towards the ambition of all young people being engaged in education, employment or training, working with schools, both inside and outside of Monmouthshire, Pupil Referral Service, Careers Wales, colleges and training providers to achieve this. It recognises that early identification and intervention are vital in supporting young people to thrive in their learning and enabling them to reach their potential beyond 16. This strategy cannot be addressed by one single agency. It has been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, identifying key priority themes and objectives that we believe will meet the needs of our young people.

ASPIRATION

Our aspiration for NEET prevention in Monmouthshire and the NEET Prevention strategy is:

Creating positive and sustained outcomes for young people through bespoke, productive and meaningful engagement in education, training and employment.

To achieve our aspiration we will focus on five key priority themes:

- Early Identification
- Commissioning Support & Provision
- Monitoring Progression
- Employability and employment opportunities
- Accountability

Page 6 BACKGROUND

The Welsh Government [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework \(2022\)](#) provides a framework for working together to engage with young people to raise their aspirations, ensure no-one is left behind and is built around the early identification of young people aged 11 to 18 who are at risk of becoming NEET (or at risk of Homelessness) across Wales. Within Monmouthshire using the framework, we have developed a model that seeks to prevent young people becoming NEET through robust early identification tool and targeted support but also effectively monitor and identify appropriate support pathways for those who do become NEET following the Post 16 Transition.

The term NEET refers to young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training. It is now a commonly used term to describe young people who are disengaged from learning or employment and have become marginalised from society.

Post 16 transition is a key transition point in a young person's life and, if we can get this process right, it can play a pivotal role in their next steps and future career pathway. Young people in Monmouthshire have a range of choices for their post 16 education, just over half in 2022/3 enrolled in Monmouthshire secondary school sixth form, whilst others enrolled in out of county sixth forms, colleges, and specialist provision. Effective practice provides young people with the coordinated support required to make a positive next step into the destination of their choice and reduce the number of young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET).

Our aim is to ensure that learners make informed, confident choices about their future education, training or journey into work through a transition process that is a positive experience for all.

DATA – PUPIL DESTINATIONS DATA AND 5 TIER MODEL

Throughout this strategy we will talk about two key sets of data – Pupil Destinations Data and Tier Dat. Pupil Destination Data provides annual data published by Welsh Government to demonstrate the destinations of our young people. The data relates to the destinations of young people *educated* in Monmouthshire. Pupil destination data provides quantitative data on the following categories:

Continuing in Full Time Education (in school)	Continuing in Full Time Education (in College)	Continuing in full time education (in Higher Education)	Taking a Gap year (intending to go to HE following year)	Continuing in Part Time Education (Less than 16 hours a week)	Work Based Training - non employed status	Work Based Training - Employment status	Employed - Other	Known not to be in Education, Training or Employment	No response to survey	Left the area
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In Monmouthshire our young people have a range of options if they choose to leave school, Pupil Destinations Data does not provide where the young person has transitioned to. For example, if college is the destination we are unable to see which college.

Tier Data is the fluid, daily snapshot of the current tier status of young people 16-19 who are resident in Monmouthshire. Tier data and which Tier a young person is in is categorised using Careers Wales 5 Tier Model, outlined below.

TIER	Young People	Lead Worker	Responsibility for Tracking and Support
Tier 5: In further education or EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In EET. Working or studying part time over 16 hours. 	No lead worker necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging. Providers' own pastoral systems or support should be utilised as appropriate.	Careers Wales
Tier 4: At risk of dropping out of EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in less than 16 hours of EET. Have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition but are subsequently in further education, sixth form or training. Have been identified to Careers Wales by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET. 	Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For low and medium risk use provider pastoral systems and/or allocate a learning coach as a lead worker. For High risk a lead worker may be allocated from either youth service or Careers Wales or if Families First involved Team Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker. 	Careers Wales
Tier 3: NEET or actively seeking EET but known to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with Careers Wales and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET, or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort. Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases. 	Careers Wales

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This tier should also include those known to Careers Wales, actively seeking EET but not requiring Careers Wales enhanced support, for example accessing support via careerswales.gov.wales or awaiting a college start date. 		
Tier 2: Young people known to Careers Wales who are NEET and are not ready or available to seek EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support. <u>Not available or unable to seek EET (for example due to illness, being a young carer, pregnancy, in custody).</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort. Youth Employment & Skills Team will provide lead worker in most cases (in some instances this role may be allocated to other services or organisations providing intensive personal support). 	Local Authority
Tier 1: EET status unknown to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unknown to YEPF Stakeholders. Young person could be in a destination but will remain 'unknown' until this is confirmed. 	Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.	Local Authority

If a young person is unable to make the transition into a destination beyond 16 and identified as Tier 2 (NEET) or Tier 1 (destination is unknown), we have an embedded local partnership that identifies, monitors and seeks to provide support. The Monmouthshire YEPF partnership **Keeping In Touch** group (KIT) meets monthly to monitor a young persons (tier) status using the **Careers Wales 5 Tier Model** above. KIT is coordinated and led by the local authorities Youth Employment & Skills Team with a range of post 16 stakeholders involved including Social Services, Careers Wales, Training Providers, Colleges, Youth Service and Youth Offending Service and monitors monthly Tier 1 and Tier 2 young people and the numbers of young people engaged with Careers Wales in Tier 3.

STRATGEY COLLABORATION

In developing this strategy, we sought the skills and knowledge of a number of personnel from our stakeholders through a working group. The NEET strategy working group have been key in shaping and developing the strategy and have also assisted and scrutinised the development of the action plan. Membership included external stakeholders and officers from Monmouthshire County Council directorates.

- Education Achievement Service
- Careers Wales
- MCC Communities & Place – Economy, Employment & Skills
- MCC Children & Young People
- MCC MonLife
- MCC Social Care & Health

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) is a systematic mechanism to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. Under the Framework there are processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, this is led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners. The Framework helps young people to fulfil their potential and prevents poverty and homelessness.

The original YEPF (2013) was developed with the aim of reducing NEET rates. In this updated version, there remains a strong focus on preventing young people becoming NEET and supporting young people who are NEET into a positive destination, improving their life chances. The updated Framework has also been expanded to include the prevention of youth homelessness. This is in recognition of the fact that the 'warning signs' of a young person potentially becoming NEET can overlap with indicators that a young person may be at risk of family breakdown and youth homelessness.

This YEPF operates alongside Welsh Government's Young Person's Guarantee (YPG). The YPG for young people aged 16 to 24 aims to give young people who are NEET other opportunities to move into education, employment or training (EET). In addition, the ['Well-being of future generations: National indicators and milestones for Wales 2021'](#) will help foster this sense of collective responsibility and accountability. The national milestones, introduced following the ['Shaping Wales' Future: Using National Indicators and Milestones to measure our Nation's progress consultation'](#), will help us assess progress towards the 7 well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act').

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Of particular relevance to the Framework is the following indicator and milestone value:

- Indicator No. 22: percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups
- Milestone: at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050

The YEPF also aligns with Welsh Government's overarching children and young people's plan ('the Plan') outlines the 7 cross-government priorities which will help achieve our ambition to make Wales a wonderful place to grow up, live and work, now and in the future.

Locally, Monmouthshire County Council's [Community & Corporate Plan](#) 'Taking Monmouthshire Forward' identifies 6 Key objectives including 'A Thriving and Ambitious Place'. Within this objective, we want to achieve 'People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business' of which Number of school leavers not in education, employment or training is a key measure. However, work the strategy will also achieve will benefit Children and Young people: A Learning Place and link across to the [Economy, Employment & Skills Strategy](#).

Monmouthshire **Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy** identifies, amongst others, the following priority: - A fairer, more successful Monmouthshire. Objectives include:

- Support a balanced change in the demographic profile of our county. However currently 45% of Year 11 school leavers opt to undertake their post 16 learning out of county.
- Support the creation of 6,240 sustainable job opportunities.

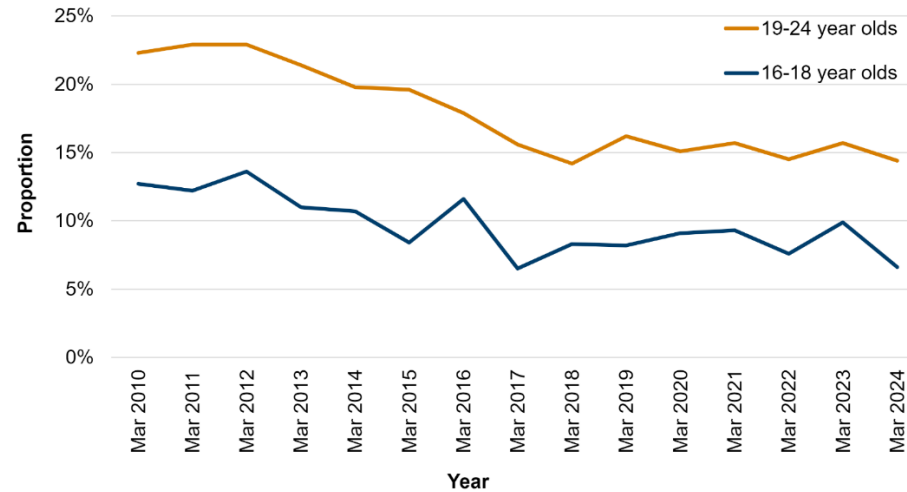
- Equip people with skills and qualifications to enter employment and enable employment progression. In addition, Monmouthshire County Council 'Community and Corporate Plan 2022 -2028' commits to promoting career paths in shortage areas such as care and construction earlier and more consistently, this strategy will aim to reduce labour shortages in these sectors by working closely with public and private sector organisations. Monmouthshire will be a place that young people will not need to leave because they will have the skills to work in new and emerging industries or set up their own businesses within the county.
- Collaborate with comprehensive schools, further and higher education partners to enhance access and networks.

Monmouthshire County Councils **Children and Young People: A Learning Place** plan identifies the following objectives:

- Develop a broader 14-19 offer including more collaboration between comprehensive schools and further education partners.
- Develop a broader educational offer to include both academic and vocational pathways and engage partners from public and private sectors.
- Provide enhanced learning opportunities and evidence-based interventions to ensure that pupils from low-income families are able to achieve their full potential.
- Promote career paths in shortage areas such as care and construction earlier and more consistently. Commit to specific activity in care apprenticeships and scale up delivery through Y Apprentis and similar schemes.
- Develop better links with further and higher education.

CURRENT POSITION

Young people not in education, employment or training in Wales, year ending March 2010 to March 2024



Line chart showing [Annual Population Survey NEET rates](#) for 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 year olds in Wales. Both age groups NEET rates have decreased overall across the last decade, despite fluctuations in each series during this time period. The NEET rate for people aged 16 to 18 in Wales was 6.6% in the year ending March 2024, down by 3.3 percentage points over the year. Over the longer term, the rate has decreased by 1.6 percentage points over the last five years and by 4.1 percentage points over the last decade.

Locally, despite the challenging times of the last 5 years, [Pupil Destinations Data](#) demonstrates Monmouthshire has continued to see consistent numbers of young people known not to be in Education, Employment or Training across our Year 11, 12 and 13 school leavers. In addition, for Year 11 and 13 particularly, we are often below the Welsh average.

Year 11

	2019	2020**	2021	2022	2023
Monmouthshire	1.3%	1.4%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%
	10	11	16	14	14
Wales	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	2.1%	2.0%
	537	527	507	664	670

Year 12

	2019	2020**	2021	2022	2023
Monmouthshire	1.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.9%	1.5%
	4	7	1	4	6
Wales	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%
	99	76	55	80	62

Year 13

	2019	2020**	2021	2022	2023
Monmouthshire	1.36%	3.92%	1.96%	1.2%	1.1%
	5	14	8	5	4
Wales	2.54%	3.53%	2.29%	2.8%	3.6%
	269	355	251	322	375

*Figures in **bold** indicate below Welsh average.

**Covid

Our Youth Engagement & Progression Framework partners, Careers Wales, provide coordination and support for young people in Tier 3 who are known not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) as detailed in the 5 Tier Model (p5). Local Authorities are unable to access, as there is no legal basis to share, Tier 3 data but do have access to numerical data. The data below represents the number of young people known not to be in education, employment or training in Y11-13 who are NEET and in Tier 3.

	Tier 3
2023	10
2022	8

Overall number of young people that are known to not be in education, employment or training has remained steady over the last 3 years. In mapping the journey of the Tier 2 NEET young people we have seen a variety of themes that contribute to a young person becoming NEET.

Theme	Mitigation
Low or non-attendance at school	Early Identification Tool 3 times per year Inspire Outreach introduced in 2023, with capacity increased September 2024.

Early disengagement from education or pathway	Inspire In-school model changed – Inspire worker stays with young person until they are sustaining a destination Youth Employment & Skills team working with stakeholders to develop broader options for young people, for example STEM.
Unable to access Level 3 / 6 th form offer in Monmouthshire	Youth Employment & Skills team working with stakeholders to develop Level 2 offer in 6 th forms – Passport to Employment.
Missed opportunities to engage	Engagement & Progression Coordinator developed Effective Practice Guidance for transition from secondary school to post 16 education. Collaborative piece of work with stakeholders on behalf of Wellbeing Subgroup.
Young people not identified as at risk of NEET – no ‘indicators’ and a planned destination.	Early Identification Tool updated in line with Welsh Government guidance, with Monmouthshire County Council staff part of working group. NEET young people case studies and themes of NEET Destination Data shared with key stakeholders.
Planned Gap Year.	Careers Wales Working Wales programme and YEPF partners continue to offer and provide support and pathways once young person returns.

DAS 2025

Monmouthshire County Council’s current NEET prevention programme works across Monmouthshire to prevent young people from becoming NEET working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure support and the best possible outcomes for our young people. Inspire has three strands which link to the Engagement and Progression Coordination and YEPF stakeholders to support and monitor at risk of or NEET young people:

- Inspire In-school – Allocated NEET prevention worker per school
- Inspire Outreach – two NEET prevention workers – Monmouth Comprehensive School & Caldicot School and KHS 3-19 School & Chepstow School.
- Inspire Post 16 Transition – one pan Monmouthshire worker
- Engagement & Progression Coordination Function* – function part of Youth Employment & Skills Leads role. Funded by Welsh Government Youth Support Grant under Youth Engagement & Progression Framework.

When considering our Pupil Destinations Data it is important to note that Youth Employment & Skills and Inspire has provided the consistent coordination and prevention programme since 2013, funded by European Structural Funds until December 2022 followed by UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund respectively with UK SPF in place until 31st March 2025.

OUR ASPIRATION, KEY PRIORITY THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

We have a clear aspiration for our NEET prevention strategy:

Creating positive and sustained outcomes for young people through bespoke, productive and meaningful engagement in education, training and employment.

In order to deliver our aspiration, we have identified five key priority themes, aligned to Welsh Governments Youth Engagement & Progression Framework but shaped to meet the needs of Monmouthshire Young People. In identifying these key priority themes we have worked collaboratively across Council Directorates and with external stakeholders and elected Members. Our five key priority themes are:

- Early Identification
- Commissioning Support & Provision
- Monitoring Progression
- Employability and employment opportunities
- Accountability

Objectives have been identified for each of the priority themes.

1. EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Monitor, develop and improve the Early Identification process in Monmouthshire to ensure the accurate and timely identification of children and young people at risk of disengagement.

Objectives

- Continue to develop and deliver the Early Identification Tool, identifying for young people aged 11-18 who are:
 - At risk of becoming NEET
 - At risk of homelessness (Collaborative Tool)
- Facilitate the Early Identification Tool to enable early intervention ahead of Key Stage 3 transition.

- Key Stage 2 Early Identification Tool (developed under ESF funding) to support early identification of at risk children in year 5 and year 6.
- Continue the identification and monitoring of young people 16-19 who are NEET.

2. COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION

Facilitate coordination of support by being the central point of contact through the Engagement and Progression Coordinator function.

Objectives

- Identify person-centred support for young people, ensuring services work collaboratively to meet individual needs.
- Provide continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people.
- Ensure appropriate opportunities and provision is available through working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure sustainable destinations for young people, including:
 - Further education, work-based learning and apprenticeships.
 - Interventions for preventing youth homelessness as identified within the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework.
 - Specific targeted support to reduce a young person's risk of NEET and boost a young person's mental health, well-being and self-esteem.
 - Targeted support programmes to ensure young people are motivated, equipped and able to engage in their next steps.

3. MONITORING PROGRESSION

Provide a coordinated approach to support transition between alternative provisions, key stages of compulsory education, and movement from pre to post 16.

Objectives

- Monitor what support and/or provision most at-risk young people are receiving and ensure this is in place through and beyond the post 16 transition.

- Under Youth Engagement & Progression Framework support monitoring of all young people through post 16 destination to minimise risk of NEET and offer support if needed.
- For young people aged 16 to 19, identify those whose destination on leaving school is unknown or known to be NEET and then:
 - establish what they are doing (EET or if they are NEET) and if they are ready to seek EET (Tier 1 or Tier 2)
 - ensure that any young people who have not progressed or sustained a destination are offered appropriate support to take steps towards education, employment or training.
- Monitor and evaluate identification processes and support programmes or provision, so adjustments can be made, as needed.

4. EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To form a better understanding of local employment needs and trends, to offer new opportunities for young people and to inform service design.

Objectives

- Youth employability provision which allows young people to progress into opportunities, with a balance of work experience, skills, qualifications and pathways to employment or self-employment. Supporting young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances and a prosperous future.
- Contribute to the development of opportunities and programmes working towards enhancing local and regional skills needs and links to employment sectors in collaboration with stakeholders. (For example – Monmouthshire STEM programme)
- Identify and support local and regional developments to aid and enhance education, training and employment opportunities for young people in collaboration with stakeholders. (For example - Post 16 Level 2 offer and Curriculum for Wales' Four Core purposes and Skills for Work Qualification.
- Working with stakeholders and networks to develop employer relationships.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY

Monmouthshire County Council has a strong sense of character and purpose. We value our young people, and will work towards providing the best opportunities and outcomes for them.

Objectives

- Shared responsibility and accountability amongst stakeholders for delivering the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework. Local authorities provide the strategic and operational leadership for implementing the Framework, while local partnerships have a critical role in supporting its delivery.
- A process of review and reflection by all delivery partners to develop a deeper understanding of how well the Framework is working in their local area and identify where improvements can be made.
- Continue to monitor tier data and annual destination data but with an increased ambition to utilise quantitative data considering trends, themes and lessons learnt to drive a culture of continuous improvement and learning amongst all partners.

FORWARD PLAN

MEASURES

Year 11

	2019		2020**		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Monmouthshire	1.1%	1.3%	1.0%	1.4%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%
	9	10	8	11	16	14	14	13	12	10
							Cohort Profile:	806	832	795
Wales	1.8%		1.7%		1.6%	2.1%	2.0%			
	537		527		507	664	670			

Year 12

	2019		2020**		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Monmouthshire	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.9%	1.5%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%
	5	4	4	7	1	4	6	5	5	4
							Cohort Profile	426	450	453
Wales	0.8%		0.6%		0.4%	0.7%	0.5%			
	99		76		55	80	62			

Year 13

	2019		2020**		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Monmouthshire	1.8%	1.36%	1.7%	3.92%	1.96%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
	8	5	7	14	8	5	4	4	4	4
							Cohort Profile	367	393	391
Wales	2.54%		3.53%		2.29%	2.8%	3.6%			
	269		355		251	322	375			

**Targets profiled in line with current NEET Prevention Programme delivery and outcomes – currently funded until end of March 2025 by UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.*

ACTION PLAN

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Monitor, develop and improve the Early Identification process in Monmouthshire to ensure the accurate and timely identification of children and young people at risk of disengagement.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Continue to develop and deliver the Early Identification Tool, identifying for young people aged 11-18 who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At risk of becoming NEET At risk of homelessness (Collaborative Tool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the Early Identification Tool three times per year for Years 7-11. Maintain EIT in line with Welsh Government guidance, contributing to WG guidance development if required. Maintain Individual EIT to be used with Y12-13 if required by schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of EIT's per academic year Numbers of young people being identified as 'at risk of NEET' Number of Y12-13 EIT's Number of young people supported by NEET prevention (Inspire) and Youth Homelessness (Compass) programmes. 	Ongoing Termly By January, then termly. Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills Youth Employment & Skills and Housing Support Team
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Facilitate the Early Identification Tool to enable early intervention ahead of Key Stage 3 transition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key Stage 2 Early Identification Tool (developed under ESF funding) to support early identification of at risk children in year 5 and year 6. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and enable access to Key Stage 2 EIT if required by schools annually ahead of KS3 transition. Ensure KS2 EIT remains accurate in case of future delivery of support programmes for KS2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of KS2 EIT's requested (and delivered). KS2 EIT. 		Youth Employment & Skills

EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Continue the identification and monitoring of young people 16-19 who are NEET. Providing clear leadership and partnership arrangements with a shared purpose of creating valuable prospects for young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate and lead monthly Keeping In Touch meeting monitoring and identifying appropriate support for young people in Tier 1 and Tier 2 • Continue to monitor numbers of young people engaged with Careers Wales in Tier 3. • Ensure appropriate membership of KIT with partners able to contribute information in and provide support pathways for young people identified in T1 and T2. 		Ongoing – monthly meeting	Youth Employment & Skills
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Careers Wales identification tool categorising learners to ensure target groups have support:	<p>The targeted groups are young people in Key Stage 4 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are looked after • Are in receipt of free school meals • Have ALN and are identified as School Action Plus/ Individual Development Plan • Are poor school attenders • Have been placed in EOTAS provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people supported. 	Ongoing	Careers Wales

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify themselves as young carers • Are identified by the Careers Adviser as being Tier 4 - at risk of NEET (based on professional judgement and information provided by partner organisations). See Tier 4 Guidelines for more information. • EAL - young people who have English as an additional language at stages A-C which means that they are not yet considered competent in their use of the English language. Schools will be asked to upload this data. 			
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COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION

Facilitate coordination of support by being the central point of contact through the Engagement and Progression Coordinator function.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION	Identify person-centred support for young people, ensuring services work collaboratively to meet individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to identify and map support and pathways available to young people. • Work collaboratively with partners to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of support providers and pathways • KIT membership and attendance. • Annual provider Self evaluation • Pupil Destination Data 	<p>April 2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Engagement & Progression Coordinator /Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>YEPF Partnership – KIT Group Careers Wales/EPC</p>

		ensure sustainable destinations for young people.		Ongoing	
COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION	Provide continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Lead Worker function through providing NEET prevention support to young people most at risk. • Ensure young people have a central point of contact to coordinate their support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people enrolled or supported • Number of outcomes (Qualification / Life Skill) • Pupil destination Data 	Ongoing	<p>Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>YEPF Partnership – KIT Group</p>
COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION	<p>Ensure appropriate opportunities and provision is available through working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure sustainable destinations for young people, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further education, work-based learning and apprenticeships. • Interventions for preventing youth homelessness as identified within the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework. • Specific targeted support to reduce a young person's risk of NEET and boost a young person's mental health, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with providers and stakeholders to ensure accessible further education, workbased learning and apprenticeships. • Create opportunities to grow provision through supporting the Level 2 Passport to Employment programme in Monmouthshire Sixth Forms. • Working with MCC Apprenticeship Coordinator, increase the number of Apprenticeships for 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data (WBL/Apprenticeships/FE) • Number of Work Based Learning providers in Monmouthshire. • Number of young people supported by Youth Homelessness programme • Number of young people enrolled on NEET prevention programme • Number of outcomes achieved • Number of new programmes developed, i.e Level 2 and STEM including number of young people to enrol. 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Annually – July 2025</p> <p>Bi-annually in line with YSG returns.</p> <p>Quarterly in line with SPF reporting</p> <p>Annually</p>	<p>CYP</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Engagement & Progression Coordinator</p> <p>Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>MCC Housing Support Team</p> <p>MCC Apprenticeship Coordinator</p>

	<p>well-being and self-esteem.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted support programmes to ensure young people are motivated, equipped and able to engage in their next steps. 	<p>school leavers within Monmouthshire County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with MCC Apprenticeship coordinator develop a work experience programme, enabling at risk of or NEET young people to gain valuable workplace skills and experience. Through Youth Support Grant funding support young people at risk of homelessness as identified by the EIT. Provide a targeted NEET prevention programme to support young people at risk of or who are NEET. 			
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MONITORING PROGRESSION

Provide a coordinated approach to support transition between alternative provisions, key stages of compulsory education, and movement from pre to post 16.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
MONITORING PROGRESSION	Monitor what support and/or provision most at-risk young people are receiving and ensure this is in place through and beyond the post 16 transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop transition working group with Vulnerable Learners Lead, Pupil Referral Service, Youth Offending Service and Social Services to monitor most at risk. Coordinate and Contribute to Pupil Destination Data through working with stakeholders to achieve positive destinations for young people. Work towards target of 0% Unknowns and Targets agreed for NEET young people. Monitor and support NEET prevention programmes in Monmouthshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil Destination Data Number of NEET Prevention Programmes 	Ongoing	CYP Vulnerable learners Lead Engagement & Progression Coordinator Pupil Referral Service Social Services Youth Offending Service
MONITORING PROGRESSION	Under Youth Engagement & Progression Framework support monitoring of all young people through post 16 destination to minimise risk of NEET and offer support if needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a coordinated approach to support transition between provisions, key stages of compulsory education, and movement from pre to post 16 for those most at risk. Also identifying support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil Destination Data Tier Data – Tier 1 & Tier 2 Number of Transition Activities Updated guide – 1 per year 	Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills CYP Wellbeing Subgroup YEPF Partners

		<p>needs for those that fail to make or sustain their destination.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and develop the 'Next Steps' process with secondary schools, Pupil Referral Service and other providers. Identifying and providing 'enhanced' transition support including college visits, careers events and related activities. • Deliver, Update and share annually Effective Practice Guide – For Transition from Secondary School to Post 16 education. 			
MONITORING PROGRESSION	<p>For young people aged 16 to 19, identify those whose destination on leaving school is unknown or known to be NEET and then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish what they are doing (EET or if they are NEET) and if they are ready to seek EET (Tier 1 or Tier 2) • ensure that any young people who have not progressed or sustained a destination are offered appropriate support to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to operate the Keeping in Touch (KIT) partnership • Seek to contact young people identified as Tier 1 to establish what they are doing. This will include communications, door knocks and partner knowledge • Provide Post 16 Tier 2/NEET support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier Data • Pupil Destinations Data • Number of young people enrolled on Post 16 Transition 	Ongoing	<p>Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>EPC</p> <p>Careers Wales</p> <p>YEPF Partners</p>

	take steps towards education, employment or training.	through Post 16 Transition (Inspire) or for those without barriers to engagement signpost to Careers Wales.			
MONITORING PROGRESSION	Monitor and evaluate identification processes and support programmes or provision, so adjustments can be made, as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual evaluation at Destination Count. Allowing us to identify themes, trends and areas of improvement. • Work with stakeholders to look at themes, trends and data. • Identify annual process and update following cycle with key stakeholders – Schools, Careers Wales and youth Employment & Skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data • Annual Review of NEET young people 	Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills EPC Careers Wales YEPF Partners

EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To form a better understanding of local employment needs and trends, to offer new opportunities for young people and to inform service design.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Youth employability provision which allows young people to progress into opportunities, with a balance of work experience, skills, qualifications and pathways to employment or self-employment. Supporting young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances and a prosperous future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver NEET prevention programme that includes additional qualifications and lifeskills to ensure young person has what they need to make the next step in education, employment or training • Deliver programmes that enhance young people's employability skills and opportunity for future employment. This will include school holiday programmes such as Inspire by Summer and one of or annual employability events. • Support employability and careers events in school through attending and contributing to school careers fairs and other key events.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of outcomes achieved through NEET Prevention programmes • Number of employability events delivered • Number of school holiday engagement sessions • Number of qualifications achieved through school holiday engagement. • Number of Careers Fairs attended 	Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Contribute to the development of opportunities and programmes working towards enhancing local and regional skills needs and links to employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement the Monmouthshire STEM Programme approved by Welsh Government in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STEM programme measures • Number of regional partnerships 	December 2024 – two year programme.	CYP Youth Employment & Skills EPC

	sectors in collaboration with stakeholders. (For example – Monmouthshire STEM programme)	partnership with stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent regional EPC's on Regional Skills Partnership Young Person's Guarantee Group 		Ongoing	
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Identify and support local and regional developments to aid and enhance education, training and employment opportunities for young people in collaboration with stakeholders. For example, Post 16 Level 2 offer and Curriculum for Wales' Four Core purposes and Skills for Work Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to support the development and implementation of the Level 2 offer in Monmouthshire Sixth Forms • Provide Mentoring and 1:1 Support for at risk of NEET young people enrolled on L2 course. • Contribute to and support implementation of New Curriculum by ensuring young people most at risk can sustain education. Also ensuring that qualifications delivered through Inspire compliment new curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people enrolled in Level 2 in 4 Secondary Schools • Number of young people enrolled for L2 Passport to Employment Mentoring, • Number of qualifications outcomes achieved through NEET prevention programme 	Review October 2024 August 2025	CYP Youth Employment & Skills
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Working with stakeholders and networks to develop employer relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Wales continue to deliver Year 10 Careers Check Data. Both 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 10 Careers Check 	Ongoing	Careers Wales EAS CWRE Network

		<p>identifying young people for Target Group and informing sector and employment data.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Employers in Monmouthshire and Careers Wales to provide insights and knowledge around Career Pathways for schools and their learners. • Utilise Economy, Employment & Skills network to enhance and develop relationships between schools and local business. <i>This will also link to STEM Programme and local opportunities in employment and training.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Wales and the EAS CWRE all phase school network • Number of relationships with local businesses 		Economy, Employment & Skills
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ACCOUNTABILITY

Monmouthshire County Council has a strong sense of character and purpose. We value our young people, and will work towards providing the best opportunities and outcomes for them.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
ACCOUNTABILITY	Shared responsibility and accountability amongst stakeholders for delivering the Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of YEPF and Engagement & Progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly review with Youth Support Grant (YSG) partners (Principal Youth Officer 	Ongoing	Engagement & Progression Coordinator.

