

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 10 September 2025

## Notice of meeting

## County Council

**Thursday, 18th September, 2025 at 2.00 pm,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA**

## AGENDA

*Prayers will be said prior to the Council meeting at 1.45pm. All members are welcome to join the  
Chair for prayers should they wish to do.*

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Chair's Announcement	1 - 2
4.	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held at 10:00am on the 17th July 2025	3 - 4
5.	To confirm the minutes of the meeting held at 14:00pm on the 17th July 2025	5 - 14
6.	Public Question:	
6.1.	<b>Submitted by Mr. Peter Short</b>  Will the Council immediately consider divesting from all 'complicit' companies and exert pressure on the Greater Gwent (Torfaen) Local Government Pension Fund, and through them on the Wales Pension Partnership, to divest from all complicit companies. To not do so would seem to be contrary to both Monmouthshire's, Torfaen's and the Wales Pension Partnership's 'Responsible Investment Policy'.	
7.	Reports to Council	
7.1.	Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2024/25	15 - 114

## **8. Motions to Council**

### **8.1. Submitted by County Councillor Ian Chandler**

This Council notes with grave concern the ongoing humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza and the widespread international calls for an immediate ceasefire.

Council further notes the findings of the United Nations and respected human rights organisations that serious breaches of international humanitarian law are being committed, including the targeting of civilians and the obstruction of essential aid.

Council recognises its responsibility to ensure that public money, including its own investments and those of the Greater Gwent Pension Fund, is used in a manner consistent with our values of peace, human rights, and respect for international law.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Review its own investments and request that those of the Greater Gwent Pension Fund are reviewed to identify any direct or indirect holdings in companies that are supplying arms, military technology, or logistical support which enable breaches of international law in Gaza;
2. Work with its asset managers to take steps to end such investments and request that the Greater Gwent Pension Fund does the same; and
3. Report back to Council within three months on progress made.

### **8.2. Submitted by County Councillor Emma Bryn**

Following the announcement in August that Monmouthshire has joined the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities:

- *The WHO Network which commits to listening to the needs of their ageing population, assess and monitor their age-friendliness, and work collaboratively with older people to create age-friendly physical and social environments.*

This Council agrees that it will support towns and communities to becoming better places to grow older and resolves to increase its investment and focus on enhancing highway infrastructure to improve residents' mobility beyond private vehicles and to advance the reporting and recording of footway taxonomy required to achieve this within the county.

### **8.3. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John**

This Council:

Recognises the significant contribution the Bridges Centre in Monmouth makes to the lives of residents across Monmouthshire.

Calls upon the Cabinet to seek an affordable and fair agreement with the trustees of the Bridges Centre to secure its long-term future.

### **8.4. Submitted by County Councillor Richard John**

This Council:

Calls upon the administration to set out its plans to tackle surplus places in the Monmouth and Chepstow clusters.

**8.5. Submitted by County Councillor Lisa Dymock**

This Council notes that access to affordable childcare is essential for parents/guardians seeking to return to work and that the current Welsh Government childcare offer provides funded childcare from the age three to four, while in England parents will now be entitled to 30 hours per week funded childcare starting at nine months.

This Council believes that Monmouthshire families should not face such high childcare costs and this Council therefore resolves to write to Welsh Government to call for an extension of the current childcare offer to match the entitlement in England by providing free childcare from nine months old.

**9. Member Questions**

**9.1. From County Councillor Jan Butler to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services**

Changes in treatment modalities have resulted in residents who previously held blue badges for their medical condition being refused renewal. Neither their underlining condition nor the disability they might cause will have gone away.

It is usual in the case of refusal for applicants to be referred to an independent assessor: *the designated assessor, Able2 (a subsidiary of Nottingham Rehab Ltd), is no longer operational following the parent company's closure on 31st July 2025.*

What measures are being put in place to correct these two issues?

**9.2. From County Councillor Alistair Neill to County Councillor Catrin Maby Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

Some two months after private construction work by European Energy began, using large heavy trucks on the narrow lanes adjoining the B4598, there is still no construction traffic management plan in place, communicated to local residents, and being implemented. The consequence has been entirely avoidable chaotic problems for local residents either in 'stand-offs' with large trucks or convoys, or reversing hundreds of yards, potentially compromising safety. Would the cabinet member please ensure that the draft plan is immediately fully communicated and implemented and take this matter up with the planning authority, the Welsh Government?

**9.3. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the road safety review of Welsh Street, Chepstow that was promised by herself on behalf of the council's Traffic Team at full council in March of this year.

**9.4. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

Could the Cabinet Member provide an update on the review of the B4235 junction (particularly the road-markings and signage) off St Lawrence Road in Chepstow that was agreed at full council in March of this year.

<b>10.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting - 23rd October 2025</b>	
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**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive / Prif Weithredwr**

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Rachel Buckler	Devauden;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Laura Wright	Grofield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tony Kear	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Catrin Maby	Drybridge;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jan Butler	Goetre Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Ian Chandler	Llantilio Crossenny;	Green Party
County Councillor Sara Burch	Cantref;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Alistair Neill	Gobion Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Su McConnel	Croesonen;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Mary Ann Brocklesby	Llanelly Hill;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Fay Bromfield	Llangybi Fawr;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jane Lucas	Osbaston;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Emma Bryn	Wyesham;	Independent Group
County Councillor Peter Strong	Rogiet;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells	Llanbadoc & Usk;	Independent
County Councillor Paul Griffiths	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong	Caldicot Cross;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Garrick	Caldicot Castle;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Maria Stevens	Severn;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Steven Garratt	Overmonnow;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Angela Sandles	Magor East with Undy;	Labour and Co-Operative Party
County Councillor Ben Callard	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor John Crook	Magor East with Undy;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies	Llanfoist & Govilon;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Dale Rooke	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Sue Riley	Bulwark and Thornwell;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jayne McKenna	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Jill Bond	West End;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Louise Brown	Shirenewton;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Lisa Dymock	Portskewett;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Tony Easson	Dewstow;	Independent Socialist
County Councillor Christopher Edwards	St. Kingsmark;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Simon Howarth	Llanelly Hill;	Independent Group
County Councillor Richard John	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor David Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	Mardy;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Phil Murphy	Caerwent;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martin Newell	Town;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Paul Pavia	Mount Pleasant;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell	Pen Y Fal;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Frances Taylor	Magor West;	Independent Group

County Councillor Tudor Thomas  
County Councillor Armand Watts  
County Councillor Ann Webb

Park;  
Bulwark and Thornwell;  
St Arvans;

Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
Welsh Conservative Party

## Public Information

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### Watch this meeting online

This meeting can be viewed online either live or following the meeting by visiting [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk) or by visiting our Youtube page by searching MonmouthshireCC.

### Welsh Language

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

### Public Speaking at Full Council

Members of the public may register to ask a question of the members of cabinet at full council meetings. There is no facility for the public to register to speak as part of the debate of an item on the agenda at full council meetings. The total time allocated for all questions at a meeting of full council is 15 minutes.

No more than one question is permitted per questioner at a meeting of full council and questions will be asked in the order that they are submitted.

In order to submit a question at a full council meeting, notice must be given in writing or by email to the head of democratic services no later than midnight three working days before the day of the meeting with each question providing the name and address of the questioner.

Questions may be rejected if the question;

- Is not about a matter for which the council has responsibility or which affects the county
- Is defamatory, frivolous or offensive
- Is substantially the same question which has been put at a meeting of full council in the past 6 months
- Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information

Where a person is not able to ask the question to full council in person, the chair may decide to read the question out on their behalf, instruct a written response be provided or choose to not deal with the question in their absence. Those who do ask a question in person will be entitled to one supplementary question which must arise out of the original question or the reply. The chair may reject a supplementary question on these grounds.

Any questions that cannot be dealt with at the meeting due to exceeding the time limit for public questions will be dealt with by a written response.

# 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.





## Report for Council 22<sup>nd</sup> July – 14<sup>th</sup> September

Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> August 12 p.m.	Food and Fun school-based education programme Caldicot Comprehensive School
Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> August 12 p.m.	Food and Fun school-based education programme Thornwell Primary School
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> August 10 a.m.	VJ Day 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary flag raising ceremony County Hall, Usk
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> August	Caldicot VJ Commemoration service and Caldicot Community Garden Open Day
Friday 15 <sup>th</sup> August 2 p.m.	VJ Day 80 Remembrance Service Pavillion, Rogiet
Tuesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 11 a.m.	Citizenship Ceremony Registrars Office, Usk
Sunday 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2 p.m.	Monmouth Town Civic Service The Priory Church of St Mary the Virgin, Monmouth
Tuesday 9 <sup>th</sup> September 10.30 a.m.	Music for Memories Community Launch Chepstow Hospital
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> September 10 a.m..	Judging at the Usk Show Secretary's Tent, Usk Showground
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> September 12.30 p.m.	President & Patron's Lunch Usk Show
Saturday 13 <sup>th</sup> September 7 p.m.	Caldicot Male Voice Choir – Gala Concert Caldicot Choir Hall
Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> September	Meet Army Veteran Darren Foote at the finish – The Long Trek Home Ebbw Vale RFC

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
on Thursday, 17th July, 2025 at 10.00 am**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor Peter Strong (Chair)  
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Sara Burch, Su McConnel, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Dale Rooke, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, M. Newell, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
Matthew Gatehouse	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Ian Chandler, Alistair Neill, Maria Stevens, Tomos Davies, Lisa Dymock and Tony Easson

1. **To exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information**

Accepted.

2. **Appointment of Chief Officer - Infrastructure**

Council resolved to appoint Debra Hill-Howells as Chief Officer Infrastructure.

3. **Appointment of Chief Officer - Place and Community Well-being**

Council resolved to appoint Craig O'Connor as Chief Officer Place and Community Well-being.

**The meeting ended at 12.40 pm**

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 5

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
on Thursday, 17th July, 2025 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:** County Councillor Peter Strong (Chair)  
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Rachel Buckler, Laura Wright, Tony Kear, Catrin Maby, Jan Butler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Su McConnel, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Steven Garratt, Angela Sandles, Ben Callard, John Crook, Tomos Davies, Dale Rooke, Sue Riley, Jayne McKenna, Jill Bond, Louise Brown, Lisa Dymock, Tony Easson, Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth, Richard John, David Jones, Penny Jones, Malcolm Lane, Phil Murphy, M. Newell, Paul Pavia, Maureen Powell, Frances Taylor, Tudor Thomas and Ann Webb

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Will McLean	Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance
Deb Hill-Howells	Chief Officer Infrastructure
Craig O'Connor	Chief Officer, Place and Community Well-being

### **APOLOGIES:**

County Councillors Ian Chandler, Maria Stevens and Armand Watts

#### **1. Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **2. Chair's Announcement**

Noted.

#### **3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th June 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2025 were accepted as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

#### **4. Reports to Council**

#### **5. Chepstow Integrated Transport LUF Project**

The Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development presented the report to seek approval from the County Council to proceed with the Chepstow LUF project and the allocation of £1,407,692 of capital match funding.

**Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendations:**

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 17th July, 2025 at 2.00 pm**

- Council agrees to proceed with the Chepstow LUF project and authorises officers to commence the on-boarding process.
- Council agrees to underwrite capital match funding of £1,407,692 to be drawn down between the financial years 25/26 and 28/29.
- Council asks the Cabinet Member and Officers to use best endeavours to displace the need to draw on capital through the alternative funding mechanisms.
- Council delegates to the Chief Officer Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member, discretion to develop the overall project through ongoing engagement with local Members, Chepstow Town Council and community stakeholders to maximise the benefits of the scheme within the approved budget and LUF parameters.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **6. Strategic Director, Children, Learning and Economy Annual Report**

The Strategic Director, Learning, Skills and Economy presented his annual report to provide members with a strategic overview of the status and performance of Monmouthshire's education system, highlighting an informed perspective on MCC system's key strengths, areas for development, emerging risks, and opportunities for development.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **7. Motions to Council**

#### **8. Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor**

Withdrawn.

#### **9. Submitted by County Councillor Lisa Dymock**

*This Council:*

- *Regrets that the administration's adoption of statutory distances to qualify for home to school transport will cause financial hardship and logistical difficulties for many Monmouthshire families.*
- *Instructs the cabinet to ensure that all families whose eligibility has changed are directly contacted, setting out their rights to appeal, committing to an assessment of whether a safe walking route exists, and expediting all appeals and complaints processes in light of the short notice to many parents ahead of the September school year.*
- *Commits to working with schools, parents, and community groups to explore safe, affordable transport alternatives for those affected.*

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

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **10. Member Questions**

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 17th July, 2025 at 2.00 pm

**11. From County Councillor Emma Bryn to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on what the Council is doing to ensure the safety of pedestrians who are forced to walk the 200m along the 60mph pavement-less section of A466 at Redbrook. Residents and visitors have had to run the gauntlet on this stretch of road to access or leave the village along Wye Valley Walk for many years and the road is not getting any quieter.*

The Cabinet Member had spoken with highways and the countryside team about the matter and they were trying to find and implement a solution. They were looking at both interim and long-term improvements. The corridor is quite constrained and unlikely to be wide enough for a fully compliant footway, but one possible solution would be a narrower metalled service surface to make it a little bit better than the existing muddy verge which would improve pedestrian safety and accessibility, particularly during periods of wet weather.

In the short term, additional signage was being installed to alert motorists to the presence of pedestrians in the carriageway. Vegetation management also needs to be prioritised so that people don't have to step out into the road. She added that there was an alternative route via Duffield Lane and Wyesham Lane which provides a restricted by-way into Wyesham but this was not a direct riverside route so may not be suitable for all users.

As a supplementary Councillor Bryn asked for a timeframe, especially regarding the road signs. The Cabinet Member replied that she could not provide a time frame but could talk to officers and ask them to confirm what is possible.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

**12. From County Councillor Rachel Buckler to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services**

*Does the Cabinet Member for Social Care believe the new domiciliary care arrangements in South Monmouthshire are progressing as expected and does he still consider his decision the right one?*

The Chair advised that the Cabinet Member was not in attendance and would provide a written response to the question. He invited Councillor Buckler to add a supplementary which was that Council acknowledge the distress and risk this caused and that assurance is given that such chaotic transitions do not happen again.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

*Councillors Howarth, Kear, Bromfield, Rooke and Thomas left the meeting at 17:27*

**13. From County Councillor Alistair Neill to County Councillor Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources**

*In 2024/25 our Monmouthshire pupils were funded at nearly £600 per pupil below the Wales average, a substantial gap. For the previous year, 2023/24, funding was £400 per pupil below the Wales average, making a two-year total of Monmouthshire pupils being funded at £1,000 below the Wales average. Funding per pupil is determined by each local authority and in those*

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*2 years Monmouthshire County Council increased council tax by 14%. Should this large increase in council tax not have ensured our funding per pupil was at least at the Wales average?*

The Cabinet Member responded that the authority has faced financial challenges, and pupils in Monmouthshire schools have not been funded above the average since 2017. He added that in this year's budget, with the additional £1,000,000 put into schools budget which was on top of the full pay awards for both teaching and non-teaching staff, based on the latest Welsh Government statistics, we were now funding above the Welsh average and are committed to continue to seek further investment in our schools.

As a supplementary Councillor Neill asked that the Administration recognise that our schools and our pupils deserve the very best and prioritise support for our pupils and our teachers. Councillor Callard replied that in investing the additional £1,000,000 they have shown support towards our schools, that this Council carries many priorities which are of obvious importance to various sections of our society. Education is one of the most important and their responsibility was to balance those priorities. He added that we were working with our schools to address the deficit balances which they carry.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **14. From County Councillor Louise Brown to County Councillor Laura Wright, Cabinet Member for Education**

*How many Primary and Secondary School Children who live in Monmouthshire County Council area will lose their free school bus this September 2025 based on both the change to statutory distances and having an initial route assessment of an available walking route to school and when were parents informed?*

The Cabinet Member explained that changes to distance eligibility will result in 51 primary and 64 secondary learners losing entitlements to free home to school transport. 3 learners lost entitlement to transport as their route has now been assessed as safe. She continued that ward members and parents or guardians of learners impacted by the changes were contacted on the 18th of June with a copy of The Walking Route Assessment.

As a supplementary Councillor Brown asked for information on wards and schools impacted? Councillor Wright agreed to send a copy of the information.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **15. From County Councillor Louise Brown to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement**

*How will the Cabinet Member ensure that key decisions which are significant in terms of its effects on the wellbeing of individuals living or working in the council area are published and made available to members on the Council website to allow for Call in, in accordance with paragraph 24 of the Council's Constitution?*

The Cabinet Member responded that the Council's constitution requires that where a chief officer makes a key decision within the definition set out in paragraph 24.2.3 of the Constitution,



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that the decision is posted on the Council's website within 2 clear days of the decision being made and cannot be implemented for a further 5 clear days in order to allow Members to call in that decision if they wish. She continued to explain that isn't a matter of choice for as it is a constitutional requirement. Therefore, where a chief officer, makes a key decision the Constitution requires that the decision will be published for all members to see and call in if they choose.

As a supplementary Councillor Brown asked when key decisions being published would be implemented. Councillor Sandles agreed to provide the information following the meeting.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **16. From County Councillor Louise Brown to County Councillor Angela Sandles, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement**

*How will the Cabinet Member ensure that the Council and Forward Planner lists items going to Cabinet in sufficient time to allow Scrutiny Committees/members to ask for a Scrutiny report prior to them going to Cabinet or Full Council?*

The Cabinet Member responded that there were various mechanisms in place to ensure that Cabinet are aware of upcoming decisions and that they are included on the forward work plan at the earliest opportunity to help support scrutiny members. The content of the forward planner is currently being reviewed so that it will be clearer whether an item included on the forward work programme is scheduled to be heard at a scrutiny meeting or not. The changes will also provide a fuller time frame that the decision will follow as it goes through the various stages of the governance programme process. By including this information on the planner, members will be able to identify if a decision is tabled for scrutiny or not, and to consider in conjunction with the scrutiny manager and relevant scrutiny chair, whether there is scope to add it to the agenda for the relevant scrutiny committee.

As a supplementary Councillor Brown asked when this would be implemented? Councillor Sandles explained that there is work currently being undertaken and Democratic Services are pulling together a much more detailed back office for all councillors, which is planned to be implemented imminently.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

*County Councillor Rachel Garrick left the meeting at 17:56pm*

#### **17. From County Councillor Paul Pavia to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update regarding the progress of both the Traffic Regulation Order and the road resurfacing works for High Street Chepstow?*

The Cabinet Member explained that the High Street works is scheduled for the Autumn, but she was unable to provide a precise date. The Traffic Regulation Order will run concurrently, and it was expected that the new Traffic Regulation Order, in line with the programme, with double yellow lines being in place in October/November. It was complicated in that you could not have the no-parking signs and double yellow lines at the same time, so one traffic order would need to be revoked to introduce the other one. She added that we are starting to recruit additional civil enforcement officers to ensure compliance of no parking zones because this is such an issue across the county.

