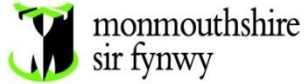


Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 14 May 2024

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK** on **Wednesday, 22nd May, 2024**, at **4.00 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Formal Feedback to Cabinet from Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee 14th May 2024 1 - 10
4. Local Food Strategy 11 - 78

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To present the Draft Local Food Strategy and associated Delivery Plan for consideration

Author: Marianne Elliott, Sustainable Food Projects Manager
MarianneElliott@monmouthshire.gov.uk

5. A Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire 79 - 136

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To advise Cabinet of the proposed strategy for commissioned domiciliary care 2024 – 2034 and implementation as set out within the plan.

Author: Jenny Jenkins, Head of Adult Services
jennyjenkins1@monmouthshire.gov.uk

6. Local Housing Market Assessment Refresh 2022-2037 137 - 196

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To provide an overview of the Local Housing Market Assessment

(LHMA) Refresh 2022-2037 provided in **Appendix One** to Cabinet, and to seek Cabinet approval of the LHMA prior to consideration by Welsh Government.

Author: Sally Meyrick, Strategy & Policy Officer, Affordable Housing
sallymeyrick@monmouthshire.gov.uk

7. Repurposing of Severn View Residential Home, Chepstow 197 - 218

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To seek approval for the repurposing of Severn View Residential Home, Chepstow to support policy objectives around temporary accommodation, in accordance with the Rapid Rehousing Strategy.

Authors: Nick Keyse – Acting Head of Landlord Services
nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Cath Fallon – Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships
cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk

8. Development of a Supported Accommodation Provision 219 - 266

Division/Wards Affected: Caldicot

Purpose: To provide details and seek approval for the repurposing of a council-owned property in Caldicot for the purpose of developing a supported accommodation provision for care experienced children, using existing borrowing headroom. Approval is sought based on a Business Case that is attached as Appendix 1.

Author: Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health
janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	<p>Leader Lead Officer – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse</p> <p>Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation Promoting localism within regional and national frameworks Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships with City Regions and Public Service Board Strategic Procurement Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture</p>	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	<p>Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien</p> <p>Economic Strategy Local development plan and strategic development plan including strategic housing sites Homelessness, affordable housing delivery and private sector housing (empty homes, leasing scheme, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive tech) Supporting Town Centres including car parking and enforcement Development Management and Building Control Skills and Employment Broadband connectivity Car parks and civil enforcement trading standards, environmental health, public protection, and licencing</p>	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	<p>Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Frances O’Brien, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Benefits Digital and information technology Human resources, payroll, health and safety</p>	Llanfoist & Govilon

	<p>Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Emergency planning</p>	
Martyn Groucutt	<p>Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education School standards and improvement Community learning Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport</p>	Lansdown
Ian Chandler	<p>Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Children’s services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health and wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision</p>	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	<p>Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officer – Frances O’Brien, Ian Saunders</p> <p>Decarbonisation Transport planning, public transport, highways and MCC fleet Active travel Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces, and parks Pavements and back lanes Flood alleviation, management and recovery Countryside, biodiversity, and river health</p>	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	<p>Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement Lead Officers – Frances O’Brien,, Matthew Gatehouse, Jane Rodgers</p> <p>Community inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre,</p>	Magor East with Undy

	<p>and customer service and registrars Leisure centres, play and sport Tourism Development and Cultural strategy Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Communications, public relations and marketing Ethics and standards Welsh Language Rights of way</p>	
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Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

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

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

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

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Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 14th May 2024

Report Item 4: Additional Learning Provision/ Specialist Resource Bases

Key points raised by the Committee Members:

The following points were raised by the Committee for consideration by the Cabinet Member:

- The report refers to some inconsistencies across the SRB's highlighted through the review, so how it is being addressed to ensure learning is applied across SRB's, avoiding a postcode lottery.
- What is the differential between the evaluation that you see in front of you today undertaken by the team and the review undertaken by Estyn?
- There's a concern about rising numbers of young people with additional learning needs requiring complex ALN provision. It would be interesting to hear your thoughts on why there are increasing numbers and what effect that will have on our need to provide for increased need.
- Please can you explain how the partnership agreements between the local authority and host schools work and what they aim to achieve.
- Please can you expand on the capacity issues for Pembroke Primary School and Monmouth Comprehensive School and the impact on the pupils.
- In relation to the improvement needed in provision at a particular school, the Committee sought reassurance that the local authority is working with SRB's where improvements are expected. The Chief Officer advised that undertaking a self-evaluation allows the local authority to understand any issues that may need to be worked on with schools so that they can be supported.
- Can you expand upon the capacity and anticipated demand for the specialist resource bases across the county and the financial implications for the local authority.
- How do the SRB leads collaborate to produce a core version of documentation?
- There was a query about the wording of the catering arrangement in the report.
- What is the impact of COVID-19 on the SRB provision and the support for learners and staff?
- What are the transition arrangements for learners moving from SRB to mainstream or post-16 provision?
- How involved are parents and carers in the review and the feedback process?
- Please explain the alignment of the SRB provision with the ALN reform and the new code of practice.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- What are the plans for future development and improvement of the SRB provision?
- What is meant by the variability in finances and accountability in the report.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair welcomed the report and praised the work of the SRB team and the schools. He thanked the officers for their presentation and their responses. He concluded that the report on the review of the specialist resource bases was moved with the recommendations, and that some questions and points raised by the committee members would be addressed in a follow-up report in 12 months. More information is requested on the capacity and affordability of the SRB model, the consistency and quality of the provision, and the Committee seeks reassurance that there are no individual schools with broad and consistent failings.

ACTION:

The Committee requested further detail on the financial implications of the increasing demand for SRB provision and the low, medium and high scenarios.

Report Item 5: Support for Vulnerable Learners

Key points raised by the Committee Members:

- What is the common ground and connection between vulnerable learners and additional learning provision and does the funding link as well?
- You mentioned children having suffered traumatic childhood experiences and the training offered, does this include parents and carers and what is the practical provision that enables children to build resilience?
- Given that emotional literacy isn't easy to measure, you have referred to this being evidence based, but do we do we accept that to an extent you cannot measure the effectiveness of these schemes? Please explain what criteria you apply to measure the effectiveness.
- What are the links between different agencies at the strategic and practise level to support children and families who have experienced trauma?
- Is there a risk that we will lose trained teaching assistants who provide emotional literacy support to vulnerable learners, and how will we mitigate that risk. With 16 schools potentially moving into a financial deficit this year according to the month 9 budget monitoring report, it raises a concern as to how schools will mitigate the risk.
- Please can you explain the reasons for the waiting list for the specialist teaching service?

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- One of the identified risks you have spoken about is the reliance on grant funding. How will you manage that and have you secured funding for ongoing years? Do you have sufficient educational psychologist resource?
- It's interesting to see that the figure of 500 of the MCC staff have accessed the whole staff training and that seems a large number. Have all of our teaching staff undergone that training?

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked Dr Wagstaff for attending and presenting a significant amount of information in both reports and asked her to relay the Committee's thanks to the team.

ACTION:

Members requested an update on the waiting list for the specialist teaching service and how it is being managed.

Report Item 6: Strategic Risk Assessment Register Update

- The Committee were concerned that some risks remain high in the register, despite the mitigating actions being taken. For example, risk 11 referring to decarbonisation is a concern because despite the actions being taken, it is not changing the risk level.
- Risk 7, refers to instability in the market for children at risk and risk 8 causing delays in service provision to older adults are both highly concerning. There isn't any reference as to what is occurring and how this is being monitored.
- How the Council is planning to address the risk of some services becoming financially unsustainable was raised as a key area for concern.
- The Committee queried the main factors that contribute to the high risk of significant harm to a child or adult due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements.
- The actions that the council is taking to reduce the high absence rates of vulnerable children is an area of interest.
- How the council is monitoring the progress of the decarbonisation plan and the impact of climate change on its services and assets was also highlighted.
- The challenges and opportunities that the council faces in relation to the new curriculum for Wales and the regional learning and skills partnership was identified as a key risk area for focus.

Chair's Summary:

The Committee has concern that approximately fifty per cent of the risks in the register remain high after mitigation actions and it isn't clear what further measure will be taken to address these risks. The Committee will forward the comments to the Cabinet and will liaise informally to shortlist specific risks for inclusion into the scrutiny forward work programme.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

ACTION: To update work forward work programme with specific risks for detailed scrutiny.

Performance & Overview Scrutiny 14th May 2024

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

<https://youtube.com/live/eDrrdWa7kWA?feature=share>

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Fookes, with Councillor McConnel substituting, and Councillor Wright.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Open Forum

No public present.

4. Additional Learning Provision/ Specialist Resource Bases

Cabinet Member Martyn Groucutt and Dr Morwenna Wagstaff introduced the report on the outcome of a review of the Specialist Resource Bases and provided an update on progress towards the review's recommendations prior to answering Members' questions with Jacquelyn Elias and Hayley Page.

Key Points raised by Members:

- The report refers to some inconsistencies across the SRB's highlighted through the review, so how it is being addressed to ensure learning is applied across SRB's, avoiding a postcode lottery.
- What is the differential between the evaluation that you see in front of you today undertaken by the team and the review undertaken by Estyn?
- There's a concern about rising numbers of young people with additional learning needs requiring complex ALN provision. It would be interesting to hear your thoughts on why there are increasing numbers and what effect that will have on our need to provide for increased need.
- Please can you explain how the partnership agreements between the local authority and host schools work and what they aim to achieve.
- Please can you expand on the capacity issues for Pembroke Primary School and Monmouth Comprehensive School and the impact on the pupils.
- In relation to the improvement needed in provision at a particular school, the Committee sought reassurance that the local authority is working with SRB's where improvements are expected. The Chief Officer advised that undertaking a self-

evaluation allows the local authority to understand any issues that may need to be worked on with schools so that they can be supported.

- Can you expand upon the capacity and anticipated demand for the specialist resource bases across the county and the financial implications for the local authority.
- How do the SRB leads collaborate to produce a core version of documentation?
- There was a query about the wording of the catering arrangement in the report.
- What is the impact of COVID-19 on the SRB provision and the support for learners and staff?
- What are the transition arrangements for learners moving from SRB to mainstream or post-16 provision?
- How involved are parents and carers in the review and the feedback process?
- Please explain the alignment of the SRB provision with the ALN reform and the new code of practice.
- What are the plans for future development and improvement of the SRB provision?
- What is meant by the variability in finances and accountability in the report.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair welcomed the report and praised the work of the SRB team and the schools. He thanked the officers for their presentation and their responses. He concluded that the report on the review of the specialist resource bases was moved with the recommendations, and that some questions and points raised by the committee members would be addressed in a follow-up report in 12 months. More information is requested on the capacity and affordability of the SRB model, the consistency and quality of the provision, and the Committee seeks reassurance that there are no individual schools with broad and consistent failings.

ACTION:

The Committee requested further detail on the financial implications of the increasing demand for SRB provision and the low, medium and high scenarios.

5. Support for Vulnerable Learners

Cabinet Member Martyn Groucutt and Dr Morwenna Wagstaff provided an update to the Committee on to the effectiveness of a number of our approaches to support the needs of vulnerable learners in our schools and settings, prior to taking Members' questions.

Key Points raised by Members:

- What is the common ground and connection between vulnerable learners and additional learning provision and does the funding link as well?
- You mentioned children having suffered traumatic childhood experiences and the training offered, does this include parents and carers and what is the practical provision that enables children to build resilience?
- Given that emotional literacy isn't easy to measure, you have referred to this being evidence based, but do we do we accept that to an extent you cannot measure the effectiveness of these schemes? Please explain what criteria you apply to measure the effectiveness.
- What are the links between different agencies at the strategic and practise level to support children and families who have experienced trauma?
- Is there a risk that we will lose trained teaching assistants who provide emotional literacy support to vulnerable learners, and how will we mitigate that risk. With 16 schools potentially moving into a financial deficit this year according to the month 9 budget monitoring report, it raises a concern as to how schools will mitigate the risk.
- Please can you explain the reasons for the waiting list for the specialist teaching service?
- One of the identified risks you have spoken about is the reliance on grant funding. How will you manage that and have you secured funding for ongoing years? Do you have sufficient educational psychologist resource?
- I was interested to see that the figure of 500 of the MCC staff have accessed the whole staff training and that seems a large number. Have all of our teaching staff undergone that training?

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked Dr Wagstaff for attending and presenting a significant amount of information in both reports and asked her to relay the Committee's thanks to the team.

ACTION:

Members requested an update on the waiting list for the specialist teaching service and how it is being managed.

6. Strategic Risk Assessment Register Update

Richard Jones and Hannah Carter presented the Committee with the risk register, which had been tabled to enable Members to identify key risks that they would like to further scrutinise, inviting the relevant Cabinet Member portfolio holders to a future meeting. They responded to key points made by Members.

Key Points raised by Members:

- The Committee were concerned that some risks remain high in the register, despite the mitigating actions being taken. For example, risk 11 referring to decarbonisation is a concern because despite the actions being taken, it is not changing the risk level.
- Risk 7, refers to instability in the market for children at risk and risk 8 causing delays in service provision to older adults are both highly concerning. There isn't any reference as to what is occurring and how this is being monitored.
- How the Council is planning to address the risk of some services becoming financially unsustainable was raised as a key area for concern.
- The Committee queried the main factors that contribute to the high risk of significant harm to a child or adult due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements.
- The actions that the council is taking to reduce the high absence rates of vulnerable children is an area of interest.
- How the council is monitoring the progress of the decarbonisation plan and the impact of climate change on its services and assets was also highlighted.
- The challenges and opportunities that the council faces in relation to the new curriculum for Wales and the regional learning and skills partnership was identified as a key risk area for focus.

Chair's Summary:

The Committee has concern that approximately fifty per cent of the risks in the register remain high after mitigation actions and it isn't clear what further measure will be taken to address these risks. The Committee will forward the comments to the Cabinet and will liaise informally to shortlist specific risks for inclusion into the scrutiny forward work programme.

ACTION: To update work forward work programme with specific risks for detailed scrutiny.

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

To include future risk areas into the forward work programme and to discuss with the Chair of People Scrutiny Committee the scheduling of a joint scrutiny meeting on the 23rd July 2024 to scrutinise the Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection Report.

8. Cabinet and Council Work Planner

The planner was noted.

9. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th March 2024

The minutes were confirmed.

10. Next Meeting: 18th June 2024

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SUBJECT:	LOCAL FOOD STRATEGY
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	22 MAY 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the Draft Local Food Strategy and associated Delivery Plan for consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To approve the Local Food Strategy and associated Delivery Plan (Appendix One), which set the Council's direction towards *a long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.*'

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Why a Local Food Strategy?

Firstly, some facts:

- Monmouthshire is known as a food destination and the 'Food capital of Wales'.
- Most of Monmouthshire's land is laid over to grassland for livestock, which is predominantly beef, lamb and dairy with some growth over the last 10 years in poultry, pigs and goats.
- Only 20% of Monmouthshire's land is currently being cultivated for crops, which include barley, wheat, maize (for feed and biofuel), stock feed and other cereals.
- The Council owns twenty-four farm holdings and forty areas of bare land amounting to 1,122 hectares (2,773 acres) in total, primarily located in the south of the county and in the Severnside area. Most of this land is tenanted or leased to graziers. Many of the holdings are mixed livestock farms, with few remaining dairy units. There are three market gardens. The Council also owns the Monmouthshire Livestock Market at Raglan.
- Demand for allotments and growing space is high, with supply and demand often unbalanced across the county.
- From primary production through manufacturing, retail, and hospitality, the food sector accounts for approximately 5,000 jobs in Monmouthshire – with many more jobs in secondary industries connected to food (vets, machinery, logistics, etc.).
- One of the Council's main interventions in the food economy is in purchasing food for school meals and the county's meals-on-wheels service ('public-sector procurement'). Traditional procurement models have excluded small and local suppliers but there has been recent progress towards a more socially responsible procurement strategy that focuses on local wealth creation, taking a more enabling approach to engage with small suppliers.
- The roll-out of Welsh Government's Universal Free School Meals policy is complete across all Monmouthshire's Infants and Juniors, though uptake is patchy and often lowest in areas with highest eligibility. School-meal budget and lunchtime food waste are areas of concern.

3.2 In considering the facts above, the Council has been developing an approach to local and community growing, procurement of food and working with local suppliers. Every primary school has a kitchen where freshly cooked, nutrition-rich meals are produced five days a week. Like most other councils in Wales, we also support a countywide Food Partnership. These initiatives are appreciated and do show impact. But the Council can do more to enable a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on sustaining the impacts of our interventions, the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.

3.3 Hence, the Local Food Strategy which:

- a) is driven by evidence which enables us to target areas and populations of need;
- b) positions us to maximise resources and inward investments – identifying potential areas of development and pathways to capitalise on development opportunities through attracting more strategic funding and investments;
- c) aligns our work on the local food system with the Council’s Community and Corporate Plan objectives and sector policies – optimising the impact of food- and farming-based interventions through how we procure, manage our assets, support our local economy, encourage learning and skills acquisition and protect our environment;
- d) is focused on long-term change – helping us achieve short-term impacts that set the foundation for achieving long-term goals.

The purpose of the Strategy will be achieved through the delivery of actions that enable, influence and advocate for a local food system that:

- ensures everyone is well nourished,
- supports sustainable food and farming businesses to prosper, and
- allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

3.4 The Approach

Our approach is founded on *collaborative working; adaptive and opportunistic approaches* - adapting to the changing dynamics in food and farming policy and practice; *taking advantage of opportunities arising* (e.g. for new partners or funding); while always focusing on *impact and outcomes*.

3.5 The Guiding Principles

The Local Food Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles are *tackling inequality, addressing the nature and climate crises, and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices*.

3.6 Three Core Themes

Three interlinked core themes have been identified which have been scoped to ensure alignment with other Council strategies, are based on evidence, and have the likelihood to drive system change. These are:

- *Improving local and ethical supply chains,*
- *Developing food as an economic sector, and*
- *Community food: access, education, participation.*

Activities have been developed under each of these themes which have been detailed in the associated Delivery Plan, and actions will be taken by the Council and in partnership. The Delivery Plan also details timeframes, responsible Officers and an explanation of

how the team will define success and track benefits through the reporting and monitoring framework.

3.7 The Consultation Process to date

In drafting the Strategy, the following consultation activities have taken place:

- A reference Group of experts and partners has been established in the capacity of 'critical friends' who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making the system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.
- Two stakeholder consultations were held in March - one in Abergavenny and one in Chepstow, where discussions regarding the draft Strategy took place.
- An all-Member's Seminar was held on the 15th of March.
- A Cross Member's working group is being considered to monitor progress of the Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan.

All these activities have shaped the Local Food Strategy appended to this report.

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

4.1 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out and attached to this report as Appendix Two.

The positive impacts of this draft Strategy are that:

- It enables a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on sustaining the impacts of our interventions, the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.
- It sets our direction of travel, towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.
- The approach of the Strategy is founded on collaborative working, maximising adaptive and opportunistic approaches, whilst taking advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding); while always being focused on impact and outcomes.
- The Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles are tackling inequality, addressing the nature and climate crises, and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices.
- There are three interlinked core themes which are likely to drive system change. These are improving local and ethical supply chains, developing food as an economic sector, and community food: access, education, participation.
- The actions associated with these three core themes will enable, influence and advocate for a local food system that ensures everyone is well nourished; supports sustainable food and farming businesses to prosper and allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

No negative impacts have been identified.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 Once approved the success of the Strategy will be monitored and quarterly progress reported against the Delivery Plan and the associated monitoring and evaluation framework including those set by funders including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and WLGA. Updates will be provided to Place Scrutiny Committee as requested.

6. REASONS

- 6.1 Whilst the Council does not have a statutory responsibility to produce a Local Food Strategy, this Strategy demonstrates the Council's recognition of Monmouthshire as the 'Food Capital of Wales'. This Strategy will enable a whole-authority approach focussed on the long-term sustainability of the County's land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.
- 6.2 The Strategy aligns with the Council's Community and Corporate Plan and its associated enabling strategies including the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy, the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy, the Asset Management Strategy, the Climate and Nature Recovery Plan and the Replacement Local Development Plan. It has also been authored to reflect key regional, national and UK Strategies such as 'Dyfodol Y Bannau The Future' (Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Management Plan, 2023–28), Gwent Public Services Board Wellbeing Assessment and Plan, Food and Drink Wales Vision and Strategy, 'National Food Strategy' (Dimpleby Report) and the Sustainable Food Places Framework.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council's Sustainable Food Team is currently funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the WLGA Direct Food Support Fund and Food Partnership Development Fund.
- 7.2 As many activities will involve our partners, support will also be provided by, among others, Natural Resources Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Public Health Team, Food Partnerships, Trussel Trust, local Community Fridges, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Social Farms and Gardens, Farming Connect, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Wye and Usk Foundation, Land Workers Alliance, farming unions, farmers and food businesses, our community groups and voices.

8. CONSULTEES

- Council Leader
- Chief Officer for Communities and Place
- Informal Cabinet (9 January 2024 and 26 March 2024)
- Place Scrutiny Committee – 10 April 2024
- Strategic Leadership Team
- All Members
- The Marches Forward Partnership
- Stakeholder Consultation Events (11 and 12 March) with local food businesses and sector representatives.
- Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships
- Communities and Place DMT
- MCC Estates Team

- MCC Economy, Employment and Skills Team

9.1 AMENDMENTS MADE AS A RESULT OF THE CONSULTATION

9.1.1 Place Scrutiny Committee made the following observations at their meeting on the 10 April 2024, as detailed in the Chair's comments below:

Members wanted to understand what we are doing to support and teach our communities and projects of upskilling residents to eat nutritious meals and how we can support and facilitate local residents to get access to Council land to grow their own produce. There is concern about the uptake of free school meals and what the Council is doing to ensure that people are aware of what is available to them.

It was asked if there is any way we can improve supply chains locally to our nursing homes, schools, etc. in relation to processing that produce. There is a very real concern from recent events that have caused members to discuss the procurement of food and milk. Council and residents will of course support a local food strategy, but we'd like a strategy to be more specific to Monmouthshire and maybe neighbouring borders. Local produce is key when considering climate change and we need our local food strategy to align.

There was praise from members for the hydrogen vehicles that are serving 'Meals on Wheels' to our residents. There was a question asking if the local food strategy played any part in the recent procurement selection of Totally Welsh and we're looking for some support to lobby Welsh Government with regards to the business rate relief for RSMES in the county. There was a valid question as to how the Council will encourage sustainable farming going forward and the importance of aligning all our policies, whether that's the local food strategy, the climate change strategy, the RLDP, tackling inequalities, the list is endless.

9.1.2 Following Scrutiny and wider stakeholder consultation the following amendments have been made:

- Clarification that delivery must take account of local geographies (sub-county level);
- Clarification of the kind of food supported by the strategy, aligned to United Nations definition of availability, accessibility, and adequacy;
- Further contextual information, including recognition of existing grassroots activity in schools and community settings and commitment to ongoing support for these where possible;
- Closer alignment with Nature & Climate Strategy and Replacement Local Development Plan;
- Increased focus on the need to understand supply-chain gaps and maximise opportunities to use MCC assets (land and commercial) to assist in achieving strategic objectives, reflected in Delivery Plan;
- Recognition of universal free school meals as a key mechanism for realising strategic objectives, and focus on maximising uptake and benefits, reflected in Delivery Plan.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix One: Local Food Strategy and Delivery Plan

Appendix Two: EQIA

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Foreword - Councillor, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Council Leader

Food matters for us in Monmouthshire: the food we eat, the food we produce, process and sell. Our land depends on it and our identity as a county is bound up with food and farming in our everyday lives, in our economy, tourism and in our hospitality sector. We have so much to celebrate and also to protect so that everyone can benefit from affordable good-quality food produced without compromising nature or degrading our beautiful environment.

Monmouthshire County Council has a long history of supporting our whole food economy, buying local produce to feed our children and supply our care homes, encouraging community growing and allotments, and working with food producers to promote their projects. Our strategy builds on these strong foundations and sets out the steps we will take towards our long term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.

This is not a county-wide food strategy. It concentrates on what we as a local authority can do to make a difference when we stay true to our values of always working in partnership and seeking to empower our local communities to find their own local solutions. Our aim is to have the

the greatest impact on our local food system either through the Council's own interventions or by enabling others to act. I am proud that our strategy has been developed together with so many people – farmers, community growers, food businesses, local communities, and food and farming policy-makers to name a few. I am grateful and thank them for their generosity in contributing their time and expertise to developing our strategy.

Sustainability lies at the very heart of this strategy. The nature and climate crises demand our attention, and our duty to future generations requires that we act now and embed sustainability in all our decision-making. When we talk about food or local food we always mean sustainable food – sustainable environmentally, and also socially and economically. That means good-quality food for everyone, not just a few, and supporting the circular and foundational economies. True sustainability means working in all three areas.

And food itself? The very word conjures up different meanings for us all. For us as a Council our priority is safe, healthy, and nutritious food that meets the UN Human Rights Standards. Food should be available from natural resources (now

and for future generations), accessible both financially and physically, and adequate to nourish the person and sustain body and mind. This is what we strive to provide for the people we feed, in schools, care homes and domiciliary care. But we are not about to dictate to residents and visitors about what to eat. Food should be pleasurable and sociable, from everyday meals to treats and beyond. Many of our local businesses specialise in luxury goods, such as alcohol, chocolate, or ice cream, and they too deserve our support as part of the rich tapestry of Monmouthshire's local food system.

The Delivery Plan that accompanies our Strategy sets out how we will act internally and with partners to achieve our objectives. I look forward to seeing those activities take shape, and to witnessing the difference those activities will make in our precious county and to the talented, dedicated, community-minded people who help make it such a special place to live, work, and visit.



Councillor
Mary Ann Brocklesby

1. OUR PURPOSE: Why a Local Food Strategy?

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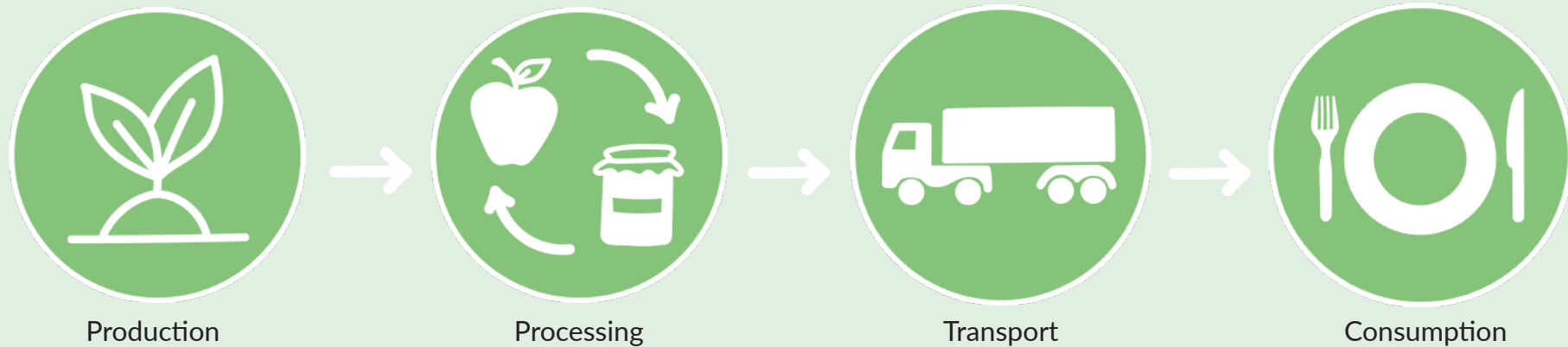
1. Our Purpose: Why a Local Food Strategy?

Monmouthshire stands out among UK counties for the commitment its local authority has made to supporting a sustainable, ethical, equitable local food system. This Local Food Strategy is the expression of that commitment, setting out a clear and ambitious goal, a practical approach, and a reasonable assessment of where MCC can have most impact given the limited resources at its disposal and the complexity of the food system itself.

The Strategy sets the trajectory towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents. This goal aligns with our wider commitment to become a prosperous zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.



1.1 What is the Food System?



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The food system is extensive and complex. It covers a wide range of activities, affects every one of us every day, and connects with some of society's most pressing and difficult issues. According to Oxford University's Future of Food Programme:

The food system is a complex web of activities involving production, processing, transport, and consumption. Issues concerning the food system include the governance and economics of food production, its sustainability, the degree to which we waste food, how food production affects the natural environment and the impact of food on individual and population health.

(Oxford Martin Programme, no date)

Although a local authority cannot influence all aspects of the food system as described above, we do touch on many of them. By doing so in a strategic manner we can deliver environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits for our county and the wider world in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

1.2 Why a Local Food Strategy?

Increasingly, politicians, campaigners, and communities across Wales are recognising that the food system is a powerful driver for change: by thinking strategically and joining up with partners, we can make this vast and complex system a force for good. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales recognised this in his 2023 strategy document, *Cymru Can*, which makes food a key 'area of focus' and sets out the responsibilities of other public service bodies in this area:

From farm to fork, food is critical to achieving Wales's well-being goals for the health of our people and our planet ... Public services must use their levers for change, for example, doing more to facilitate community growing and sustainable land use, considering the wider implications of planning decisions on communities and nature, providing the framework of farming subsidies and grants and understanding the local and global impact of food spending.

(Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2023)

Historically, Monmouthshire County Council has been ahead of the curve: in 2013 we passed a motion to support the Incredible Edible community growing movement on Council land; in 2015 we adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Green Infrastructure, which includes provision for food growing; and in 2020 the Council made a commitment to the delivery of a Food Development Action Plan. More recently the Council has explored new approaches to procurement and working with local suppliers, and embraced the roll-out of Universal Free School Meals to all Infants and Juniors, cooking meals from scratch in the purpose-built kitchens that are a feature of every one of our primary schools.

This Strategy now draws on that long track record and sets a vision for the future, providing an evidence-based, whole-Authority approach that will ensure we use our resources wisely and to maximum effect for Monmouthshire's communities, businesses, and natural environment.

1.3 Defining Concepts

What is Local?

'Local food' is difficult to define geographically, particularly as Monmouthshire is a border county with neighbours in both Wales and England. This Strategy aligns with the Council's Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy (2023) in recognising the economic, social, environmental and cultural value that can be generated by spending public money with local businesses (in particular small and micro enterprises), and acknowledging that *'dependent on the particular requirement, local can be Monmouthshire, Gwent, English Border Counties, Cardiff Capital Region or Wales'*.

What sort of food are we talking about?

For us as a Council, our priority is **safe, healthy, and nutritious food** that meets the UN Human Rights standards:

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- **Availability:** Food should be obtainable from natural resources, and on sale in markets and shops.
 - **Accessibility:** Food must be affordable. Individuals should be able to have an adequate diet without compromising on other basic needs [...] Food should be accessible to the physically vulnerable, including children, sick people, people with disabilities and the elderly. Food must also be available to people in remote areas, to victims of armed conflicts or natural disasters, and to prisoners.
 - **Adequacy:** Food must satisfy dietary needs, taking into account a person's age, living conditions, health, occupation, sex, etc. Food should be safe for human consumption and free from adverse substances.

(UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2024)

However, we also recognise that food should be pleasurable and sociable. So, while nourishment is our priority, we will also embrace and promote our local businesses who produce luxury goods and treats. They too are a vital part of our local food system and economy.



2. THE CONTEXT

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2. The Context

The food system impacts many areas of county life, from how land is managed, to how our economy functions, to the health of our residents and how communities come together.

2.1 Current Land Use

- 80% of Monmouthshire's land is farmed. The great majority is laid over to grassland for livestock, which is predominantly beef, lamb and dairy with some growth over the last 10 years in poultry, pigs and goats. Livestock is and probably always will be the mainstay of our agricultural land use and farming communities.
- 16% of Monmouthshire's land is currently being cultivated for crops, which include barley, wheat, maize (for feed and biofuel), stock feed and other cereals.
- There are currently at least fifteen primary vegetable and fruit producing businesses across Monmouthshire; those selling direct to the public are small, the largest being 6 hectares (15 acres).
- Monmouthshire County Council owns 24 farm holdings and 40 areas of bare land amounting to 1,122 hectares (2,773 acres) in total, primarily located in the south of the county and in the Severnside area. Most of this land is tenanted or leased to graziers. The majority of the holdings are mixed livestock farms, with few remaining dairy units. There are three market gardens. The Council also owns the Monmouthshire Livestock Market at Raglan.
- The county's rivers are in an unfavourable condition, partly due to agricultural pollution from within and outside the county. Steps are being taken to address the issues, but the problems remain.
- In future, food production will probably need to be balanced with a greater emphasis on other ecosystem services (such as atmospheric regulation, water quality regulation, water storage, and cultural services).
- The agricultural industry is experiencing challenging times as Government subsidy, trade deals and immigration policy change post-Brexit, and pressure to reduce the environmental impact of farming grows through Government policy, the supply chain, media, and public opinion.

2.2 Enterprise and Economy

- From primary production through manufacturing, retail, and hospitality, the food sector accounts for approximately 5,000 jobs in Monmouthshire – with many more jobs in secondary industries connected to food (vets, machinery, logistics, etc.). Monmouthshire is known as a food destination and the ‘food capital of Wales’.
- Broadly, the sector’s significance in GVA is forecast to increase between 2024 and 2042, though more granular data reveals nuances within the macro-forecasting in terms of job gains or losses in different parts of the supply chain, and GVA per job.
- Monmouthshire has around 700 food-related businesses. Over 90% are micro-businesses (0–9 employees), though there are also successful SMEs and larger businesses operating in the county’s food industry. These businesses contribute significantly to Monmouthshire’s sense of place for residents and visitors and are central to our local food economy.
- Food and drink businesses sometimes struggle to find suitable premises (and/or secure planning permission) to allow them to move into the county or scale-up within it, potentially limiting growth. Housing costs and availability present another pinch-point, limiting entrepreneurs’ ability to start up in the county.
- Supply-chain gaps and precarities limit the viability and/or long-term resilience of local supply chains (e.g. slaughtering facilities for livestock; processing and logistics for grains and horticultural crops).
- Staffing and skills are concerns in many areas of the food industry locally, from primary production through manufacture and retail. These concerns are often linked to the availability and cost of housing and transport.
- One of Monmouthshire County Council’s main interventions in the food economy is in purchasing food for school meals and the county’s meals-on-wheels service (‘public-sector procurement’). Traditional procurement models have excluded small and local suppliers but there has been recent progress towards a more socially responsible procurement strategy that focuses on local wealth creation, taking a more enabling approach to engage with small suppliers.

2.3 Community and Health

- Just under 20% of pupils aged 5–15 are eligible for free school meals or transitionally protected (2021–22 data), and just over 25% of children are living in poverty, after housing costs (2020/21 data).
- The roll-out of Welsh Government’s Universal Free School Meals policy is complete across all Monmouthshire’s Infants and Juniors. Uptake is generally high and increasing, but areas of lowest uptake are often those with highest eligibility. As in many local authorities, school-meal budget and lunchtime food waste are areas of concern.

Healthy Start uptake varies month by month, usually between 60% and 80%.

- Out of 40 pre-school settings, 32 have completed the nutrition and oral health element of the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme, and 30 have achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award.
- Five schools in Monmouthshire have achieved National Quality Award including focus on food and nutrition.
- Yet, approximately 20% of 4–5-year-olds and over 50% of adults aged 16+ are obese.



- Trussel Trust food banks gave out approximately 4,000 food parcels in 2021/22. Additional free or low-cost food parcels or meals are provided by other community initiatives across the county, including independent food banks, community fridges, food clubs, lunch clubs, soup kitchens, etc., all of whom report rising demand. These initiatives are a vital and vibrant part of our local food system providing invaluable direct and wrap-around support to our residents.
- Demand for allotments and growing space is high, with supply and demand often unbalanced across the county. Many communities and schools have communal growing initiatives, providing a source of fresh fruit and vegetables and opportunities for outdoor learning, exercise, and social interaction.
- Public health practitioners and campaigners are increasingly reporting that traditional health messaging, which seeks to influence individual decisions, is inadequate; they are turning instead to different approaches that attempt to shift the wider context in which individuals make their choices. These approaches often involve working in partnership through cross-sector networks.

* * *

Awareness of the context in which we work has shaped our Strategy and the broader Council strategies it supports. Within the county-wide context, delivery against this Strategy will consider more granular local data when selecting priority areas and interventions.



3. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY



3. Developing the Strategy: Process and Evidence

This Strategy has developed out of conversations and discussions within the Council, with colleagues across many organisations, and with individuals who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making that system fairer, more ethical and more locally based. We have also drawn on a wealth of evidence and stakeholder engagement about our local food and farming context and what works in contributing to a healthier, more sustainable system. Many of our partners have shared data with us, and we have a library of commissioned studies and active research undertaken through the Rural Development Programme, Community Renewal Fund and others.

We also ran an internal influence mapping exercise to help shape our delivery plan. The outcomes of this exercise are described in Section 9. In drafting the Strategy, the following consultation activities took place:

- A reference group of experts and partners was established in the capacity of 'critical friends' who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making the system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.
- The outline strategy proposal was presented and discussed at the regular Monmouthshire Food Partnership Steering Group meeting on 28 February 2024.
- Two stakeholder consultations were held in March 2024, one in Abergavenny and one in Chepstow, where discussions regarding the m draft Strategy took place.
- Eight written responses were received from external stakeholders.
- An all-Member's Seminar was held on the 15 March 2024.
- A cross-party Member's working group is being considered to monitor progress of the Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan.
- The draft Strategy was scrutinised at Place Scrutiny Committee on 10 April 2024.

All these activities have shaped the Local Food Strategy and Delivery Plan.

4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND SCOPE

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4. Strategic Context and Scope

4.1 Strategic Context

In addition to the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, there are legislative and policy requirements that inform and influence the Council's activity within the local food system. Crucially, the context we work in is framed by law and policy on agriculture, trade, immigration, commerce and procurement as set by the Welsh and/or UK Governments. Though these do not always align comfortably with our local objectives, in many cases there are synergies. Some of the most relevant adopted and emerging strategies are set out in below. In particular this Strategy should be read alongside the strategies listed in the Local column, and provide more detailed data and contextual information, and set the wider organisational aspirations.

Local	Regional	National
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy • Asset Management Strategy • Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy • Climate & Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plans* • Green Infrastructure Strategy • Replacement Local Development Plan • Food Partnership Charter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natural Resources Wales South -East Area Statement • Gwent Wildlife Trust Landscape Profiles • Gwent Public Services Board Wellbeing Assessment & Plan • 'Dyfodol Y Bannau The Future' (Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Management Plan, 2023–28) • South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Strategic Development Plan • Food Strategies from neighbouring counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wellbeing of Future Generations Act • Social Partnerships and Procurement Act • Food and Drink Wales Vision and Strategy • Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme • Welsh Government Community Food Strategy • Welsh Government Healthy Weight Healthy Wales Strategy • Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 'Cymru Can' • 'National Food Strategy' (Dimpleby Report) • Sustainable Food Places framework • Future Wales: The National Plan 2040

* The action plans (APs) that sit under the Climate and Nature Strategy are: (1) Internal 2030 Decarbonisation AP; (2) Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Section 6 Forward Plan & Nature Recovery AP; (3) Rivers and Oceans AP; (4) Community Climate AP.

4.2 Scope

We recognise that it is neither possible nor appropriate for a local authority to influence all aspects of the food system. Our direct influence is limited to our own asset portfolio and our statutory and voluntary functions; though we can work collaboratively to widen our influence, there are still many areas that come down to personal choice – be that the commercial choice of a business or land owner, or the personal choice of individual shoppers. The scope of this Strategy is therefore restricted to those areas where MCC has direct or significant indirect influence (see further Section 9); it does not attempt a comprehensive picture of all food-system work undertaken in the county across the private, public, and third sectors.

Nor does the Strategy reflect all the ways the Council touches on the local food system. Much relevant activity is already being reported elsewhere. The primary purpose of this Strategy is to highlight areas of maximum impact, where the Council can most effectively deploy its voluntary functions (and the funding associated with them) to assist in meeting wider organisational objectives delivered through statutory operational teams.



4.3 Resourcing the Strategy

Food cuts across many Council departments and teams. Some of those teams deliver on the Council's legal obligations; others are discretionary – the Council chooses to support them. The Sustainable Food Team is discretionary, funded through grants from various sources. This presents a risk, which we have been aware of when developing the Local Food Strategy and Delivery Plan.

Much of the excellent work carried on in schools, community settings, and core teams is already firmly embedded. This Strategy provides the supporting framework to continue good work already in progress. Where there is grant funding available for additional resources, like the Sustainable Food Team, we will use those resources to further embed good practice across the Council and county. In this way, should the funding position change, the Strategy will still be able to progress. And of course, we will continue to advocate regionally and nationally for sustainable food systems and seek additional funding streams to support the Strategy into the medium and long term.

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5. OUR GOAL AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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5.1 Our Goal

This Strategy sets the trajectory towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents. It also recognises the changes we want to see in our local food system will: a) take longer than one Council term; b) cannot happen unless we work collaboratively with farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers and communities; and c) depend on Welsh and UK farming, food and procurement investments and policies.

We will achieve our purpose through actions that enable, influence, and advocate for a local food system that:

- ensures everyone is well nourished,
- brings prosperity to sustainable food and farming businesses, and
- allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

This purpose springs from the over-arching objective of MCC's Community and Corporate Plan: to see Monmouthshire become 'a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life'.



5.2 Our Guiding Principles

Our Local Food Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources.

These principles, which are shared with the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, are:

**Tackling
inequality**



**Addressing the nature
and climate crises**



**Supporting sustainable
and innovative
economic activity**



The principles are all directly relevant to the local food system and the Council's place within it. Table 1 shows how elements of the food system connect with each principle.

Table 1: MCC's Guiding Principles Applied to the Food System

Tackling inequality	Addressing the nature and climate crises	Supporting sustainable and innovative economic activity
Access: to appropriate and affordable food; to land	Agricultural and land management practices	Alternative enterprise models and social enterprise
The socio-economic distribution of dietary ill health and obesity	Food waste, packaging and recycling	Collaboration and clustering
The ethics of global and local supply chains	Diversity and resilience in the local food economy	Infrastructure and investment
Links between food and the root causes of inequality	Visibility and public understanding of food production	Higher education, technology, R&D

6. OUR APPROACH

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6. Our Approach

Our approach is founded on three principles:

- **collaborative working** – we will always work in partnership where appropriate;
- **adaptive and opportunistic responses** – we will adapt to the changing dynamics in food and farming policy and practice, taking advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding);
- **focus on impact and outcomes** – we will take time to learn from past experience and new research (our own and others'), and to understand 'what good looks like' and how to measure progress towards it.