	Engagement & Progression Framework. Local authorities provide the strategic and operational leadership for implementing the Framework, while local partnerships have a critical role in supporting its delivery.	Coordination (EPC) function. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate and lead monthly Keeping In Touch meeting and ensuring appropriate membership and attendance 	and Youth Homelessness Manager) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YSG 6 month and Annual Report. Annual Delivery plan (<i>if grant proceeds beyond 2025</i>). • KIT Meeting minutes • Tier 1 and 2 Data 	October 2024 March 2025 Ongoing Monthly (last Friday of each Month)	Youth Employment & Skills Team
ACCOUNTABILITY	A process of review and reflection by all delivery partners to develop a deeper understanding of how well the Framework is working in their local area and identify where improvements can be made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review and feedback from KIT partners to ensure appropriate membership and areas for development • Annual review of Pupil Destination processes with Careers Wales Pre 16 Manager • Annual Review of NEET Prevention Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Form • Updated Destination Process • NEET Strategy Review 	July 2025 November 2024 November 2025	Youth Employment & skills Careers Wales
ACCOUNTABILITY	Continue to monitor tier data and annual destination data but with an increased ambition to utilise quantitative data considering trends, themes and lessons learnt to drive a culture of continuous improvement and learning amongst all partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate and contribute to Pupil Destination processes. • Review and feedback annual destination data and 'lessons learnt' to stakeholders. • More frequent and strategic sharing progress including monthly tier data, Pupil Destinations and lessons learnt with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data • Annual NEET young people overview • Tier 1 and 2 Data 	April 2025	Youth Employment & skills

		Cabinet Members and Chief Officers.			
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Key Strategic Initiatives highlighted in the action plan above will contribute to the Key Priority Themes. These include but are not limited to:

- Maintain NEET Prevention Programme
- Level 2 Provision in Monmouthshire 6th Forms – Once established, scope to extend and grow into additional sectors and for learners not currently educated in Monmouthshire.
- STEM Programme being developed for implementation in 2025, connecting schools, communities and business, with an ambition to develop a Skills Centre in Monmouthshire
- MCC Opportunities:
 - Work experience – ambition to develop a paid work experience programme
 - Apprenticeships for school leavers – working to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities within our organisation, particularly school leavers, returning to a grow our own ethos. We will develop a case study of the current Economy, Employment & Skills Finance team who all entered employment in Monmouthshire through apprenticeships or work programmes. They reinforce how we can attract local young people into the organisation, providing opportunities to earn, grow and learn whilst shaping our future work force.
 - Training opportunities – explore widening the current training provision available to young people in Monmouthshire with a focus on quality and timely provision.



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Integrated Impact Assessment document (incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

<p>Name of the Officer Louise Wilce</p> <p>Phone no: 01600 730531 E-mail: LouiseWilce@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To implement the draft Monmouthshire NEET (not in education, employment or training) Reduction Strategy 2024-2027</p>
<p>Name of Service area Youth Employment & Skills (Economy, Employment & Skills)</p>	<p>Date: 3rd October 2024</p>

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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	We aim to engage with young people 11- 19 years most at risk of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) or who are NEET. The age range is in line with with Welsh Government Youth Engagement & Progression Framework.	None identified	N/A
Disability	We aim to engage and support young people to meet individual needs without discrimination.	None identified	N/A

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	.We aim to provide a provision which is inclusive for transgender people and groups We will address any issues in regards to work placements, employment and training opportunities.	None identified	N/A
Marriage or civil partnership	Not Applicable	None identified	N/A
Pregnancy or maternity	Risk assessment will be in place for pregnant young people ensuring all health and safety measures have been addressed and the well-being of the young person is paramount.	None identified	N/A
Race	.Young people referred onto our programmes will be given the same opportunities regardless of race. The relevant support will be provided to meet individual needs	None identified	N/A
Religion or Belief	.We aim to offer bespoke packages of support that will take into account young peoples' religion and religious beliefs.	None identified	N/A
Sex	We aim to offer opportunities that will take into account individual needs regardless of sex.	None identified	N/A

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?
Sexual Orientation	We aim to offer opportunities that will take into account individual needs regardless of sexual orientation.	None identified	N/A

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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?

Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	<i>The NEET Prevention strategy will provide a framework to ensure young people at risk of or who are NEET are identified and provided with support if required. The work completed by partners identified and Monmouthshire's NEET Prevention programme (inspure) will seek to ensure young people have the qualifications, lifeskills and support needed to make positive next steps and are able to sustain their education, employment or training destination. The strategy seeks to ensure young people have the right opportunities to be successful.</i>	<i>None identified</i>	<i>N/A</i>
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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	The use of the Welsh language has been taken into consideration in delivery of the SPF projects. The promotion of Welsh language will be monitored. The delivery team will continue to ensure that they adhere to the Council's Welsh Language Standards.	No impact identified at this stage	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	<i>There is no planned recruitment however, where new posts are required, the need to communicate through Welsh and English as part of the recruitment process and any necessary training offered as needed.</i>	No impact identified at this stage	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	The programmes operating under this strategy have bilingual promotional materials and qualifications workbooks can be provided in Welsh if requested by the young person. Staff will assess qualifications using incidental Welsh.	No impact identified at this stage	N/A



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?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>This strategy sets out our commitment to increase young peoples engagement and progression into education, training and employment. Responsible partners will support young people to make the right choices to move into further education, employment and training. This strategy will aim to enable young people to improve their skills and future employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Person centred approach in supporting future pathways addressing individual need.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)</p>	<p>The programmes outlined in this strategy will address issues such as waste, recycling, minimize energy usage and efficient use of such resources, whilst also raising awareness of environmental issues and healthy lifestyles.</p>	<p>Sharing expertise, networks and resources will ensure a good provision for our young people.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>The programmes outlined in this strategy will work with young people, supporting them to overcome health and wellbeing barriers by either delivering health or wellbeing workshops and/or support, linking learners with health care professionals, organisations and networks and other health and wellbeing services. The young people's health and wellbeing is a crucial element to reducing their overall risk of becoming NEET.</p>	<p>The one to one support from responsible partners will enable us to identify and address individual need. Setting agreed goals and reinforcing recognition and achievements. A reduction in the barriers to participation is a key element to enable young people to be engaged, supported and valued. The level of support offered will be high and consistent.</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Programmes in the strategy will encourage safe and appropriate use of IT and the internet, developing young peoples' digital literacy skills, preparing them for further learning, education and training. The programmes will link to the wider community, helping young people be active citizens in their community and have a greater awareness of community safety.	Encourage safer use of the internet and raise awareness of the harmful effects and consequences of inappropriate use of social media
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The strategy and activities delivered within its framework will work to enhance our young people's global responsibility through qualifications and learning opportunities.	Working closely with our Local Authority partners and Careers Wales we will share resources and good practices to ensure young people have the best opprutnities to engage in global wellbeing activities and see how this impacts on their communities.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	All programmes outlined in this strategy will have marketing, publications and printed literature available bilingually where appropriate. The strategy will conform to the Welsh Language Legislation Welsh Language Wales Measure and accompanying welsh language standards.	Encouraging young people to embrace the vibrant welsh culture and language.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The strategy will develop effective ways to engage and provide support for those individuals regardless of ethnic origin, gender, disability sexual orientation or religion to ensure all young people actively participate in and benefit from the programme. The LA Equal Opportunity's Policy stipulates how staff can best promote equality of opportunity and outcomes for young people regardless of age, race, ethnicity and disability.	All of our policies and procedures are guided by the current local and national equal opportunities guidance and legislation.

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The long term future plan is that all young people will secure and sustain a positive destination after leaving compulsory education. This strategy aims to create a NEET free county working with our schools, Pupil Referral Service, Careers Wales, colleges, training providers and local employers. This will reduce the likelihood of future or continuing poverty amongst young people. It will also deliver improved health and well-being for young people, whilst also instilling a work ethic for young people and seeing aspiration levels rise.</p>	<p>This strategy aims to support the development of resilience in those young people most at risk or who are NEET, to improve their confidence and skills. Thus enabling them to progress into education, employment or training..</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>This strategy cannot be addressed by one single agency. It has been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders including our schools, Pupil Referral Service, Careers Wales, colleges, training providers and local employers. Thus reducing the chances of young people becoming NEET.</p>	
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p><i>Young people, have been involved in the development and setting the key priorities of the strategy. Young people will be part of the monitoring and evaluation process of the strategy to demonstrate impact and value added, shaping future development through lessons learnt.</i></p>	

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The Inspire programme and Engagement & Progression Coordination is a key part of the strategy and are preventative initiatives to enable the reduction in the risk of young people becoming NEET and reduction in the number of young people who are NEET.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the long term impact of the programmes will challenge behaviours, actions and attitudes, subsequently establishing firm foundations on which to support in the future and provide generic skills.</p>	<p>The programmes will be monitored and reviewed as part of the action plan to ensure targets are on track and then young people feel the programmes are meeting their needs and expectations.</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>Young peoples well being is paramount and supporting them to overcome health and wellbeing barriers by either delivering health and wellbeing programmes and/or support, linking young people with health care professionals, organisations and networks and other health and wellbeing services. The young peoples' health and wellbeing is a crucial element to reducing their overall risk of becoming NEET.</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	<i>Safeguarding is a priority, young people on our programmes will have a multiple barriers and are vulnerable individuals. All Youth Employment & Skills staff have completed the Safeguarding level 1. Some staff including the service lead are trained to Level 2 and all staff will maintain the level of which they are trained.</i>	<i>.None identified</i>	<i>N/A</i>
Corporate Parenting	<i>The strategy and action plan targets young people who are looked after children (LAC) and care leavers. We aim to continue collaborative working with associated workers and young people to meet their needs and circumstances.</i>	<i>None identified</i>	<i>N/A</i>

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

The following data has identified and informed both strategy and the need to continue the Inspire programme;

- The Local Authority Early Identification process identifying young people most at risk in key stage 3 and 4.
- The Careers Wales 5 Tier model data, identifying young people 16 -18 years in tier 1 and 2 of the system who are NEET
- Pupil Destinations Data - [Pupil destinations | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](https://gov.wales/pupil-destinations)

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?

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.It is anticipated that the NEET Prevention Strategy will have a positive impact on the young peoples' social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education and skills. This will develop their resilience and improve their life chances. This proposal does acknowledge that due to personal, social and educational barriers, not every young person will progress into further education, training or employment. The strategy has also, and will continue to, identify and drive key strategic initiatives to improve the opportunities for young people in partnership with meeting future business skills requirements.

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

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	NEET Strategy Working Group: Working group developed aspiration, key priority themes and action plan	July-September 2024	
1	Consultation with Cabinet Members: Updates provided to Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Cabinet Member for Education for discussion – focusing on asportation and key priority themes. Draft Strategy provided to Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Cabinet Member for Education.	July-September 2024	
1	SLT	September	Consideration to strengthen key strategic initiatives. Consideration of Targets and funding risk for NEET Prevention programmes (SPF funded)
1	Cabinet Business Meeting	1 st October 2024	Consideration to strengthen key strategic initiatives.
2	Performance and Scruting Committee	15 th October 2024	
	Cabinet	6 th November 2024	

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Monmouthshire County Council

NEET Prevention Strategy

2024

DRAFT

FOREWORD

Young people contribute significantly to their families, communities and economy and it is crucial we collectively work together to optimise the opportunities they have to learn, earn and upskill in their chosen pathways. As our young people leave compulsory education, those that become NEET (not in education, employment or training) between the ages of 16 and 18 are more likely to be unemployed in the future, receive low income, suffer from poor physical and mental health, depression and possibly find themselves involved in crime.

Our strategy for Monmouthshire sets out our commitment in creating better outcomes for young people through increasing engagement and progression in education, training and employment. We will continue to be ambitious in driving this strategy and work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure that the challenges and barriers our young people face are minimised through shared action whilst always seeking to identify, enhance and develop opportunities in our county.

Despite the upheaval recent years has presented to our children and young people, and the lasting effects we see from it, the number of young people not entering education, employment or training have remained consistently low and often below the Welsh average. However, the economic challenges we face currently will contribute and impact on the choices our young people have when making decisions about their next steps. We have a collective responsibility to ensure young people secure and sustain a positive destination after leaving compulsory education whether that involves remaining in school, transitioning to college or work based learning or seeking employment.

This strategy will work towards the ambition of all young people being engaged in education, employment or training, working with schools, both inside and outside of Monmouthshire, Pupil Referral Service, Careers Wales, colleges and training providers to achieve this. It recognises that early identification and intervention are vital in supporting young people to thrive in their learning and enabling them to reach their potential beyond 16. This strategy cannot be addressed by one single agency. It has been developed collaboratively with key stakeholders, identifying key priority themes and objectives that we believe will meet the needs of our young people.

Our aspiration for NEET prevention in Monmouthshire and the NEET Prevention strategy is:

Creating positive and sustained outcomes for young people through bespoke, productive and meaningful engagement in education, training and employment.

To achieve our aspiration we will focus on five key priority themes:

- Early Identification
- Commissioning Support & Provision
- Monitoring Progression
- Employability and employment opportunities
- Accountability

BACKGROUND

The Welsh Government [Youth Engagement and Progression Framework \(2022\)](#) provides a framework for working together to engage with young people to raise their aspirations, ensure no-one is left behind and is built around the early identification of young people aged 11 to 18 who are at risk of becoming NEET (or at risk of Homelessness) across Wales. Within Monmouthshire using the framework, we have developed a model that seeks to prevent young people becoming NEET through robust early identification tool and targeted support but also effectively monitor and identify appropriate support pathways for those who do become NEET following the Post 16 Transition.

The term NEET refers to young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training. It is now a commonly used term to describe young people who are disengaged from learning or employment and have become marginalised from society.

Post 16 transition is a key transition point in a young person's life and, if we can get this process right, it can play a pivotal role in their next steps and future career pathway. Young people in Monmouthshire have a range of choices for their post 16 education, just over half in 2022/3 enrolled in Monmouthshire secondary school sixth form, whilst others enrolled in out of county sixth forms, colleges, and specialist provision. Effective practice provides young people with the coordinated support required to make a positive next step into the destination of their choice and reduce the number of young people who are not engaged in education, employment or training (NEET). Our aim is to ensure that learners make informed, confident choices about their future education, training or journey into work through a transition process that is a positive experience for all.

DATA – PUPIL DESTINATIONS DATA AND 5 TIER MODEL

Throughout this strategy we will talk about two key sets of data – Pupil Destinations Data and Tier Data.

Pupil Destination Data provides annual data published by Welsh Government to demonstrate the destinations of our young people. The data relates to the destinations of young people *educated* in Monmouthshire. Pupil destination data provides quantitative data on the following categories:

Continuing in Full Time Education (in school)	Continuing in Full Time Education (in College)	Continuing in full time education (in Higher Education)	Taking a Gap year (intending to go to HE following year)	Continuing in Part Time Education (Less than 16 hours a week)	Work Based Training - non employed status	Work Based Training - Employment status	Employed - Other	Known not to be in Education, Training or Employment	No response to survey	Left the area
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In Monmouthshire our young people have a range of options if they choose to leave school, Pupil Destinations Data does not provide where the young person has transitioned to. For example, if college is the destination we are unable to see which college.

Tier Data is the fluid, daily snapshot of the current tier status of young people 16-19 who are resident in Monmouthshire. Tier data and which Tier a young person is in is categorised using Careers Wales 5 Tier Model, outlined below.

TIER	Young People	Lead Worker	Responsibility for Tracking and Support
Tier 5: In further education or EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In EET. Working or studying part time over 16 hours. 	No lead worker necessary given that young person is already engaged and not judged to be at risk of disengaging. Providers' own pastoral systems or support should be utilised as appropriate.	Careers Wales
Tier 4: At risk of dropping out of EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged in less than 16 hours of EET. Have been identified at risk of disengagement pre-16 and/or were judged as at risk of not making a positive transition but are subsequently in further education, sixth form or training. Have been identified to Careers Wales by EET providers (or themselves) as at risk of dropping out of EET. 	Allocation of lead worker depends on level of risk: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For low and medium risk use provider pastoral systems and/or allocate a learning coach as a lead worker. For High risk a lead worker may be allocated from either youth service or Careers Wales or if Families First involved Team Around the Family will decide allocation of lead worker. 	Careers Wales
Tier 3: NEET or actively seeking EET but known to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged with Careers Wales and/or known to be actively seeking EET; either ready to enter EET, or assessed as requiring career management or employability skills support to enter EET. This tier should also include those known to Careers Wales, actively seeking EET but not requiring Careers Wales enhanced support, for example accessing support via careerswales.gov.wales or awaiting a college start date. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort. Careers Wales will provide the lead worker in nearly all cases. 	Careers Wales

Tier 2: Young people known to Careers Wales who are NEET and are not ready or available to seek EET	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant or multiple barriers requiring intensive personal support. • Not available or unable to seek EET (for example due to illness, being a young carer, pregnancy, in custody). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead worker identified for 100% of the cohort. • Youth Employment & Skills Team will provide lead worker in most cases (in some instances this role may be allocated to other services or organisations providing intensive personal support). 	Local Authority
Tier 1: EET status unknown to Careers Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown to YEPF Stakeholders. • Young person could be in a destination but will remain 'unknown' until this is confirmed. 	Once individuals are identified they are allocated to appropriate tier and allocated a lead worker accordingly.	Local Authority

If a young person is unable to make the transition into a destination beyond 16 and identified as Tier 2 (NEET) or Tier 1 (destination is unknown), we have an embedded local partnership that identifies, monitors and seeks to provide support. The Monmouthshire YEPF partnership **Keeping In Touch** group (KIT) meets monthly to monitor a young persons (tier) status using the **Careers Wales 5 Tier Model** above. KIT is coordinated and led by the local authorities Youth Employment & Skills Team with a range of post 16 stakeholders involved including Social Services, Careers Wales, Training Providers, Colleges, Youth Service and Youth Offending Service and monitors monthly Tier 1 and Tier 2 young people and the numbers of young people engaged with Careers Wales in Tier 3.

STRATEGY COLLABORATION

In developing this strategy, we sought the skills and knowledge of a number of personnel from our stakeholders through a working group. The NEET strategy working group have been key in shaping and developing the strategy and have also assisted and scrutinised the development of the action plan. Membership included external stakeholders and officers from Monmouthshire County Council directorates.

- Education Achievement Service
- Careers Wales
- MCC Communities & Place – Economy, Employment & Skills
- MCC Children & Young People
- MCC MonLife
- MCC Social Care & Health

DRAFT

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Welsh Government's Youth Engagement and Progression Framework (YEPF) is a systematic mechanism to identify and respond to young people at risk of becoming NEET, who are NEET and/or who are at risk of being homeless. Under the Framework there are processes in place to identify young people who require tailored support that meets their needs and to monitor their progression, this is led by local authorities, working with their delivery partners. The Framework helps young people to fulfil their potential and prevents poverty and homelessness.

The original YEPF (2013) was developed with the aim of reducing NEET rates. In this updated version, there remains a strong focus on preventing young people becoming NEET and supporting young people who are NEET into a positive destination, improving their life chances. The updated Framework has also been expanded to include the prevention of youth homelessness. This is in recognition of the fact that the 'warning signs' of a young person potentially becoming NEET can overlap with indicators that a young person may be at risk of family breakdown and youth homelessness.

This YEPF operates alongside Welsh Government's Young Person's Guarantee (YPG). The YPG for young people aged 16 to 24 aims to give young people who are NEET other opportunities to move into education, employment or training (EET). In addition, the '[Well-being of future generations: National indicators and milestones for Wales 2021](#)' will help foster this sense of collective responsibility and accountability. The national milestones, introduced following the '[Shaping Wales' Future: Using National Indicators and Milestones to measure our Nation's progress consultation](#)', will help us assess progress towards the 7 well-being goals set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ('the Act').

Of particular relevance to the Framework is the following indicator and milestone value:

- 090134
- Indicator No. 22: percentage of people in education, employment or training, measured for different age groups
 - Milestone: at least 90% of 16 to 24 year olds will be in education, employment, or training by 2050

The YEPF also aligns with Welsh Government's overarching children and young people's plan ('the Plan') outlines the 7 cross-government priorities which will help achieve our ambition to make Wales a wonderful place to grow up, live and work, now and in the future.

Locally, Monmouthshire County Council's [Community & Corporate Plan](#) 'Taking Monmouthshire Forward' identifies 6 Key objectives including 'A Thriving and Ambitious Place'. Within this objective, we want to achieve 'People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business' of which Number of school leavers not in education, employment or training is a key measure. However, work the strategy will also achieve will benefit Children and Young people: A Learning Place and link across to the [Economy, Employment & Skills Strategy](#) .

Monmouthshire **Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy** identifies, amongst others, the following priority: - A fairer, more successful Monmouthshire.

Objectives include:

- Support a balanced change in the demographic profile of our county. However currently 45% of Year 11 school leavers opt to undertake their post 16 learning out of county.
- Support the creation of 6,240 sustainable job opportunities.

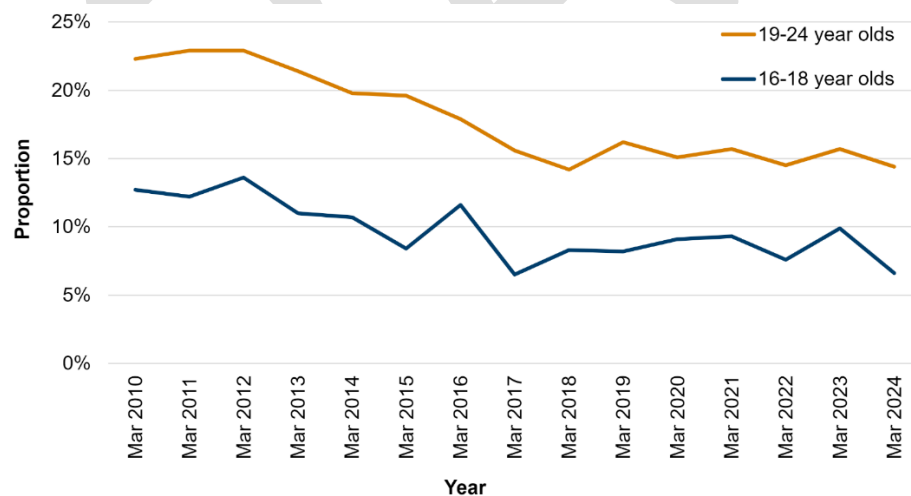
- Equip people with skills and qualifications to enter employment and enable employment progression. In addition, Monmouthshire County Council 'Community and Corporate Plan 2022 -2028' commits to promoting career paths in shortage areas such as care and construction earlier and more consistently, this strategy will aim to reduce labour shortages in these sectors by working closely with public and private sector organisations. Monmouthshire will be a place that young people will not need to leave because they will have the skills to work in new and emerging industries or set up their own businesses within the county.
- Collaborate with comprehensive schools, further and higher education partners to enhance access and networks.

Monmouthshire County Councils **Children and Young People: A Learning Place** plan identifies the following objectives:

- Develop a broader 14-19 offer including more collaboration between comprehensive schools and further education partners.
- Develop a broader educational offer to include both academic and vocational pathways and engage partners from public and private sectors.
- Provide enhanced learning opportunities and evidence-based interventions to ensure that pupils from low-income families are able to achieve their full potential.
- Promote career paths in shortage areas such as care and construction earlier and more consistently. Commit to specific activity in care apprenticeships and scale up delivery through Y Apprentis and similar schemes.
- Develop better links with further and higher education.

CURRENT POSITION

Young people not in education, employment or training in Wales, year ending March 2010 to March 2024



Line chart showing [Annual Population Survey NEET rates](#) for 16 to 18 and 19 to 24 year olds in Wales. Both age groups NEET rates have decreased overall across the last decade, despite fluctuations in each series during this time period. The NEET rate for people aged 16 to 18 in Wales was 6.6% in the year ending March 2024, down by 3.3 percentage points over the year. Over the longer term, the rate has decreased by 1.6 percentage points over the last five years and by 4.1 percentage points over the last decade.

Locally, despite the challenging times of the last 5 years, [Pupil Destinations Data](#) demonstrates Monmouthshire has continued to see consistent numbers of young people known not to be in Education, Employment or Training across our Year 11, 12 and 13 school leavers. In addition, for Year 11 and 13 particularly, we are often below the Welsh average.