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[Click here to view the meeting](#)

**18. From County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Laura Wright, Cabinet Member for Education**

*Could the cabinet member please provide an update on the funding promised to ARW for their planned expansion?*

The Cabinet Member was pleased to confirm that we have recently invoiced the developer for some of the section 106 money as the relevant number of houses were now either sold or occupied. However, the amount was not immediately sufficient to develop the classroom extension that is envisioned as being needed. When the remaining funds were received from the developer it would become feasible to undertake the work. This approach was usual in these circumstances. She added that Council remains committed to developing the expansion of Archbishop Rowan Williams Church in Wales Primary School.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

**19. From County Councillor Lisa Dymock to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*In light of a recent incident where a resident was knocked to the ground by a cyclist on an the Portskewett active travel path, will measures such as improved signage or lane markings to provide designated walking and cycling zones be considered to prevent further accidents?*

The Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism responded that she hoped the resident had recovered, and explained that whether or not to put markings on shared use paths to attempt to separate cyclists and pedestrians was one of the most thorny issues in the design of active travel routes. The current design thinking based on research was that it did not reduce the potential for incidents but could increase conflict and encourage cyclists to assume a priority that they don't have in terms of the hierarchy of road users. It is the responsibility of cyclists to keep out of the way of pedestrians. She was conscious that the Greenway and the other paths such as the new route in Monmouth, were used by families or groups of friends who naturally want to walk together, often with children and buggies on scooters. She has discussed with officers the need to remind the users of shared paths to share with care and agreed that signage is needed to that effect on routes, which was being worked on. It is a matter of cyclists being aware that pedestrians may or may not hear them or see them coming particularly well, and to cycle courteously. This is part of our cycle training for young people in schools.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

**20. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism**

*Has the Cabinet given further consideration to the Conservative Group's proposal that the Council should rule out introducing a tourism tax in Monmouthshire?*

The Cabinet Member clarified that this referred to the visitor levy as introduced in the Visitor Accommodation (Register and Levy) Etc. (Wales) Bill passed in the last few days. She explained that there were no immediate plans to introduce a visitor levy in Monmouthshire, and

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we were currently working with the tourism sector and our towns to develop an ambitious destination management plan. We would then work closely with the local tourism providers to fully understand the advantages and disadvantages and understand whether a visitor levy would be right for Monmouthshire and how the money raised could improve our counties welcome for visitors. She added that the same legislation which has given councils the option to introduce a visitor levy has also introduced a registration scheme for visitor accommodation, which was welcome, and looked forward to further details of the licencing scheme for visitor accommodation which was planned.

As a supplementary Councillor John asked for a timescale for the work outlined. In response the Councillor Burch explained that the timescale for the destination management plan would go through scrutiny and into cabinet in the autumn.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

#### **21. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism**

*What steps is the Council taking to promote Monmouthshire as a tourist destination?*

The Cabinet Member welcomed the opportunity to explain that there is an expert team working directly on tourism. The Visit Monmouthshire marketing plan targets independent explorers within a two-to-three-hour drive time along the M4/M5 corridors and there is a programme of marketing through digital channels, contact creation, asset libraries and business and visited database. There is collaboration on the South Wales Regional Marketing campaign promoting the area to UK and International group travel and travel trade audiences.

MCC provides responsive visitor information services, including handling enquiries via e-mail and social media. The tourism, signage and application team also advise on planning applications and keep reports on key management indicators, including bed stop and occupancy. Data which informs strategic planning and development provide tailored marketing and business development advice to tourism businesses, both individually and through group sessions.

Work on tourism is across to make life better for residents and also make Monmouthshire more attractive and a better experience for tourists, particularly within the brand of Monlife. It was hoped that this way of thinking would be elaborated on through the destination management plan, and through local businesses, town councils and through the partnerships within the county.

As a supplementary Councillor John asked if the Council was prepared to add its weight to the tourism sector campaigning against that 182 night threshold for self-catering operators, to support our businesses in Monmouthshire. Councillor Burch replied that a rural manifesto is being developed, but there was a balance to be struck and that we should support Welsh Government in striking that balance.

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

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*What steps will the Council take to protect the 12 bat species, including rare and endangered bats, recently identified in the Dixon Bat Project, a citizen science initiative verified by qualified ecologists?*

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development responded to the question and commended the residents of Monmouth who were using their time and effort to undertake the survey of the presence of those species. Although the consultation on the Replacement Local Development Plan ended last year, we have chosen to continue to receive and consider the survey information provided by residents. Our response to that information will be shared with all Council members in the response to consultation, which will be published in September in good time for consideration by the Scrutiny Committee and Full Council. To this end he offered reassurance that this information was welcomed and would be fully considered by Cabinet, the planning team, by Council, and potentially by the inspector.

He added that we were fortunate in Monmouthshire to have a rich diversity of species in our landscapes, and it was not uncommon in Monmouthshire for there to be a significant number of bat species in any one location. There was a responsibility on our planning process and a responsibility on all councillors to ensure that any development sustains and enhances our rich and extensive biodiversity. In responding to the consultation, he would only recommend development that he believed to achieve this objective.

[Click here to view the meeting](#)

**23. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Laura Wright, Cabinet member for Education**

*Would the Cabinet Member set out the administration's expectations for the level of school balances at the end of the 25/26 financial year.*

Question withdrawn.

**24. To exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information**

Accepted.

**25. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE MONMOUTHSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) FOR RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS**

The Cabinet Member for Education presented the report to appoint members of the Monmouthshire Standing Advisory Council (SAC) for Religion, Values and Ethics for a four-year period.

**Upon being put to a vote Council resolved to accept the recommendation that the applicants set out in Appendix 1 be appointed as members of the Monmouthshire SAC for a term of four years with effect from 17 July 2025.**

**26. Date of next meeting - 18th September 2025**

Noted.

**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

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**The meeting ended at 6.20 pm**

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**SUBJECT:** Self-Assessment Report 2024/25

**MEETING:** County Council

**DATE:** 18<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:** All

## **1 PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2024/25 to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2025 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the self-assessment for 2024/25 be approved.

## **3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan established a clear purpose for Monmouthshire to be a zero carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. Self-assessment is a way of evaluating, critically and honestly how well the authority is progressing with the delivery of the objectives set in the plan and the effectiveness of our supporting arrangement such as finance, workforce and asset management. It is a vital part of the authority's performance management arrangements. The full self-assessment report has been examined by the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and the Governance and Audit Committee which have provided feedback and assurance on the assessment scores and the effectiveness of the arrangements. The full self-assessment report is included as appendix 3 with a summary at appendix 2
- 3.2 The initial years of activity set out in the Community and Corporate Plan included work to develop new strategies, including enabling strategies. The focus is now on delivering the actions outlined in the strategies throughout the period of the plan. An evaluation score of between 1 (unsatisfactory) and 6 (excellent) has been applied to each of the council's six objectives for the year ending March 2025. Five of these have been assessed as level 4 (good) and one as level 3 (adequate) showing a positive trajectory of improvement since 2022. The report also describes the progress that has been made following the recommendations made in last years' evaluation as well as highlighting future areas of development.
- 3.3 The financial year 2024/25 saw a continuation of numerous pressures in the local government sector. Council's are facing rising costs, alongside increasingly complex demand pressures. The objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan strive to address complex issues within an increasingly uncertain environment. The ambition outlined in the document looks to the long-term and is focused on the well-being of current and future generations.
- 3.4 The self-assessment report evaluates the council's performance under each of the six Well-being Objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan, and the programme of work

that supports their delivery. The report focusses on the 'what we want to achieve' outcome statements. These are each underpinned by specific actions for each objective.

3.5 The report demonstrates the progress the council has made in achieving its intended outcomes and identifies any further areas for development to be addressed in 2025/26. These include:

- Focussing on improving life chances for people irrespective of their income or background. We have provided targeted support to those experience disadvantage including increasing the number of flying start places and running the food and fun programme which provides free or subsidised meals and activities during school holidays.
- Taking local action to reduce our carbon emissions. Scorecards published by Climate Emergency UK show that Monmouthshire County Council has improved its work towards net zero over the past two years and are performing better than most councils in England and Wales.
- Alongside this, residents have made a significant contribution to the green agenda by recycling 72.18% of household waste - one of the highest rates in the UK.
- Delivering a range of projects to develop a diverse local economy in which businesses and working people can thrive. In April 2024 the council secured up to £8.4m to implement transport projects across the county to enhance access, safety and infrastructure. Changes have been made to local bus services, with a new operator taking over some routes and several services being adjusted to improve connections and efficiency.
- Like all parts of the UK Monmouthshire has a highways maintenance backlog that exceeds the available funding. We have allocated an additional £2M in our 2025-26 budget for infrastructure with the majority being spent on road improvements.
- Taking action to reduce homelessness. Last year, 71% of households, who were at risk of homelessness, were prevented from becoming homeless.
- Changing the way social care is provided by taking a more preventative approach, intervening earlier and bringing some provision back into the county. In adult social care there has been an increase in the past three years in the availability of care at home. In children's social care there has been a gradual reduction in the number of children looked after from 209 to 190 over the past three years.
- In 2024 our secondary schools achieved higher results than elsewhere in Wales. 27.5% of pupils across Monmouthshire achieved 5 or more GCSE at levels A\*-A, compared with 18.1% for Wales. Pupils eligible for free school meals don't do as well however, they have higher attainment than their peers in Wales at Key stage 4.

3.6 To support the delivery of the objectives, it's important that all teams are working efficiently and effectively. The report assesses the effectiveness of the enabling functions that support front line delivery to meet changing demands and ensure their sustainability. These include corporate planning, performance and risk management, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, digital and data.

3.7 Alongside the assessment of the delivery of our objectives, the report assesses how well we have achieved the areas for development identified in the 2023/24 self-assessment report. This can be found in the 'our actions' section. This section also sets out additional areas for development that have been identified as part of the 2024/25 assessment.

3.8 This report is primarily an evaluation of what did in 2024/25. It informs our future work but it does not purport to set out detailed action or delivery plans. That work sits elsewhere, including in the service business plans that are produced annually by teams across the



authority. Nor does not cover the authority's budget position which is considered in more detail in financial monitoring reports.

- 3.9 As well as being an incredibly useful tool for councillors and officers, the production of a self-assessment report is a legal requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. The Act requires each local authority in Wales to keep under review the extent to which it is meeting the 'performance requirements' defined in the Act. This means the extent to which: it is exercising its functions effectively; is using its resources economically, efficiently and effectively and its governance is effective for securing these.
- 3.10 The Act creates a duty to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the self-assessment once in respect of every financial year. This informs decisions on how to secure improvement for the future. The self-assessment process has been embedded as part of the council's performance management framework (appendix 1 of the assessment). This ensures it can help the council continually learn and achieve sustainable improvement and better outcomes for citizens, service users and its own workforce. Our self-assessment began with a desk-based evaluation of available evidence. The initial findings were tested refined through a series of workshops with Directorate Management Teams before being subject to challenge by Strategic Leadership Team and then presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Governance and Audit Committee.
- 3.11 A draft of the self-assessment report was provided to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee, who used the report to scrutinise the council's performance during 2024/25. The committee provided helpful feedback, emphasising the importance of ensuring external and independent assurance of the adequacy of the self-assessment process. Further external assurance will be provided during 2025/26 as part of the completion of a panel Performance Assessment of the Council to gain additional independent assurance of the council's performance.
- 3.12 The draft self-assessment report was also presented to Governance and Audit Committee, which has a statutory role to review the draft assessment. The report was used by the committee to seek assurance on the effectiveness of the council's governance and assurance arrangements. Governance and Audit Committee are also able to make recommendations for changes to the conclusions or actions the council intends to take as set out in paragraph 2.40 of the statutory guidance. The committee reviewed the report and were satisfied with the assurance provided on the process followed for the self-assessment exercise and the structure and content of the report completed. The committee noted how these arrangements had evolved to strengthen the process. The committee did not make any specific recommendations for change ahead of its consideration by Council.
- 3.13 The self-assessment is a public document and should be accessible to a wide audience. Once approved the assessment and summary will be published on the council's website and shared with key partners in accordance with paragraph 2.42 of the statutory guidance.
- 3.14 The annual self-assessment report is, by its very nature, carried out by local authority officers drawing on a range of evidence including reports produced by external organisations like regulators. Once every five years, the Local Government and Elections Act requires us to conduct a panel performance assessment which will be chaired and conducted by external peers including an independently appointed chair. The Council is planning to complete the panel performance assessment in the current, 2025/26, financial year. Our Improvement work is also examined by Audit Wales who undertake audits of our performance management work. The findings of these are reported to the Governance and

Audit Committee who use them to seek assurance about the effectiveness of our arrangements.

**4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

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

**5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 5.1 The self-assessment report is an evaluation of previous commitments and is not seeking a decision on a future policy direction. The report provides an analysis, using a range of information, on the council's performance in 2024/25. The structure of the report has been informed by the legislation it is required to meet.

**6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- 6.1 The report provides a comprehensive evaluation of the performance of the council in 2024/25 using a range of performance information and evidence.

**7. REASONS:**

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

**8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 This report is a review of performance in 2024/25. This report does not commit the council to any explicit actions which result in additional resource commitments. Any resource implications of action the Council takes in future in response to the assessment will be dealt with in accordance with the usual decision-making rules.

**9. CONSULTEES:**

Directorate Management Teams  
Strategic Leadership Team  
Cabinet

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

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

**6. AUTHORS:**

Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships  
Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager  
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
Hannah Carter, Performance Analyst

**7. CONTACT DETAILS:**

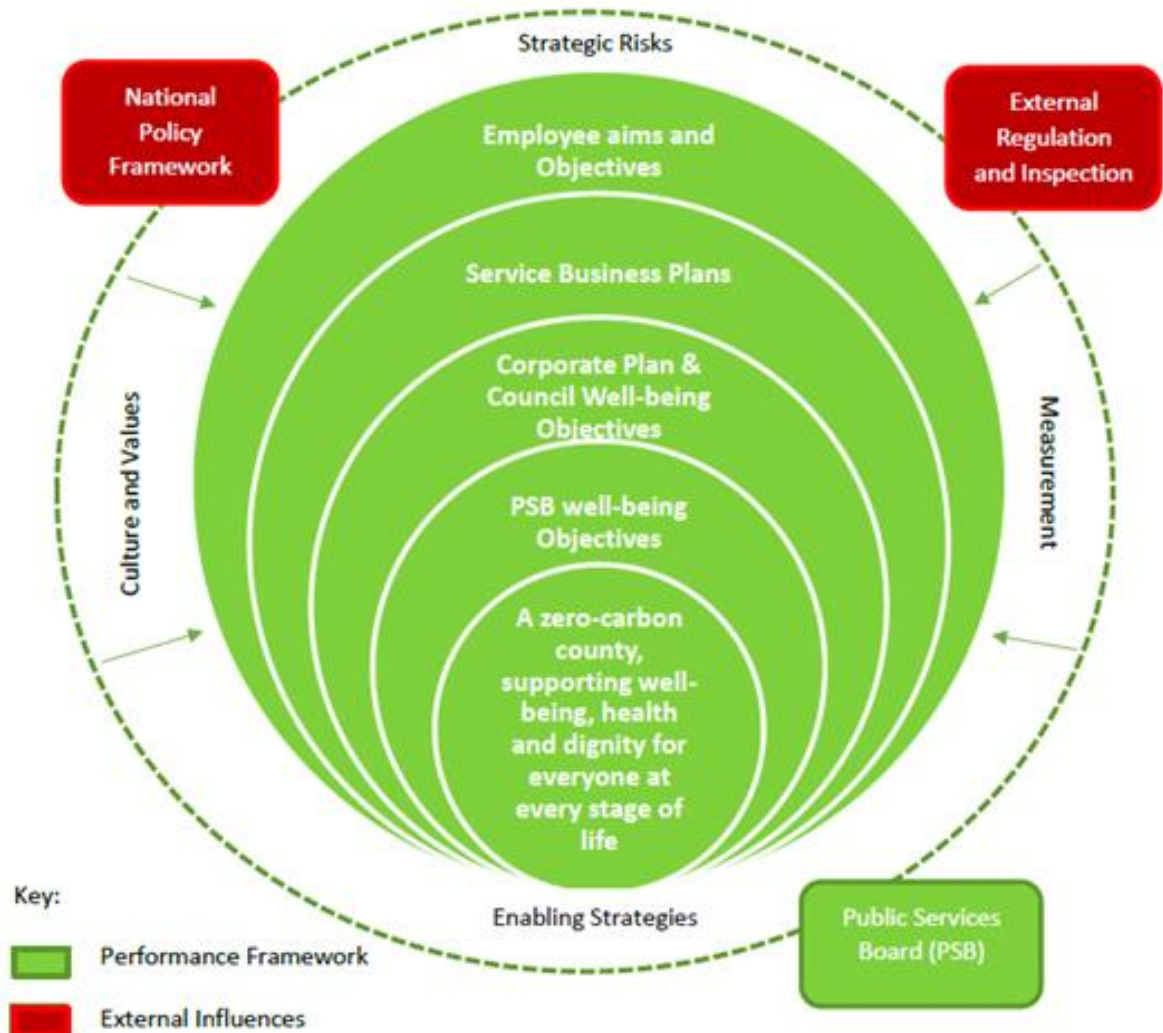
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## Appendix 1

### Performance Management Framework

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

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



## Self-Assessment 2024/25 Summary

We want to be a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. We are committed to working with, and alongside, our communities to achieve this. This is the clear purpose established by our Community and Corporate Plan. The annual self-assessment is one of the ways we report on progress and identify where we need to make further improvements. Importantly it allows us to be held to account by elected councillors and local people.

Local authorities deliver a wide range of services. This evaluation cannot cover every one of them. Instead, we have focused on the six objectives in our plan. Beyond the detail you see here, we have scrutiny committees, business plans and performance measures in place. These allow us to be held accountable for all aspects of our work. We also rely on the work of our internal audit team and external regulators such as Audit Wales, Estyn and the Care Inspectorate Wales to provide an independent lens.



This is a summary of a fuller self-assessment which is available on our website (*not yet live*). The assessment also evaluates the effectiveness of the things that are not always visible to residents. These include financial management, use of assets, procurement and HR. Looking at these helps us identify areas for development for the years ahead. You can find these towards the end of this summary.

### How well do we understand our local context and place?

Monmouthshire is a great place to live, work and visit. We have made a clear commitment to work with and alongside communities, empowering people to support each other and come up with long-term solutions. One example is the way we have engaged residents and businesses in the production of our replacement Local Development Plan. When approved, it will shape future land use in the county. This will increase opportunities for young people and families to live and work locally. It also contains ambitious commitments to deliver more energy efficient and affordable homes. We are also working in partnership on the production of placemaking plans to improve Monmouthshire's town centres.

In Autumn 2024, just under 1,500 people completed our residents survey. This helped increase our understanding of peoples' perceptions of their local council and the place they live. The survey gave us a baseline so we can measure whether we are getting better. In the past year we have launched the *Let's Talk Monmouthshire* website to make it easier for people to have conversations about the policies and changes that affect them. We will soon be inviting people to join a residents' forum so we can have more in-depth conversations.

### How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?

We have assessed progress against our objectives using a six-point scale. This scores each objective from 1 (unsatisfactory) through to 6 (excellent). After the local elections in May 2022, we took time to understand what matters to people and put the foundations in place for improvement. This included new strategies for the climate, the economy and food. Many of the things we are committed to, such as improving the health of the Wye and Usk rivers, achieving net zero and tackling inequality are complex challenges that will not be solved quickly. This assessment shows a positive trajectory of improvement. The arrows next to each of the objectives below indicate the change in assessment over the past three years while the colours correlate with the scores.