This approach will deliver a strategy that:

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- a) **is evidence-based**, enabling us to target areas and populations of need;
 - b) **positions us to maximise resources and inward investments**, identifying potential areas of development and pathways to capitalise on development opportunities through attracting more strategic funding and investments;
 - c) **aligns our work on the local food system with our Community and Corporate Plan objectives and sector policies**, optimising the impact of food- and farming-based interventions through how we procure, manage our assets, support our local economy, encourage learning and skills acquisition and protect our environment;
 - d) **is focused on long-term change**, helping us achieve short-term impacts that set the foundation for achieving long-term goals.

Sustainability

Sustainability lies at the very heart of this strategy. When we talk about food or local food we always mean sustainable food – sustainable environmentally, and also socially and economically. That means good-quality food for everyone, not just a few, and supporting the circular and foundational economies. True sustainability means working in all three areas, for present and future generations.



Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire

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Talk Farm Regen (TFR) Monmouthshire is an example of using our approach to put our guiding principles into action. TFR Monmouthshire is a farmer-led discussion group supported by the Council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It is open to anyone who is farming in the Usk and Wye catchments and interested in regenerative farming. Regenerative farming has five core principles:

- minimise soil disturbance
- keep living roots in the soil
- keep the soil covered
- grow a wide variety of crops
- practise mixed farming (crops and livestock)

The approach is well established and backed by evidence of the benefits for soil health, water quality and flood risk, biodiversity, yields, and business performance. It therefore aligns with our guiding principles of addressing the nature and climate crises and supporting sustainable economic activity and the objectives of the Community and Corporate Plan. The group provides an informal setting where farmers can give and get advice from others trying similar things in the same locality.

By raising awareness and spreading knowledge locally through talks, workshops and farm visits, the group positions farmers to enter future agricultural subsidy schemes and emerging private markets that look to balance food production with broader ecosystem services – allowing farm businesses to maximise resources and inward investment.

Equally important is the group's social aspect: farming can be an isolating profession, involving hard labour, low returns, and long hours worked alone. The group's in-person events provide an opportunity for our farming community to come together and socialise in a way often taken for granted by those in other occupations, contributing to our objective of tackling inequality in all its forms.

Alongside the discussion group the Council has supported a mentoring scheme to give three farms a year's more focussed support to plan a transition to regenerative practices. Since we recognise that farming systems cannot be changed overnight, this scheme is focused on long-term change rather than short-term targets: the year of mentoring will provide farms with a tailored route map for change over years to come. This project is also a shining example of partnership working between the Council, Food Partnership, Wye Valley National Landscape, private consultancy, the farming community, and Size of Wales and ACE Monmouth – the third-sector and community organisations who conceived the project and lead delivery.



7. PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIPS



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7. Partners and Partnerships

Partnership working is at the heart of our approach, in line with the collaboration, integration and involvement 'ways of working' under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We have partners at national, regional and local levels, and this Strategy is nested in the wider framework set by those partnerships as outlined in Section 4.1 above.

7.1 Regional Strategic Economic Partnerships

Monmouthshire is a border county in a strategic location. Our county benefits from membership of regional economic partnerships including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCR), the Western Gateway and Marches Forward. Through the CCR, Monmouthshire assists in delivering the Sustainable Food Challenge Fund. Monmouthshire also leads the Food, Rural Development and Economy subgroup of the Marches Forward Partnership. These regional strategic economic partnerships also set a context of local-authority collaboration and joint working in many other fields too.



7.2 Multi-Agency Working

More locally we work closely with a wide range of partners to address specific issues and/or push for long-term change. Among our valued partners are: Gwent Public Services Board, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Public Health Team, Natural Resources Wales, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Registered Social Landlords, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Food Sense Wales and Food Partnerships, Social Farms and Gardens, Trussell Trust, Food Farming and Countryside Commission, Farming Connect, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership, Wye and Usk Foundation, river catchment partnerships, Wye Valley National Landscape, Land Workers Alliance, Transition Towns, education providers, farming unions, farmers and food businesses, and our community voices.

7.3 Local Insights

We rely on direct connections with Monmouthshire residents, community groups and businesses to understand our County's needs and aspirations. Elected Members represent their constituents and ensure these vital voices are heard. In addition, the Council convenes specific food-system networks and groups, including Monmouthshire Food & Drink Business Network, Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire, and Monmouthshire Food Partnership.



Monmouthshire Food Partnership

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Monmouthshire Food Partnership is a county-wide collaboration of people and organisations from all walks of life who think food is worth taking seriously. The Partnership is hosted by Monmouthshire County Council and coordinated by the Sustainable Food Team. It is part of a UK-wide network of Food Partnerships who are all working together to champion good food and create sustainable local food systems that everyone can access and enjoy.

Monmouthshire Food Partnership's bilingual website is at foodmonmouthshire.co.uk



Or use the QR code to access

The Partnership works to the nationally acclaimed Sustainable Food Places framework, which covers six key issues:

- Governance and Strategy
- Healthy Food for All
- Food for the Planet
- Good Food Movement
- Sustainable Food Economy
- Catering and Procurement

This framework has been endorsed by Welsh Government, which has so far funded food partnerships across Wales in 2022–24.

Through its cross-sector Steering Group and wide network of over 500 members and supporters, Monmouthshire Food Partnership aims to:

- connect people, projects and partners trying to create a sustainable local food system,
- take collective action to shape the local food system, and
- be a collective voice for food that positively shapes policy and shares best practice.

Since convening in its current form in 2022 the Partnership has issued over £14,000 in grants to support community food projects and growing spaces. It has supported FOOD Clubs, community fridges, and secondary-school breakfast clubs, and run training sessions in cookery and food growing. There have been two community 'Cook and Share' days, and 70 people were introduced to pumpkin soup in a waste-busting campaign ahead of Hallowe'en 2023. Businesses have benefited from a Meet the Buyer event, peer-to-peer networking, and support to trade at the world-famous Abergavenny Food Festival. Three farm businesses have received a year of 1:1 mentoring in transitioning to regenerative farming practices from a leading expert in the field. The Partnership is also crucial to the Welsh Veg for Schools supply chain investment pilot, showcased in the next case study.

8. OUR CORE THEMES

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Our Core Themes

We have a clear purpose for this Strategy, which is:

to set the trajectory towards fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.

To reach our goal we have set three interlinked core themes, which we will address by working collaboratively across Council Directorates, with elected Members, our partners and trusted experts.

These core themes are:

- improving local and ethical supply chains
- developing food as an economic sector
- community food: access, education, participation

Broad objectives have been identified for each theme, and alignment with other key strategies identified (Table 2). Many of these objectives and their related actions are captured and monitored in the strategies cross-referenced.



Table 2 Core Themes and Linked Objectives*

Improving local and ethical supply chains	Developing food as an economic sector	Community food: access, education, participation
<p>Increasing the use of local and seasonal produce in schools (primary and where possible secondary) and care homes.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>	<p>Showcasing local food and drink producers and promoting Monmouthshire as a food and drink destination.</p> <p><i>DMP, EESS</i></p>	<p>Providing and promoting access to land through allotments and community gardens for growing food.</p> <p><i>NRAP</i></p>
<p>Working across the supply chain (incl. suppliers, processors and logistics) to support the development of the local food economy in private and public sectors and reduce our reliance on imported food.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>	<p>Supporting entrepreneurs, start-ups, and established food and drink businesses to be environmentally, socially, and financially sustainable – encourage innovation and clustering.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>	<p>Working in schools to increase ‘food literacy’ from soil to plate and encourage a positive food culture.</p> <p><i>NRAP</i></p>
<p>Working with procurement colleagues to maximise the social value and minimise the environmental impact of public-sector food contracts (e.g. using Fairtrade and Deforestation Free options where possible, minimising packaging and waste).</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>	<p>Promoting learning pathways to develop skills and career opportunities in food, farming, and associated industries.</p> <p><i>EESS, NRAP</i></p>	<p>Supporting accessible food projects in community settings (e.g. community fridges, lunch clubs), with a focus on environmental sustainability and nutritional quality</p> <p><i>CCAP, NRAP</i></p>
<p>Promoting regenerative agriculture, nature-friendly farming and horticulture on the MCC farm estate and beyond.</p> <p><i>EESS, NRAP</i></p>	<p>Exploring options for investment in infrastructure and taking a long view on supply-chain resilience.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>	<p>Facilitating Monmouthshire Food Partnership as a driver of food citizenship and cross-sector insight.</p> <p><i>NRAP</i></p>

* Letters in italic indicate strategic alignment: CCAP = Community Climate Change Action Plan; DMP = Destination Management Plan; EESS = Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy; NRAP = Nature Recovery Action Plan



Welsh Veg in Schools

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Since 2023 Monmouthshire has been participating in a pilot to develop new local agroecological supply chains into schools – specifically focusing on vegetables. The Welsh Veg in Schools pilot is a collaboration between Local Authorities and Health Boards covering Cardiff, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire, the counties’ Food Partnerships, the wholesaler Castell Howell Foods, a number of vegetable growers, and Farming Connect Horticulture. It is led by Food Sense Wales and supported by Welsh Government Foundational Economy funding. This ‘action research’ pilot brings together all this Strategy’s core themes into one multi-pronged project.

In essence the project is about improving local and ethical supply chains: the partners worked together to open conventional wholesale supply chains to Welsh vegetable growers focused on producing high-quality food with minimal environmental impacts. Through the Autumn Term of 2023, ten Monmouthshire primary schools received fresh agroecological Welsh vegetables through the project to use in school lunches. More broadly, the collaboration is an example of developing food as an economic sector: the growers have invested and adapted their practices to meet the requirements of public-sector supply chains, and new quality assurance standards have been developed to suit such small-scale mixed enterprises.

Nutritional analyses of the produce have been undertaken, and options trialled to extend the harvest’s shelf life and preserve summer gluts for future use (e.g. by converting fresh tomatoes into a jarred base sauce fortified with spinach and/or kale).

Finally, the project addressed wider issues around access, education and participation. By investing in the supply chain through school meals, high-quality local vegetables were made available to all children regardless of their socio-economic status, going some way to ‘bridging the gap’ between the sustainability and food access movements. Children from participating schools were also taken on farm visits to meet the people who grew their vegetables and get hands on planting onions and harvesting carrots. There was also a series of classroom activities for children to explore less familiar vegetables through touch, smell, and taste, increasing ‘food literacy’ from soil to plate and encouraging a positive and enquiring food culture.



The project is ongoing in 2024 and at the time of writing the growing season is already in progress and looking ahead to the next harvest.

9. INFLUENCE MAPPING



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9. Influence Mapping

The core themes and objectives identified above are broad and cross-cutting. Given our evidence-based approach and the strict scope of this Strategy, a further influence mapping exercise was carried out to identify areas of maximum impact, where the Council can most effectively concentrate its limited resources. This exercise identified three areas of focus that draw multiple workstreams together and unite them to drive change against our Core Themes and in line with our Guiding Principles.

These are:

**The food
we buy**



**The land
we own**



**The conversations we
convene**



9.1 The Food We Buy

In the 2023/24 financial year, the Council spent approximately £1.3 million on food for school meals, care homes and domiciliary support ('meals on wheels'). School meals are one of our most powerful levers for addressing inequality and the nature and climate crises. We feed 4,200 children every day, providing a nourishing hot lunch to sustain them as they grow and learn. Increasing uptake of universal free school meals (UFSM) is one way in which we can strike at the root causes of inequality, in particular child hunger, dietary ill-health and the socio-economic attainment gap. By procuring wisely, choosing British seasonal ingredients that are ethically and sustainably produced, we can support our domestic economy in confidence that the ingredients have been produced to UK standards without unacceptable exploitation of human and natural resources. Where budgets allow and the evidence is robust, we can potentially go further by committing to certifications such as Fairtrade for chocolate, coffee, sugar, bananas and more, RSPO for palm oil, MSC for fish, higher-welfare meat, or organic fruit and vegetables.

However, the school catering team faces barriers. A return to seasonal eating means embracing ingredients that are unfamiliar in many households, such as kale, beetroot, and spinach. Raising standards in some areas may mean economising in others, for instance by using beans and lentils sometimes to free up budget for sustainable meat and fish on other days. Above all, children's palates are increasingly accustomed to the flavours and textures of ultra-processed foods. Before committing to menu change, our menu planners therefore need assurance that the changes will be accepted by children and their families; otherwise the food will be wasted and the learners go hungry. To overcome these barriers we need to work in concert with our communities, using our direct and indirect influence through community food projects and school outreach to further our ambitions for healthy children with a positive food culture that spreads from school to home and back again, and will serve them for life.



For our more elderly residents, our Monmouthshire Meals domiciliary service and care-home staff grapple with the increasingly complex dietary needs. Again, service innovation is required if we are to meet those needs and ensure the older generation is likewise provided with the appropriate, accessible, and affordable food we all deserve by right. Here the challenge is less to do with changing tastes, and more to do with recruiting and training staff with the right skill set for care catering, and exploiting new technology to provide economies of scale and a mobile service that is fit for purpose in the modern era.

In our heritage and leisure outlets the opportunities are different. Here (within legislative boundaries), we have the opportunity to support and showcase small artisan businesses selling added-value products. These businesses contribute greatly to Monmouthshire's local economy and appeal as visitor destination, and their produce could, in turn, enhance our visitor attractions and so drive revenue opportunities for the Council and the businesses themselves.



9.2 The Land We Own

Land management and its associations with water and air quality, soil health, biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, and flood risk are key issues for any rural Council. Through our various partnerships and outreach work MCC seeks to influence land management practices in our County and catchments and promote sustainable, nature-friendly, regenerative farming practices. More immediately, the Council is also a land-owner in its own right, in possession of tenanted county farms, bare land let to graziers, statutory allotment sites, parks and play areas, and other small parcels in urban and rural settings that may be suitable for community food-growing. Here we can intervene more directly to achieve our ambitions. For example, when farms are relet Landlord Services can and do consider factors such as environmental sustainability, food production, and community engagement when selecting successful bidders. If a community expresses interest in managing a site for a shared garden, the Council will in principle support their ambition provided the site is suitable and legal obligations met on both sides.

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However, there is more we can do. Many farms are on historical tenancies that leave the landlord with little influence over how the land is managed. But we can seek to build closer relationships with our tenants to understand more fully what is happening on our estate, what is needed from us as landlords, and how we and our tenants can work together to ensure our collective land management is the best it can be on each farm and sets a model of good practice when we advocate change to others. There is no universal model, and our approaches will need to reflect the particular needs of the different businesses involved. At the community level, we can improve our processes to provide a smoother pathway to community growing along with robust and transparent decision-making and clear guidelines on how we wish to see the land managed (e.g. no dig approaches to minimise soil disturbance, and holistic pest management that uses chemicals only as a last resort).

We know that many allotment sites have long waiting lists. The issue is complex as new sites are not easily found and resources for their management are very limited. We can however continue to work with Allotment Associations to revive disused plots and create new ones through the Allotment Support Grants provided by Welsh Government, and consider ways of managing waiting lists more effectively to ensure plots are allocated in line with our core ambition to tackle inequality. We will also continue to promote communal community gardening as a more sustainable and equitable alternative to single-occupancy allotments, as communal growing makes better use of the limited space available and facilitates more even distribution of harvest gluts.

9.3 The Conversations We Convene

As a local authority Monmouthshire County Council is privileged to be able to take a long view. Many of the systemic imbalances upon which this Strategy touches are global and will take decades, perhaps generations, to redress. The ubiquity of ultra-processed foods, excessive consolidation of supply chains, exploitation of primary producers, and over-emphasis on agricultural yields at the expense of other ecosystem services are examples. Looking ahead, we can map other risks that are approaching and bring stakeholders together to identify mitigations, assess options, make the case for investment, and begin long-term change. The local food economy is a case in point, where supply-chain gaps and precarities limit the viability and long-term resilience of our supply chains. If we lose our small abattoirs, for example, the local meat supply chain will collapse. If we wish to increase horticultural production in line with national ambitions, we need the infrastructure, the expertise to enable farmers to diversify and the contracts to purchase the vegetables that are grown. If we wish to keep our rural communities together, we need young people to be aware of the career opportunities available in food, farming and their supporting rural industries. We may not know the answers, and we will not be able to afford the solutions, but we can bring together the people who might, to develop locally appropriate interventions and investment proposals and galvanise both public and private enterprise, innovation, and collaboration.

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These are specific examples of where MCC can bring stakeholders together to address particular issues. The Council also has a more general convening role, providing a forum for knowledge exchange within and between sectors to share best practice, spark new ideas, or simply provide opportunities for social interaction to individuals working in a challenging and often isolating industry. Moreover, by acting strategically in our areas of strongest influence we can demonstrate good food citizenship and inspire it in others – both organisations and individuals – to make our local food system and the part we play within it truly a force for good.

* * *

These three areas are where Monmouthshire County Council has most influence in the local food system, and where we will therefore target our efforts to meet the objectives set out in Table 3 above. The Delivery Plan that follows identifies the activities we will undertake.

10. OUR DELIVERY PLAN

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Delivery Plan



The food we buy

Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Increase uptake of UFSM in target areas (i.e. areas with below-average uptake)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather data to understand barriers to uptake Deliver awareness and familiarisation sessions in schools and community settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering Sustainable Food with Community Focused Schools Healthy Schools Education Community Development Healthy Schools 	Uptake of UFSM in target areas	Medium
Increase use of seasonal and/or local produce in schools, care homes, and domiciliary care; reduce use of UPFs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver awareness and familiarisation sessions in schools and community settings Gather data to support adoption of more seasonal ingredients Pursue supply-chain and service innovation and (where appropriate) investment to facilitate local and/or seasonal sourcing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering Sustainable Food with Procurement Community Focused Schools Healthy Schools Education Social Care Mon Life Community Development Healthy Schools 	Amount of local and/or seasonal produce used in schools, care homes, and domiciliary care Amount of UPFs used in schools, care homes, and domiciliary care Lessons learnt from supply-chain and service innovation activity	Medium-long

Delivery Plan

Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Integrate community food projects in the good food movement to enable and extend local and/or seasonal procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community food: access, education, participation Improving local and ethical supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver awareness and familiarisation sessions in community settings Include seasonality and support for local businesses in grant requirements Link local businesses with community settings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of joined up approach between schools and community work Evidence of local spend from community settings 	Short-medium
Identify ways to use heritage and cultural attractions to showcase local food & drink businesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore cooperative models and procurement options to facilitate purchasing from local suppliers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food <i>with</i> Mon Life Procurement 	Number of heritage and cultural attractions showcasing local food & drink businesses	Short-medium
Understand potential for additional certifications on specific ingredients (e.g. Fairtrade, RSPO, MSC, pasture-fed, organic)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with partners to explore the evidence for and practical feasibility of such commitments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catering Sustainable Food <i>with</i> Procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant options analysis undertaken Commitments made where recommended by options analysis 	Medium-long

Delivery Plan



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Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Embed food production, environmental land management (ELM) and community engagement in decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include food production, ELM and community engagement criteria when re-letting county farms and assessing bids Seek out examples of innovation and best practice elsewhere and apply learning to Monmouthshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord Services <i>with</i> Sustainable Food 	Scoring criteria and weightings in tender assessments	Short (in progress)
Further ELM best practice across county farm estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen relationships with existing tenants Gather data to build understanding of current practices Convene knowledge transfer and discussions to further ELM best practice among tenants Promote Farming Connect services to tenants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord Services <i>with</i> Sustainable Food Biodiversity Green Infrastructure Natural Flood Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenant testimonies Proportion of tenants registered with Farming Connect No. of knowledge transfer events 	Medium-long

Delivery Plan

Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Facilitate access to Council land for community food growing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish and communicate clear process for establishing new community gardens Revise and re-affirm commitment to Incredible Edible movement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food <i>with</i> Landlord Services Legal Community Development Biodiversity Green Infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment, communication and utilisation of clear process map New community garden(s) supported 	Short-medium
Maximise benefits from existing allotment space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Welsh Government Allotment Support Grant to bring more plots into use Consider new ways of managing waiting lists to tackle inequality Promote communal community gardening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Landlord Services <i>with</i> Sustainable Food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of sites benefiting from Allotment Support Grant New approaches to waiting lists considered and, if appropriate, acted upon 	Short-medium

Delivery Plan



The
conversations
we convene

Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Secure the long-term viability of the local meat supply chain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene key stakeholders to map current situation, vulnerabilities, and opportunities Options analysis and recommendations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food <i>with</i> Economy, Employment & Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existence of options analysis and recommendations Evidence that preferred option is being pursued Ongoing viability of local meat supply chain 	Long
Increase commercial horticultural production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with partners to promote diversification into horticulture Identify existing and new routes to market for horticultural enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food <i>with</i> Economy, Employment and Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of increased horticultural production New routes to market established 	Long

Delivery Plan

Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Ensure young people are aware of career pathways in food, farming, and related rural industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with partners to develop a consistent message and resources across careers advice services in schools and colleges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food Economy, Employment and Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources and insight disseminated to and adopted by careers advisors 	Medium-long
Facilitate knowledge exchange within and between sectors to share best practice, spark new ideas, and support mental wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate Monmouthshire Food Partnership as a driver of food citizenship and cross-sector insight Facilitate Monmouthshire Food & Drink Business Network Facilitate Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire discussion group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of meetings and/or events held Number of businesses engaged Persistence of business engagement 	Short (in progress)

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Delivery Plan

Monitoring and Review

Target	Relevant themes	Actions we will take	Who will do it?	How will we measure progress?	Timeframe (short, medium or long term)
Quarterly internal monitoring via Service Business Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update SBP quarterly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food Projects Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Short
Work with Members and Reference Group partners to oversee progress against the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold 6-monthly meetings with Members and/or Reference Group partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable Food Projects Manager Members and/or Reference Group partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Short
Assess need to review Strategy in 2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improving local and ethical supply chains Developing food as an economic sector Community food: access, education, participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider progress against the plan and wider changes in context and assess need to review the Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet SLT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As above 	Medium-long

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

<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Cath Fallon</p> <p>Phone no: 07557 190969 Email: cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal Presentation of the Local Food Strategy and associated Delivery Plan for approval by Cabinet on 22 May 2024.</p>
<p>Name of Service area Communities and Place</p>	<p>Date 24 March 2024</p>

1. Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?

Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	This Strategy seeks to have a positive impact. Its purpose is to set the Council's direction towards a long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.	None	None
Disability	As above	As above	As above

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	As above	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	As above	As above
Race	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	As above	As above	As above
Sex	As above	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above	As above	As above

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	Our local food strategy is based on three interlinked principles, fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles include tackling inequality	There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.	We will therefore consider amongst other things, how we will tackle the root causes of inequality in a local food context.

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	Neutral impact Where possible, the Council will work with its partners to promote the Welsh language as part of the food partnership activities. We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Neutral impact. The strategy and delivery plan does not involve the appointment of staff. However, on a general basis, the Communities and Place Directorate encourages the appointment of Welsh Language speakers and offers staff Welsh Language training.	None	N/A
Service delivery. Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Neutral impact	None	We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.

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</p> <p>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Positive: The Strategy identifies three interlinked core themes which are likely to drive system change. These include Improving local and ethical supply chains and developing food as an economic sector.</p> <p>Activities will include working across the supply chain (incl. suppliers, processors and logistics) to support the development of the local food economy in private and public sectors; Supporting entrepreneurs, startups, and established food and drink businesses to be environmentally, socially, and financially sustainable – encouraging innovation and clustering; and promoting learning pathways to develop skills and career opportunities in food, farming, and associated industries.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	<p>It is an on-going priority for the Council to work collaboratively to maximise efficiency and capitalise on opportunities.</p>
<p>A resilient Wales</p> <p>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and</p>	<p>Positive: The two other guiding principles of the Strategy include addressing the nature and climate crises and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	<p>Consideration will therefore be given to agricultural and land management practices; Food waste and recycling; and diversity and resilience in the local food</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?
can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)		system along with the ethics of global and local supply chains.
<p>A healthier Wales</p> <p>People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: The Strategy reflects the on-going work of the Sustainable Food Team in developing an approach to local and community growing, procurement of food and working with local suppliers. Recognising that in Monmouthshire, every primary school has a kitchen where freshly cooked, and nutrition rich meals are produced five days a week. The team also recognises the need to implement a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on the health and well-being of our communities.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	N/A
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities</p> <p>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Positive: The Sustainable Food Team will be working together with partners and the Council's Community Development Team, to support the development of sustainable communities, creating a social infrastructure offer which realises the growth and sustainability of the rural economy.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	N/A
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p>	<p>Positive: The Strategy recognises the need to work with partners to identify and collaborate on</p>	N/A.

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?
Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	opportunities that are based around our high-quality natural environment, addressing current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery. Negative: None identified	
<p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p> <p>Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p>Positive: The Team will work with partners to showcase local food and drink producers, promoting Monmouthshire as a food and drink destination thereby supporting a coherent cultural and visitor economy offer.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	N/A
<p>A more equal Wales</p> <p>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive: The Team have drawn on a wealth of evidence about our local food and farming context and what works in contributing to a healthier, more sustainable system. The team will be working with partners, to leverage joint intelligence and research expertise to improve the quality of life and increase the number of opportunities for the residents in our rural communities.</p> <p>Negative: None identified</p>	N/A

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 Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The purpose of the Strategy is to guide our work for the next five years and beyond. The Team recognises that the changes the Council wishes to see in the local food system will: a) take longer than one council term; b) cannot happen unless we work collaboratively with farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers and communities; and c) depend on Welsh and UK farming, food and procurement investments and policies.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Collaboration Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The purpose, approach, principles and thematic areas for the Strategy have been founded on collaborative working, identified through conversations and discussions within the Council, with colleagues across many organisations, and with individuals who work in the local food system and/or have an interest in making that system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>In drafting the Strategy, the following consultation activities have taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reference Group of experts and partners has been established in the capacity of ‘critical friends’ who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making the system fairer, more ethical and more locally based. • Two stakeholder consultations were held in March – one in Abergavenny and one in Chepstow – where discussions regarding the draft Strategy took place. • An All-Member’s Seminar was held on 15 March. • A Cross Member’s working group is being considered to monitor progress of the Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan, once approved. <p>All these activities have shaped the Local Food Strategy appended to this report.</p>	<p>N/A</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 Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The Strategy seeks to develop collaborative partnerships, working directly with local food businesses and farmers to identify adaptive and opportunistic approaches which will take advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding).</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Integration Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>In developing the Strategy we have identified the following types of partners, all of whom we will look to work with, when considering the impact of the Strategy Delivery Plan on the Council and their wellbeing goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic partners: Welsh Government, Marches Forward Partnership, Cardiff Capital Region, Natural Resources Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Public Health Team, Gwent Public Services Board, Food Farming and Countryside Commission, Food Partnerships. • Partners in tackling inequality: Registered Social Landlords, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Social Farms and Gardens, Trussell Trust 	<p>N/A</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?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners in addressing climate and nature crises: Farming Connect, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Wye and Usk Foundation, Land Workers Alliance, farming unions, farmers and food businesses, our community voices. 	

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	N/A	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	N/A	None.	N/A

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

The Strategy has been developed utilising evidence identified through conversations and discussions within the Council, with colleagues across many organisations, and with individuals who work in the local food system and/or have an interest in making that system fairer, more ethical and more locally based. The team have also drawn on a wealth of evidence about the local food and farming context and what works in contributing to a healthier, more sustainable system. This evidence is also strengthened through the key role the Monmouthshire Food Partnership play in the National Sustainable Food Partnership network.

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

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

Positive

The positive impacts of this Strategy are that:

- It enables a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on sustaining the impacts of our interventions, the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.
- It sets our direction of travel, towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.
- The approach of the Strategy is founded on collaborative working, maximising adaptive and opportunistic approaches, whilst taking advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding); while always being focused on impact and outcomes.
- The Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles are tackling inequality, addressing the nature and climate crises, and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices.
- There are three interlinked core themes which are likely to drive system change. These are improving local and ethical supply chains, developing food as an economic sector, and community food: access, education, participation.
- The actions associated with these three core themes will enable, influence and advocate for a local food system that ensures everyone is well nourished; supports sustainable food and farming businesses to prosper and allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

Negative

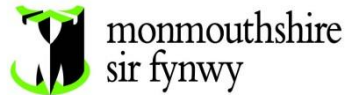
None identified.

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
Present the Strategy for Approval	22 May 2024	Leader of the Council
Instigate the Delivery Plan	On going	Sustainable Food Projects Manager

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.	SLT/Cabinet Members	March 2024	Consider the Strategy and Delivery Plan prior to scrutiny and presentation for approval
2.	Cabinet Report	May 2024	Present the Strategy and Delivery Plan for approval, amended in light of comments from Scrutiny and wider consultation



SUBJECT: A Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 22.5.24

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

To advise Cabinet of the proposed strategy for commissioned domiciliary care 2024 – 2034 and implementation as set out within the plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Cabinet endorses the strategy for commissioned domiciliary care 2024-2034 and implementation plan including the procurement of block contracts and a Spot Purchasing System

3. KEY ISSUES:

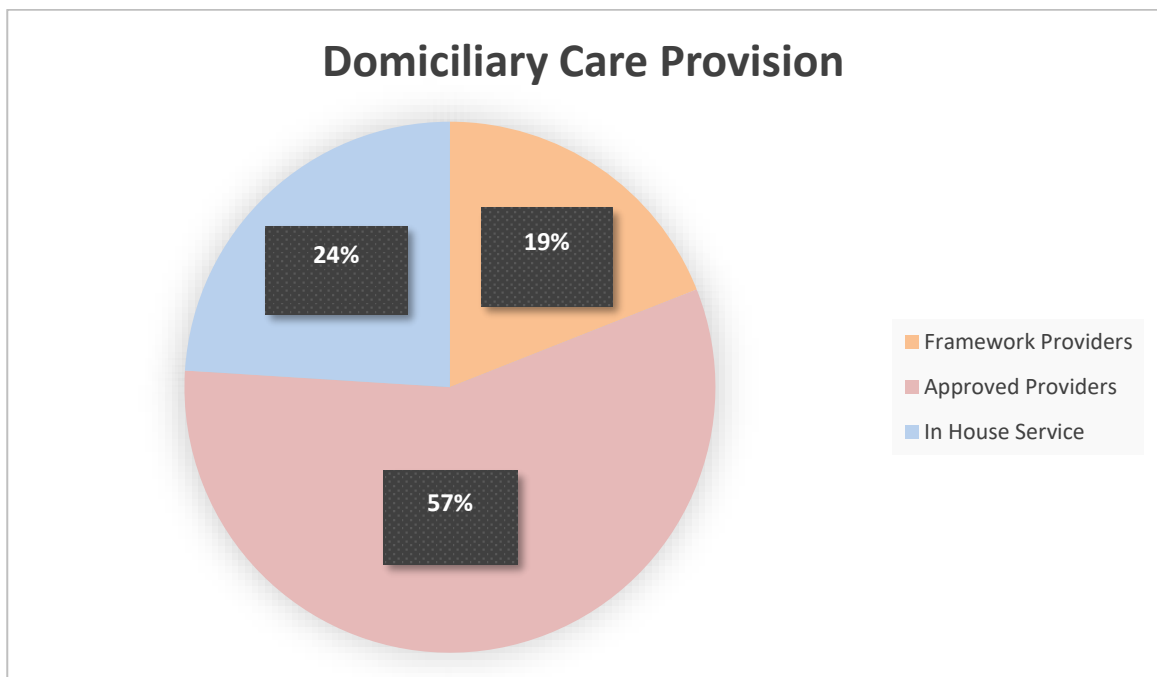
3.1 Background

3.1.1 Since 2011 the Council has commissioned its domiciliary care via a combination of framework and approved provider contracts. Framework providers are initially offered packages of support and if they are unable to deliver they are then offered out to approved providers who charge variable rates that are less cost effective. Neither framework nor approved contracts guarantee hours except for the Usk block.

3.1.2 Monmouthshire County Council's last commissioning strategy for Adult Social Care was for 2014 – 2017. Since then, we have explored potential options for improving the delivery of commissioned domiciliary care, including reorganising the commissioning of care on a small geographical patch basis, predictable payment arrangements, improved conditions for the independent workforce and outcome focused commissioning. However, with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic this exploratory work was paused. Given the challenges we face in terms of demand and the recent worsening financial situation, it is necessary to reconsider our current arrangements and develop a strategy for the future.

3.1.3 There is a need to develop our future commissioning approach to domiciliary care within the context of key Monmouthshire County Council strategic documents, especially the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028 and the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28. Our future commissioning approach will need to support and contribute to the delivery of the C&CP's objectives especially, A Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued. The future procurement approach will need to be consistent with and supportive of the values and objectives within the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy to enable us to buy services that are sustainable, ethically produced, local wherever possible, and in line with our priorities and commitment to be an equitable organisation.

3.1.4 The data within the strategy is at a point in time in July 2023, which shows approximately 8000 hours per week of domiciliary care being delivered. The chart below shows the breakdown of hours between Framework and Approved Providers and In House Provision.



3.1.5 In October 2023 we began an analysis of our existing commissioned domiciliary care arrangements, an assessment of future need and an exploration of options for the future. The work has culminated in the development of a 10-year strategy, which is attached as Appendix 1 and an executive summary as Appendix 2.

3.1.6 The data within the strategy was obtained from FLO and relates to planned hours and not actual hours. Where spend data is shown this has been derived from calculations of planned and has not been validated against the Council's spend. All data is based on an hour of care and does not take in to account the varying costs of part hour care calls. All figures are based on a point in time in July 2023.

3.2 Findings

- 3.1.1 The strategy sets out in detail the findings on both a county wide and locality basis. The key issues of note are summarised below:
- 3.1.2 The county has seen a 26% increase in over 65's (2011 - 2021 Census Data), which is the largest increase in Wales. The Gwent Region Needs Assessment predicts a rise in the older population of 97.1% between 2013 and 2035 in Monmouthshire.
- 3.1.3 The current commissioning arrangements are do not provide sufficient capacity to meet current need. This presents a further risk to our ability to meet growing demand up to 2035.
- 3.1.4 The framework arrangements are no longer fit for purpose, only delivering 24% of commissioned care. There is an overreliance on approved providers, a key risk, as costs are higher.
- 3.1.5 The impact of these arrangements is common to all three locality areas. However, the extent varies in each locality and in addition there are issues which are relevant in some of the localities but not all.
- 3.1.6 In the North 71% is purchased in the lowest cost band. In comparison in the South 61% is purchased in the highest cost band. Average hourly costs vary significantly.
- 3.1.7 In-house domiciliary care provision is consistent in the North and South (24% & 22%), in the Central area 67% is delivered by our in-house services.
- 3.1.8 The number of providers operating in each of the locality areas varies:
- The North has 9 providers with no dominant provider.
 - Central area has 10 providers, most have low hours. No dominant provider, the provider with the highest number of hours has 19% of the market. 36% of care has average care rates in the highest cost bracket.
 - South area has 6 providers with average rates in the highest cost bracket.
- 3.1.9 The average weekly care hours per person (commissioned and in house) are consistent in the North (13.9) & South (13.2) but are 35% less in Central (9.6).
- 3.1.10 The brokerage arrangements provide a fragmented structure, care is offered and accepted on an individual and siloed basis. Providers aren't always able to respond to the bigger picture. It has limited financial controls built in; teams broker individual packages at any of the available rates. There is no requirement to procure lowest cost, outside of the framework being offered work first.

3.1.11 Feedback from the people using the service obtained via community care questionnaires, complaints and quality assurance activity has been taken into consideration in the development of the strategy. This feedback indicates in the main people are happy with the current care they receive. We receive very few complaints in regard to domiciliary care where people have expressed concerns this usually relates to inconsistency of carers and late call times. As we move forward with the implementation of the strategy and the procurement process, we will seek to ensure the voices of people receiving the service are heard and incorporated into service design.

3.1.12 The views of existing providers have been sought in regards to the existing arrangements, what works well and doesn't work well, and what would improve things for the future. As part of the procurement process, we will be seeking further views from both potential new and existing providers, as well as people who receive the service.

3.2 Conclusions

3.2.1 The independent sector has shown remarkable resilience over recent years, managing the pandemic, recruitment and retention issues and growing costs.

3.2.2 Current contractual arrangements are not conducive to maximising capacity to meet demand, offering insufficient security to either the Council or providers. They are fragmented with a large number for providers competing for business.

3.2.3 To meet the current challenges and future demand, contractual arrangements need restructuring to support greater resilience, flexibility, and capacity.

3.2.4 The challenges are common to all areas, but the extent and degree vary.

3.2.5 Brokerage arrangements are fragmented and time consuming often resulting in lengthy delays in securing care. More robust arrangements are needed.

3.2.6 Care costs differ considerably across the county. Approved provider dominance in certain areas, at higher rates, is impacting on overstretched budgets.

3.2.7 The current financial situation is unprecedentedly challenging, the existing arrangements do not maximise cost effectiveness and control.

3.3 Future Strategic Objectives

3.3.1 The strategy has three strategic objectives to effectively respond to the current challenges within the domiciliary care sector in Monmouthshire. There is a need to change the procurement and management of domiciliary care to meet current and future predicted demand.

- 1. Provide sustainable high quality domiciliary care to those with an assessed need within Monmouthshire.**
 - Increase capacity and resilience with the domiciliary care sector.
 - Improve outcomes for individuals who need or may need care in the future, through target reablement and best use of capacity.
- 2. Maximise the cost effectiveness of the care purchased, with less diversity of cost between providers.**
- 3. Improve and standardise terms and conditions for the domiciliary care workforce, supporting with stability of workforce within providers.**

3.3.2 Section 4.2 within the strategy sets out some of the key changes that we want to put in place to deliver these strategic objectives. The key elements of the strategy are:

- Implement Block Contract arrangements as the primary delivery mechanism for all commissioned care.
- Implement spot purchasing contractual arrangements as a secondary arrangement for commissioning specialist and/or complex packages, which cannot be delivered through the block contract arrangement.
- An open procurement process, to enable existing and new providers to tender for both the block contracts and the spot purchasing contract.
- Contracts will include the requirement to deliver outcomes for people.
- Implement a new brokerage system and invoice validation process.
- Develop specific implementation plans for each of the three localities to account for local variation/need, including volume of hours.
- Include within the block contract terms and conditions a fair and reasonable hourly rate (flat rate with no premiums for part hours)
- Introduce the requirement for electronic call monitoring systems in both the block and Spot Purchasing contracts.
- Include within the block and spot purchasing contract terms and conditions for staff to include payment of RLW, mileage rate, payment for travel time, holidays, and contract terms.
- Ensure providers are employing staff in line with agreed contract terms and conditions.

3.4 Options Appraisal

3.4.1

Option 1: Continue with existing framework and approved provider arrangements.	
Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall existing arrangements meet demand moderately well. • Stable sector – longstanding arrangements and good working relationships • Continuity of Care retained. • No impact on existing independent workforce i.e. TUPE. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unmet need continues to be problematic especially in the South and Central areas. • Insufficient capacity to meet current demand and predicted growth. • Recruitment and retention is not improved. • Too many providers competing for business with a negative impact. • Framework and approved contracts offer no guarantee of hours, piece meal brokering of individual support packages offers little opportunity for growth. • Little centralised oversight of brokering of packages. • The framework contract is no longer fit for purpose, only 24% of care provided through it and an overreliance on commissioning care via approved providers. • Some localities have considerable challenges in securing care and are either over reliant on high-cost providers and or in house. • The current brokerage arrangements aren't effective for either the Council or providers and offer little financial control or oversight. • Significant variation in hourly costs.
Option 2: Bring all commissioned domiciliary care in house.	
Opportunities	Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct control through operational management of all domiciliary care. • Enhanced terms and conditions for the workforce. • Ability to reorganise operations without contractual variation/negotiation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No alternative method of provision if in house service is unable to meet demand. • Local and national businesses would lose a significant proportion of, if not all their work. • Mass TUPE transfer of existing provider workforce into MCC. • Loss of expertise and specialism in the independent sector e.g. learning disability and brain injury. • Costs will be considerably higher due to employment terms and conditions.

Option 3: Implement new contractual arrangements including block and spot purchasing.	
Opportunities	Risk
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective management processes to maximise capacity and flexibility. • Greater sustainability and resilience for providers. • Better cost effectiveness – less variation in rate range. • TUPE will apply which will ensure continuity of care. • Improve recruitment and retention of social care workforce. • Quality Assurance mechanisms confirm care is at the required standard. • Improved capacity to meet current and future demand. • Improved recruitment and retention of social care workforce through consistent terms and conditions. • Efficient oversight of use of hours. • Improved financial controls. • More efficient invoice payment system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destabilisation of providers and market, existing providers may lose business. • Mass transfer of staff (TUPE) • Potential loss of continuity of Care • Lack of interest in the tender from providers • Opposition from people receiving services. • Phased approach may impact on other areas. • Destabilisation of the market due to change in one area.

3.4.2 Option 3 is the preferred option for the future of commissioned domiciliary care as it provides an opportunity to ensure the future arrangements are fit for purpose and cost effective.

3.5 Next Steps

Implementation Approach

3.5.1 The challenges we face over the next 10 or more years are complex and multi-faceted. To meet these challenges and realise the three strategic objectives, a systematic and targeted plan of action is needed. The scale of the challenge will necessitate a prioritised implementation approach. The South needs to be addressed first due to their reliance on high-cost provision.

3.5.2 The issues are common to all three areas but vary in degree and impact. The manner in which these issues will be bespoke to the individual locality; the objectives will be common to all, but the specific actions may differ.

3.5.3 Phase one of the two phased action plan will focus on implementing a range of targeted key actions for the South. Work will be ongoing during phase one to identify the key actions needed to address the Central. Phase two will be implementation for Central and identifying and implementing key actions for the North.

3.5.4 The implementation approach is ambitious, with demanding timescales which assume the smooth running of the process. The benefits of a phased implementation approach include the opportunity for iterative learning, learning from successes and difficulties.

Provisional Implementation timetable

3.5.5 The strategy (see appendix 1) has a phased implementation plan. The key action areas for Phase 1 (February 2024 – February 2025) are set out below:

- Implementing a new contract in the South offering fixed blocks of hours.
- Implementing a new system for spot purchasing of specialist or ad hoc domiciliary care in the South.
- Implementing a new brokerage system for the new block and spot purchasing contracts
- Enhancing monitoring of delivery hours and improving payment processes
- Developing a locality specific plan for the Central area for phase 2.