Year 11

	2019	2020**	2021	2022	2023
Monmouthshire	1.3%	1.4%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%
	10	11	16	14	14
Wales	1.8%	1.7%	1.6%	2.1%	2.0%
	537	527	507	664	670

Year 12

	2019	2020**	2021	2022	2023
Monmouthshire	1.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.9%	1.5%
	4	7	1	4	6
Wales	0.8%	0.6%	0.4%	0.7%	0.5%
	99	76	55	80	62

Year 13

	2019	2020**	2021	2022	2023
Monmouthshire	1.36%	3.92%	1.96%	1.2%	1.1%
	5	14	8	5	4
Wales	2.54%	3.53%	2.29%	2.8%	3.6%
	269	355	251	322	375

*Figures in **bold** indicate below Welsh average.

**Covid

Our Youth Engagement & Progression Framework partners, Careers Wales, provide coordination and support for young people in Tier 3 who are known not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) as detailed in the 5 Tier Model (p5). Local Authorities are unable to access, as there is no legal basis to share, Tier 3 data but do have access to numerical data. The data below represents the number of young people known not to be in education, employment or training in Y11-13 who are NEET and in Tier 3.

	Tier 3
2023	10
2022	8

Overall number of young people that are known to not be in education, employment or training has remained steady over the last 3 years. In mapping the journey of the Tier 2 NEET young people we have seen a variety of themes that contribute to a young person becoming NEET.

Theme	Mitigation
Low or non-attendance at school	Early Identification Tool 3 times per year Inspire Outreach introduced in 2023, with capacity increased September 2024.
Early disengagement from education or pathway	Inspire In-school model changed – Inspire worker stays with young person until they are sustaining a destination Youth Employment & Skills team working with stakeholders to develop broader options for young people, for example STEM.
Unable to access Level 3 / 6 th form offer in Monmouthshire	Youth Employment & Skills team working with stakeholders to develop Level 2 offer in 6 th forms – Passport to Employment.
Missed opportunities to engage	Engagement & Progression Coordinator developed Effective Practice Guidance for transition from secondary school to post 16 education. Collaborative piece of work with stakeholders on behalf of Wellbeing Subgroup.
Young people not identified as at risk of NEET – no ‘indicators’ and a planned destination.	Early Identification Tool updated in line with Welsh Government guidance, with Monmouthshire County Council staff part of working group. NEET young people case studies and themes of NEET Destination Data shared with key stakeholders.
Planned Gap Year.	Careers Wales Working Wales programme and YEPF partners continue to offer and provide support and pathways once young person returns.

Monmouthshire County Council's current NEET prevention programme works across Monmouthshire to prevent young people from becoming NEET working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure support and the best possible outcomes for our young people. Inspire has three strands which link to the Engagement and Progression Coordination and YEPF stakeholders to support and monitor at risk of or NEET young people:

- Inspire In-school – Allocated NEET prevention worker per school
- Inspire Outreach – two NEET prevention workers – Monmouth Comprehensive School & Caldicot School and KHS 3-19 School & Chepstow School.
- Inspire Post 16 Transition – one pan Monmouthshire worker
- Engagement & Progression Coordination Function* – function part of Youth Employment & Skills Leads role. Funded by Welsh Government Youth Support Grant under Youth Engagement & Progression Framework.

When considering our Pupil Destinations Data it is important to note that Youth Employment & Skills and Inspire has provided the consistent coordination and prevention programme since 2013, funded by European Structural Funds until December 2022 followed by UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund respectively with UK SPF in place until 31st March 2025.

OUR ASPIRATION, KEY PRIORITY THEMES AND OBJECTIVES

We have a clear aspiration for our NEET prevention strategy:

Creating positive and sustained outcomes for young people through bespoke, productive and meaningful engagement in education, training and employment.

In order to deliver our aspiration, we have identified five key priority themes, aligned to Welsh Governments Youth Engagement & Progression Framework but shaped to meet the needs of Monmouthshire Young People. In identifying these key priority themes we have worked collaboratively across Council Directorates and with external stakeholders and elected Members. Our five key priority themes are:

- Early Identification
- Commissioning Support & Provision
- Monitoring Progression
- Employability and employment opportunities
- Accountability

Objectives have been identified for each of the priority themes.

1. EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Monitor, develop and improve the Early Identification process in Monmouthshire to ensure the accurate and timely identification of children and young people at risk of disengagement.

Objectives

- Continue to develop and deliver the Early Identification Tool, identifying for young people aged 11-18 who are:
 - At risk of becoming NEET
 - At risk of homelessness (Collaborative Tool)
- Facilitate the Early Identification Tool to enable early intervention ahead of Key Stage 3 transition.
 - Key Stage 2 Early Identification Tool (developed under ESF funding) to support early identification of at risk children in year 5 and year 6.
- Continue the identification and monitoring of young people 16-19 who are NEET.

2. COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION

Facilitate coordination of support by being the central point of contact through the Engagement and Progression Coordinator function.

Objectives

- Identify person-centred support for young people, ensuring services work collaboratively to meet individual needs.
- Provide continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people.
- Ensure appropriate opportunities and provision is available through working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure sustainable destinations for young people, including:
 - Further education, work-based learning and apprenticeships.
 - Interventions for preventing youth homelessness as identified within the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework.
 - Specific targeted support to reduce a young person's risk of NEET and boost a young person's mental health, well-being and self-esteem.
 - Targeted support programmes to ensure young people are motivated, equipped and able to engage in their next steps.

3. MONITORING PROGRESSION

Provide a coordinated approach to support transition between alternative provisions, key stages of compulsory education, and movement from pre to post 16.

Objectives

- Monitor what support and/or provision most at-risk young people are receiving and ensure this is in place through and beyond the post 16 transition.
- Under Youth Engagement & Progression Framework support monitoring of all young people through post 16 destination to minimise risk of NEET and offer support if needed.
- For young people aged 16 to 19, identify those whose destination on leaving school is unknown or known to be NEET and then:
 - establish what they are doing (EET or if they are NEET) and if they are ready to seek EET (Tier 1 or Tier 2)
 - ensure that any young people who have not progressed or sustained a destination are offered appropriate support to take steps towards education, employment or training.
- Monitor and evaluate identification processes and support programmes or provision, so adjustments can be made, as needed.

4. EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To form a better understanding of local employment needs and trends, to offer new opportunities for young people and to inform service design.

Objectives

- Youth employability provision which allows young people to progress into opportunities, with a balance of work experience, skills, qualifications and pathways to employment or self-employment. Supporting young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances and a prosperous future.
- Contribute to the development of opportunities and programmes working towards enhancing local and regional skills needs and links to employment sectors in collaboration with stakeholders. (For example – Monmouthshire STEM programme)
- Identify and support local and regional developments to aid and enhance education, training and employment opportunities for young people in collaboration with stakeholders. (For example - Post 16 Level 2 offer and Curriculum for Wales' Four Core purposes and Skills for Work Qualification.
- Working with stakeholders and networks to develop employer relationships.

5. ACCOUNTABILITY

Monmouthshire County Council has a strong sense of character and purpose. We value our young people, and will work towards providing the best opportunities and outcomes for them.

Objectives

- Shared responsibility and accountability amongst stakeholders for delivering the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework. Local authorities provide the strategic and operational leadership for implementing the Framework, while local partnerships have a critical role in supporting its delivery.
- A process of review and reflection by all delivery partners to develop a deeper understanding of how well the Framework is working in their local area and identify where improvements can be made.
- Continue to monitor tier data and annual destination data but with an increased ambition to utilise quantitative data considering trends, themes and lessons learnt to drive a culture of continuous improvement and learning amongst all partners.

FORWARD PLAN

MEASURES

Year 11what

	2019		2020**		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Monmouthshire	1.1%	1.3%	1.0%	1.4%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%	1.4%	1.3%
	9	10	8	11	16	14	14	13	12	10
							Cohort Profile:	806	832	795
Wales	1.8%		1.7%		1.6%	2.1%	2.0%			
	537		527		507	664	670			

Year 12

	2019		2020**		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Monmouthshire	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.5%	0.2%	0.9%	1.5%	1.2%	1.1%	0.9%
	5	4	4	7	1	4	6	5	5	4
							Cohort Profile	426	450	453
Wales	0.8%		0.6%		0.4%	0.7%	0.5%			
	99		76		55	80	62			

Year 13

	2019		2020**		2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Target	Target	Target
Monmouthshire	1.8%	1.36%	1.7%	3.92%	1.96%	1.2%	1.1%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%
	8	5	7	14	8	5	4	4	4	4
							Cohort Profile	367	393	391
Wales	2.54%		3.53%		2.29%	2.8%	3.6%			
	269		355		251	322	375			

*Targets profiled in line with current NEET Prevention Programme delivery and outcomes – currently funded until end of March 2025 by UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund.

ACTION PLAN

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Monitor, develop and improve the Early Identification process in Monmouthshire to ensure the accurate and timely identification of children and young people at risk of disengagement.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Continue to develop and deliver the Early Identification Tool, identifying for young people aged 11-18 who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At risk of becoming NEET • At risk of homelessness (Collaborative Tool) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the Early Identification Tool three times per year for Years 7-11. • Maintain EIT in line with Welsh Government guidance, contributing to WG guidance development if required. • Maintain Individual EIT to be used with Y12-13 if required by schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of EIT's per academic year • Numbers of young people being identified as 'at risk of NEET' • Number of Y12-13 EIT's • Number of young people supported by NEET prevention (Inspire) and Youth Homelessness (Compass) programmes. 	Ongoing Termly By January, then termly. Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills Youth Employment & Skills and Housing Support Team
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Facilitate the Early Identification Tool to enable early intervention ahead of Key Stage 3 transition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Stage 2 Early Identification Tool (developed under ESF funding) to support early identification of at risk children in year 5 and year 6. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and enable access to Key Stage 2 EIT if required by schools annually ahead of KS3 transition. • Ensure KS2 EIT remains accurate in case of future delivery of support programmes for KS2. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of KS2 EIT's requested (and delivered). • KS2 EIT. 		Youth Employment & Skills
EARLY IDENTIFICATION	Continue the identification and monitoring of young people 16-19 who are NEET.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate and lead monthly Keeping In 		Ongoing – monthly meeting	Youth Employment & Skills

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 14</p>	<p>Providing clear leadership and partnership arrangements with a shared purpose of creating valuable prospects for young people.</p>	<p>Touch meeting monitoring and identifying appropriate support for young people in Tier 1 and Tier 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor numbers of young people engaged with Careers Wales in Tier 3. • Ensure appropriate membership of KIT with partners able to contribute information in and provide support pathways for young people identified in T1 and T2. 			
<p>EARLY IDENTIFICATION</p>	<p>Careers Wales identification tool categorising learners to ensure target groups have support:</p>	<p>The targeted groups are young people in Key Stage 4 who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are looked after • Are in receipt of free school meals • Have ALN and are identified as School Action Plus/ Individual Development Plan • Are poor school attenders • Have been placed in EOTAS provision • Identify themselves as young carers • Are identified by the Careers Adviser as being Tier 4 - at risk of NEET (based on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people supported. 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Careers Wales</p>

		<p>professional judgement and information provided by partner organisations). See Tier 4 Guidelines for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAL - young people who have English as an additional language at stages A-C which means that they are not yet considered competent in their use of the English language. Schools will be asked to upload this data. 			
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COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION

Facilitate coordination of support by being the central point of contact through the Engagement and Progression Coordinator function.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION	Identify person-centred support for young people, ensuring services work collaboratively to meet individual needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with stakeholders to identify and map support and pathways available to young people. • Work collaboratively with partners to ensure sustainable destinations for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of support providers and pathways • KIT membership and attendance. • Annual provider Self evaluation • Pupil Destination Data 	<p>April 2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Engagement & Progression Coordinator /Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>YEPF Partnership – KIT Group Careers Wales/EPC</p>

COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION	Provide continuity of support and contact for the most at-risk young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain Lead Worker function through providing NEET prevention support to young people most at risk. • Ensure young people have a central point of contact to coordinate their support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people enrolled or supported • Number of outcomes (Qualification / Life Skill) • Pupil destination Data 	Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills YEPF Partnership – KIT Group
COMMISSIONING SUPPORT AND PROVISION	Ensure appropriate opportunities and provision is available through working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure sustainable destinations for young people, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further education, work-based learning and apprenticeships. • Interventions for preventing youth homelessness as identified within the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework. • Specific targeted support to reduce a young person's risk of NEET and boost a young person's mental health, well-being and self-esteem. • Targeted support programmes to ensure young people are motivated, equipped and able to engage in their next steps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with providers and stakeholders to ensure accessible further education, workbased learning and apprenticeships. • Create opportunities to grow provision through supporting the Level 2 Passport to Employment programme in Monmouthshire Sixth Forms. • Working with MCC Apprenticeship Coordinator, increase the number of Apprenticeships for school leavers within Monmouthshire County Council • Working with MCC Apprenticeship coordinator develop a work experience programme, enabling at risk of or NEET young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data (WBL/Apprenticeships/FE) • Number of Work Based Learning providers in Monmouthshire. • Number of young people supported by Youth Homelessness programme • Number of young people enrolled on NEET prevention programme • Number of outcomes achieved • Number of new programmes developed, i.e Level 2 and STEM including number of young people to enrol. 	Ongoing Annually – July 2025 Bi-annually in line with YSG returns. Quarterly in line with SPF reporting Annually	CYP Schools Engagement & Progression Coordinator Youth Employment & Skills MCC Housing Support Team MCC Apprenticeship Coordinator

		<p>to gain valuable workplace skills and experience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Youth Support Grant funding support young people at risk of homelessness as identified by the EIT. • Provide a targeted NEET prevention programme to support young people at risk of or who are NEET. 			
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MONITORING PROGRESSION

Provide a coordinated approach to support transition between alternative provisions, key stages of compulsory education, and movement from pre to post 16.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
MONITORING PROGRESSION	Monitor what support and/or provision most at-risk young people are receiving and ensure this is in place through and beyond the post 16 transition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop transition working group with Vulnerable Learners Lead, Pupil Referral Service, Youth Offending Service and Social Services to monitor most at risk. • Coordinate and Contribute to Pupil Destination Data through working with stakeholders to achieve positive destinations for young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data • Number of NEET Prevention Programmes 	Ongoing	<p>CYP</p> <p>Vulnerable learners Lead</p> <p>Engagement & Progression Coordinator</p> <p>Pupil Referral Service</p> <p>Social Services</p> <p>Youth Offending Service</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work towards target of 0% Unknowns and Targets agreed for NEET young people. • Monitor and support NEET prevention programmes in Monmouthshire. 			
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 148</p> <p>MONITORING PROGRESSION</p>	<p>Under Youth Engagement & Progression Framework support monitoring of all young people through post 16 destination to minimise risk of NEET and offer support if needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a coordinated approach to support transition between provisions, key stages of compulsory education, and movement from pre to post 16 for those most at risk. Also identifying support needs for those that fail to make or sustain their destination. • Maintain and develop the 'Next Steps' process with secondary schools, Pupil Referral Service and other providers. Identifying and providing 'enhanced' transition support including college visits, careers events and related activities. • Deliver, Update and share annually Effective Practice Guide – For 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data • Tier Data – Tier 1 & Tier 2 • Number of Transition Activities • Updated guide – 1 per year 	Ongoing	<p>Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>CYP</p> <p>Wellbeing Subgroup</p> <p>YEPF Partners</p>

<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 149</p>	<p>Transition from Secondary School to Post 16 education.</p>	<p>For young people aged 16 to 19, identify those whose destination on leaving school is unknown or known to be NEET and then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish what they are doing (EET or if they are NEET) and if they are ready to seek EET (Tier 1 or Tier 2) ensure that any young people who have not progressed or sustained a destination are offered appropriate support to take steps towards education, employment or training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to operate the Keeping in Touch (KIT) partnership Seek to contact young people identified as Tier 1 to establish what they are doing. This will include communications, door knocks and partner knowledge Provide Post 16 Tier 2/NEET support through Post 16 Transition (Inspire) or for those without barriers to engagement signpost to Careers Wales. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tier Data Pupil Destinations Data Number of young people enrolled on Post 16 Transition 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>EPC</p> <p>Careers Wales</p> <p>YEPF Partners</p>
<p>MONITORING PROGRESSION</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate identification processes and support programmes or provision, so adjustments can be made, as needed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual evaluation at Destination Count. Allowing us to identify themes, trends and areas of improvement. Work with stakeholders to look at themes, trends and data. Identify annual process and update following 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupil Destination Data Annual Review of NEET young people 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Youth Employment & Skills</p> <p>EPC</p> <p>Careers Wales</p> <p>YEPF Partners</p>

		cycle with key stakeholders – Schools, Careers Wales and youth Employment & Skills.			
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EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

To form a better understanding of local employment needs and trends, to offer new opportunities for young people and to inform service design.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES Page 150	Youth employability provision which allows young people to progress into opportunities, with a balance of work experience, skills, qualifications and pathways to employment or self-employment. Supporting young people on a path that gives them the best possible life chances and a prosperous future.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver NEET prevention programme that includes additional qualifications and lifeskills to ensure young person has what they need to make the next step in education, employment or training • Deliver programmes that enhance young people's employability skills and opportunity for future employment. This will include school holiday programmes such as Inspire by Summer and one of or annual employability events. • Support employability and careers events in school through attending and contributing to school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of outcomes achieved through NEET Prevention programmes • Number of employability events delivered • Number of school holiday engagement sessions • Number of qualifications achieved through school holiday engagement. • Number of Careers Fairs attended 	Ongoing	Youth Employment & Skills

		careers fairs and other key events..			
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Contribute to the development of opportunities and programmes working towards enhancing local and regional skills needs and links to employment sectors in collaboration with stakeholders. (For example – Monmouthshire STEM programme)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement the Monmouthshire STEM Programme approved by Welsh Government in partnership with stakeholders Represent regional EPC's on Regional Skills Partnership Young Person's Guarantee Group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEM programme measures Number of regional partnerships 	December 2024 – two year programme. Ongoing	CYP Youth Employment & Skills EPC
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Identify and support local and regional developments to aid and enhance education, training and employment opportunities for young people in collaboration with stakeholders. For example, Post 16 Level 2 offer and Curriculum for Wales' Four Core purposes and Skills for Work Qualification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with stakeholders to support the development and implementation of the Level 2 offer in Monmouthshire Sixth Forms Provide Mentoring and 1:1 Support for at risk of NEET young people enrolled on L2 course. Contribute to and support implementation of New Curriculum by ensuring young people most at risk can sustain education. Also ensuring that qualifications delivered through 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of young people enrolled in Level 2 in 4 Secondary Schools Number of young people enrolled for L2 Passport to Employment Mentoring, Number of qualifications outcomes achieved through NEET prevention programme 	Review October 2024 August 2025	CYP Youth Employment & Skills

		Inspire compliment new curriculum.			
EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES	Working with stakeholders and networks to develop employer relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Careers Wales continue to deliver Year 10 Careers Check Data. Both identifying young people for Target Group and informing sector and employment data. • Work with Employers in Monmouthshire and Careers Wales to provide insights and knowledge around Career Pathways for schools and their learners. • Utilise Economy, Employment & Skills network to enhance and develop relationships between schools and local business. <i>This will also link to STEM Programme and local opportunities in employment and training.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Year 10 Careers Check • Careers Wales and the EAS CWRE all phase school network • Number of relationships with local businesses 	Ongoing	<p>Careers Wales</p> <p>EAS CWRE Network</p> <p>Economy, Employment & Skills</p>

ACCOUNTABILITY

Monmouthshire County Council has a strong sense of character and purpose. We value our young people, and will work towards providing the best opportunities and outcomes for them.

Theme	Objective	The action we will undertake	How we will measure progress	Target Date	Owner
ACCOUNTABILITY	Shared responsibility and accountability amongst stakeholders for delivering the Youth Engagement & Progression Framework. Local authorities provide the strategic and operational leadership for implementing the Framework, while local partnerships have a critical role in supporting its delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of YEPF and Engagement & Progression Coordination (EPC) function. • Continue to coordinate and lead monthly Keeping In Touch meeting and ensuring appropriate membership and attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly review with Youth Support Grant (YSG) partners (Principal Youth Officer and Youth Homelessness Manager) • YSG 6 month and Annual Report. Annual Delivery plan (<i>if grant proceeds beyond 2025</i>). • KIT Meeting minutes • Tier 1 and 2 Data 	Ongoing	Engagement & Progression Coordinator. Youth Employment & Skills Team
				October 2024 March 2025	
ACCOUNTABILITY	A process of review and reflection by all delivery partners to develop a deeper understanding of how well the Framework is working in their local area and identify where improvements can be made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Review and feedback from KIT partners to ensure appropriate membership and areas for development • Annual review of Pupil Destination processes with Careers Wales Pre 16 Manager • Annual Review of NEET Prevention Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Form • Updated Destination Process • NEET Strategy Review 	July 2025 November 2024 November 2025	Youth Employment & skills Careers Wales
ACCOUNTABILITY	Continue to monitor tier data and annual destination data but with an increased ambition to utilise quantitative data considering trends, themes and lessons learnt to drive a culture of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to coordinate and contribute to Pupil Destination processes. • Review and feedback annual destination data and 'lessons learnt' to stakeholders. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Destination Data • Annual NEET young people overview • Tier 1 and 2 Data 	April 2025	Youth Employment & skills

	continuous improvement and learning amongst all partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More frequent and strategic sharing progress including monthly tier data, Pupil Destinations and lessons learnt with Cabinet Members and Chief Officers. 			
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Key Strategic Initiatives highlighted in the action plan above will contribute to the Key Priority Themes. These include but are not limited to:

- Maintain NEET Prevention Programme
 - Level 2 Provision in Monmouthshire 6th Forms – Once established, scope to extend and grow into additional sectors and for learners not currently educated in Monmouthshire.
 - STEM Programme being developed for implementation in 2025, connecting schools, communities and business, with an ambition to develop a Skills Centre in Monmouthshire
- MCC Opportunities:
- Work experience – ambition to develop a paid work experience programme
 - Apprenticeships for school leavers – working to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities within our organisation, particularly school leavers, returning to a grow our own ethos. We will develop a case study of the current Economy, Employment & Skills Finance team who all entered employment in Monmouthshire through apprenticeships or work programmes. They reinforce how we can attract local young people into the organisation, providing opportunities to earn, grow and learn whilst shaping our future work force.
 - Training opportunities – explore widening the current training provision available to young people in Monmouthshire with a focus on quality and timely provision.

SUBJECT:	Former Mounton House School, Chepstow
DIRECTORATE:	CYP / Resources
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	4th December 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

This report is brought forward to declare surplus the site of the Former Mounton House School, Chepstow, by the Learning Skills and Economy portfolio for transfer to Landlord Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet agrees that the former Mounton House School, exclusive of retained land, be released from Learning Skills and Economy Directorate to Landlord Services for disposal.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

- 3.1 Mounton House Special School was built in the 1950's and located in Mounton Pwllymeric, Chepstow. Mounton House School closed in August 2020, as part of the Council's Additional Learning Needs Review. The building has remained empty since the school closed and is now in a poor state of repair.
- 3.2 Members agreed to allocate a budget to refurbish the two staff houses on the site into accommodation which will be used by pupils who attend the PRS South base. The works are currently in progress, with completion in February 2025 and pupils will transfer from Hanbury House in Chepstow.
- 3.3 Various options have been explored to utilise the site since the closure however none have been developed and the remainder of the site, 11.4 acres, remain unused and redundant.
- 3.4 Learning Skills and Economy Directorate have no further use of the building and request that this asset is transferred to Landlord Services and declared surplus. This would enable Landlord Services to explore opportunities to generate a financial return from an otherwise largely vacant area of land and property.
- 3.5 The site would be advertised for sale inclusive of a retained right of access for services and users of the PRS provision. The site is already subject to an access right and annual service charge contribution for the private accessway.
- 3.6 The site sits within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and outside of the Conservation Area. The site is partially in a limestone protection area and a very small part of the grounds falls within a historic park and gardens.

- 3.7 The permitted planning use is D1 Non-Residential Institution. There is no current permitted change of use. Planning permission is required for any alternative use.
- 3.8 Should Cabinet agree to the transfer of the land, Landlord Services will market the opportunity, and invite offers for the site. Any decision to award a tender would be presented before Cabinet, with recommendations based on an evidence-based scoring criteria, in accordance with the Council’s Asset Management Strategy. It is proposed that marketing would commence in early January 2025.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION:

- 4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken, attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 A summary from Section 8 of the Integrated Impact Assessment identifying the significant positive and negative impacts is detailed below.

Positive Impact

- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal to offer the site for alternative use may enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.

Negative Impacts

- The proposal may result in uncomplimentary uses being identified or that conflict with the service delivery of the PRS. Weighting will be applied as part of the scoring matrix to ensure any proposals reflect the necessity to work in collaboration with the PRS.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Recommendation
Do not declare the site surplus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst the property would be vacant, the property would be retained for the delivery of other council services should the need arise. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the property falls into disrepair and remains underutilized, in conflict with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy to maximise the use of property. • The property would continue to result in costs to MCC through utilities and business rates. 	
Declare the site surplus and advertise for prospective occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property could generate a financial return. • MCC would offset any ongoing running costs associated with the asset. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That no offers are received for the property. • That the property fails to be repurposed and remains vacant. • The property requires investment to repurpose, which may prohibit our ability to identify a user or introduce capital costs to MCC. 	Recommended the site is declared surplus and transferred to Landlord Services to advertise.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Landlord Services will be responsible for assessing the merits of proposals received for the property and evaluating the extent to which they can be delivered or are sustainable alternative uses.

7. REASONS:

7.1 Following completion of the refurbishment of the property for the Pupil Referral Services, the remainder of the asset is vacant.

7.2 The property has potential to generate a financial return to MCC. Maximising the use of property that is under-utilised features in the principles of the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The annual running costs (utilities and business rates) for the vacant former Mounton House School are approximately £13,615 per annum. Disposal of the surplus land/property on site would offset these costs, exclusive of any running costs associated with the retained land/property.