#### ***A fair place to live – Our Assessment: 4 (Good)***



We have been working hard to improve life chances for people irrespective of their income or background. This includes providing targeted support those experiencing disadvantage. The changes we have been making will take time before they make a difference to outcomes. In the meantime, we have put in place solutions to mitigate the effects of inequality.

We have increased the availability of Flying Start childcare places. Since April 2023 an additional 210 children have benefitted from this, ensuring that more children in disadvantaged areas can access key foundational learning. It also provides parents with free childcare allowing them to return to work which in turn leads to increased household incomes. The number of private childcare places in Monmouthshire has fallen. We recognise that accessing affordable childcare is challenging for some people. We are doing what we can by opening more facilities alongside our primary schools such as the one that opened in Trellech in early 2025.

Healthy, free meals at school can help to reduce food insecurity and improve equity in health and education outcomes. We have gone above our statutory duty to provide free breakfast and a freshly cooked meal at lunchtime to all primary school pupils. Take-up has been increasing but varies between schools. We are working with schools, parents and pupils to understand the reasons for this and doing everything we can to make sure as many people as possible take advantage of this offer.

We have provided targeted support to reduce inequalities, including providing free or subsidised play provision to 2,463 young people in the school holidays. We delivered Food and Fun which provided 8,950 healthy meals to young people. We have also helped residents improve their health and fitness through the national exercise referral scheme. 66% of people who enrolled completed the programme. Three quarters of those reported improved well-being and happiness. We also worked with local people to develop and open the £2.9M Magor and Undy Community Hub which recognised a longstanding need in this growing community.

We are now working to make sure people who would benefit from support can be easily identified. One example is our participation in a pilot scheme to identify residents who may be missing out on means-tested benefits so that we can improve take-up.

#### ***A green place to live – Our Assessment: 3 (Adequate)***



We are taking local action to reduce our carbon emissions and play our part in tackling global warming. Despite facing systemic challenges to reach our ambition of achieving net zero by 2030 we are making good progress.

We have been busy refitting our public buildings with LED lighting, solar panels and heat pumps. Over time this is reducing energy use and carbon emissions and will result in lower energy bills in the future. We have opened two purpose-built, energy efficient, buildings in the past year to replace ageing facilities; Severn View Park Home and King Henry VIII 3-19 school, a carbon neutral secondary. Construction has pushed up our emissions in the short-term but we will benefit from the environmental and financial benefits for many years to come.

One of the other big sources of emissions is transport. We have increased the percentage of ultra low emission vehicles in our fleet from 8% in 2022 to 16% today. We will continue to increase this on a case-by-case basis. We are developing plans to increase the electric vehicle charging infrastructure in the county, including on street charging. We have also improved walking and cycling routes, often called active travel. We have attracted £6.5M in new funding to the county and have created or enhanced 19 routes in the past year bringing the total to over one hundred. Funding is now in place for a new bridge at Llanfoist.

Our residents have made a significant contribution to the green agenda by recycling 72.18% of household waste last year - one of the highest rates in the UK. We know that river health has been a huge problem and has largely been caused by land use and pollution upstream of our county. We are working with

partners including through the Wye Nutrient Management Board to identify and analyse options for delivering water quality improvements. We have also been working closely with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water. They are now installing two multi-million pound phosphate stripping plants to improve the health of the Wye and Usk rivers which should result in significant improvements to future water quality. We have also delivered a range of nature-based projects bringing benefits to ecosystem resilience and climate change mitigation.

We are making good progress with the resources we have available. Scorecards published by Climate Emergency UK show that Monmouthshire has improved its work towards net zero over the past two years and is the second-best performer in Wales in relation to climate emergency action, increasing 9 places compared with 2023. This independent assessment also rated Monmouthshire as the top performing local authority in the UK in terms of waste reduction and food. We recognise that we are unlikely to achieve our ambition of becoming a net zero organisation by 2030 unless there is a significant increase in funding. However, the independent external assessment has provided assurance that we are putting the groundwork in place to ensure a positive future trajectory.

***A thriving and ambitious place – Our Assessment: 4 (Good)***



We have worked in partnership with others, including the Cardiff Capital Region, to deliver a range of projects that are contributing to a local diverse economy in which businesses and workers can thrive. We have produced a new local transport strategy for Monmouthshire which was approved in May 2024. This sets clear priorities for the next five years. We have also contributed to the development of the regional transport plan.

In April 2024 we secured up to £8.4m to implement transport projects across the county to enhance access, safety and infrastructure. We have made changes to local bus services, with a new operator taking over some routes and several services being adjusted to improve connections and efficiency. We have worked with an active group of residents to make the case for investment in a new Magor Walkway station to improve connectivity. The UK Government has indicated that it will prioritise funding for this station, bringing environmental and economic benefits to the area.

Like all parts of the UK we have a highways maintenance backlog that exceeds the available funding. To begin to address this we have allocated an additional £2.3M of capital expenditure in our 2025-26 budget for infrastructure with the majority being spent on road improvements.

We have established placemaking partnerships in all six towns in the county. These have involved local residents, business and voluntary organisations. We secured over £800k in funding from Welsh Government for town centre improvements in 2024/25. So far improvements have been made to 17 town centre buildings and commercial properties, bringing previously vacant properties back into use. This is helping to contribute to the vibrancy of town centres throughout our county. Projects include improvements to the youth centre in Caldicot and the refurbishment of a previously run-down building in Chepstow for use as a local community food project. 72% of people responding to our residents' survey felt very or fairly satisfied with their local area as a place to live.

There has been an increase in the percentage of school leavers who were NEET from 1.8% (14 young people) in 2022 to 3.1% (25 young people) last year. We recognise this is an area we need to improve. We have developed a new Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) Prevention Strategy. The strategy demonstrates our commitment ensuring better outcomes and opportunities for young people, through collaborative work.

We have provided advice or assistance to 89 local businesses as part of our commitment to enable people of all ages and backgrounds to have the skills to do well in work or start their own business. This is below the target we had set ourselves and broadly unchanged from the number assisted in 2022. 79.9% of Monmouthshire's population is economically active. This is consistent with the position in 2022 and remains above the average rates for Wales and Great Britain. Overall Monmouthshire is ranked as the second most economically competitive area in Wales, behind Cardiff.



***A safe place to live – Our Assessment: 4 (Good)***



We have taken action to reduce homelessness and have put plans in place to ensure the future supply of good quality, energy efficient homes.

We have prepared a replacement Local Development Plan and undertaken a public consultation on this. The plan sets out how land will be used for homes and employment up to 2033. In line with our climate commitments, all new properties will incorporate renewable energy generation technology, low carbon heating systems and electric vehicle charging points. As well as the environmental benefits this will reduce energy bills for these households. We have also committed to 50% of the homes on each site being affordable with a mix of housing types to meet local need.

The development of new properties has been limited in recent years due to planning restrictions resulting from high phosphate levels in rivers. We delivered 71 affordable homes in 2024/25, the highest figure in the past three years, bringing the total over that period to 198. We also granted planning permission for 108 affordable homes, more than double the total for the previous year.

High property prices and a shortage of affordable private rented accommodation have contributed to a rising homeless problem in Monmouthshire. We have adopted a rapid rehousing approach. In 2024/25 we successfully prevented 71% households at risk, from becoming homeless, a significant improvement on the 2022 figure of 50%. We have also been acquiring or repurposing properties as alternatives to unsuitable and costly B&B accommodation. As a result, we have been able to reduce the number of homeless households placed into B&B from 90 in 2022 to 20 in 2024/25. Alongside this, we have reduced B&B use for families with children to zero.

We have worked with young people across the county to address concerns of knife crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB). We secured funding for a pilot scheme in Caldicot in 2024, increasing the support available from youth workers and targeting young people involved in ASB through a total of 121 sessions. This has resulted in a 23% decrease in ASB incidents in the town. Overall, anti-social behaviour rates across the county have reduced marginally in the past three years, although the overall crime rate in the county has increased. The residents survey found that 90% of respondents felt safe in their local area during the day, while 66% felt safe after dark.

***A connected place where people are valued – Our Assessment: 4 (Good)***



We are changing the way we provide services to ensure that Monmouthshire is a place where people's contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. We are doing this by taking a more preventative approach, intervening earlier and bringing some provision back into the county.

Social Services spending is taking an increasing proportion of our budget each year as a result of increasing demand and more complex needs. There are many factors that affect our health and well-being. We have committed to working in different ways to address the root-causes of this, becoming what is known as a Marmot Region. One of the ways we are doing this is by developing a more preventative approach where early help and enabling people is at the forefront. This was an area of development identified in our last self-assessment.

Early help is vital to prevent children coming into local authority care. We have established a coordinated approach to early intervention in children's social services. We have overseen a gradual reduction in the number of children looked after from 209 to 190 over the past three years. We are also developing more in-county residential and supported accommodation. One development has been completed and three more are in the pipeline. This allows children to maintain local connections and helps us reduce costs.

The recruitment of foster carers is a significant challenge across the UK. We have improved our offer to foster carers and advertised extensively. We have achieved a small increase, but this is not sufficient to



meet our needs. 35.8% of placements of children looked after were with in-house foster carers. This is marginally less than in the previous year and below the target of 43% we set for ourselves

We want to help vulnerable older people regain their independence. We provided 309 reablement care packages last year compared to 240 in 2021/22. In 55.7% of cases this mitigated or reduced peoples' need for long-term support. When people do need longer-term care it can sometimes be hard to source the care they need. We have had a relentless focus on this working with our partners, and we are now meeting 98.2% of assessed needs for care at home, up from 96.6% in the previous year. We have more than halved the amount of unmet care hours since 2022.

In March 2024 we opened a new purpose-built specialist care home for people living with dementia. The home has 32 bedrooms for both long-term support and short-term support in the form of respite based on a relationship-centred care model.

Overall, 84.7% of adults in receipt of social services told us they were happy with the care and support they received. This is about the same as the previous year but around five percentage points lower than pre-pandemic levels.

**A learning place – Our Assessment: 4 (Good)**



We have worked with the regional Education Achievement Service to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools. This is part of our commitment to make Monmouthshire a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential.

In 2024 our secondary schools achieved higher results than elsewhere in Wales. The average capped 9 points score was 369.8 in Monmouthshire, compared to an average of 358.1 across Wales. Most of our pupils performed in line with their expectations. Overall, 27.5% of pupils across Monmouthshire achieved 5 or more GCSE at levels A\*-A, compared with 18.1% for Wales. We also have fewer pupils leaving school with no qualifications.

We have developed a new Inclusion Strategy and an updated Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to shape our work with children and young people. We have secured Shared Prosperity funding to deliver the Inspire Programme. This has enabled us to support 340 young people since January 2023, providing life skills and qualifications which improve their future life chances.

We are committed to ensuring the needs of vulnerable learners, which includes those eligible for free school meals, are being met. On average, Monmouthshire pupils who are eligible for free school meals performed better than those in other parts of Wales. Despite this, the attainment of learners eligible for free school meals is lower than those who are not eligible. We will continue to work with schools to explore actions to narrow this divide.

We continue to work with schools to improve attendance. There has been a gradual improvement in primary school attendance since the pandemic. At the end of the academic year 2023/24 attendance was 93.6%; provisional data shows attendance has increased to 94.1% in the summer term 2024/25. Attendance in secondary schools has been slower to return to pre-pandemic levels. Attendance was 88.2% in the academic year 2023/24. Provisional figures show this had improved to 90.1% by the summer term 2024/25.

We have continued to develop our support to reduce and prevent behaviours that challenge in our schools. We have implemented a whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being. This helps schools to understand how they are best placed to promote well-being.

We have completed the construction of the new King Henry VIII 3-19 school in Abergavenny. The building is the first operationally net zero carbon all-through school in Wales, in line with our commitment to decarbonise our operations. It provides a hub for learning in Abergavenny, creating an environment in which young people can thrive as well as well improving leisure facilities for the wider community. It is anticipated that the development will reduce the number of pupils attending a secondary school out-of-county.

## How effectively are resources being used to deliver our priorities?

Over the past year we have developed enabling strategies to ensure we align all of our resources to deliver the priorities set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. We have evaluated these and concluded that we have sound arrangements in place to enable and support service delivery.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act defines the core set of activities that are common to the corporate governance of public bodies. We have assessed each of these using our evaluation framework:

Corporate planning, performance and risk management. We assessed this as level 4 (Good) – Unchanged from last year.	↔
Financial planning. We assessed this as level 4 (Good). Unchanged from last year.	↔
Workforce planning (people). We assessed this as level 4 (Good). An improvement on last years' assessment score.	↑
Procurement. We assessed this as level 3 (Adequate). Unchanged from last year.	↔
Assets. We assessed this as level 5 (Very Good). An improvement on last years' assessment score.	↑
Digital and data. We assessed this as level 3 (Adequate). Unchanged from last year.	↔
Democracy and scrutiny. We assessed this as level 4 (Good). Unchanged from last year.	↔

Further detail on these is available as part of the full evaluation available at:  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/improvement](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/improvement). *(not yet live)*

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

Working in partnership is one of the ways we can achieve our objectives while delivering value for money. Key partners include Welsh Government, the Cardiff Capital Region and the Gwent Public Services Board. A review conducted by our Internal Audit Team identified a reasonable level of assurance was in place for the authority's governance arrangements based on a sample of partnerships. We have now developed a toolkit and guidance to strengthen our arrangements in this area.

### Areas for Development

As a result of the self-assessment, we have identified a number of areas for development. These include:

- Develop more childcare places, including Flying Start and Welsh medium places.
- Develop solutions to tackle the rise in young people not in education, employment or training.
- Strengthen our capacity and capability in digital and data to deliver impact at scale.
- Strengthen our procurement arrangements to ensure we can deliver the ambition within our Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy.

### Measuring Progress

We use a wide range of performance measures to evaluate our progress against our priorities. These are found throughout the assessment. We also track progress against a range of outcome measures at population level. Key measures are presented regularly to Cabinet and the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee so that we can actively manage performance and adjust delivery where we are falling short of our expectations.

### What do you think?

We have used some of the feedback we have received from other organisations to shape this report and would be delighted to hear your views to help us inform future assessments.

Please e-mail us: [improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk)



# Self-assessment Report 2024/25



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

## Version Control

<b>Title</b>	Monmouthshire County Council Self-Assessment 2024/25
<b>Purpose</b>	To self-assess the council's goals and arrangements as required by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.
<b>Owner</b>	Chief Officer – People, Performance and Partnerships
<b>Approved by</b>	Draft - Not yet approved
<b>Date</b>	September 2025
<b>Version Number</b>	0.4
<b>Status</b>	Draft – For Council approval
<b>Review Frequency</b>	Annual
<b>Next review date</b>	2026
<b>Consultation</b>	Cabinet Strategic Leadership Team Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Governance and Audit Committee

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## Introduction

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

Local councils deliver a wide range of services. Some, such as roads and waste collection are universal, others such as social care are there at times of need. Many of our services act as a safety net when people are at their most vulnerable or are targeted at those experiencing disadvantage. Others, such as schools are there to help young people get the best start in life and make sure we are educating and developing the next generation of Monmouthshire residents. This evaluation cannot cover every single service. We have scrutiny committees and business plans in place to allow our councillors to hold senior officers and Cabinet members to account for those. Instead, it focuses primarily on how well we have delivered the six well-being objectives described in the Community and Corporate Plan.

### Our Community and Corporate Plan – at a glance



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

Like many public services we are facing budget pressures as a result of rising costs and increasing demands. We have made tens of millions of pounds in savings over recent years. We have had to take difficult decisions to balance our books but we always do this with the needs of communities in mind. This evaluation helps us understand the impact of the changes we make and allows us to learn from these so we can strive to continually improve what we do.

## Our Self-Assessment

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, requires councils to keep their performance under review through self-assessment. We need to publish a report setting out the conclusions of the assessment once every financial year. This report predominantly looks back over the period from April 2024 to March 2025. It also makes reference to the cumulative effect of changes since 2022 when we began to develop our Community and Corporate Plan.


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

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

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

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

 [improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

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

 @MonmouthshireCC

## Understanding our local place

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

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

Local place	
How well do we understand our local context and place and has this informed our purpose and priorities?	How do we know?
<p>The council has a good understanding of the well-being of its residents. We have access to and analyse a range of statistical information including but not limited to health, income levels and the local economy. We have also conducted a residents survey. We received 1,465 responses and have analysed the results to understand what respondents said about their local area, the council and their interactions with the council.</p> <p>The survey is one mechanism to help us understand residents' views, alongside a range of feedback collected across services, which provides a more detailed understanding of the council's services. Some, such as social care, libraries and building control also gather feedback from user surveys. However, we recognise that we do not have a comprehensive understanding of how well services and policies are meeting the needs of the people who use them given the breadth of our responsibilities.</p> <p>A study by Audit Wales concluded that, like other councils, we needed to do more to understand the impact of our services on residents.</p> <p>We facilitated the Make Your Mark survey, which a record-breaking 3,509 young people took part in for 2025. A youth conference was held in May 2025 that allowed young people from schools across the county to unpack and dig deeper into three priority areas identified in the survey - the cost of living, mental health matters and employment and skills. This allowed young people to formulate recommendations for decision makers, public services and young people themselves to address over the coming year.</p> <p>We have 46 ward councillors who represent the interests of their communities and bring forward local intelligence. This is supplemented by the use of a public open forum at scrutiny meetings and Council to allow residents to raise matters of concern.</p> <p>We have launched 'Lets Talk Monmouthshire' as a platform for consultations and engagement. This is enabling greater clarity of information for residents and providing a single place to visit for online consultations right across the organisation, to ensure residents do not miss the opportunity to engage. We need to grow this platform and encourage residents to register for regular updates, across each and every directorate.</p> <p>We also consult directly when we are planning service changes or considering action in a particular area, for example, we engaged with over 1,200 people to understand how we could make our communities more age friendly.</p>	<p>National Resident Survey</p> <p>Customer Surveys</p> <p>Audit Wales Report - <i>Use of Performance Information: Service User Perspective and Outcomes</i></p> <p>Make Your Mark survey</p> <p>Informational from the National Statistics Office and other sources</p> <p>Population Needs Assessment</p> <p>Gwent Well-being Assessment &amp; Plan</p> <p>Community and Corporate Plan</p> <p>Replacement Local Development Plan</p> <p>Town centre masterplans</p>



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The Community and Corporate Plan sets a clear commitment to work with and alongside communities, empowering people to support each other and come up with long-term solutions.

We have engaged extensively during the production of the replacement Local Development Plan. This will shape land use in the county. It will increase opportunities for the younger people to both live and work within Monmouthshire, creating a more balanced demography and socially and economically sustainable communities. We are also working in partnership on the production of town centre masterplans.

Once every five years we also conduct an extensive well-being assessment and population needs assessment with partners across Gwent. The Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) has engaged widely in the development of the well-being assessment and plan for the area.

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## Our Outcomes

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

In assessing the performance of the six objectives, we have considered the extent to which:

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

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

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



Prosperous Wales



Healthier Wales



Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language



Resilient Wales



More equal Wales



Wales of cohesive communities



Globally responsible Wales

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

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

A guide showing the layout of the template we have used, and what each section means, is included as an appendix to the self-assessment.