3.5.6 The key considerations and risk associated with phase 1 are:

- Procuring appropriate providers to fulfil the block arrangements.
- Ensuring the block rate is reasonable, financially viable & cost-effective.
- Significant change for providers, workforce & people receiving services.
- The resources which will be required for many areas of SCH to deliver the plan i.e Commissioning, Care Management and Finance Team.

3.5.7 The timeline for phase one is as follows:

- Feb - May 2024: Gain Approval (DMT, SLT and Informal Cabinet)
- By August 2024: Develop Procurement Paperwork for Block and Spot Purchasing Contractual arrangements (South)
- September - October 2024: Procurement Process for Block and Spot Purchasing Contractual arrangements (South)
- September-October 2024: Identify commissioning need for Central.
- November 2024: Develop future commissioning approach to meet need for Central.
- November 2024: Award for Block and Spot purchasing
- November 2024 – January 2025: Implementation
- December 2024/ January 2025: Produce Contractual and procurement documentation (Central)
- 1st February 2025: Contract fully implemented.
- 1st February 2025: Implement Revised Brokerage Arrangements and greater oversight of call times and delivery.
- February 2025: Gain approval for Central implementation plan

3.5.8 Phase two, February 2025 – February 2026 will be the implementation of new arrangements in the Central area and identifying the required future contractual arrangements to address the specific geographical challenges.

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

4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken and is attached as Appendix 3 and a summary from Section 8 of the Integrated Impact Assessment identifying the significant positive and negative impacts is detailed below.

Positive Impacts:

- The proposed changes to the way in which we commission domiciliary care should improve capacity and resilience in the sector, whilst ensuring best use of public funds. This will ensure there is as far as possible sufficient quality care at the right cost to meet the individual's needs. The Spot Purchasing arrangements (which will run alongside block contracts) will also provide a way in which very specialist care and support can be purchased.
- The new commissioning model will enable a cost effective, secure and resilient model of care commissioning and delivery which will seek to provide best possible outcomes for individuals who require care in Monmouthshire.
- Longer term the mandating of common employment terms will improve equity in the sector, improve consistency and also provide greater security to the workforce.

Negative Impacts:

- Individuals who currently receive care and support may be impacted by changes in care provider. This may cause some anxiety and uncertainty.
- Providers and who are not successful in winning the tender will be impacted, with the workforce potentially being transferred under TUPE regulations.

5 REASONS:

- 5.1 Analysis of the existing commissioning domiciliary care arrangements clearly evidences that there is a need for change to meet the current challenges of growing demand and growing costs, and to be fit for purpose for the future.
- 5.2 Specific implementation plans are required for each locality to positively influence the arrangements without losing the benefits of the current arrangements.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 Expenditure on commissioned domiciliary care is one of adult services biggest spend areas, circa £6m in 2022/23.
- 6.2 At this stage it is not possible to calculate the costs of implementing the new block contract and spot purchasing arrangements as the rates will not be confirmed until the procurement process begins.
- 6.3 The implementation of new arrangements in the South has the potential to deliver cost savings.
- 6.4 As work proceeds in regard to the procurement process and the hourly rates/costs are clearer, a further report will be brought to DMT to advise of implementation costs.

7 CONSULTEES:

- SLT
- SCH DMT
- Integrated Service Managers
- Head of Adult Services

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1: A Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire

Appendix 2: A Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire – Executive Summary

Appendix 3: Integrated Impact Assessment

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A Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire.

2024 - 2034

May 2024

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INTRODUCTION

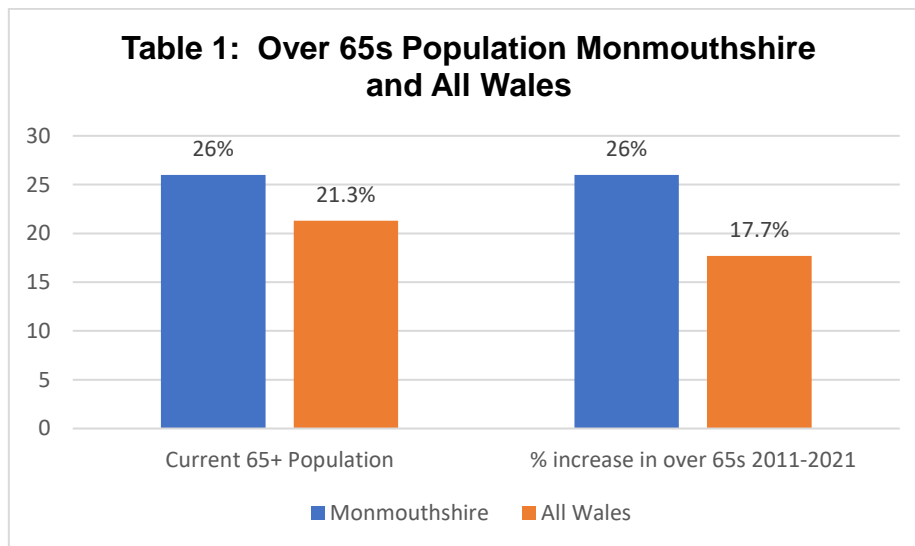
This document provides an assessment of the current arrangements within Monmouthshire for commissioned long term domiciliary care and sets out Monmouthshire County Council's strategy for the next 10 years.

1. BACKGROUND

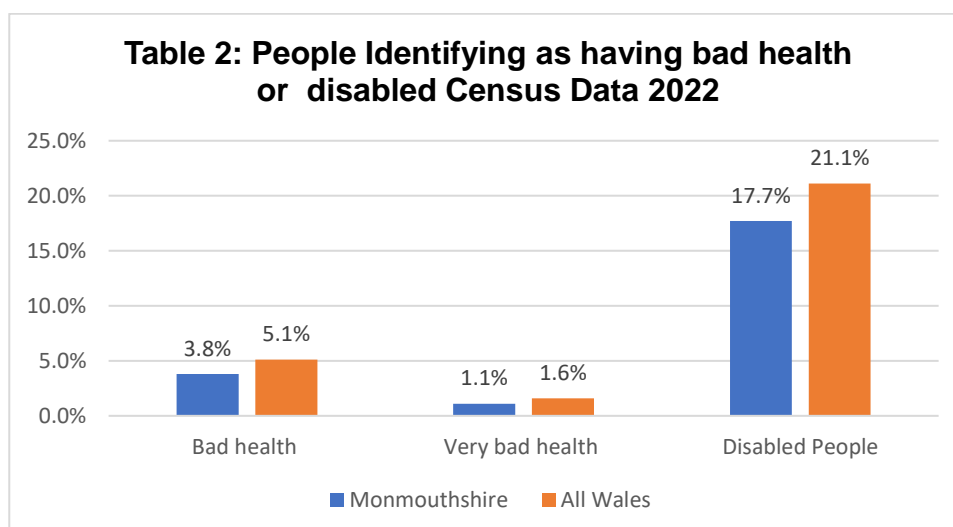
1.1 Demographics

Monmouthshire is a primarily rural community with an approximate population of 93,000 people, ONS Census Data shows a 1.8% population increase between 2011 and 2021, this is slightly higher than the overall increase for Wales.

The ONS 2021 Census survey illustrate rises in the older population in Monmouthshire, with further increases predicted up to 2035. Please see table 1 below.



ONS Census Data 2021 provides information about the number of people living in Monmouthshire who identify as having bad or very bad health, and/or a disability. Table 2 shows the Monmouthshire and all Wales position.



Monmouthshire has the lowest percentage of disabled people in Wales (ONS Data 2021) and the Gwent Population Needs Assessment (2022-23) shows it has the lowest rate of life limiting long-term illness per 100,000 in the Gwent region.

The increasing ageing population in Wales, and society presents a set of unique challenges, including how this population should be supported to live fulfilled lives and in the context of this strategy particularly how individuals should be supported once they reach the point of needing care.

Monmouthshire is an affluent area, it has no 'small areas' in the most deprived 10% in the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019. This contrasts with Newport which has the highest proportion of 'small areas' in the most deprived 10% in Wales.

It is possible to assume that because Monmouthshire is not considered a deprived area, that there are no areas of deprivation. This however is not the case, Cantref 2 (a smaller area in Abergavenny) is in the 10-20% most deprived overall (WIMD, 2019), and both Llanover 2 and Thornwell 1 are in the 20-30% most deprived areas of Wales. The Monmouthshire Tackling Poverty Action Plan (2021) states that the relative affluence of the county can often mask the day-to-day experience of its residents who may be experiencing poverty that may not be immediately visible. Data within the plan also shows that access to services and hardship grants peaked following Covid.

1.2 Current Service Provision

Monmouthshire County Council commissions long term domiciliary care from independent sector providers supplemented through in-house reablement and domiciliary care services. Analysis of current service provision, including spend data, has been undertaken by using data contained within existing management information systems. The data within the system relates to planned hours of care and not actual hours delivered. Where spend data is shown this has been derived from planned hours of care within Flo and has not been validated against the Council's spend. All data is based on an hour of care and does not take in to account the varying costs of part hour care calls.

Monmouthshire County Council currently provides approximately 8000 hours per week of long-term domiciliary care this includes independently commissioned and directly delivered care.

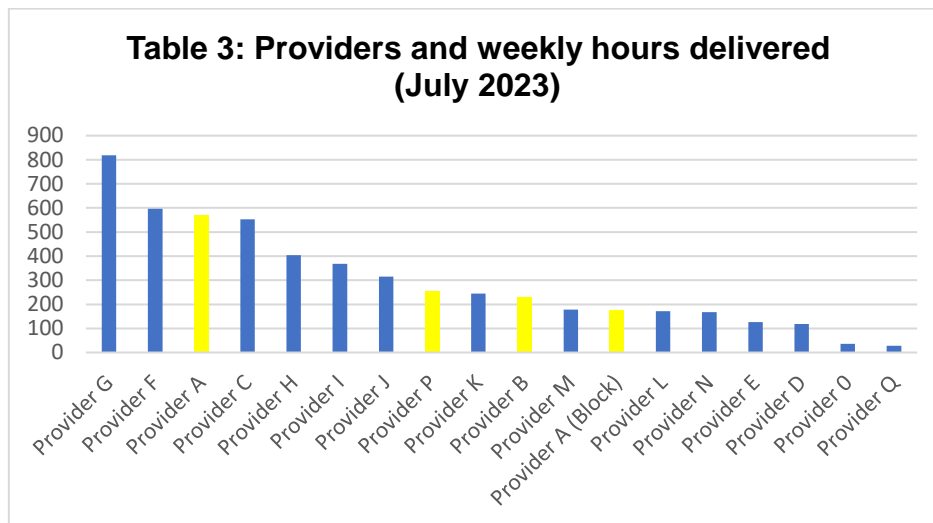
Directly Delivered Care

The in-house domiciliary care service's focus is on the provision of reablement and specialist support such as dementia. In recent years the service's ability to deliver reablement has been adversely impacted by the need for it to deliver long term care in parts of the county where it has proved difficult to secure independently commissioned domiciliary care. Approximately 24% are provided by in house reablement and domiciliary care services. In house domiciliary care services are organised on a locality bases, with a team in each of the three localities which is sub divided into patch based teams. Although overall 24% is provided by the in house service the position varies between each of the localities in the North and South area

it provides between 22% and 24%. In contrast, in the Central area it provides 67% of all domiciliary care.

Independently Commissioned Care

There are 17 core independent sector domiciliary care providers with whom Monmouthshire County Council commissions. Generally, the sector has remained relatively stable over the last 2-3 years with only 1 provider withdrawing from the county. There have been a few new entrants to the market. The Council has matured, good working relationships with all of its providers. Table 3 shows all providers and weekly hours.



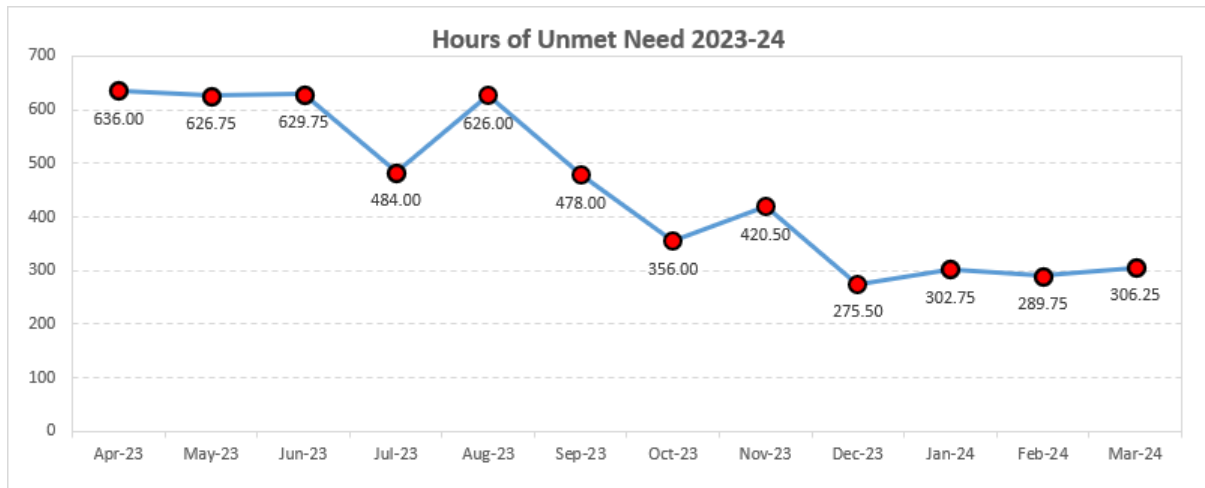
*The chart above has framework providers plotted in yellow

The Gwent Market Stability Report 2022 showed that there was insufficient capacity in the sector across the region to meet demand. The report also stated staff are leaving the sector at an unprecedented rate due to issues around terms and conditions, cost of Social Care Wales registration, driving and other factors. This has led to the hand back of packages across the region, particularly complex packages where providers have been unable to find the staff to cover. Local data shows package hand backs in Monmouthshire have been limited to date.

The Gwent Market Stability report 2022, showed Monmouthshire as having the highest level of unmet need across the Gwent authorities. Our data shows that it is more difficult to find care in the South and Central areas, particularly in Chepstow, Monmouth, and some of the more rural areas. Providers have reported the longstanding challenges they face in recruiting in these areas. Other contributing factors could include the relative affluence of these areas, and the rural nature of their surrounds. This is in contrast to the North of the county where population is more mixed, and people travel from Torfaen and Caerphilly for work.

Following a peak in unmet need during 2022 capacity within the market has improved. Table 4 shows the number of hours of domiciliary waiting to be brokered county wide between April 2023 and March 2024

Table 4



76% of all domiciliary care in Monmouthshire is purchased from the independent sector. 24% is purchased from a small framework of three providers and the remaining 76% from approved providers.

Providers who form part of the framework are our providers of first choice. Approved providers have different contractual terms and rates are generally higher. We do not guarantee any of our providers work, except for the Usk block. See table 5.

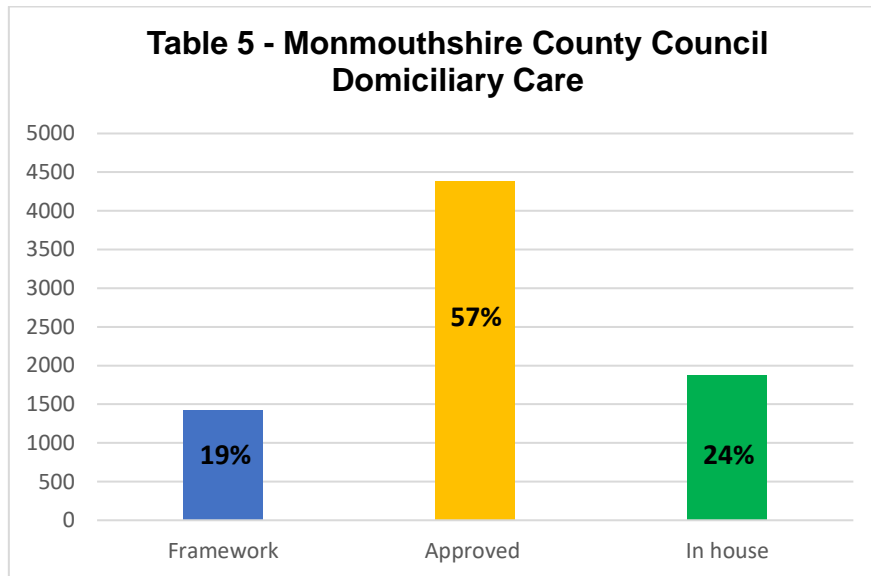


Table 5 demonstrates an overreliance on approved providers which varies in degree across the county. Table 6 shows hours provided in each area of the county.

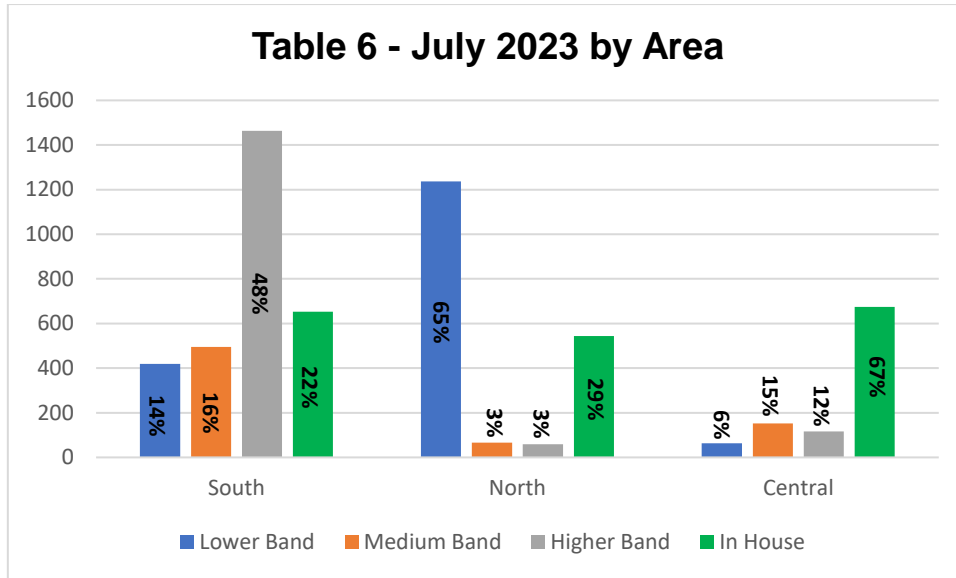
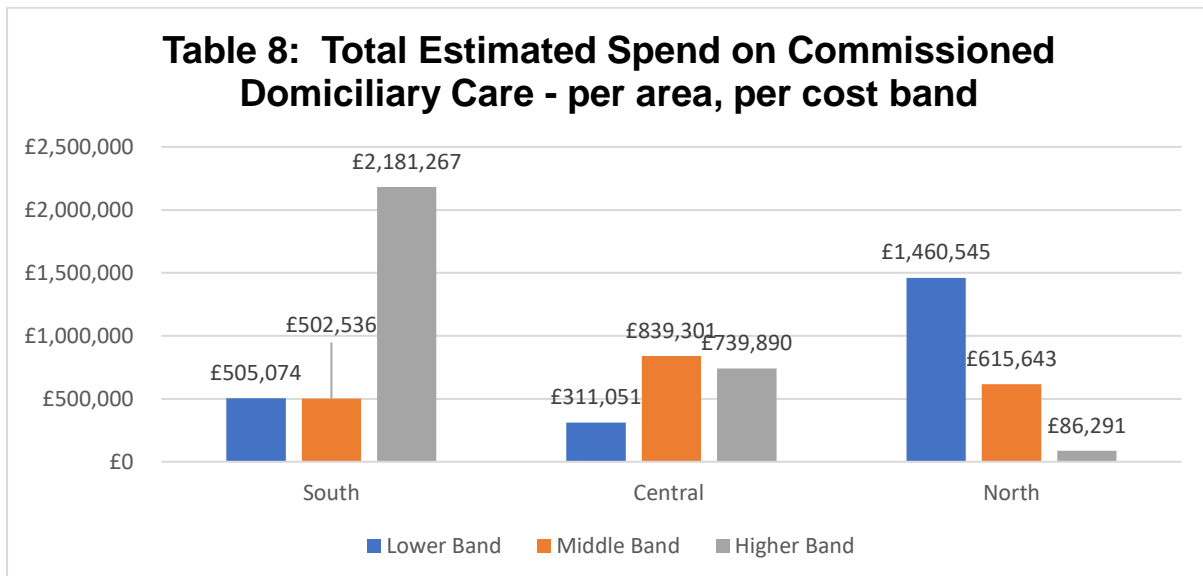


Table 7 – Average Weekly Number of Hours per person

	Purchased Externally	Provided by In House	Purchased and in house
South	15.1	9	13.2
North	14.8	11.8	13.9
Central	10.5	8.3	9.6

The average weekly hours per person is similar in the South and North whilst the Central area provides lower average hours per person and can be attributed in part to lower levels of market sufficiency and high service demand.



The estimated spend is based on planned hours of support at the hourly rate at a point in time in July 2023, and is for illustrative purposes. Actual spend would include the actual units of hours and part hours provided.

The current brokerage system entails individual packages of care brokered out by an administrative brokerage officer, first to framework and subsequently to approved where capacity doesn't exist within the framework. Offers of capacity are then sent to social workers who make the final decision and confirm with the successful provider.

Over the last few years, as the council explored and implemented Place Based and localised systems to make best use of capacity, care management teams have often made direct contact with providers themselves to secure care. Whilst this approach has many benefits, it has also led to less oversight as to how care packages are brokered, cost of packages and a two-tier system of brokerage which can lead to some providers not receiving equitable access to care packages.

Direct Payments and Micro Carers

As well as receiving domiciliary care from commissioned and in house providers, people in Monmouthshire are able to have their care at home needs met through other options which include micro carers and direct payments.

Micro Care

In 2022/23 the Council developed and implemented a micro care platform. The number of micro carers operating in Monmouthshire has steadily gained momentum providing alternative employment options in care and supporting choice and capacity within the provision of care.

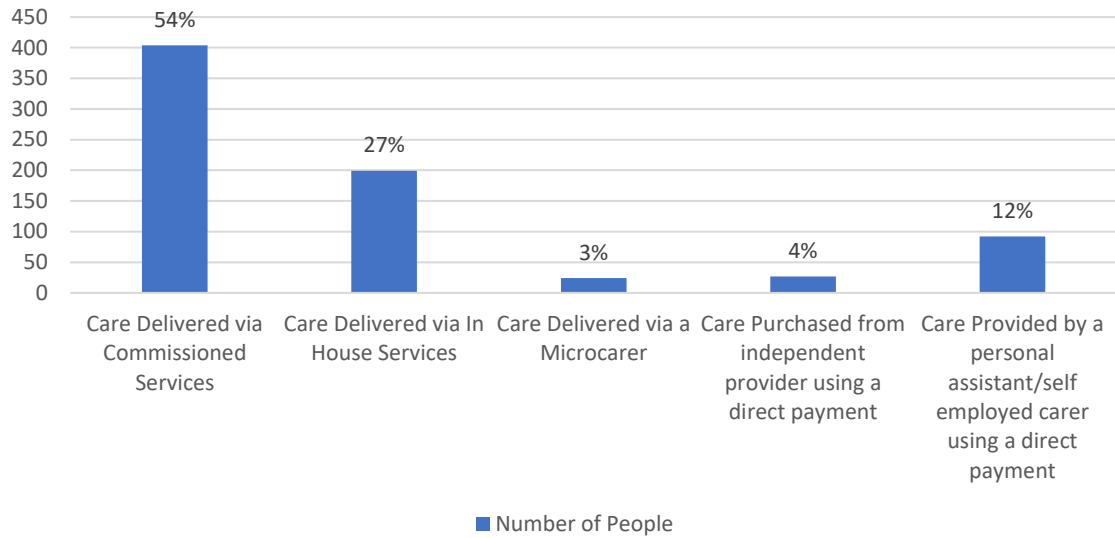
Micro carers are self-employed individuals who offer personalised support and care to citizens who live in their local area. This means that the support services they offer can be delivered at times and in ways that suits the needs of the individual, offering greater continuity of care and flexibility. Micro carers aim to offer a tailored service that is responsive and imaginative in its delivery.

Recruiting home care workers in rural areas has historically proven a challenge. The development of the micro care directory looks to address this issue by offering an additional, viable solution to the availability of care services across Monmouthshire, providing greater choice to its residents.

Direct Payments

The Direct Payment Scheme is designed to give people more independence, choice, and control and to help them manage their lives in their own homes. The scheme can provide assistance with personal care, everyday living tasks, support in people's caring roles, with purchasing equipment or any other type of support that enables people to live independently. People are provided with a budget through a Direct Payment which they can use to purchase the types of support they need privately this may include employing a personal assistant or contracting with an independent domiciliary care agency directly.

Table 8A - Number of People Receiving Domiciliary Care via different delivery mechanisms



1.3 Commissioning of Domiciliary Care in Wales

During July/August 2022 a short piece of research was carried out by Monmouthshire County Council across the other 21 local authorities in Wales to understand what and how they commissioned their domiciliary care services, and to help shape our strategy going forward. Some high-level findings are shared in tables 9 and 10:

Table 9: Current Model of Care

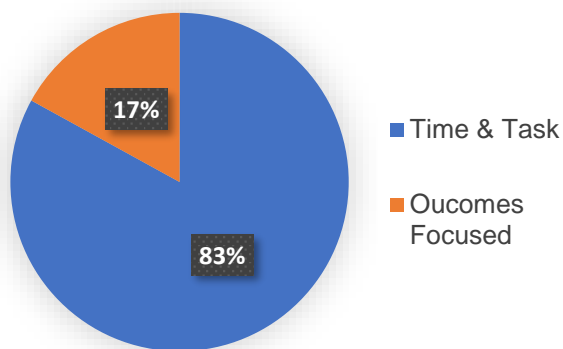
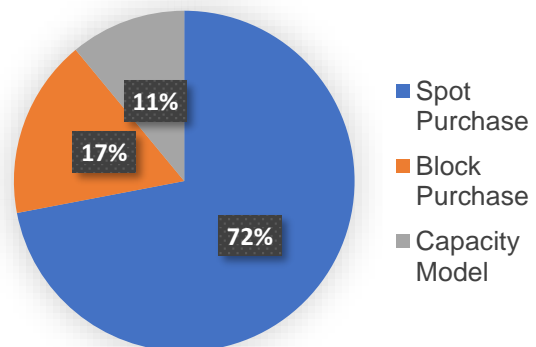


Table 10: Purchasing Method & Payment



Whilst 83% of respondents (15/18) still commission a time and task model of care, there was some innovation within this group. There were a smaller number of areas including two in Gwent who felt that the current time and task, traditional method of commissioning was working for them and so didn't feel the need for any innovation.

Half of the authorities spoken to referred to some sort of innovation, the scale of innovation varied quite significantly from area to area with most at the stage of small-scale pilots to test out innovative ways of working. The key themes in terms of innovation were:

- Patch-based working; from very micro patches to larger scale areas.
- Use of block contracts to improve working conditions and guarantee hours in areas where capacity is an issue.
- Mandating minimum employment terms within contracts, including paying RLW or higher, 45p per mile, fixed hours, and flat rates of pay for all hours worked including travel time.
- Restructuring of packages to make best use of the in-house workforce in areas with limited capacity, rural areas and for complex packages.
- Increased rates, which varied across areas.
- Outcomes based commissioning is a small but growing area.

Monmouthshire has been similarly innovative, we have made use of a block contract in specific areas where capacity has been a particular issue and was one of the first Councils to trial place based, patch-based care which has led to the identification of some of the key operating principles conducive to more sustainable domiciliary care.

Whilst there is a variety of innovation occurring across Wales, most areas are still operating a time and task model of care. Most require hours delivered to be monitored by an Electronic Care Monitoring System so that commissioner can maintain some oversight of hours delivered and reconcile to payments. Almost all areas, regardless of levels of innovation reported issues with recruitment, retention, and capacity; although newer and more innovative models of provision were in their early stages and as such impact was hard to measure at this stage. The challenges Monmouthshire faces are not unique and are being experienced across Wales.

1.4 Local Strategic and Policy Context

This assessment of the existing arrangements for domiciliary care and future delivery strategy have been developed and informed by key local strategic priorities and policy objectives. These include:

Monmouthshire County Council's Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028

The plan sets out the ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire. The purpose is clear. Monmouthshire will be: "a zero carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life".

The plan articulates the challenges and opportunities facing the Council and county and sets out how these will be addressed. It has clear high-level objectives that are measurable, Monmouthshire will be:

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

The objective of A Connected place where people feel part of a community and valued relates to health and wellbeing including access to social care, and seeks three specific achievements:

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

Monmouthshire County Council’s Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28

Our financial position is challenging and must use every penny we have wisely. However, procurement also plays a vital role in achieving societal benefits through enabling the delivery of progressive policies like decarbonisation, achieving social value, securing fair work and delivering community benefits that can play a significant role in bringing about a more fairer society.

Our Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 will enable us to buy goods, services and works that are sustainable, ethically produced, local wherever possible, and in line with our priorities and commitment to be an equitable organisation.

This approach to procurement will achieve financial value but equally, if not more importantly. It will also achieve equitable community benefits and social value for current and future generations. This approach will underpin our future procurement activity for domiciliary care.

Social Care and Health Directorate strategies

The Social Care and Health Director’s report 2022/23 provides an overview of progress against the social care priorities. The value-base of the Social Care and Health Directorate aligns to Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 where putting individual people at the centre of what we do and practising with care and compassion is what really counts. Supporting citizens to live their own best lives has been the mantra for Monmouthshire Social Care and Health over many years and is still at the heart of what we do.



Adult Social Care and Health services in Monmouthshire support people to live their own lives as independently as possible. Key to this is the ability to understand what matters to people and to identify the right support required to find solutions to the issues they face. The services are wide ranging and varied but share a common

purpose to 'support people to live their own best lives' as defined by what matters to them as individuals. This is a holistic, value based approach aligned with the principles of the SSWBA.

A priority action for 2023 is to further develop strategic and locality-based commissioning and seek to expand choice for how individuals receive the care they need, the production of this Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care is a key foundation stone of this.

Welsh Government Health and Social Care Climate Emergency National Programme

The Welsh Government established the health and social care climate emergency national programme in Autumn 2021. The aim of the programme is to provide strategic oversight for the health and social care response to the climate emergency. Within the programme there are 5 national project boards one of which is social care. The programme has funding for over 3 years to support projects across the sector that contribute to reducing emissions and help the sector adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Social Care in Wales – Decarbonisation Route Map towards Net Zero by 2023 sets out how this will be achieved, there are a number of key steps which will need to be considered in the commissioning and delivery of domiciliary care into the future, which will include promoting active travel, education and carbon literacy programmes and the way in which we procure care to appraise providers' sustainability credentials.

2. ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

2.1 General Features

The framework contract was introduced in April 2011 with the intention of securing sufficient capacity and maximising cost effectiveness. The 23/24 framework rate is more cost effective. Only 24% of our overall commissioned care is purchased via the framework, this low take up has remained relatively static for the last 5-6 years.

76% of all commissioned support is purchased from approved providers whose rates vary considerably from low to high. The reliance on approved providers varies across each of the 3 localities and therefore the impact of these rates is different in each area.

Both the framework and the approved provider contracts offer us no guarantee of hours, and equally we provide no guarantee of hours in return. Whilst the absence of a guarantee of hours minimises the risk to the Council in terms of paying for care which is not needed, demand is outstripping capacity and has done for many years. The Council also has no contractual assurance that the hours that are needed will be delivered and are dependent upon providers choosing to pick up new packages of support. The only exception is the Usk Project where a capacity model is in place with a framework provider guaranteeing us 250 care hours.

Brokerage

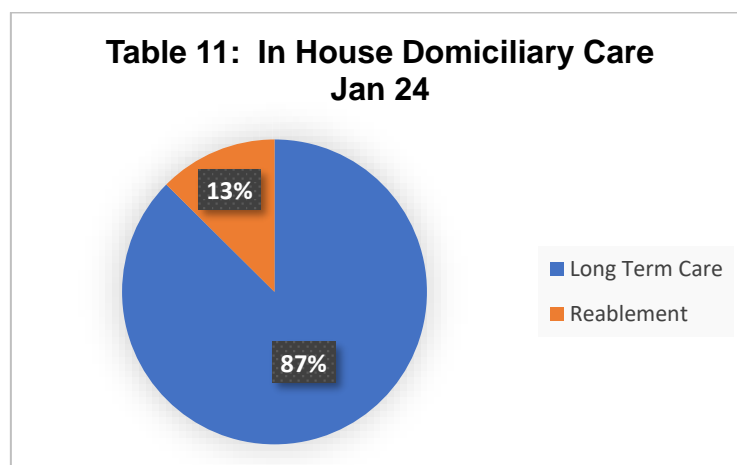
The current system works on the brokering of individual packages, for example one 30min morning call 7 days a week. This means that providers are usually looking for space within their current provision to accommodate hours. It can prove challenging for existing providers as the low volume of hours being offered make it very difficult for them to grow capacity. Equally for new providers entering the area, it can prove challenging to pick up sufficient volume needed to be viable. The overall outcome is the Council is ultimately totally reliant on the hourly rate of whichever provider offers to provide support.

Whilst some work has been done in some areas to look at coordinating the brokering of individual packages to create volume rather than the traditional piecemeal offering; this isn't consistent across the county.

Current brokerage arrangements provide a fragmented structure, where care is offered and accepted on a largely individual and siloed basis. This means that providers aren't always able to respond to the bigger picture, for example if they knew there were 70 hours in a specific area, they may be able to recruit to meet this need. The current brokerage system has limited financial controls built in; teams are able to individually broker packages at any of the available rates. There is no requirement to procure lowest cost, outside of the framework being offered work first. Anecdotally the care management teams are often balancing the need to have care provided quickly and may therefore approach providers with whom they have a good working relationship with first. This doesn't always secure the most cost-effective option.

In House

The in-house Care at Home service was transformed some years ago to focus on the provision of short term reablement support and specialist support such as dementia. However, over recent years the ability of the reablement team has been reduced due to the need to subsidise a lack of capacity within the long-term domiciliary care market. The current split between long term care and reablement can be seen in table 11.



The intention is to refocus the in-house provision, so it returns to its original purpose of being a small specialist in house service that is dedicated to reablement and specialism.

The split is approximately 75% purchased domiciliary care and 25% directly provided. While this split is seen in the North and South, in the Central area there has been a long-term dependency on the in-house service to meet the demands of long-term care which has been difficult to commission; approximately 67% of all care is provided by the in-house service in this area. The need to provide this longer-term care and support negatively impacts upon the reablement capacity of the in-house service.

Summary of Key General Features and Observations

- 26% increase in Monmouthshire's over 65 population between 2011 and 2021, the largest in Wales, with a further predicted increase up to 2035.
- Current supply is insufficient to meet need - unmet need and significant risk of being unable to meet growing demand up to 2035.
- Current spot purchase arrangements are commercially risky for new entrants to the market.
- Under supply of external provision within the County means that in house provision is diverted from the reablement and specialist support model.
- A future tender process may encourage new entrants to the market.
- The framework contract is no longer fit for purpose with only 24% of care provided through it and generally an overreliance via approved providers.
- Longer term contracts (10 years) would offer greater stability and encourage real partnership in the delivery of outcomes-based delivery.
- Opportunity to flex capacity within the contractual term.
- Opportunity for providers to bid for block and spot contracts.
- The position varies considerably across all 3 localities with significant differences in average hourly rates, average weekly hours of care per person and significant differences in the bands in which care is purchased.
- Approved provider rates vary considerably from low to high.
- The position varies across the three localities, in the North most of the care is purchased from the lowest cost band 71%, contrasted to the South where 61% of care is commissioned from the highest cost band. The Central area is reliant on in-house provision.

2.2 Local Features

The impact of the current domiciliary care arrangements explored in section 2.1 above, are common to the three locality areas of the North, Central and South. However, the extent varies in each locality and in addition there are issues which are relevant in some of the localities but not all. In the section below the impact and issues are set out on a locality-by-locality basis. All data relates to July 2023.

South

The South encompasses Caldicot, Chepstow, the Gwent levels and surrounding rural areas, it borders Newport and Gloucestershire. Table 12 shows the spread of commissioned domiciliary care provision by cost bracket as well as in house provision. (Table 12) and commissioned care only (Table 13).

Table 12: South Domiciliary Care - July 23 - including In House

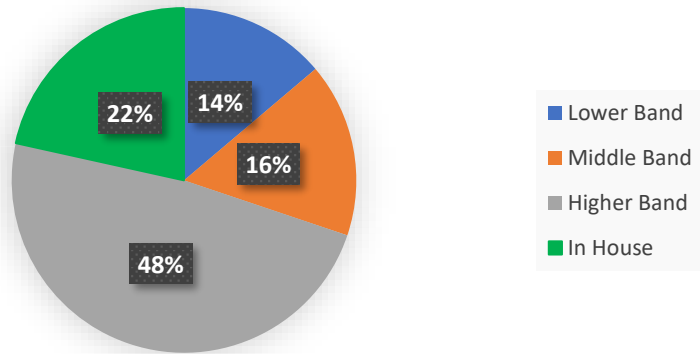
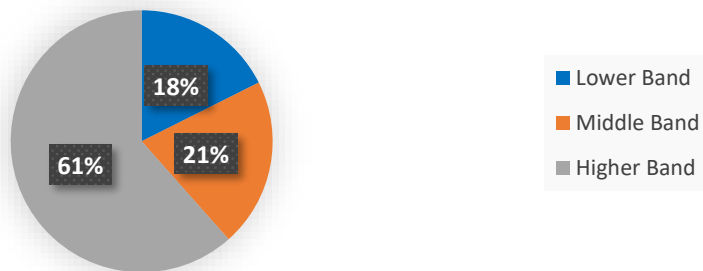


Table 13: South Domiciliary Care - July 23 - excluding In House



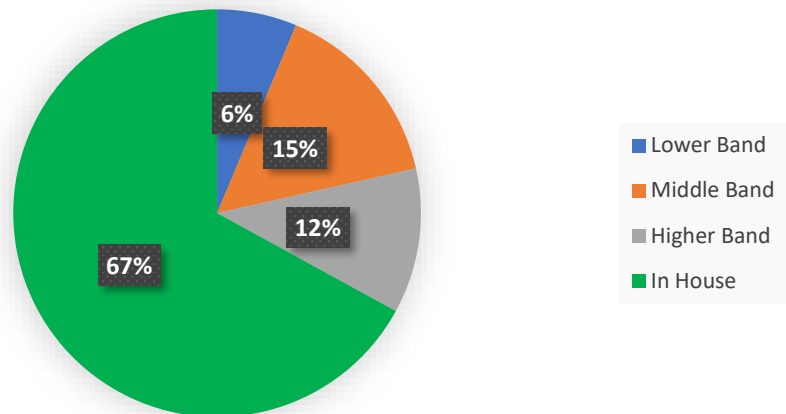
Key Factors:

- Lowest percentage (22%) of in-house compared to commissioned care.
- Highest number of commissioned care hours in the county.
- Highest level (61%) of commissioned care in the highest cost bracket.
- Very low percentage (18%) of commissioned care bought within the lowest price bracket.
- Second highest level of unmet need in October 2023
- Based on July 2023, 36% of care in the South is delivered by one provider at a high rate.

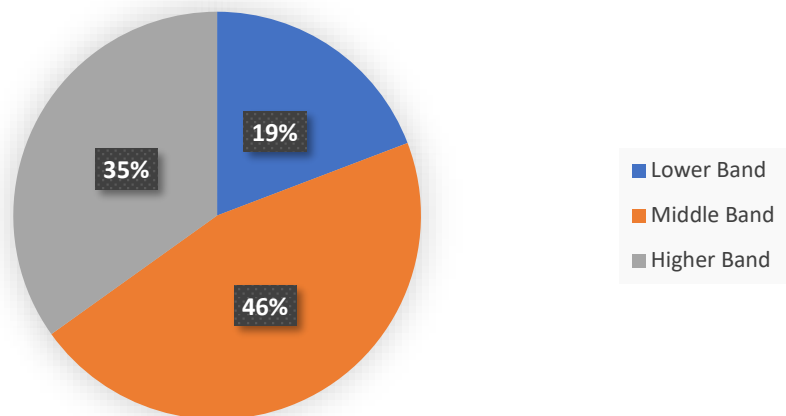
Central

The Central encompasses Monmouth, Raglan and Usk. Outside of the main township of Monmouth and Usk, the area is very rural. Table 14 and 15 show the spread of domiciliary care provision in this area by cost bracket.

**Table 14: Central Domiciliary Care - July 23
- including In House**



**Table 15: Central Domiciliary Care - July 23
- excluding in House**



Key Factors:

- Highest percentage (67%) of in-house provision compared to commissioned care. Overreliance on in house, to plug gaps in commissioned provision and reduces the ability of MCC to provide specialist reablement short term interventions to increase and maintain independence.
- Lowest number of commissioned care hours in the county.
- Highest level (45%) of commissioned care in the middle cost bracket. 36% of care purchased in the highest price bracket.
- 10 providers operate with weekly hours ranging between 17.5 and 354. There is no real dominant provider, the provider with the highest number of hours only supports 19% of the market.
- Highest level of unmet need in October 2023 (second highest in July 2023).

North

The North encompasses Abergavenny, Govilon, Gilwern, Llanfoist, Llanelly Hill. Tables 16 and 17 show the spread of care provision in this area by cost bracket only.