8.3 MCC would generate a financial return from disposal of the property.

9. CONSULTEES:

- CYP Directorate Management Team
- Legal Services

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix A – Redline Plan

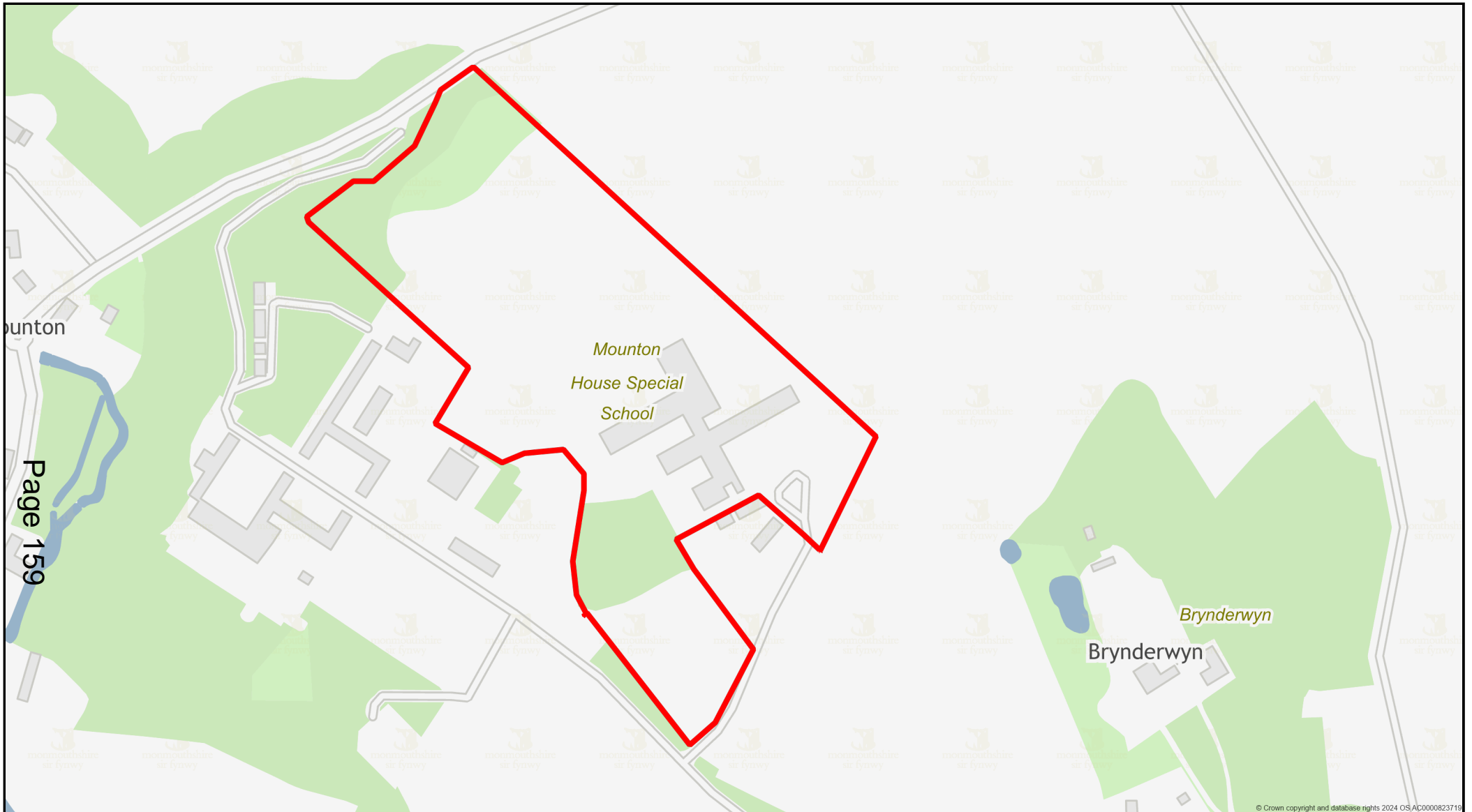
Appendix B – Integrated Impact Assessment

12. AUTHOR:



Cath Saunders, Sustainable Communities for Learning Manager - Learning, Skills & Economy

Nicholas Keyse, Acting Head of Landlord Services

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	<h2>Redline Plan - Former Mounton House School, Chepstow</h2>			
	<p>Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk. NP15 1GA</p>			
	<p>Scale:1:2835</p>	<p>Printed on:2024-11-20 15:53:38 by NicholasKeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Grid Ref:351653,193076</p>	

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Integrated Impact Assessment document

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

<p>Name of the Officer; Nicholas Keyse, Cath Saunders</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644773 / 07595647637</p> <p>E-mail: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk / cathsaunders@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>This report is brought forward to declare surplus the Former Mounton House School, transferring from the Learning Skills and Education portfolio to Landlord Services.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>CYP</p> <p>Resources</p>	<p>Date: 4th December 2024</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The PRS provides statutory education for children/ young people who are permanently excluded from school or too ill to attend. The retained land will have a positive impact on the service that can be provided in the south of the county. The surplus land may enable alternatives uses to be identified that would have a positive impact on protected characteristics.	None identified at this point	We will ensure that all protected characteristics are considered in arriving at any recommendation on the future use of the site.

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	Declaring the site surplus will enable opportunities for commercial or community development to be explored, further extending the range of opportunities that people with disability can access.	No impact identified at this stage	We will ensure that all protected characteristics are considered in arriving at any recommendation on a future use of the site.
Gender reassignment	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Marriage or civil partnership	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Pregnancy or maternity	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Race	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Religion or Belief	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Sex	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage

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?
Sexual Orientation	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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>Declaring the site surplus to requirements will enable a marketing exercise to be undertaken, inviting proposals for the property/land and such that different uses can be explored.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.



How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favorably	Marketing details for the property will be made available in Welsh and English.	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	No impact identified at this stage .	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage




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	Positive: This proposal will enable us to repurpose an underutilized asset and offer an opportunity that could enhance the availability of opportunities to the area.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	Positive: the property benefits from large grounds that may enable opportunities for biodiversity enhancement to be explored. The PRS use will retain a garden area to support the provision of outdoor learning spaces.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood	Positive: The proposal is consistent with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy, which includes maximizing the use of Council assets.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Positive: Proposals received for this property will need to evidence how they are meeting a market need or gap, and the opportunities to connect with existing communities.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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?
are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation		
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	No mitigating actions identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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>	The implementation of the proposal will enable proposals to be received that consider the short- and long-term opportunities that exist on the land/property of the Former Mounon House School. Any proposal will need to reflect on how co-location with the PRS can be achieved to the betterment of both proposals and their users.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	Any proposal will need to reflect on how co-location with the PRS can be achieved to the betterment of both proposals and their users. Weighting will be applied to those proposals that complement the service use proposed for the retained land/property.	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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>Invitations to tender will be made available to all parties and MCC Landlord Services will manage the advertising process directly. Any recommendation relating to the future of the site will be presented to Cabinet for consideration.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The proposals received will be assessed against an obligation to maximise financial value without compromising on its well-being principles and social justice agenda.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions have 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	None identified	.There may be safeguarding implications if there is inadequate separation between the PRS building and new owners.	Adequate fencing will be required between the PRS and new landowners. Safeguarding of pupils should be considered when considering applications
Corporate Parenting	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage

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

In accordance with the requirements of the Asset Management Strategy, any vacant property should be repurposed to ensure they are generating a financial and social return. Any recommendation to Cabinet to accept a proposal will be informed by a scoring matrix, considering the financial offer, experience and standing of the applicant, details of the proposed use, conditionality, etc. Proposals should reflect the necessity for co-location with the PRS service on the Council's retained land.

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?

Positive Impact

- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal to offer the site for alternative use may enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.

Negative Impacts

- The proposal may result in uncomplimentary uses being identified or that conflict with the service delivery of the PRS. Weighting will be applied as part of the scoring matrix to ensure any proposals reflect the necessity to work in collaboration with the PRS.

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
Landlord Services will commence marketing the opportunity	January 2025	Landlord Services

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

SUBJECT:	Strategic Risk Assessment
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	4th December 2024
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Cabinet members review the strategic risk assessment and assess whether it provides a realistic and evidenced appraisal of the strategic risks facing the authority over the next three years.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The strategic risk management process ensures that strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority; Risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate; Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority.

3.2 The council's strategic risk management policy and guidance and risk assessment helps ensure strategic risks are identified and assessed robustly, risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate, and risks are supported by effective mitigations to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management.

3.3 Strategic risks covered by the assessment are typically risks which could significantly jeopardise the council's ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned. The risk assessment only covers high and medium level strategic risks. Lower level or operational risks are not registered unless they are projected to escalate within the three years covered. The strategic risk assessment should continue to focus on medium term risks to service delivery.

3.4 Appendix 1 provides the latest strategic risk register for the Council. The assessment is a detailed document. Any significant changes or updates made to each risk can be found in the 'key changes' column in the summary table at the start of the full register. The council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and has controls in place to assess, manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks. The strategic risk register is a live document and is continually updated based on the latest evidence. This will include adjusting the focus, detail and risk levels of risks where necessary. Some of the significant progress made with mitigation measures for the risks in the last six months includes:

- The development of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets key principles to guide medium term financial planning and provide the link between the council's long-term policy objectives and its financial capacity (risk 2). Significant financial risk remains in year and in the medium term for which mitigating actions are being implemented.
- The development of a People Strategy that contains activity aimed at mitigating risks to recruitment and retention (risk 4). There is immediate pressure faced within workforce planning. The measures put in place by the people strategy are assessed to support the reduction in the risk in the medium-term.
- The development of strategies to provide the provision to meet social care needs for children requiring support in specific placements (risk 7), and adults who require care at home (risk 8,) supporting mitigation for the risks. There are continuing challenges in responding to the complexity of demand for social care support.

- Implementing a range of approaches and support to improve attendance in schools and reduce exclusion, as part of mitigating risk 9a, school attendance, and risk 9b, behaviours that challenge in schools, which have been assessed as high risks.
- The development of an RLDP deposit plan, that full Council endorsed for detailed public consultation in October 2024. This forms part of the mitigation for some risks including risk 11, climate and risk 13, housing. The risk of delays in adopting the plan is identified in risk 10.
- The development of a Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy, underpinned by four action plans, the delivery of which are an important part of the mitigation of risk 11, climate.
- The risk on the delivery of public bus services, previously risk 14, has been de-escalated from the strategic risk register as it is no longer a significant risk to the whole organisation. This risk will be monitored closely within the relevant directorate risk register, and may escalate to the strategic risk register in future, if needed.

3.5 Cabinet agreed an updated Strategic Risk Management Policy in June 2024, including the further definition of the Council's risk appetite. A period of transition in implementing the policy was agreed until April 2025 to allow the council time to strengthen arrangements in line with the revised policy. Progress made so far in implementing the updated policy includes:

- Adapting and updating the format of the strategic risk register, including applying risk appetite levels.
- Developing directorate risk registers, in a phased approach, and embedding these in service planning arrangements.
- An assessment of the effectiveness of each of the risk control arrangements that integrate with strategic risk management policy, these are Health and Safety, Emergency Planning, Insurance, Finance, Internal Audit, Information Governance & Cyber Security. The outcome of this assessment was reported to Governance & Audit Committee, this included actions to strengthen these arrangements.

3.6 The strategic risk assessment is due to be presented to Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 3rd December 2024. The committee's role is to scrutinise the risk assessment and responsibility holders to seek assurance that strategic risks have been appropriately identified and risk is being appropriately managed. An overview of the strategic risk register is also due to be presented to Governance and Audit Committee on the 28th November 2024 to fulfil the committee's role of assessing the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements. The feedback from these committees will be considered in the continued update of the strategic risk register and implementation of the policy. Any key conclusions will be shared with Cabinet.

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

4.1 The purpose of the whole authority strategic risk assessment is to identify and assess risks robustly and ensure risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate. Any specific mitigating actions that have significant policy implications would need to be subject to a separate decision and a full impact assessment completed at that time.

4.2 The risk assessment specifically references risks around safeguarding and corporate parenting and how they are being mitigated. It also includes activity to mitigate risks relevant to the socio-economic duty and Future Generations.

4.3 An Integrated Impact Assessment was completed on the Council's revised strategic risk management policy.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1 The Strategic Risk Assessment is updated based on the latest evidence available in line with the Council's strategic risk management policy. Risks that are identified as needing to be managed through the strategic risk register are included. The structure of the register has been developed based on information specified in the policy as being required. Updates to the strategic risk management policy and guidance consider feedback received and take account of the Council's current governance arrangements.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6.1 The strategic risk management policy sets the criteria that needs to be considered when identifying and mitigating strategic risks. Actions in the risk register set timescales and responsibility holders for delivery. The risk assessment will be subject to continuous review as part of the authority's performance management framework. An up-to-date risk register will be accessible to members on the council's intranet – The Hub. The risk management policy and guidance set the reporting requirements of the risk assessment to Governance and Audit Committee, Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

6.2 The risk management policy sets an assessment of the effectiveness of the risk management framework will be undertaken six monthly and any subsequent action identified implemented. The strategic risk policy and guidance will be reviewed annually and adapted if required, to address any external and internal changes. Any material changes will need to be agreed with the Strategic Leadership Team and Cabinet.

7. REASONS:

7.1 To provide timely, relevant information on strategic risks and the strategic risk management process as part of the performance management framework for ensuring the authority is well run and able to contribute to achieving the Council's purpose.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Resource implications are associated with some risks and in implementing actions to manage them. There are no additional resource implications as a result of implementing the strategic risk management process.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Governance and Audit Committee (28th November 2024)
Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee (3rd December 2024)

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire County Council Risk Policy and Guidance

11. AUTHORS:

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Appendix 1 - Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment – November 2024

Ref	Potential Risk	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Key changes
Risks to resources				
1	Potential risk that: Financial pressures and increased complexity of demand for services, impacts on delivering all of the council’s commitments in the Community and Corporate plan, leading to longer term outcomes for the county not being achieved	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The enabling strategies which support the delivery of the community and corporate plan have now been updated. These will be subject to an annual review, as outlined in each strategy, to evaluate progress and ensure they continue to support delivery of the community and corporate plan.
1b	Potential risk that: A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	A number of special meetings continue to be held to ensure decisions are scrutinised in advance of Cabinet/Council decision.
2	Potential risk that: Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which sets out clear timescales for completion.
3	Potential risk that: The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The pre-mitigation risk scores for this risk have increased from 12 to 16 to reflect ongoing pressure on the capital budget.
4	Potential risk that: Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retention and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (12) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Both the pre-and-post mitigation risk levels for this risk are decreasing in the longer term to reflect the anticipated future impact of the foundations put in place by the People Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in June 2024.
	Potential risk that: Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	A range of mitigating actions continue to be undertaken to mitigate this risk.
Risks to service delivery				
6	Potential risk that: Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The most recent Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2024. The report evaluates the progress of the Council’s key safeguarding priorities during 2023/24, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2024/25.
7	Potential risk that: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/25 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	A commissioning and placement strategy has been developed, with a specific emphasis on the development of in-county residential and support living accommodation. This is aligned with Welsh Government’s ambition to eliminate profit from children’s care. Two children’s homes have been commissioned through partnership models, one of which was a specialised provision for children with very complex needs
8	Potential risk that: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Pre-mitigation risk scores have been re-assessed from 16 (high) to 12 (high). The potential risk of meeting the needs of some vulnerable adults remains high; a comprehensive strategy for commissioning homecare through increased block purchasing has been developed. Engagement with local providers to progress the strategy has commenced.
9a	Potential risk that: Failure to return attendance figures to those seen before the pandemic, particularly among vulnerable pupils and those eligible for free school meals, could lead to a negative impact on educational attainment	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The previous risk 9 has been divided into two related, but separate, risks to better reflect and capture the breadth of mitigating action that is underway. The Local Authority Attendance and Engagement Policy has been updated to encompass all aspects of the Engaging,

				Belonging and Participating guidance issued by Welsh Government in October 2023 and will be consulted on with schools.
9b	Potential risk that: An increase in behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic may lead to harm to a pupil or member of staff	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The previous risk 9 has been divided into two related, but separate, risks to better reflect and capture the breadth of mitigating action that is underway. A range of action is being undertaken to mitigate this risk, including the work of the Education Support Team which has enabled those primary aged learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) or of Permanent Exclusions (PEX) to receive support from specialist professionals, alongside the continued input of the Educational Psychology Service.
Risks to policy priorities				
10	Potential risk that: The Council does not support the Replacement Local Development Plan, leading to delays in its adoption which restricts our ability to take forward key policy objective such as job creation, affordable housing development and the adoption of key policies to protect the environment and tackle climate change	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	This risk has been refocused to reflect progress made in developing the replacement local development plan and the risk that this may not be approved by Council following public consultation. The post-mitigation risk level for 26/27 has increased from medium to high.
11	Potential risk that: a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. This strategy is underpinned by four action plans to better reflect the breadth of work that is taking place: Internal decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change. Progress in implementing the strategy is regularly monitored by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.
	Potential risk that: The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	In October 24, the Community Development Team, together with partners such as Citizen’s Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others, held the first in a series of events across the county to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Representatives from Benthg library of things also attended to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling poverty interventions.
13	Potential risk that: Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Rapid rehousing is facilitating increased resource into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. Accommodation has started to be acquired for temporary accommodation use and the first approval has been given to re-purpose a council owned agricultural property.
14	Potential risk that: Increased legal challenge to council decisions and service delivery resulting in delays, increased costs and reputational harm.	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	2024/25 – Medium (6) 2025/26 – Medium (6) 2026/27 – Medium (6)	This has been identified due to the risk of delays to council decision making as a result of legal challenges.

Risks to resources

Ref & Status	1	Risk	Potential Risk that: Financial pressures and increased complexity of demand for services, impacts on delivering all of the council's commitments in the Community and Corporate plan, leading to longer term outcomes for the county not being achieved.						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) and Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)		Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All All	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat	
Reason why Identified									
The council has an agreed Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 that 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 requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The objectives include a focus on equality, climate change, economy and skills, housing, care and support and learning. The Council is facing significant budget pressures and increasing complexity in demand for its services. The contemporary policy challenges that need to be addressed, working with communities, are complex and evolving. The immediate pressures the council is facing risks impacting on the ability and resources to deliver the longer-term objectives in the plan and meeting the requirements on the Act.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Regularly review progress made in implementing the commitments of the community and corporate plan, ensuring resource is targeted in the most pertinent areas		Strategic Leadership Team Six Monthly (December 2024 & June 2025)		A six-month progress report and annual self-assessment report on the delivery of the community and corporate plan is completed. This provides a regular review of progress made in implementing the commitments made in the plan and facilitates targeted activity and intervention in areas requiring further development. The community and corporate plan measurement framework has been revised and agreed by Cabinet in September. This has ensured an increased focus on outcomes in measuring progress of the plan. A dashboard is updated quarterly to track progress in meeting milestones, measures and targets.					
Review the progress of the Enabling Strategies which support delivery of the community and corporate plan to ensure alignment of resources with policy priorities		Enabling Strategy lead officers. Annual review timescales as per each strategy, ranging from February – June 2025.		The enabling strategies which support the delivery of the community and corporate plan have now been updated. These include: the People Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy and Digital and Data strategy. These will be subject to an annual review, as outlined in each strategy, to evaluate progress and ensure they continue to support delivery of the community and corporate plan.					
Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and adapt to reflect the global uncertainty on public finances		Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources March 2025		The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. This strategy provides the strategic framework for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and a set of key principles to guide medium term financial planning. These two together form the link between the council's long-term policy objectives and its financial capacity. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which sets out clear timescales for completion; this is monitored regularly by Cabinet and Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. Given significant financial pressures modelled in the MTFP, a programme of change is being implemented. This is being developed as part of the budget setting process. This will assess the opportunities for service change and cost reduction, whilst ensuring appropriate service resilience is maintained. Areas of consideration include: the role of commissioning services, identifying scope for further income generation and sustained focus on productivity and efficiency.					
Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users		Strategic Leadership Team March 2025 (further activity ongoing)		The Council has undertaken a range of assessment and research to understand well-being in the county including the well-being assessment, population needs assessment, and research for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). These were used to inform the development of Community and Corporate Plan. A resident survey is being undertaken to understand resident's views on their local area and council services. The results will be analysed and used to evaluate progress with the community and corporate plan and inform future decision making in the council. A consultation exercise on the proposed 2025/26 budget will be undertaken in January and February 2025.					

The involvement and participation of and engagement with Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents continue to be strengthened to help further understand experiences in the County.

Ref & Status	1b	Risk	Potential Risk that: A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) and Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic, Service delivery Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
Reason why Identified									
The local elections of May 2022 resulted in no political party having overall control of the Council. The Labour party was the largest party and formed a new cabinet without an overall majority. The lack of a majority Council has resulted in a politically unstable council, which has had a significant effect on the speed of the organisation's decision making and the ability to implement policy change. A coalition agreement has subsequently been reached between the Labour party and the Green party which provides a slim political majority of one councillor. The democratic process has seen some decisions be subject to call-in which can cause uncertainty in some projects.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
2026/27	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress				
Undertake pre-decision scrutiny on relevant decisions			Chief Officer Law & Governance and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships Ongoing		Each scrutiny committee has an established forward plan. This is shared regularly with department management teams to seek their input on items that will require scrutiny. A number of special meetings have been held to ensure decisions are scrutinised in advance of decisions. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the forward plan to ensure appropriate time can be allocated by scrutiny committees to forthcoming decisions.				
Utilise members seminars and scrutiny workshops to engage and involve all councillors in the development of policy			Chief Officer Law & Governance and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships Ongoing		Members seminars are being used to share developments and involve councillors on significant forthcoming decisions. Recent seminars include on the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and Culture Strategy. Scrutiny workshops are being held to seek councillors' involvement in the development of proposals, these include the review of primary school catchments and Gypsy and Traveller needs assessment.				
Maintain a fully populated forward work planner of Cabinet and Council business			Chief Officer Law & Governance Ongoing		An established forward work planner for cabinet and Council business is available to all councillors and is a standing item on the agenda of scrutiny committees to inform their own work programme. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the forward plan to ensure all interested parties are sighted as early as possible on planned decisions being brought forward.				

Ref & Status	2	Risk	Potential Risk that: Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Peter Davies (Deputy Chief Executive) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
Councils across the UK are continuing to face significant financial challenges. It is widely acknowledged that local government funding has not kept pace with increased service demand and inflationary pressures. The Council has seen continuing financial headwinds which are severely impacting the service operating environment. The Inflationary drivers impacting pay and supplies and services continue to far outstrip available resources: demand led pressures continue to increase in the areas of Homelessness, Social Care, Children's additional learning needs, and Transport; interest rates remain significantly higher than seen in previous years; the Council continues to deal with a shortage of staff resources due to ongoing labour market challenges which require the use of more costly temporary solutions; supply chain issues continue which require more costly alternative or expedited arrangements; the cost of living crisis continues to have a significant impact on our communities. This will be further exacerbated over the medium term by a weak growth forecast in the UK economy impacting on public sector spending, and by heightened interest rates that will impact housing costs. All the aforementioned results in a growing need for supportive Council services, a reduced demand for income generating services, increased risks around debt recovery, and a continued high-cost operating environment.									
Current modelling predicts a continuously increasing budget deficit, despite a higher than expected increase in Welsh Government funding, with a projected cumulative shortfall of £34.7m by 2028/29. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and therefore any budget shortfalls will need to be met through a combination of pressures being mitigated, additional savings and income or reserve contributions. This will be particularly challenging set against the backdrop of an ambitious Corporate and Community Plan being implemented.									

A continuation of challenges seen during the pandemic has meant that an increasing number of our schools are experiencing budget deficits. At 2022/23 year end, just 5 schools were in deficit; this increased to 16 by year-end 2023/24. This is projected to increase to 19 by year-end 2024/25, over 50% of schools.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Ensure that services deliver within budget, deliver savings targets and continue to identify, review and challenge pressures		Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources Ongoing		<p>A 24/25 revenue budget update presented to Cabinet in October notes an overall revenue budget deficit forecast of £3,388,000. This deficit is made up of in-year budget pressures of £1,334,000 that have developed since the budget was set in February 2024, alongside a forecast shortfall in meeting budgeted savings target of £2,055,000.</p> <p>Pressures continue in adult's and children's social care. Demand, and complexity of demand, continues to increase. An increase in demand for residential placements in adult's and a shortfall in meeting savings targets has resulted in pressures of over £1.5m. The pressure of new referrals and more complex needs has generated additional unbudgeted costs of over £1.1m in children's social care. These pressures sit alongside continued increased demand for costly ALN placements, increased demand for Home to School transport placements, and continued inflationary and maintenance costs across the estate.</p> <p>In order to deliver a balanced budget for 24/25, which will be fundamental in ensuring financial sustainability moving into the 25/26 budget setting process, a programme of budget recovery actions will be implemented. This includes, but is not limited to: Maximising all grant and income opportunities, including the transfer of core costs into grant where conditions allow; Vacancy management with a targeted freeze on filling vacant posts; Bearing down on all non-essential expenditure; Service reduction and efficiency; Maximising the opportunity to meet the costs of organisational reform from capital receipts where regulations allow.</p>					
Develop a set of budget proposals for 2025/26		Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources March 2025		<p>A medium-term financial plan update and budget setting process for 2025/26 was presented to Cabinet in October 2024. This sets out the council's timeline for setting its 25/26 budget, with final budget proposals due to be presented in Council in March 2025. Given difficult financial and economic circumstances, the 25/26 budget has a need to demonstrate clear alignment between financial choices and service/policy impact, with consideration of the commitments set in the community and corporate plan forming a key part of decision making.</p> <p>Budget workshops are currently underway with SLT, Cabinet and officers. High level pressure and saving mandates are currently being produced, with final mandates to be completed by December 2024. These mandates, alongside current budget assumptions, will then be subject to further Cabinet scrutiny. Welsh Government's final settlement is yet to be released; this will be key to understanding whether any additional funding is likely to be received. This, alongside other currently unknown budget assumption, will be incorporated when available. Scrutiny and public consultation of proposals will take place in January and February 2025 ahead of consideration by Cabinet and Council in March 2025.</p>					
Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-term financial plan, that is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios, to guide our budget setting in line with agreed strategic objectives and responsiveness to challenges, such as the cost-of-living		Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources Ongoing		<p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. This strategy provides the strategic framework for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and a set of key principles to guide medium term financial planning. These two together form the link between the council's long-term policy objectives and its financial capacity. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which sets out clear timescales for completion; this is monitored regularly by Cabinet and Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee as part of six-monthly MTFP updates.</p> <p>The authority's budget modelling assumptions are reviewed regularly. Current budget assumptions were reviewed as part of the setting of the MTFP in July 2024, and currently project a budget deficit of £11.5m for 25/26, with continued significant deficits for the years following. With reserve balances at low levels, and the layers of efficiency being driven from services over time, the council will need to seek significant change, particularly in areas where there is consistent and significant overspend.</p> <p>Given significant pressures, the council will implement a programme of change. This will work to assess the opportunities for service change and cost reduction, whilst ensuring appropriate service resilience is maintained. Areas of consideration include: the role of commissioning services, identifying scope for further income generation and sustained focus on productivity and efficiency.</p>					

		A range of further activity is also underway as part of the MTFP to strengthen medium term planning. This includes the delivery of a change and improvement plan to enable delivery of required savings; this is being developed as part of the budget setting process. Other activity includes a rollout of budget holder training to strengthen knowledge, an enhanced approach to budget modelling, the establishment of a financial risk register to ensure suitable mitigations are in place and undertake an independent financial resilience review.
Continue to work closely with schools to ensure their financial plans are as robust as possible to minimise any impact, whilst continuing to improve standards for our young people	Finance Manager – Children & Young People Ongoing	The overall level of school reserves is currently forecast to move further into deficit by £4,929,000 by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, to a collective deficit balance of £5,832,000. The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision. Higher than budgeted pay awards for both teaching and non-teaching staff have also impacted upon budgets. It is currently anticipated that nineteen of the Council’s thirty-four schools will be in a deficit balance by the year-end. All schools that are budgeting to register a deficit balance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year are required to bring forward budget recovery plans. These recovery plans will be confirmed with both the Local Education Authority, each School’s Governing Body and, in some cases, the plans will need to be agreed by the relevant Cabinet Member. All recovery plans are expected to be received by October Half Term. Close monitoring and support will be given to these schools, as well as those at risk of entering a deficit position over the medium term, to ensure that the proposed actions to address medium term budget challenges are instigated.

Ref & Status	3	Risk	Potential Risk that: The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability					
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Peter Davies (Deputy Chief Executive) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat	

Reason why Identified

Underlying the Capital Strategy is the recognition that the financial resources available to meet council priorities are constrained by the level of one-off reserves and capital receipts that the Council holds and the level of capital grant funding from Welsh Government and other funding bodies, and the extent to which the Council is able to entertain further prudential borrowing. The core capital programme has been impacted in recent years in order to enable the Band A new schools programme to be funded, which has now successfully concluded. Subsequent to a Council decision having been secured the 3-19 school in Abergavenny has progressed into contract and is in its construction phase, supported under the Welsh Government Band B programme.