## A Fair Place to Live

### What we want to achieve:

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

### Strategic Assessment


We have been working hard to improve life chances for people irrespective of their income or background. This includes providing targeted support those experiencing disadvantage. The sort of changes we want people to experience won't happen overnight so in the meantime we've also been putting in place solutions to mitigate the effects of inequality on different groups of people.

Monmouthshire, on average, is a prosperous and affluent county. None of our communities are in the most deprived 10% in Wales. However, we have high levels of income inequality, and headline figures can mask pockets of need. We have therefore focused on providing targeted support wherever possible to mitigate the effects of inequalities. This includes programmes including Food and Fun and the expansion of Flying Start childcare to ensure children in the least affluent communities have access to foundational learning.

We have delivered our statutory duty to provide breakfast and a freshly cooked meal at lunchtime to all primary school pupils to ensure everyone has access to a healthy meal which is shown to have positive effects on health and education outcomes. Take up of this free offer has differed by area and we are working hard to address this.

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





## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Fair Place to Live

A Fair Place to Live		
<div>Fair place</div> 	<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	<p>Level 4 Good – Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have increased the support we provide to residents to improve their life chances and enabled our communities to develop the places they live. We have set plans to deliver most of what we to achieve. Our assessment shows we need to ensure all our interventions to achieve this objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact.</p>
<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>		
<p>Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire or feel their voice does not count. Many of our residents are prosperous and very capable of looking after themselves and their loved ones. However, this is not the case for all and in a rural county inequality is often more hidden than in urban places. We will increase the intensity of our work to help those who need support to live the lives they want.</p>		
<b>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</b>		<b>How do we know?</b>
<b>What we want to achieve: Improved life chances for people regardless of income or background</b>		
<p>We have worked with childcare providers to increase the number of Flying Start childcare places available. This ensures that families in disadvantaged areas can access free childcare, giving children access to key foundational learning and providing parents with the opportunity to return to work. Having a positive early years education ensures strong foundations for young people. Despite increased efforts to expand the number of childcare places, due to the closure of a nursery setting and the cancellation or suspension of the registration of some childminding settings, the number of places has reduced. We will continue to work with existing providers to develop new settings and promote a career in childcare to encourage more individuals to join the childcare workforce.</p> <p>We have established a new childcare setting on the site of Trellech Primary School at the end of February 2025. This purpose-built setting will allow the provider to develop their provision and ensure their sustainability. We have undertaken feasibility studies for childcare provision on the site of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary School; a Business Justification Case will be submitted to Welsh Government in Summer 2025. The development of an additional Cylch Meithrin has not progressed as planned due to a lack of suitable accommodation. This has meant that families in Monmouth and Chepstow are unable to access childcare, including Flying Start, through the medium of Welsh. We will continue to work closely with partners to develop Welsh medium provision in these communities.</p> <p>We have gone above our statutory duty to provide breakfast and a freshly cooked meal at lunchtime to all primary school pupils. Healthy, free meals at school help all children to learn and thrive irrespective of their background or income. Uptake of meals remains</p>		<p>Number of childcare and Flying Start places</p> <p>Free school meals uptake</p> <p>Community Development Team action plan</p> <p>Number of meal kits distributed</p> <p>Community fridge usage figures</p>

<p>varied across schools, on average 75% of pupils received the meals in the last year. We are working with schools, parents and learners to understand and remove any barriers to take-up.</p> <p>We have developed a targeted tackling poverty and inequality action plan. We partnered with Citizen's Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Increased community engagement has led to improved levels of trust, participation and collaboration with our communities. We recognise there is still more we can and will do to reach out to our communities to provide support to ensure a cohesive and joined-up approach.</p> <p>We secured £29k of funding from Welsh Government to support 30 Warm Spaces during 24/25. Over 700 people used these facilities providing immediate relief to those in need of support. We also distributed 100 Warm Packs to ensure no one in our community goes cold in Winter.</p> <p>We are working to ensure individuals in need of support can be easily identified. We have supported a local organisation to improve the data we hold to help us understand our service user needs. This will enable more responsive, targeted interventions. We are also taking part in the Local Authority Benefit Take-up Pilot which aims to identify residents who may be missing out on means-tested devolved and reserved benefits. We will use data to undertake targeted outreach campaigns to improve benefit take-up. This project is in the early stages. The Shared Benefits Team have begun the foundational work to integrate this tool into our systems.</p> <p>We want residents to have access to healthy meals, irrespective of their circumstances. We have distributed 360 meal kits to residents, which provided over 1,400 meals. These offered practical and dignified support, whilst also building confidence in cooking skills; 93% of participants reported a decrease in weekly food bills after getting involved. We are also a part of Monmouthshire Food Action Network helping to improve food security sharing knowledge, resources and data and providing support and advice on best practice.</p> <p>We have continued to support circular economy projects, including Benthyg libraries of things, which means residents can borrow or buy things that they only use occasionally. This saved residents approximately £28,028 last year. This resulted in a carbon saving of 12,402kg last year. We appointed two circular economy project officers, enabling the development of Benthyg Caldicot which opened in December 2024. Benthyg Chepstow will be re-launched during the next year. We are continuing our commitment to wider circular economy initiatives which help people on lower incomes reduce expenditure. These include our repair cafes, swap shops, and bike repair workshops.</p>	<p>Carbon and monetary saving from Benthyg library of things</p>
<p><b>What we want to achieve: Residents have better access to council services and support needed to live a healthy life</b></p>	
<p>We are working with our partners in other public services to take action to reduce unfair and unjust inequalities in health. We have committed to becoming a Marmot region and recognise that the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age play a major factor in their health.</p> <p>We are ensuring children have access to play by providing free or subsidised activities during the school holidays. We delivered free or subsidised play provision, which benefited 2,463 children this year. This includes our targeted Food &amp; Fun programme which provides</p>	<p>School Holiday Play provision Food and Fun scheme</p> <p>National Exercise Referral Scheme take-up</p>

<p>two healthy meals and activities for children during the summer holidays, aiming to reduce the financial burden on families. This scheme supported 617 children throughout this year, serving 8,950 healthy meals.</p> <p>We have continued to help residents to improve their health and fitness levels through the National Exercise Referral Scheme. The percentage of participants who completed the scheme increased to 66% last year. Those completing the scheme reported improvements in balance, fitness levels and independence, and importantly their mental health; 75% of people reported that their general well-being had improved and that they felt happier. The positive experience of those taking part has resulted in an increase in Exercise Referral Memberships at our leisure centres from 300 in 2015 to 1,134 in 2025.</p> <p>We have continued to develop our relationship with the creative sector in Monmouthshire and have worked with them to identify their needs. We held our first annual celebration of the arts day at County Hall in April 2024 which showcased arts activity from across the county. The event brought together a range of artists and practitioners enabling us to understand their priorities and inform the development of our Cultural Strategy. We have not met our milestone to develop the strategy by March 2025 as we broaden our focus to ensure it is a strategy for the whole county and not just the council. We are preparing applications for new rounds of Arts Council Wales funding and have successfully secured funding from the Social Prosperity Fund to progress this work.</p> <p>We developed and opened the new £2.9 million Magor and Undy Community Hub in partnership with MUCH group. The development was based on extensive involvement of the community and is designed based on residents' feedback. The site provides spaces for community use and commercial events, as well as potential for small business growth. The MUCH group now occupies and manages the community hub for the direct promotion of social, cultural, leisure, sporting and other community activities.</p>	<p>Draft Cultural Strategy</p>
<p><b>What we want to achieve: Citizens are able to participate in council and community decision-making and take actions which enable them to shape their own futures</b></p>	
<p>We have developed a Volunteering Good Practice Guide to ensure a high-quality volunteering experience. We have also delivered bespoke training to over 570 volunteers and community groups through our Be Community project. This is ensuring volunteers are equipped with the skills they need. Our commitment has resulted in a retention rate of active volunteers of 89.7% and 95% of volunteers who responded to our annual survey agreeing that they felt their expectations for volunteering were being met. Ensuring volunteers are supported helps to maintain the social capital which brings huge benefits to communities.</p> <p>We have launched 'Lets Talk Monmouthshire' as a platform for consultations and engagement. This is enabling greater clarity of information for residents and providing a single place to visit for online consultations right across the organisation, to ensure residents do not miss the opportunity to engage. We need to grow this platform and encourage residents to register for regular updates, across each and every directorate.</p> <p>We are committed to tackling inequality. We have made achieved the accredited Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) status. We committed to encourage local firms to become accredited disability confident employers; currently 39 local firms are Disability Committed and 7 are Disability Employers reducing the inequalities faced by disabled people in accessing employment.</p>	<p>Annual Volunteer Survey</p> <p>'Lets Talk Monmouthshire'</p> <p>Disability Confident Employer action plan</p> <p>County of Sanctuary working group</p> <p>Number of staff completing a Welsh language course</p>

<p>Council passed a motion in September 2023 committing us to formally becoming a county of sanctuary. Progress has been slower than planned and we anticipate securing accredited status towards the end of 2025.</p> <p>Supporting and promoting the use of the Welsh language is vital to ensuring it's growth. We are providing opportunities for our staff to improve their Welsh language skills; 53 staff members were completing a Welsh language course during 24/25. We currently have 392 members of staff that have some level of Welsh language skills and can use these to provide a service in Welsh to residents. There has been an increase in the percentage of the Monmouthshire population who can speak Welsh from 19.7% to 21.3%. We are continuing to work with partners to promote the use of the Welsh language in our county.</p>	Number of staff that have a level of Welsh speaking ability
<b>Further areas for development identified through our 2024/25 self-assessment</b>	
Develop more childcare places, including Flying start and Welsh-medium childcare provision	

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact						
Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓		✓	✓		✓	
<div> <div>Well-being Objective: A Fair Place to Live</div> <div>     </div> </div> <p>Adopting community-focussed approaches promotes <b>collaboration</b> which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, empowering people and ensuring they can access support we hope to <b>prevent</b> problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county, so it is vital that everyone can be <b>involved</b> to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a <b>long-term</b> benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an <b>integrated</b> benefit for many aspects of the act, they will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales.</p>						
Measures of progress						
Milestone	Target for completion		Progress			
A new poverty and inequality action plan is approved by Cabinet	December 2024		It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option. The Community Development Team have developed a targeted action plan for 2025/26.			

All four library of things are fully operational	March 2025	Currently 3 of 4 sites are fully operational. Benthg Chepstow will be relaunched during 25/26.			
Establish two additional cylch meithrin	First established September 2025, second established January 2027	These have not been established as planned due to a lack of suitable accommodation.			
Establish childcare settings on the sites of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary school and Trellech Primary schools	To establish the site at Trellech by March 2025 and Archbishop Rowan Williams by January 2027	The setting at Trellech Primary School has now been completed. A business case for the site at Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary School will be submitted in Summer 2025.			
Opening of the Magor and Undy Community Hub	August 2023	This has now been completed.			
A new inclusive Cultural Strategy is approved by Cabinet	March 2025	Changes to the nature of the strategy has meant that this milestone has not yet been met. A draft document is being prepared for consultation in 25/26.			
Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) Status attained	June 2024	This has now been completed.			
County of Sanctuary Status attained	December 2024	This has not yet been achieved. A multi-agency working group has been developed to drive forward progress			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Previous<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Latest<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Target for 2024/25</b>	<b>Quick View</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Percentage of pupils choosing to receive universal free school meals	75	75	77	↔	
i) The financial saving to communities (£) ii) Carbon saving (Kg Co2)  from items borrowed through Benthg Library of Things	New measure	i)28,028 ii)12,402	i)20,000 ii)10,000		
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week	42	43	45	↑	Previous is 2021/22, latest is 2022/23.
Number of children benefitting from MonLife-run free or subsidised play provisions	New measure	2,463	3,525		This is a new measure introduced for 24/25. More accurate reporting has meant a revision to figures; targets will be adjusted in line with this change.

<sup>1</sup> Previous data is 2023/24 unless otherwise stated.

<sup>2</sup> Latest data is 2024/25 unless otherwise stated.



Number of local employers who make the disability confident employer pledge	35	46	70	↑	Previous is November 24, latest is March 25.
Percentage of people who volunteer	32	39	40	↑	Previous is 2019/20, latest is 2022/23.
Percentage of the population who can speak Welsh	19.7	21.3	18	↑	

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



## Green Place to Live

### What we want to achieve:

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

## Strategic Assessment


We are taking local action to reduce our carbon emissions and play our part in tackling global warming. We face systemic challenges reaching our ambition of achieving net zero by 2030 but independent analysis from Climate Emergency UK shows that we are making good progress.

We need to celebrate the outstanding beauty of our county and ensure we are doing all we can to protect and conserve it. We are working with partners and our communities to enhance and protect biodiversity. We have empowered local nature champions to carry out their vision for local green space. The health of our rivers has suffered in recent years with high phosphate levels in the Usk and Wye. We have worked with partners to address this. Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water are now installing phosphate stripping plants at two areas in the county to improve the health of our rivers.

Carbon emissions per head of population in Monmouthshire are above the average for the UK. Residents have made a significant contribution to the green agenda by recycling 72.18% of household waste last year - one of the highest rates in the UK.

We have refitted many of our buildings with LED lighting, solar panels and heat pumps. We have recently opened the new King Henry VII 3-19 school, a carbon neutral secondary in Abergavenny. We are also expanding our use of electric vehicles when they are suitable for the job in hand. Over time these actions are reducing energy use and carbon emissions. We have also refreshed our Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and have separated this into four clear action plans, including a decarbonisation plan. This better reflect the breadth of work being undertaken as we strive to meet our goal.

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Green Place to Live

A Green Place to Live		
<div>Green place</div> 	<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	<p>Level 3 – Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets.</p> <p>We are continuing to implement projects that are contributing to achieving our objective, however we will need to do more and quicker to meet our ambition. The range of work that we are undertaking is helping us to understand the scale of the challenge and the path we need to take to reach our goal. We remain ambitious in our aim of becoming net zero by 2030. However, unless there is significant public investment, the evidence that we are gathering suggests that reaching our target will be extremely challenging.</p>
	<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>	<p>We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. We will work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding and promote the circular economy. We also recognise that these are complex issues, and it will take decades rather than years to see the full impact of the changes we are making.</p>
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?		How do we know?
<b>What we want to achieve: Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint</b>		
<p>Changes in our climate are linked to man-made greenhouse gas emissions, in particular carbon dioxide, and affect the natural environment, infrastructure, health, communities, the built environment and business.</p> <p>We recognise that achieving our collective target of net zero by 2030 will be challenging without significant public sector investment. The range of activity we are undertaking is helping us to better understand the scale of the challenge and target our action accordingly. We have updated our Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. This includes an action plan showing on how we will reduce the council's carbon emissions. The Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group is monitoring progress and using this to target future activity.</p> <p>The council's carbon emissions increased between 2022/23 and 2023/24 (data for 2024/25 is being collated and is not yet available). The main reasons for this increase are larger construction projects being undertaken in that period, the development of Severn View Park care home and Abergavenny 3-19 school. Whilst the construction of these buildings has increased emissions in the short term, they have been designed to ensure minimal environmental impact in the long-term, with Abergavenny school being net-zero and the new care home being far more energy efficient than its predecessor. We are currently undertaking an assessment of the carbon footprint of the council's purchased good and services; this will ensure we are targeting future carbon reduction activity in areas of spend with the highest emissions.</p>		<p>Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy</p> <p>Carbon emission reporting data</p> <p>Recycling and waste data</p> <p>Active travel route usage data</p> <p>Local Area Energy Plan</p>

<p>The emissions from the council's estate have been steadily decreasing in recent years. However, these are not at the pace needed to achieve net zero by 2030. We have commissioned and are completing decarbonisation surveys which will inform the development of our low carbon heat strategy and an action plan for our built estate. We are also developing a high-level costed decarbonisation plan, informed by this data, that will include costs for reducing operational emissions from the estate, fleet, and street lighting. This will quantify the scale of investment that is required to achieve our decarbonisation aims and will inform prioritisation of our resources based on cost and impact.</p> <p>A draft Local Area Energy Plan has been produced in conjunction with the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR). This outlines actions for key aspects of our energy transition locally, as well as joining up actions regionally and nationally. We have had challenges in progressing decarbonisation projects due to increased costs, complexity of delivery and accessing the specialist skills required. We have increased the capacity of our decarbonisation team which will help ensure a pipeline of ready-to-implement decarbonisation projects when funding becomes available.</p> <p>The emissions from our fleet and travel have increased. We are transitioning to Ultra Low Emission Vehicles at the point of renewal and where services need and funding permits. We have increased the percentage of our fleet which is ultra-low emission from 8% in 2022 to 16.5% today. We are developing a fleet transition plan. As we progress this, the electric vehicle charging infrastructure (EVCI) network across the county will need to be reviewed. We have identified potential requirements and assessed on-street charging options, with internal consultation underway, and we are using this to draft an overarching EVCI strategy.</p> <p>Climate Emergency UK assessed all UK councils on the actions they have taken towards net zero. While we have a range of mechanisms in place to assess our own performance the Climate Emergency UK audit is another way to gauge our progress. Our overall score from the 2025 assessment was 46% of potential targets achieved, an increase from 37% in 2023, and we are amongst the highest scoring local authorities in Wales. Our scores improved in most areas in 2025, although a couple of sections were lower than in 2023.</p> <p>We have increased the percentage of municipal waste in the county that was sent for recycling, reuse or composting to a provisional rate of 72.18%. This is above the statutory target of 70%. This is due to continued participation of residents with household recycling. The overall amount of waste generated per person increased from 198kg in 2022/23 to 202kg in 2023/24 and remains above the Wales average. Our score for Waste Reduction &amp; Food in the Climate Emergency UK assessment was the highest in the UK, at 93%.</p> <p>We are improving and expanding our active travel network to help our communities to reduce the carbon produced from travel. We currently have over 100 active routes in place. We have utilised over £6.5m of funding to and have created or enhanced 19 Active travel routes this year, above our target of 14. We have live journey counter information to monitor the use of our network; these found a 4.1% increase in active travel usage in 24/25 compared with the previous year.</p> <p>We have continued to support low-income households to access grant funding to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. We are promoting the Eco4 scheme which provides funding for low-income households and those living with medical conditions worsened by damp or cold to access energy efficiency improvements.</p>	<p>Climate Emergency UK Assessment</p>
<p><b>What we want to achieve: Nature recovery, improved environmental and river health</b></p>	