Table 16: North Domiciliary Care - July 23 - including In House

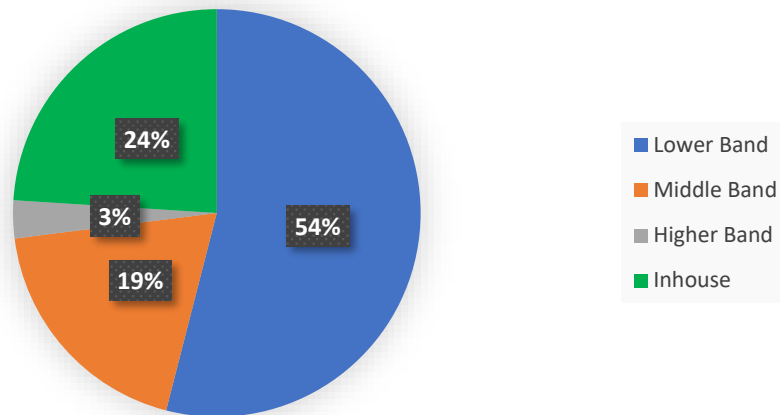
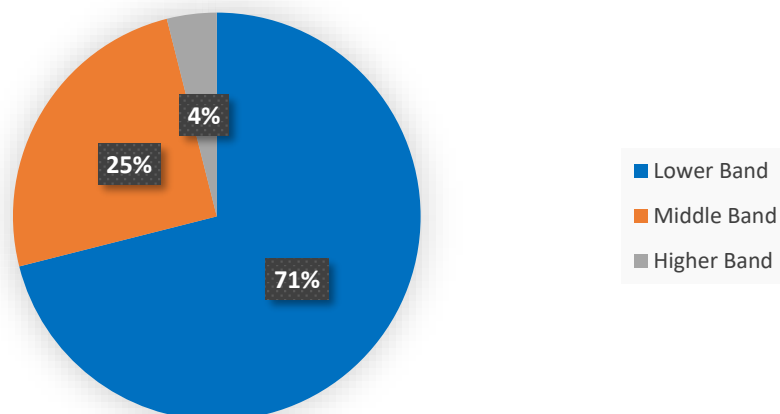


Table 17: North Domiciliary Care - July 23 - excluding In House



Key Factors:

- Second lowest percentage (24%) of in-house provision compared to commissioned care (lowest percentage 22%)
- Highest level (71%) of commissioned care in the lowest cost bracket.
- Lowest average hourly rate for commissioned care.
- No dominant provider and has a good level of choice.

2.3 Feedback from Stakeholders

Existing Providers

An important aspect of the assessment of the existing arrangements is capturing the experience and views of our existing providers.

In March and April 2024, an initial engagement exercise was undertaken, with all existing providers in Monmouthshire invited to participate in a survey. 25 providers of domiciliary care were invited to take part, this included the 17 core providers of long-term domiciliary care and a further 8 who provide more specialist services such as supported living. The survey sought views on what works well and doesn't work well in the way it is commissioned and the way they deliver it currently.

Responses were received from 8 providers (32% response rate).

What Works Well?

- Good working relationships with the commissioning and social work teams.
- Fair brokerage system.
- Timely invoice payments.
- Spot purchasing with no requirement to deliver specified number of hours.
- Locality working/Geographical split.

What doesn't work so well?

- Recruitment and retention including staff leaving the sector, movement between agencies and ability to recruit.
- Geographical spread and rural nature of areas of the Council.
- Hourly rates.
- Currently only able to offer staff zero hours contracts.
- No guarantee of hours, making it difficult to build volume and develop runs.
- Too much competition.
- Difficulty in recruiting drivers, and walking runs not always possible.
- Delays between bidding on packages and final decisions.
- Delays in finance being informed of packages, with delays in invoice payments.
- No enhancements for bank holidays or retainers for absences e.g. hospital.

What would improve things in the future?

- Guaranteed hours.
- More parity in rates and fees.
- Predictable payments.
- Improved Terms and Conditions for the workforce.
- Improved spot purchasing systems.
- Continued joint working.
- Rural runs that pay travel time
- Block Contracts and guaranteed hours.

People Receiving the Service

An analysis of feedback from the people using the service obtained via community care questionnaires, complaints and quality assurance activity indicates in the main people are happy with the current care they receive. We receive very few complaints in regard to domiciliary care where people have expressed concerns this usually relates to inconsistency of carers and late call times.

As we move forward with the implementation of the strategy and the procurement process we will seek to ensure the voices of people receiving the service are heard and incorporated in to service design.

We understand the potential change in a domiciliary care provider may be worrying for people receiving services, and we will seek to mitigate their anxiety and possible disruption as far as possible. It is likely that TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings Protection of Employment rights) will apply to any future procurement exercise which would offer existing carers the right to transfer their employment to the newly awarded provider. This will ensure continuity of carer for people receiving the service.

3. KEY OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

3.1 Observations

Strategic resilience:

- Overall existing arrangements meet demand moderately well – although it fluctuates
- Unmet need is more problematic in the South and Central areas.
- Insufficient capacity to meet current demand and predicted growth.
- Recruitment and retention is a key issue with a resultant impact upon capacity – the situation has deteriorated even more since the pandemic.
- Stable sector – longstanding arrangements and good working relationships
- Too many providers competing for business with a negative impact.
- Framework and approved contracts offer no guarantee of hours, piece meal brokering of individual support packages offers little opportunity for growth.
- Little centralised oversight of brokering of packages.
- The framework contract is no longer fit for purpose, only 24% of care provided through it and an overreliance on commissioning care via approved providers.

Operational effectiveness:

- The challenges are common to all localities but the extent and degree to which they are impacted varies.
- Some localities have considerable challenges in securing care and are either over reliant on high-cost providers and or in house.
- The South locality has the greatest dependency on higher cost providers 61%.
- The Central area has 67% of in-house provision compared to commissioned care with an overreliance on in house, to plug gaps in commissioned provision.

- Arrangements in the North work well, with the highest level (71%) of commissioned domiciliary care in the most competitively priced lowest cost bracket.
- The current brokerage arrangements aren't effective for either the Council or providers and offer little financial control or oversight.

Cost effectiveness:

- Significant variation in hourly costs
- The existing arrangements for commissioned domiciliary care do not maximise the opportunities for greater cost effectiveness and control.

3.2 Conclusions

The independent sector in Monmouthshire has shown remarkable resilience over recent years, managing the impact of the pandemic, coping with deteriorating recruitment and retention levels and growing costs.

The current contractual arrangements are not conducive to maximising capacity to meet demand. They do not offer sufficient security to either the Council or providers. They are fragmented with a large number of providers competing for business.

To meet the current challenges of demand and the future predicted increases, contractual arrangements need restructuring to secure and support greater resilience, flexibility, and capacity. We will need to work with current providers through effective market engagement to ensure models for the future support local provision and provide opportunities for effective care delivery. This will include giving consideration to lot areas which allow for best use of existing provision and staff and minimises market disruption. This will include ensuring block contracting opportunities are open to provider consortiums, social enterprises, not for profits and other business models.

Though operationally the challenges are common to all localities, the extent and degree to which they are impacted varies. These challenges are seen in terms of difficulty in securing care, over reliance on high-cost providers and or in house.

The Usk Capacity model is one of the ways in which we have been able to meet the challenges within the sector. Commissioning hours as a block from a framework provider, guaranteeing payment at an affordable level and allowing the provider to plan delivery has provided guaranteed care (up to 250 hours) in an area where care was previously difficult to secure. This model enables us to manage capacity, closely monitor quality and develop an outcomes focused service model, through effective partnership working with a provider. To ensure the effective and efficient operation of the block delivery against paid hours has been consistently monitored and flexed up and down when needed.

The Usk model has greatly influenced this strategic commissioning plan as it provides experience of overseeing an arrangement that differs from traditional spot contract methods of commissioning. The decision to further expand this model is therefore based on sound learning achieved through operational success.

The current brokerage arrangements are fragmented, some packages of support are commissioned directly by the care teams and other via the brokerage system operated via the commissioning team. It is cumbersome, time consuming and often results in lengthy delays in securing care. A more robust approach is needed.

There are considerable differences in the cost of care across the county. The predominance of the approved provider supply in certain areas, at high hourly rates, is having a considerable impact on already overstretched budgets.

The current financial situation is one of unprecedented challenge, the Council is facing budget deficits and high levels of overspends particularly in adult social care. The existing arrangements for commissioned domiciliary care do not maximise the opportunities for greater cost effectiveness and control.

There are a number of Quality Assurance mechanisms in place to provide assurances around the delivery of good quality care across Monmouthshire. This includes Care Inspectorate Wales who provide Welsh Government with assurances around quality and safety of service, through inspection and registration of new services. Internally, the Social Care and Health Directorate Commissioning Team operate a robust accreditation process for approving new providers, considering their financial standing, insurance, and track record (through references, visits, and inspection reports). All domiciliary care providers receive annual quality assurance visits, to check contract compliance including: Safe recruitment practices, care management and records, training, and care quality. Whilst these visits provide assurances around quality of care, further scrutiny around call monitoring will be needed in the future. In addition, we also have Safeguarding, Community Care questionnaires and complaints processes in place to ensure any quality or safety issues are identified and responded to quickly and effectively.

4. THE FUTURE

4.1 Strategic Objectives

To respond to the current challenges within the domiciliary care sector in Monmouthshire there is a need to change the way in which we procure and manage domiciliary care to ensure we meet current and future predicted demand. The steps we take going forward will be guided by the following strategic objectives.

- 1. Provide sustainable high quality domiciliary care to those with an assessed need within Monmouthshire.**
 - Increase capacity and resilience within the domiciliary care sector both now and into the future.
 - Improve outcomes for individuals who need or may need care in the future, through targeted reablement and best use of capacity.
- 2. Maximise the cost effectiveness of the care purchased, with less diversity of cost between providers.**
- 3. Improve and standardise terms and conditions for the independent sector domiciliary care workforce supporting with stability of workforce within providers.**

4.2 How we will achieve the strategic objectives.

The approach we will take to address the current and future challenges and deliver the strategic objectives will require some key changes to be put in place, these are set out in the table below.

What we want to achieve	The actions we will take	How we will measure progress
<p>Provide sustainable high quality domiciliary care to those with an assessed need within Monmouthshire.</p> <p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>People in Monmouthshire receive high quality domiciliary care, which enables them to live their lives on their terms.</p>	<p>County Wide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Block Contract arrangements as the primary delivery mechanism for all commissioned care. • Implement spot purchasing contractual arrangements and systems for commissioning specialist and/or complex packages, which cannot be delivered through the block contract arrangement. • Use an open procurement process, which enables existing and new providers to tender for both the block contracts and the spot purchasing contract. • Contracts will include the requirement to deliver outcomes for people. • Implement a new brokerage system. <p>Localities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specific implementation plans for each of the three localities to account for local variation/need, including volume of hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of care provided via the block contract arrangements • % of care provided via spot purchase • % of unmet need • Number of people waiting for discharge from hospital due to awaiting domiciliary care packages. • Feedback from people in receipt of domiciliary care (Community Care Questionnaire). • Use quality assurance framework to measure progress on individual outcomes.
<p>Maximise the cost effectiveness of the care purchased, with less</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include within the block contract terms and conditions a fair and reasonable hourly rate (flat rate with no premiums for part hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monthly analysis of costs of care. • Number of hours of care delivered against planned.

<p>diversity of cost between providers. Desired Outcome:</p> <p>Care is purchased in the most cost-effective way.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include within the Spot Purchase contract terms and conditions a fair and reasonable minimum and maximum rate. • Introduce the requirement for electronic call monitoring systems in both the block and Spot Purchasing contracts. • Implement a robust verification process for the validation of invoice payments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of invoices paid at actual level of delivered hours.
<p>Improve and standardise terms and conditions for the independent sector domiciliary care workforce supporting with stability of workforce within providers.</p> <p>Desired Outcome:</p> <p>A stable independent sector domiciliary care workforce with harmonised terms and conditions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include within the block and spot purchasing contract terms and conditions for staff to include payment of RLW, mileage rate, payment for travel time, holidays, and contract terms. • Ensure providers are employing staff in line with agreed contract terms and conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % staff turnover in providers • % of staff leaving the sector • % of staff moving between providers

5. NEXT STEPS

Analysis of our existing commissioning domiciliary care arrangements clearly evidences that there is a need for change if we are to meet the current challenges of growing demand and growing costs, and to be fit for purpose in meeting the future challenges of increased demographics.

In considering how best to meet these challenges it has been paramount to understand how we can positively influence our arrangements for the future without losing the benefits of the current arrangements. For example, the current arrangements clearly result in a much higher cost of care in the South whilst in the North of the county the opposite is true. Affecting positive change will require diligent, meticulous and iterative management.

This is a complex area, the proposals for the future are equally complex. However, the aspirations and actions for the future offer a way forward which is both ambitious and deliverable and will ultimately deliver the strategic objectives for commissioned domiciliary care.

The challenges facing domiciliary care in Monmouthshire over the next 10 years are both complex and multi-faceted. To meet these challenges and realise our three strategic objectives, a systematic and targeted plan of action is needed. The scale of the challenge will necessitate a prioritised implementation approach. The South is the area which needs addressing first due to the significant reliance on high-cost provision.

The issues currently faced whilst common to all three geographical areas, vary in degree and impact. It is therefore logical that the manner in which these issues are addressed is bespoke to the individual localities; the objectives will be common to all, but the specific actions may differ.

Phase one of the two phased action plan will focus on implementing a range of targeted key actions for the South. Work will be ongoing during phase one to identify the key actions needed to address the Central. Phase two will be implementation for Central and identifying and implementing key actions for the North.

This phased implementation approach is ambitious, the breadth and depth of work required to deliver it cannot be overestimated. The suggested timescales are demanding and assume the smooth running of the process, which may be subject to change as the project progresses. The benefits of a phased approach include iterative learning; learning from successes and difficulties as it progresses.

5.1 Summary of Phase 1 Implementation

At the end of document there is an overview of the actions, timescales, and risks for each phase. A detailed project plan will be developed for the implementation phases. It is anticipated that Phase 1 will begin in February 2024 and conclude by February 2025. The key areas of focus for this phase are:

- Implementing a new contract in the South offering fixed blocks of hours.
- Implementing a new contracts and systems for purchasing of specialist or ad hoc domiciliary care in the South.

- Implementing a new brokerage system for the new block and spot purchasing contracts
- Enhancing monitoring of delivery hours and improving payment processes
- Developing a locality specific plan for the Central area for phase 2.

Key considerations/risks:

- The need to attract sufficient and appropriate providers via tendering process to fulfil the block arrangements.
- Ensuring the agreed rate for the block contracts is fair, reasonable, and financially viable whilst at the same time securing care at the most cost-effective rate.
- Significant change for providers, the workforce and people receiving services.
- The resources which will be required for many areas of SCH to deliver the plan i.e. Commissioning, Care Management and Finance Team.

6. PHASED IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Phase 1 February 2024 – February 2025					
Area	Actions	Detail	Timeframe	Desired Outcomes	Risks
South	Implement three geographical lots with guaranteed block hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guaranteed hours at a set rate. Annual uplifts set by MCC. Mandated common contractual terms for staff to improve terms and conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval Feb - May 2024 Develop necessary paperwork and procurement documentation by August 2024 Procurement September-October 2024 Award November 2024 Implementation November 2024 – January 2025 Contract fully implemented 1st February 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective management processes to maximise capacity and flexibility. Greater sustainability and resilience for providers Better cost effectiveness Improve recruitment and retention of social care workforce. Quality Assurance mechanisms confirm care is at the required standard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destabilisation of providers and market. Existing providers may lose business. Mass transfer of staff (TUPE) Loss of continuity of Care Lack of interest in the tender from providers Opposition from people receiving services. Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work. If the rate is too low it may be unviable and unattractive to providers, too high and it could result in an overall increase in costs.
	Implement new spot purchasing contractual arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smaller number of approved providers to pick up specialist/ad hoc cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approval Feb - May 2024 Develop necessary paperwork and procurement documentation by August 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved capacity Better cost effectiveness – control of rates. Improve recruitment and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some loss of continuity of Care Lack of interest in the tender from providers Opposition from people receiving services.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a minimum and maximum cost level. • Annual uplifts set by MCC. • Mandated common contractual terms for staff to improve terms and conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement September-October 2024 • Award November 2024 • Implementation November 2024 – January 2025 • Contract fully implemented 1st February 2025 	retention of social care workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work. • If the rate is too low it may be unviable and unattractive to providers, too high and it could result in an overall increase in costs.
	Implement revised and refined brokerage arrangements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for management of the block contract. • Process for use of the spot purchasing systems. • Centralised oversight and reporting arrangements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design July/August 2024 • Obtain additional staffing resources if needed August-October 2024 • Fully implemented 1st February 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise cost effectiveness. • Ensure best use of capacity. • Efficient oversight of use of hours. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived loss of control/decision making by care management teams. • Potential need for additional resources. • Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work.
	Greater contractual oversight – compliance monitoring of call times and payments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process for monitoring of call times and call delivery; implementation of call monitoring system. • Robust process for invoice payments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design July/August 2024 • Obtain additional staffing resources if needed August-October 2024 • Fully implemented 1st February 2025 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved financial controls. • More efficient invoice payment system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible resistance from providers due to increased scrutiny. • Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work.
Central	Identify the required future contractual arrangements to address the specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand further the specific challenges faced in the Central area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify commissioning need September/October 2024 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of approach specific to this locality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two tiered contractual arrangements in place. • Potential for some providers to move to the

	geographical challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider overreliance on in house services. Develop appropriate future approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop future commissioning approach to meet need November 2024. Produce Contractual and procurement documentation December 2024/ January 2025 Approval Feb 2025 		<p>South, because of attractiveness of new contractual arrangements there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Destabilisation of the market due to change in one area. Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work.
Phase 2					
February 2025 – February 2026					
Area	Actions	Detail	Timeframe	Desired Outcomes	Risks
Central	Implement agreed commissioning approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence procurement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement March 2025 Fully Implemented 1st August 2025 	To be confirmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two tiered contractual arrangements in place. Potential for some providers to move to the South, because of attractiveness of new contractual arrangements there. Destabilisation of the market due to change in one area. Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work.
North	Identify the required future contractual arrangements to address the specific geographical challenges.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand further the specific challenges faced in the North area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify commissioning need April/May 2025 Develop future commissioning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarity of approach specific to this locality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two tiered contractual arrangements in place. Potential for some providers to move to the South, because of attractiveness of

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop appropriate future approach. • Commence procurement 	<p>approach to meet need June 2025.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce Contractual and procurement documentation July/August 2025 • Approval September 2025 • Procurement October 2025 • Fully Implemented 1st February 2026 		<p>new contractual arrangements there.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destabilisation of the market due to change in one area. • Insufficient resource within commissioning and care management teams to deliver this piece of work.
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A Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire.

Executive Summary

2024 - 2034

INTRODUCTION

This executive summary provides a brief overview of Monmouthshire County Council's Strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care.

1. BACKGROUND AND CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

Monmouthshire has an approximate population of 93,000 people (ONS Census Data 2021), 26% are aged over 65 with a further predicted increase by 2035. The increasing ageing population presents a set of unique challenges, particularly in the context of this strategy how people are supported if they need social care.

Monmouthshire County Council commissions 76% of all its long-term domiciliary care from independent sector providers (July 2023). There are two types of contract. The framework arrangement delivers care at a standard rate and provides 24% of the total number of hours. The approved contract delivers care at higher costs with variable rates and provides 76% of the total number of hours.

The way domiciliary care is commissioned in Monmouthshire is very similar to the majority of Council's in Wales, though some are looking at innovative methods:

- Patch-based working.
- Use of block contracts.
- Mandated terms and conditions for domiciliary care workers.
- Increased rates for hard to service and rural areas.
- Outcomes based commissioning.

Generally, the sector has remained relatively stable over the last 2-3 years with only 1 provider withdrawing from the county. There have been a few new entrants to the market, but most remain on a lower level of packages. The Council has good working relationships with all of its providers.

Monmouthshire County Council's Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028 sets out the ambition for the council and county. One of its objectives is, A Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued; this objective is particularly relevant to social care and is a key influence for the development of this strategy.

2. ASSESSMENT AND OBSERVATIONS OF EXISTING ARRANGEMENTS

It is clear that while in the main the current commissioning arrangements works fairly well in delivering social care to the people of Monmouthshire there is considerable scope to improve and develop these for the future. Key observations are summarised overleaf:

Strategic resilience:

- Overall existing arrangements meet demand moderately well.
- Unmet need is more problematic in the South and Central areas.
- Insufficient capacity to meet current demand and predicted growth.
- Recruitment and retention is a key issue with a resultant impact upon capacity.
- Stable sector – longstanding arrangements and good working relationships
- Too many providers competing for business with a negative impact.
- Framework and approved contracts offer no guarantee of hours, piece meal brokering of individual support packages offers little opportunity for growth.
- The framework contract is not effective, only 24% of care provided through it.

Operational effectiveness:

- The challenges are common to all localities, but the extent and degree vary.
- Some localities have considerable challenges in securing care and are either over reliant on high-cost providers and or in house.
- The South locality has the greatest dependency on higher cost providers 61%.
- The Central area has 67% of in-house provision compared to commissioned care with an overreliance on in house, to plug gaps in commissioned provision.
- Arrangements in the North work well, with the highest level (71%) of commissioned domiciliary care in the most competitively priced way.
- The current brokerage arrangements aren't effective.

Cost effectiveness:

- Approved provider rates are higher than framework provider rates
- Significant variation in hourly costs,
- Costs vary, the average cost in the South is higher than in the North.
- The existing arrangements for commissioned domiciliary care do not maximise the opportunities for greater cost effectiveness and control.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The independent sector in Monmouthshire has been remarkably resilient managing the impact of the pandemic, recruitment and retention issues and growing costs.

The current contracts are not conducive to maximising capacity and do not offer sufficient security to either the Council or providers. They are fragmented with a large number of providers competing for business.

To meet the challenges of demand and predicted increases, contractual arrangements need restructuring to secure and support greater resilience, flexibility, and capacity.

There are considerable differences in the cost of care across the county, with over reliance on approved providers which is impacting already overstretched budgets.

The existing arrangements for commissioned domiciliary care do not maximise the opportunities for cost effectiveness and control.

4. THE FUTURE

Three key strategic objectives have been set which will inform the steps we will take going forward:

1. Provide sustainable high quality domiciliary care to those with an assessed need within Monmouthshire.
 - Increase capacity and resilience within the domiciliary care sector both now and into the future.
 - Improve outcomes for individuals who need or may need care in the future, through targeted reablement and best use of capacity.
2. Maximise the cost effectiveness of the care purchased, with less diversity of cost between providers.
3. Improve and standardise terms and conditions for the independent sector domiciliary care workforce supporting with stability of workforce within providers.

5. NEXT STEPS

The challenges facing the provision of domiciliary care in Monmouthshire over the next 10 or more years are both complex and multi-faceted. We will tackle this in a systematic and targeted way using a two-phase implementation plan:

Phase one will focus on the South of the county - February 2024 to February 2025.

Phase two will focus on the Central and North areas - February 2025 to February 2026.

The Key Actions We Will Be Taking:

- Introducing Block Contracts as the main mechanism for all commissioned care.
- Introducing spot contracts as a secondary mechanism to ensure sufficient resilience when it cannot be delivered through the block contract.
- Using a procurement process that enables existing and new providers to tender.
- Including in contracts the requirement to deliver outcomes for people.
- Implementing a new brokerage system.
- Develop specific locality implementation plans.
- Including within the block and spot contract terms and conditions a fair and reasonable hourly rate.
- Introducing the requirement for electronic call monitoring systems to ensure accurate invoicing
- Implementing a robust verification process for the validation of invoice payments.
- Including within both contracts' terms and conditions, payment of RLW, mileage rate, holidays, and contract terms for care workers.



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

<p>Name of the Officer Ceri York and Nicola Venus-Balgobin</p> <p>Phone no: 01873 735416 E-mail: NicolaVenus-Balgobin@Monmouthshire.gov.uk ceriyork@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>A strategy for Commissioned Domiciliary Care in Monmouthshire, including a 2 phased implementation plan changing the way domiciliary care is commissioned in Monmouthshire</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Social Care and Health</p>	<p>Date: 30th April 2024</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	<p>Most of the commissioned care provided is to older and vulnerable people. The proposed changes to the way in which we commissioned domiciliary care should improve capacity and resilience in the sector, whilst ensuring best use of public funds. This will ensure that as the population of older people continues to grow (26% growth between 2013-2023, the highest in Wales), there is as far as possible sufficient quality care at the right cost to meet individual's needs.</p>	<p>The proposal for the South of the county (and potential for other areas where plans are still in development), will likely see some disruption to care and support packages, many of which are delivered to older people. This is because of a full procurement process which will see several key providers delivering care in lots/areas (these may be different to those currently delivering), as a result packages of care will be likely to be moved between providers which may cause some anxiety and/or disruption.</p>	<p>Due to the size of likely business transfers, TUPE will apply and if managed appropriately will see in the majority of cases the ability to maintain some consistency in front line care staff.</p> <p>There will be a managed and structured 2–3-month transition period to ensure appropriate communication, support, reassurance and continuity of care where possible.</p> <p>People will receive support from their social worker if needed.</p>

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	<p>As with the older people's care, a significant proportion of support is provided to people with a disability, either physical, learning or both. The proposed changes to the way in which we commissioned domiciliary care should improve capacity and resilience in the sector, whilst ensuring best use of public funds. This will ensure there is as far as possible sufficient quality care at the right cost to meet individual's needs. The Spot Purchasing arrangements (which will run along side block contract) will also provide a way in which very specialist care and support can be purchased,</p>	<p>The proposal for the South of the county (and potential for other areas where plans are still in development), will likely see some disruption to care and support packages. This is because of a full procurement process which will see several key providers delivering care in lots/areas (these may be different to those currently delivering), as a result packages of care will be likely to be moved between providers which may cause some anxiety and/or disruption.</p> <p>With one provider operating predominately within an area there could be some loss of specialist resource for those with more complex needs.</p>	<p>Due to the size of likely business transfers, TUPE will apply and if managed appropriately will see in the majority of cases the ability to maintain some consistency in front line care staff.</p> <p>There will be a managed and structured 2–3-month transition period to ensure appropriate communication, support, reassurance and continuity of care where possible.</p> <p>The use of a spot purchasing arrangements alongside the blocks will ensure opportunity for the purchase of highly specialist provision is still possible, at a managed cost.</p> <p>People will receive support from their social worker if needed.</p>
Gender reassignment	No impact identified at this stage	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions 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?
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	<p>Most of the care workforce is predominantly female and providing blocks of care to providers, may allow for improved terms and conditions and contracts for the workforce.</p> <p>The intention is to also mandate common contractual clauses across the commissioned sector which should in turn provide security and equity for the workforce.</p>	<p>The re-procurement of all services in the south will impact on those providers not successful in winning a lot/block. As a result some areas of the workforce may be destabilised, and there may be some anxiety and uncertainty for the predominantly female workforce.</p>	<p>TUPE protocols will be managed tightly, and a 2–3-month implementation plan will be developed with sensitivity to the workforce.</p>
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>The new commissioning model will enable a cost effective, secure and resilient model of care commissioning and delivery which will seek to provide the best possible outcome for individuals who require care in Monmouthshire. All care will be commissioned in way which celebrates and promotes equality and diversity, and providers will be asked as part of the tender documentation for documentation and care where possible to be provided in both Welsh and English.</p>	<p>There is a risk that individuals receiving care, who will have vulnerabilities and care needs may be negatively impacted by the changes to who and how their care is delivered.</p> <p>The workforce may also experience some disruption due to the changes</p>	<p>A thorough 2-3 month implementation plan will be implemented which will seek to provide robust and reassuring communication and as smooth a transfer of responsibility as possible.</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	Providers will be asked as part of the tender process for documentation and care where possible to be provided in both Welsh and English	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Tendering arrangements will allow for changing of terms and conditions for staff, which may include contracts which guarantee hours – this may positively impact on their ability to recruit and train Welsh speakers	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	Providers will be asked as part of the tender process for documentation and care where possible to be provided in both Welsh and English	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?
<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>The procurement of service in the south county via a series of block arrangements with the mandating of certain employment terms will provide the opportunity for providers in the domiciliary care sector to provide more secure employment terms to their workforce and ensure equity within the sector. This will in turn hopefully make employment in the sector more attractive and will make for a more resilient workforce.</p> <p>The procurement exercise will also ensure best value to the council and will provide in built financial controls to the council.</p>	<p>Robust and phased implementation management to allow for iterative learning.</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>No impact identified at this stage</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Care will be procured from providers who are able to meet reasonable quality standards and deliver care in a way which meets individuals assessed outcomes.</p> <p>There is potential for some anxiety and uncertainty to individuals who require care.</p>	<p>Robust procurement process and ongoing monitoring.</p> <p>Robust implementation planning, and joint working with providers.</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	Improved employment terms, and block commissioning will allow for a resilient sector which is hopefully more attractive to the workforce.	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	Not applicable	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 are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Improving employment terms will hopefully allow people looking and/or working in the care sector to fulfil their potential	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>	<p>The older population in Monmouthshire grew by 26% from 2013-2023 (Census Data) and is predicted to grow by over 90% between 2013 and 2033 (Gwent population needs assessment). With an ageing population will come increased numbers of people will need social care support to enable them to lead fulfilled and meaningful lives.</p> <p>A resilient, cost-effective and good quality care sector will be essential into the future to balance budget pressures with growing need.</p>	<p>Ensure a robust procurement process which ensure value for money, care quality, resilience and best possible employment terms.</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>Social care providers are key partners of the Council in delivering care and support to some of the most vulnerable people within the county.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>We will work with existing and potential future care providers to share plans for domiciliary care and build procurement paperwork and activity. A robust communication plan will also be developed to ensure adequate, timely and reassuring communication to individuals receiving care.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</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>A range of social care provision enables peoples independence to be sustained and prevent greater reliance on more intensive social care support.</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 provision of appropriate and sufficient social care is necessary to ensure we meet partnership goals with agencies, such as the NHS.</p> <p>The NHS is currently under significant pressure due to the unavailability of sufficient social care services. Ensuring the procurement and delivery of resilient domiciliary care will be essential in supporting this.</p>	<p>No mitigating actions identified at this stage</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	The implementation of block contracts and spot purchasing contractual arrangements will hopefully support those most in need of reliable and consistent quality care. Ensuring there is sufficient capacity to meet demand.	No impact identified at this stage	No mitigating actions identified at this stage
Corporate Parenting	Not Applicable.	Not Applicable.	Not Applicable.

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

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1. National Census Data
2. Gwent Population Needs Assessment
3. In house Flo and financial data
4. Pan Wales research in to approaches to domiciliary care and procurement.
5. Stakeholder engagement internally with ISMs.
6. Analysis of current contractual frameworks and brokerage processes.
7. Feedback from existing providers

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 impacts:

- The proposed changes to the way in which we commission domiciliary care should improve capacity and resilience in the sector, whilst ensuring best use of public funds. This will ensure there is as far as possible sufficient quality care at the right cost to meet individual's needs. The Spot Purchasing arrangements (which will run alongside block contracts) will also provide a way in which very specialist care and support can be purchased.
- The new commissioning model will enable a cost effective, secure and resilient model of care commissioning and delivery which will seek to provide best possible outcomes for individuals who require care in Monmouthshire.
- Longer term the mandating of common employment terms will improve equity in the sector, improve consistency and also provide greater security to the workforce.

Negative Impacts:

- Individuals who currently receive care and support may be impacted by changes in care provider. This may cause some anxiety and uncertainty.
- Providers who are not successful in winning the tender will be impacted, with the workforce potentially being impacted financial and emotionally.

The proposed strategy and phased implementation plan take into account both the negative and positive impacts of the proposal. It seeks to acknowledge risks and provide mitigations through robust planning, strong communication strategies and stakeholder management and via phased implementation to allow for iterative learning. TUPE legislation is likely to apply which will allow for the smooth transfer of care with a familiar workforce in most cases and will provide reassurances to the workforce in terms of employment.

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
Develop a communication strategy for communication with providers and people who receive care	April-August	Nicola Venus-Balgobin/Ceri York
Develop procurement paperwork	June/July	Nicola Venus-Balgobin/Ceri York
Procurement Exercise	September/October	Procurement/ Nicola Venus-Balgobin/Ceri York

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	DMT	28.2.24	No amendments
2	SLT	12.3.24	Feedback from existing providers to be sought.
3	Informal Cabinet	7.5.24	No Changes
4	Cabinet	22.5.24	

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SUBJECT:	LOCAL HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT REFRESH 2022-2037
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	22nd May 2024
DIVISION/WARDS	
AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide an overview of the Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) Refresh 2022-2037 provided in **Appendix One** to Cabinet, and to seek Cabinet approval of the LHMA prior to consideration by Welsh Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To provide Cabinet approval of the LHMA prior to consideration by Welsh Government.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 All Local Authorities in Wales are required to undertake a periodic review of housing needs by conducting a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA). This involves a comprehensive review of housing need, broken down by tenure and area. LHMA's provide a crucial role in informing local development plans and housing strategies.
- 3.2 This LHMA Refresh has been undertaken using the new methodology and new LHMA tool provided by Welsh Government. Welsh Government required an updated LHMA to be completed by the end of March 2024. This LHMA has been submitted to Welsh Government, subject to approval by the Council.
- 3.3 LHMA's must be rewritten every five years and refreshed once during that five-year period (between years two and three). The Council last undertook a rewrite of the LHMA in 2020, meaning a refresh was required.
- 3.4 The LHMA estimates a net need for 499 additional affordable homes per year until 2027 across the whole of Monmouthshire, consisting of 409 social rent, 44 intermediate rent and 46 low-cost home ownership properties. The greatest need is for social rent accommodation (82%) with the need for intermediate rent and low-cost home ownership accommodation estimated at 9% each.
- 3.5 For the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period, there is an estimated need for 90 affordable homes, consisting of 48 social rent, 25 intermediate rent and 17 LCHO.
- 3.6 There is a particularly high need for one-bedroom social rent accommodation which has been influenced by the significant increase in homelessness presentations since the COVID pandemic. Although this need is particularly high, it is important to ensure that a mix of house types and tenures is provided on new developments in order to achieve the Council's objective of creating sustainable and resilient communities.
- 3.7 It is important to note that these figures should not be taken as a target for the delivery of affordable homes, as new build homes are not the only solution to the supply of affordable homes in the County. Other methods such as bringing empty homes back into use, the acquisition of existing homes and engaging with private sector landlords can all contribute towards the supply of affordable homes.
- 3.8 The LHMA also estimates a need for 126 market homes throughout the County per year, consisting of 86 private rented (68%) and 41 owner occupier properties (33%).
- 3.9 The LHMA also provides an assessment of the specific housing needs of a range of population groups who require specialist or supported housing.

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

- 4.1 The following is an overview of the evaluation, a more detailed breakdown can be found at **Appendix Two**: There are significant positive impacts especially around health and wellbeing goals by contributing to “a prosperous Wales”, “a healthier Wales” and “a Wales of Cohesive Communities”. The proposal meets the sustainable government principles by contributing to the principles of “Long term”, “Collaboration” and “Integration”. There are no negative impacts of this proposal.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The following options are available:

Option	Benefit	Risk	Comment
<p>Option 1: The recommended option is to recommend Cabinet approval of the LHMA.</p>	<p>An up to date and accurate assessment of affordable housing need across the County which has been undertaken following Welsh Government guidance.</p> <p>Adherence to the Council’s statutory duty to undertake a periodic review of housing needs.</p> <p>A robust evidence base to inform the Council’s Replacement Local Development Plan and housing strategies.</p>	<p>There are no risks to this option.</p>	<p>The LHMA is a complex piece of research, this has been undertaken using the Welsh Government methodology and Tool. It is the most accurate indicator of affordable housing need within Monmouthshire.</p>
<p>Option 2: The LHMA is not recommended for approval.</p>	<p>There are no benefits to this option.</p>	<p>The LHMA is an integral part of the evidence base for a range of housing and planning related policies, including the Replacement Local Development Plan. To ensure the policies are fit for purpose and meet local need, the evidence base must be robust and up to date.</p> <p>It is a statutory requirement to undertake a periodic review of housing needs. If the LHMA is not approved there is a risk the Council will not meet its statutory duties.</p>	<p>The LHMA is a complex piece of research, this has been undertaken using the Welsh Government methodology and Tool. It is the most accurate indicator of affordable housing need within Monmouthshire.</p>

6. REASONS

- 6.1 Local Authorities in Wales have a statutory duty to undertake a periodic review of housing needs, as set out in section 8 of the Housing Act 1985. This is conducted through a Local Housing Market Assessment, which needs to be submitted to Welsh Government.
- 6.2 Local Authorities are required to follow Welsh Government guidance [Undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments: Guidance](#), produced in 2022, and utilise the LHMA tool when undertaking their LHMA.
- 6.3 The LHMA provides a robust evidence base, which is crucial to inform local development plans and housing strategies.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no additional resource implications associated with this proposal, as the LHMA has already been carried out.

8. **CONSULTEES:** Housing & Communities Manager; Head of Enterprise and Community Animation; Chief Officer – Communities and Place; Head of Planning, Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy, People Scrutiny Committee

- 8.1 The LHMA was considered by People Scrutiny Committee on 16th April 2024, where the following conclusions were drawn:

Local Housing Market Assessment: *The report has been scrutinised by the People Scrutiny Committee, which discussed the definition and tenures of affordable housing, the income thresholds and affordability levels, the housing market areas, the census data, and the impact of the cost of living crisis on the number of homeowners in Monmouthshire. Members discussed the methodology for the LHMA and queried the data sources, highlighting that the inclusion of Usk and Raglan in the Chepstow housing market area, may be disadvantaging those wards due to the different needs and affiliations of those areas. Members supported there is a need for specific and supported housing for various groups, such as homeless people, older people, people with mental health needs, and children and young people. The Committee felt that as the county has an ageing population, officers should consider exploring other methods such as the housing register to give a more accurate picture. The Committee asked that officers challenge Welsh Government on the applicability of the statistical travel to work areas census data for determining the housing market areas in Monmouthshire.*

Following this feedback, further analysis of the Chepstow housing market area has been undertaken, the area has been separated into two sub-housing market areas to allow for a more localised assessment of housing need. This has been added as an Appendix to the report.

The housing market areas used in this assessment are consistent with the previous LHMA rewrite which was agreed in 2020, which were based on statistically defined Travel to Work areas. When the next rewrite of the LHMA is undertaken, consideration will be given to redefine these housing market areas, which will involve justifying the new methodology and consulting with key stakeholders including Welsh Government.

This response and updated report have been provided to People Scrutiny Committee.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

[Undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments: Guidance](#)
Housing Act 1985

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Appendix One – LHMA Refresh 2022-2037



Monmouthshire
LHMA Refresh 2022-2

Appendix Two - Equality and Future Generations Evaluation



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Local Housing Market Assessment Refresh 2022-2037



Local Housing Market Assessment Refresh 2022-2037

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Executive Summary

This Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) utilises Welsh Government guidance *Undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments, March 2022* and Version 3.2 of the *Local Housing Market Assessment Tool* in order to evaluate the housing need across Monmouthshire for the period 2022-2037.

The LHMA estimates a net need for 499 additional affordable homes per year until 2027 across the whole of Monmouthshire, consisting of 409 social rent, 44 intermediate rent and 46 low-cost home ownership properties. The greatest need is for social rent accommodation (82%) with the need for intermediate rent and low-cost home ownership accommodation estimated at 9% each.

For the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period, there is an estimated need for 90 affordable homes, consisting of 48 social rent, 25 intermediate rent and 17 LCHO.

There is a particularly high need for one-bedroom social rent accommodation which has been influenced by the significant increase in homelessness presentations since the COVID pandemic. Although this need is particularly high, it is important to ensure that a mix of house types and tenures is provided on new developments in order to achieve the Council's objective of creating sustainable and resilient communities.

The LHMA also estimates a need for 126 market homes throughout the County per year, consisting of 86 private rented (68%) and 41 owner occupier properties (33%).

1. Introduction

Local Authorities in Wales have a statutory duty to undertake a periodic review of housing needs, as set out in section 8 of the Housing Act 1985. This is conducted through a Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA), which involves a comprehensive review of the existing and newly arising housing need, broken down by tenure and area.

LHMAs provide a crucial role in informing local development plans and housing strategies. They also inform the allocation of Social Housing Grant to support the development of affordable housing and aid negotiations between local authorities and private sector developers.

LHMAs must be rewritten every five years and refreshed once during that five year period (between years two and three). Monmouthshire County Council last undertook a rewrite of the LHMA in 2020, therefore a refresh was required in 2023.

Welsh Government produced new guidance ([Undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments: Guidance](#)) in 2022 and a LHMA tool. This refresh has been undertaken using the new methodology and Version 3.2 of the tool, therefore caution should be used when comparing the results with previous versions. The report largely follows the LHMA Refresh template produced by WG, however, additional sections have been included where it is considered relevant.

1.1 National Policy Background

Homelessness Legislation and Guidance

An overview of Welsh Government changes to homelessness legislation and guidance has been included in this LHMA refresh due to its significance. The Covid pandemic prompted a big shift in how local authorities process homelessness applications, and authorities across Wales are still working through the consequences. From March 2020 the Welsh Government ordered authorities to suspend Priority Need and Intentionality tests to homeless applications and instilled Public Health Measures under 'No-One Left Out'. This meant that authorities had a duty to accommodate anyone at risk of homelessness.

Due to the social and economic impact the pandemic period understandably triggered a reverse in the previous downward trend in homelessness applications. The implication of Public Health measures coupled with a rise in homeless applications resulted in a sharp increase in households the Council had a duty to accommodate under Section 73 of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

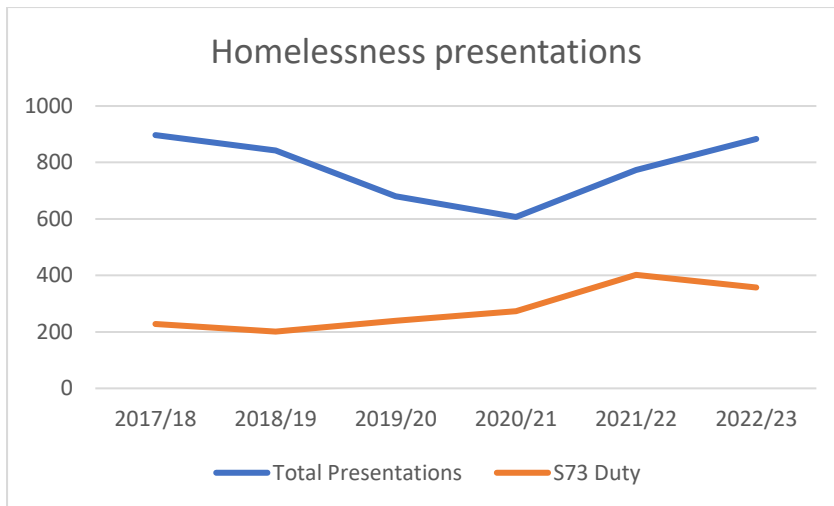


Figure 1 Homelessness presentations and Section 73 duty to accommodate

Just over half of the applications in 2021/22 were made by single adults and a high proportion of these single applicants were male (approx. 69%). Prior to the pandemic a significant number of these applicants would not have been considered 'Priority Need' and may have continued as 'hidden homeless'.