There remain a considerable number of pressures that sit outside any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP, and this has significant risk associated with it. These include property and highways infrastructure, DDA work, and public rights of way. In addition to this, there are various schemes/proposals (e.g. Monlife, tranche C Future schools, climate emergency response, any enhanced DFG spending etc.) that could also have a capital consequence, but in advance of quantifying those or having Member consideration of these items, they are also excluded from current capital MTFP. In the event of emergency pressures, resources will have to be diverted. Projects, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, also require significant capital investment to realise the outcomes.

The timing of capital receipts always remains uncertain due to market conditions. Future investment in capital schemes is in part dependent on future success of achieving capital receipts and there are risks attached to some receipts materialising. There is a risk associated with relying on the use of capital receipts in the same year that they come into the council and the potential for this to have significant revenue pressures should receipts be delayed and temporary borrowing be required. Significant further capital receipts are now not forecast and until such time as the outcome of the Replacement Local Development Plan is known and for which the Council has put forward a number of strategic sites in its ownership.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Regularly review assumptions as part of the capital MTFP taking account of any new information that is relevant and the consequential impact on the revenue MTFP	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources Ongoing	The MTFP model was reviewed and updated as part of the development of the MTFS in July 2024. The Capital Programme for 2025-2029 will be reviewed and reconsidered during the 2025/26 budgetary process to ensure that the revenue implications of capital expenditure are accurately reflected in the revenue budget and that the capital expenditure plans of the Council remain affordable, prudent and sustainable.

		<p>Whilst the core capital programme is being sustained, and sees planned investment in the Council's infrastructure, there still remains a considerable number of backlog pressures that sit outside the core capital programme given the affordability and funding constraints facing the Council. This will continue to have varying levels of risk associated with it and will have to be managed and mitigated. Schemes already included in the indicative programme will be reviewed in respect of timing and their continued alignment to strategic objectives. Schemes that are not time critical may be deferred to focus capacity on the delivery of priority schemes, or to allow capital receipts to be released to aid in meeting wider Council service redesign.</p> <p>The value of Capital receipts is forecast to decrease significantly between 2024/25 and 2028/29. This is reflective of the replacement local development plan (RDLP) not proceeding as quickly as envisaged in the original delivery agreement. This will have a substantial impact on the balance of receipts available to fund future capital investment demands. It is therefore important that reliance on capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction (to fund one-off revenue costs eligible to be met from capital resources) is seen as a short-term measure only.</p> <p>The Council has strengthened its scrutiny and challenge of the Capital Programme through the establishment of Capital and Asset Management working groups. The respective working groups look to ensure that projects are prudent, affordable and will deliver tangible benefits to core policy objectives over the long term.</p>
Review and refresh the council's Capital Strategy	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources March 2025	The Council's Capital Strategy outlines how the Authority makes and manages capital investment decisions that support its corporate objectives. It also provides a framework that the Council can rely on to develop a clear, consistent, and informed process to make investment decisions. The Council faces more demand for capital spending than it can afford, and therefore it has to prioritise projects, leverage other sources of funding, work with partners, and keep capital investment within affordable limits. The Capital strategy will be refreshed and brought alongside final budget proposals to Council in March 2025.
Continue to monitor the Capital budget	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources Ongoing	<p>The 2023/24 capital expenditure at outturn totalled over £65m, with a net over spend of £485k. This is primarily due to meeting costs under capitalisation within the revenue budget. This overspend was offset by a lower than anticipated volume of vehicle replacements.</p> <p>A total of 107 capital schemes require slippage into 2024/25 totalling £28,605,000, representing 30% of the total budget for the year. The economic environment during 2023/24 continued to have a significant impact on the overall capital programme with cost inflation and supply chain issues continuing to present a challenge to project delivery. The large number of schemes requiring slippage does however still point to more underlying issues in project planning, unrealistic profiling of budgets, and a lack of resourcing to manage the volume of schemes being planned. Finance teams will need to continue to work with budget holders to assess if any further amendment to project delivery plans are required given the impact that capital expenditure progress can have on the profiling of capital financing costs.</p> <p>Capital receipts are projected to be in surplus for the medium-term. Whilst the current balance is healthy, there remains a need for caution over committing any further receipts to either capital investment or increasing the level of capitalisation direction given the level of currently unbanked receipts contained within the forward projections.</p>
Further refinement of priority assessments in the property and infrastructure budgets to ensure all pressures have been considered and ranked.	Head of Landlord Services Ongoing	<p>A regular programme of property condition surveys is underway, supported by routine compliance checks for all assets. This information as well as technical input from MCC's Landlord Services team, will continue to be used to inform prioritisation of planned capital maintenance spend. A programme of Health and safety surveys is currently being commissioned. Independent condition assessments of key highways infrastructure are completed as required depending on condition. These inform prioritisation of available capital budget.</p> <p>A review of the pressures and associated risks is being undertaken to inform the capital budget process. A previous review in 20/21 had concluded that further feasibility studies and technical assessments needed to be undertaken on specific infrastructure assets, funded from existing highways infrastructure capital budgets. The results of these studies and assessments will inform the capital MTFP and pressures that will need to be accommodated and funded therein in future financial years The Capital Working Groups and Asset Management Working Groups will contribute to decisions on the capital spend and MTFP.</p>
Deliver the Asset Management Plan to manage the Council's land and property portfolio	Head of Landlord Services Ongoing	The Asset Management Strategy has been adopted, introducing clearer alignment to the Community & Corporate Plan and establishing key principles which will inform strategic decision making for the council's land and property portfolio. The Asset Management Strategy is delivered via the associated Asset Management Plan, which is subject to regular monitoring and progress reporting.
Help sustain Council Services and enhance the asset base by investing in commercial property assets in order to increase the	Head of Landlord Services Ongoing	The Asset Management Strategy commits to maximising and commercialising assets wherever possible, including achieving income generation or revenue enhancement where opportunities are identified to do so. The core principle is achieved with acknowledgement of the council's policy objectives and ambition to achieve both financial and social returns.

net rental income stream for the Council in line with the Asset Management Strategy		The performance of the council's commercial and investment portfolios are reported to Performance & Overview committee on six monthly cycles. The updates provided include an acknowledgement of the performance of the assets, their capital value and risk, market information and transaction updates. Officers provided recommendations and updates in accordance with the revised financial performance terms, as outlined in the Asset Management Strategy.
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Ref & Status	4	Risk	Potential risk that: Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, particularly for posts that require specific skills or qualifications, retention and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services					
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Matthew Gatehouse (Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery, Governance Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat	

Reason why Identified

There is a global skills shortage, and the impact is being felt in several sectors that Monmouthshire County Council is either a part of or competes with for talent. Some services have identified challenges with recruitment; Social Care, Operations and Facilities are all facing difficulties, which is affecting service provision.

There is a continuing risk that staff well-being could be impacted by a range of factors from work related pressures, such as: staff in some areas facing considerably increased workloads to meet increasing demand and personal home-based factors such as financial strains due to the increased cost of living.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8

Mitigating Actions		
Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Recruit and retain staff more effectively	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships Ongoing	Recruitment issues are being reflected nationally within some sectors, and the council is not exempt from this. Positions within Social Care, Operations and Facilities, for example, have seen reductions in applicants, and this is impacting on service provision. Solutions for the national recruitment issues do not sit solely with local authorities. The People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024 and contains a specific objective, and actions, aimed at improving recruitment and retention. An e-recruitment system is being implemented to support the development of recruitment as a genuine talent acquisition process. This will benefit recruiting managers who want speed, simplicity and agility. The HR team are also utilising different social media channels to reach applicants. A new work experience and apprentices' policy has been developed and will seek to increase the number of apprentice positions, creating a new pipeline of talent. The Leaders Q&A sessions are encouraging discussion between service areas to promote networking and sharing ideas. HR staff sit on various local government groups and are collaborating with partner organisations to identify commonalities and information sharing. This is being fed into Welsh Government to inform their decision-making and to influence their response to the issue.
Develop the support mechanisms to support staff wellbeing	Head of Organisation Workforce Development Ongoing	Staff well-being is affected by a range of factors, including additional work pressure and demand, personal factors and societal factors. Supporting the health and well-being of our colleagues is a key objective of the People Strategy. The use of networks and communication digitally, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce. This has also created the conditions for a wider system of self-supportive networks sharing practice, ideas and support. An audit has been undertaken of our wellbeing offer and location of access allowing for consolidation and ease of access for all colleagues. We are exploring the opportunity to work with CASE UK funded by Welsh Government to provide physiotherapy,

		<p>psychological and occupational therapy. We are also assessing options for providing support and guidance to colleagues in relation to financial wellbeing.</p> <p>The Digital 'Cwtch' continues, although less frequently, along with a People Leaders Q&A session. The people services team has developed a People Leaders Support Site which enables 'live' discussion/news feed, enabling direct support and a shared learning platform for managers and head-teachers.</p>
Embed workforce planning to ensure the right skills, expertise and knowledge are available for future changes	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships Ongoing	<p>The new People Strategy has created a clear commitment to embed workforce planning across the organisation. This is aimed at addressing shortages and ensure career pathways are in place. New arrangements within the HR team will ensure that HR business partners can continue to play an active role in strategic discussions at Directorate Management Teams to ensure effective workforce planning.</p> <p>The People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024 and contains a clear commitment to ensuring we can retain the best people. Action includes promoting career development opportunities to ensure that we keep talent in local government. A new work experience and apprentice policy has been developed to create a new pipeline of people being recruited and trained to supply the workforce of the future.</p> <p>The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning. A learning management system (Thinqi) has now been rolled out to all staff; this provides a centralised training and development area for officers, and includes a host of learning resources for staff as well as the opportunity to book face to face and digital/online training.</p>
Adopt a qualitative approach to ensuring professional development, wellbeing and information flow is taking place for those that want or need it	Head of Organisation Workforce Development Ongoing	<p>The colleague appraisal scheme has been redesigned to allow all colleagues to engage in performance discussions with their line manager. This process facilitates both a training needs and skills analysis.</p> <p>A Leader/Manager Developmental Pathway has been created and due to be launched in December 2024. This pathway will comprise of a number of modules including meaningful staff/line manager engagement and communication. Colleagues need to be given the 'right' to seek meaningful 1-1s on a regular basis, and there needs to be a focus on improving the skills of line managers to enable a variety of different approaches to the process so that performance development is realistically achieved.</p> <p>Both the Colleague Survey and People Q&As provide feedback loops to ensure colleagues requirements are being met.</p>

Ref & Status	5	Risk	Potential Risk that: Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Sian Hayward (Head of Information, Technology & Security) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Governance and Audit Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Information Governance, Service delivery Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
Reason why Identified									
There have been a number of high-profile cases across both public and private organisations where cyber-attacks and data breaches have compromised service delivery and financial loss. These attacks occur due to insecure infrastructure or staff who are not cyber literate and may inadvertently introduce attacks through their personal actions. Cyber security can also be compromised through a lack of structured governance arrangements, risk assessments and planning.									
Digital working has increased in recent years bringing an increase in the potential for loss of data through cyber incidents.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress				

Ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard the organisation's data and systems from cyber-attack	Cyber security service Ongoing	The Council recognises that total elimination of cyber-attack is not possible, but we will ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard data and systems from cyber-attack via: Physical barriers to the network, staff awareness, training and culture and structured governance, risk analysis and business continuity planning. Significant investments in ICT infrastructure and software have been undertaken, which will mitigate against the likelihood of a cyber-attack. An operational risk register, which is exempt from publication under the Data Protection Act, is maintained by the Information Security Team, the SRS Security Team and MCC. A cyber security report was taken to Governance and Audit Committee in February 2024 to provide assurance to the committee that the arrangements in place are robust.
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Risks to service delivery

Ref & Status	6	Risk	Potential Risk that: Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) & Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young people), and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Connected Place Where People Care People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		

Reason why Identified

The Council and its partners must maintain a consistent focus on safeguarding vulnerable people in order to both prevent and reduce the likelihood of harm, and to respond effectively to reduce risks if harm occurs.

The consequences of the pandemic and the current economic and social pressures on families generates pressure within the social care and health system with more complex presentations and increased vulnerability within communities. This demand pressure, alongside ongoing social care workforce recruitment challenges, impacts on the council's ability to protect children and adults who are at risk.

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) continue to inspect and conduct assurance checks of our services. Recent reviews include a CIW Performance Evaluation Inspection of Adults social services undertaken in July 2022, and a Performance Evaluation inspection in Children services in February 2024. All recommended areas of improvement have been recognised by the council and inspection action plans are in place

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Continually monitor and evaluate safeguarding processes and practice and ensure good accountability for safeguarding. Ensure that where actions are identified from self-evaluation processes that these are implemented.	Safeguarding & quality assurance service manager Ongoing, Annual Evaluation – September 2025	Progress against the council's safeguarding priorities is evaluated annually and the priorities reflect the cornerstones for keeping people safe in Monmouthshire, as set out in the Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The most recent Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2024. The report evaluates the progress of the Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2023/24, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2023/24. The report evaluates the cornerstones of safeguarding in Monmouthshire - 3 areas of safeguarding arrangements are assessed as Level 5 Very Good– and 2 areas as Level 4 – Good. This evaluation report forms an integral part of the improvement of safeguarding practice across the Council and drives the work of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group.
Drive the strategic agenda and the associated programme of activities for safeguarding through the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG).	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG] has continued to meet bi-monthly on a digital platform. The group ensures that corporate Safeguarding has oversight at a senior level, with membership from each directorate lead. These meetings identify safeguarding concerns and themes; share knowledge around safeguarding issues and, where required, promote a strategic and

	Ongoing, Annual Evaluation – September 2025	<p>coordinated approach. A Core Data set has been agreed by WASG. Moving forward, this should provide increased opportunity to inform WASG members of safeguarding performance at a whole authority level.</p> <p>Despite resource pressures across directorates and capacity issues within the Safeguarding Unit, safeguarding has remained a priority for the Council with key strengths within directorates and across council relationships. The SAFE (Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation) process has continued to roll out across directorates and reviews have taken place in a timely manner. The Safeguarding Unit continues to be available to offer support and advice as well as being the conduit for new and developing safeguarding policy and guidance from the Regional Safeguarding Board. Issues raised within the previous SAFE assessment led to the strengthening of support in the safe recruitment process, specifically in risk management following DBS certifications.</p>
As a statutory partner of the regional safeguarding boards, continue to work with other statutory partners to ensure that there are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements, that they are working well, share learning and implement any recommendations.	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding Ongoing, Annual evaluation – September 2025	<p>There continues to be full representation at all levels of the work of the regional safeguarding board. There is strong engagement in regional approaches to addressing the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation of children; Modern Day Slavery; Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse; Sexual Violence (VAWDASV); and Contest (PREVENT anti radicalisation).</p> <p>The priorities set in in the regional board’s annual plan are reflected in the priority work of the Council’s Safeguarding Unit. The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group continues to receive, review, and implement developments in safeguarding flowing from regional and national policy. The Council’s safeguarding unit supports quarterly safeguarding learning networks to share learning and developments in safeguarding across agencies.</p> <p>The Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG) has been implemented, with representation from the Safeguarding Unit, Public Protection, Partnerships, Police, Gwent Missing Children’s Team, Education and community-based teams. This group has overseen the development of a Monmouthshire Protocol for responding to Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation.</p>

Ref & Status	7	Risk	Potential Risk that: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Connected Place Where People Care People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
<p>The number of contacts into the ‘front-door’ of children’s services has increased by 21% to 7071 in 2023/24. The council is supporting 205 children who are looked after (September 2024). The number has stabilised in recent years, although it remains higher than the average number of children who are looked after across Wales. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) being looked after by the local authority is currently 12.</p> <p>The 2024/25 budget for Children’s Services is forecast to overspend by £1.1 million at Month 4. This is mainly as a result of increased demand for very high-cost placements for children who are looked after. The workforce position within children’s services also remains challenging, with reliance on agency workers which can affect continuity of social work relationships for children.</p> <p>There is an insufficiency of placements for children who are looked after at a local, regional and national level, particularly those with complex needs or disabilities. Because of this, there is a risk that we may need to place children in unregistered provision in emergency situations. Instability within the placement provider market is being exacerbated by the Welsh Government’s policy commitment to eliminate profit from the care of looked after children. This creates an on-going risk for the council that is difficult to fully mitigate at present.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress				
Continue to strengthen the preventative offer to support children living safely at home, with their families and communities, and continue to review and monitor the Children Looked after			Head of Children’s services Ongoing		The council is supporting 205 children who are looked after (September 2024). The number has stabilised in recent years, although it remains higher than the average number of children who are looked after across Wales. Over the year, the number of contacts into the ‘front-door’ of children’s services has increased by 21% to 7071 contacts. The focus has been on keeping children safe, which				

population in line with Welsh Government expectations around reduction		<p>means there has been less time for strength-based engagement with parents and children. A detailed analysis of referral activity is being undertaken to in order to consider the best way of intervening.</p> <p>There is a coherent approach to early help and prevention to support families. This allows families to receive support at the right level of intensity to enable parents to provide their children with the safety, nurture and care they need. Services are in place to support the rehabilitation of children following periods of being looked after e.g. Families Re-connect; to provide medium-term holistic support to families making sustainable change e.g. Achieving Change Together Team; and to provide a therapeutic response to parents and carers in supporting children with trauma presentations e.g. MyST.</p> <p>Family support has been further strengthened to provide intensive community supervision and support to children. The focus remains on practice development and working with families to support strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes, reducing the need for children to be looked. An additional focus is to increase resilience within Child Protection services to work with increased levels of risk and vulnerability within the community.</p>
Develop and expand the Children's Services Commissioning Strategy in response to the intention to eliminate profit from children's social care	Head of Children's services Ongoing	<p>A commissioning and placement strategy has been developed, with a specific emphasis on the development of in-county residential and support living accommodation. This is aligned with Welsh Government's ambition to eliminate profit from children's care. Two children's homes have been commissioned through partnership models, one of which was a specialised provision for children with very complex needs. Further opportunities to develop residential and supported accommodation placements are in place. Establishing a residential workforce and bringing the projects into operation is a priority. There are huge challenges with this work particularly around workforce, resources and the time it takes to develop provision.</p> <p>In the meantime, however, finding appropriate placements for children remains challenging. The policy direction of removing profit from children's care has created instability and uncertainty within the provider market (for both foster care and residential care) resulting in placement insufficiency and driving up the cost of placements. Whilst we continue to take steps to prevent children coming into care and reduce the numbers of children in care, the demand for appropriate placements remains high in a low supply environment.</p>
Continue to implement the fostering strategy on the recruitment, retention and skills development of in house fostering.	Head of Children's Services Ongoing	<p>The recruitment and retention of foster carers remains an area of significant challenge. There is an insufficiency of in-house carers in Monmouthshire, particularly carers who are able to provide more specialist care or look after sibling groups. In 2023/24 little progress has been made in the net numbers of in-house foster carers despite considerable effort and attention. This creates an over-reliance on private and independent providers, where the right placement for a child cannot be assured.</p> <p>The number of foster carers increased from 36 to 38 (including 7 new carers) with a corresponding increase in placement capacity from 64 to 67 (at year end 40 children were placed). Current projections for 2024/25 include a further 6 carers currently going through the assessment process. The overall offer to foster carers is being reviewed to see where and how more foster cares can join the in-house team.</p>

Ref & Status	8	Risk	Potential Risk that: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Connected Place Where People Care People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
<p>Referrals to Adult's Services have increased over recent years, and services are facing unprecedented pressure as a result. There are waiting lists in place for social care assessments and some people are having to wait for services, particularly for reablement care at home, and mental capacity act assessments. There has also been an increase in the number of residential care placements due to the complexity of people's needs. Monmouthshire has specific challenges in providing sufficient home care due to the more rural parts of the county. The impact of the pandemic, together with the aging demographic has increased the complexity of presenting need, and services are under immense pressure as a result, particularly given the added challenges of the Council's financial situation.</p> <p>The availability of workforce in some key posts remains a risk - specifically mental health practitioners and Therapies. There is insufficient capacity within the current workforce structure to meet the demand pressures, particularly given the demands associated with hospital discharge. The current financial context for both health and social care places restrictions on the ways in which services can respond to need. In 2024/25 the Adult Services budget is forecasting an overspend of £1.5 million at Month 4, with pressures due to increases in external residential care home placements and increased demand for care at home.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score

2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Work with Welsh Government to recruit and retain care staff	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health Ongoing	Ensuring that there is a sufficient workforce has been a risk for some time, particularly in key posts around direct care, mental health, team leader posts and occupational therapy, and this is an on-going endeavour. The perceptions of working in social care tend to be negative; recruitment is focussed on counteracting these negative perceptions and demonstrate the opportunities, career progression, work life balance and job satisfaction that people experience who work within the sector. Generally, the workforce in Adults social care remains stable, however attraction and recruitment of people into the social care sector, particularly in some roles, continues to be a challenge. Workforce planning remains a priority within the service to ensure that scarce resources are utilised in the best way possible.
Work to address the difficulties in the health and social care system through the Regional Partnership Board and its sub-groups.	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health and Head of Adult Services Ongoing	There are on- going regional and local partnership meetings to identify and address difficulties across health and social care. These include Gwent Adult Service Partnership, and at a local level the Integrated Services Partnership Board. At a local and regional level, grant money received via the Regional Partnership Board is used to best effect to meet population needs and respond to demand pressure in particular within hospital discharge; supporting people with frailty to remain well at home, and ensuring the development of effective early help and preventative services via the Integrated Wellbeing Network. Establishing targeted early help and ensuring there are good pathways between social care and community based wellbeing support is central to trying to mitigate demand pressures over time.
Rebalance reablement and long-term care within our in-house care at home service.	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health Ongoing	There is increased capacity to provide reablement service to those who would benefit from it, with 331 packages of reablement provided in the last year. While this is good progress the aim is to improve this further. In line with the aims of the commissioning strategy the focus is on further increasing the availability of in-house home care to support reablement as opposed to providing long term care, and to increase the number of people accessing the opportunities that reablement provides. Over time this should help to mitigate demand pressures.
Monitor requests for Domiciliary Care to ensure demand is being met and delays are minimised	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health Ongoing	On-going pressure across the social care and health system, together with workforce shortages in some areas, has meant that there are continued challenges in being able to respond to people’s care and support needs as timely as we would want. All referrals are triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Case reviews are being undertaken, applying the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act to ensure a strengths-based approach looking at individual, family and community based support where appropriate. Access to care and support is not always timely; however, overall there is increased capacity across home care which has assisted in supporting 96% of demand in the last year. Action is being undertaken to ensure that home care runs, both in-house and provider services, are coordinated as efficiently as possible. The commissioning strategy is being implemented to strengthen locality based provision of home care and increase capacity into rural areas.
Implement a ‘place-based’ approach to create sustainability in care at home services	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health – As per commissioning strategy	The Council remains committed to developing a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. A comprehensive strategy for commissioning homecare through increased block purchasing has been developed. Engagement with local providers to progress the strategy has commenced. The micro-care project within Monmouthshire continues to support the self-employed carers to develop their businesses. This is increasing care and support capacity across the county and allowing people increased choice and control over how they receive support.
Ensure the long-term sustainability of social care providers	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health & Head of Public Protection Ongoing	It is vital that social care providers are able to provide care and support after the period of the pandemic and as such the council has a role in ensuring their financial sustainability through fair fee negotiations and supporting with recruitment and training. The Council has built positive relationships with local providers and intervenes and provide support where difficulties emerge. There is effective contract monitoring in place, based on partnership approaches. The position in Monmouthshire, whilst challenging, has seen very few providers withdraw their services and most have managed to weather the difficulties around recruitment and retention with the social care sector. Positively home care services have increased and there has been a reduction in the number of people waiting and the average length of wait time. The number of residential placements has increased by 42 placements over the year (from 268 to 310 at year end). Occupancy of care home placements is high at around 95% which is positive from a provider perspective and ensures businesses are viable.

		The increase in residential placements and costs of residential care had a big impact the budget in Adult Social Care. The main pressure on the budget during 2023/2024 was down to provider fees. At the beginning of the year the cost of the care that commissioned was calculated at a higher rate than was able to be accommodated within the budget set. Through extensive fair fee negotiations with provider agencies this was reduced; however, not to the extent that this delivered within the financial envelope agreed within the budget.
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Ref & Status	9a	Risk	Potential Risk that: Failure to return attendance figures to those seen before the pandemic, particularly among vulnerable pupils and those eligible for free school meals, could lead to a negative impact on educational attainment				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young People) and Cllr Martyn Groucutt (Cabinet member for Education)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All People Scrutiny Committee, Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat

Reason why Identified

The pandemic caused widespread disruption to learning, with a significant effect on both teachers and learners. Longer-term effects of the pandemic on pupil well-being and attendance have emerged. There is a risk that our schooling system struggles to adjust to the new patterns of need amongst our children and young people in the post-pandemic period. Meeting the needs of vulnerable learners remains a priority and the gap in attainment between those not eligible and those eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) remains a concern. There is variation in eFSM learner progress and outcomes across schools. Leadership, management, capacity and performance has been identified as in need of improvement in some schools.

Attendance levels have been particularly affected. Though attendance at a primary level has slowly returned to pre-pandemic levels, attendance in our secondary schools remains below levels seen before the pandemic. Attendance of those eligible for free schools meals remains below pre-pandemic levels and below those of their peers not eligible for free school meals. 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.

Ensuring pupils return to school, and understanding the barriers to prevent them doing so, will be key to ensuring our learners are achieving their potential.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Complete the consultation on the new Attendance and Engagement Policy and processes	Head of Attainment Ongoing	The Local Authority Attendance and Engagement Policy has been updated to encompass all aspects of the Engaging, Belonging and Participating guidance issued by Welsh Government in October 2023 and is currently in draft form ready for consultation with schools. Alongside the policy, the team have created a draft handbook for schools to summarise the roles and responsibilities in the new policy, the graduated response for attendance, model policy and the local code for fixed penalty notices and prosecutions. The Education Welfare Service have also prepared training for governors as they implement the new policy.
Work with Education Welfare Services to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are able to access excellent teaching and learning	Head of Attainment Ongoing	The Education Welfare Service (EWS) team continue to work collaboratively with external supporting services to provide a holistic approach to supporting families to overcome barriers to school attendance. This year, EWS has reviewed processes for closing cases where attendance has improved, there has been a change in provision, or a pupil has relocation to another area. As a result, 50 cases were closed during the year, which has released additional time for Education Welfare Officers to focus on the increasing number of complex cases involving a wide range of agencies.
Work with schools and partners to better understand drivers of low attendance	Head of Inclusion Ongoing	The team have developed their awareness of drivers of low school attendance through engagement in programmes such as Community Focused Schools (which focuses on the way in which families work with schools), Trauma Informed Schools and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) approaches. This means that the team consistently reinforce the language, expectations and approaches used in other teams within the directorate. EWS are also working closely with the Inspire Outreach Team who offer support to secondary pupils with attendance below 50% through a reintegration and qualification approach for pupils who may be dis-engaged or experience Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

		For the first time a team of Family Liaison Officers has been working with schools and families to build relationships, overcome barriers to attendance and support pupils back into school. This means pupils and families are receiving support earlier, and Education Welfare Officers have more time to deal with increasing numbers of complex cases and support schools to review systems and processes to secure high levels of attendance for all pupils. However, during the year, the capacity of the service has been reduced for periods.
Support pupils' wellbeing and address barriers to learning	Head of Inclusion Ongoing	The whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being has been implemented. Which helps schools to understand how they are best placed to promote well-being. This has been introduced 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 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 there are currently 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. School are also engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism; currently 68% of schools are engaged.