<p>The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to life in Monmouthshire. We need to ensure we are doing all we can to protect and conserve it.</p> <p>We have reviewed and updated our Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy to include a biodiversity and ecosystems resilience action plan. This sets out how we will maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems resilience through the council's operations. We have created a Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) and Green Infrastructure strategy and have undertaken a consultation to help shape the plans. We worked with Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership to produce the local NRAP which provides a roadmap for local conservation efforts, offering practical steps to reverse biodiversity decline and strengthen ecosystem resilience across Monmouthshire. The plan aims to support everyone, from individuals and communities to businesses and conservationists. The Green Infrastructure Strategy aims to create a connected network of green spaces to improve health, support biodiversity, enhance ecosystem resilience, increase climate resilience, preserve our landscapes, and promote sustainable economic growth. We have delivered 23 Green Infrastructure nature-based projects across the county, above our target of 20, these delivered a variety of benefits including ecosystem resilience and climate change mitigation.</p> <p>We continue to actively participate in partnerships, including coordinating of the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership and roles in the Usk catchment partnership. We have supported the delivery of 25 nature recovery projects, including improvements to green spaces, purchase of machinery to facilitate meadow management, and a swift tower. We have empowered local nature champions to carry out their existing vision for local green spaces and the wider community to enhance biodiversity. We have fostered conversations with local community groups about protecting local nature and biodiversity planting and provided opportunities for primary schools and gardening volunteers to help with enhancement of green spaces outside their normal sites.</p> <p>The health of our rivers has suffered in recent years. Phosphate targets for the Usk were being failed at a rate of 88% and the Wye at 68%. We have worked with partners to address this, and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water is now installing phosphate stripping plants to improve the health of our rivers. This is enabling appropriate development to be permitted within these areas where it was previously restricted and has contributed to the increase in the number of affordable homes granted planning permission. We have developed an action plan showing how we will work in partnership to improve the health of our rivers and oceans. The Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group will monitor progress against this.</p> <p>With extreme weather events becoming more frequent it is important to support communities at risk of flooding. We have developed and updated emergency flood response plans for sites across the county and regularly engage with our communities through one-to-one sessions and community meetings. We have also continued to operate as the Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approving Body to ensure all new developments in the county have a sustainable drainage system in place, eliminating an increased risk of flooding whilst also providing water quality and biodiversity benefits. We are developing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and action plan, which assesses flood risk on a catchment-based approach and will identify Strategic Flood Risk Areas (SFRA); public consultation on the strategy is underway.</p>	<p>Nature Isn't Neat project</p> <p>Gwent Green Grid Partnership</p> <p>Biodiversity and ecosystems resilience action plan</p>
<p><b>What we want to Achieve: Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce</b></p>	

<p>We have created a Local Food Strategy that sets out how we will facilitate access to council land for growing food, including allocating land for community use. We have facilitated the Welsh Government's Allotment Support Grant which has supported over 130 allotment plots to be improved, created or revived across six different sites throughout Monmouthshire.</p> <p>We are committed to transforming our agriculture to be more regenerative and sustainable. We are supporting the Regen Ben mentoring scheme, with three farms receiving mentorship. This is helping participating farms to move their operations onto more regenerative lines, building soil health and improving water quality. The Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire continues to attract support from volunteers in the local farming community.</p> <p>We have worked with local farmers as part of the Welsh Veg in Schools pilot scheme to bring more local produce into schools. This has provided pupils in ten participating schools with nutritious, local food no matter their socio-economic background. The project has also supported the development of new safety standards and new logistics. Growers are expanding their enterprises, and new farmers are diversifying into organic horticulture to participate.</p>	<p>Local Food Strategy</p> <p>Welsh Government Allotment Support Grant</p>
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## Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

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

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

### Well-being Objective: A Green Place to Live



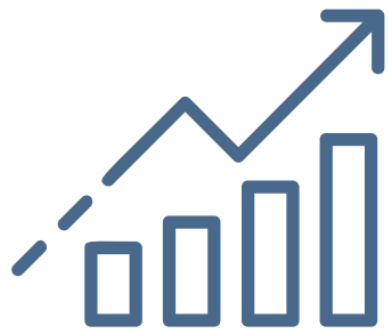
Monmouthshire is a beautiful place, with a stunning natural and built environment. We have a collective responsibility to ensure this is available for future generations to enjoy so our plans must be focussed on the **long-term** and look to **prevent** problems from occurring in years to come. **Involvement**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

### Measures of progress

Milestone	Target for completion		Progress		
New climate and nature emergency strategy approved by Cabinet	May 2024		This has now been completed.		
Food strategy developed and approved	May 2024		This has now been completed.		
Increased use of seasonal and/or local produce in schools, care homes and domiciliary care	May 2026		Work with partners is ongoing to increase the use of seasonal, local produce in schools and play activities across the county.		
Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2024/25	Quick View	Comment
Carbon emissions (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e) from the council's assets and operations <sup>i</sup>	44,248	54,859	36,000	↓	Latest figure is 2023/24, previous is for 2022/23. 2024/25 data will be included when available.
Percentage of our local authority fleet which is ultra-low emission	14	16.5	12	↑	
Capacity (MW) of renewable energy equipment installed on the council's estate	6.598	6.722	6.7	↑	Latest figure is 2023/24, previous is for 2022/23. 2024/25 data will be included when available.
Amount (kwh) of renewable energy generated from Council installations	4,783,567	5,271,000	4,857,500	↑	Latest figure is 2023/24, previous is 2022/23. 2024/25 data will be included when available.
Number of active travel routes created or enhanced	20	19	14	↓	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Percentage of municipal waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting	71.8	72.2	70	↑	Latest is provisional 2024/25 data.

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

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



## A Thriving and Ambitious Place

### What we want to achieve:

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

## Strategic Assessment


We have delivered a range of projects that are contributing to a local diverse economy in which businesses and workers can thrive. We have been working in partnership with others, including the Cardiff Capital Region, to make this happen. Monmouthshire has a strong local economy and is well placed for growth in Welsh terms. The employment rate is higher than both the UK and Wales averages. We also have a highly qualified population, with over half of Monmouthshire's working age population qualified to level NVQ4 and above. However, the lack of higher education establishments in the county, combined with high property and rental prices, results in many young people leaving the county. We have developed an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy which sets out how we equip young people with the skills to enter the workforce and how we will work with partners to create training and employment opportunities.

Our towns and high streets have faced many challenges in recent years. We have established placemaking partnerships in all six towns and have secured additional funding to improve commercial properties. We are committed to supporting local businesses through these challenges and promoting the creation of new business. We provided support to pre-starts and existing businesses throughout this year. It's important that we support the amenities that attract people to our towns. We have continued to make improvements to the accessibility of our visitor sites as part of our Heritage Strategy and are working to understand and address barriers to attendance.

Public transport is limited in the county. This results in an over-reliance on cars, which can be a barrier to accessing training and employment. We have developed a Local Transport Strategy which sets a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire over the next five years. We have made changes to local bus services to improve connections and efficiency and expanded our active travel network. We also have allocated an additional £2M in our 2025-26 budget for infrastructure with the majority being spent on road improvements. However, like all parts of the UK we have a highways maintenance backlog that exceeds the available funding.









## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place

A Thriving and Ambitious Place		
<div>Thriving and ambitious place</div> 	<b>Evaluation score:</b>	<p>Level 4 – Good – Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have developed our strategies to deliver the objective. We have provided support for residents and businesses to gain new skills, develop and grow. We have delivered projects to enhance connectivity in the County. We are building from a strong economic and skills base. Our assessment shows we need to grow this base and provide targeted support and projects for people, business and places that need them most.</p>
	<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>	<p>Our starting point is a comparatively strong one. Monmouthshire has a strong local economy and is well placed for growth in Welsh terms. There is strength in a number of key sectors which are highlighted and supported at a national level. Employment rates are high, as are qualification levels. But more can be done. Monmouthshire can be more vibrant. The conditions exist to achieve this. We will work with national, regional and local partners to increase investment, improve connectivity and continue the development of an economy which is thriving, ambitious and enterprising.</p>
<div>Age 49</div>	<b>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
	<b>What we want to achieve: Vibrant town centres which bring people together and attract investment</b>	
	<p>Attracting residents and visitors to our town centres is vital for the local economy. We are committed to ensuring that town centres remain vibrant and welcoming places that meet the needs of the local communities, businesses and visitors.</p> <p>We have established placemaking partnerships in all six towns in the county. Building these strong links ensures developments are informed and aligned with the needs of our communities. We have worked with partners and stakeholders to adopt Placemaking Plans in Usk and Chepstow, and are developing plans for Monmouth, Abergavenny and Magor with Undy. These plans aim to create a vibrant and sustainable future for town and village centres, informed by local residents, businesses and voluntary organisations. We have secured over £800k in funding from Welsh Government to drive forward town centre regeneration projects.</p> <p>Throughout this year we have used grant funding to provide a flexible grant scheme to enable building owners and businesses to bring vacant commercial space back into use and improve the functionality, performance and appearance of town centre buildings. 17 buildings or commercial units across the county benefitted from this grant, including the refurbishment of a previously run down building for the use of a community fridge and food club, and improvements to youth centres. A range of town centre public realm/connectivity projects have also been delivered to improve the functionality and appearance of town centres, including installation of steps and walkways to improve connectivity between towns and visitor attractions and widening of walkways to improve accessibility.</p>	<p>Placemaking plans</p> <p>Flexible grant scheme delivery and public realm improvements</p> <p>Tourism data</p>

<p>We are making improvements to our heritage sites, including their accessibility. We have launched a small grants programme to support access improvements at visitor attractions and events throughout the county. We continue to provide concessionary prices at our attractions, including for foster carers, to reduce the financial barriers to attending. Inclement weather has affected attendance at open-air spaces during this year, with 189,541 visitors to our heritage and culture sites in 2024/25, falling slightly below our target.</p> <p>This tourism sector is important in supporting employment and the economy in the county. We have continued to assist the sector and promote event and attractions in the county. The number of jobs supported by tourism stayed stable at 3,422 in 2024. The economic impact of tourism increased to £352.41m in 2024, a 1.9% increase on the previous year, demonstrating that the resilience of the sector in Monmouthshire.</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve: People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business</b></p>	
<p>Monmouthshire values all of its citizens and the people who work for our businesses. In 2023 we developed an Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy. We are committed to helping people of all ages and backgrounds develop the skills needed by new and established businesses helping them to grow and thrive.</p> <p>We have provided support to people who want to start their own business, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). We assisted 89 pre-start and existing businesses during the year, below our target. We had a staffing vacancy that reduced our capacity to provide support in the year. We have filled this vacancy, and we are using our new customer relationship management system to promote our services more widely to existing businesses.</p> <p>We have continued to provide employment support, with a specific focus on addressing skills in shortage areas. We have held successful Construction Skills Certification Scheme weekly drop-in sessions in. 70% of those enrolling completed the assessments to gain the green labourer's card, promoting career paths in the construction sector. We have addressed barriers to employment and supported 82 people to gain employment this year, above our annual target. We are running a number of projects, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, such as business coaching and advice. We are awaiting announcements regarding the future of the longer-term funding that supports this work.</p> <p>We have developed a new Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) Prevention Strategy. The demonstrates our commitment to preventing young people ending up without education, training or employment, ensuring better outcomes and opportunities for young people through collaborative work with stakeholders. We have supported ten young people into employment in the year; this is fewer than our target. There is reduced capacity across the NEET prevention team and so priority is given to those most in need of support. There has been a significant increase in the number of Year 11 and Year 13 leavers not in education, employment or training; 3.1% of Year 11 leavers were NEET, higher than the 1.8% in the recent years. We are analysing the reasons for this, including tracking individual journeys, and will use this information to target support with partners as part our NEET prevention strategy.</p> <p>The latest data shows that 55% of Monmouthshire residents are qualified to level 4 of the national framework (the highest level), compared to 45% for Wales and 48% for Great Britain. However, the ratio of jobs to population in Monmouthshire is lower than the figures for Wales and the UK as a whole. One of the reasons behind this is a shortage of the new employment sites needed to grow opportunities. We have developed a deposit replacement Local Development Plan, which has been agreed by Council for consultation, in which new employment sites are highlighted to address</p>	<p>Entrepreneur and business assistance</p> <p>Self-employment rate</p> <p>Employment support</p>

<p>the shortfall. We are seeing positive signs of progress in the Monmouthshire economy, such as an improvement in our economic position as measured by the UK Competitiveness Index, and sustained levels of people economically active: 79.9% of people in Monmouthshire are economically active which is above the rates for Wales and Great Britain.</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve: Sustainable Transport and Infrastructure</b></p>	
<p>Good transport and infrastructure are vital to our communities and economy, enabling access to a wide range of services and opportunities for all residents.</p> <p>We adopted a new Local Transport Strategy in May 2024 setting out a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire over the next five years. We have been awarded up to £8.4m to implement transport projects to enhance access, safety and infrastructure. We have used the funding on community road safety training, bus infrastructure projects and road resilience projects to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. We are using the largest portion of this funding to enhance our Active Travel network, including the installation of an active travel bridge in Llanfoist.</p> <p>As well as infrastructure improvements, we are using the funding to improve safe routes in the community and supporting public transport improvements, such as real-time interfaces. We amended bus timetables in September to ensure that public buses were a viable option for those pupils wishing to travel to school who are not eligible for free home to school transport. This has ensured a suitable and sustainable travel option for those pupils. We also utilised Welsh Government funding to increase the frequency of some public bus services to ensure a well-connected county for our residents.</p> <p>In March 2025, Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) opened its consultation on the draft Regional Transport Plan (RTP) to shape transport provision in South East Wales, aimed at unlocking opportunities, connecting people and businesses, and supporting the creation of jobs. The Regional Transport Plan includes various schemes identified within the South East Wales Transport Commission led by Lord Burns. We are focussed on ensuring the needs and ambition of Monmouthshire are included in this plan as it will be key to securing funding for the delivery of our Local Transport Strategy. If our transport schemes are not prioritised, there is a risk we may not be as successful going forward.</p> <p>In June 2025, the UK Government allocated £445m of resources to enable rail infrastructure improvements across Wales, this includes the delivery of the recommendations made by the South East Wales Transport Commission. The upgrades to the South Wales Mainline will increase train service frequency and the provision of five new railway stations – including Magor Walkway. We will continue to work with the Welsh Government and our neighbouring authorities to deliver the other recommendations of the Commission which includes the provision of a new link road between the M48 and the B4245 to enhance park and ride facility at Severn Tunnel Junction Railway station.</p> <p>A motion was passed at Monmouthshire County Council’s full council meeting, expressing concerns over the ban on Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) crossing the M48 Severn Bridge. The council recognises the urgent need to address the potential impact on local business and the wider community and will be urging UK and Welsh Government to work quickly to develop new measures for the bridge.</p> <p>Monmouthshire is not alone in facing challenges maintaining its highways. There is a significant backlog in roads maintenance across the UK. We simply cannot afford to fund all the necessary improvements from our capital budget. These have varying levels of risk associated with them. We</p>	<p>Local Transport Strategy</p> <p>Highway planned programme maintenance</p>

commission independent assessments of key highways infrastructure, and these have enabled us to prioritise maintenance expenditure in line with our maintenance strategy. We are also undertaking surveys of road and pavements to gain a further detailed understanding of their condition. Welsh Government's Local Government Borrowing Initiative will allow us to borrow money to fund an increased number of improvements projects. This will still not meet the identified funding gap required.	
<b>Further areas for development identified through our 2024/25 self-assessment</b>	
Understand the reasons for the rise in young people Not in Employment, Education or Training	

<b>Well-being of Future Generations Act impact</b>						
<b>Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals</b>						
<b>Prosperous Wales</b>	<b>Resilient Wales</b>	<b>Healthier Wales</b>	<b>More equal Wales</b>	<b>Wales of cohesive communities</b>	<b>Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language</b>	<b>Globally responsible Wales</b>
✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
<div> <div>Well-being Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place</div> <div>       </div> </div>						
<p>This goal is aimed at the <b>long-term</b> viability of Monmouthshire as a thriving place to live, work and visit. The location of Monmouthshire as the gateway to South East Wales means we must embrace working with neighbouring areas to maximise opportunities. Keeping Monmouthshire thriving and well-connected promotes <b>integration</b> and impacts on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the county. This requires <b>collaboration</b> with local businesses and other organisations, and <b>involvement</b> from the local community to maximise opportunities. Considering the global well-being of Wales is also important and this goal focuses on ensuring decisions are made with future generations in mind and takes a <b>preventative</b> approach to enable the retention of young people.</p>						
<b>Measures of progress</b>						
<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Target for completion</b>		<b>Progress</b>			
Development of draft Placemaking Plans for Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth	March 2025		Draft plans have been developed for each area with partners and residents and consultation undertaken in each of the local areas.			
Develop Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy	February 2024		This has now been completed.			
Develop and approve NEET strategy	November 2024		This has now been completed.			

Local Transport Plan supporting modal shift is produced	May 2024		This has now been completed.		
Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2024/25	Quick View	Comment
Number of NEET young people supported into employment	New measure	10	25		This is a new measure for 24/25. Targets will be assessed to ensure they reflect capacity for delivery of projects.
Number of pre-starts and existing businesses assisted during the year by the local authority and its partners	165	89	180	↓	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.  This was fewer than targeted due a staffing vacancy reducing our capacity to provide support. The vacancy has now been filled.
Number of working age people supported into employment during the year through action by the local authority	115	82	60	↓	These reflect annual figures and are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.
Percentage of school leavers not in education, employment or training <sup>ii</sup>	1.8	3.1	1.5	↓	Work is underway to understand the drivers of this increase.
Percentage of care experienced young people who have completed at least three months in education, training or employment	52.5	65	60	↑	Measure amended in line with Welsh Government Performance Improvement Framework to include care leavers up to the age of 21 from 19.
Total number of visitors to our heritage & culture sites	194,700	189,541	198,000	↓	
Number of schools who reported that MonLife Heritage Learning has had a positive impact on teaching and learning in their school	10	11	10	↑	

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

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

## A Safe Place to Live



### What we want to achieve:

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


## Strategic Assessment

We have taken action to reduce homelessness and have put plans in place to ensure the future supply of good quality, energy efficient homes. House prices here are some of the highest in Wales, with the average property costing over £320k or 8.5 times average earnings in the county. This makes it difficult for many people to buy or rent locally. That is why affordability is at the heart of our ambition in our proposed replacement Local Development Plan for our county. The delays in adopting this plan have limited the progress we have made in increasing the supply of affordable homes.

High property prices, a shortage of affordable private rented accommodation and the increasing cost of living have all contributed to a rising homelessness challenge in the county. Working collaboratively with partners we have implemented a Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. This has increased homeless prevention. We have worked with social and private landlords and started to re-purpose our own properties to increase the availability of temporary and settled homes for homeless households which has led to reduced use of unsuitable B&B accommodation including the elimination of it to house 16 and 17 years olds and families with children.

We want everyone to feel safe in Monmouthshire. Residents have voiced concerns about safety and rates of anti-social behaviour have increased slightly. We have worked with young people to address their concerns about knife crime and anti-social behaviour and have secured funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to support this work. We have worked with the Police and partners across the region to develop a strategy aimed at preventing the most serious types of violence across Gwent.