As Public Health measures were relaxed and slowly reversed during the 2022-2023 financial year the Welsh Government published an addendum to the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 which added an 11th category to Priority Need of Rough Sleeping. The addendum, which came into force in October 2022, now means that anyone who presents as homeless who has no other accommodation options must be treated as at risk of rough sleeping and therefore in Priority Need.

Monmouthshire now applies Priority Need and Intentionality tests to all homeless applications but given the recent changes it seems unlikely that presentations and those statutorily entitled to accommodation will reduce significantly or go back to pre-pandemic levels.

In October 2023 the Expert Review Panel on Ending Homelessness published its recommendations for legislation reform in the White Paper on ending homelessness in Wales. These recommendations are under consultation until January 2024. It is anticipated that any housing legislation reform will be adopted by the end of the current Senedd term.

Of the more significant recommendations is the proposal to remove the tests of Priority Need and Intentionality which will have a direct impact on future homelessness figures and Monmouthshire's statutory duties.

Rapid Rehousing

Welsh Government's vision is for homelessness to be 'rare, brief and unrepeated'. Local Authorities are to achieve this by adopting a Rapid Rehousing approach to homelessness, focusing on the prevention of homelessness. Where prevention is not possible appropriate, stable housing and support should be provided through a range of models, thereby reducing the dependency on emergency housing.

Over the next five years Welsh Government expect to see removal of prolonged and potentially damaging spells in temporary accommodation and the development of a systematic and strategic process that links housing development, support and supply to housing need.

The Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) identifies four priority areas to prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity, to minimise any time households may have to spend in temporary accommodation and to provide the right level of support at the right time to sustain future tenancies:

- Priority 1 - Prevent homelessness at the earliest opportunity
- Priority 2 - Increase the supply of affordable and settled accommodation
- Priority 3 - Provide timely and effective support to sustain accommodation
- Priority 4 - Maximising resources and benefits through well connected partnerships

2. Overview of LHMA Assessment and Methodology

This LHMA has been prepared using version 3.2 of the LHMA tool issued by Welsh Government, along with training materials and guidance: *Undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs), March 2022*. The LHMA and updated guidance has been developed in order to ensure that local authorities adopt a consistent approach to developing their LHMAs.

The methodology for calculating the net shortfall of affordable housing is complex and involves collating and analysing several sources of data and applying various assumptions to the LHMA Tool. The data sources and key assumptions are outlined in this section.

2.1 Data inputs

A range of data sets have been utilised to prepare this LHMA. The primary sources of data are:

- Monmouthshire's Common Housing Register
- Hometrack - property valuation and housing market data
- Office for National Statistics
- Land Registry Data
- CACI Paycheck - gross household income estimates
- Nomis – official Census and labour market statistics provided by the ONS
- Ministry of Justice

2.1.1 Existing affordable housing need

Backlog of need

This refers to the number of households that are currently unable to satisfy their housing need via the open market and have registered on Monmouthshire's common housing register, Monmouthshire Homesearch.

Households not considered to be in housing need are removed from the backlog of need figures for the purposes of the LHMA including:

- Households without a local connection to Monmouthshire
- Existing RSL tenants
- Households considered to have sufficient financial resources

The number of waiting list applicants will continually fluctuate but as of January 2024 there were 3,723 households registered, of which 2,064 have a recognised housing need.

In order to analyse the backlog of need, households must be allocated to the most appropriate tenure of affordable housing (social rent, intermediate rent or low-cost home ownership). This is based on applicants' income and savings, the thresholds applied are set out in Section 2.2.

Households also need to be allocated to a Housing Market Area (see Section 2.3). This is based on their specified first choice area, although it should be noted that they are free to apply for housing in any area of Monmouthshire except where a Rural Allocation Policy applies.

The LHMA Tool assumes that the existing need will be met over the first five years of the LHMA period, therefore the gross backlog of need is divided by five to give the annual need.

Table 1 Annual backlog of affordable housing need

Housing Market Area	Social rent	Intermediate rent	Low cost home ownership
Monmouthshire total	359	31	45
Abergavenny	104	5	12
Chepstow	181	19	25
Monmouth	56	5	5
BBNP	16	2	3

It is considered that the intermediate rent and low-cost home ownership backlog may not be an accurate reflection of actual need. The limited stock and lack of turnover means that these properties are rarely available, due to a lack of availability people are less likely to register or be aware of these types of affordable housing.

Existing households falling into need

The LHMA also needs to take into account existing households falling into need each year due to homelessness. The number of homeless presentations requiring temporary accommodation gives an indication of the number of households likely to fall into need. Data has been used from the last three years to give an annual average. Duplicate presentations were filtered out to prevent double counting then presentations were analysed by bedroom requirement and the census ward level proportions were applied to give an estimation of the need at ward level.

There were 1,244 homelessness presentations between April 2020 and March 2023 that required temporary accommodation. As it is assumed that the existing need will be met over the first five years of the LHMA period, this equates to an annual figure of 371 households. These households will be eligible for social rent housing.

Table 2 Annual existing households falling into need

Housing Market Area	Social rent
Monmouthshire Total	371
Abergavenny	69
Chepstow	194
Monmouth	67
BBNP	42

Mortgage and landlord possession claims leading to orders can also be used to estimate the number of households likely to fall into need. This data is available at local authority level from the Ministry of Justice and shows that there were 279 mortgage and landlord possession claims between July 2018 and June 2023. Some of these households will have been included in the homelessness presentations figures, therefore, to prevent double counting, they have not been added into the existing need figures. There are indications that the mortgage and landlord possession claims have increased for the first two quarters of 2023 compared with the same period in the previous year, the

current economic situation is likely to be a contributory factor, with higher interest rates, inflation and cost of living.

2.1.2 Newly arising need

It is necessary to factor newly arising need into the LHMA calculation. Welsh Government 2018-based household projections provide an estimation of population growth and household composition. Principal, higher variant (assumes longer life expectancy, higher migration and fertility) and lower variant (assumes shorter life expectancy, lower migration and fertility) projections are available which estimate different levels of household growth.

Figure 2 illustrates the principal, higher and lower variant household projections for Monmouthshire over the LHMA period. The principal variant predicts there will be 2,316 additional households by 2037, while the lower and higher variants predict this will be 1,185 and 3,242, respectively.

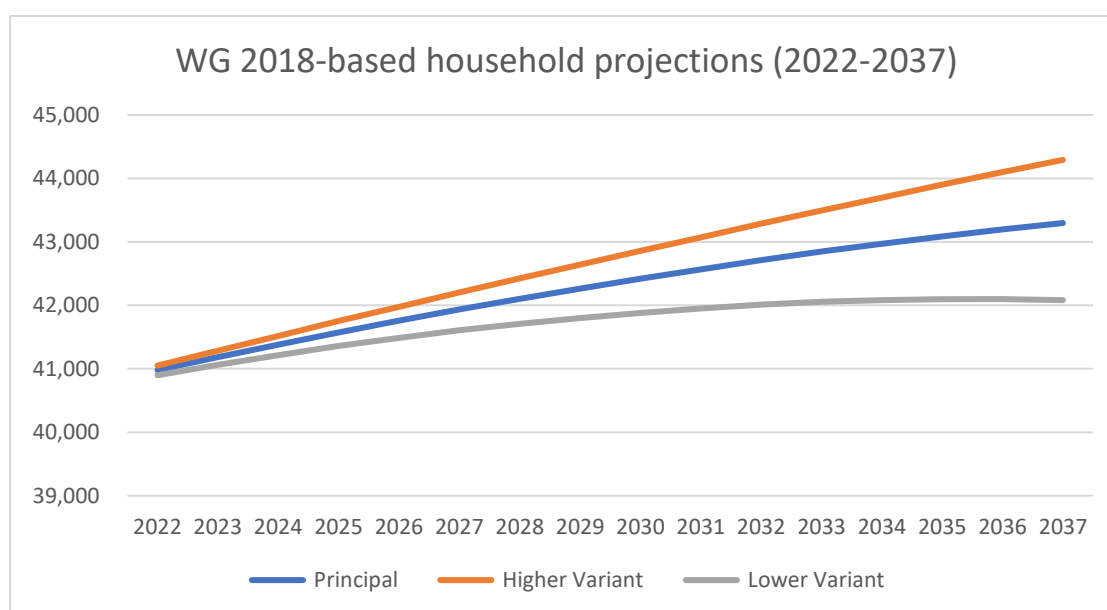


Figure 2 WG 2018-based household projections (2022-2037)

Only a proportion of new households will require affordable housing as some will be able to meet their own housing needs via the open market. House price and household income data was applied to produce an estimation of the newly arising need by tenure. A proportion of growth was allocated to each Housing Market Area, based on Census 2021 population data, factoring in Monmouthshire’s County Council’s growth strategy.

Table 3 Annual newly arising affordable housing need by tenure and housing market area

Housing Market Area	Social rent	Intermediate rent	Low cost home ownership
Monmouthshire Total	48	25	17
Abergavenny	13	7	5
Chepstow	22	12	8
Monmouth	8	4	3
BBNP	5	2	1

The existing and newly arising need data sets are combined to produce an estimation of the gross annual existing housing need. It is assumed that all existing need will be met over the first five years of the LHMA period (2022-2027) and will be allocated to affordable housing. It is calculated that 895

existing households will require affordable housing each year for the first five years of the LHMA (2022-2027), as shown in Table 4.

Table 4 Gross annual existing affordable housing need by HMA (2022-2027)

Housing Market Area	Total affordable housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent	Low cost home ownership
Monmouthshire Total	895	778	56	62
Abergavenny	215	186	12	17
Chepstow	461	397	31	33
Monmouth	148	132	9	7
BBNP	72	63	4	5

2.1.3 Committed Supply and Turnover of Existing Stock

The committed supply of affordable housing, expected re-lets and planned removals should all be factored into the LHMA calculation to estimate the net stock and supply.

Committed supply

This includes all additional affordable housing due to be delivered over the first five years of the LHMA period, this information was gathered from:

RSL development programmes

Social Housing Grant Programme

Local Development Plan

Planning permissions requiring affordable housing as part of a Section 106 agreement

Planned removals

This includes any affordable housing earmarked for disposal or demolition over the first five years of the LHMA period. The information was provided by RSLs who provide Monmouthshire's affordable stock. The number of planned removals was low, this will only be done as a last resort where the property is unable to meet the required standards.

Turnover of existing stock

The last three years lettings data was analysed from the Common Housing Register for all tenures of affordable housing.

These data sets were combined to give the estimated net annual supply of affordable housing, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 5 Net annual stock and supply of affordable housing

Housing Market Area	Social rent	Intermediate rent	Low cost home ownership
Monmouthshire Total	368	12	16
Abergavenny	111	2	3
Chepstow	189	6	11
Monmouth	46	2	2
BBNP	22	2	1

2.1.4 Private rent data

Rent data was provided by Rent Officers Wales for the calendar year 2022-23, including the number of rental properties and the 30th and 50th percentile private rent figures, for each housing market area. Rent Officers Wales data includes renewal and new tenancy “confirmed” lettings only, it excludes any properties in which the Local Housing Allowance is claimed.

Private rental data has also been accessed from Hometrack Data Systems, which provides up to date information and intelligence about the housing market, both sales and rental. There is a large discrepancy between the average rental figures provided by Hometrack and Rent Officers Wales. The obvious reason for this is the inclusion of renewal lettings in Rent Officers Wales figures, whereas Hometrack data is based solely on new lettings.

Table 6 Monmouthshire monthly average private rent data

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed
Hometrack (Jul 2022 to Jun 2023)	£676.00	£797.33	£996.67	£1,499.33
Rent Officers Wales (Apr 2022-Mar 2023)	£550.00	£725.00	£872.93	£1,300.00
Percentage difference	18.6%	9.1%	12.4%	13.3%

Any household needing to access private rent will expect to pay the new letting rent, therefore the figures reported by Hometrack are considered more representative of the current rental market. As the data available from Hometrack is not detailed enough to input into the LHMA tool (it is not available at housing market area level), a 9% increase has been applied to the Rent Officers Wales data, as this is the minimal difference between the two data sets.

2.1.5 House price data

Land Registry house price data is built into the tool, covering the calendar year 2022-2023. The data shows a wide variation in the median house prices across Monmouthshire’s four housing market areas, ranging from £257,072 in the Abergavenny area to £306,538 in the Monmouth area. The most expensive properties in Monmouthshire tend to be located in more rural areas as these tend to be larger, detached properties which attract a premium. The Abergavenny area has the lowest average house price as this is mainly made up of more urban areas.

The median house price is somewhat lower than the average (mean) house price data available from Land Registry which stands at £355,975 ([Land Registry House Price Index](#), July 2023). This indicates that there are a large number of high value properties driving up the average (mean) house price.

2.1.6 Household income data

Household income data is available at ward level from CACI Paycheck. The 2023 figures were input into the tool which record a median household income of £35,978 per year, compared to an average of £27,854 across Wales.

Every income band below £30,000 - £35,000 has a lower number of households than the Wales average. Comparability is reached in the £35,000-£39,000 income band, from this point the opposite trend happens and Monmouthshire is above the Wales average.

While data shows that Monmouthshire has a higher proportion of managerial, administrative and professional workers than the Wales average, many of the higher earners living in Monmouthshire are employed outside the County (Nomis). The average household income is lower when considering households that both live and work within the County. This means that people that are employed within the County earn less on average than people living here.

2.2 Key Assumptions

Income thresholds need to be applied to allocate existing and newly arising need to the appropriate tenure of housing. The thresholds have been set according to the recommendations made by the WG technical working group. For reference, these do not form the policy basis for the allocation of affordable housing, details are available in Monmouthshire’s Allocations Policy ([Monmouthshire County Council: Joint Allocations Policy](#)).

2.2.1 Social Rent

It is assumed that the maximum income for social housing is where the 30th percentile of private rent equates to no more than 35% of household income. The 30th percentile of Monmouthshire’s annual private rent is recorded as £9,814 in the LHMA tool, all households earning £28,040 or less per year are allocated to social rent housing.

Table 7 Social rent upper threshold household income by housing market area

Housing Market Area	30% percentile annual rent	Upper threshold income for social rent
Abergavenny	£8,744	£24,984
Chepstow	£9,825	£28,071
Monmouth	£10,860	£31,028
BBNP	£10,559	£30,169
Monmouthshire	£9,814	£28,040

2.2.2 Market Housing

Households are assumed to be able to afford market housing where median rent equates to no more than 30% of income. The 50th percentile annual private rent for Monmouthshire is £10,936 according to the LHMA tool, meaning a household earning £38,695 per year or more is allocated to market housing.

Table 8 Minimum income needed for market housing by housing market area

Housing Market Area	50% percentile (median) annual rent	Minimum income for market housing
Abergavenny	£9,904	£33,015
Chepstow	£10,889	£36,296
Monmouth	£11,883	£39,609
BBNP	£11,609	£38,695
Monmouthshire	£10,936	£36,453

The minimum household income to qualify for home ownership is calculated to be between £46,500 and £53,000 per year, assuming that First Time Buyers will enter the market at the 40th percentile of house prices. The 40th percentile house prices are consistent with the lower quartile value of a semi-detached house for Monmouthshire which stands at £250,000 (Hometrack, April 2023). This is

considered entry level as semi-detached properties account for just under 30% of all housing in Monmouthshire, so they are widely available in all areas of the county, whereas terraced properties account for only 17% of the housing stock. Although detached properties account for nearly 45% of the stock they are not considered entry level as they are significantly more expensive.

Applying the First-Time Buyer property value to income ratio for 2022 of 5.06 (WG/UK Finance), gives the income level required for each housing market area, as illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9 First Time Buyer property prices and corresponding household income required by housing market area

Housing Market Area	Property price at which FTB enter the market	Implied FTB household income level for owner occupier
Abergavenny	£235,292	£46,500
Chepstow	£259,568	£51,298
Monmouth	£263,326	£52,041
BBNP	£268,171	£52,998

It is estimated that just 40% of households allocated to home ownership will proceed to buy due to high house prices across the County, high mortgage interest rates and the current cost of living.

2.2.3 Intermediate Housing

Households with an annual income between the thresholds for social rent and market housing were allocated to intermediate housing. There will be some overlap between the need for the different tenures of intermediate housing, the maximum income for intermediate rent was set to 80% of market rents meaning households earning above this were allocated to low cost home ownership.

2.2.4 Five-year financial forecasts for key variables - income, rents and house prices

Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) financial forecasts have been built into the LHMA tool for key variables including household income, rents & house prices for the next five years. The default OBR assumptions have been applied which forecast:

- A slight yearly increase in median household income
- A yearly increase in private rent prices of 5% for the first year with lower increases for subsequent years
- A decrease in house prices for the first two years followed by slight increases for subsequent years

Table 10 OBR five-year financial forecasts for key variables

Financial forecast	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Income – change to median household income (OBR Supplementary tables, 1.13)	2.3%	2.8%	2.8%	2.8%	3.6%
Income - change to distribution of household income	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Rents - change to private rental prices (OBR Supplementary tables, 1.6)	5.0%	1.8%	1.7%	1.9%	2.5%
House prices - change to house prices (OBR Supplementary tables, 1.21)	-1.1%	-5.7%	1.1%	3.4%	3.6%

2.3 Monmouthshire Housing Market Areas

For the purposes of the LHMA, analysis should be carried out at housing market area (HMA) level. A HMA is based on the geographical areas that people live and would be willing to move home.

The 2020-25 LHMA identified three HMAs based on the 2011 Census Travel to Work Areas. Travel to Work Areas are areas derived to approximate labour market areas. In other words, they are derived to reflect self-contained areas where most people both live and work. The current criteria for defining a Travel to Work Area is that at least 75% of the area's resident workforce in the area and at least 75% of the people who work in the area also live in the area.

For the purposes of this LHMA refresh an additional HMA has been identified for areas within the Brecon Beacons National Park. This is for consistency with Local Development Plans and allows for housing need within and outside the National Park to be separated.

This provides the four HMAs used in this report:

- Chepstow Housing Market Area (Newport Travel to Work Area)
- Monmouth Housing Market Area (Cinderford and Ross-on-Wye Travel to Work Area)
- Abergavenny Housing Market Area (Merthyr Tydfil Travel to Work Area)
- Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP)

As shown in Figure 3, Chepstow HMA represents the largest area as it includes the settlements of Caldicot, Raglan, Rogiet, Magor, Undy, Usk as well as Chepstow itself. Further analysis of the Chepstow HMA has been undertaken and is provided in Appendix 1.

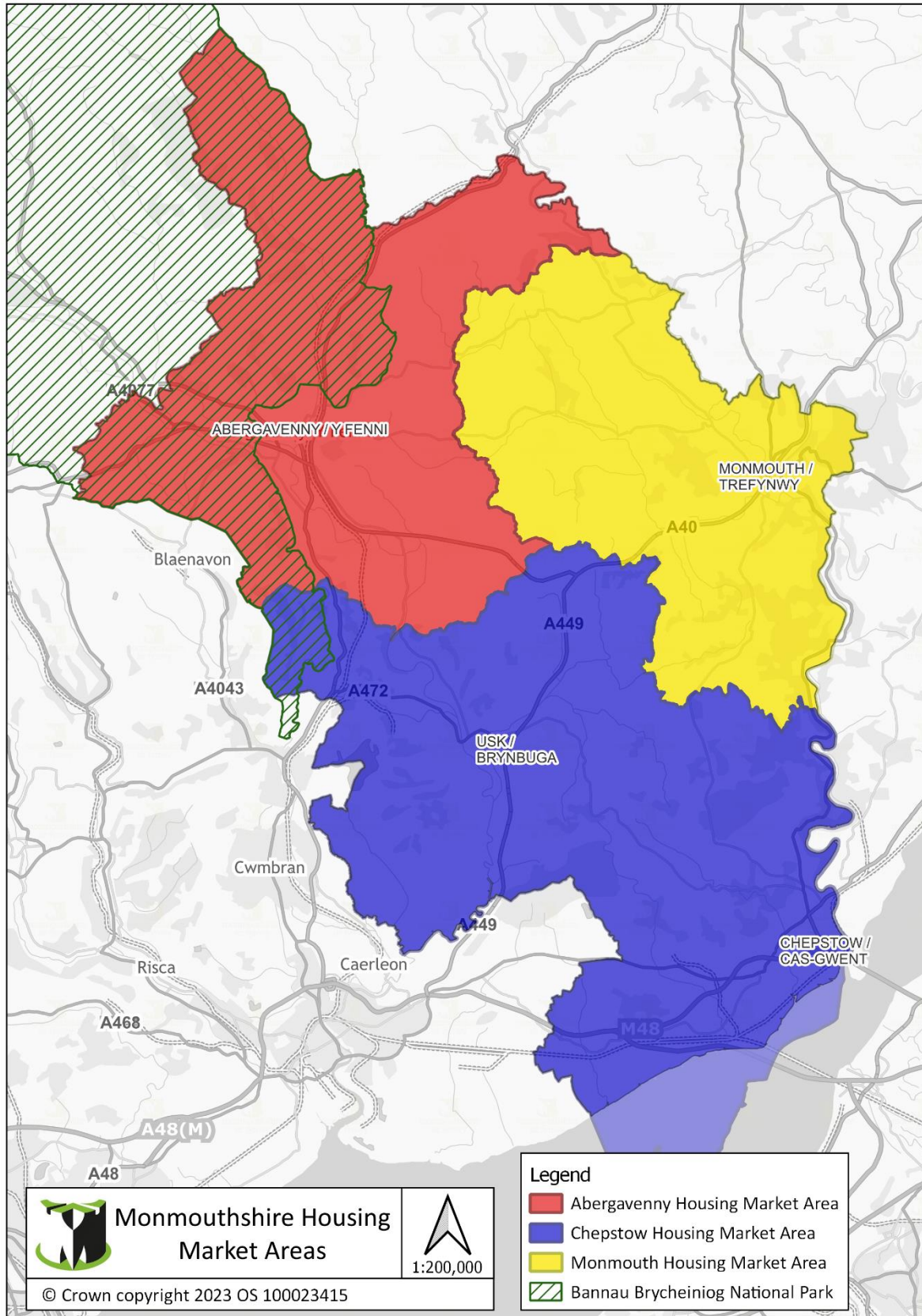


Figure 3 Monmouthshire housing market areas

3. Overview of Housing Market and Socio-economic and Demographic Trends

3.1 Housing Market Analysis

As this report is a refresh of the 2020 LHMA, an up to date analysis of the housing market and socio-economic/demographic trends would not usually be included. However, given the changing state of the housing market over recent months and the completion of the Census in 2021, an overview has been provided in this section.

3.1.1 Population

The population of Monmouthshire now stands at around 93,000 (Census, 2021), this represents an increase of approximately 1.8% since the 2011 Census and is slightly higher than the overall increase across Wales. The number of households has increased from 38,233 to 40,900, representing an increase of around 7%, well above the average for Wales at 3.4%.

Monmouthshire has an ageing population, evidenced by the median age increasing from 45 to 49 years between 2011 and 2021. There was a decline in the number of working age residents (people aged between 15 and 64 years), whereas the number of people aged 65 years and over increased by 26%. This represents the largest increase in Wales and compares with a 17.7% average rise across the Country (Monmouthshire population change, Census 2021 – ONS).

3.1.2 Households by tenure

Home ownership remains by far the most significant form of tenure in Monmouthshire, despite a slight decrease since 2011. Although other forms of tenure are low, there has been a relatively large increase in the proportion of households renting privately which has increased by over 25%.

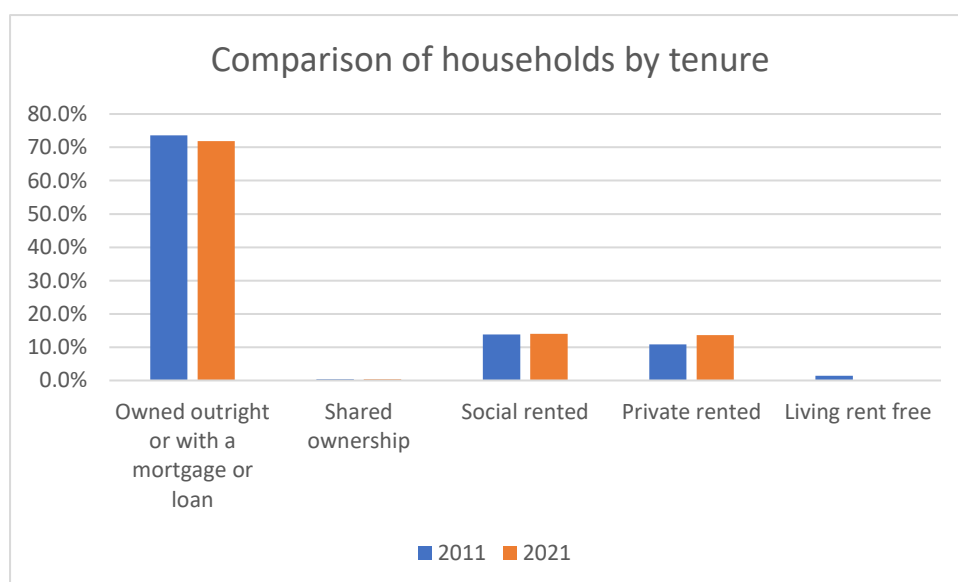


Figure 4 Comparison of households by tenure

3.1.3 Overview of owner occupier position: property price trends for area and by HMA; sales (volume) trends by HMA

The average price of a home in Monmouthshire was £380,162 in July 2023, according to Hometrack data, which is based on house sales and valuations. The Land Registry data for the same period stands lower than this at £355,975. These averages are significantly higher than the average for Wales, the average price paid for a home in the Country in July 2023 was £216,960 (Land Registry). It is important to note that even though the average price is high, this does not mean prices have risen, it is an average based on sales transactions and the indications are that a lot more transactions are taking place at the higher priced end of the market.

The current house price to income ratio for Monmouthshire is 8:1 i.e. an average priced property costs approximately 8 times the average household income (Hometrack, February 2024). This rises to as high as 10:1 across the rural central area of Monmouthshire which includes Cross Ash, Raglan, Usk and Llangybi. Both these figures illustrate how unaffordable home ownership is for many, but especially first time buyers and is a factor in the increase in the median age of the county shown by Census 2021 data. The current economic situation is making home ownership less affordable, with high interest rates and cost of living.

3.1.4 Overview of the Private Rented Sector

The private rented sector is an important form of tenure to meet the housing requirements of those that are unable to purchase on the open market and cannot access affordable housing. The private rented sector has seen significant changes since the introduction of the Renting Homes (Wales) Act 2016 in 2022. This law brought about a change in terminology from tenants or licencees to 'contract holders'. It also provides greater for security for those renting by extending the 'no fault' notice period from two to six months and setting out minimum property standards.

Private rented stock

There are currently 2,963 landlords registered with Rent Smart Wales, representing 4,814 rental properties throughout Monmouthshire (February, 2023). The largest number of private rented properties are three bedroom, followed by two bedroom.



Figure 5 Private rentals by bedroom size (Data Source: Rent Smart Wales)

Analysis of private rented sector

The private rented sector is characterised by a period of low supply and high demand which is pushing up average prices. Across Wales as a whole rental prices are up 9.9% over the year for new lets (Hometrack, September 2023). A desktop study of Monmouthshire’s private rented sector highlights the decline in supply. The study analysed private rental activity from 2012 to 2022 utilising Hometrack’s comprehensive database of properties advertised to let including:

- Rental market and activity within Monmouthshire
- Distribution of properties and rental values by bedroom category and housing market area
- Rental values and Local Housing Allowance rates
- Affordability

The analysis produced a sample size of 5,938 properties and found the market started to contract significantly from 2013 to 2017 with almost a 79% decrease in the number of lets coming on to the market. From 2017 to 2020 the market contracted further, likely due to the COVID pandemic, but has since recovered slightly to pre-COVID levels. However, the market remains approximately 65% smaller than it was in 2012.

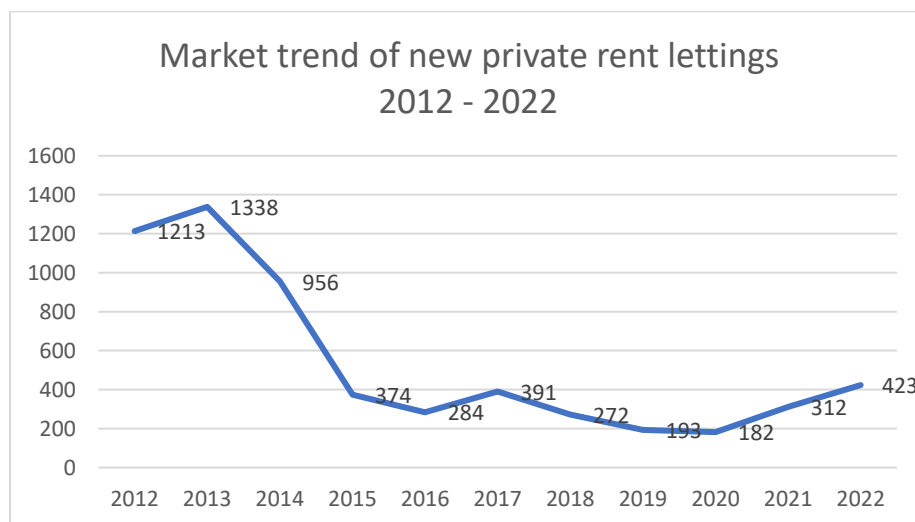


Figure 6 Number of new private rent lettings 2012 – 2022 (Data Source: Hometrack)

The study found a significant increase in rental prices over the period, with an average increase of 52.4% for Monmouthshire as a whole. While all property sizes saw a substantial increase, the highest increases were across larger properties.

Table 11 Average monthly rental values 2012 compared to 2022

	2012 Rental Values	2022 Rental Values	Percentage Increase
1 Bed	£435	£659	51.4%
2 Bed	£541	£821	51.7%
3 Bed	£649	£1,055	62.7%
4 Bed	£937	£1,543	64.7%
Total	£633	£965	52.4%

The following statements caveat the findings of this study:

- The collation of information and data on private rental activity, costs and affordability is not as reliable as housing sales activity due to the lack of data currently available. As a result, the data only allows for a very broad analysis of the rental market in Monmouthshire
- The data does not differentiate between properties that are provided as furnished/unfurnished, nor where utility bills and council tax are included/not included within the rental value
- The study concentrates on properties where the bedroom category is known, properties have been excluded from the analysis where this information is not available.

Local Housing Allowance

The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) determines how much financial help people can receive when renting privately, this is based on local rental values, age of the claimant, household size and bedroom eligibility. Monmouthshire has a single rate for each bedroom category.

An analysis of the LHA rates over the past 10 years show that these have moved very little when compared to the rise in rental values with the exception of the shared category (see table 2).

Table 12 Monthly LHA rates 2012 compared to 2022

	2012-2013 LHA rate	2022-2023 LHA rate	Percentage increase
Shared Allowance	£227	£329	44.7%
1 Bed	£395	£414	4.8%
2 Bed	£500	£549	9.7%
3 Bed	£580	£648	11.8%
4+Bed	£750	£773	3.1%

Anecdotally, very few private rent properties are available in Monmouthshire at the current LHA rate, meaning it is becoming increasingly difficult for people on low incomes to access private rent accommodation. The recent LHA rate increase announced by the government which applies from April 2024 will provide some relief. Further analysis will be required to assess the impact of this uplift.

Another important factor impacting on the private rented sector is the recent sharp increase in Bank of England interest rates. These have risen from a low of 0.10% in March 2020 to the current level of 5.25% (Bank of England, November 2023). This has impacted on mortgage rates both for home owners and private landlords and is believed to be contributing to the increasing prices and declining supply of private rental properties.

3.1.5 Overview of affordable housing stock

Monmouthshire's affordable housing stock, consisting of over 6,200 homes, is widely owned and managed by three Housing Associations: Monmouthshire Housing Association; Melin Homes; and Pobl. Properties are advertised and let through the Common Housing Register, Monmouthshire Homesearch.

Table 13 Monmouthshire's existing affordable housing stock by housing market area

Housing Market Area	Number of bedrooms				Total
	1	2	3	4+	
Abergavenny	665	644	525	59	1893
BBNP	98	81	116	4	299
Chepstow	956	982	989	78	3005
Monmouth	303	372	348	27	1050
Total	2022	2079	1978	168	6247

Affordable housing can be defined as “housing where there are secure mechanisms in place to ensure that it is accessible to those who cannot afford market housing, both on first occupation and for subsequent occupiers” (Planning Policy Wales, Technical Advice Note 2 Planning and Affordable Housing, June 2006). This includes:

- Social rent – where rents are set at Welsh Government benchmark levels
- Intermediate housing – where prices or rents are above social rent levels but below market levels

Intermediate housing can be provided as the following tenures:

- Intermediate rent – rented properties, typically available at 80% of market rent
- Low cost home ownership – “shared equity” homes are available in Monmouthshire, where the RSL provides an interest-free equity loan between 50% and 70%

The majority of Monmouthshire’s affordable housing stock consists of social rent housing, as illustrated in Figure 7.

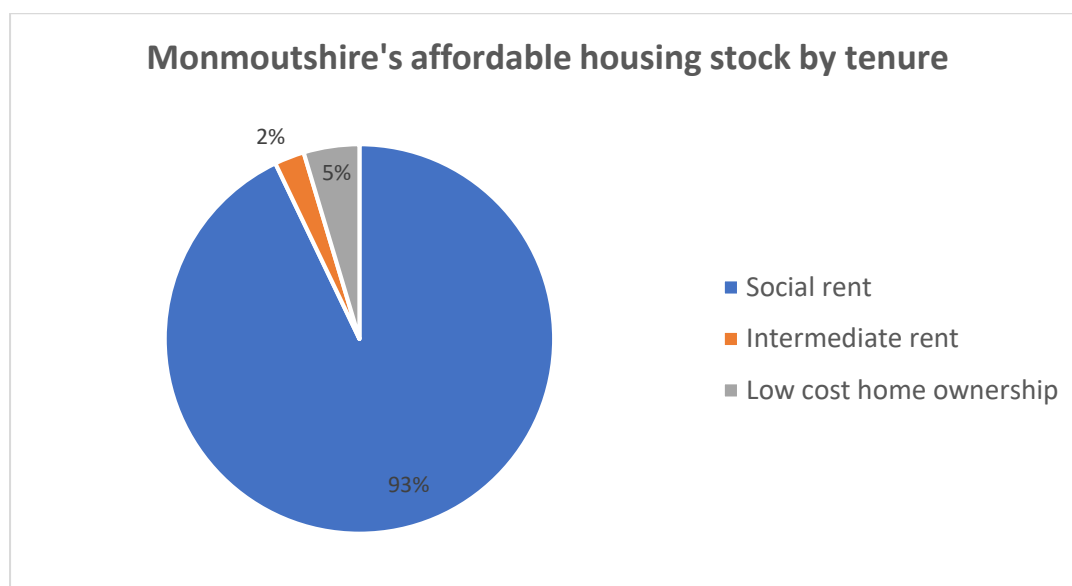


Figure 7 Monmouthshire's affordable housing stock by tenure

3.1.6 Overview of empty homes and second homes

Reducing the number of long-term empty homes and second homes that are rarely occupied is a priority for the Council, due to the impact of these properties on local communities. As such the Council recently took the decision to introduce a Council Tax premium for second homes and long-term empty homes which will come into force on 1st April 2024. Empty Homes grants of up to £25,000 are available to encourage empty properties to be brought back into use. Grants also may be available for landlords signing up to Leasing Scheme Wales.

At the end of the financial year (2022-2023), there were 581 properties recorded as empty for six months or more and 176 second homes. These are properties registered with the Council’s Revenue & Benefits Department, as such this may not represent an exhaustive list of empty properties.

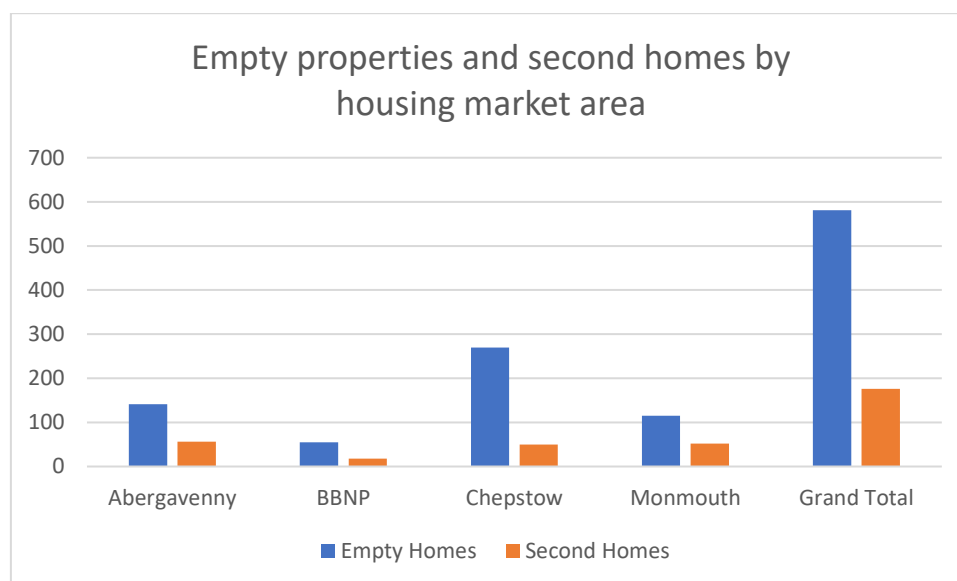


Figure 8 Empty homes and second homes by HMA (Source: Council’s Revenue & Benefits Department)

The Council has increased levels of activity contacting empty homeowners during the last financial year. This has initially focused on positive engagement which has generated a reasonable level of response. Homeowners have been provided with information regarding schemes that are available to bring properties back into use, for example Empty Homes Grants and Leasing Scheme Wales. There is the option to consider enforcement action where appropriate. Early indications are that the number of empty properties has started to reduce across the County.

3.2 Specific Housing Needs Requirements

This section of the LHMA considers the housing needs of a range of population groups within Monmouthshire who require specialist or supported housing that cannot be met by general affordable housing. The population groups and housing-related provision are set out in the guidance and include:

- Accessible and adapted housing provision
- Multi-generational and/or larger families requiring larger properties
- Non-permanent housing
- Housing, care and support needs
- Locational needs for student accommodation
- Locational needs for people with physical or cultural needs

Plans, strategies and assessments that consider the housing needs and housing-related provision requirements for the identified population groups have been utilised where appropriate in this section of the LHMA. For example, Monmouthshire’s Housing Support Programme Strategy and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan set out the need for non-permanent accommodation, and the Gwent Regional Partnership Board Capital Strategy 2023-33 and Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board (ABUHB) Housing Needs Assessment sets out the need for housing, care and support needs. Further evidence has been accessed and analysed in order to provide a full assessment of specific

housing needs. Consultation has been carried out with numerous internal and external stakeholders, a summary of the feedback received is noted in the relevant section.

3.2.1 Accessible and adapted housing provision

<p><u>Local policies/strategies</u> Monmouthshire Housing Allocations Policy 2022</p>								
<p><u>Property needs</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. General needs accessible accommodation i.e. wheelchair accessible bungalows or ground floor flats 2. Bespoke adapted accommodation There is a very small requirement for bespoke adapted accommodation designed to individual's or families' specific needs. At the time of writing there were four households known to the Council that require bespoke adapted accommodation 								
<p><u>Suitable for</u> Individuals and families that require accessible and adapted housing that are unable to meet their own housing needs</p>								
<p><u>Evidence including data sources</u> Evidence has been gathered from Monmouthshire's housing waiting list, households are asked to indicate whether they have a mobility issue if their current housing is impacting on their mobility.</p> <p>At year end 2022/23 11.8% of households in housing need reported a mobility issue, broken down as follows:</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <table border="1"> <caption>Proportion of waiting list applicants with a mobility issue</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Mobility Level</th> <th>Proportion</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Mobility level 1</td> <td>1.1%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mobility level 2</td> <td>4.3%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Mobility level 3</td> <td>6.3%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div> <div style="flex: 0.5; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-left: 10px;"> <p><u>Key</u> Mobility level 1 = applicants who are full-time wheelchair users Mobility level 2 = applicants who use a wheelchair some of the time Mobility level 3 = applicants who do not use a wheelchair but have limited mobility</p> </div> </div> <p><i>Figure 9 Proportion of waiting list applicants with a mobility issue</i></p> <p>Bungalows and ground floor general needs accommodation with a wet room will be suitable for the majority of applicants with a mobility issue. The majority of these properties are advertised giving priority to those with limited mobility. Bungalows account for approximately 12.8% of Monmouthshire's existing affordable housing stock.</p> <p>Average wait times for accessible accommodation are longer than for non-accessible accommodation. Households in high housing need waited an average of 21.4 months for accessible accommodation in 2022-2023, whereas the overall average was 10.2 months. This evidences the need for additional accessible accommodation.</p> <p>Where bespoke accommodation is required to meet a household's needs, MCC Housing and</p>	Mobility Level	Proportion	Mobility level 1	1.1%	Mobility level 2	4.3%	Mobility level 3	6.3%
Mobility Level	Proportion							
Mobility level 1	1.1%							
Mobility level 2	4.3%							
Mobility level 3	6.3%							

Communities department will work with MCC Social Services and partner RSLs to understand the specific requirements and deliver appropriate accommodation.

External stakeholder consultation and engagement

The Monmouthshire Homeseach team were involved in gathering and analysing the data presented in this section. In addition, various stakeholders were consulted regarding the findings outlined in this section of the LHMA including:

- MCC Adult Services
- MCC Children Services
- MCC Housing Options Team
- MCC Housing Support Team
- RSLs
- Support Providers
- Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
- Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Key issues identified

The data provides a snapshot of the mobility needs of applicants on a specific date. It is reliant on applicants providing accurate information and updating their applications if their circumstances change.

3.2.2 Multi-generational and/or larger families requiring larger properties

Local policies/strategies

Monmouthshire Housing Allocations Policy 2022

Property needs

Large general needs accommodation i.e. four or more bedrooms

Suitable for

Multi-generational and/or larger families

Evidence including data sources

A very small proportion of applicants on Monmouthshire’s housing waiting list require larger properties. At year end 2022/23 just 4% of applicants in housing need required four or more bedrooms. Applicants will be awarded higher banding if they are found to be overcrowding their current accommodation or if they are sharing facilities.