Ref & Status	9b	Risk	Potential Risk that: An increase in behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic may lead to harm to a pupil or member of staff						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young People) and Cllr Martyn Groucutt (Cabinet member for Education)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All People Scrutiny Committee, Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding, Health and Safety Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
<p>Monmouthshire is currently experiencing exceptionally high levels of both Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) and Permanent Exclusions (PEX) and this presents a risk to the positive engagement and outcomes for children / young people and increasing pressure on local authority services and provisions.</p> <p>Permanent Exclusion (PEX) and Fixed Term exclusions (FTE) have both increased over the past year. Local authorities across Wales and England have experienced similar trends post covid. The reasons for this are complex and not easily resolved. As of the end of the 2023/24 academic year there were 22 upheld PEX. The number and rate of PEX and FTE is higher than the South East Wales consortia overall rate. Of concern is that the data shows clear rises in the issue of FTE for reasons linked to violent or aggressive behaviour, this can be verbal or physical against another student or an adult.</p> <p>Increased levels of exclusions increase the pressure on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) which currently does not have the capacity to accept any new learners unless they have been permanently excluded. This means that even where a graduated response has been applied within a school, and where behaviours and risk assessments indicate the learner may merit a PRS intervention, there is limited capacity to access this. Increased referrals to the PRS as a result of exclusions also puts pressure on the service and impacts its ability to deliver its statutory function to education learners who cannot attend school due to ill-health.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Support learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions or of Permanent exclusions through the Education Support Team (EST)		Head of Inclusion Ongoing		The Education Support Team (EST) was created in March 2023 and alongside the Educational Psychology Service has enabled primary aged learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) or of Permanent Exclusions (PEX) to receive support from specialist professionals. These teams have experience in responding to behaviours of concern/ challenge, an enhanced understanding of social emotional and mental health needs and additional learning needs (ALN) in a way that is trauma informed and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) aware. These supportive teams work to enable learners to maintain their current placement by reducing the risk of PEX by stabilising behaviours and thus reducing risk. The EST have supported learners to integrate into other schools via managed moves to prevent PEX and supported in year transfers of learners with prior FTE.					
Implement the outcomes of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) review		Head of Inclusion Ongoing		The Pupil Referral Service has been reviewed. This has helped understand the current demand, while considering the future role and function of the PRS. The findings of this review will now be implemented including increasing the capacity of the PRS to provide					

		preventative intervention for pupils at risk of PEx and enhanced support for learners to reintegrate into mainstream having had a period of support in the PRS.
Work with officers in community partnerships to secure Home Office grant funding to support the reduction of violence in schools	Vulnerable Learners Lead Ongoing	The Vulnerable Learner Lead worked with officers in community partnerships to secure Home Office grant funding to support the reduction of violence in schools and to reduce exclusions (both FTE and PEx) associated with this. This funding enabled several learners at risk of PEx to avoid this outcome, including learners in their final year of school, who were able to complete their exams in school. Work is already underway on a bid for the current financial year to extend and enhance this work. Further multi agency work has also been undertaken to consider how to reduce FTE and PEx linked to aggression and violence amongst both pupils and towards staff. Focused efforts are underway to improve representation at multi agency meetings in schools and with focused consideration of learners who have been excluded for these reasons in the intervening periods between each meeting.
Continue to roll out training for all staff in all school and settings (i.e. ACEs and Trauma Informed practice) to increase the understanding of the impact on learner behaviours, strategies and approaches to deescalate and ensure safety and wellbeing.	Head of Inclusion Ongoing	A key part of our approach to reducing exclusions is to improve an understanding of the drivers for children’s behaviours. Trauma Informed approaches form part of a universal, whole-school, preventative approach supporting school communities to become trauma informed and mentally healthy places for all. Being Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) aware and trauma-informed is recognised by the Welsh Government in guidance and reflects the evidence base that it is important to build relational practice to improve positive outcomes for all learners. Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) and relational practice approaches are being developed and embedded. A multi-agency TIS Steering Group, including colleagues from health and social care, has been established to achieve this, led by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), and a tiered training programme has been developed. Monmouthshire schools continue to request Trauma Informed training, three schools have been identified to pilot our Trauma Skilled training in the Autumn Term 2024.

Risks to policy priorities

Ref & Status	10	Risk	Potential Risk that: The Council does not support the Replacement Local Development Plan, leading to delays in its adoption which restricts our ability to take forward key policy objective such as job creation, affordable housing development and the adoption of key policies to protect the environment and tackle climate change						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Craig O’Connor (Chief Officer Place) and Cllr Paul Griffiths (Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Thriving and Ambitious Place A Safe Place to Live Place Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Governance, Strategic Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
Reason why Identified									
<p>The current Local Development Plan ran until 31st December 2021; it will remain the principal development plan for decision-making purposes until the adoption of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This does not change the urgent need for the council to make timely progress on its RLDP and to adopt it as soon as realistically possible to address key issues and challenges, including rebalancing our demography and responding to the climate emergency, and to meet the future needs of the county. Factors contributing to the delays include challenge from Welsh Government, which resulted in the need for a new Preferred Strategy, high phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye which resulted in restrictions on developments, and delays in agreeing appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites.</p> <p>The Council is now proceeding with a new Preferred Strategy that responds to the Welsh Government objection and unresolved water quality constraint in the upper River Wye catchment. A revised Delivery Agreement has therefore been prepared which sets out an amended timetable for Plan preparation. The revised timetable shows that the adoption of the RLDP is anticipated in Summer 2025. This unavoidable delay will impact on the Council’s ability to address the identified issues and objectives until the RLDP is adopted and puts pressure on the deliverability of the housing and employment figures over the Plan period, with more reliance on delivery towards the end of the Plan.</p> <p>There are a range of issues and challenges the RLDP will need to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of affordable housing continues to be a concern. There are a significant number of households on the Councils waiting list, and there are limited remaining opportunities within the current LDP to deliver affordable homes because most strategic sites have been delivered and the remaining few cannot currently proceed due to phosphates. • There is a recognised lack of suitable employment land in the northern part of the County (Abergavenny and Monmouth in particular). Delays to the RLDP mean that new allocations to attract investors or retain growing businesses will not be available. There may be some scope for employment sites to come forward adjacent to settlement boundaries outside of the current LDP allocations but in parts of the county these are affected by phosphate restrictions. • The RLDP will identify areas with potential for renewable energy. A delay to the RLDP will have limited impact in this regard because renewable energy schemes such as solar farms can come forward for consideration via the existing LDP and under national planning policy. • There is a need to ensure the RLDP’s growth ambition is matched by infrastructure delivery, much of which is delivered by other bodies. This alignment is required to ensure sustainable development to support future economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. 									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12

2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Prepare a replacement Local Development Plan to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.		Chief Officer Place Spring 2026		The RLDP Preferred Strategy was endorsed by Council in October 2023. This has formed the basis of the Deposit Plan, which was endorsed by Council for a detailed public consultation in October 2024. The Deposit Plan sets the ambition for development within the county. This plan also addresses a number of key issues and align with the priorities of the organisation; it has allocated 50% affordable housing on each new development and is 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. All homes developed under this plan will also be net zero carbon. Council will consider the results of the consultation in Summer 2025, following which the RLDP will be subject to public examination.					
Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the Rivers Usk and Wye		Chief Officer Place Ongoing		In May, Cabinet approved the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. This includes 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. Over the last few years there has been significant work in this area and there is planned strategic phosphate mitigation work in the form of phosphate stripping being installed in Llanfoist (Abergavenny) and Monmouth to serve their settlements. This will enable appropriate development to be permitted within these settlement areas. There has also been a comprehensive review of the Environmental Permits of wastewater treatments across Monmouthshire and, where there is capacity, appropriate development proposals will be permitted. The candidate sites proposed within the Deposit Plan will not have an adverse impact on water quality within the River Wye or Usk.					
Ensure RLDP growth ambition is met by essential infrastructure		Chief Officer Place Chief Officer Infrastructure Chief Officer Children and Young People		Close working is being undertaken on the infrastructure requirements and the delivery between the Local Planning Authority and colleagues in the Local Education Authority, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Highways Authority, Passenger Transport Unit, Active Travel Team, SUDs Approval Body and Green Infrastructure team. The Infrastructure Plan will be published alongside the Deposit Plan. A Local Transport Plan was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. The Employment, Economy & Skills Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2024.					

Ref & Status	11	Risk	Potential Risk that: a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities							
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Strategic Leadership Team & Cllr Catrin Maby (Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment)		Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Place Scrutiny Committee		Risk category and appetite level	Strategic, Environmental, Service Delivery Minimalist		Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate
Reason why Identified										
Tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy is one of the biggest challenges facing our society. Rising temperatures and more extreme weather events bring increased risks to our communities and are causing long-term and potentially irreversible damage to our planet's eco-systems, with significant local impacts such as flooding and loss of species. If we are to stand a chance of slowing the rise in the Earth's temperature, we need to act now. In 2019, councillors were unanimous in declaring a climate emergency. The council will strive to reduce its own emissions and work with communities and local businesses to help them reduce their emissions. This will require engagement, community involvement and commitments from third parties.										
When considering climate change, it is important to consider both how Monmouthshire is contributing to climate change, but also how resilient the county is to the likely impacts of climate change. Extreme weather, such as flooding and record high temperatures, can impact significantly on infrastructure, homes and businesses, along with disruption to community life and public services, particularly critical public services people rely on such as care services.										
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)					
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	

2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Deliver the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy	Strategic Leadership Team Timescales as per strategy	<p>The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. This strategy is underpinned by four action plans to better reflect the breadth of work that is taking place: Internal decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change. Progress in implementing the strategy is regularly monitored by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.</p> <p>Work is underway as part of this strategy to better understand the scale of the challenge we face in striving to collectively become net zero. A costed decarbonisation plan and survey for our built estate has been commissioned to ensure a sound understanding of the funding needed to implement change. Without significant increases in public funding, it is unlikely we will meet the collective target of net zero by 2030.</p> <p>Support is being provide to communities to reduce their carbon emissions through circular economy projects such as Benthylg library of things and reuse shops. Grant funding has been obtained to employ two officers to help expand this offering. The Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) continues to share best practice and resources. This partnership developed the Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP); the public consultation of this action plan was launched in September. The action plan provides practical and achievable actions to help reverse the decline in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in the county.</p> <p>The council is a member of the Wye Nutrient Management Board Technical Advice Group which is identifying and analysing options for delivering improvements in water quality. The council also has continued involvement in the Wye Catchment Partnership to protect water quality, water quantity and biodiversity. An Usk Catchment Partnership Core Group has been established and has agreed its priorities for the draft Integrated Catchment Plan.</p>
Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change	Strategic Leadership Team Ongoing	<p>In recent years, council services have considered what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start thinking about how to adapt to these risks. In 2021, some services updated these Climate Change Risk Assessments to allow service areas to better understand their necessary adaptation requirements. Discussion are also taking place with Welsh Government to better understand their expectations around climate adaptation. The council is also part of broader assessments of climate risk being carried out by the Cardiff Capital Region as part of their Carbon Disclosure Project commitments.</p> <p>The Replacement Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Changes to national planning policy on flooding are still awaited, but officers intend to take a precautionary approach, avoiding all built development on greenfield sites at known flood risk. Welsh Government has produced The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, and in response, Monmouthshire is currently developing an updated Flood Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>Much of the work to coordinate emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The council continues to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.</p> <p>As part the reworking of the Climate Emergency Strategy, climate adaptation, which includes preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change, has been embedded across each of the 4 action plans. Some of the actions within this include developing the management of green infrastructure to improve climate resilience; increasing urban tree canopy, including new street trees and in car parks to provide a cooling effect; and continuing to promote and support council services with business continuity and emergency response strategies.</p>

Ref & Status	12	Risk	Potential Risk that: The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Ian Saunders, Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing, Jane Rodgers,	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery, Economic Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		

Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health & Cllr Angela Sandles, Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement							
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Reason why Identified

Monmouthshire is a beautiful county, blessed with strong communities and a competitive local economy. However, the county’s relative affluence compared to much of Wales, when viewed through the lens of aggregated data, masks the day-to-day reality and lived experience of those citizens who are experiencing poverty, financial hardship and who do so in the context of the considerable financial inequality that exists within the county. In many ways, living in an area of relative affluence and wealth whilst struggling to make ends meet can make that experience even harder and more isolating. This is Monmouthshire’s particular challenge and one that we are determined to understand and address.

For families on lower incomes the rising cost of living, including higher energy prices and cost of fuel, rising food prices and high inflation – risks adding additional financial pressures to households. This also follows financial challenges experienced through the pandemic. This is causing significant pressures and is resulting in an increasing number of families requiring additional public service support from services such as housing support, Mental health, health, debt advice and customer contact and support services. Many of these services have already seen increasing demands and complexity in support required through the pandemic. The cost-of living will also impact Council staff, including costs for working, which could impact staff well-being and capacity to deliver services.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Undertake data modelling to identify communities at greatest risk and use this to target pro-active responses such as commissioning of services	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation Ongoing	We have undertaken extensive data analysis and qualitative research furthering understanding of inequality at a local level and how the affects people’s lives. Close working with partners is being undertaken to help understand the situation and act accordingly (e.g. the number of food bank parcels issued, referrals for housing support, nature or queries to Citizens Advice, use of Register Social Landlords hardship funds).
Support residents with the cost-of-living crisis through ensuring they have the right advice and support	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation Ongoing	The Council is delivering a range of activities to support residents including the Money Matters campaign which signposts to sources of support and further delivery of the campaign to staff in schools and other projects related to the costs of the school day. In October 24, the Community Development Team, together with partners such as Citizen’s Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others, held the first in a series of events across the county to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Representatives from our Bentyg library of things will also attend to ensure a joined-up approach of our tackling poverty interventions.
Review the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation December 2024	A Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead was appointed in April 2024. It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option at this time. The Community Development Team, who coordinate delivery of work in this area, will continue to work to their targeted work plan.
Work across the organisation to address food insecurity	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation Ongoing	We continue to support community-based food insecurity interventions including community fridges. These provide an indirect source of support for those experiencing food insecurity. The number of people accessing community fridges has increased in recent years; there is a need to ensure the long-term sustainability of these interventions. There is a risk that community fridges support residents who otherwise would have reached the foodbanks, which require a referral process and can trigger more extensive support which may be required. We are working alongside the community fridges to sensitively support frequent users to connect with appropriate support, particularly through the Housing Gateway. 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 4,445 in 23/24, with 617 children supported, and 8,950 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.

Ref & Status	13	Risk	Potential Risk that: Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Cath Fallon, Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships, Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships & Cllr Angela Sandles, Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Safe Place to Live A Fair Place to Live People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
<p>The Council is currently experiencing significant challenges and risks in relation to homelessness. Initially due to the pandemic, Welsh Government required Councils to avoid people sleeping rough, then made the subsequent decision to transition homeless services with the aim of homeless becoming rare, brief and unrepeatable, together with an improvement in the quality of homeless accommodation. Welsh Government homeless policy changes through the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Support, whilst positive, has created challenges. Although homeless presentations have remained broadly consistent, the impact of Welsh Government policy has seen a significant increase in demand for homeless accommodation. This in turn has impacted significantly on the Housing Options Team operationally in respect of the need to identify alternative accommodation, which largely has relied on B & B, re-housing households, housing management and placement break downs. This has also created placement and staffing challenges.</p> <p>There are challenges regarding the availability of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation, the type and quality of accommodation and the range of housing support available necessary to meet current and emerging homeless need. Further challenges are also being experienced in respect of acquiring existing accommodation and repurposing properties due to the buoyant market in Monmouthshire and constraints relating to funding eligibility and planning. There are also delays in the construction of new homes due to delays in implementing the RLDP.</p> <p>The Renting Homes Act, which came into force from 1 December 2022, has made significant change the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties. There is a risk this could impact on the private rented sector in the County and reduce the availability of rental properties, further decreasing housing availability and increasing accommodation challenges in the County. The Council is anecdotally seeing evidence of landlords leaving the market.</p> <p>Monmouthshire has welcomed more refugees from Ukraine, in absolute terms, than any area in Wales apart from Cardiff. Hosts have opened their homes and all these refugees will need alternative accommodation when these temporary arrangements come to an end. In addition, many of those who have come through the Welsh Government Super Sponsor Scheme have found jobs and placed children in local schools, but are now struggling to find suitable accommodation and are faced with unaffordable rent prices in the private sector. A shortage of move-on accommodation combined with uncertainty over long-term funding will challenge our ability to provide suitable long-term accommodation for fleeing the war in Ukraine.</p> <p>The widening of asylum dispersal from 2022 will put further pressure on the housing market as the council plays its part in assisting the Home Office to move asylum seekers from hotels and other unsuitable accommodation in line with aspirations for Monmouthshire to become a county of sanctuary.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Prevent homelessness through Rapid Rehousing		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation As per Homeless Transition Plan		<p>The Rapid Re-Housing Transition plan was adopted by Cabinet in April 2023. This sets out the Council's five-year plan to prevent homelessness, increase accommodation and focus support, and includes active buy-in from wider agencies involving homelessness, for example, the role of Health and Social Care is extremely important in homeless prevention and helping people (such as young people and those with mental health issues) maintain their existing accommodation.</p> <p>Rapid rehousing is facilitating increased resource into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. The council is working with 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, granting awards to households</p>					

		<p>to help tackle arrears/debt and households experiencing homelessness to enable them to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives.</p> <p>The Housing Support service has been remodelled to include dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement 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 to 71%. 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.</p>
Develop suitable accommodation for homeless people, including long-term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing and specialist provision for those with additional needs	<p>Head of Enterprise & Community Animation</p> <p>As per Homeless Transition Plan</p>	<p>The RLDP was recently approved by Council for public consultation. Council will consider findings of this consultation in Summer 2025. The delivery of the RLDP will be key to increasing the availability of housing in the county; the plan has allocated 50% affordable housing on each site and is 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 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; currently 55% of social housing is allocated to homeless households. 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.</p>
Prepare an RLDP to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.	<p>Chief Officer Place</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Detailed update contained in risk 10.</p>
Work with Welsh Government, local sponsors and landlords to identify a range of accommodation to accommodate Ukrainian refugees	<p>Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The authority has been successful 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.</p> <p>Recognising the challenges faced by this community, we have established a specialised team comprising of two homeless prevention workers, two Community and Wellbeing 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 (PRS), addressing concerns related to affordability and financial assessments.</p>
Work with national providers and the Home Office to identify suitable accommodation for those fleeing persecution and ensure that appropriate support services, including trauma informed support, are available.	<p>Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Home Office has made all local authorities Asylum Dispersal Areas. This has broadened the responsibility for accommodating asylum seekers in Wales which had previously been shouldered by a small number of authorities. The Home Office's chosen accommodation provider has struggled to find suitable and affordable properties in Monmouthshire, mirroring the challenges faced by the local population. Officers continue to meet with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and Home Office and indications are that some a small number properties may come forward in 2024-25.</p> <p>In September 2023 Council passed a motion committing the authority to formally becoming a county of sanctuary. An application was submitted to the UK-wide City of Sanctuary network in April; discussions with the body have identified further work is needed before the council has met the criteria for accredited membership. A multi-agency working group has been developed to drive forward this application, working closely with school leads to develop, as part of this, schools of sanctuary across the county.</p>

Ref & Status	14	Risk	Potential Risk that: An increase in the number of legal challenges to decisions resulting in delays and increased costs						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	James Williams (Chief Officer Law and Governance) and Cllr Mary-Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All All	Risk category and appetite level	Legal and Regulatory Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
The Council has seen an increase in legal challenges in recent years. As plans are developed to address the financial challenges faced by the Council there is a risk that those challenges increase in frequency. These legal challenges expose the Council to legal and reputational risk, as well as taking increased time and cost to address.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2024/25	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2025/26	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
2026/27	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2026/27	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Impact assesses service changes and policy decisions		Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships Ongoing		An established Integrated Impact Assessment template and guidance is in place and is completed for all decisions that require an assessment. These assessments are challenged by a panel of policy officers prior to decision. There is a need to ensure impacts are assessed at the start and throughout the development of changes and policy to ensure any appropriate mitigation can be undertaken.					

Appendix 2: Strategic Risk Management – Summary

Risk Management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of controlling them or responding to them. Strategic risks are those which affect the Council as a whole. Typically these will be key risks which could significantly jeopardise the Council’s ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned.

The Council is committed to the effective management of risk. As a large public sector organisation, it is exposed to a wide range of risks and threats in delivering key services to communities. Within the Council the purpose of risk management is to:

- preserve and protect the Council’s assets, reputation and staff
- promote corporate governance and aid good management in controlling and managing risks
- support successful delivery of strategic aims, objectives and outcomes
- improve business performance and better anticipate calculated risks where these are likely in delivering improvements
- avoid unnecessary liabilities, costs and failures

The Council seeks to ensure that risk management is effective from strategic to individual services and employees. Therefore, all employees and councillors are responsible for ensuring there are good levels of internal control and risk management throughout the Council in order that the Council’s specified outcomes are achieved.

The Council uses a ‘traffic light’ system of Red/Amber/Green associated with High/Medium/Low to categorise risk levels. This is determined using the risk matrix below.

High risk	The risk is highly likely to occur and the impact will be major. Management action/control evaluation and improvement is required coupled with continued pro-active monitoring
Medium risk	The risk is unlikely to result in a major issue, however, if it did the impact would be significant or serious . This risk is relatively less significant than a High risk however it needs to be closely monitored within timely management action/controls to ensure it does not escalate.
Low risk	The risk is very unlikely to occur and the impact will be minor or moderate at worst. Risk will be managed by seeking control improvements where practical and / or monitoring and reviewing at regular intervals

Risks are also given a score. Scores of 1-4 are low risks, scores of 6-9 are medium risks and scores 12-16 are high risk. Providing a score as well as a risk level allows the variations within risk levels to be more clearly stated.

Major (4)	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)
Substantial (3)	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)
Moderate (2)	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)
Minor (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)
	Unlikely (1)	Possible (2)	Likely (3)	Almost certain (4)

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Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 3rd December 2024

Report Item 4: Risk Register Update

The Cabinet Member introduced the report, together with Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager.

Key points raised by the Committee Members:

Discussion took place, with the following questions and key points raised by the Committee for consideration by the Cabinet Member:

- Members asked about the high number of risks rated as high and whether the mitigations are effective or overly cautious. They also inquired about unforeseen risks and their management in departmental risk registers. The officer explained that risk levels are assessed pre-mitigation, and post-mitigation scores reflect the anticipated impact of mitigation actions. While some risks remain high, the Council is cautious and bases its assessments on evidence, with Directorate Risk Registers introduced for detailed risk management.
- Members also asked if unforeseen risks would be added to each directorate's risk register. Officers confirmed that foreseeable and evidenced risks would be included, emphasizing that risk is ever-changing, and the Council aims to stay updated.
- The committee questioned financial sustainability and service delivery amid financial pressures, overspending in social care, and educational deficits. Officers referred to a medium-term financial strategy, a new budget monitoring process, and a programme of change as key mitigating actions. Questions about workforce challenges and retention, particularly in social care and education, were raised. Officers mentioned a new people strategy focused on recruitment and retention, including a new recruitment portal and proactive approaches in social care to recruit qualified social workers.
- Members raised concerns about the rising demand and complexity of social care cases for children and adults. The Cabinet Member detailed initiatives like a new strategy for children's placements, investment in recruiting foster carers, and a new commissioning strategy for domiciliary care. The challenges of an aging demographic and the need for long-term projects to extend healthy life expectancy were also discussed.
- A member asked if children in care are always managed to stay in their area and school. The Cabinet Member responded that while the aspiration is to keep children local, it is not always possible due to a lack of placements and foster carers. Each case is assessed independently to determine the best interest of the child, sometimes necessitating relocation.
- The Chair asked if the Welsh Government's policy to eliminate profit from the care of looked-after children resulted in market instability, as predicted. The Cabinet Member responded that the policy is being embedded in the new Health and Social Care bill, with extended implementation timelines

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

to ensure market stability. The Council is establishing in-house children's homes and post-16 supported accommodations and recruiting more in-house foster carers by reviewing fees and allowances. The situation is continuously monitored with no major impacts observed.

- The Chair also asked how risk levels can be lower despite the Council's deteriorating financial situation. The Cabinet Member explained that ongoing changes to high-risk services take time to implement. The risk level has been reduced from 16 to 12 due to factors like the autumn budget's positive outlook for public service spending and ongoing budget recovery measures. The risk assessment considers current and future mitigation actions, with continuous monitoring and review.
- The committee questioned the capacity within the Social Care department to manage service delivery model reorganization while handling daily tasks. The Cabinet Member responded that management capacity has been squeezed, but a new service manager for the children's placement program has been recruited, providing additional capacity and freeing up the management team.
- A member raised concerns about the increased risk and sophistication of cyber-attacks, particularly in the social care supply chain. Officers responded that the Council employs a head of cybersecurity who supports other public bodies in Southeast Wales. When entering contracts with new suppliers, their information governance arrangements are assessed. The Council provides support and guidance for suppliers and has information governance groups and backup systems to minimize cyber-attack risks.

SUBJECT:	Community and Corporate Plan Performance Update
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	4th December 2024
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress that has been made to deliver the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet use this report as part of their continuous monitoring of how effectively the council is delivering its objectives to identify where departments are not on track to meet the targets and identify any remedial actions that may be required.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In April 2023, Council approved the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028. The plan establishes a clear purpose to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. The plan sets six objectives, also the Council's well-being objectives, for Monmouthshire to be a:
- 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 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.
- 3.2 These objectives are underpinned by a series of commitments and more detailed actions that will ensure that the organisation is able to deliver on its ambition. Appendix 1 provides an update on progress made during the first six months of 2024/25 on the commitments set out under 'what we want to achieve' of the plan.
- 3.3 The ambition outlined in the Community and Corporate Plan looks to the long term, aims to address many complex challenges and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations. The foundations to deliver the objectives have been developed through new strategies. This report provides an update on delivery of the commitments, many of these are in their initial stages. This should be considered when assessing progress as improved outcomes are unlikely to be seen in the short term. In many instances the report is capturing progress against milestones. These will show whether progress is being made towards the longer-term objectives.