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Safe Place to Live

Objective: A Safe Place to Live		
<b>Safe place</b> 	<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	<p>Level 4 – Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.</p> <p>We have drafted our ambition for development in the county and implemented projects and support to deliver our objective. Our assessment shows that the delay in progressing our plans has limited the impact we have made to deliver our objective in the short term.</p>
<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>		
<p>For most people, Monmouthshire is a really good place to live, but not for everyone. This needs to change. We will work with partners to create a safe place that people are proud to call home, increase the availability of good quality affordable housing, reduce homelessness and promote approaches to help homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.</p>		
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?		How do we know?
<b>What we want to achieve: Increased supply of good quality affordable housing</b>		
<p>Having a safe, secure and warm place to call home is one of the most important contributors to peoples' well-being. High property prices and a limited supply of affordable housing mean this is currently out of reach for too many local people.</p> <p>We have granted 108 affordable homes planning permission this year, a significant increase on the 46 granted permission in 23/24. This is mainly attributed to improvements in river health permitting developments in Monmouth and Abergavenny that were previously restricted. An additional 71 affordable homes were delivered throughout this year, an increase on the 61 delivered in 23/24 and above our target of 60. We recognise that more affordable homes are needed to meet need in the county and our deposit Replacement Local Development Plan aims to increase delivery.</p> <p>We have developed a deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This was endorsed by Council in October ahead of a public consultation that took place in December 2024. This plan aims to address a number of key issues and align with the priorities of the organisation. It has allocated 50% affordable housing on each new development and is introducing enabling policies which will allow for further affordable housing developments to come forward. This includes facilitating more single person accommodation in the county which is currently extremely limited and is a factor contributing to homelessness. Council will consider the results of the consultation in Autumn 2025, following which the RLDP will be subject to public examination.</p> <p>We have engaged with owners of vacant properties, offering advice and support to help and encourage them to bring houses back into use. This has led to 36 applications to the Empty Homes Grant. Four owners have subsequently expressed an interest in leasing their property as temporary homeless accommodation.</p>		<p>Draft RLDP</p> <p>Applications for Empty Homes Grant</p> <p>Number of long-term empty homes</p>



<p>We have introduced more formal mechanisms to help tackle empty properties within the county. This includes a Council Tax Premium on long-term vacant properties to encourage owners to bring them back into use. Our approach has reduced the number of recorded long-term empty homes from 541 to 447.</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve: Reduce the number of people who become homeless</b></p>	
<p>We have seen increasing levels of homelessness in recent years, alongside this, limited temporary accommodation has meant we have been dependent on costly and unsuitable bed and breakfast accommodation to fulfil our responsibilities to citizens.</p> <p>We have applied a Rapid Rehousing approach and increased the resources for homeless prevention. This includes increased staffing, procedural changes and closer partnership working to support more people at risk and providing grants from the Homeless Prevention Fund to help tackle arrears/debt and enable households remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives.</p> <p>We remodelled our Housing Support service to include dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement support. This also includes dedicated support for young people with higher need through the expansion of the Housing First scheme with Pobl and the introduction of MoYo – dedicated housing floating support for young people. These initiatives have contributed to increasing the percentage of applicants successfully prevented from becoming homeless from 62% to 71%. We have identified further opportunity exists to review and refresh the current Housing Support Grant programme to increase effectiveness and we will focus on this over the next year.</p> <p>We are striving to provide more settled accommodation of homeless households in temporary accommodation. The number of households in temporary accommodation remains high, with 140 households in this accommodation. The focus of our RLDP on affordable housing provision will help us to address some of this need, particularly the demand for single person accommodation, of which there is a limited supply. We have also continued to engage with owners and private landlords to encourage them to make their properties available for temporary accommodation through private leasing.</p> <p>In order to meet more immediate demand, we have started to acquire accommodation for use as temporary accommodation. A former agricultural property has been refurbished, and approval has been given to repurpose Severn View, a former residential home, to temporary homeless accommodation with dedicated support. This will particularly help to reduce the need to use B&amp;B accommodation. We have worked with housing associations to make more social housing available for homeless households; 58% of general needs social housing was allocated to homeless households in 24/25. We need to ensure that allocating further social housing to homeless applicants will not be detrimental to other housing need groups.</p> <p>The increased support for those at risk of homelessness, combined with efforts to increase availability of both temporary and settled accommodation, has contributed to a reduction in the use of bed and breakfast (B&amp;B) accommodation from 46 people at March 2024 to 20 at March 2025. The number of 16- and 17-year-olds and the number of families in B&amp;B accommodation was zero at March 2025. Ensuring increases in both temporary and permanent accommodation will be key to achieving our milestone of eliminating the use of B&amp;B accommodation for households with children and young people.</p>	<p>Homelessness data</p> <p>Housing Support Grant programme</p> <p>Re-purposing of property</p>

<p>We regularly hold a Corporate Parenting Panel to coordinate and support care leavers to prevent them from becoming homeless. During the last year, eight care leavers experienced homelessness within 12 months of leaving care, an increase from five the previous year.</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve: A more energy efficient housing stock with a lower carbon footprint</b></p>	
<p>Tackling the climate emergency and reducing emissions is one of our priorities. Domestic properties are one of the biggest contributors to carbon emissions in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>The Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) has been subject to consultation ahead of consideration by Council in the Autumn. This will require new homes in the county to be net zero carbon. Once implemented, this will lower carbon emissions and help to reduce energy costs for residents in new homes.</p> <p>We have continued to support low-income households to access grant funding to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. We are promoting the Eco4 scheme which provides funding for low-income households and those living with medical conditions worsened by damp or cold to access energy efficiency improvements. During 24/25, 60 applications were processed, a significant increase on the previous year. We are working with the NHS to identify residents with respiratory or immune suppression illnesses who may benefit from the scheme. A targeted campaign is being prepared to increase take-up from those who can benefit from the scheme. We are supporting a range of further energy schemes such as Solar Together, a group-buying scheme for solar panels and Nest Scheme which provides advice and support for energy efficiency improvements.</p>	<p>Number of people supported to access Eco4</p>
<p><b>What we want to achieve: Communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other</b></p>	
<p>Everyone should have the right to feel safe and have a sense of belonging in their local community.</p> <p>Our community safety team have worked with young people across the county to address concerns of knife crime and anti-social behaviour in the area. We secured £10k from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to support this work. We are also working with the charity Fearless to deliver workshops on critical issues such as county lines and knife crime at our youth centres, helping young people to navigate these challenges. Through our work we targeted 9 young people involved in ASB in Caldicot through a total of 121 sessions; this has resulted in a 23% decrease in ASB incidents in the towns where our teams are based, and 17% overall for the area. We are working to improve the relationship between young people and local police by regularly inviting police to our youth centres to engage with young people and understand what is important to them.</p> <p>We have continued to support young people through engagement at youth centres, providing a space to share concerns and any issues they are facing. Youth workers provide consistent emotional support, practical safety advice and made referrals to wider support organisations where necessary.</p> <p>We have worked with partners to develop a Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024/25. This has helped identify the serious violence priorities across Monmouthshire. We are now working with key partners and agencies to deliver a range of targeted interventions to address these.</p>	<p>Feedback from young people at youth centres</p> <p>Gwent Serious Violence Prevention Strategy</p> <p>VAWDASV strategy</p>

We have contributed to the development of the Gwent regional violence against women and domestic sexual violence (VAWDASV) strategy. The strategy is now being implemented through partnership arrangements and will ensure that more people feel safe, and free from abuse and violence.	
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**Well-being of Future Generations Act impact**

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



**Well-being Objective: A Safe Place to Live**

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

**Measures of progress**

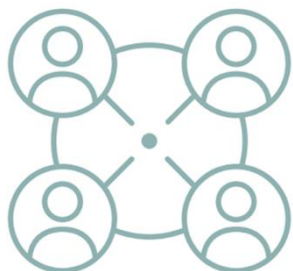
Milestone	Target for completion	Progress
Replacement Local Development Plan approved by Council	July 2025	Council will consider the results of the RLDP consultation in Autumn 2025, following which the RLDP will be subject to public examination.
The use of B&B accommodation is eliminated for households with children and young people	March 2027	There are currently 0 families in B&B accommodation, down from 9 at September 2024. Ensuring increases in both temporary and permanent accommodation will be key to achieving this milestone.
Rapid Rehousing Approach introduced	April 2023	This has now been completed. The Rapid Rehousing Approach was implemented in April 2023 and has contributed to increased focus on homeless prevention.

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2024/25	Quick View	Comment
Number of affordable homes granted planning permission in year	46	108	50	↑	
Number of additional affordable homes delivered	61	71	60	↑	
Percentage of homeless applications who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless	62	71	70	↑	
Number of 16 and 17 year olds in bed and breakfast accommodation	0	0	0	↔	
Number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation	9	0	0	↑	Previous is September 2024, latest is March 2025.
Number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation	46	20	40	↑	
Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation	161	140	150	↑	

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

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

## A Connected Place Where People Care



### What we want to achieve:

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


## Strategic Assessment

We are changing the way we provide services to ensure that Monmouthshire is a place where people's contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. The council has a track record of delivering innovative approaches and rich partnership working in health and social care. Working in this way is vital to meet growing pressures on health and social care services. We have worked to speed up hospital discharge, helped vulnerable older people regain their independence, developed a longer-term strategy for domiciliary care, including reduce unmet care hours, and opened a new purpose-built specialist care home. These have increased the availability of care for those who need it now and set out our path for a longer-term strategy to meet increased demand for the future. We have also developed a recruitment and retention strategy to maintain the social care workforce we need.

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

Healthy life expectancy in Monmouthshire is above both the average for Wales and the UK. This hides inequalities at a local level with a gap between those living in the most and least affluent parts of the county. We know that there are many factors that affect our health and well-being. For this reason, we committed to work with others across Gwent and the Institute of Health Equity to tackle these by becoming what is known as a Marmot Region. We are developing a strategy to enhance wellbeing, resilience and prevention for adult residents who are on the threshold of needing formal care and support. We have continued to deliver schemes to support people to be physically active and access nature for the well-being benefits it brings.

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

A Connected Place Where People Care		
<b>Connected place</b> 	<b>Evaluation Score:</b>  Level 4 – Good – Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved.  We have increased access to care and support in the county and provided services to support health and well-being of residents. Our evidence shows we are supporting higher levels and greater complexity of demand. Resourcing the preventive approaches required while meeting existing demand is a challenge to the delivery of our objective.	
<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>  Monmouthshire will be a place where people's contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. The health and social care system is facing significant challenges, and statutory services across the UK are struggling to cope with the volume and complexity of demand. Monmouthshire has a track record of delivering innovative approaches and rich partnership working. We recognise that well-being is about far more than treating people when they get sick. There are many factors that can affect our health including the environment, housing, what we do for work, how much we earn, our lifestyles, transport and community cohesion. These wider determinants of health, sometimes called the social determinants, can affect physical and mental health in either a positive or negative way.		
<b>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</b>  <b>What we want to achieve: High quality social care which enables people to live their lives on their terms</b>		<b>How do we know?</b>
<p>Early help is vital to prevent children coming into care. We have established a coordinated approach to early intervention and prevention in Children's Social Services. Demand for these services is high; we have maintained low waiting times by building capacity through group work and supporting student placements. This ensures that families get the help they need in a timely way and supports good outcomes for children. Evaluation and feedback of family support services indicates clear and positive outcomes for families. 100% of families continue to report a positive outcome following a Building Stronger Families team intervention. A significant amount of our prevention work is grant funded which could impact on our ability to deliver these services if the funding is altered or removed. We continue to review demand and work with partners to provide accessible and coordinated early help support.</p> <p>Early help services are the foundation for our long-term strategy to prevent and reduce the need for children to come into care. We are focussed on preventative family support throughout children's social care, from first referral to complex cases. We have seen an ongoing gradual reduction of children looked after from 209 in April 2022 to 190 in March 2025.</p> <p>Due to the demand and complexity of presenting issues there remains a shortage of suitable placements for children requiring support particularly locally, and especially those who need additional support or who are not able to be placed with foster carers. We have developed our foster care offer and a placement development strategy to address this. We have analysed demand and set a strategy to develop children's residential and 16+ supported accommodation placements within the county. This sets out how we will support the transition to not-for-profit care for children in Wales and respond to the associated risks and challenges. We have completed one project providing aged 16+ supported accommodation for five</p>		<p>Early help service evaluations</p> <p>Placement Development Strategy</p> <p>Children Social care performance data</p> <p>Hospital discharge monitoring information</p> <p>Reablement service performance information</p>

<p>placements and are developing a further three projects, two children’s residential homes and one further aged 16+ supported accommodation. This will improve availability or placements and help to ensure children and young people can remain close to their communities.</p> <p>The recruitment and retention of foster carers remains a significant challenge across Wales and the rest of the UK. We have an unfailing commitment to the recruitment and retention of in-house foster carers. Our fostering strategy has helped the us a achieve a small increase in fostering households and whilst our foster carer retention is generally good; we have an aging population of foster carers, and it is likely that some of our fostering households will retire in the next few years. Overall, the total number of Local Authority foster carers has not increased sufficiently to meet our needs. We still have a reliance on commissioning “for profit” foster placements for children from independent fostering agencies. As of March 2025, 35.8% of placements of children looked after were made with in-house foster carers. We have reviewed the foster care offer to Monmouthshire carers to support recruitment and agreed a case for investment in generic in-house foster carers. This includes increasing the fees paid to Monmouthshire (in-house) foster carers, this aims to support the recruitment and retention of foster carer to improve placement sufficiency. This will improve outcomes for children who are looked after and reduce costs.</p> <p>We are supporting an ageing population. This is the prime driver for increased demand in adults' social care. The proportion of residents aged 65 and over is expected to increase to 33.6% by 2043, compared to 25.7% across Wales. We have been implementing a renewed focus on assessment and review of care and support needs for adults requiring social care support to ensure residents receive the right support to meet their outcomes. This includes increasing the number of people accessing the opportunities that reablement provides, supporting people to relearn how to do daily activities and to reduce their need for further support, as opposed to providing long term care. Over time this should help to mitigate demand pressures. We have provided 309 packages of reablement in 2024/25, with 55.7% of these mitigating the need for further support. We are continuing to focus on the consistency in application of assessment and support provided at the front door of Adult’s social care to make sure people receive the most appropriate information, advice and assistance they need.</p> <p>We are increasing the use of assistive technology within care and support planning. The Assistive Tech service is supporting 1017 clients and provided 310 installations in 2024/25, this has provided a range of technology that helps support someone to live independently at home for longer.</p> <p>We want to ensure care is available for adults who require it. We have developed and are implementing a long-term strategy for commissioned domiciliary care. This supports place-based care and the provider market. At the same time this ensures that wherever possible our in-house provision is supported for reablement, utilising our expertise to support residents to retain independence. Due to a combination of our activities and external factors resulting in the demand and market for care at home stabilising across the region we have increased capacity across home care and significantly reduced the number of unmet care hours from 804 in March 2023 to 132 hours in March 2025, with 98.2% of hours of long-term domiciliary care now being fulfilled. This has improved access to care and support for those who need it.</p> <p>Our continued focus is on ensuring we have capacity and support available to review and assess care requirements to provide support that meets needs with the right services, allowing choice and consistency including the provision of reablement to try to reduce further needs. We have seen a gradual reduction over the year in the number of adults in receipt of home care, from 535 in April 2024 to 475 in March 2025, and an increase in the number of adults in receipt of residential care over the same period, from 319 in April 2024 to 357 in March 2025. The increasing need for residential care is a trend nationally, in Monmouthshire this increased demand is mainly due to an ageing population and increasingly complex</p>	<p>Care Inspectorate Wales Improvement Inspection of Adults services</p> <p>Adults Social care performance information</p> <p>Strategy for commissioned domiciliary care</p>
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<p>needs requiring increased support. Feedback from adults' social care services users shows continued high levels of satisfaction with their care and support; 84.7% of adults were happy in 2024/25, the same as the previous year. There remain challenges to responding to all people's care and support needs in as timely a manner as we would want due to continuing pressure across the social care and health system and the complexity of people's support needs has resulted in increased costs needing to be met from our Adults' Social Care budget.</p> <p>We are developing new provision and the way we provide care and support to meet this demand. We opened Severn View Park, a specialist care home for people living with dementia in March 2024. The home provides 32 bedrooms for both long-term support and short-term support in the form of respite based on a relationship-centred care model. The new care home aims to maintain connections with the surrounding community.</p> <p>We continue to work with partners in both primary and secondary health to prevent unnecessary admissions to hospital and support timely discharges. Ensuring well-coordinated and timely discharges and managing the pressure within the hospital system remains challenging. We convene weekly multi-disciplinary meetings to identify and unblock delays when they arise. The number of patients awaiting discharge varies during the year, in March 2025, 26 patients were awaiting discharge for social care reason. The main reasons for these delays include, waiting for assessment and capacity in care homes and domiciliary care. We continue to develop and embed our practice, working in an integrated way with acute and community settings and with multi-disciplinary teams to support hospital discharge. An Audit Wales report reviewing the arrangements to support effective flow out of hospital in the Gwent Region sets out several recommendations for both the health board and local authority to respond to and a collective response to address these has been developed.</p> <p>A Care Inspectorate Wales inspection improvement check of adult social services found key strengths in our establishment of a place-based approach and implementation of the commissioning strategy, the improved availability of domiciliary care development, reablement approaches reducing or mitigating the need for ongoing support. Areas requiring further development identified include the need for improvement in risk identification, staff engagement and communication and support for carers. We have developed a response to address the areas for improvement identified.</p>	
<b>What we want to achieve: A healthy and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded</b>	
<p>We recognise that well-being is about far more than treating people when they need support, there are many factors that can have an impact on our health including the environment, housing, what we do for work, how much we earn, our lifestyles, transport and community cohesion. These wider determinants of health, sometimes called the social determinants, can impact in either a positive or negative way on physical and mental health. We are committed to work with others across Gwent and the Institute of Health Equity to tackle these by becoming what is known as a Marmot Region.</p> <p>We are also developing a strategy focussed on enhancing wellbeing, resilience and prevention for adult residents who are on the threshold of needing formal (statutory) care and support. This will aim to coordinate our own council activity and work with partners to facilitate healthier lifestyles and build individual and community resilience so that residents, especially our more deprived residents, are enabled to live healthier and independently for longer – boosting their wellbeing as well as delaying or reducing their call on statutory services.</p>	<p>Youth Service provision</p> <p>Carers and Young Carers service</p> <p>Strategy for enhanced wellbeing, resilience and prevention</p>



<p>We are helping residents to live healthier and more fulfilled lives through improved access to outdoor opportunities. In total 41 schools, volunteers, local interest groups and partners have been involved in nature-based health and wellbeing projects and initiatives across the county, providing participants with increased access to nature to support well-being.</p> <p>We have supported young peoples' mental health and wellbeing across the county through the youth service Shift project. We have expanded the offer with a focussed grant funded programme called Emotional Logic. 90% of young people engaged in the project reported an improvement in their mental health/emotional well-being, exceeding the target of 85%.</p> <p>We have commissioned carers services, provided information and advice and offered a range of free events and activities to support carers and young carers' needs. We have focussed on re-shaping information we provide to carers, informed by feedback from the young carers and carers strategy group. This feedback is informing the redevelopment of our website, a revised carers handbook and improved signposting to other organisations with specific expertise and knowledge.</p> <p>We provide 1,028 adult carers on our database with advice and assistance through our biannual carer newsletter and discounted leisure offer. Similarly, 136 young carers are registered with the Young Carers Service and are provided with more targeted support. We are focussed on improving our engagement with our young carers on the support we provide.</p> <p>This feedback will also inform how we develop our assessments of carers needs. We undertake carers needs assessments to ensure that carers needs are understood in their own right. There is increasing demand for support, and carers awaiting a needs assessment has increased from 8 in 2023/24 to 23 in the same period in 2024/25, with a vacancy in the carers team reducing our capacity to undertake assessments. We are developing clearer information about a carer needs assessment to ensure all age unpaid carers are correctly supported by the appropriate agencies at the right time.</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve: A professional and passionate social care workforce</b></p>	
<p>We have developed our workforce planning arrangements. We have focussed our social care workforce development on addressing areas where there is high demand and recruiting to essential posts to meet the care needs of our residents. Recruitment is focussed on demonstrating the opportunities, career progression, work life balance and job satisfaction that people experience who work within the sector. Generally, the workforce in social care remains stable, the number of vacancies across social care was 26 in March 2025 compared to 23 vacancies in March 2024. The attraction and recruitment of people into the social care sector, particularly in some roles, continues to be a challenge. We have also undertaken a training needs analysis and used this to develop training plans focussing on professional development and practice.</p> <p>We have delivered a range of activities and support working with care providers and our partners. For example, we have developed a micro-care project to increase the availability of care in the county. The project supports self-employed carers to develop their businesses as well as providing the opportunity for greater oversight and governance of self-employed care workers operating within Monmouthshire. The number of micro-carers is steadily increasing. The number of carers has grown, with 59 carers registered (an increase from 24 previously). Micro-carers are delivering around 900 hours of care and support each week supporting Monmouthshire residents in their local community.</p>	<p>Social care workforce recruitment and retention data</p> <p>Micro-care project</p> <p>Fees for care providers</p>

We have allocated additional funding to pay fees for care providers to increase the placements available for people who require care. We have provided an additional £2.7 million in last year's budget for care provider fees across Children's and Adults' social care. This ensures that providers can continue to pay the real living wage to attract and retain key staff to meet increasing demand. We need to ensure our fee rate remains a viable and attractive option for care providers. We have allocated an additional £3.2 million to cover an expected increase in fees following the review of care provider fees across Children's and Adults' social care as part of the yearly fee negotiations. This aims to ensure that residents can choose the best support for them.

## Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

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

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### Well-being Objective: A Connected Place Where People Care



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

### Measures of progress

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

Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target for 2024/25	Quick View	Comment
The percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year that mitigated the need for support / positive outcome from reablement	55.3	55.7	60	↑	
Percentage of adult service users who are happy with the care and support they have had	84.6	84.7	90	↑	
Percentage of hours of long-term domiciliary care fulfilled	96.6	98.2	96	↑	
Percentage of families reporting a positive outcome following a building stronger families team intervention	100	100	90	↔	
Percentage of adult service users who have had the right information or advice when they needed it	77.6	78.0	80	↑	
Percentage of placements of children who are looked after by the local authority made with in-house foster carers	36.5	35.8	43	↓	As at Census date
Percentage of young people engaged in the youth service Swift project who perceive an improvement in their mental health / emotional well-being	84	90	85	↑	
Number of schools, volunteers, local interest groups and partners involved in nature-based health and wellbeing projects and initiatives across the county	New Measure	41	30		

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

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

## A Learning Place



### What we want to achieve:

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

## Strategic Assessment


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

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

We provide monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. Learners in our secondary schools achieve higher results than elsewhere in Wales. Our disadvantaged learners attain in line with their modelled outcomes, although continue to experience lower attainment than those less disadvantaged. We have developed targeted support for these learners from education advisors and the wider community focussed schools approach. This is aimed at ensuring all pupils can succeed irrespective of their socio-economic background.

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

## Community & Corporate Plan Objective: A Learning Place

A Learning Place		
<b>Learning place</b> 	<b>Evaluation Score:</b>	<p>Level: 4 – Good – Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved</p> <p>We have developed our approaches and increased our support to schools and pupils to achieve our objective. Our evidence shows the demand and complexity of support children and young people require, particularly vulnerable learner, has grown. Our assessment identifies the need to further adjust, develop and target our support to achieve our objective.</p>
	<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>	<p>Monmouthshire will be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential. The pandemic has had a substantial effect on schools and pupils. The two years of uncertainty and significant disruption to learning have inevitably left a legacy. Before the pandemic we knew that our disadvantaged learners did not achieve the outcomes we would wish. The pandemic has worsened the learning experiences of many vulnerable students such as those eligible for free school meals. The emotional and mental well-being of pupils was often affected, with many experiencing increased uncertainty, anxiety and loneliness. In line with our guiding principles, it is vital that we develop more opportunities to listen and learn from our pupils and students. Since schools have reopened the education system in Wales has continued to evolve with reforms and developments including the new curriculum for Wales and the introduction of a new Additional Learning Needs Act.</p>
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?		How do we know?
<b>What we want to achieve: Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils</b>		
<p>We recognise that being around teachers and friends in school is the best way for pupils to learn and reach their potential. Being in school can also support pupils' wellbeing, and wider development. We continue to work with our schools to support pupils to attend. Lower attendance levels in our schools remains a challenge since the pandemic and continues to be a national issue. We have dedicated education welfare officers who are working with vulnerable pupils to bring them back into the educational setting, where possible, and are holding attendance consultations with schools regularly to promote attendance and provide bespoke support to families. We have updated our attendance policies to strengthen systems and processes to improve and sustain high levels of attendance in line with new Welsh Government guidance. As a result, overall attendance has increased during the academic year 2024/25.</p> <p>There has been a gradual increase in attendance in our primary schools, at the end of the academic year 2023/24 attendance was 93.6%; provisional data shows attendance was 94.1% in the summer term 2024/25. Attendance in secondary schools remains lower and has been slower to increase, attendance was 88.2% in the academic year 2023/24, provisional attendance was 90.1% by summer term 2024/25. Attendance for those eligible for free school meals (eFSM) remains lower and we continue our work to improve attendance for these pupils to return the school environment to support their well-being and educational attainment. Pupils eFSM attendance in primary schools was slightly lower in the academic year 2023/24 at 89.0%, and significantly lower in secondary schools at 75.8%; provisional data shows attendance was 89.3% in primary school and</p>		<p>Education Welfare Service</p> <p>School Attendance</p> <p>School Exclusions</p> <p>Whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being</p> <p>Trauma Informed Schools Training</p>

79.8% in secondary school in the summer term 2024/25. This means we will need continue to focus on our work to securing improvements in attendance for these pupils to ensure no pupil is left behind and all can achieve their potential.

There has been an increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic. This is a national challenge and is an issue that poses a challenge for schools, staff, and learners. There is a risk that this will also result in a worsening of educational attainment. We have continued to develop and evolve our support to reduce and prevent behaviour that challenges. We continue to try to further understand the reasons for this behaviour and implement support for learners' wellbeing. We have implemented the whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being. This helps schools to understand how they are best placed to promote well-being. We have introduced this in a phased approach and increased the number of schools engaged in the approach from 74% to 88.2%. All schools and settings are engaged with Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), and we currently have 78 practicing ELSAs, at least one in each of our schools, who access regular supervision making a positive impact on the emotional literacy of pupils.

We continue to be committed to our trauma informed practice which form part of a universal, whole-school, preventative approach, which continues to be led by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS). We have developed a Monmouthshire specific Trauma-Informed Professional Learning programme in collaboration with Traumatic Stress Wales (TSW) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Hub Wales. This aligns with the Trauma-Informed Wales Framework. This approach focuses on understanding children/young people presenting with behaviours of concern and raising the awareness and capacity of adults supporting vulnerable pupils. Currently 79% of schools (27 of 34) are engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism.

The continued work of the Vulnerable Learner Lead and increased capacity within the Inclusion Service is supporting more focus on managing exclusions, this includes an increased focus on the role of critical friend to schools where the use of exclusion is of concern. The number of permanent exclusions from schools was high at 22 in the last academic year. This year to date 20 permanent exclusions have been issued but none of these have been upheld at Pupil Discipline Committees (PDC). This is due to the improved operation and effectiveness of the Inclusion Panel to consider acceptable alternatives to permanent exclusion where the threshold is met. This has enabled the Inclusion Service to work with schools and other agencies, to offer viable and suitably risk-managed alternatives. The number of fixed term exclusions also increased in the last academic year and remain high. The high levels of exclusions have increased the pressure on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) to support pupils who have been excluded, and those at risk of exclusion. Our investment in new accommodation and enhanced leadership is improving capacity to support pupils in the PRS.

#### **What we want to achieve: The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning**

We need to support all learners to secure the necessary skills and knowledge that we would expect them to have at the relevant point in their education. Schools in Monmouthshire are embracing the new curriculum. Through our regular monitoring and Estyn inspections, we know that overall, many schools are making good progress in developing a broad, balanced and purposeful curriculum that reflects the context of the school and meets pupils' needs well. Nearly all schools have aligned their curriculum with the principles of the Curriculum for Wales and most have a clear vision for the curriculum. They have carefully designed their curriculum to promote pupils' moral, social and cultural development effectively. Teachers plan worthwhile learning experiences that support all pupils to develop and transfer their knowledge and skills to other areas of the curriculum. Where this is most successful, teachers provide a range of engaging, exciting and inclusive learning experiences that meet the pupils'

Estyn Inspection reports

Attainment data

School Development Plans (SDPs)

interests and develop pupils’ knowledge, skills and experience progressively. Schools continue to refine and adapt their curriculum to reflect pupil’s interests and the changing context of the school. Between April 2024 and the end of March 2025, Estyn inspected six primary schools and two secondary schools.

Our focus remains on supporting excellent teaching and learning. We have worked with the Education Achievement Service to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools. All schools are provided with a bespoke support package that complements the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs), in line with the levels of support they require.

The results of learners in our secondary schools are higher than elsewhere in Wales. On average, the capped 9 points score was 369.8 in Monmouthshire in 2024, compared to 358.1 across Wales. Most of our pupils performed in line with their expectations; overall, two schools in Monmouthshire were above Welsh Government modelled capped 9 outcomes, and two below. Breaking groups of learners in each individual school into ‘thirds’ compared with modelled outcome shows that all schools are above expectation for the highest and middle achieving thirds. In the lowest third two schools are well above expectation, but two are below, one significantly (the equivalent of half a GCSE grade per learner, per subject). This suggests a need for targeted intervention to support lower-attaining learners. Overall, 27.5% of pupils across Monmouthshire are achieving 5 or more GCSE at levels A\*-A in 2024, compared with 18.1% for Wales. We also have fewer pupils leaving school with no qualifications, at 1.1%, although higher than 0.8% in 2024, compared with 1.8% of pupils across Wales. Adjustments in examinations means direct comparison with the previous year's outcomes has not been provided.

When schools evaluate their own performance, they assess this against similar schools. This is a more informative and detailed assessment of attainment and wider progress, given the varying make up and individual plans of schools, than comparing against Wales averages. When comparing our comprehensive schools with those of similar size and linguistic delivery across Wales, two schools outperform schools in almost every category (including capped 9, literacy, numeracy, science, Welsh Baccalaureate, 5+ A\*-A, expect one school for no qualifications). One of our schools underperforms in some categories and one in more categories compared to similar schools. We continue to support our schools to raise attainment levels beyond expected levels to levels where they and we want attainment to be.

We have an agreed Welsh in Education Strategic Plan that sets our strategic direction for the planning, delivery, and growth of Welsh medium education in Monmouthshire over the next ten years. We are mainly on target with delivering the plan, in line with point we want to be in the plan. We are working with childcare providers to expand the availability of Welsh medium childcare provision. The development of an additional Cylch Meithrin has not progressed as planned which has limited access to childcare, through the medium of Welsh. We opened a new Welsh-medium primary school to serve both Monmouth and the surrounding towns and villages, Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy, in September 2024, uptake of places at schools has been positive and from September the school will welcome pupils from nursery age to Year 3 pupils. We have established an immersion class at Ysgol Y Ffin and have secured funding to establish a second class in Y Fenni to enable pupils from year 3 and upwards to transfer into Welsh-medium education, and in doing so support an increased demand when the school moves to a new site in September 2025. The current number of Reception learners in Welsh medium schools is 57, which is 64% of our 2031 target.

Arrangements to develop and track linguistic progression within Monmouthshire schools and at transition from Year 6 to Year 7 has strengthened significantly during the year through bespoke support from the EAS. The number of children transitioning from a Welsh language primary school

Welsh in Education  
Strategic Plan



<p>into a Welsh language secondary school in the summer of 2024 was 22 and below our expectation. We will continue to implement our plan to increase Welsh medium education in the county.</p>	
<p><b>What we want to achieve: A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs</b></p>	
<p>Over the past three years, schools have seen a consistent increase in the number of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM), ranging between 5% to 48% (with an average of 18%). We need to support learners who are eligible for Free School Meals (eFSM) or who are experiencing the impact of poverty, and those learners with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) throughout our provision.</p> <p>We have worked with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) to provide challenge, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in schools. This has a particular focus on vulnerable learners, which includes those eligible for free school meals who are also more likely to have further needs requiring support. eFSM learners in Monmouthshire attain higher than their peers in Wales at Key stage 4, the capped 9 points score for Monmouthshire pupils eFSM was 304.7 for exams in the summer of 2024. Modelled expectations for eFSM learners are all above expectations for all indicators (including capped 9, Skills Challenge Certificate, numeracy and science), except the literacy indicator which is slightly below. There remains a difference in attainment between those pupils eligible for free school meals and those not by around 1.3 GCSE grades. Lower attendance levels for eFSM learners will also have an impact on their attainment. Schools continue to undertake a detailed assessment of attainment and wider progress based on the varying make up and individual plans of each school to ensure that each pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed no matter their socio-economic background.</p> <p>We have developed a new Inclusion Strategy and an updated Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to shape our work with children and young people in schools and settings in Monmouthshire. The Inclusion Strategy sets out our priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people in vulnerable groups and their families. The Additional Learning Needs Policy outlines our approach to supporting children and young people with barriers to learning and additional learning needs, ensuring they receive the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.</p> <p>Our Inclusion support is now embedded as part of interconnected strategies and related toolkits, resources and policies. This covers ALN, relationships, children looked after and reducing exclusions. A framework is being developed for the management of specialist resource bases (SRB) to ensure a consistent, equitable approach across all settings. We have established an Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review and associated quality assurance cycle to ensure that there is a consistent and equitable approach to meeting the needs of Monmouthshire children and young people with ALN. The assessment demonstrates many strengths in provision across Monmouthshire, as well as identifying some recommendations for development on the consistency of ALN provision across the county.</p> <p>We are operating the Inspire programme in each secondary school in Monmouthshire to work with vulnerable learners, with a designated worker per school. Inspire has supported 340 young people since January 2023, to achieve 185 life skills and 130 qualifications, providing them with further learning to improve their future life chances. The inspire project is funded by the Shared Prosperity Funded (SPF). We have secured funding for the project for another year, as part of transitional funding, while announcements are awaited regarding the future of the funding for subsequent years. Our Community Focussed Schools lead works with schools and partners to develop activities and relationships for the benefit of the whole</p>	<p>Attainment data</p> <p>School Development Plans (SDPs)</p> <p>Community Focussed Schools</p> <p>Inclusion Strategy</p> <p>Additional Learning Need (ALN) Strategy</p> <p>Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review</p> <p>Inspire programme</p> <p>Adult education courses participation</p> <p>Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Strategy</p>



<p>school community. This has included building relationships, signposting to support and benefits entitlements, poverty proofing schools and providing cost of living support.</p> <p>We are reducing financial barriers to our adult education courses to make them more accessible to our residents. We have reviewed our course funding model and have shifted to a grant subsidised model; this now means that all our community education courses are directly subsidised. We have also continued our partnership with Coleg Gwent to offer low-cost foundation-level learning, costing £10 for access to all franchise courses provided in Monmouthshire. We recognise the importance of removing any barriers to involvement in adult education and the effect it can have on adults gaining new skills and knowledge. In 24/25, 909 learners enrolled in our community education courses, above our target of 876.</p>	
<p align="center"><b>What we want to achieve: Continue our programme of school modernisation</b></p>	
<p>The environment in which children and young people learn is important to their development and well-being.</p> <p>We have completed the construction of the new King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny in April 2025. The facility provides a hub for learning in Abergavenny, providing the tools for young people to thrive as well as well wider community facilities. The building is the first operationally net zero carbon all-through school in Wales, in line with our commitment to decarbonise our operations. The school has the capacity for 1,200 secondary school age pupils, 420 primary age pupils and 200 places for post 16 education. There will also be suitable accommodation for 71 pupils with complex neurodevelopmental and learning needs within the school. It is anticipated that the development will reduce the number of pupils attending an out of county secondary school. The remaining construction of the site's playing fields and energy centre is scheduled to be completed by April 2026.</p> <p>Full Council approved a capital investment of £1.2m to improve and remodel the accommodation to facilitate the relocation of the south Monmouthshire pupil referral service. This is providing the service with a permanent and dedicated high-quality environment that is conducive to the needs and increasing demands of the vulnerable population of pupils it serves.</p> <p>We are expanding our provision of Welsh medium education. We have secured a new site for Ysgol Y Fenni which will increase the capacity of the school from 210 to 420 pupils. Work is scheduled to be completed in September 2025. We opened Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy on the site of Overmonnow Primary school in September 2024, with 24 pupils attending. To continue the expansion of our Welsh medium provision we need to focus on promoting Welsh medium education and securing appropriate staff to ensure a high-quality education for our young people.</p>	<p>King Henry VIII all-through school</p> <p>Welsh in Education Strategic Plan</p> <p>Pupil Referral Service</p>

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

### Well-being Objective: A Learning Place



The **long-term** nature of this goal is intrinsic to its success. Working with and **involving** children and young people, as early as possible, to identify their needs will give them the best chance of achieving their maximum potential. **Preventing** problems before they start will provide our young people with the best chance to develop. Using a **collaborative** approach and aligning services provides a rounded resource that works in harmony for the young person. Overall, this approach **integrates** the needs of our young people, ensuring they have the best opportunity to achieve their goals.