Monmouthshire’s affordable housing stock includes a small proportion of four-bedroom properties (approximately 2.7% of stock), some of which comprise an additional reception room such as a separate dining area or study which can be designated as a bedroom if required. These properties are generally able to meet the needs of households requiring larger properties, however waiting times can be long and tend to only go to households in high housing need.

Bespoke larger properties may be required on rare occasions to meet the housing needs of households requiring larger properties.

External stakeholder consultation and engagement

The Monmouthshire Homeseach team were involved in gathering and analysing the data presented in this section. In addition, various stakeholders were consulted regarding the findings

outlined in this section of the LHMA including:

MCC Adult Services
MCC Children Services
MCC Housing Options Team
MCC Housing Support Team
RSLs
Support Providers
Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Key issues identified

The data provides a snapshot of the need for larger properties on a specific date. It is reliant on applicants providing accurate information and updating their applications if their circumstances change.

3.2.3 Non-permanent housing

Local policies/strategies

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
Housing Support Programme Strategy

Property needs

1. Self-contained Temporary Accommodation
Since the increase in homelessness presentations during the COVID pandemic the Council has been reliant on bed and breakfast accommodation and shared accommodation to keep up with demand. Neither of these types of accommodation are seen as suitable and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan aspires to reduce the reliance on these provisions.
2. Supported accommodation for individuals with high support needs
The profile of support needs of those presenting as homeless has increased in both intensity and complexity since the pandemic. As there no high support provision in Monmouthshire onsite security services have been installed in some bed and breakfast provision in order to keep households safe.
3. Self-contained temporary accommodation for families in the north of Monmouthshire
A need for specific temporary accommodation for families is required to prevent families being placed in generic temporary accommodation.

Suitable for

1. Homeless households: individuals; couples; families
2. Homeless individuals with high and/or complex needs
3. Homeless families

Evidence including data sources

- As of 30 April 2023, Monmouthshire were accommodating 94 households in bed and breakfast and 115 in temporary accommodation, a total of 209 homeless households.
- 70 of the 94 households in bed and breakfast were single person households (74%)
- 23% increase in the number of actual homeless applications received between 2020 and 2023 (financial years) (RRTP, 2022).

- 12% increase in Section 73 duty to accommodate awards between 2020 and 2023 (financial years). 113% increase in S73 duty awards between 2018 and 2023 (financial years).
- 26% of those in temporary accommodation were assessed as having high or above support needs as of April 2022 (RRTP, 2022)

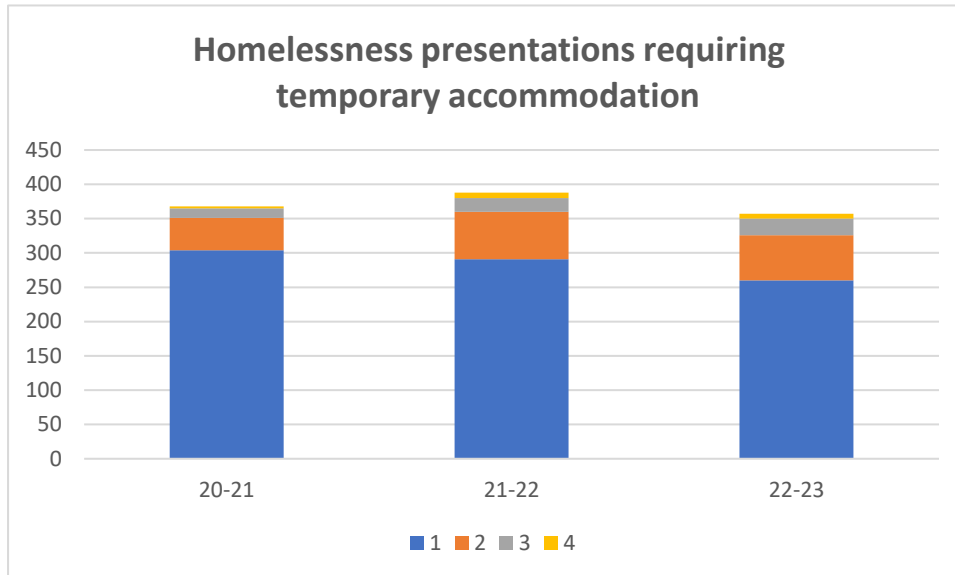


Figure 10 Homeless presentations resulting in temporary accommodation

Whilst there is a predicted increased need in temporary accommodation units of all sizes, households requiring single bedroom units remains significantly high.

External stakeholder engagement and consultation

Various stakeholder engagement and consultation events were carried out in the development of the Housing Support Programme Strategy and the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan including:

- multi- agency meetings
- steering group meetings
- service mapping exercise
- workshops
- individual meetings with services and partner agencies
- focus group meetings
- stakeholder engagement exercises

Further consultation was carried out regarding the findings outlined in this section of the LHMA including:

MCC Adult Services
MCC Children Services
MCC Housing Options Team
MCC Housing Support Team
RSLs
Support Providers
Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Key issues identified

Historic and current data was accessed to provide an overview of the current need for non-permanent and allows for an estimation to be made of the future need. Although this is an

evidence-based approach individuals' needs and circumstances can change which may impact on future need. In addition, upcoming legislative changes may impact on the future requirements for this type of accommodation.

3.2.4 Housing, care and support needs: Children and Young People

Local policies/strategies

Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33
 Programme for Government priority – Eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children
 Placement commissioning strategy – due to be completed March 2024

Property needs

1. Supported lodgings (16-25)
 A minimum of three large properties (north, south, and central Monmouthshire) with a minimum of five beds for young people with a range of needs, with capacity for staff to sleep-in, and access to local amenities. Preference for detached housing, but consideration would be given to semi-detached.

2. Residential children's homes (pre-16)
 A minimum of three medium/large properties (north, south and central Monmouthshire) with a minimum of three beds for young people with a range of needs, with capacity for staff to sleep-in. Preference for detached housing only, with privacy afforded by large outside open space and distance from neighbours.

Suitable for

Children and young people

Evidence including data sources

Comprehensive asset mapping of current asset base and strategic needs assessment identifying current and future need

External stakeholder consultation and engagement

Extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement was carried out in the development of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33 including:

- Regional stakeholder asset mapping exercise
- Regional strategic workshops

Further consultation was carried out with MCC Children Services to identify the housing needs specific to Monmouthshire, these have been reflected in the property needs above.

Key issues identified

None identified.

3.2.5 Housing, care and support needs: Individuals with Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum Disorder

<p><u>Local policies/strategies</u> Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33 Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board (ABUHB) Housing Needs Assessment</p>
<p><u>Property needs (Monmouthshire)</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Supported accommodation for individuals with complex needs 2. Additional residential placements for individuals with Mental Health and Learning Difficulties 3. Adaptations to support people to remain in their home 4. Additional supported living units/single accommodation for individuals with Mental Health and Learning Difficulties 5. More specialist provision – refuge 6. More specialist provision – step across facilities for substance misuse 7. Increased step up/step down supported accommodation for individuals with Mental Health and rehabilitative provision <p><u>Property needs (Gwent-wide)</u> The Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board (ABUHB) Housing Needs Assessment identified a number of recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A programme of 50 units of purpose built supported living for people with learning disabilities across Gwent, with the Health Board having nomination rights to 25 units • Piloting an ‘Own Front Door’ model for people with learning disabilities in partnership with a local authority on a new general needs housing development, involving jointly commissioning the care and support • Develop two purpose built autism supported living schemes of 6 units each in two locations in Gwent • Develop two purpose built schemes with a total of 16 units to provide short term step down capacity from the Specialist Inpatient Service Unit and the mental health pathway • Commission an ‘Own Front Door’ programme of 8 units a year with intensive support for people with mental health problems • Jointly commissioning a semi-supported accommodation scheme of 6 units for young people with mental health problems, with the Health Board having nomination rights to 3 units • Develop two new long term supported living schemes for the forensic pathway of 6 units each. In addition develop a 6 unit supported living scheme for women who are subject to the forensic pathway
<p><u>Suitable for</u> Individuals with Mental Health, Learning Difficulties and Autism Spectrum Disorder</p>
<p><u>Evidence including data sources</u> Comprehensive asset mapping of current asset base and strategic needs assessment identifying current and future need. ABUHB Housing Needs Analysis for Learning Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Mental Health</p>
<p><u>External stakeholder consultation and engagement</u> Extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement was carried out in the development of the</p>

Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33 including:

- Regional stakeholder asset mapping exercise
- Regional strategic workshops

Further consultation was carried out regarding the findings outlined in this section of the LHMA including:

MCC Adult Services
MCC Children Services
MCC Housing Options Team
MCC Housing Support Team
RSLs
Support Providers
Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Key issues identified

Current data was accessed to provide an overview of the current provision to meet the needs of this group of people and inform the current and future priorities. Although this is an evidence-based approach individuals' needs and circumstances can change which may impact on future need.

3.2.6 Housing, care and support needs: Older People and People living with Dementia

Local policies/strategies

Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33
Monmouthshire Housing Allocations Policy 2022

Property needs (Gwent-wide)

1. Additional nursing units
2. Additional residential units
3. Additional respite support units
4. Additional older persons accommodation, with and without care
5. Step up/down provision to support independence
6. Supporting people to remain in their own home with appropriate adaptations
7. Redevelop current stock to improve accessibility

Suitable for

Older people and people living with dementia

Evidence including data sources

Comprehensive asset mapping of current asset base and strategic needs assessment identifying current and future need.

A significant proportion of housing waiting list applicants are aged 60 years or older (16.1% at year-end 2022/2023). Monmouthshire's existing housing stock comprises approximately 22.9% of accommodation designated as older persons, the majority of which apply a minimum age criteria of 60 years, although some schemes accept people from 55 years of age. Older persons accommodation turns over at a higher rate than general needs accommodation, in 2022 to 2023 34% of properties let through the Common Housing Register were designated as older persons, meaning these are more readily available than general needs accommodation as a proportion of

eligible applicants.

External stakeholder consultation and engagement

Extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement was carried out in the development of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33 including:

- Regional stakeholder asset mapping exercise
- Regional strategic workshops

Further consultation was carried out regarding the findings outlined in this section of the LHMA including:

MCC Adult Services
MCC Children Services
MCC Housing Options Team
MCC Housing Support Team
RSLs
Support Providers
Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Key issues identified

Current data was accessed to provide an overview of the current provision to meet the needs of this group of people and inform the current and future priorities. Although this is an evidence-based approach individuals' needs and circumstances can change which may impact on future need.

3.2.7 Locational needs for student accommodation

The guidance requires consideration for student accommodation close to a University. This is not considered to be relevant to Monmouthshire as there is no evidence to support this need.

3.2.8 Locational needs for people with physical or cultural needs

Consideration should be given to the needs of people from diverse backgrounds, including those from particular Black and Minority Ethnic groups or those with physical or cultural needs.

Local policies/strategies

None identified

Property needs

None of the current waiting list applicants indicated a housing need in relation to their ethnicity, religion or culture.

Suitable for

N/A

Evidence including data sources

In order to assess this need, waiting list data was analysed for ethnicity and religion/culture. However, as this information is not mandatory the data is incomplete, particularly in relation to religion where approximately 86% of applicants did not respond. A baseline comparison has been provided with general population of Monmouthshire from 2021 Census data.

In relation to ethnicity, the vast majority of applicants on the housing waiting list are White: English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British (90.2%), this is similar to the overall population of Monmouthshire at 94.2% (Census 2021).

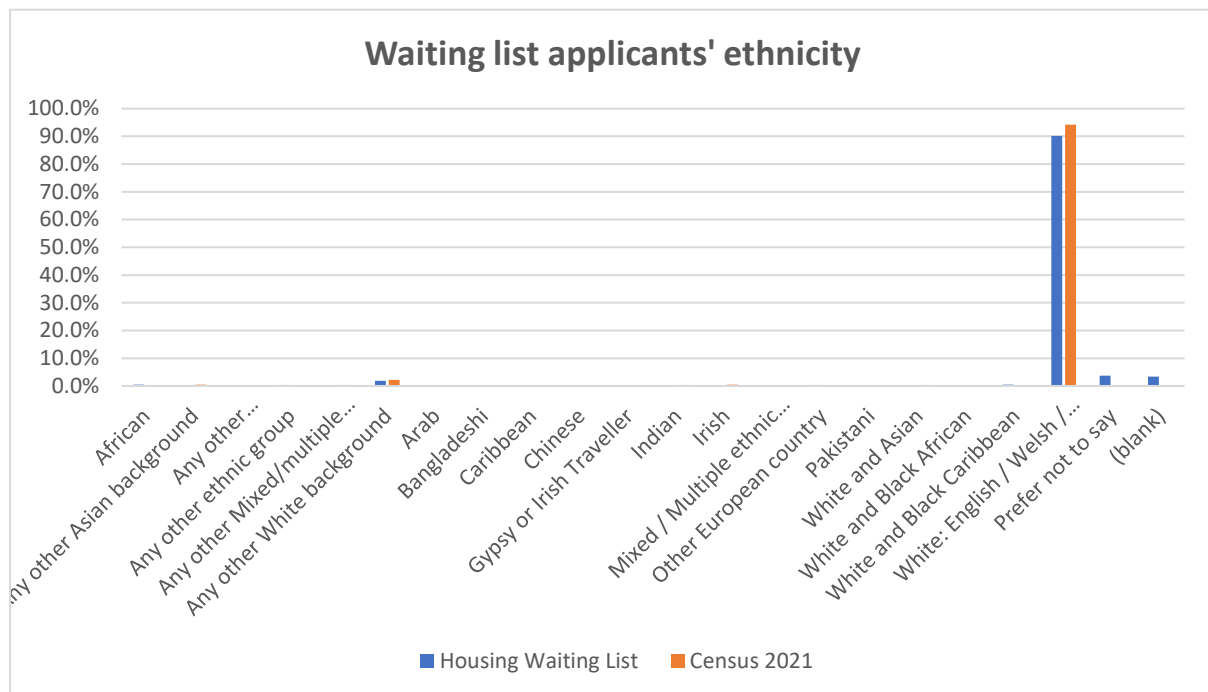


Figure 11 Waiting list applicants' ethnicity

In relation to religion and culture, where data is available the majority of applicants indicated they had no religion (6.9%) or were Christian (4.7%).

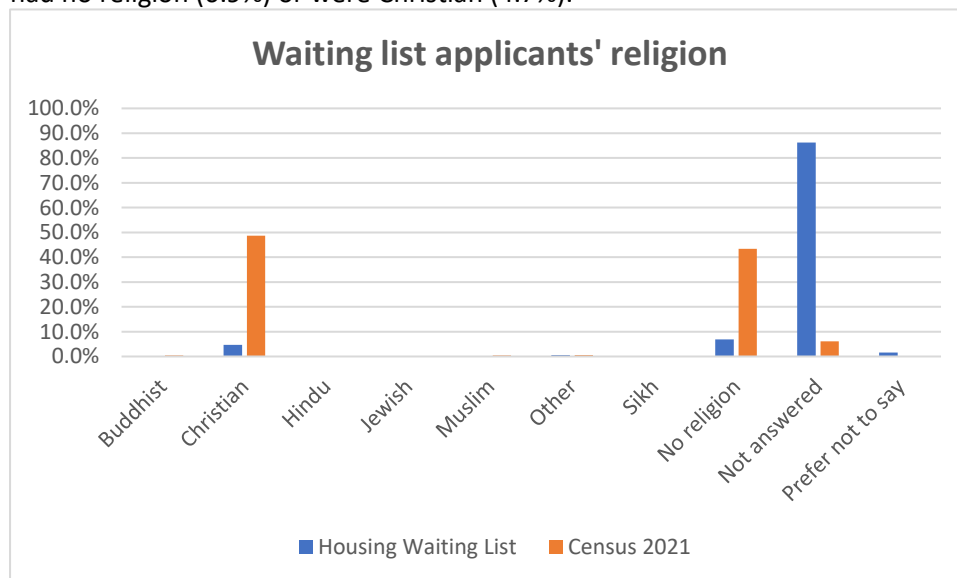


Figure 12 Waiting list applicants' religion

External stakeholder consultation and engagement

Extensive stakeholder consultation and engagement was carried out in the development of the Gwent Regional Partnership Board Regional Capital Strategy 2023-33 including:

- Regional stakeholder asset mapping exercise
- Regional strategic workshops

Further consultation was carried out regarding the findings outlined in this section of the LHMA

including:
MCC Adult Services
MCC Children Services
MCC Housing Options Team
MCC Housing Support Team
RSLs
Support Providers
Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
Gwent Regional Partnership Board

Key issues identified

The data provides a snapshot of applicants' ethnicity and religion/culture on a specific date. As noted above there is a lack of reliable data as applicants are not required to provide this information.

While not specifically covered in the section above, it is also considered that there is a small need for accommodation for people experiencing domestic violence. At year end 2022/2023 there were 63 households registered on the waiting list that indicated they were experiencing domestic violence which represents 2.9% of the total households on the waiting list.

The need for Gypsy and Traveller communities is not reflected in this LHMA, this need has been considered in Monmouthshire's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2021-2026. The assessment concludes:

- that there is an unmet need of nine pitches under the assessment period 2020 to 2025
- Beyond 2025, there is a further unmet need of four pitches over the remaining length of the Replacement Local Development Plan (2026 – 2033)
- There is not a need for a permanent transit / stopping pitch in Monmouthshire
- The Council should consider the use of short-term toleration or negotiated stopping arrangements to deal with short-term encampments

4. Range of Additional Annual Housing Need Estimates

The LHMA Tool can be run with the three WG-2018 based household projection variants (principal, higher and lower), which will produce distinct housing need estimates. Household projections utilised within the Council's Local Development Plan can also be input into the tool, however this option has not been selected as Monmouthshire's LHMA covers a different time span to that of Monmouthshire's Replacement Local Development Plan.

The housing need estimates generated by each of the household projection variants are shown in sections 4.1 to 4.3, as required by Welsh Government guidance. Further analysis of the Chepstow HMA has been undertaken and is provided in Appendix 1.

4.1 Principal household projections

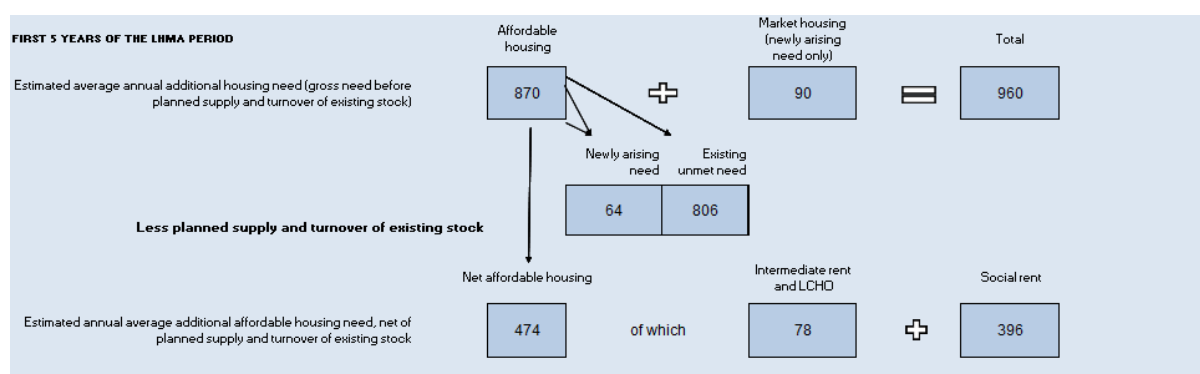


Figure 13 Additional annual housing need estimates by tenure for the first five years of the LHMA based on principal household projections

Table 14 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply) based on principal household projections

HMA	(a) one bedroom	(b) two bedrooms	(c) three bedrooms	(d) four+ bedrooms	(e) Social rent (a) + (b) + (c)) + (d) = (e)	(f) Intermediate rent	(g) LCHO	(h) Affordable Housing (h) = (e) + (f) + (g)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	319	45	14	18	396	37	41	474
Abergavenny	60	5	3	3	72	8	12	92
Chepstow	164	24	5	9	202	22	20	244
Monmouth	65	11	3	3	83	6	5	94
BBNP	30	5	3	2	39	2	4	44

Table 15 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) based on principal household projections

HMA	(a) Social rent	(b) Intermedi ate rent and LCHO	(c) Affordable Housing (c) = (a) + (b)	(d) Owner occupier	(e) Private rented sector	(f) Market Housing (f) = (d) + (e)	(g) Additional housing need (g) = (c) + (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	764	106	870	29	61	90	960
Abergavenny	183	25	208	8	16	24	232
Chepstow	391	58	449	15	32	47	496
Monmouth	129	15	144	4	8	13	156
BBNP	61	8	69	2	5	7	76

Table 16 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA based on principal household projections

HMA	(a) Social rent	(b) Intermedi ate rent and LCHO	(c) Affordable Housing (c) = (a) + (b)	(d) Owner occupier	(e) Private rented sector	(f) Market Housing (f) = (d) + (e)	(g) Additional housing need (g) = (c) + (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	34	30	64	29	61	90	154
Abergavenny	9	8	18	8	16	24	42
Chepstow	16	14	30	15	32	47	77
Monmouth	6	5	11	4	8	13	23
BBNP	3	3	6	2	5	7	12

Table 17 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA based on principal household projections

HMA	Average annual estimates			15-year estimates		
	(a)	(b)	(c)			
	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(c) = (a) + (b)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	155	46	201	2,322	688	3,010
Abergavenny	30	12	42	452	182	634
Chepstow	78	24	102	1,171	354	1,525
Monmouth	32	7	38	475	100	575
BBNP	15	3	18	224	52	276

4.2 Higher variant household projections

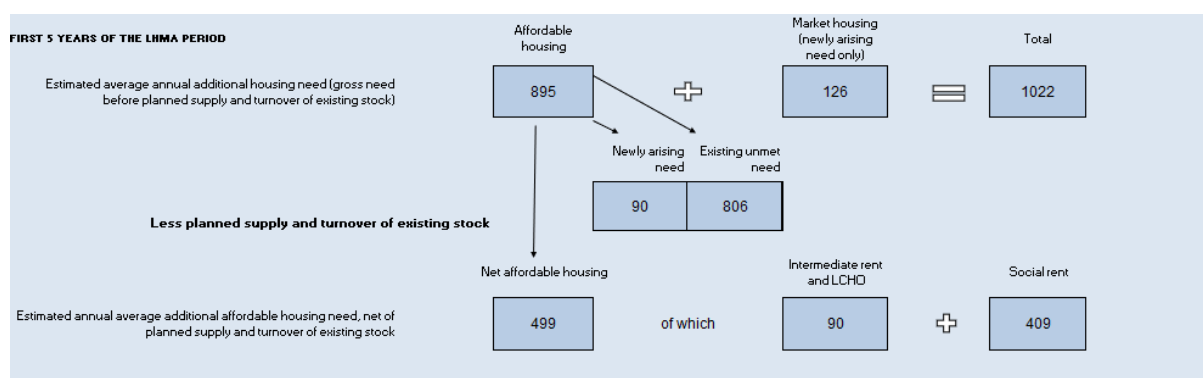


Figure 14 Additional annual housing need estimates by tenure for the first five years of the LHMA based on higher variant household projections

Table 18 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply) based on higher variant household projections

HMA	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	Social rent	Intermediate rent	LCHO	Affordable Housing
					(a) + (b) + (c) + (d) = (e)			(h) = (e) + (f) + (g)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	328	47	17	18	409	44	46	499
Abergavenny	63	6	4	3	75	10	14	99
Chepstow	168	25	6	9	209	25	22	256
Monmouth	66	12	4	3	86	7	5	98
BBNP	31	5	3	2	40	2	4	46

Table 19 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) based on higher variant household projections

HMA	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing	Additional housing need
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(f) = (d) + (e)	(g) = (c) + (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	778	118	895	41	86	126	1,022
Abergavenny	186	28	215	11	23	34	249
Chepstow	397	64	461	21	45	65	526
Monmouth	132	16	148	6	12	18	166
BBNP	63	9	72	3	7	10	81

Table 20 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA based on higher variant household projections

HMA	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing	Additional housing need
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(f) = (d) + (e)	(g) = (c) + (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	48	42	90	41	86	126	216
Abergavenny	13	11	25	11	23	34	58
Chepstow	22	20	43	21	45	65	108
Monmouth	8	6	15	6	12	18	32
BBNP	4	4	8	3	7	10	17

Table 21 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA based on higher variant household projections

HMA	Average annual estimates			15-year estimates		
	(a)	(b)	(c)			
	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(c) = (a) + (b)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	169	58	226	2,528	866	3,394
Abergavenny	34	15	49	509	231	740
Chepstow	84	29	114	1,266	441	1,707
Monmouth	34	8	43	511	127	639
BBNP	16	4	21	242	67	309

4.3 Lower variant household projections

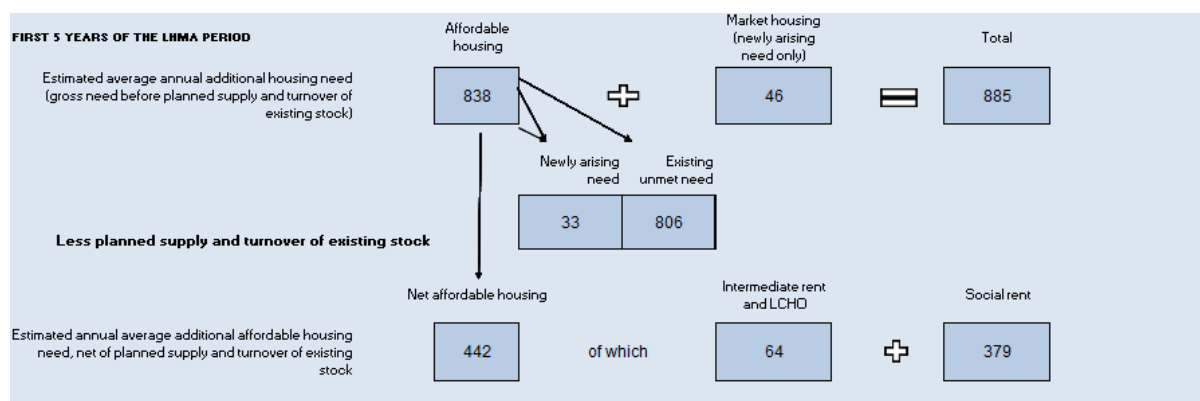


Figure 15 Additional annual housing need estimates by tenure for the first five years of the LHMA based on lower variant household projections

Table 22 Additional affordable annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (net need, net of turnover of existing stock and planned supply) based on lower variant household projections

HMA	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)
	one bedroom	two bedrooms	three bedrooms	four+ bedrooms	Social rent	Intermediate rent	LCHO	Affordable Housing
					(a) + (b) + (c) + (d) = (e)			(h) = (e) + (f) + (g)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	309	41	12	17	379	29	35	442
Abergavenny	57	4	2	3	67	5	11	83
Chepstow	153	22	4	9	194	18	17	229
Monmouth	63	11	3	3	80	5	4	89
BBNP	29	4	2	2	37	1	3	41

Table 23 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (gross need, before turnover and supply) based on lower variant household projections

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing	Additional housing need
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(f) = (d) + (e)	(g) = (c) + (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	747	91	838	15	31	46	885
Abergavenny	178	21	199	4	8	12	212
Chepstow	383	51	434	8	16	24	458
Monmouth	126	12	139	2	4	6	145
BBNP	60	7	67	1	2	3	70

Table 24 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure for the remaining 10 years of the LHMA based on lower variant household projections

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing	Additional housing need
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(f) = (d) + (e)	(g) = (c) + (f)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	18	15	33	15	31	46	79
Abergavenny	5	4	9	4	8	12	21
Chepstow	8	7	16	8	16	24	39
Monmouth	3	2	5	2	4	6	12
BBNP	2	1	3	1	2	3	6

Table 25 Additional annual housing need estimates by HMA and tenure (net need) over the 15 years of the LHMA based on lower variant household projections

	Average annual estimates			15-year estimates		
	(a)	(b)	(c)			
HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing	Social rent	Intermediate rent and LCHO	Affordable Housing
			(c) = (a) + (b)			(c) = (a) + (b)
Additional housing need estimates by tenure	138	31	169	2,070	470	2,540
Abergavenny	26	8	34	383	123	505
Chepstow	70	17	87	1,054	248	1,302
Monmouth	29	4	33	432	66	498
BBNP	13	2	16	202	33	235

5. LHMA Additional Housing Need Estimates

It is proposed that the WG 2018-based higher variant household projections are applied to the LHMA as these align more closely with the Council's Replacement Local Development Plan 2018 – 2033 Preferred Strategy. This strategy, which was endorsed by Council in October 2023, makes provision for approximately 5,400 – 6,210 homes over the plan period 2018-2033. As there are currently approximately 4,085 homes in the housing landbank, land will be allocated for approximately 1,660 – 2,125 new homes, including 830 – 1,065 new affordable homes.

The 2018-based WG population and household projection variants form the starting point of the modelling used in the Preferred Strategy, adjusted to reflect higher in-migration rates from Bristol and South Gloucestershire following removal of the Severn Bridge tolls and to adjust the County's

unbalanced demographic. These project household growth of 5,159 which is significantly higher than the higher variant projection of 2,732 for the same period.

The Census 2021 recorded 40,922 households in Monmouthshire, this is higher than all WG household variants estimated: the principal variant estimated there would be 40,755, whereas the higher and lower variants estimated 40,797 and 40,705 respectively. This is an additional justification for applying the higher variant household projections.

The LHMA estimates a net need of 499 additional affordable homes per year for the first five years of the LHMA period (2022-2027), based on the WG higher variant household projections. The majority of the estimated affordable housing need is for social rent accommodation (409 per year), with intermediate rent and low cost home ownership making up much smaller proportions of the need (44 and 46 per year respectively).

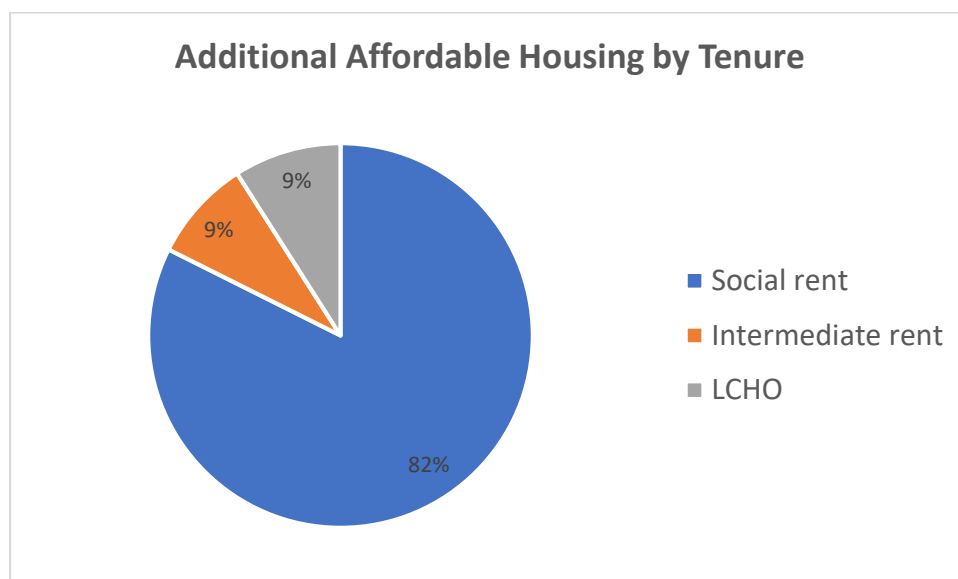


Figure 16 Estimated annual additional affordable housing by tenure for the first five years of the LHMA period

For the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period, there is an estimated need for 90 affordable homes, consisting of 48 social rent, 25 intermediate rent and 17 low cost home ownership.

It is estimated that 126 additional market homes are needed each year for the duration of the LHMA period (2022-2037). This consists of 86 private rented and 41 owner occupier homes per year.

The LHMA also estimates a need for 126 market homes throughout the County per year, consisting of 86 private rented (68%) and 41 owner occupier properties (33%).

There may be an unhidden need for intermediate housing that is not reflected in the estimations calculated by the LHMA. There is currently very little backlog for intermediate housing, likely due to the lack of availability and awareness of this type of accommodation. The LHMA has estimated a significant need for private rented housing, this sector is currently very challenging to access in Monmouthshire with high demand and a lack of supply. Intermediate rent housing offers a more secure alternative where rents are more affordable.

The additional housing need figures estimated by the LHMA are summarised in Table 26. Comparisons are provided with the previous LHMA, although some comparable data was not available due to the differing methodologies.

Table 26 Housing need figures for the first five years of the current LHMA compared to previous LHMA

Annual additional housing need estimates	Column index	Current LHMA	Previous LHMA
		Over the first five years of the LHMA period	
Total housing need estimate	(a)	1022	
Market housing	(b)	126	
Affordable housing	(c)	895	931
Percentage split of additional housing need by market and affordable housing	(b)/(a): (c)/(a)	12% 88%	
Annual planned supply and turnover of existing stock for affordable housing	(e)	396	464
Affordable housing need – net of planned supply and turnover of existing stock	(f) =(c)-(e)	499	468
Annual additional housing need estimate split by tenure:			
Owner occupier	(g)	41	
Private rented sector	(h)	86	
LCHO – net basis	(i)	46	116
Intermediate rent – net basis	(j)	44	33
Social rent – net basis	(k)	409	320
One bedroom social rent	(l)	328	
Two bedrooms social rent	(m)	47	
Three bedrooms social rent	(n)	17	
Four+ bedrooms social rent	(o)	18	
Market housing percentage split: Owner occupier estimate Private rented sector estimate	(g)/(b) (h)/(b)	32% 68%	
Affordable housing need percentage split: LCHO Intermediate rent Social rent	(i)/(f) (j)/(f) (k)/(f)	9% 9% 82%	25% 7% 68%
Social housing need percentage split by number of bedrooms			

1 bed	(l)/(k)	80%	
2 beds	(m)/(k)	12%	
3 beds	(n)/(k)	4%	
4+ beds	(o)/(k)	4%	

It should be noted that Monmouthshire’s LHMA covers two Local Planning Authority Areas: Monmouthshire County Council and the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park (BBNP). The housing need can be separated for each of the areas.

Within the MCC Local Planning Authority Area the LHMA estimates a need for 453 additional affordable homes per year until 2027, consisting of 370 social rent, 42 intermediate rent and 41 low-cost home ownership properties. For the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period, there is an estimated need for 82 affordable homes, consisting of 44 social rent, 23 intermediate rent and 16 LCHO.

There is an estimated annual need for 117 market homes within the MCC planning authority area, consisting of 80 private rented and 38 owner occupier properties.

Within the BBNP planning authority area the LHMA estimates a need for 46 additional affordable homes per year until 2027, consisting of 40 social rent, 2 intermediate rent and 4 low-cost home ownership properties. For the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period, there is an estimated need for 8 affordable homes, consisting of 4 social rent, 2 intermediate rent and 1 LCHO.

There is an estimated annual need for 10 market homes within the MCC planning authority area, consisting of 7 private rented and 3 owner occupier properties.

6. Quality Assurance Statement

This report has been prepared following Welsh Government guidance *Undertaking Local Housing Market Assessments, March 2022* and Version 3.2 of the *Local Housing Market Assessment Tool* in order to provide an accurate and reliable estimation of the housing need across Monmouthshire.

The methodology and assumptions have been clearly explained in Section 2 of this report. The default data and assumptions provided in the tool have been applied throughout the assessment. The WG-2018 based higher variant household projections have been applied as outlined in Section 5.

The data utilised within this assessment comes from verified, approved sources such as Welsh Government, Land Registry, Census 2021 and Office for National Statistics. The data analysis has been thoroughly reviewed in order to ensure its validity and integrity.

Throughout the report, figures have been rounded for ease of representation and to facilitate understanding of the data, however it has led to some information not summing correctly which is a common statistical reporting issue. This has particularly affected the housing market need, the rounded numbers estimate 41 owner occupier and 86 private rented sector homes are required, which does not sum to the overall need for 126 homes. This can also be seen in the separated figures for the MCC and BBNP Local Planning Authority areas. This does not affect the reliability of the data.

Annex 1: Glossary

The following acronyms are used within this report:

ABUHB	Aneurin Bevan University Hospital Board
BBNP	Bannau Brycheiniog National Park
FTB	First Time Buyer
HMA	Housing Market Area
LCHO	Low Cost Home Ownership
LHMA	Local Housing Market Assessment
MCC	Monmouthshire County Council
OBR	Office for Budget Responsibility
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RRTP	Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan
RSL	Registered Social Landlord
S73 Duty	Section 73 Duty
WG	Welsh Government

Appendix 1: Chepstow Housing Market Area Analysis

The Chepstow housing market area covers the largest geographical and population area as it includes the southern settlements of Chepstow through to Magor/Undy as well as the more rural central settlements of Usk and Raglan. As explained in Section 2.3 the housing market areas have been based on statistically defined Travel to Work areas, however it is possible to separate the Chepstow HMA into two smaller sub-housing market areas in order to provide more detailed analysis of housing need. This is considered appropriate due to the higher prevalence of home working since the COVID pandemic.

The two sub-housing market areas have been based on settlement hierarchies defined in Monmouthshire's Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2021:

- I. **Central Rural sub-HMA** which includes the Rural Secondary Settlements of Usk, Raglan and Penperlleni
- II. **Severnside sub-HMA** which includes the Severnside Settlements of Caerwent, Caldicot, Magor, Portskewett, Rogiet, Sudbrook and Undy as well as the town of Chepstow

These sub-housing market areas do not form part of the main Local Housing Market Assessment as they have not been statistically defined and formally agreed, they have therefore been provided as an Appendix for informative purposes and to give a more localised assessment of housing need.

The data has been re-analysed in order to produce estimates of housing need for these sub-housing market areas, which is shown in Tables 27 and 28, along with the overall need for the Chepstow HMA identified in the main body of the LHMA. Applying the updated data has resulted in some of the need being re-distributed between different tenures, therefore some of the figures do not tally.

Table 27 Additional annual affordable housing need estimates by tenure for the first five years of the LHMA (Chepstow HMA)

HMA	Social rent	Intermediate rent	LCHO	Affordable Housing
Chepstow HMA	209	25	22	256
Central Rural sub-HMA	63	5	6	74
Severnside sub-HMA	148	21	11	179

Table 28 Additional annual market housing need estimates by tenure for the duration of the LHMA (Chepstow HMA)

HMA	Owner occupier	Private rented sector	Market Housing
Chepstow HMA	21	45	65
Central Rural sub-HMA	2	6	8
Severnside – sub-HMA	19	41	60

For the remaining 10 years of the LHMA period, there is a need for 43 additional affordable homes for the Chepstow housing market area, of which four are within the Central Rural sub-HMA and 35 are within the Severnside sub-HMA.

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<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Sally Meyrick</p> <p>Phone no: 07970 957039 E-mail: sallymeyrick@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To provide an overview of the Local Housing Market Assessment Refresh 2022-2037 and to seek approval prior to sign off by Welsh Government.</p>
<p>Name of Service area Housing & Communities</p>	<p>Date 25th April 2024</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The LHMA provides an assessment of housing need for households of all ages and supports the delivery of affordable housing.	None	None

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	The LHMA provides an assessment of housing need for households with disabilities and supports the delivery of adapted housing and supported housing.	As above	As above
Gender reassignment	The LHMA provides an assessment of housing need for all households and supports the delivery of affordable housing.	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	As above	As above
Race	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	As above	As above	As above
Sex	As above	As above	As above
Sexual Orientation	As above	As above	As above

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	<p>It is recognised that lack of suitable housing and homelessness is often characterised by issues such as: low income; affordability; impact of childhood trauma; substance misuse; accessing employment / training opportunities; barriers to accessing mental health and lack of independent living skills.</p> <p>The provision of affordable housing therefore benefits those experiencing socio economic disadvantage. Good quality affordable housing also supports wider priorities such as health and well-being, poverty, employment opportunities etc.</p>	There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.	<p>Housing and homelessness are a cross cutting priority of the Corporate and Community Plan with a multi-agency involvement.</p> <p>The proposal mitigates against chaotic lifestyles by seeking to provide safe and secure accommodation through which lives can be rebuilt.</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 favourably	Neutral impact	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Neutral impact. The Council encourages the appointment of Welsh Language speakers and offers staff Welsh Language training	The Council struggles to employ Welsh speaking staff	Actively promote roles and make sure they reach Welsh speaking candidates through Welsh Language recruitment sites.
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Neutral impact	None	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>Positive: The LHMA provides an indication of affordable housing need and is part of the evidence base, which informs future plans. Affordable housing helps the overall prosperity of neighbourhoods and residents (e.g. a stable home to access employment) and contributes towards balanced and resilient communities that are sustainable. The building of new affordable housing also contributes to the economy with regard to the supply chain, employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>It is an on-going priority for the Council to increase the provision of affordable homes and reduce reliance on bed & breakfast accommodation.</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>Positive: All new build affordable homes have to be designed to meet high energy efficiency, low carbon standards. Negative: N/A</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?
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: The LHMA provides an assessment of affordable housing need and ensures that affordable housing is suitable for the identified need. Needs considered include those who have physical health issues, mental health issues or other welfare needs. The provision of suitable housing can assist in promoting good health, independence and well-being. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>The proposal has the potential to align with the Housing Support Grant programme to enable residents to access housing support and help to maintain their accommodation.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Positive: Affordable housing makes an important contribution to the sustainability and cohesiveness of our towns and villages by providing homes that local people can afford to live in and helps to mitigate against the need to move away. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Positive: Positively contributes to the health of homeless households and households in need of suitable housing. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>N/A.</p>
<p>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</p>	<p>Positive: N/A Negative: N/A</p>	<p>N/A</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?
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>Positive: The LHMA provides an assessment of housing need and supports delivery of affordable housing. Providers of affordable homes (RSLs) offer a range of support such as financial inclusion or education and employment opportunities - all of which contributes to empowering people and helps them fulfil their potential. Negative: N/A</p>	N/A

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 future</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The LHMA provides an assessment of the current housing market in addition to assessing the need for all types of affordable housing. The report also assesses housing need against the committed supply of affordable housing over the next 5 years. Information contained in the LHMA will contribute towards the evidence base for a range of housing and planning related plans and policies.</p>	<p>The LHMA will be updated every 2-3 years.</p> <p>The Council is moving towards a Rapid Rehousing Approach as required by Welsh Government</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>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>The findings of the LHMA will contribute to negotiations with RSL's and private developers to ensure the right type of affordable housing is delivered in the right location.</p> <p>This proposal supports Welsh Government ambition to transition to a Rapid Rehousing Approach to homelessness.</p> <p>The proposal supports Health (good accommodation contributes to well-being etc) and Social Care (good accommodation supports families, care leavers and corporate parenting etc) and Police/Public Protection (greater options for potentially placing offenders)</p>	N/A
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>Various internal stakeholders have been consulted in the development of this assessment including Planning, Adult Services, Children Services, Housing & Communities departments. Various external stakeholders have also been consulted including partner RSLs and neighbouring Local Authorities.</p>	N/A

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 LHMA helps to identify emerging trends in house prices together with the current and future housing needs of Monmouthshire households and will be used as part of the evidence base for a range of housing and planning related plans and strategies.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>Affordable housing makes an important contribution to the sustainability of our towns and villages by providing homes that local people on low incomes can afford to live in. The allocation of affordable housing seeks to support those in housing need and vulnerable households, the housing application assessment considers a range of needs including medical and welfare needs and banding is awarded in line with someone's circumstances. An allocation of affordable housing is often a betterment to an individual's circumstances. RSL partners offer a range support to their tenants such as financial inclusion, advice in relation to fuel poverty/energy efficiency or advice around education and employment all of which help the individual as well as the economy and environment.</p>	<p>N/A</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	The LHMA provides data on the housing needs of homeless households, those that require specialist housing such as adapted or supported housing and also older persons' housing.	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	The proposal supports Corporate Parenting by potentially providing safe and secure accommodation.	None.	N/A

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

<p>A number of data sources were used in the preparation of the LHMA. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CACI Paycheck Data. • Hometrack (Housing Intelligence) Data • Monmouthshire's Common Housing Register • Office of National Statistics <p>The legislation and good practice which have informed the LHMA are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Housing Market Assessment Report; Getting Started with your Local Housing Market Assessment, Welsh Government, 2014 • Local Market Housing Assessment guide, Welsh Government, March 2006 • Housing Act 1985 • Housing (Wales) Act 2014 • The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
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8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

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

The LHMA provides an assessment of the need for all types of affordable housing, the report also assesses housing need against the committed supply of affordable housing over the next 5 years. Information contained in the LHMA will contribute towards the evidence base for a range of housing and planning related plans and policies.