- 3.4 When the plan was approved by Council, Cabinet were tasked with keeping the measures and targets under review and to update these where necessary. In September 2024 Cabinet agreed an update of the measurement framework and associated targets used to track and manage the delivery of the objectives within the plan up to 2026/27. This revised framework focuses on improved measurement of outcomes rather than outputs wherever possible.
- 3.5 The update includes the latest available data for the performance measures identified in the updated framework agreed by Cabinet. The 'latest period' column in the data tables includes figures for quarter 2 of 2024/25. The 'previous' column includes data for 2023/24. Not all data is produced quarterly and where figures refer to different periods this is highlighted in the comments section of the table.
- 3.6 Each objective has been scored based on the council's self-evaluation framework using a scale of 1-6, where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 excellent, as shown in Appendix 1. This provides an in-year assessment based on the progress made so far in 2024/25. It also identifies learning from this interim evaluation that has highlighted where a further focus on certain outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation at the end of the year. A more detailed evaluation of outcomes and impact of this work will be undertaken at the end of the year, the scores will also be re-assessed based on the latest evidence. The annual report will also cover factors such as finance, workforce and procurement which are set out in our developed suite of enabling strategies, whereas the interim report is focused on the six outcome focussed objectives.
- 3.7 The scores for each of the objectives are unchanged from those reported for 2023/24:
- A fair place to live: Level 4 (Good).
 - A green place to live: Level 3 (Adequate).
 - A thriving and ambitious place: Level 4 (Good).
 - A safe place to live: Level 4 (Good).
 - A connected place where people care: Level 4 (Good).
 - A learning place: Level 4 (Good).
- 3.8 This mid-year report highlights progress against the objectives up to October 2024. Key areas to highlight include:
- We have developed a number of critical strategies that set out clearly how we will deliver on our priorities and will enable us to accelerate delivery in the years ahead.
 - Tackling the climate and nature emergency is one of our biggest priorities. Council has approved a new Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. Partnership working has led to significant progress towards improving the health of our rivers with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water now installing phosphate stripping plants at two areas in the county. These will be operational from 2025.
 - We need to maintain a range of services that support people in periods of vulnerability, from childhood to old age. We have taken action to significantly reduce the number of unmet care hours and have increased capacity across

home care. 98.2% of hours of long-term domiciliary care are now being fulfilled which is a significant improvement on the position two years ago.

- We want to foster a thriving place where business can grow and thrive and where people have a safe place they can call home. The Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan has been developed and approved by Council ahead of public consultation. This sets out how land could be developed for employment and affordable housing in future including committing to targets for affordable housing and ensuring that future housing development will be net-zero.
- Our economy needs people with the skills required by employers or who have access to the support they need to start their own businesses. We have continued to provide employment support, with a specific focus on addressing skills in shortage areas.
- We are continuing our programme of school modernisation. Construction of the new, net-zero, King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny continues at pace. Phase 1 of the school is scheduled to be completed by April 2025. Council has also approved a capital investment of £1.2m to improve and remodel the accommodation for the south Monmouthshire pupil referral service
- We have obtained Disability Confident Employer – Level 2 status and we strive to reduce the barriers experienced by disabled people and other groups who are under-represented in the workforce.

3.9 Of course there are also challenges:

- Delivering public services comes at a cost. Rising demand and more complex care needs are placing the council's finances under pressure with a significant overspend in adult social care.
- A shortage of affordable accommodation continues to place more households at risk of homelessness. While we have made good progress through our rapid rehousing and preventative work, there is still high demand for temporary accommodation.
- Pupil attendance in secondary schools has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels and there remains a persistent gap in attainment between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those not.

3.10 Appendix 2 shows the latest data on measures that are being tracked to inform the work in the plan. We want to see positive movement in these measures, however the council's work is only part of a much bigger picture with many partners and other agencies playing a role. As a result, it is not appropriate to set targets against them.

3.11 The report was scrutinised by Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 19th November. The committee used the report to scrutinise the council's performance during the first six months of 2024/25 and agree any areas they would like to examine in greater depth as part of their forward work programme. The committee highlighted the need for benchmarking information, whether regional or national, to provide a more objective view of the Council's performance, and raised the idea of exploring peer reviews with neighbouring authorities. The committee appreciated the Leader's engagement on this matter and acknowledged the ongoing efforts to work more closely with other councils and share best practice.

- 3.12 A dashboard providing further detail on the quantitative measures in the Community and Corporate Plan is updated quarterly on the council's intranet site, the hub. Further information on the activity being undertaken is contained in relevant service business plans. These are updated quarterly and are also available for members to view on the hub
- 3.13 An annual self-assessment of performance in 2024/25 will be produced at the end of the year in line with the performance requirements under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 to produce a self-assessment report and requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act to produce an annual report showing progress against the Council's well-being objectives.

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

- 4.1 An integrated impact assessment was completed on the Community and Corporate Plan. This is a performance progress report and is not seeking a decision that would have an impact on these areas. The report includes information on progress the council has made on the Future Generations Act, equalities, socio-economic duty, the Welsh Language, safeguarding and corporate parenting and social justice.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 5.1 Each of the programmes of activity in the Community and Corporate Plan have been considered against the other choices that could have been made; further information on the process undertaken is in the plan. Every choice we make carries an opportunity cost. Some of these commitments – such as the building of new schools – have already been approved by Council as part of an agreed policy position while others are in development. Each new proposal brought forward to deliver against these goals will be subject to an individual decision in accordance with the constitution.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 The Community and Corporate Plan sets out clearly the council's purpose. It contains specific objectives which can be measured over time. The report provides an update on performance and targets of the full measurement framework set in the plan, as agreed by Cabinet in September 2024. The decision to adjust targets over the lifetime of the plan, in response to changing circumstances, sits with Cabinet and chief officers.
- 6.2 The actions to deliver the plan are embedded in the service business plans of individual teams and the performance measures are updated on a specific dashboard. This report provides a headline progress update for Cabinet and has been reported to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2024. A full evaluation of progress will be produced annually as part of the authority's self-assessment carried out under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

7. REASONS:

7.1 To provide cabinet with an update on progress being made so far in 2024/25 to deliver the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 This is a progress report and there are no direct resource implications. Each of the activities in the community and corporate plan carries some resource implications and need to be considered as part of the Council's challenging financial position. Cabinet has set an expectation that the budget build for 2024/25 will recognise priorities set within the Community and Corporate Plan with reducing the impact of inequality on citizens and climate change on communities being central to all considerations.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team
Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee – feedback from the committee is included in paragraph 3.11

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28](#)
[Community & Corporate Plan Measurement Framework](#)
[Self-Assessment Report 2023/24](#)

11. AUTHORS:

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Appendix 1 – Six-month 2024/25 Community & Corporate Plan performance report


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



The long-term nature of some objectives means that the effects of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will have an impact over the longer term. The targets included in this progress report are reflective of where the council aspires to be in 2024/25. Informed by the evidence gathered, each objective has been assessed on a scale of 1-6 based on performance so far in 2024/25 by applying 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: A Fair Place to Live

<p>Fair place</p> 	<p>Interim Evaluation Score: 4</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 yet been achieved.</p>
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Why This Matters: 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.

Key factors influencing the interim evaluation:

- We are implementing universal free school meals for all primary pupils. This ensures that all pupils have access to a freshly cooked meal at lunchtime, irrespective of their background; however, uptake remains varied and is lower in more deprived areas.
- We are ensuring all children have access to play by providing free or subsidised activities during school holidays.
- We are working to ensure everyone has equal opportunity in Monmouthshire through the implementation of our Strategic Equality Plan and Disability Confident action plan.

The learning from the interim evaluation has highlighted that focus on the following outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation:

- The development of a whole authority approach to tackling poverty and inequality to ensure a joined-up, targeted approach across services.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?	
What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Improved life chances for people regardless of income or background</p>	<p>The inequalities that exist within and between communities have a major bearing on well-being.</p> <p>Healthy, free meals at school help enable all children to have the same opportunities to learn and thrive irrespective of their background or income. We have gone above our statutory duty to provide breakfast and a freshly cooked meal at lunchtime to all primary school pupils. Uptake of meals between areas remains varied, with the lowest rates being seen in the most deprived areas. 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.</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
	<p>A Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead was appointed in April 2024. It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option at this time. The Community Development Team, who coordinate delivery of our work in this area, will continue to work to their targeted work plan.</p> <p>From October 24 we are partnering with Citizen’s Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others to hold a series of events across the county to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Representatives from our Benthg library of things, employment economy and skills and the food partnership team will also attend to ensure a joined-up approach.</p> <p>We have continued to support circular economy projects, including Benthg library of things and Repair Cafes, which are diverting waste from landfill and saving residents money. Two circular economy project officers have been appointment to support and grow these projects, including developing an additional library of things in Caldicot. Due to circumstances beyond the council's control, Benthg Chepstow has closed, and discussions are underway to find an alternative location.</p>
<p>Page 208</p> <p>Residents have better access to council services and support needed to live a healthy life</p>	<p>The conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age play a major factor in their health. As a Marmot Region we are working with our partners in other public services to take action to reduce unfair and unjust inequalities in health.</p> <p>We are ensuring all children have access to play by providing free or subsidised activities during the school holidays. 1,410 hours of play provision were provided during the summer holidays with 2,039 children benefiting. Since April, we have served 8,950 meals, providing access to food through the summer holidays to some children who need it. We continued to deliver Food and Fun schemes across the county, which provides two healthy meals and activities for children during the summer holidays. During this year, this scheme has saw 4,445 attendances, with 617 children supported.</p> <p>We have continued to host networking events across the county, helping us to map out the needs of the creative community. We have submitted a grant application to Arts Council Wales to support the development of our Cultural Strategy, providing training and support to our creative community and hosting eight events and festivals across the county. This strategy is due to be completed by March 2025.</p> <p>We developed and opened the new £2.9 million Magor and Undy Community Hub in partnership with MUCH group. 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 social, cultural, leisure, sporting and other community activities.</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: Citizens are able to participate in council and community decision-making and</p>	<p>Ensuring volunteers are supported and valued is vital to maintaining the social capital which brings huge benefits to communities.</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?


What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>take actions which enable them to shape their own futures</p>	<p>We have the second highest percentage of people who volunteer in Monmouthshire. We have developed a Volunteering Good Practice Guide to ensure a high-quality volunteering experience and have run recruitment campaigns which included promoting the experience of current volunteers. Our annual survey found that 95% of volunteers felt their expectations for volunteering were being met.</p> <p>We want to ensure that everyone in Monmouthshire has equal opportunity. We have made the disability confident pledge and have been accredited with Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status; we're implementing an action plan alongside this. 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 pledge has decreased from 39 (April 24) to 35 (November 24). We will continue to encourage employers to take up, and importantly, to renew their disability confident status to ensure we are reducing the inequalities faced by disabled people in accessing employment in the county.</p> <p>Council passed a motion in September 2023 committing us to formally becoming a county of sanctuary. A multi-agency working group has been developed to drive forward progress on achieving official status. It's likely that this will be achieved in early 2025, falling slightly short of our milestone target.</p> <p>Supporting and promoting the use of the Welsh language is vital to ensuring it's growth. We're providing opportunities for our staff to improve their Welsh language skills. We currently have 327 members of staff that have some level of Welsh language skills and can use these to provide a service in Welsh to residents. There has been an increase in the percentage of the Monmouthshire population who can speak Welsh from 19.7% to 20.5%. We are continuing to work with partners to promote the use of the Welsh language in our county.</p>

Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
A new poverty and inequality action plan is approved by Cabinet	December 2024	It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option at this time; further discussion in relation to a whole authority approach to tackling poverty and inequality will be led by the Strategic Leadership Team.
All four library of things are fully operational	March 2025	Due to the closure of Benthgig Chepstow, two of the four are fully operational. Two circular economy officers have been appointed who will support the establishment of Benthgig Caldicot.

Establish two additional cylch meithrin	First established September 2025, second established January 2027	Information is awaited on suitable venues. We will then look to set up voluntary management committees and identify staff to run them.
Establish childcare settings on the sites of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary school and Trellech Primary schools	To establish the site at Trellech by March 2025 and Archbishop Rowan Williams by January 2027	These remain on track.
Opening of the Magor and Undy Community Hub	August 2023	This has now been completed.
Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) Status attained	June 2024	This has now been completed.
County of Sanctuary Status attained	December 2024	An initial submission was made in April. Discussions with the accrediting body have identified the need for further work. It is unlikely this will be achieved until 2025.

Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Percentage of pupils choosing to receive universal free school meals	75	75	77	
i) The financial saving to communities (£) ii) Carbon saving (Kg Co2) from items borrowed through Benthylg Library of Things	i) 44,500 ii) 22,783	i) 15,170 ii) 7,867	i) 20,000 ii) 10,000	Previous is total since opening, latest is combined total for Q1 and Q2 24/25
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week	42	43	45	Latest is 2022/23, previous is 2021/22
Number of children benefitting from MonLife-run free or subsidised play provisions	3,464	2,039	3,525	
Number of local employers who make the disability confident employer pledge	39	35	70	Latest is November 2024, previous is April 2024. April 2024 data has been revised.
Percentage of people who volunteer	32	39	40	Latest is 2022/23, previous is 2019/20
Percentage of the population who can speak Welsh	19.7	20.5	18	Latest is year ending June 2024, previous is 2023/24

Objective: A Green Place to Live

<p>Green place</p> 	<p>Interim Evaluation Score: 3</p>	<p>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>
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Why This Matters: We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this 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.

Key factors influencing the interim evaluation:

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- We have published our climate and nature emergency strategy which sets out four clear action plans on how we will tackle each element of climate change.
- Our carbon emissions have increased due to key construction projects. Though this impacts our emissions target in the short-term, they have been designed to ensure minimal environmental impact in the long-term.
- We have published our Food Strategy which will guide how we increase community access to land for growing and increase the amount of local produce used in our schools.

The learning from the interim evaluation has highlighted that focus on the following outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation:

- Progress on delivering our decarbonisation plan will be key if we are to approach net zero at a suitable pace.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint</p>	<p>Changes in our climate are linked to man-made greenhouse gas emissions, and in particular carbon dioxide. The impacts affect the natural environment, infrastructure, health, communities, the built environment and business.</p> <p>We recognise that achieving our collective target of net zero by 2030 will be challenging without significant public sector investment. The range of activity we are undertaking is helping us to better understand the scale of the challenge. We have updated our Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. This includes an action plan showing on how we will reduce the council's carbon emissions. The Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group is monitoring progress and using this to target future activity.</p>

	<p>The council’s carbon emissions increased between 2022/23 and 2023/24. The main attributors of this increase are the construction of Severn View Park care home and Abergavenny 3-19 school; whilst the construction of these buildings has increased emissions in the short term, they have been designed to ensure minimal environmental impact in the long-term, with Abergavenny school being net-zero and the new care home being far more energy efficient than its predecessor. We are currently undertaking an assessment of the carbon footprint of the council’s purchased good and services; this will ensure we are targeting future carbon reduction activity in areas of spend with the highest emissions.</p> <p>The emissions from the council’s estate have been steadily decreasing in recent years. Despite good progress, the scope and delivery will need to increase if we are to approach net zero at an appropriate pace. We have commissioned decarbonisation surveys to develop a costed decarbonisation plan for the built estate. The findings of these surveys will inform a low carbon heat strategy and action plan.</p> <p>The emissions from our fleet and travel have increased. We are transitioning to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles at the point of renewal and where services need and funding permits. We are developing a fleet transition plan which will be informed by utilisation data; as we look to develop this strategy, the electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI) network across the county will need to be reviewed. We have identified potential electric vehicle charging infrastructure requirements and assessed on-street charging options, with internal officer consultation underway. The next step is to draft an overarching EVCI strategy.</p> <p>We have increased the percentage of municipal waste in the county that was sent for recycling, reuse or composting to 71.8% (provisional data). This is above the statutory target of 70%. This is due to continued participation of residents with household recycling. The overall amount of waste generated per person has increased from 198kg in 2022/23 to 202kg in 2023/24 and remains above the Wales average.</p> <p>We are improving and expanding our active travel network to help our communities to reduce the carbon produced from travel. We currently have over 100 active routes in place and an additional 23 in development. So far this year we have created or enhanced three routes. We have live journey counter information to monitor the use of our network; these found a 23.2% increase in usage in Q1 compared to the previous year. We will utilise £6.6m of funding to deliver a range of projects throughout the remainder of this year.</p>
<p>Nature recovery, improved environmental and river health</p>	<p>The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to life in Monmouthshire. We need to ensure we are doing all we can to protect and conserve it.</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, with a public consultation launched in September. This guides how we will improve the health and well-being of our residents through enhancing our green spaces.</p>

	<p>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. This is enabling appropriate development to be permitted within these areas where it was previously restricted. We have developed an action plan showing how we will work in partnership to improve the health of our rivers and oceans. The Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group will monitor progress against this.</p> <p>With extreme weather events becoming more frequent it is important to support communities at risk of flooding. We have developed and updated emergency flood response plans for sites across the county, and regularly engage with our communities through one-to-one sessions and community meetings. Our work in these areas is helping to inform our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and action plan. This assesses flood risk on a catchment-based approach and will identify Strategic Flood Risk Areas (SFRA).</p>
<p>Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce</p>	<p>We have published our 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 are assessing community access to land in the county, and ensuring this is considered within the Replacement Local Development Plan.</p> <p>We have continued our participation in the Welsh Veg in Schools supply chain investment scheme to increase the amount of local produce used in our schools. We have also ensured an increased use of local produce in Food & Fun Summer activities. The sustainable food team has supported in the procurement of milk and dairy to explore local options; a number of local suppliers have expressed interest in bidding for the new contract.</p>

Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
New climate and nature emergency strategy approved by Cabinet	May 2024	This has now been completed
Food strategy developed and approved	May 2024	This has now been completed
Increased use of seasonal and/or local produce in schools, care homes and domiciliary care	May 2026	Work with partners is ongoing to increase the use of seasonal, local produce in schools and play activities across the county.

Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Carbon emissions (kgCO ₂ e) from the council's assets and operations	44,248	54,859	36,000	Previous is 2022/23, latest is 2023/24. This increase is mainly attributed to progress made in significant construction projects.
Percentage of our local authority fleet which is ultra-low emission	14	16.43	12	
Capacity (MW) of renewable energy equipment installed on the council's estate	6.598	6.722	6.7	Previous figure is for 2022/23, latest is 2023/24.
Amount (kwh) of renewable energy generated from Council installations	4,783,567	5,271,000	4,857,500	Previous figure is for 2022/23, latest is 2023/24.
Percentage of municipal waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting	71.7	71.8	72	This is provisional data which may be subject to change.
Number of active travel routes created or enhanced	20	3	14	These figures are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.

Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place

Thriving and ambitious place



**Interim
Evaluation
Score: 4**

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 yet been achieved.

Why This Matters: We want to foster a diverse, fairer, greener and circular economy, generating sustainable employment growth and creating conditions for shared prosperity. This will ensure that town centres remain vibrant and welcoming places that meet the needs of the local communities, businesses and visitors. Alongside this, good connectivity and infrastructure will enable people to access the services, attractions, education and training opportunities that are central to a thriving and ambitious place.

Key factors influencing the interim evaluation:

- We have developed important strategies, such as the NEET Strategy and Local Transport Plan, which lay the foundations and provide clarity on what we need to do in the coming years.
- We are working in partnership with town councils and other key stakeholders to develop placemaking plans and have attracted new funding to enable town centre improvements.
- We have a well-qualified population and have focused on addressing skills shortages in key industries and supporting residents into employment.

The learning from the interim evaluation has highlighted that focus on the following outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation:

- The ability to secure additional employment sites as part of the RLDP will have a significant bearing on our success as will wider economic factors that influence business confidence and investment.
- The progress we make implementing the actions that flow from the new Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy will be critical in making progress towards our ambition to create a vibrant and thriving place.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Vibrant town centres which bring people together and attract investment</p> <p>Page 217</p>	<p>Attracting residents and visitors to our town centres is vital for the local economy. We will continue to work with businesses and local people to improve the look and feel of the town centres.</p> <p>We are working in partnership with town councils and other stakeholders to develop placemaking plans in Monmouth, Abergavenny and Magor with Undy. We have secured additional funding from Welsh Government and regeneration experts have been appointed to support the development of this work.</p> <p>We have brought in new funding to enable improvements to commercial properties in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth town centres. 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>We are making improvements to our heritage sites, including their accessibility. We have launched a small grants programme to support access improvements at visitor attractions and events throughout the county. There has been a total of 101,481 visitors to our heritage and culture sites so far in 2024/25, on track to meet our target.</p> <p>The number of jobs supported by tourism increased from 3,356 to 3,462 in 2023. The economic impact of tourism increased to £329.8m, a 2 percent increase on the previous year based on the indexed total, demonstrating that the sector has continued to recover following the challenges of the pandemic.</p>
<p>People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business</p>	<p>Monmouthshire values all of its citizens and the people who work for our businesses. In 2023 we developed an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy. We are committed to helping people of all ages and backgrounds develop the skills needed by new and established businesses helping them to grow and thrive.</p> <p>We have provided support to people who want to start their own business. At quarter 2 we had assisted 42 pre-start and existing businesses. We will need to refocus our efforts if we are to achieve our target of 180.</p> <p>We have continued to provide employment support, with a specific focus on addressing skills in shortage areas. We supported four people to gain a Construction Skills Certification Scheme card and delivered two Pathway to Hospitality courses with 15 attendees who all gained accredited qualifications. In partnership with the Job Centre, we have organised two job fairs that saw 360 attendees.</p> <p>We have addressed barriers to employment and supported those who are economically inactive to re-enter the job market. We are running a number of projects, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, such as business coaching and advice. In total, we have supported 53 people to gain employment so far this year, which is forecast to achieve our annual target. We are also developing a new</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
	<p>strategy to prevent young people ending up without education, training or employment, ensuring better outcomes and opportunities for our young people.</p> <p>The latest data shows that 58% of Monmouthshire residents are qualified to level 4 of the national framework (the highest level), compared to 43% for Wales and 47% for Great Britain. However, the ratio of jobs to population in Monmouthshire is lower than the figures for Wales and the UK as a whole. One of the reasons behind this is a shortage of the new employment sites needed to grow opportunities. Council has approved the deposit replacement local development plan highlighting new employment sites that will address this.</p> <p>78.9% of people in Monmouthshire are economically active, this is above the rates for Wales and Great Britain. We are seeing positive signs of progress such as an improvement in our economic position as measured by the UK Competitiveness Index.</p>
<p>Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure</p>	<p>Good transport and infrastructure are vital to our communities and economy, enabling access to a wide range of services and opportunities for all residents.</p> <p>Monmouthshire is not alone in facing challenges maintaining its highways. There is a significant backlog in roads maintenance across England and Wales. We simply cannot afford to fund all of the necessary improvements from our capital budget. These have varying levels of risk associated with them. We commission independent assessments of key highways infrastructure, and these have enabled us to prioritise maintenance expenditure.</p> <p>In May we adopted a new Local Transport Strategy setting out a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire over the next five years. We have been awarded up to £8.4m to implement transport projects across the county. These will enhance access, safety and infrastructure. Projects awarded funding include community road safety training, bus infrastructure projects and road resilience projects to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change.</p>

Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
Development of draft Placemaking Plans for Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth	March 2025	Draft plans are in development with partners and residents. These are due to be completed by March 2025. Work is progressing well.
Develop Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy	February 2024	This has been completed
Develop and approve NEET strategy	November 2024	The draft Strategy is being developed. This is on target to meet the milestone
Local Transport Plan supporting modal shift is produced	May 2024	This has now been completed

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Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Total number of visitors to our heritage & culture sites	194,700	101,481	198,000	Latest figure is for the period April to September 2024. Target is for full year April 24- March 25. We are forecast to exceed the target.
Number of NEET young people supported into employment	21	Not yet available	25	Data will be added as soon as this becomes available.
Number of working age people supported into employment during the year through action by the local authority	115	53	60	Performance is linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered. We are on the way to the annual target at the 6-month stage.
Percentage of school leavers not in education, employment or training	1.8	1.8	1.5	Latest available date is for 2023/24 data. We are not yet able to assess progress against the 2024/25 target.

Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Percentage of care experienced young people who have completed at least three months in education, training or employment by the age of 19	Newly adjusted measures	52.5	60	Latest available date is for 2023/24 data. We are not yet able to assess progress against the 2024/25 target
Number of pre-starts and existing businesses assisted during the year by the local authority and its partners	165	42	180	Performance is linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.

Objective: A Safe Place to Live

Fair place



**Interim
Evaluation
Score: 4**

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 yet been achieved.

Why This Matters: For most people, Monmouthshire is a really good place to live but this is not the case for everyone. It's important that people have a place to call home, feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

Key factors influencing the interim evaluation:

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- Council has approved a deposit version of the Replacement Local Development Plan for public consultation. This sets out how land will be developed for employment and affordable housing.
- We are continuing to implement our Rapid Rehousing model, and this is preventing more people from becoming homeless.
- We have started to acquire accommodation to increase the availability of temporary housing in the county which is reducing the number of homeless households placed into costly and inadequate bed and breakfast accommodation.

The learning from the interim evaluation has highlighted that focus on the following outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation:

- The continued need to focus on delivering preventative approaches to homeless needed to achieve this objective. An increase in and/or greater complexity in demand for homelessness services could present challenges to capacity to deliver this.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Increased supply of good quality affordable housing.</p> <p>Page 222</p>	<p>Having a safe, secure and warm place to call home is one of the most important contributors to peoples’ well-being. High property prices and a limited supply of affordable housing mean this is currently out of reach for too many local people.</p> <p>We have developed a deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This has been approved by Council and is now out for consultation. It will require each new development to contain 50% affordable housing. It is also introducing enabling policies which will allow more affordable housing developments to come forward at a later date. This includes facilitating more single person accommodation in the county, this is currently extremely limited and is a factor contributing to homelessness.</p> <p>We have engaged with owners of vacant properties, offering advice and support to help and encourage them to bring houses back into use. This has led to 36 applications to the Empty Homes Grant. Four owners have subsequently expressed an interest in leasing their property as temporary homeless accommodation.</p> <p>We have introduced more formal mechanisms to help tackle empty properties within the county. This includes a Council Tax Premium on long-term vacant properties to encourage owners to bring them back into use. Our approach has reduced the number of recorded long-term empty homes from 541 to 447.</p>
<p>Reduce the number of people who become homeless.</p>	<p>We have seen increasing levels of homelessness in recent years, alongside this, limited temporary accommodation has meant we have been dependent on costly and unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation to fulfil our responsibilities to families.</p> <p>We have applied a Rapid Rehousing approach and increased the resources for homeless prevention. This includes increased staffing and closer partnership working to support more people at risk and providing grants from the Homeless Prevention Fund to help tackle arrears/debt and enable households remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives.</p> <p>We remodelled our Housing Support service to include dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement support. This also includes dedicated support for young people with higher need through the 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 an increase in the proportion of applicants successfully prevented from becoming homeless to 71%. We may struggle to meet demand for further support within current resources, particularly for younger people and those with mental health and substance misuse needs.</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?