Positive

- The LHMA provides an assessment of housing need for all households and supports the delivery of affordable housing
- The provision of good quality affordable housing benefits those experiencing socio economic disadvantage and supports wider priorities such as health and well-being, poverty, employment opportunities etc.
- The building of new affordable housing also contributes to the economy with regard to the supply chain, employment and apprenticeship opportunities.
- Affordable housing makes an important contribution to the sustainability and cohesiveness of our towns and villages by providing homes that local people can afford to live in and helps to mitigate against the need to move away
- Delivers positive impacts to those with protected characteristics
- Supports wider priorities such as contributing to a Rapid Rehousing approach to homelessness

Negative

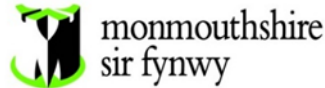
N/A

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.	People Scrutiny Committee	16 th April 2024	Additional analysis of the Chepstow housing market area has been undertaken and provided as an appendix to the report.
2.	Cabinet	15 th May 2024	
3.	Welsh Government	TBC	



SUBJECT:	REPURPOSING OF SEVERN VIEW RESIDENTIAL HOME, CHEPSTOW
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	22nd May 2024
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek approval for the repurposing of Severn View Residential Home, Chepstow to support policy objectives around temporary accommodation, in accordance with the Rapid Rehousing Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees to the repurposing of Severn View Residential Home, Chepstow, now vacated, for the use of temporary housing accommodation.
- 2.2 Agrees to delegate authority for approval of the final business case to the Chief Officers for Communities & Place and Resources, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy and the Cabinet Member for Resources.
- 2.3 Agrees to fund the consequential shortfall in capital funding for the Severn View Parc development costs of £900,000 from the existing capital receipts reserve. The capital receipts reserve would subsequently be replenished when the receipt is eventually realised.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Severn View Residential Home in Chepstow was constructed in 1966 and is located within the settlement of Chepstow. The Home was registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) to provide personal care to a maximum of 32 residents who are over 65 years of age and have dementia needs.
- 3.2 Severn View Residential Home closed its operations, following completion and CIW approval, of the new Severn View Parc Care Home in Portskewett in March 2024. A 2018 December Full Council decision determined that the sale of Severn View Residential Home would be available for disposal following completion of the new development and relocation of residents to the new home.
- 3.3 Aligning with the previous Cabinet and Council approval of the Rapid Rehousing Strategy, as well as the Council's Asset Management Strategy, consideration has been given to any potential for repurposing this property prior to declaring the asset surplus to requirements. The Council recognises an urgent need for housing to

support policy objectives to alleviate pressures with homelessness and to reduce the reliance on private rented accommodation.

- 3.4 The Council's Housing Team rent existing B&B accommodation in Chepstow for 17 individuals at an annual net revenue cost of £471,058. It is considered feasible that a single wing (ground and first floor) of Severn View Residential Home could be repurposed to accommodate these individuals. This would result in significant financial savings resulting from the avoided cost of renting private premises. The asset would also provide more suitable and better-quality temporary accommodation.
- 3.5 It is therefore proposed that as part of the repurposing to temporary accommodation, the Housing Team will provide on-site floating support services, utilising the property's communal spaces. The vision for this service would include four or five floating support workers. This would result in a proposed change to the current contract, which is in the process of being negotiated with current support providers, should the proposal be approved.
- 3.6 An MCC employed Scheme Coordinator for the facility is also proposed, who would provide consistent support to residents and manage the building during office hours, ensuring positive outcomes for residents and minimising the potential for any incidents. The Scheme Coordinator will be supported by an existing Council Housing Accommodation Officer who will visit regularly, and two 24 hours on site-security personnel, who will be relocated from the current B&B accommodation.
- 3.7 It is not anticipated that sufficient need exists, to occupy the entirety of the property. Therefore, discussions are ongoing with other internal services to explore opportunities to maximise the asset with complementary uses, such as providing a suitable location for the Council's 'Community Meals' catering facility. There is also an ambition, that this facility could offer an on-site cookery school, specialising in the provision of bespoke meals for those with specific dietary needs. This facility could therefore also present training opportunities for residents who wish to upskill.
- 3.8 Planning 'change of use' (COU) consent would be required to utilise the asset for the purpose of providing temporary accommodation. The LPA have confirmed any COU application should be accompanied by a site management plan, information on anticipated parking/traffic movements, and any biodiversity mitigation because of the nature of the proposed repurposing. This application has now been submitted.
- 3.9 The asset requires investment to repurpose. This would include decoration and replacement of fixtures and fittings throughout, changes to the existing bathrooms, external works including ground clearance and replacement of guttering/facias, fire sprinklers would also need to be installed. A schedule of works has been produced by MCC Housing with support from Landlord Services. The indicative costs of the works are in the region of £250,000. Quotations are being sought via tender for the refurbishment works. Value engineering will be undertaken to ensure the property is legally compliant in a suitable condition. Subject to approval of the change of use application, the targeted completion and occupancy date is November 2024.

- 3.10 The financing of the new Severn View Parc care home capital scheme included part funding from capital receipts, aided by the disposal of the Severn View site, which was estimated at £900,000. With the Severn View site instead being repurposed as per this proposal, the capital receipts reserve will still need to be drawn on to part fund the new care home project, but with the reserve ultimately being replenished upon the eventual disposal of Severn View.
- 3.11 The asset is to be retained within the Social Care portfolio until such time that the relocation of residents from the existing care home to Severn View Parc Care Home has been completed. This is anticipated to be completed by the 1st of June 2024. MCC will carry property holding costs for the vacant asset.
- 3.12 The proposed use would be subject to regular monitoring. If a decision was taken to stand down the proposed alternative use of this asset, suitable properties would be needed to enable tenants to move on and be able to live independently. For any tenants who may have intensive and high support needs at that time, Housing First accommodation or a specialist supported housing facility would need to be available to enable the residents to move to an alternative location.

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

- 4.1 The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation Assessment (Appendix One) details the following positive impacts which include:
- An opportunity to improve temporary housing accommodation;
 - The provision of better-quality accommodation in the County for those with high homeless and support needs;
 - An opportunity to generate revenue and capital savings through the reduced reliance on private hire of B&B;
 - The development of local accommodation provision to enable the service to plan in the medium and longer term;
 - Less delays in being able to provide sustainable accommodation options;
 - An opportunity to improve access to supportive services, providing better access to support nearer home;
 - A positive contribution to the health and well-being of homeless households which are likely to also impact positively on Social Care clients and the Directorates priorities.

4.2 There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken in Table One below and can be summarised as follows:

Table One – Options Appraisal

Option	Positives	Negatives	Recommended?
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<p>Retain the asset and repurpose for internal service need, namely temporary housing.</p>	<p>The Council will make best use of a vacant asset and provide safe and more sustainable accommodation offer which provides a more suitable alternative to B&B.</p> <p>Prevents the need to acquire additional property to meet an identified specific need, reducing revenue and capital outlay.</p> <p>Opportunity to provide a hub-type facility with onsite, multi-agency support to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>Opportunity to strengthen homelessness prevention through earlier intervention.</p> <p>Potential to both quickly generate rental income and reduce existing revenue costs.</p> <p>Ability to move clients in quickly to avoid building being vacant for a lengthy period, incurring property holding costs.</p>	<p>Planning may be refused for change of use, resulting in additional delay in disposing of the asset.</p> <p>Ongoing maintenance and servicing costs will be required. The property requires investment and refurbishment to meet requirements.</p> <p>Not all of the property will be required for the proposal, therefore parts of the property will remain vacant and potentially fall into disrepair.</p> <p>Complementary uses are being explored for the areas not immediately required under this proposal, for additional temporary accommodation use e.g., emergency placements, physical disability.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>Sell the property for development and to achieve a capital receipt</p>	<p>Achieves a capital receipt to support the capital program.</p> <p>Facilitates the development of housing, including affordable housing.</p> <p>Removes the maintenance liability and holding costs for a large asset.</p>	<p>MCC will continue to incur holding costs and carry risks associated with vacant property (security, disrepair, etc.) until such time that a disposal is completed.</p> <p>Continuing maintenance liability.</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>Retain the asset short term whilst securing planning consent and marketing for the demolition and redevelopment of the site</p>	<p>Enables revenue savings to be achieved for a period of 5 years, whilst a new housing scheme is progressed, and purchaser or development partner identified.</p> <p>Generates a greater capital receipt for land to support the capital program.</p> <p>Increases MCC's influence over the scheme's development, maximizing the type of housing in need to meet the Council's core objectives.</p> <p>Affords time to explore joint venture opportunities to develop the site, which would establish shared risk and development expertise.</p>	<p>Management and financial implications of standing up and down a temporary use.</p> <p>Development risks, including planning related costs.</p> <p>Financial and budgetary risks associated with uncertain property market and local/national economy issues.</p>	<p>No</p>
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5.2 Table 2 below details the current issues and the solutions this proposal will present.

Table Two – Issues and Solutions

Current Issues	Solutions this proposal will present
<p>The Council's current provision of Temporary Accommodation is through leases with private landlords and RSLs, including extensive use of bed and breakfast accommodation.</p>	<p>This proposal is to repurpose the Council owned residential home to provide Temporary Accommodation for homeless households, thereby reducing the reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation.</p>
<p>The current financial implications of the current use of B & B accommodation are unsustainable.</p>	<p>The proposal contributes to the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.</p>

5.3 Risks and Mitigation

A Risk Assessment has also been undertaken and is detailed in Table Three below which mitigates risks identified in the Strategic Risk Register:

Table Three – Risk Assessment

Risk/Point of Failure	Reason why identified (evidence)	Risk Level (High, Medium or Low)	Mitigating Actions	Performance Monitoring
Unable to reduce number of residents requiring temporary accommodation	<p>Numbers of applicants constantly fluctuate.</p> <p>Potential inability to prevent homelessness e.g., late presentations.</p> <p>Fluctuations in move-on accommodation availability</p>	High	<p>Maximise opportunities for early intervention to prevent homelessness e.g., Discretionary Homeless Prevention Grants, joint working with other support agencies.</p> <p>Maintain strong relationships with existing landlords to avoid an increase in resident numbers.</p> <p>Provision of specialist support e.g., Housing First Officers (potentially subject to HSG funding)</p> <p>Regular monitoring of Rapid Rehousing progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. homeless applications received. Level of successful prevention No. of S73 duties discharged. No. of residents in Temporary Accommodation including B & B Time spent in Temporary Accommodation reduced. Reduction in support needs from intensive and high to medium/low
Delays in alternative suitable properties becoming available	<p>Lack of affordable properties available</p> <p>Fluctuations in turnover of social housing</p> <p>Future capital grant funding streams could reduce the impact on future pipeline of new build/acquisitions.</p>	High	<p>Continue work with Landlord Services to identify alternative properties.</p> <p>Regular monitoring of Rapid Rehousing progress</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No. of leased properties taken Reduction in number of residents in temporary accommodation
Extensive refurbishment works required to make the asset suitable for repurposing.	The building requires renovation to meet the specific needs of new users. Change of use consent stipulates the need for the installation of fire sprinklers.	High	Housing and Landlord Services work together to identify value engineering opportunities and appropriate scope of works.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing scrutiny of the tender costs and post-completion success of the proposals.
Failure to secure Change of Use consent, or to repurpose/disposal of the property resulting in it falling into further disrepair	MCC will continue to incur holding costs whilst the asset is empty, inclusive of insurance, rates, utilities, security, etc.	Medium	Granting change of use, or disposal of the property would reduce the period over which it is vacant.	Ongoing cost of holding property and budgetary impact of failure to achieve savings.

6. REASONS

- 6.1 The Council has a duty to prevent and respond to homelessness under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.
- 6.2 The Council is expected to support and comply with Welsh Government Guidance – Coronavirus (COVID-19): Local Authority support for rough sleepers April 2020 and Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness & Housing Related Support.
- 6.3 The proposal also supports the Council to meet the Welsh Government requirement to adopt a Rapid Re-Housing approach to homelessness as per the Rapid Re-Housing Plan approved by [Cabinet – 5th April 2023](#) whilst also addressing other relevant policy documents such as [Homelessness strategy | GOV.WALES; Ending homelessness in Wales: a high level action plan 2021 to 2026 \(gov.wales\); and Homelessness accommodation provision and rough sleeping: July 2022 | GOV.WALES](#)
- 6.4 Retention of the asset retains MCC's ability to progress development of the asset in future. The site is inside the development boundary and there is a presumption in favour of development. The site has limited planning constraints.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Budget modelling has identified a projected full year revenue budget saving of £637,000 against current provision as listed in Table 1 below :-

Table1

Description	External Provider	In-House Model
B&B Accommodation (Net of DWP income)	432,281	-
Security	302,615	302,615
Damage Repair	38,777	25,000
Premises (incl Cleaning, Rates and Maintenance)		54,578
Utilities		70,000
Staffing (On-site Manager)		44,648
Total Expenditure	773,673	496,841
Housing Prevention Grant	(302,615)	
Housing Prevention Grant Required For New Model		(136,332)
Housing Prevention Grant Released to offset other Costs within Housing Budget		(166,283)
Rent		(347,912)
Service Charge		(12,597)
Total Income	(302,615)	(663,124)
Net Cost	471,058	(166,283)
Saving Against Current Model		(637,341)

- 7.2 The movement from temporary B&B provision to a more permanent housing provision that is provided by the Council results in the Council being able to claim full Housing

Benefit subsidy against rental payments, as opposed to only a partial claim against temporary B&B costs. This has the consequential impact of releasing grant funding which would otherwise have been used to bridge the shortfall. Therefore, the net saving figure includes £166,283 that can be released to fund other core costs within Housing. This saving will be reflected within other services but is included here so that the overall benefit is captured in the business case.

- 7.3 The 24/25 Revenue budget included a saving target of £400,000 for Housing/rehousing projects and the modelling above indicates that this will be exceeded in a full year of operation. Due to the delays in bringing the site online we are projecting that we will only capture part of the saving in 24/25 resulting in a £100,330 shortfall against saving target as listed in Table 2 below. Included in this shortfall figure is £19,000 of one-off set-up costs which will be incurred in the first year.

Table 2

2024-25 Projection		£
Expected 12 Month saving		(637,341)
Less : Impact of 6-month delay		318,670
Less : Set-up Costs		19,000
Total Potential Saving 24-25		(299,670)
Budgeted Saving 24-25		(400,000)
Potential Saving Shortfall 24-25		100,330

- 7.4 Mitigating against the above £100,330 shortfall is a priority of Housing & Communities. On-going actions will continue to maximise homeless prevention, minimise the number of households needing temporary accommodation and identify further temporary and permanent accommodation that provides a more suitable and cost-effective alternative to B & B accommodation. More specifically a recent restructure has been completed to ensure full strategic alignment between the Council's Housing Support Grant and Homeless functions and of relevance to homeless prevention, the recommissioning of the Housing Support Grant programme is scheduled to be completed by 1st April 2025.
- 7.5 The £250,000 capital refurbishment works will be funded from the Housing Provision capital budget that was approved by Council in 22-23 to "address the longer-term housing needs of the homeless within the County and that looks to create a more sustainable and cost-effective approach following the change in Welsh Government policy". The revenue budget implications of this are already captured within the Council's revenue medium term revenue budgets and therefore there are no consequential revenue budget implications on the service.
- 7.6 The financing of the new Severn View Parc care home capital scheme included part funding from capital receipts, aided by the disposal of the Severn View site which was estimated at £900,000. With the Severn View site instead being repurposed as per this proposal, the capital receipts reserve will still need be drawn on to part fund the new care home project, but with the reserve ultimately being replenished upon the eventual disposal of Severn View. The delay in generating the capital receipt will have an impact upon the Council's cash balances and will result in overall net interest payable being slightly higher, however this will be managed within the overall treasury management activities of the Council.

8. CONSULTEES

Cabinet

Senior Leadership Team

Landlord Services (Estates and Property Services)

Communities and Place Leadership Team

Housing and Communities Team

MCC Legal Services

Head of Finance

Local Ward Members

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

10. AUTHORS:

Nick Keyse – Acting Head of Landlord Services

Cath Fallon – Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk



<p>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Nick Keyse / Cath Fallon</p> <p>Phone no: 01633 644773 Email: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk / cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To seek approval for the repurposing of Severn View Residential Home, Chepstow to support policy objectives around temporary accommodation, in accordance with the Rapid Rehousing Strategy.</p>
<p>Name of Service area Landlord Services / Housing</p>	<p>Date 15/05/2024</p>

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	This proposal affects people of all ages from 16+ including older persons by virtue of making more accommodation available in Monmouthshire. This property will have the potential to support people of all protected characteristics	None	Repurposing an existing asset to meet temporary housing need will complement other housing options.

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	The property is DDA compliant. Investment will be made in the property to ensure it meets the appropriate guidelines.	As above	As above
Gender reassignment	As above	As above	As above
Marriage or civil partnership	As above	As above	As above
Pregnancy or maternity	As above	As above	As above
Race	As above	As above	As above
Religion or Belief	As above	As above	As above
Sex	As above	As above	As above

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	As above	As above	As above

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>It is recognised that homelessness is often characterised by issues such as: low income; affordability; impact of childhood trauma; substance misuse; accessing employment / training opportunities; barriers to accessing mental health and lack of independent living skills.</p> <p>The provision of temporary and sustainable accommodation therefore benefits those experiencing socio economic disadvantage. Good quality accommodation also supports wider priorities such as health and well-being, poverty, employment opportunities etc.</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.</p>	<p>It will be an on-going action to identify opportunities to strengthen homeless prevention, improve affordable housing provision and support homeless actions through social poverty actions and partnership arrangements.</p> <p>The proposal mitigates against chaotic lifestyles by seeking to provide safe and secure accommodation through which lives can be rebuilt.</p>
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3. Policy making and the Welsh language.



How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	Neutral impact	None	N/A
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	This proposal requires the appointment of staff to manage the site including associated services. Housing & Communities colleagues encourage the appointment of Welsh Language speakers and offers staff Welsh Language training	None	N/A
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Neutral impact	None	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>Positive: Positively contributes to increasing housing options in Monmouthshire. Helps to reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation. Any remodelling and refurbishment work required will also support the local construction sector and wider economy.</p> <p>Negative: None</p>	<p>It is an on-going priority for the Council to increase the provision of self-contained temporary accommodation and reduce reliance on bed & breakfast accommodation. Homeless prevention work will continue.</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>Positive: N/A Negative: N/A</p>	<p>Biodiversity enhancement opportunities will be considered as part of the Change of Use application.</p>
<p>A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p>	<p>Positive: Positively contributes to the health of homeless persons. Good housing supports well-being. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>The proposal will align with the Housing Support Grant programme to enable residents to access housing support and help to maintain their accommodation.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe, and well connected</p>	<p>Positive: Positively contributes by effectively increasing housing supply thereby helping local people remain in their home communities. Negative: N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales</p>	<p>Positive: Positively contributes to the health of homeless households.</p>	<p>N/A.</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?
Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic, and environmental wellbeing	Any remodelling and refurbishment work required will aim to improve and maximise the energy efficiency of the property where opportunities exist to do so. Negative: N/A	
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	Positive: N/A Negative: N/A	N/A
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	Positive: The proposal both strengthens the quality and availability of homeless accommodation. It presents opportunities to provide supportive services via communal spaces in the asset, increasing the stability in people's lives through improving opportunities in respect of personal finances; employment; training etc. Negative: N/A	N/A

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 future</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p>	<p>The proposal seeks to provide a short-term/temporary housing intervention option for Housing colleagues which will need to be underpinned by the potential availability of housing support and eventually Rapid Re-housing to long-term housing solutions. Some of the short-term options provide stability from which plans can be made for longer term housing needs to be met e.g., move on and permanent accommodation. The proposal is about sustainable solutions and minimising the potential to set people up to fail.</p>	<p>The Council is transitioning to a Rapid Rehousing Approach as required by Welsh Government</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>This proposal is all about supporting Welsh Government to implement the emerging Phase 2 Welsh Government homeless policy and transition to a Rapid Rehousing Approach to homelessness. Homeless applicants benefiting from the proposal may receive support from housing support providers. The proposal supports Health (good accommodation contributes to well-being etc.) and Social Care (good accommodation supports families, care leavers and corporate parenting etc) and Police/Public Protection (greater options for potentially placing offenders)</p>	<p>Arrangements already exist with housing associations and private landlords and links are in place with the Police and Probation.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>Estates have and are working closely with Housing colleagues who are in support of the proposals. The Council's Housing department has met with Welsh Government about the proposal and routinely liaises with Welsh Government's Relationships Manager. The Housing Support Commissioning & Operations Manager, Estates and Finance have also been involved.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Prevention</p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The proposal is about strengthening and improving accommodation availability to offset the need to use inappropriate temporary accommodation and the associated expenditure.</p>	<p>Resources are already being directed towards mitigating against homelessness through trying to prevent homelessness and acquiring accommodation elsewhere in Monmouthshire.</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>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The proposal indirectly positively impacts on well-being e.g., potential for additional good quality accommodation supports well-being and potential additional income for empty property owners.</p>	<p>N/A</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	The proposal supports households where there could be safeguarding issues by providing safe and secure temporary accommodation.	None.	N/A
Corporate Parenting	The proposal supports Corporate Parenting by potentially providing safe and secure accommodation.	None.	N/A

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

Evidence has been gathered and provided by Housing colleagues in the following ways:

- Housing Options Team service activity e.g., numbers in B & B accommodation; homeless presentations.
- Consideration of current pressures being faced by Housing Options because of the statutory duty to accommodate all homeless households.
- Strategic overview of the temporary accommodation available and gaps in current provision.

The legislation and good practice which have informed the policy revisions are:

- Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Section 122 Local Government Act
- Planning Policy Wales and the guidance set out in Welsh Government Circular 003/2019: Compulsory Purchase in Wales and 'The Criche Down Rules (Wales Version, 2020)'
- Housing Act 1996.
- Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

- Welsh Government's Code of Guidance for Local Authorities on the Allocation of Accommodation and Homelessness.
- The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility)(Wales) Regulations.
- Welsh Government Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness & Housing Related Support.
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Equalities Act 2010.
- Data Protection Act 2018.
- Welsh Government, Developing a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan 2022-2027

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

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

Positive -

The positive impacts of this proposal are:

- Additional housing options in terms of numbers of properties and type to assist homeless households.
- Better quality self-contained accommodation.
- Provides a settled period for applicants to access help and support.
- A wider range of housing support.
- It contributes to the health and well-being of homeless households.
- Makes best use of Council property assets bringing vacant properties back into use.

Negative

None.

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
Continue to work alongside Housing (and Children's Services colleagues) to support their specific needs in particular homelessness prevention to prevent temporary accommodation placements wherever possible.	On-going. This is a priority to minimize the numbers of people approaching the Council who need accommodation	Estates, Housing Options Team Manager and Childrens Services Manager/Eliminate Project Lead
Consider and plan next steps and responsibilities.	On going	Strategy & Policy Officer, Homes & Communities Manager, Estates Manager, Childrens Services Manager/Eliminate Project Lead

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.	SLT/Cabinet Members	15 th May 2024	

SUBJECT: Development of a Supported Accommodation Provision

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 22nd May 2024

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Caldicot

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide details and seek approval for the repurposing of a council-owned property in Caldicot for the purpose of developing a supported accommodation provision for care experienced children.

1.2 Approval is sought based on a Business Case that is attached as Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To approve the Business Case for the repurposing of the council owned property in Caldicot to allow for the development of supported accommodation provision for care experienced young people.

2.2 To note that a Housing with Care Fund (HCF) application has been made to fund the works up to a value of £300,000.

2.3 To allow for a maximum draw down of £300,000 [from the £3m borrowing headroom agreed at Full Council meeting 18th April 2024] to enable the service to proceed with the project, subject to an anticipated successful HCF application.

2.4 To enter into a contract with a suitable external provider to provide the housing-based support for young people residing at the property.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Children's Services has identified a property in Caldicot that the council owns and which is suitable to be developed into a supported accommodation provision for up to 5 care experienced young people aged between 16 – 21 years of age.

3.2 In order to meet the needs of the young people and the identified objectives of the service the property will require repurposing.

3.3 The provision will provide a homely setting for 5 care experienced young people, where 24-hour support will be available to assist the young people to develop their independent living skills. During their stay in the provision the goal is to equip the young people to progress

onwards to accommodation with a lower intensity of support or into independent accommodation. In this sense the provision will form the first step in a young person's pathway to independence.

- 3.4 Alongside of repurposing the property the intention is to seek to commission and enter into a contract with a suitable external provider that has experience of providing accommodation-based support to young people. A robust evaluation process and on-going contract monitoring will be put in place to ensure that quality standards are maintained and that young people are provided with the individualised support they require.
- 3.5 The business case is set out in the context of the decisions made at full Council on 18th April 2024 which set out proposals for the overall development of children's residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements and increased the available borrowing headroom to £3M for that purpose.
- 3.6 The Local Authority has a legal duty to provide sufficient and appropriate placements for children who are looked after which includes a range of supported accommodation options for young people who have left, or who are preparing to leave care. However, at present, the Local Authority has insufficient suitable supported accommodation placements and very limited options for young people who have medium to high support needs.
- 3.7 The current situation creates a number of pressures and issues including:
- Financial pressure because of the cost of spot-purchased placements.
 - Young people being placed away from their communities and support networks creating additional barriers for young people to overcome when they are preparing to leave care.
 - Variable quality in terms of achieving good outcomes for young people and ensuring that they have been afforded the opportunity for age-appropriate skill development.
 - Risk of a young person being placed somewhere that is not in keeping with their needs or stage of development or is beyond their capabilities.
 - Risks of not being able to find a placement for a child / young person and the need to enter into placement arrangements that are outside Welsh Regulations (OWRs).
 - Workforce pressure because of children / young people being placed in numerous different locations; the time it takes to source external placements; and the psychological impact of working in a context where placement insufficiency is a day-to-day risk factor.
- 3.8 The current ambition, as set out in the report presented to Council on 18th April 2024, is to significantly increase the number of all in-house placement types including fostering, residential and supported accommodation placements over the next 1 – 3 years. This will ensure that the needs of Monmouthshire's Looked After Children and those young people who are leaving care are consistently met with increased opportunity to be placed closer to their homes and communities. Increasing the number of placements that are within the control of the Local Authority will also enable increased stability and certainty in our wider care planning for children and young people.

3.9 Our commissioning data and analysis confirms that to ensure sufficiency of appropriate placements for children and young people we must significantly increase the number of all placement types. Specifically, the service has identified that at least 20 further placements that are suitable for young people aged 16 plus are needed, 5 of which would be achieved through the repurposing of the property.

3.10 The key objectives for this business case are:

- To redevelop the property in Caldicot to provide a five-bedroom supported living accommodation for care experienced young people.
- To redevelop an existing asset through fully utilising available grant funding, with no match requirement.
- To redistribute revenue into Council owned properties.
- To support the 3rd sector via tendering for the operational delivery of the scheme.
- To increase the number of young people who are placed closer to their homes and communities and in a way that meets their personal outcomes and care planning needs. In turn this will improve welfare considerations and efficiencies for the children's services workforce due to reduced travel time.
- To secure better value for money and the potential to reduce revenue costs associated with the current arrangements.
- To improve services for care experienced young people through ensuring that there are appropriate placements available to them which enable them to develop their independent living skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- To allow the Council increased autonomy in care planning and matching decisions for all children who are looked after.
- To allow the Council to meet legal and regulatory requirements under SSWBA regulations.

3.11 Works for the repurposing will be procured through normal council arrangements utilising the framework contractors. For the support element, the Council will be using an Open Procurement Route via Sell2Wales. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued via Sell2Wales on the 5th of February 2024, with several potential providers expressing an interest in the tender by the 11th of March 2024. A Market Engagement Event was held on the 22nd of March 2024 which was attended by several provider agencies. The Tender will be officially published via Sell2Wales subject to business case approval.

3.12 Implementation risks and wider risks to the Local Authority in developing the provision are set out below.

Implementation / Service Risks

Risk	Mitigation
Unable to secure a service provider	The Council will be using an Open Procurement Route via Sell2Wales. Several potential providers have expressed an interest in the tender. A Market Engagement Event held on the 22nd of March 2024 was attended by several provider agencies.
Delays / inability to identify and match suitable young people who need the supported accommodation provision	<p>The service has an in-depth knowledge of individual young people and how they might match.</p> <p>Work is currently taking place to consider the whole cohort of children / young people who are looked after to consider potential candidates for the home.</p> <p>MCC will work with the region to offer up potential placements to achieve a good match / avoid voids (should the need arise)</p>
Repurposing costs exceed what is currently provided for.	There is a contingency for unexpected works in the costs and a process for additional grant funding application via the Notification of Event (NoE) process.
Unsuccessful grant application leading to MCC meeting cost of refurbishment.	<p>There has been regular contact with the grant funding team and indications are that the application will be viewed favourably. The return on investment this project represents is positive.</p> <p>Regular and detailed contact with grant funding team will be maintained to ensure compliance with application process.</p> <p>The costs of drawing down on borrowing have been factored into the business case.</p>

Wider Service Risks

Risk	Mitigation
Commissioned service provider provides poor quality service	Quality of service is heavily weighted within the service specification and evaluation process. There will be ongoing contract monitoring.

There is a 10-year purpose period as a condition of grant award with claw back if it is not used for its intended purpose.	Commissioning data and projections of children who need looked after or care leaving services are not expected to fall to the extent that this provision would not be required within a 10 year period.
The property is not required to provide placements for care experienced children in the future.	The property could be re-purposed for several different uses; a business case and options appraisal would be undertaken.
Service provider gives notice on the contract or are unable to meet the terms of the contract	On-going partnership work will be in place to support the provider in all aspects of service delivery.
Any delay in implementation may impact on the ability to fully meet savings proposals for 2024/25	<p>The service is contingency planning for when potential placement moves for children are not achieved (which can arise for a number of reasons).</p> <p>Care and progression planning across the overall cohort of children looked after should allow for other potential positive movement and changes within placements for children which present opportunities for savings.</p> <p>On-going budget monitoring is in place to highlight as and when any additional measures need to be put in place.</p>
Risk of voids	If voids arise, and there are no young people identified within Monmouthshire who will need the placement in the short-term, there is potential to 'sell' the placement to another Local Authority.

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

4.1 The business case seeks to increase the sufficiency of appropriate placements closer to home for care experienced children and supports the repatriation of Monmouthshire children back into the county. The provision will enable care experienced young people to develop their life skills and support their pathway to independence so that their future life chances and economic mobility are improved. The provision is designed for care experienced young people who have medium to high support needs, which is currently a gap in provision. This additional stepping stone approach will help vulnerable young people sustain future stable accommodation and tenancies.

4.2 The money currently being spent on this cohort of children includes residential and independent foster care placements, some of which are located out of county. The project will allow the development of provision in county. This will support young people's sense of identity, belonging and connectivity with support networks, as well as providing the opportunity for new jobs and training / career opportunities for the wider social care workforce.

4.3 Planning is required in order to ensure the Welsh language is encouraged within the scheme and community engagement will need to be at the forefront of the development moving forward.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 An options appraisal is set out in the business case. In summary the council could chose to do nothing and refrain from moving ahead with the scheme. This would avoid any of the implementation or wider risks identified at 3.12. This option is not recommended in that i) it would not fill the gap in existing provision and continue to mean that children preparing to leave care are not provided with the right level of support in keeping with their needs and ii) that the council would lose the potential to generate any savings against the current approximate spend of £625,273.57.

5.2 Two minimal options are identified the first being to withdraw from the current property and wait for an alternative property to become available that requires less refurbishment. This would avoid any risks specific to the current property, but is discounted on the basis that i) it would cause significant delay in the development of suitable in-county placements for young people and ii) it is likely that any other property would require an acquisition as well as repurposing which would likely to be considerably more costly.

5.3 The second minimal option is to proceed with the repurposing of the property and seek to develop the support element in-house. This option is discounted because i) it is felt that there is strong experience and expertise within the sector providing accommodation-based support and ii) that children's services does not currently have the resources or capacity to undertake the support element and iii) it is likely that a procurement route will be quicker.

5.4 The option as set out within the business case, for the Council to repurpose the existing asset (i.e. the property in Caldicot) and seek to enter into a contract with a suitable provide organisation to provide the support, is the preferred option.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Success criteria for the business case have been identified as follows:

- The property is repurposed to a high standard.
- A capital grant is received to reduce any borrowing strain on the Council.
- A service provider is successfully appointed and a contract and monitoring arrangements are in place.
- The first cohort of children successfully matched and in-situ.
- Young people achieve good outcomes through their placement in the new scheme.
- Young people are supported to move on to living independently.

7. REASONS:

7.1 In summary, the business case represents an important step in the Council's ambition to increase the overall number of in-house placements for children including supported living

accommodation. This will increase the service's ability to appropriately plan and control care pathways for children and young people in keeping with their needs and reduce the Council's dependency on an uncertain provider market.

7.2 The proposed development of the property will meet the wellbeing and safeguarding needs of care experienced young people and provide an affordable means by which the Council can provide good quality support. The business case supports the Council to fulfil its statutory duty to provide sufficient and suitable for children who are looked after and is in keeping with national and local policy direction.

7.3 The business case represents a viable way forward for an existing un-used asset within the social care and health directorate, with the opportunity to maximise potential grant funding and generate savings for the council.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

CAPITAL Costs of Refurbishment

8.1 The Local Authority has applied to Welsh Government for a £300,000 capital grant to repurpose the property via the Housing with Care Fund 2024/25 (HCF). This would provide a 100% grant funded resource for the development of provision, in line with the elimination of profit agenda. We will continue to monitor the progress of this application as we progress with this project.

8.2 There is the acknowledgement that we will enter the initial stages of repurposing without grant approval and therefore at a degree of risk.

8.3 We have mitigated the risk of non-approval via our robust partnership and consultation with the Capital Projects Team at ABuHB. The return on investment this project represents is extremely high with a five-bedroom accommodation being developed for £300,000. All indications are we have a very strong case, and our application will be successful. The process can take up to 2 months for full approval.

8.4 We require access to the capital borrowing headroom pending the HCF grant application being submitted and approved; or in the event that it is not approved.

8.5 In light of the above we have modelled both scenarios i) that the capital scheme is fully funded via a grant and ii) that the capital element is met through prudential borrowing.

8.6 The revenue costs of prudential borrowing are already factored into the Council's medium term treasury budgets and therefore there are no consequential borrowing cost implications on the Children's services budget. However, for transparency and to aid in a meaningful like-for-like comparison between the existing model of service delivery and this proposal, an indicative annual borrowing cost has been included within the business case calculation.

Annual Revenue Costs

8.7 Currently, the cost of providing the care and support that will be replaced through the development of this property is approximately £625,273.57 over 5 children (based on illustrative cohort of 6 children currently in spot-purchased provision). The cost of commissioning the support element of the scheme has been calculated based on an equivalent service model in a neighbouring authority (i.e. Local Authority owned property with an external provider contract to provide the care).

8.8 Taking into account the varying cost impact of the 2 potential borrowing scenarios as above, we have modelled the revenue costs against a 100% occupancy rate and an 80% occupancy rate.

8.9 These tables are illustrative because the identified savings / or the impact on savings arising from a void cannot be easily identified due to the variability of existing package of care. Equally, there may be situations where placements result in cost avoidance. This potential saving has been profiled into the overall £1.3m Children’s Services practice change mandate for 2024/25. As the project is scheduled to come online in the later part of the year, part savings will fall into 2025/26 as a consequence. Any delay in implementation may impact on the ability to fully meet savings proposals for 2024/25 (see wider service risks).

8.10 80% occupancy is a cautious approach which we have adopted given the importance of matching children and allowing appropriate time for transitions particularly during the early period of the residential home.

Based on 100% occupancy

Annual Revenue Costs	Based on successful HCF application	Based on borrowing to complete the repurposing
	£	£
Service Provider Contract	300,000	300,000
General Maintenance	10,000	10,000
Service Manager 0.5FTE	42,531	42,531
Annual repayment costs (over a 25 year period) set at rates on 08/05/2024	0	21,303
TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE COSTS	352,531	373,834
ANNUAL REVENUE PACKAGES TO FUND COSTS		
Average cost of identified current care packages paid through the Children’s budget	(625,273)	(625,273)
Based on 100% occupancy POTENTIAL ANNUAL REVENUE SAVINGS	272,742	251,439

Based on 80% occupancy

Annual Revenue Costs	Based on successful HCF application	Based on borrowing to complete the repurposing
	£	£
TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE COSTS	352,531	373,834
ANNUAL REVENUE PACKAGES TO FUND COSTS		
Average cost of identified current care packages paid through the Children's budget	(625,273)	(625,273)
Based on 80% occupancy POTENTIAL ANNUAL REVENUE SAVINGS	218,193	201,151

9. **CONSULTEES:**

- Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services
- Ben Thorpe, Development Surveyor
- Craig Williams, Lead Commissioner
- Tyrone Stokes, Finance Manager
- Diane Corrister, Head of Children's Services
- Sam Mills, Regional Project Manager
- Kevin Fortey, Housing with Care Fund Project Manager, Regional Partnership Board

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Council Report 18th April 2024 - Developing children's residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements

11. **AUTHOR:**

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

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REDEVELOPMENT OF A PROPERTY IN CALDICOT TO PROVIDE SUPPORTED LIVING ACCOMODATION FOR CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE

SINGLE-STAGE BUSINESS CASE - MEDIUM VALUE AND RISK - (£250K TO £2
MILLION VALUE OF PROCUREMENT)

Author:

Jane Rodgers

Chief Officer, Social Care and Health



Date : 3rd May 2024

Consultees:

- Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services
- Ben Thorpe, Development Surveyor
- Craig Williams, Lead Commissioner
- Tyrone Stokes, Finance Manager
- Diane Corriester, Head of Children's Services
- Sam Mills, Regional Project Manager
- Kevin Fortey, Housing with Care Fund Project Manager, Regional Partnership Board

1 INTRODUCTION

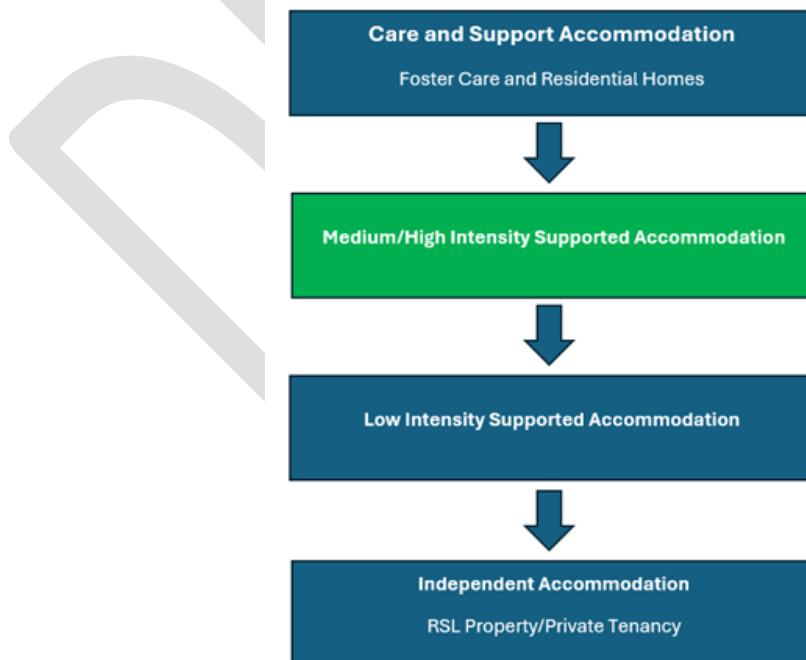
Children's Services seek approval to redevelop a property in Caldicot that the council owns to become a supported lodgings provision for 5 care experienced young people aged 16-21.

A care experienced young person is a child or young person who is living or has lived in care at any stage of their lives. This includes children who have experienced, or are currently, living in residential care, foster care, kinship care, or at home under a full Care Order or Supervision Order.

The property is a large, detached property situated within a residential area. It is a council owned property within the social care and health directorate asset base. The property is currently unoccupied after previously being used for respite fostering for Children with Disabilities, a service which ceased on the retirement of the respite foster carers.

In order to meet the project aims and the young people's support needs appropriately, the property will require repurposing. Fortunately, the property is in reasonable condition which will reduce expenditure and redevelopment time and allow for the provision to become operational within a relatively shortened timeframe.

The provision will provide a homely setting for 5 young people with 24-hour support to assist the young people to develop their independent living skills. During their stay in the provision the goal is to equip the young people to progress onwards to accommodation with a lower intensity of support or into independent accommodation. In this sense the provision will form the first step in a young person's pathway to independence.



Alongside of repurposing the property the intention is to seek to commission and enter into a contract with a suitable external provider that has experience of providing accommodation-based support to young people. This will be achieved through an open procurement process and will be evaluated on both quality of service provision (65%) and cost (35%).

Developing a council owned supported accommodation provision managed by a suitable external provider is in keeping with the WG policy to eliminate profit from children's care and is an important next step in MCC's desire to increase overall sufficiency of placements for children.

This business case therefore seeks approval to:

- To repurpose the council owned property in Caldicot to allow for the development of supported accommodation provision for care experienced young people
- To allow for a maximum draw down of £300,000 [from the £3m borrowing headroom agreed at Full Council meeting 18th April 2024] to enable the service to proceed with the project, subject to an anticipated successful HCF application.
- To enter into a contract with a suitable external provider to provide the housing-based support for young people residing at the property.

This business case is set out within the context of the decisions made at full Council 18th April 2024 regarding proposals for the overall development of children's residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements, subject to appropriate business cases and cabinet approval. It has also been agreed that progress against the decisions made by Council will be reported to the Performance and Oversight Scrutiny Committee on a 6-monthly basis.

2 STRATEGIC CASE

2.1 Context

Aligned to its Corporate Parenting responsibilities, under Section 75 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 the Local Authority has a legal duty to ensure that there are sufficient and appropriate placements for children who are Looked After. Under Part 6 of the Act the Local Authority has a duty "where reasonably practical" to provide Children Looked After/Care Experienced Children with accommodation which is (a) within the authority's area, and (b). meets the needs of those children.

There is a national shortage of residential placements for children and young people. This has been exacerbated by an insufficiency of local authority foster placements, and more recently by instability within the private provider market following the Welsh Government policy initiative to drive profit out of children's care. Within Monmouthshire, this lack of available placements applies also to supported accommodation provision which is used to support care experienced young people aged 16 plus who are on their pathway to increased independence. Such provision that is available, is quickly saturated

because of difficulties in securing move-on accommodation given the wider context of housing issues within the county and the shortage of affordable housing.

A lack of throughput across the system can mean that young people remain in foster care or residential settings for longer than is in-keeping with their need for increased independence; and simultaneously blocks placements for other children.

The current shortage of and increased competition for available local placements combined with an over reliance on the 3rd sector is creating numerous pressure and risks for the Council including:

- Financial pressure because of the cost of spot-purchased placements.
- Young people being placed away from their communities and support networks creating additional barriers for young people to overcome when they are preparing to leave care.
- Variable quality in terms of achieving good outcomes for young people and ensuring that they have been afforded the opportunity for age-appropriate skill development.
- Risk of a young person being placed somewhere that is not in keeping with their needs or stage of development or is beyond their capabilities.
- Risks of not being able to find a placement for a child / young person and the need to enter into placement arrangements that are outside Welsh Regulations (OWRs).
- Workforce pressure because of children / young people being placed in numerous different locations; the time it takes to source external placements; and the psychological impact of working in a context where placement insufficiency is a day-to-day risk factor.

The current ambition, as set out in the report presented to Council on 18th April 2024, is to significantly increase the number of all in-house placement types including fostering, residential and supported accommodation placements over the next 1 – 3 years. This will ensure that the needs of Monmouthshire's Looked After Children and those young people who are leaving care are consistently met with increased opportunity to be placed closer to their homes and communities. Increasing the number of placements that are within the control of the Local Authority will also enable increased stability and certainty in our wider care planning for children and young people.

Our commissioning data and analysis confirms that to ensure sufficiency of appropriate placements for children and young people we must significantly increase the number of all placement types. Specifically, the service has identified that at least 20 further placements that are suitable for young people aged 16 plus are needed, 5 of which would be achieved through the repurposing of the property in question.

2.2 Case for Change

2.2.1 Spending objectives

The development of the property in Caldicot as a supported lodgings accommodation is in keeping with the Council's objective to provide placements closer to home and is aligned to the current Welsh Government commitment to eliminate profit from children's social care. Equally, the development will promote the service objective to ensure that young people leaving care have the right level of support available to them aligned with their individual needs and experiences.

The cohort of children transitioning out of care in Monmouthshire have a range of support needs that require a variety of support and accommodation options post 16. The care and support plans bespoke to each young person post 16 should balance any safeguarding issues as well as supporting the young person to develop the skills they will need to live successful, happy and safe lives on their own terms as young adults. The type and level of support that each young person requires will be influenced by issues such as what brought them into care; their experiences whilst in care; their exposure to adversity, harm or abuse; their individual learning needs and stage of development; and the opportunities afforded to them to build personal resilience and independence.

For some young people, leaving the relative safety of a child's placement can be a huge step – to help them navigate this change successfully they require the 'stepping stone' of a supported environment. Other young people may well feel they have outgrown a child's placement but not yet have the skills to adapt to living without considerable and specialist support. The additional levels of support that these groups of young people require during their pathway to independence is not currently available within the council's existing provision.

Therefore, one of the central objectives of the current development is to fill the gap in our existing provision by supporting young people who have medium to high support needs. Primarily the development will meet the needs of children looked after who are:

- Aged 16+ and transitioning out of residential or foster care and require a stepping-stone to independent living; or
- Aged 16+, and where current models of accommodation / support are deemed unsuitable due to their risk factors or level of support required.

The needs profile of young people will feature multiple needs including but not limited to:

- Trauma / Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Attachment difficulties
- Linguistic barriers
- A limited support network outside of professional support
- Risk taking behaviours
- Vulnerable to exploitation (including risk of domestic abuse, financial, criminal or sexual exploitation)
- Additional complex needs including poor physical or mental health, or substance misuse.

The overall aim of the service is to reduce young people's support needs and prepare them for transition into more independent provisions. The service will deliver medium to high support to these young people with support workers on site and available twenty-four hours a day. As described, the young people will have a range of support needs, some of which will be complex and require enhanced accommodation-based, transitional support. The support offer will be person centred and outcome focused. The aim will be to develop the young person's capacity to live independently so that they are able to step down to alternative suitable accommodation by the age of 18 when safe and appropriate to do so, and if not at least before their 21st birthday. Supporting skill and knowledge development will include:- developing resilience and problem solving, making informed decisions, practical skills in day to day living and budgeting, pursuing goals in education or employment, managing external interactions and building support networks.

The project will:

- i) Provide a relatively small-scale provision exclusively for Children Looked After (between 16 – 18 years old) or young people aged between 18 – 21 years old who have previously been looked after. It will provide for a cohort of care experienced children who have medium to high support needs.
- ii) Support a cohort of young people stepping down from residential and /or foster care who may be at risk of eviction and homelessness early into their transition out of care because of not being able to sustain a tenancy, or safeguarding concerns arising due to the support levels not being adequate.
- iii) Allow young people who may not be suitable for the existing provisions to have the opportunity to step down from residential and/or foster care safely as part of their preparation for independence, rather than remain in placements which no longer best meet their needs.
- iv) Allow young people to be given the best opportunity to prepare for independence and increases success of maintaining their tenancy in more independent living arrangements, prior to 18 wherever possible, and if not then at least prior to the 21st birthdays.
- v) Allow a safe movement of children within and through the care system from provisions that are no longer proportionate to their needs, allowing these to be made available for other young people who require this.

Accommodation based support for young people who are aged over 16 does not come under RISCA regulations and therefore there is no requirement for it to be a registered provision. It is proposed that the support element of the service will be provided by a suitable external provider. Careful consideration has been given as to whether the Local Authority could or should run the provision itself. However, the Local Authority does not currently have the required resources or workforce to develop the service within the required timescale and it is apparent that a commissioning / procurement route will be quicker. There

are a number of external providers who are experienced in running such provisions. Initial contact with providers indicates healthy interest from existing and new partners in running the service, including partner organisations who are running similar schemes in neighbouring authorities.

The refurbishment of the property is required in order to provide safe and appropriate accommodation in accordance with statutory frameworks. Each of the 5 young people will have their own bedroom with access to 3 shared bathrooms. The property will have a large kitchen-diner area with a further 2 communal lounges for the young people to utilise. There will be a staff bedroom located on the ground floor and staff office on the first floor. The intention is to create a homely environment with access to shared facilities and communal spaces for recreational activity and to facilitate positive peer relationships. There is accessible outdoor space with a rear garden that we intend to develop to include outdoor social areas and growing spaces for the young people to utilise.

The building is situated close to the town centre and within walking distance of a range of local amenities and community-based resources, as well having good public transport links. Being located within Monmouthshire the young people living there will be able to have good connections with their families.

Whilst the aim is to create stability, the nature of the project is that young people will move on at different times and that the make-up of the household will change over time. Each change or move would be planned and matched to ensure that young people would only be placed in the property if it was the right placement both for them and the other young residents already there.

In summary, the primary objective of the Business Case is for up to 5 young people to be suitably matched and to be enabled to live comfortably and well in the property for as long as it meets their individual pathway planning needs.

The key objectives for this business case are:

- To redevelop the property to provide a five-bedroom supported living accommodation for care experienced young people.
- To redevelop an existing asset through fully utilising available grant funding, with no match requirement.
- To redistribute revenue into Council owned properties.
- To support the 3rd sector via tendering for the operational delivery of the scheme.
- To increase the number of young people who are placed closer to their homes and communities and in a way that meets their personal outcomes and care planning needs. In turn this will improve welfare considerations and efficiencies for the children's services workforce due to reduced travel time.
- To secure better value for money and the potential to reduce revenue costs associated with the current arrangements.

- To improve services for care experienced young people through ensuring that there are appropriate placements available to them which enable them to develop their independent living skills in a safe and supportive environment.
- To allow the Council increased autonomy in care planning and matching decisions for all children who are looked after.
- To allow the Council to meet legal and regulatory requirements under SSWBA regulations.

2.2.2 Existing Arrangements

All children who are looked after have an allocated social worker and a care plan which sets out their individual outcomes within the context of i) why the child needed to come into care; ii) the primary purpose and objective for the time that they are in care; iii) how their family and community relationships will be maintained and developed; iv) their educational arrangements; and v) their pathway plan to leave care.

The pathway plan assessment informs the young person pathway post 16 and sets out what support a young person will receive as part of their pathway to independence. Pathway planning for a child who is in care commences when they are 14 years of age. Pathway planning includes active consideration by the allocated social worker as to what support the child / young person will require to develop age-appropriate self-care and independent skills; together with some agreed personal outcomes and wellbeing goals around accommodation options, connection with family and other networks, levels of support, education / employment and so forth. From the age of 15 ½, a child is allocated a Personal Advisor who supports the pathway planning process jointly with the social worker. In some situations, particularly when it is something the young person wishes, pathway planning opens up further consideration as to whether it is safe and possible for the young person to return to live with their families. Where this is not possible there are currently a number of different options available as described below, which vary in terms of the type of accommodation and the level of support provided.

The current accommodation and support models available to care experienced young people (aged 16 – 21 years old) in Monmouthshire are:

- **When I am Ready placements** – this options allows a young person to remain in their previous foster placement. The foster-care receives a payment from the Local Authority and technically becomes the landlord. The model of care can transfer over anytime after the young person's 16th birthday. Given that the young person can remain in the placement post 18, this can provide continuity for the young person. The scheme has not seen a huge take up from foster carers, primarily as it limits their ability to foster.

Number of placements: 11

- **Independent Living** – is when a young person takes on their own tenancy independently, including a local authority or housing association tenancy, private tenancy, accommodation provided by a college or university, and house sharing

Number of placements: 7

- **Low level supported accommodation** - At present MCC has 2 provisions accommodating our Unaccompanied Asylum-seeking Children aged 16 plus. The accommodation and (low level) support element are provided by an external provider and offers floating support Monday to Friday, and access to an off-site house manager outside of this time. There is one 5-bed provision in Newport and one 4-bed provision in Cardiff.

Number of placements: 9

- **Semi-independent / Transitional Accommodation** – this is provided via supported hostels with self-contained accommodation and low to medium support for young people aged 16 – 24 including those with care experience or young people who are homeless. There are three provisions in Monmouthshire that we use for our 16 plus young people, all of which are provided by Pobl at:

Hill House (Chepstow) – which has 9 beds

Woodstock (Abergavenny) – which has 12 beds

Sunnyside (Chepstow) – which has 4 flats with floating support

Monmouthshire Children Services has access to 6 of these beds

As at 29.04.2024 the authority had 69 children/ young people who are currently being accommodated in residential care homes or with foster carers **who are 16+ or who will be turning 16 in the next 2 years**. Based on an understanding of their current care and support needs, many of these young people will require a step-down provision with medium to high support (such as the current project) to support them with their transition out of a care environment.

This table shows the placement types for the current 14 plus cohort of young people.

Placement Type	Children and Young People Placed in County	Children and Young People Placed Out of County	Total Number of Children and Young People
Monmouthshire Foster Carer	4	5	9
Independent Foster Carer	4	8	12
Monmouthshire Kinship Carer	13 (includes PWP)	4	17
Residential Care	6	9	15

Semi-independent / transitional accommodation (all 3 rd Party)	0	16	16
Total	27	42	69

Out of the above numbers **35** young people are **already aged 16 or over**. These young people are currently being accommodated in various placements type.

- 11 young people in UASC accommodation provisions
- 4 young people in Pobl accommodation provisions
- 3 young people in residential accommodation
- 4 young people accommodated by an IFA.
- 5 young people are with LA foster carers.
- 3 young people are with kinship carers.
- 5 young people are placed with a person with parental responsibility

To develop a prospective business case an initial group of 6 children have been identified who would benefit from a planned move into the property upon it being available for occupation. These children are currently in placements that are not best suited to their needs. The refurbishment of the property is required to provide safe and appropriate accommodation for five Monmouthshire CLA, currently residing in for-profit residential homes or short term foster care placements.

Based on an understanding of their individual care and support plans, the service has identified 6 children who would potentially benefit from a placement in the property. All young people are currently in either foster Care or a residential placement. Weekly costs associated with their current placement equate to £14,429.39. These costs are currently met through Children's Services revenue budget.

We have taken the mean cost of the 6 placements to produce a weekly cost of £2,404.90 per young person. This means that the current annual costs associated with 5 placements is £625,273.57 for a full year.

We have used a group of 6 children because, given the project development time, and as the wider cohort of young people who are looked after changes, it is unfeasible to accurately pin-down the exact 5 young people identified for the placement until more detailed work is undertaken. The group of 6 provides a reasonably accurate illustration of such young people as might benefit from a future placement at the property and their current associated costs.

The identified young people are:

- Currently are in residential and/foster care placements and are either assessed as ready to or are being supported in preparation of a step down from these provisions.
- Currently have needs that are assessed to be medium to high level needs, and as such will require the level of support to be provided at the current project.

2.2.3 Business Needs

Where we are now	ESSENTIAL Objectives of Business Case
Monmouthshire does not have existing any medium to high supported living placements	To develop a medium to high supported lodgings provision for up to 5 young people
Monmouthshire does not have experience of providing housing-based support	To contract with a suitable external provider who could provide good quality housing-based support
Provider fees for young people in residential or IFA provisions are negotiated on an annual basis	To reduce dependency on external provision and external fee-setting [in the context where a national lack of placement sufficiency is driving costs]
Young people do not always have the opportunity to fully develop independent living skills in an appropriately supportive environment	To appoint an experienced support provider to offer a stable, consistent environment, so that the young people can be encouraged to build their independent skills
Children are not placed near to their home and communities [being placed away from Monmouthshire leads to disrupted support and family relationships]	To increase opportunities to place children closer to their homes and communities allowing them to develop consistency and stability.
The Council is reliant on external placements to agree matching for children / young people and there is little opportunity for forward care planning across the cohort of children who are looked after	To increase the ability to forward plan and have greater control on matching, placement decisions and oversight on support.
Social care workers are required to travel to different parts of the country to visit individual children	To reduce the amount of travel time for the social care workforce
Children / young people are placed in a range of different organisations which do not support fully integrated working.	To increase opportunities for integrated working to ensure good outcomes for children / young people

2.2.4 Additional Benefits

This business case presents an opportunity for the Council to redevelop an existing asset to become a 5-bedroom supported living accommodation potentially utilising full grant funding. This will allow for sustainable improvements to be made to the property and its outside space including energy efficiency. As part of the refurbishment, we will be making every effort to increase the energy efficiency of the property with the aspirational A rating in mind. We plan to install solar panels to the roof making an approximate annual saving of £1,253 and upgrade the current central heating system to air source heat pumps.

The business case is in-keeping with the objectives of the Welsh Government and the Regional Integration Fund Capital programme. This means that there is a high likelihood of the Council being successful in its application for a grant to support the refurbishment costs in year 2024/25. Initial discussions with Regional Integration Fund Capital programme manager regarding the development of the property have been met with positivity, with all indications that the grant application will be successful.

2.2.5 Main Risks

The risks for this proposal fall into two main areas – property related risks and service-related risks.

Property Related Risks (to be completed by Ben Thorpe)

Risk	Mitigation
Unknown/excessive project costs.	Engage Property Services to compile detailed schedule of works & property specification and seek competitive quotations.
Availability and capacity of suitable building contractor.	Procure contractor on the basis of having the capacity to carry out the works within the required timescale.
Time delays in project completion due to unforeseen circumstances, project scheduling, changes in scope, or external factors beyond the project team’s control.	Complete detailed monitoring of the project through each stage from inception and planning to completion of works.
Property Title is assumed clean, free of any restrictions or encumbrances. Assumed property is registered with H M Land Registry as freehold with title absolute.	Legal due diligence to be carried out.
Condition of Property not fully known.	The property has been maintained and improved by the Council’s Property Services team for many years.
Structural works may be required - Assumed free from defect.	MCC Building Control to be contacted for comment on proposed structural alterations. Carry out structural survey and/or provide calculations as required.
Services - Detailed investigations of the property’s services have not been undertaken, however there is no change proposed to the existing. It is assumed that the services and	The property is connected to mains services including electricity, gas, water, and drainage.

<p>associated controls are in working order and free from defect.</p> <p>Planning – Existing use is C3 dwelling houses.</p> <p>Contamination and Hazardous Substances (i.e. Asbestos)</p> <p>Building Regulations risks</p>	<p>COU is not considered to be required given the proposed use is permitted development if required to change to C3(b).</p> <p>An asbestos report dated 2014 is available and identifies minimal low risk asbestos present in the property. A full R&D survey will be carried out prior to works commencing.</p> <p>If required following discussions with Building Control, survey works can be commissioned although it is not likely to be needed.</p>
<p>Improvement Works - The property requires general and specific improvement works to meet required standards and to safeguard the occupants. Associated costs are subject to survey findings and subsequent recommendations.</p>	<p>Schedule of works and specification to be determined by MCC Child Services, Property Services and Estates.</p>
<p>EPC - From the 1st of April 2018, under the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations 2015, all domestic and non-domestic rented property which are to have a new tenancy, must have an EPC rating of at least an “E”.</p>	<p>The property is a domestic property that will not be subject to the private rented market. The property has an Energy Performance Certificate (Cert. No. 1534-2724-0000-0318-7292) valid until April 2034, with an energy rating of D. Energy efficiency improvements are proposed including solar and new ASHP system.</p>

Service Related (Implementation) Risks

Risk	Mitigation
<p>Unable to secure a service provider</p>	<p>The Council will be using an Open Procurement Route via Sell2Wales. Several potential providers have expressed an interest in the tender. A Market Engagement Event held on the 22nd of March 2024 was attended by several provider agencies.</p>

Delays / inability to identify and match suitable young people who need the supported accommodation provision	<p>The service has an in-depth knowledge of individual young people and how they might match.</p> <p>Work is currently taking place to consider the whole cohort of children / young people who are looked after to consider potential candidates for the home.</p> <p>MCC will work with the region to offer up potential placements to achieve a good match / avoid voids (should the need arise)</p>
Repurposing costs exceed what is currently provided for.	There is a contingency for unexpected works in the costs and a process for additional grant funding application via the Notification of Event (NoE) process.
Unsuccessful grant application leading to MCC meeting cost of refurbishment.	<p>There has been regular contact with the grant funding team and indications are that the application will be viewed favourably. The return on investment this project represents is positive.</p> <p>Regular and detailed contact with grant funding team will be maintained to ensure compliance with application process.</p> <p>The costs of drawing down on borrowing have been factored into the business case.</p>

Wider Service Risks

Risk	Mitigation
Commissioned service provider provides poor quality service	Quality of service is heavily weighted within the service specification and evaluation process. There will be ongoing contract monitoring.
There is a 10-year purpose period as a condition of grant award with claw back if it is not used for its intended purpose.	Commissioning data and projections of children who need looked after or care leaving services are not expected to fall to the extent that this provision would not be required within a 10 year period.
The property is not required to provide placements for care experienced children in the future.	The property could be re-purposed for several different uses; a business case and options appraisal would be undertaken.

Service provider gives notice on the contract or are unable to meet the terms of the contract	On-going partnership work will be in place to support the provider in all aspects of service delivery.
Any delay in implementation may impact on the ability to fully meet savings proposals for 2024/25	<p>The service is contingency planning for when potential placement moves for children are not achieved (which can arise for a number of reasons).</p> <p>Care and progression planning across the overall cohort of children looked after should allow for other potential positive movement and changes within placements for children which present opportunities for savings.</p> <p>On-going budget monitoring is in place to highlight as and when any additional measures need to be put in place.</p>
Risk of voids	If voids arise, and there are no young people identified within Monmouthshire who will need the placement in the short-term, there is potential to 'sell' the placement to another Local Authority.

2.2.6 Constraints

If capital costs are supported or fully met through the Housing with Care capital grant (or any other capital grant) this will considerably reduce the borrowing costs for the Council.

However, there will be constraints around the use of the property going forward (i.e. to provide a service in keeping with a provision for care experienced young people / children who are looked after / with complex needs) and a requirement to pay back in the event of the property being repurposed or sold. The term for these constraints is 10 years. These constraints do not outweigh the benefits of securing a capital grant to support the proposal.

2.2.7 Dependencies

Operational delivery is dependent on approval of a suitable provider via the authority’s procurement framework.

3. OPTIONS ANALYSIS

3.1 Critical Success Factors

- The property is repurposed to a high standard.
- A capital grant is received to reduce any borrowing strain on the Council.

- A service provider is successfully appointed and a contract and monitoring arrangements are in place.
- The first cohort of children successfully matched and in-situ.
- Young people achieve good outcomes through their placement in the new scheme.
- Young people are supported to move on to living independently.

3.2 Main Options

Table 1: Summary of Options Appraisals

Summary of Options Appraisals

OPTION 1	Do Nothing
Description	The Local Authority does not develop the property as a supported accommodation scheme and continues to commission placements through housing options or spot-purchasing from the external market
Net Costs	£0 however, the council would lose the potential to generate any savings against the current spend of £625,273.57 (based on illustrative cohort of children)
Advantages	The Council will avoid any of the implementation or wider risks identified above.
Disadvantages	Leaves the Council with an on-going deficit of supported accommodation placements for young people.
Conclusion	Not recommended
<hr/>	
OPTION 2	Do Minimal
Description	Do not proceed with the refurbishment of this property and seek alternatives.
Net Costs	£0 however, the council would lose the potential to generate any savings against the current spend of £625,273.57 (based on illustrative cohort of children)
Advantages	The council would not utilise its current borrowing headroom, which would then be retained for an alternative, potentially more suitable / less costly property.
Disadvantages	On-going searches for potentially suitable properties within Monmouthshire have been undertaken and are on-going. Suitable properties for development do not come onto the market frequently; and there are limited options in respect of re-purposing existing assets. Delay in identifying an alternate suitable property would delay the opportunity to develop a supported accommodation provision by an indefinite, potentially extended, period.
Conclusion	Not recommended
<hr/>	
OPTION 3	Repurpose the property and provide the support in-house
Description	Proceed with the refurbishment and look to provide the support element in-house rather than through a 3 rd party

Net Costs	Not Known
Advantages	Children’s services would retain full autonomy and decisions about the provision would be made entirely by the service. There would be no requirement to procure a service or for contract monitoring. The service would be required to build an in-house workforce which could be scaled up in required.
Disadvantages	The service would lose the opportunity to partner with a 3 rd party provider with expertise in providing housing-based support.
Conclusion	NOT RECOMMENDED
OPTION 4	Redevelopment of the property with 3rd party service delivery
Description	The Local Authority proceeds with the development of the property but seeks to commission a suitable partner to provide the support
Net Costs	Based on similar models, the weekly anticipated cost for an external provider would be £1,355.88 per week per bed, equating to an annual revenue cost of £352,531.
Advantages	This would mean that the delivery and implementation risks are shared with another organisation who are vastly experienced in the delivery of post 16 housing based support and will enable us to appropriately match children based on the level of support required. This fully supports the wider strategic aims of the council in terms of developing in-house / regional sufficiency. It is felt that currently the provider market for supported living is sufficiently developed to generate a competitive response to a tender.
Disadvantages	A partnership arrangement would reduce the level of autonomy that the council has in terms of care planning and matching.
Conclusion	Recommended

3.3 Recommended option

Option 4 is the recommended option.

4. PROCUREMENT ROUTE

Works for the refurbishment will be procured through normal council arrangements utilising the framework contractors.

For the support element, the Council will be using an Open Procurement Route via Sell2Wales. A Prior Information Notice (PIN) was issued via Sell2Wales on the 5th of February 2024, with several potential providers expressing an interest in the tender by the 11th of March 2024. A Market Engagement Event was held on the 22nd of March 2024 which was attended by several provider agencies. The Tender will be officially published via Sell2Wales subject to business case approval.

5. FUNDING AND AFFORDABILITY

CAPITAL Costs of Refurbishment

The Local Authority has applied to Welsh Government for a £300,000 capital grant to repurpose the property via the Housing with Care Fund 2024/25 (HCF). This would provide a 100% grant funded resource for the development of provision, in line with the elimination of profit agenda. We will continue to monitor the progress of this application as we progress with this project.

There is the acknowledgement that we will enter the initial stages of repurposing without grant approval and therefore at a degree of risk.

We have mitigated the risk of non-approval via our robust partnership and consultation with the Capital Projects Team at ABUHB. The return on investment this project represents is extremely high with a five-bedroom accommodation being developed for £300,000. All indications are we have a very strong case, and our application will be successful. The process can take up to 2 months for full approval.

We require access to the capital borrowing headroom pending the HCF grant application being submitted and approved; or in the event that it is not approved.

In light of the above we have modelled both scenarios i) that the capital scheme is fully funded via a grant and ii) that the capital element is met through prudential borrowing.

The revenue costs of prudential borrowing are already factored into the Council's medium term treasury budgets and therefore there are no consequential borrowing cost implications on the Children's services budget. However, for transparency and to aid in a meaningful like-for-like comparison between the existing model of service delivery and this proposal, an indicative annual borrowing cost has been included within the business case calculation.

Annual Revenue Costs

Currently, the cost of providing the care and support that will be replaced through the development of this property is approximately £625,273.57 over 5 children (based on illustrative cohort of 6 children currently in spot-purchased provision). The cost of commissioning the support element of the scheme has been calculated based on an equivalent service model in a neighbouring authority (i.e. Local Authority owned property with a 3rd party contract to provide the care).

Taking into account the varying cost impact of the 2 potential borrowing scenarios as above, we have modelled the revenue costs against a 100% occupancy rate and an 80% occupancy rate.

These tables are illustrative because the identified savings / or the impact on savings arising from a void cannot be easily identified due to the variability of existing package of care. Equally, there may be situations where placements result in cost avoidance. This potential saving has been profiled into the overall £1.3m Children’s Services practice change mandate for 2024/25. As the project is scheduled to come online in the later part of the year, part savings will fall into 2025/26 as a consequence. Any delay in implementation may impact on the ability to fully meet savings proposals for 2024/25 (see wider service risks).

80% occupancy is a cautious approach which we have adopted given the importance of matching children and allowing appropriate time for transitions particularly during the early period of the residential home.

Based on 100% occupancy

Annual Revenue Costs	Based on successful HCF application	Based on borrowing to complete the repurposing
	£	£
Service Provider Contract	300,000	300,000
General Maintenance	10,000	10,000
Service Manager 0.5FTE	42,531	42,531
Annual repayment costs (over a 25 year period) set at rates on 08/05/2024	0	21,303
TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE COSTS	352,531	373,834
ANNUAL REVENUE PACKAGES TO FUND COSTS		
Average cost of identified current care packages paid through the Children’s budget	(625,273)	(625,273)
Based on 100% occupancy POTENTIAL ANNUAL REVENUE SAVINGS	272,742	251,439

Based on 80% occupancy

Annual Revenue Costs	Based on successful HCF application	Based on borrowing to complete the repurposing
	£	£
TOTAL ANNUAL REVENUE COSTS	352,531	373,834
ANNUAL REVENUE PACKAGES TO FUND COSTS		
Average cost of identified current care packages paid through the Children's budget	(625,273)	(625,273)
Based on 80% occupancy POTENTIAL ANNUAL REVENUE SAVINGS	218,193	201,151

Revenue Generation (if applicable)

If voids arise, and there are no children identified within Monmouthshire who will need the placement in the short-term, there is potential to 'sell' the placement to another Local Authority. Standard practice for inter Local Authority purchasing of placements is to charge a mark-up of 20% of the weekly cost which would equate to £1,627 per bed per week (with HCF contribution) £1,725 per bed per week (without HCF contribution).

6. DELIVERY ARRANGEMENTS

Key milestones and indicative timelines

- Submit HCF application May 2024 (completed)
- Framework Contractors Mini Tender May 2024
- Appoint Contractor June 2024
- Commencement of Works July 2024
- Appoint Service Provider July 2024
- Service Provider Contract Commencement - August/September 2024
- Completion of Works October 2024
- Provision becomes operational November 2024/January 2025.

Delivery Arrangements

Task	Person Responsible	Time frame	Reports to
Project management for refurbishment and improvement	Property services Ben Thorpe Nick Perry	17/06/24 – 09/09/24	Nicholas Keyes
Service specification and Contract with Service Provider	Craig Williams	29/07/24 ongoing	Jane Rodgers
Development of the service in-line with service specification	Lupupa Nshimbi	29/07/24 – October 2024	Diane Corrister
Care planning and transition arrangements for young people who are identified as suitable to be placed in the new provision	Lupupa Nshimbi	Ongoing	Diane Corrister
On-going contract monitoring	Craig Williams	Quarterly	Jane Rodgers
Oversight of young people placed in the scheme	Lupupa Nshimbi in partnership with the external provider.)	Ongoing	Diane Corrister

Contingency Plan

The need for a contingency might arise if it becomes clear that the development of the property won't be achieved, or no suitable providers respond to the tender, or no suitable children are identified to move in. In this case contingency options will be considered follows:

- The council will review the specification and re-tender for either the works or the support element.
- The council will look at the option of developing the support element in-house.
- The council will seek to sell individual residential placements to neighbouring Local Authorities.
- The council will liaise with the regional partnership board to seek a change of use for the property in keeping with the objectives of the council and the overall objectives of the capital programme (to avoid claw back).
- The property could be re-purposed for several different uses; a business case and options appraisal would be undertaken.

DRAFT



Integrated Impact Assessment document

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

<p>Name of the Officer Jane Rodgers Chief Officer, Social Care, Safeguarding & Health</p> <p>Phone no: E-mail: janerodgers@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	<p>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</p> <p>This impact assessment will look at the impact of the redevelopment of a 5-bedroom supported accommodation provision in Caldicot.</p>
<p>Name of Service area</p> <p>Social Care and Health Directorate, Children's Services</p>	<p>Date</p> <p>15/04/24</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	This development will positively impact our young people, specifically those who are looked after, by ensuring that they have increased opportunities to get the support they need closer to their homes and communities.	None identified at this point	None identified at this point
Disability	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic

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	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic
Marriage or civil partnership	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic
Pregnancy or maternity	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic
Race	.There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic
Religion or Belief	.There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic
Sex	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic

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	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on people who share the protected characteristic

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

The business case seeks to increase the sufficiency of appropriate placements closer to home for care experienced children and supports the repatriation of Monmouthshire children back into the county. The provision will enable care experienced young people to develop their life skills and support their pathway to independence so that their future life chances and economic mobility are improved. The provision is designed for care experienced young people who have medium to high support needs, which is currently a gap in provision. This additional stepping stone approach will help vulnerable young people sustain future stable accommodation and tenancies.

Bringing young people closer to their families and support networks will ensure there are reduced socio-economic barriers for parents and guardians to engage with their children.

The development of accommodation close to community resources will reduce the economic impact on the young people when accessing EET, with transport infrastructure becoming more accessible.

There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a negative impact on people who are socio-economically disadvantaged.

Placement of young people closer to home and communities to improve social and economic mobility where appropriate. Ensuring the project is close to schools, employment opportunities, youth and health services to enhance the opportunities for supporting our young people to achieve their personal wellbeing outcomes and become more independent.

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	The proposals will be neutral in relation to opportunities to use the Welsh language and will not treat the Welsh language less favorably than the English language. The proposal will ensure young people remain in Wales and enable them to maintain connections to the Welsh language.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a negative impact on the Welsh language.	All supporting documents, information and surveys are available in Welsh upon request
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	All adverts and tender specifications will be available in Welsh and will be advertised via the Sell2Wales procurement website. We are not currently implementing an authority led operational delivery team, therefore there will be no formal recruitment linked to this project.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a negative impact on the Welsh language.	Any future recruitment will be undertaken through the medium of English and Welsh and all documents displayed bilingually on the council website and social media channels. Applicants will be invited to apply in Welsh if that is their preference.
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Welsh language and reference to Welsh culture will be actively encouraged in the home, this will be stipulated with the service provider at award of contract. Non-Welsh speakers will be encouraged to use incidental Welsh in everyday communications.	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will have a negative impact on the Welsh language.	Development of bilingual policies and procedures to be available on request.

	All policies and procedures implemented within the home will be available in Welsh on request.		
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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	Utilising local property related services and contractors in the refurbishment of the home boosting local economy.	This proposal will also provide new jobs for supported accommodation staff.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and land, river and coastal ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	We aim to increase the properties EPC rating to A, reducing carbon emissions and ensuring sustainability is at the heart of the development. Examples include the installation of an air source heat pump and solar panels. We intend to install planting areas in the garden to encourage sustainability and support biodiversity. Young people will be encouraged to develop their environmental awareness.	Close proximity to public transport links will reduce the reliance on private transport, reducing the carbon footprint. Using framework contractors who are compliant with environmental legislation in relation to materials and the disposal of waste
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood	Children and young people will be living in their communities and close to support networks, thus improving their sense of identity and general wellbeing. The support provider will ensure the mental and physical health of the young people is monitored and supported	The proposal will contribute to the improved emotional wellbeing of young people, who have access to local services and maintaining links to their family and community. Bringing our children looked after back to Monmouthshire will mean we can work more closely with our local partner's where good relationships have

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>where necessary, encouraging them to be active and eat well will be at the heart of this.</p> <p>Young people will be supported to engage with activities which increase self-esteem and confidence, leading to better mental health and sense of purpose.</p>	<p>already been built to ensure that the young person has the best access to services and their physical, emotional and mental needs are being met.</p>
<p>A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</p>	<p>Our young people will be able to connect with their local community and benefit from the excellent community support on offer. They will be supported to positively engage in their community and contribute where they can, to promote cohesive community links.</p> <p>This can be achieved by engaging with education, employment and training, joining community clubs and groups and taking pride in where they live.</p>	<p>Bringing our young people closer to home to maintain connections with families, communities, and school placements. As they grow and develop into adulthood, there is a greater possibility that they will remain in Monmouthshire as adults.</p> <p>Close collaboration with neighbourhood groups, police and community groups will ensure we maintain cohesive and positive relationships and address any concerns in a proactive and empathetic manner.</p>
<p>A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p>Living inside of Monmouthshire and Wales will enable our young people to take ownership for their future and contribute to the development of Wales.</p> <p>By repurposing an existing MCC asset we are minimising the requirement for new materials and reducing the carbon footprint associated with their production and transportation. It also helps to prevent urban sprawl, as repurposing existing buildings means we can make better use of the space we already have, rather than building on greenfield sites.</p>	<p>This proposal will keep young people in county and in country. It will promote links to families and communities.</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?
<p>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</p>	<p>Children and young people are enabled to live and grow in communities which represent their own language and culture. Use of the Welsh language and reference to Welsh culture will be encouraged by the service provider.</p>	<p>Welsh language and reference to Welsh culture will be actively encouraged in the home.</p> <p>Non-Welsh speakers will be encouraged to use incidental Welsh in everyday communications.</p>
<p>A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p>The creation of this provision will provide the young people with a supportive environment which will provide the young people the skills that are required to step down into supported accommodation with a lower intensity of support and ultimately into independent accommodation provision. This provision will provide stability and structure for the children and ensure their life experiences do not inhibit their development and progression.</p>	<p>Regular reviewing of progress linked to mutually agreed targets with the young people. These will relate to developing their skills, knowledge and qualities with the intention of becoming self-sufficient and responsible adults.</p>

4. 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>Significant emphasis has and will continue to be placed on the long-term care and pathway planning and reviewing arrangements for these children and young people. Utilising the momentum of the Welsh Government manifesto pledge to ‘eliminate’ profit from children’s social care by April 2027.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>	<p>During the redevelopment process we have and will continue to engage with a number of local contractors to deliver the desired objectives.</p> <p>Collaboration with the service provider will be fundamental to the success of the home. This will be an on-going and tightly monitored relationship.</p> <p>In addition, collaboration with the Gwent regional partnership board will be a key collaboration in coordinating the HCF funding application.</p>	<p>None identified</p>
 <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>	<p>The transitional arrangements for these young people will be managed in detail. Key internal stakeholders have been engaged in the design and inception of the provision including property and planning colleagues. All council governance has been adhered to, to ensure all members are briefed on proposals. Specific Ward Members will be consulted further and kept abreast of all developments.</p> <p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p>	<p>Continued dialogue with children, home visits, managed transitions into education, training and employment</p> <p>Public engagement events with neighbours and community groups to ensure a harmonious and positive inception to the project and continued local support.</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>Children Services works to the earliest possible intervention, preventing problems occurring or getting worse. The introduction of the 'Going home staying home' team in Monmouthshire highlights the focus on this. Where appropriate in-house placement can act as a stepping stone to support a child or young-person to leave care in a planned way.</p> <p>A 24 hour support provision will provide the daily support for the young people. Ensuring their needs are met on a proactive basis, identifying any issues as they arise, preventing escalation and incident.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>
 <p>Integration</p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p>	<p>The proposal allows children and young people to become integrated into the local community, they will be encouraged to engage in community activities such as Mon life and Mon Sport. They will have access to local education, employment and training as well as statutory healthcare facilities. These measure will ensure they are integrated into the community.</p>	<p>None identified at this point</p>

5. 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	Safeguarding will be at the heart of developing this provision for our young people. The home will be quality assured via the service provider's governance arrangements, will be subject to review and scrutiny from Childrens Services and will have detailed safeguarding arrangements in place.	The proposal will not bring a negative impact to safeguarding.	None identified at this point
Corporate Parenting	By developing this supported accommodation provision we are enhancing the council's corporate parenting role by providing a local authority scheme specifically for our young people. This will enable improved care experiences for young people and will allow good oversight of the individualised support that is provided.	The proposal will not bring a negative impact on corporate parenting.	None identified at this point

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

Commissioning Data

As at 29.04.2024 the authority had 69 children/ young people who are currently being accommodated in residential care homes or with foster carers **who are 16+ or who will be turning 16 in the next 2 years**. Based on an understanding of their current care and support needs, many of these young people will require a step-down provision with medium to high support (such as the current project) to support them with their transition out of a care environment.

This table shows the placement types for the current 14 plus cohort of young people.

Placement Type	Children and Young People Placed in County	Children and Young People Placed Out of County	Total Number of Children and Young People
Monmouthshire Foster Carer	4	5	9
Independent Foster Carer	4	8	12
Monmouthshire Kinship Carer	13 (includes PWP)	4	17
Residential Care	6	9	15
Semi-independent / transitional accommodation (all 3 rd Party)	0	16	16
Total	27	42	69

Out of the above numbers **35** young people are **already aged 16 or over**. These young people are currently being accommodated in various placements type.

- 11 young people in UASC accommodation provisions
- 4 young people in Pobl accommodation provisions
- 3 young people in residential accommodation
- 4 young people accommodated by an IFA.
- 5 young people are with LA foster carers.
- 3 young people are with kinship carers.
- 5 young people are placed with a person with parental responsibility

Financial Data - including the costs associated with a representative group of young people; revenue costs of running the scheme and borrowing costs to undertake the proposed renovations to the property. This has allowed us to undertake financial modelling on both 100% and 80% occupancy levels.

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

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

Positives

Our project proposes to repatriate Monmouthshire children. Bringing our children back into our communities where they can access local education, employment opportunities and youth services that will support their social development and increase their social and economic mobility.

The ability to create a bespoke provision that meets the needs of the young people, moving them forward in their development in a supportive environment, until they are ready to transition into more independent accommodation.

Safeguarding for our young people will be improved with increased oversight of the support being delivered. MCC will have the opportunity to have full design of the support delivery specification.

Bringing young people closer to their families and support networks will see reduced socio-economic barriers.

This proposal will represent a financial saving, with the redistribution of revenue currently being spent in the private sector and out of county being redirected to our service. This proposal will also provide new jobs in the community with the procurement of a service provider to manage the home.

The proposal will contribute to the improved emotional wellbeing of young people, having greater access to local services and maintaining links to their family and community.

Negatives

Preparation is required in order to ensure the Welsh language is present and encouraged within the home. Welsh language and culture development may be needed for both young people and staff.

Community engagement will need to be at the forefront of the development moving forward as this may represent a barrier if not managed correctly and communities are not well informed.

8. 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
Cabinet	22 nd May 2024	Jane Rodgers
Engage with ward member and local community	April / May 2024	Jane Rodgers

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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	Cabinet	22nd May 2024	