What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Page 223</p>	<p>We still have a lack of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation. The focus of our RLDP on affordable housing provision will help address some of this need, particularly for single person accommodation. There are presently 160 people in temporary accommodation. We are working to provide more settled accommodation for these households.</p> <p>We regularly hold a Corporate Parenting Panel to coordinate and support care leavers to prevent them from becoming homeless. During the last year, eight care leavers experienced homelessness within 12 months of leaving care, an increase from five the previous year.</p> <p>We have increased the availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households through partnerships with private landlords, new builds and acquisitions. We have worked with housing associations to make more social housing available for homeless households; currently 55% of social housing is allocated to homeless households. We need to ensure that allocating further social housing to homeless applicants will not be detrimental to other housing need groups.</p> <p>We have started to acquire accommodation for use as temporary accommodation. The first approval has been given to re-purpose a council owned agricultural property and, we have started work to re-purpose Severn View residential home as temporary accommodation. The increased support for those at risk of homelessness, combined with the increase in availability of both temporary and settled accommodation, has contributed to a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation which now stands at 52, although this is slightly higher than 46 last year, it remains below 92 during 2022/23. The number of 16- and 17-year-olds in B&B accommodation remains at zero. Ensuring increases in both temporary and permanent accommodation will be key to achieving our milestone of eliminating the use of B&B accommodation for households with children and young people.</p>
<p>A more energy efficient housing stock with a lower carbon footprint.</p>	<p>Tackling the climate emergency and reducing emissions is one of our priorities. Domestic properties are one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>The Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) has been approved for consultation by Council. This will require new homes in the county to be net zero carbon. Once implemented, this will lower carbon emissions and help to reduce energy costs for residents.</p> <p>We have continued to support low-income households to access grant funding to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. We are promoting the Eco4 scheme which provides funding for low-income households and those living with medical conditions worsened by damp or cold to access energy efficiency improvements. Our staff are working with the NHS to identify residents with respiratory or immune suppression illnesses. Later this year we will launch a targeted campaign to increase take-up from those who can benefit from the scheme.</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other</p> <p>Page 224</p>	<p>Everyone should have the right to feel safe and have a sense of belonging in their local community.</p> <p>Our community safety team have worked with young people across the county to address concerns of knife crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. We are also working with the charity Fearless to deliver workshops on critical issues such as county lines and knife crime at our youth centres, helping young people to navigate these challenges. We have secured £10k from the Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office to target young people involved in Anti-social behaviour. We are also 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.</p> <p>We have worked with partners to develop a Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25. This has helped identify the serious violence priorities across Monmouthshire. We are now working with key partners and agencies to ensure deliver a range of targeted interventions to address these.</p> <p>We have contributed to the development of a new Gwent regional violence against women and domestic sexual violence (VAWDASV) strategy. The strategy is now being implemented through partnership arrangements and will ensure that more people feel safe, and free from abuse and violence.</p>

Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress			
Replacement Local Development Plan approved by Council	July 2025	The Deposit RLDP was endorsed by Council in October 2024 ahead of public consultation.			
The use of B&B accommodation is eliminated for households with children and young people	March 2027	There are 9 families in B&B accommodation. Ensuring there is sufficient temporary and permanent accommodation in the county will be key to achieving this milestone.			
Rapid Rehousing Approach introduced	April 2023	This has now been completed. The Rapid Rehousing Approach was implemented in April 2023 and has contributed to increased focus on homeless prevention.			
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment	
Number of affordable homes granted planning permission in year	46	15	50		
Number of additional affordable homes delivered	-	-	60	Data not currently available due to vacant post	
Percentage of homeless households who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless	71	71	70		
Number of 16- and 17-year-olds in bed and breakfast accommodation	0	0	0		
Number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation	New measure	9	New measure	The corresponding milestone is the use of B&B accommodation is eliminated for households with children and young people by March 2027	
Number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation	46	52	40		
Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation	161	160	150		

Objective: A Connected Place where People Care

<p>Connected place</p> 	<p>Interim Evaluation Score: 4</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 yet been achieved.</p>
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Why This Matters: We want Monmouthshire to be a place where people’s contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. The need and complexity of demand for care and support is high. We need to maintain a range of services that support people in periods of vulnerability, from childhood to old age, allowing them to live their lives on their terms. We know that well-being is about far more than treating people when they get sick. We need to deliver approaches that promote, physical and mental health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.

Key factors influencing the interim evaluation:

- We have developed strategies that will provide the provision to meet social care needs for children requiring support in specific placements and adults who require care at home.
- We have implemented preventative and reablement approaches to providing care that support long term well-being, with plans to grow these further.
- We are driving through significant programmes of change including increasing the use of Assistive tech within care and support planning.

The learning from the interim evaluation has highlighted that focus on the following outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation:

- The continued need to focus on delivering preventative approaches to achieve this objective.
- The continuing challenge of responding to the complexity of demand for social care support which is placing huge cost pressures on the authority’s finances.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?	
What we want to achieve	Progress Update
High quality social care which enables people to live their lives on their terms	Early help is vital to prevent children coming into care. We have established a coordinated approach to early intervention and prevention in Children’s Social Services. Demand for these services is high, we have maintained low waiting times by building capacity through group work and supporting student placements. This ensures that families get the help they need in a timely way and supports good

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve

Progress Update

outcomes for children. So far this year, 100% of families reported a positive outcome following a Building Stronger Families team intervention.

We have analysed demand and set a strategy to develop children’s residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements within the county. This sets out how we will support the transition to not-for-profit care for children in Wales and respond to the associated risks and challenges. We are developing two projects, with a further project in the pipeline. There remains a shortage of suitable placements, especially those who need additional support or who are not able to be placed with foster carers. Our strategy will improve availability.

The recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a significant challenge. We are reviewing the foster care offer to Monmouthshire carers to support recruitment. The total number of foster carers increased from 36 to 38 (including 7 new carers) in 2023/24. The current projections for 2024/25 include a further 6 carers currently going through the assessment process.

We are supporting an aging population. This is the prime driver for increased demand in adults social care. The proportion of residents aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 33.6% by 2043, compared to 25.7% across Wales. We are increasing the use of reablement wherever possible to support people to relearn how to do daily activities and to reduce their need for further support. We have provided 136 packages of reablement so far in 2024/25, with 47.1 percent of these resulting in a reduced or mitigated need for further support.

We continue to work with partners in both primary and secondary health to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and support timely discharges. Ensuring well-coordinated and timely discharges and managing the pressure within the hospital system remains challenging. We convene weekly multi-disciplinary meetings to identify and unblock delays when they arise. The number of patients awaiting discharge for social care reasons varies during the year. In September 2024, 14 patients were awaiting discharge.

We are developing new provision and the way we can provide care and support. We opened Severn View Park, a specialist care home for people living with dementia in March 2024. The home provides 32 bedrooms for both 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. We are increasing the use of assistive technology within care and support planning. We made 267 installations in 2023/24, providing a range of technology that helps support someone to live independently at home for longer.

We want to ensure care is available for adults who require it. We have developed a long-term strategy for commissioned domiciliary care. This supports place-based care and the provider market. At the same time this ensures that wherever possible our in-house provision is supported for reablement, utilising our expertise to support residents to retain independence.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
	<p>We have taken action to significantly reduce the number of unmet care hours from 804 in March 2023 to 148 in September 2024 and have increased capacity across home care. 98.2% of hours of long-term domiciliary care are now being fulfilled. There has been an increase in the number of adults supported in residential care placements from 320 in March 2024 to 337 in September 2024. This is due to the complexity of people’s needs and has resulted in increased costs being met from our Adult Social Care budget.</p>
<p>Page 228 Active and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded</p>	<p>Healthy life expectancy is critical to support wellbeing and increase independence. This averages 68.7 years for males 69.3 years for females, this is lower in the most deprived parts of the county. Life expectancy here is longer than most other parts of Wales.</p> <p>We continue to provide the National Exercise Referral scheme which provides 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. We continue to work with healthcare professionals to increase participation and continuation in the scheme. We have 216 participants in the MonLife’s Active 60 programme, which is supporting people aged 60+ to become more physically active. Participants on the 60+ programme have reported wider benefits to the determinants of health including making friends and creating social networks, as well as improving their health.</p> <p>We have delivered three Green Infrastructure Nature-based projects across the county, with the preparation for 19 sites to be delivered in the rest of the year. This is supporting increased access to nature which supports well-being. In total 30 schools, volunteers, local interest groups and partners have been involved in nature-based health and wellbeing projects and initiatives across the county so far this year.</p> <p>We have supported young people’s mental health and wellbeing across the county through the youth service Shift project. We have expanded the offer with a focussed grant funded programme called Emotional Logic. 95% of young people engaged in the project reported an improvement in their mental health / emotional well-being, exceeding the target of 85%.</p> <p>We have commissioned carers services, provided information and advice and offered a range of free events and activities to support carers and young carers’ needs. There are 1,002 adult carers who have signed up to receive information, advice and assistance through our biannual carer newsletter and discounted leisure offer. Similarly, 168 young carers are registered with the Young Carers Service and receive a comparable service with more targeted support. We also undertake carers needs assessments to ensure that carers needs are understood in their own right. There is increasing demand for support, carers awaiting a needs assessment has increased from 8 in 2023/24 to 23 in the same period in 2024/25.</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
A professional and passionate social care workforce	<p>We have focussed our social care workforce development on addressing areas where there is high demand and recruiting to essential posts to meet the care needs of our residents. Recruitment is focussed on demonstrating the opportunities, career progression, work life balance and job satisfaction that people experience who work within the sector. Generally, the workforce in social care remains stable, however attraction and recruitment of people into the social care sector, particularly in some roles, continues to be a challenge. The workforce market remains volatile; the number of vacancies across social care remains broadly stable with 26 vacancies in September 2024, compared to 23 vacancies in March.</p> <p>The micro-care project within Monmouthshire continues to support self-employed carers to develop their businesses as well as providing the opportunity for greater oversight and governance of self-employed care workers operating in the county.</p>

Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
Development of a young persons Placement Development Strategy	April 2024	This has now been completed
Approval of a commissioning strategy to support a sustainable domiciliary care sector	May 2024	This has now been completed

Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
The percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year that reduced or mitigated the need for support / positive outcome from reablement	55.3	47.1	60	
Percentage of adult service users who are happy with the care and support they have had	84.6	84.4	90	

Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Percentage of hours of long-term domiciliary care fulfilled	96.6	98.2	96	
Percentage of families reporting a positive outcome following a building stronger families team intervention	100	100	90	Latest figure is Quarter 1 2024/25
Percentage of adult service users who have had the right information or advice when they needed it	77.6	78.5	80	
Percentage of placements of children who are looked after by the local authority made with in-house foster carers	36.5	39	43	
Percentage of young people engaged in the youth service Shift project who perceive an improvement in their mental health / emotional well-being	84	95	85	
Number of schools, volunteers, local interest groups and partners involved in nature-based health and wellbeing projects and initiatives across the county	New Measure	30	30	

Objective: A Learning Place

Learning place



**Interim
Evaluation
Score: 4**

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 yet been achieved.

Why This Matters: We want Monmouthshire to 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 had a substantial effect on schools and pupils. The two years of uncertainty and significant disruption to learning 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.

Key factors influencing the interim evaluation:

- We are implementing a range of approaches and support to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and support pupils' well-being.
- Attendance in primary schools has improved to near pre-pandemic levels, secondary school attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels. Attendance of eFSM pupils remains lower, particularly in secondary school. The number of exclusions from schools is high and there is significant demand for support to pupils.
- We are developing an Inclusion Strategy that will help us to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery of inclusion services across Monmouthshire.
- We are developing the school estate, including the development of King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny and opening of Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy.

The learning from the interim evaluation has highlighted that focus on the following outcomes is required to affect the final evaluation:

- We need to evaluate the attainment of key stage 4 learners in our schools in the academic year 2023/24 to assess the outcomes achieved.
- We need to target our support for children and young people, using the approaches we have now developed, to support attendance in school and reduce behaviours that challenge.

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p>Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils</p>	<p>Being in school is crucial for achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. The pandemic caused significant disruption to the education of our pupils, and we are still seeing the consequences of this today. 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 have updated our attendance policies to strengthen systems and processes to improve and sustain high levels of attendance in line with new Welsh Government guidance.</p> <p>Attendance in primary schools during the 2023/24 academic year was 93.7%; this is near to pre-pandemic levels. Attendance in secondary school remains below pre-pandemic levels at 88.9%. Attendance for those eligible for free school meals (eFSM) remains lower in primary schools at 89.3%, and significantly lower in secondary schools at 78.7%; both remain lower than pre-pandemic figures. We need to increase attendance for those eFSM to ensure no pupil is left behind.</p> <p>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>We have implemented the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being. This 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 74% to 88.2%. All schools and settings are engaged with Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), and we currently have 63 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 and seven schools have signed up to receive whole staff trauma skilled training. This approach focuses on understanding children/young people presenting with behaviours of concern and raising the awareness and capacity of adults supporting vulnerable pupils. Currently 23 (of 34) schools are engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism.</p> <p>The number of permanent exclusions from schools is high and increased to 22 in the last academic year. The number of fixed term exclusions has also increased and remain high. The continued work of the Vulnerable Learner Lead and increased capacity within the Inclusion Service will allow more focus on managing exclusions, this includes an increased focus on the role of critical friend to schools where the use of exclusion is of concern. The high levels of exclusions have increased the pressure on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) to</p>

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How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
	<p>support pupils who have been excluded, and those at risk or exclusion. The service has limited capacity to support new learners unless they have been permanently excluded; the move into new accommodation will improve this position.</p>
<p>The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning</p>	<p>We need to support all learners to secure the necessary skills and knowledge that we would expect them to have at the relevant point in their education.</p> <p>Our focus remains on supporting excellent teaching and learning. 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. Key stage 4 attainment data for the academic year in 2023/24 is being validated and evaluated. A fuller assessment of 2023/24 performance will be provided to scrutiny and in the annual self-assessment report of this objective.</p> <p>We have an agreed Welsh in Education Strategic Plan that sets our strategic direction for the planning, delivery, and growth of Welsh medium education in Monmouthshire over the next ten years. 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.</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. We are preparing for the opening of a second immersion class which will enable pupils from year 3 and upwards to transfer into Welsh-medium education, and in doing so support and increase demand. The number of Reception learners in Welsh medium schools is 56. Progress has been limited in developing systems to track linguistic progression between years 6 and 7. The number of children transitioning from a Welsh language primary school to a Welsh language secondary school in the summer of 2024 was 27, below our target. We will continue to implement our plan to increase Welsh medium education in the county.</p>
<p>What we want to achieve: A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners’ starting points, strengths and educational needs</p>	<p>Over the past three years, schools have seen a consistent increase in the number of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM), ranging between 5% to 48% (with an average of 18%). We need to support learners who are eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) or who are experiencing the impact of poverty, and those learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) throughout our provision.</p> <p>There remains a gap in attainment between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those not. We have worked with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools. This has a particular focus on vulnerable learners, which includes those eligible for free school meals. A fuller assessment of 2023/24 performance,</p>

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How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 234</p>	<p>including attainment of pupils eligible for free school meals, will be provided to scrutiny committee and in the annual self-assessment report of this objective.</p> <p>We are operating the Inspire programme in each secondary school in Monmouthshire to work with vulnerable learners, with a designated worker per school. So far this year 97 young people have been supported by Inspire to achieve an additional qualification and/or achieve a life skill.</p> <p>Our Community Focused Schools lead works 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.</p> <p>We are developing our Inclusion Strategy. This will outline our collective principles, approaches and service offer, and will help ensure consistent, high-quality delivery of inclusion services. Our Inclusion support is now embedded as part of interconnected strategies and related toolkits, resources and policies. This covers ALN, relationships, children looked after and reducing exclusions. A framework is being developed for the management of specialist resource bases (SRB) to ensure a consistent, equitable approach across all settings.</p> <p>We are delivering the Additional Learning Need (ALN) Strategy, which aims to build sustainable and resilient provision. We have established an ALN Quality Assurance system for mainstream schools to support excellent practice in the identification and management of pupils with ALN. We are using the quality assurance to develop the consistency of ALN provision across the county.</p>
<p>Continue our programme of school modernisation</p>	<p>The environment children and young people learn in is important to their development and well-being.</p> <p>We are progressing with construction of the new King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny. Phase 1 of the school is scheduled to be completed by April 2025. The new building will be net zero in line with our commitment to decarbonise our operations. The school 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 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.</p> <p>Full Council approved a capital investment of £1.2m to improve and remodel the accommodation to facilitate the relocation of the south Monmouthshire pupil referral service. This will provide the service with a permanent and dedicated high quality environment that is conducive to the needs and increasing demands of the vulnerable population of pupils it serves.</p>

How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

What we want to achieve	Progress Update
	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. Work is scheduled to be completed in September 2025. We opened Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy on the site of Overmonnow Primary school in September 2024, with 19 pupils attending

Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
Attendance and Engagement Strategy updated to strengthen systems and processes to improve and sustain high levels of attendance in line with new Welsh Government Guidance	September 2024	A range of policies have been updated to support increased attendance levels. These include the Council attendance policy, primary and secondary school attendance model policies and fixed penalty notice policy.
Inclusion Strategy approved by Cabinet	November 2024	The Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy have been drafted and are out for consultation.
Quality Assurance of Additional Learning Provision across the county via school's finance forms and provision pyramids is completed. Additional Learning Provision (ALP) meets the needs of vulnerable learners in the county and is of good quality	Regular Assessment	Almost all schools have submitted their finance forms and provision pyramids for quality assurance.
Additional Learning Need Coordinators and Specialist Resource Base Leads are engaged in quality assurance processes around the consistency and impact of Additional Learning Need provision through Additional Learning Provision forum and cluster / Specialist Provision and Outreach Team	Regular Assessment	Individual Development Plans moderation has taken place at both a cluster and Local Authority level. Secondary supported self-evaluation for ALN / ALP outcomes have been shared with ALN coordinators and Headteachers; where relevant action plans have been developed with schools or existing plans added to.

A new carbon neutral, 3- 19 school is opened in Abergavenny	Phase 1 April 2025, Phase 2 April 2026	Phase 1 is on track for completion
A strategic review of school catchments is completed, and recommendations are made to Cabinet	Annual review of policy	The School Admissions Policy 2025/26, including a review of school catchment areas, was approved by Cabinet in April 2024, in which it was agreed to accommodate the villages of Tredunock, Llanhennock and Llandegveth into the catchment area for Usk Church in Wales Primary School.
Deliver a new non-maintained nursery in Trellech, invest S106 funding to improve the infrastructure at Castle Park and Archbishop Rowan Williams schools and improve and develop the buildings used to accommodate the Pupil Referral Service	Trellech March 2025, Archbishop Rowan Williams January 2027	We are delivering a new non maintained nursery in Trellech, this is on target to be ready by March 2025. We are investing S106 funding to improve the infrastructure at Castle Park and Archbishop Rowan Williams schools and expect to complete this by January 2027.
A new Welsh-medium seedling provision is opened in Mynmouth	September 2025	We opened Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy on the site of Overmonnow Primary school in September 2024
A newly refurbished Welsh-medium primary school is opened	Opened and refurbished September 2025	We have secured a new site for Ysgol Y Fenni which will increase the capacity of the school from 210 to 420 pupils. Work is scheduled to be completed in September 2025

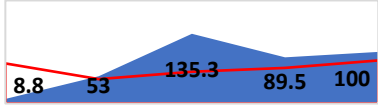
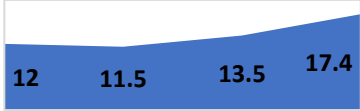
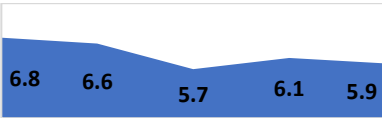
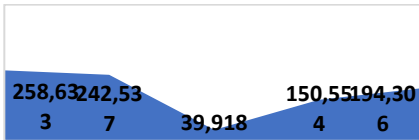
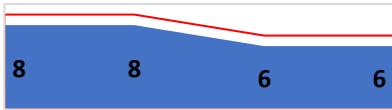
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Pupil attendance (brackets show efsm figure) i) primary ii) secondary	i) 93.7 (89.3) ii) 88.9 (78.7)	i) 94.6 (89.6) ii) 90.8 (77.7)	i) 94.6 (92.6) ii) 91.2 (82.4)	Previous is 2023/24 academic year data. Latest in 2024/25 academic year data – period from 1st September to 14th October
Percentage of schools engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism	New Measure	67%	100%	New Measure for 2024/25
Number of Reception learners in Welsh medium schools	48	56	85	Longer term target is 105 by 2030.

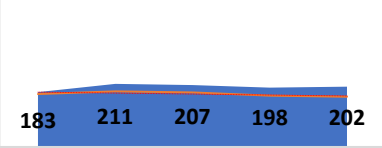



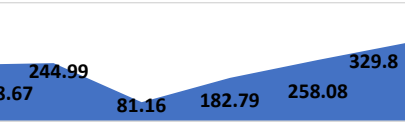
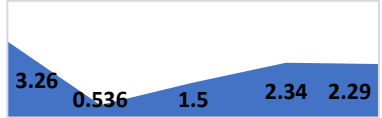
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Number of children transitioning from a Welsh language primary school to a Welsh language secondary school	27	27	46	Latest is summer 2024, transition numbers varied in primary schools. As a result, transition numbers are lower than the target this year.
Number of young people supported by Inspire (in school support/outreach support/post 16 support) to achieve an additional qualification and / or achieve a life skill	New Measure	97	133	New Measure for 2024/25
Total number of enrolments by adult learners on community education courses including Coleg Gwent franchise courses	937	Not yet available	876	Latest is 2023/24 data, update not yet available for 24/25.

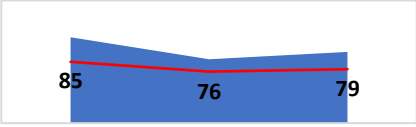
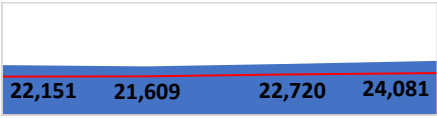
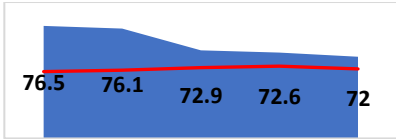
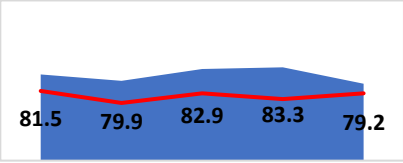
Appendix 2 – Latest update on the longer-term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028

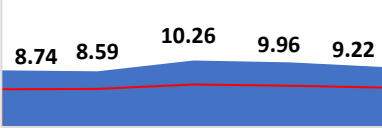
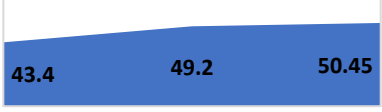
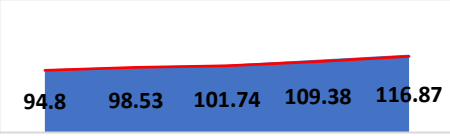
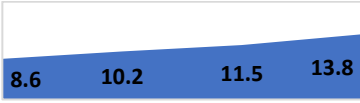
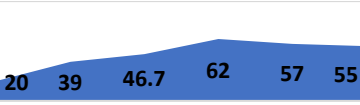
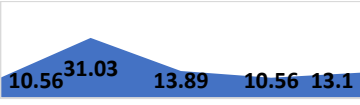
The table below provides the latest data on measures that are being tracked to inform the work in the plan. We want to see positive movement in these measures but they are things where our input is only part of a much bigger picture and so we are not able to set targets against them. Wales data is included in red, where available.

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Trend	Latest
A Fair place to live		
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need	<p>79 88 86</p>	86
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation	<p>10 7 8</p>	8
Healthy life expectancy - female (years)	<p>66.1 69.3</p>	69.3
Healthy life expectancy – male (years)	<p>66.4 68.7</p>	68.7
Gap in healthy life expectancy between most and least deprived areas - female (years)	<p>11.4 12 8.8 9.5 7.7</p>	7.7
Gap in healthy life expectancy between most and least deprived areas – male (years)	<p>10 12 6.1 4 3.1</p>	3.1


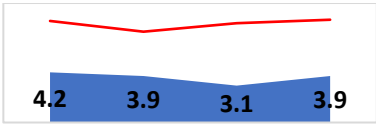
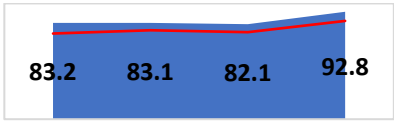
Difference in average pay between men and women working in the county (£)		100
Percentage of children living in relative low-income families		17.4
Percentage of residents who feel 'People in my local area get on well and help each other'	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Percentage of residents who feel 'People in my local area pull together to improve the local area'	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
A Green place to live		
Average carbon emissions per capita in Monmouthshire (tonnes)		5.9
Number of rail passenger journeys		194,306
Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the air (µg/m3), measured at Air Quality Management Areas in Monmouthshire		6

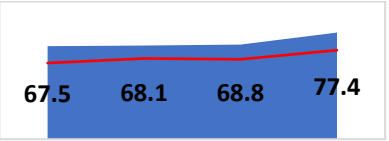
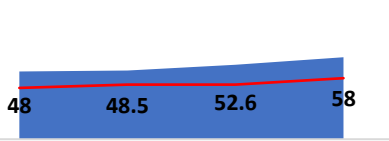
Average annual residual household waste produced per person (kilograms)		202
Percentage of the Special Area of Conservation river catchment waterbodies that fail the phosphorus targets	Trend data not available	88 for Usk 67 for Wye
Percentage of people who agree that their local area has a clean environment	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
A Thriving and Ambitious place		
Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live		95
Average hourly town centre footfall		288
Percentage of vacant town centre premises		10.9
Annual economic impact of tourism (£)		329.8
Number of tourists visiting the county (million)		2.29

Percentage of people who attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities three or more times a year		79
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework i) no qualifications, ii) qualified to level 2 or above, iii) qualified to level 3 or above iv) qualified to level 4 or above	Update in learning place below	Update in learning place below
Gross disposable household income per head (£)		24,081
Percentage unemployed i) females ii) males	Data not available	Data not available
Percentage employed – female		72
Percentage employed – male		79.2
Percentage of council expenditure spent in local supply chain through public sector contracts	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Percentage increase in active travel route usage	New measure – trend data not available	8.43
A Safe Place to Live		

Median house prices compared to median workplace-based earnings		9.22
Percentage of all homes in the county with an energy efficiency rating of 'C' or above		50.45
Average weekly rent for social housing in Monmouthshire		116.87
Average time (months) homeless households spend in Band 1 with a homeless duty before moving on to settled/permanent accommodation		13.8
Percentage of social housing allocated to homeless households		55
Number of overall crimes recorded	Trend data not yet available	5807
Number of recorded crimes - sexual offences	Trend data not yet available	205
Number of recorded crimes - public order offences	Trend data not yet available	770
Rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population		13.1

Percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area during the i) day ii) night	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Percentage of those referred to the youth offending service who subsequently re-offend	<p>35.9 15.8 18.6 12.5</p>	12.5
A Connected Place Where People Care		
Percentage of children supported to remain living with their family (not including children looked after)	<p>57.5 58.6 59.8 61.1 60.2 64.9</p>	64.9
Percentage of adult service users who feel part of their community	<p>46.4 50.3</p>	50.3
Percentage of children looked after supported to remain in Monmouthshire	<p>48.3 45.9</p>	45.9
Number of carers and young carers supported by the carers team	<p>131 203 168 164 107</p>	107
Percentage of people who are lonely	<p>17 11 13 12</p>	12
Percentage of adults with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours	Trend data not available	93
Healthy life expectancy at birth (women)	<p>66.1 69.3</p>	69.3

Healthy life expectancy at birth (men)		68.7
Percentage of people who agree 'People in my local area get on well and help each other'	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
A Learning place		
Number of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools	Trend data not yet available	22
Rate of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Rate of fixed term exclusions i) primary ii) secondary (all/eFSM)	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Capped 9 Point Score i) all ii) females iii) males iv) eFSM	Trend data not yet available	i)374.7 ii)381.3 iii)368.1 iv)304.7
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework i) no qualifications		3.9
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework ii) qualified to level 2 or above		92.8

<p>Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework iii) qualified to level 3 or above</p>	 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>2011</td> <td>67.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2012</td> <td>68.1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2013</td> <td>68.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2015</td> <td>77.4</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Percentage	2011	67.5	2012	68.1	2013	68.8	2015	77.4	<p>77.4</p>
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