#### Measures of progress

Milestone	Target for completion	Progress
Attendance and Engagement Strategy updated to strengthen systems and processes to improve and sustain high levels of attendance in line with new Welsh Government Guidance	September 2024	A range of policies have been updated to support increased attendance levels. These include the council attendance policy, primary and secondary school attendance model policies and fixed penalty notice policy.
Inclusion Strategy approved by Cabinet	November 2024	The Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy have been drafted and consulted on between October – December 2024. The draft policy was scrutinised by People Scrutiny Committee in February 2025.
Quality Assurance of Additional Learning Provision across the county via school's finance forms and provision pyramids is completed. Additional Learning Provision (ALP) meets the needs of vulnerable learners in the county and is of good quality	Regular Assessment	Additional Learning Provision (ALP) Review associated quality assurance cycle has been established. An update on the outcomes and recommendations from the quality assurance was presented to Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee in June 2025.
Additional Learning Need Coordinators and Specialist Resource Base Leads are engaged in quality assurance processes around the consistency and impact of Additional Learning Need provision through Additional Learning Provision forum and cluster / Specialist Provision and Outreach Team	Regular Assessment	Individual Development Plans moderation has taken place at both a cluster and Local Authority level. Secondary supported self-evaluation for ALN / ALP outcomes have been shared with ALN coordinators and Headteachers; where relevant action plans have been developed with schools or existing plans added to.
A new carbon neutral, 3-19 school is opened in Abergavenny	Phase 1 April 2025, Phase 2 April 2026	Phase 1 was completed in April 2025 with completion of the new school building.
A strategic review of school catchments is completed, and recommendations are made to Cabinet	Annual review of policy	The School Admissions Policy 2025/26, including a review of school catchment areas, was approved by Cabinet in April 2024, in which it was agreed to accommodate the villages of Tredunnock, Llanhennock and

		Llandegveth into the catchment area for Usk Church in Wales Primary School. The changes will be implemented for the academic year 2025/26.
Deliver a new non-maintained nursery in Trellech, invest S106 funding to improve the infrastructure at Castle Park and Archbishop Rowan Williams schools and improve and develop the buildings used to accommodate the Pupil Referral Service	Trellech March 2025, Archbishop Rowan Williams January 2027	Trellech Nursery building was completed and opened in February 2025. We are investing S106 funding to improve the infrastructure at Castle Park and Archbishop Rowan Williams schools and expect to complete this by January 2027
A new Welsh-medium seedling provision is opened in Monmouth	September 2025	We opened Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy on the site of Overmonnow Primary school in September 2024
A newly refurbished Welsh-medium primary school is opened	Opened and refurbished September 2025	We have secured a new site for Ysgol Y Fenni which will increase the capacity of the school from 210 to 420 pupils. Work is scheduled to be completed in September 2025

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target for 2024/25	Quick View	Comment
Percentage pupil attendance (brackets show eFSM figures) i) Primary ii) Secondary	i) 92.9 (89.0) ii) 88.1 (77.2)	i) 93.6 (89.0) ii) 88.2 (75.8)	i) 94.6 (92.6) ii) 91.2 (82.4)	↑	Data measured in academic years. Previous is 2022/23 academic year data. Latest is 2023/24 academic year.
Percentage of schools engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism	New Measure	79%	100%		New Measure for 2024/25
Number of Reception learners in Welsh medium schools	48	57	85	↑	Longer term target is 105 by 2030.
Number of children transitioning from a Welsh language primary school to a Welsh language secondary school	27	22	46	↓	Latest is summer 2024, transition numbers varied in primary schools. As a result, transition numbers are lower than the target this year.
Number of young people supported by Inspire (in school support/outreach support/post 16 support) to achieve an additional qualification and / or achieve a life skill	New Measure	186	133		New Measure for 2024/25
Total number of enrolments by adult learners on community education courses including Coleg Gwent franchise courses	937	909	876	↓	

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

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

## Using Our Resources

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

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

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

### **Annual Governance Statement**

The council has a governance framework, our Code of Corporate Governance, for the year end March 2025. The framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

We have produced a draft Annual Governance Statement for the year 2024/25 that demonstrates that we have appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the governance principles and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. This self-assessment of our resources integrates with the findings from the Annual Governance Statement and will also contain further actions and recommendations related to these arrangements.

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

How effective is corporate planning?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed and agreed a Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28. This sets a clear direction for the council. An Audit Wales review of our objective setting in the Community and Corporate Plan has found ‘the council has set its well-being objectives in accordance with the sustainable development principle and is aligning its key strategies and business plans to support their delivery, but it could further strengthen its approach by increasing the diversity of citizen involvement in future’.</p> <p>We have developed an accompanying performance measurement framework. We have reviewed the measurement framework to increase the focus on outcomes, where possible. We have set targets against these measures that demonstrate the ambition of the council to residents. This is allowing us to be held to account for performance and measure our performance on areas that can be directly affected by the council and the progress of wider outcomes that are not directly in the council’s control. This also responds to the Audit Wales review on the council’s use of performance information which found ‘the council provides some performance information to enable senior leaders to understand the perspective of service users, but information on outcomes is limited.</p> <p>Supporting and enabling strategies have been developed to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan. These will enable the delivery of the ambitions of the plan. We have developed arrangements to monitor the impact of these strategies and regularly evaluate performance against outcomes, through an annual performance assessment.</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28 and measurement framework</p> <p>Audit Wales reports</p> <p>Enabling strategies</p> <p>Annual performance assessment of enabling strategies</p>
How effective is performance management?	How do we know?
<p>The approval of the Community and Corporate Plan has ensured that there is a clear direction for the council. This has been embedded in our performance management framework. Regular reporting ensures accountability at all levels and demonstrates progress to residents. We have embedded the self-assessment process in the council’s performance management framework. The self-assessment process has facilitated the completion of a robust evaluation of performance. These performance management arrangements have helped to clearly identify areas of progress and areas for development.</p> <p>An Audit Wales review of our performance management arrangements found ‘the council has a maturing performance management system that supports delivery of its corporate objectives’.</p> <p>Service business planning principles, supporting templates and guidance are in place and regularly reviewed. Service business plans are facilitating services to plan for the next three years, assess what went well, learn from what did not and measure the impact their service has made on people and places of Monmouthshire. Service business plan completion rates and quality have improved. Although these remains varied and require improvement. Latest monitoring shows 60% were updated within timescales and there is an increase in compliance with principles. Quality assurance on service business plans has shown areas of planning still require development to ensure the principles are consistently applied.</p>	<p>Community and Corporate Plan progress report</p> <p>Draft Self-assessment report</p> <p>Service business plans &amp; quality assurance</p>

How effective is risk management?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed an updated strategic risk management policy and guidance. This defines the approach, process and responsibility for managing strategic risk in the council. This also defines risk tolerance and a risk appetite for the council. The policy is being embedded in the council, the requirements have been integrated as part of the council's performance management framework. There remains some part of the new policy that need to be embed through the organisation.</p> <p>The strategic risk register is updated regularly and available to all members and officers to view at any time. There are arrangements to formally review the whole strategic risk register and report it six monthly to scrutiny, Governance and Audit Committee and Cabinet. This facilitates and demonstrates that risk management is embedded in the council and strategic risks facing the council are being robustly identified and managed. The risk assessment in service business plans is not always completed robustly. This limits the ability of services to use their service business plans to robustly manage and mitigate risks and may impact the escalation of risks onto the strategic risk register.</p>	<p>Strategic risk management policy, appetite statement and guidance</p> <p>Strategic risk register</p>

#### Financial Planning – Evaluation Score: Level 4 - Good

How effective is financial monitoring?	How do we know?
<p>We have closely monitored our finances at regular intervals throughout the year. Cabinet have received regular financial updates. These have forecasted a revenue budget deficit for the financial year 2024/25 for which we implemented budget recovery action. This has included services bearing down on avoidable cost and identifying further income opportunities wherever possible in order to bring the budget back to a balanced position. As a result of this action, forecasts through the financial year have demonstrated an improvement in the forecast financial position at the end of the year.</p> <p>Our 2025/26 budget setting process also identifies many risks that remain to be assessed and managed within the year. These include high demand for council services; deliverability of budget saving proposals; pay awards; and employer's national insurance contributions. Grant funding also supports delivery of some our priorities, particularly preventive approaches, there is associated risks to the certainty of some funding, which can limit our ability to plan longer term. We have strengthened our governance arrangements and will continue to implement these through 2025/26 to provide assurance that robust arrangements are in place to respond to any circumstances where further budget pressures might require additional mitigation or savings to be brought forward.</p> <p>There remains variability in the quality of our budget monitoring and forecasting across service areas. This has impacted on the effectiveness of our in-year budget management. We are developing a structured financial training programme for staff on our learning management platform to help strengthen financial monitoring. Prioritisation of budget monitoring and year end accounts closure has resulted in a slight delay from the original schedule.</p>	<p>Financial monitoring reports</p>
How effective is financial planning?	How do we know?

We established a clear process and timetable to set a budget for the 2025/26 financial year. We developed a range of proposals in line with a set of budget principles. The proposals were subject to public engagement, robust scrutiny and an assessment of their potential impact. This informed the development of the final budget proposals. This planning resulted in us setting a balanced budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

Our capital planning is based on an established prioritisation process informed by evidence and assessment of risk to develop a programme within the financial constraints on the council. We have reviewed and agreed a current and forward capital programme for 2025/26. The core capital programme is being sustained and sets planned investment in the council's infrastructure. There remains a considerable number of backlog pressures that sit outside the core capital programme. These have varying levels of risk associated with them.

Our financial planning arrangements identify current and future budget pressures which pose a risk to the deliverability of our objectives in the Community and Corporate Plan. We have developed a Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This strategy provides the strategic framework for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and a set of key principles to guide medium term financial planning. These enable us to plan for the council's long-term policy objectives within our financial capacity. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which is monitored and scrutinised regularly. The authority's budget modelling assumptions are reviewed and updated regularly. We are developing a wider programme of service change that will include an ongoing assessment of key service pressures, the risks and modelling assumptions that sit alongside it. This is essential to establish a clear plan and approach to address the medium-term budget shortfalls forecast.

Budget setting reports  
2025/26

Medium -Term Financial  
Strategy

#### Further areas for development identified through our 2024/25 self-assessment

A programme of service change which identifies sustainable ways to deliver services whilst addressing the forecast funding gap.

#### Workforce Planning – Evaluation Score: Level 4 - Good

How effective is workforce management?	How do we know?
We have a loyal, dedicated and talented workforce that continue to deliver our services and objectives for residents.	People Strategy
We have an established set of policies and procedures that guide our Human Resources function. These support standards and behaviours we expect employees to deliver. They also allow flexibility and opportunity for our workforce to develop their careers in Monmouthshire. If employees do not meet these standards, we have arrangements to manage and resolve these issues.	Workforce management data
We have increased engagement with our workforce, including relaunching the People Leaders Workshops and team Q&A sessions, which are held face-to-face in peoples' workplaces, and holding two face-to-face staff conferences. We also ran a staff survey to enable us to understand how connected people feel to the organisation. The results have been fed back to staff and will be used to inform the development of our workforce planning and management arrangements.	Staff survey



<p>Our sickness figures have increased slightly from 11.9 to 12.7 days per full time equivalent employee, we continue to analyse the figures to support service areas in managing and supporting colleagues. We have a developed well-being offer, including the 'Go To' group, free counselling and a well-regarded occupational health service. The results of our staff survey shown that only around six out of ten employees think we do enough in this area. In response, we created a marketplace at the staff conference to promote our offer. We also need to ensure our workforce management support is targeted and applied consistently to support our colleagues.</p> <p>We have developed a new employee appraisal scheme aligned to a training needs analysis. This has been piloted in some service areas. We have yet to roll this out across the organisation due to capacity constraint. This scheme aims to improve our ability to link individuals' performance to the priorities of the organisation and improve accountability. It will also ensure we understand peoples' development needs and can design our training offer to fit this.</p>	
<b>How effective is workforce planning?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
<p>We have a flexible approach to workforce planning to attract and retain people to roles in the council. This includes long-standing agile working arrangements, for jobs that do not require employees to travel to their base every day and targeted recruitment campaign for certain jobs.</p> <p>We are in the early stages of developing our workforce planning arrangements. We have become a member of workforce planning networks, to learn from others in the development of our practice. We do not yet have all the arrangements in place to facilitate the organisation to plan the workforce it needs to meet current and future demands. We have seen a reduction in turnover this year. The continued delivery of our new People Strategy will aim to improve the effectiveness of our workforce planning.</p> <p>We are experiencing recruitment challenges in specific sectors, most of which match wider national recruitment issues. We have implemented an e-recruitment system to support the development of recruitment as a genuine talent acquisition process. Some challenges in use have been experienced by recruiting managers and we will be seeking feedback to inform how we embed the system.</p> <p>The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning. A learning management system (Thinqi) has now been rolled out to all staff; this provides a centralised training and development area for officers and includes a host of learning resources for staff as well as the opportunity to book face to face and digital/online training. We need to develop our training offer to equip the workforce with the skills its needs for now and the future.</p>	<p>People Strategy</p> <p>Workforce management data</p> <p>learning management system</p>

**Procurement – Evaluation Score: Level 3 - Adequate**

How effective is strategic procurement?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed and Cabinet has approved, a Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 which sets an enabling platform for the development of progressive policies that will achieve greater and more targeted social, economic, environmental and cultural gains through working with our supply chains.</p>	<p>Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-27</p>
<p>We have begun to develop supporting policies and guidance to enable the delivery of this strategy, including giving consideration to new legislative requirements of the Procurement Act. We have held workshops and training sessions, as well as developed training videos, to support staff to implement the requirements of the strategy. We are also developing training modules to be made available on our learning management system. We are monitoring completion rates of training and promoting completion of training and use of guidance. We need to ensure officers feel supported and are provided with the knowledge and skills needed to deploy the necessary thinking and processes to secure value for money in procurement and deliver the aims of the strategy.</p>	<p>Draft Socially Responsible Procurement Policy</p> <p>Updates CPRs</p>
<p>We are developing a Socially Responsible Procurement Policy, in collaboration with Ardal, to implement our ambitions in the strategy. We need to accelerate its completion to provide clear guidance to officers and our supply chains. The policy will provide a well-being framework to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of 'Socially Responsible Procurement' that encapsulates UK and Welsh Government legislative requirements and the council's priorities.</p>	<p>Revised Contract Forward Plan</p> <p>Updated guidance and training</p>
<p>We have developed updated Contract Procedure Rules (CPRs) that reflect the new legislative requirements of the Procurement Act and worked with Ardal to standardise the core elements of the CPRs across all Ardal Councils. Digital governance forms including Pre-Tender and Contract Award Reports have also been developed and rolled out across all Ardal Councils for all tenders in excess of £75,000 to promote transparency. This ensures that all tenders are challenged and that consideration for Community Well-being Benefits (CWBs), Social Value, safeguarding, fair work, carbon reduction and localism are, where appropriate, delivered as part of the award of contract.</p>	
<p>We are developing a new and revised Contract Forward Plan to mirror the requirements of the Procurement Act and the requirement to publish a Pipeline Notice of all current and future public contract opportunities over £2M. The development of more definitive Contract Forward Plans allows greater dedicated time for procurement professionals to consult with operational technical leads to discuss options and undertake soft market testing if there is an opportunity for innovation. This will also be used to assess opportunities to create better economies of scale and identify contracts where Community well-being benefits can be delivered.</p>	
<p>We are continuing to work with suppliers to ensure they are able to meet the requirements of the strategy and developing policy. This included developing Carbon Reduction Plan Guidance and holding a Carbon Reduction Workshop Programme, targeted at three high carbon spend areas. As part of the response to the new Procurement Act, we have simplified the quotation processes for low value opportunities and introduced a digital form for service areas to record their quotation process and outcomes. We will continue to look to reduce the burden of information required from bidders ensuring that it is proportionate to the value of the procurement.</p>	

We are reviewing how to increase opportunities for local businesses to bid for work. We are aiming to work with partners to publicise opportunities on the Contract Forward Plan to local businesses that have not worked with the council previously. We have worked with the other Ardal Councils to develop an Ardal Selling to the Council Guide that will be launched in July 2025. The Guide is designed to help suppliers and contractors understand how to do business with all Ardal Councils.

#### Further areas for development identified through our 2024/25 self-assessment

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

#### Assets – Evaluation Score: Level 5 - Very Good

How effective is strategic Asset Management?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed an Asset Management Strategy 2023-2027 that informs the way decisions and day-to-day management of council land and property is undertaken. It sets five clear objectives for land and property to deliver the council's objectives. It also establishes the supporting policy framework from which the strategy is implemented. The Asset Management Strategy is supported by an Asset Management Plan which identifies the actions to deliver the strategy.</p> <p>We have continued to develop significant building projects in the last year, improving services to residents and supporting community activity in line with wider corporate strategies. In March 2024 we opened Severn View Park, a specialist care home for people living with dementia. The care home provides a bespoke environmental design, based upon innovating best practice standards for people with dementia and a relationship-centred care model. In Education, new provisions have been created through the completion of the new non-maintained nursery at Trellech Primary School, and completion of the north and south provision for the Pupil Referral Service. This has provided the service with a dedicated high-quality environment and setting, with improved access to outdoor space which is conducive to the needs of the pupils they serve.</p> <p>As part of the completion of new developments, we have given careful consideration to the environmental impact, with low carbon measures included as part of schemes. This includes the installation of air source heat pumps and renewable technologies as part of retrofit and new build design. Improving our built environment through investment in low carbon technologies has continued to feature in our design and development approach, including targeting higher standards of BREEAM performance. Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points have been installed at various council assets. These installations have supported the expansion of the public EV network throughout the county.</p>	<p>Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan</p> <p>Severn View Park</p> <p>New nursery site</p> <p>Pupil Referral Service</p>
How effective is operational Asset Management?	How do we know?
<p>We are undertaking feasibility studies, technical assessments and surveys on property, infrastructure, and assets. These are informing our capital budget planning and maintenance schedules in line with established processes. Decision making on managing our assets will need to be strengthened in line with the mechanisms established in our Asset Management Strategy. We have considerable number of maintenance pressures for our assets, including property and highways infrastructure and public rights of way, that sit outside any potential to fund them within the capital medium term financial plan. These carry significant risk.</p>	<p>Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plan</p> <p>Capital medium term financial plan</p>

Progress has been made to strengthen the enablement role of Landlord Services and facilitate increased collaboration across the organisation. This is ensuring the delivery of a cohesive asset management system that aligns with the priorities of the organisation. We need to develop individual Service Asset Plans to inform proactive planning on the potential for assets and developing service requirements can be forecast. We will establish Service Asset Working Groups for each directorate to inform the development of the capital maintenance budget. Landlord services will continue to work with directorates to determine whether the spaces they occupy remain fit for purpose, in the right places, accessible and best meeting current and future service needs.

We aim to achieved further efficiencies in the reporting of property information through the design, procurement and implementation of a new asset management system. This will enable clearer strategic planning with an evolving asset base. Capital funding has been secured for the implementation of the system and procurement of the new system is ongoing.

### Digital & Data – Evaluation Score: Level 3 - Adequate

How effective is the development of digital?	How do we know?
<p>We have developed a revised Digital and Data Strategy that sets the direction for the organisation over the next three years</p> <p>We have strong partnership arrangements in place for digital with the Shared Resource Service (SRS), neighbouring Local Authorities and national partners. These have led to the development of five collaborative digital and data projects led by the Shared Resource Service (SRS), focussed on customer services, use of Artificial Intelligence and data insight. These projects are utilising the knowledge and skills within this field in our partnership network and enabling sharing of learning on common issues across Local Authorities</p> <p>We have not been able to fulfil all our digital ambitions in the year, particularly due to reductions in our digital team's capacity. To accelerate our use of digital as means to transform the way we work and deliver our ambitions in the strategy, we have begun the process of transitioning towards a shared service model for digital and data in collaboration with Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough, as part of an expanded role for the Shared Resource Service. With the digital team beginning to work alongside partner organisations at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>We also need to strengthen how we priorities digital and data projects based on the outcomes they can achieve and how we subsequently evaluate impact of digital and data, including efficiency and effectiveness. To deliver the strategy and strengthen stakeholder engagement a Strategic Digital, Data and Technology Board and a Digital Steering Group have been established and will be operational this year.</p> <p>We have established information security and technology arrangements ensuring that information held by the council to ensure that information remains confidential, maintains its integrity and is available to those who need to access it as part of our work. We actively support, advise, and train our workforce. Mandatory training is provided for GDPR and cyber security, alongside comprehensive guidance, and policies for all aspects of data management.</p>	<p>Digital Service Business Plan</p> <p>Digital and Data Strategy</p> <p>Information security and governance arrangements.</p> <p>Digital, data and technology collaboration</p>

<p>We have developed a range of training for officers to improve digital literacy across the organisation. These included an essential skills framework for foundational digital skills and a digital induction which will be rolled out on our corporate training platform. We know that continuous development in digital skills is essential to achieve our ambition. We need to continue to develop digital training resources to allow staff to continue to improve their digital skills.</p>	
<p><b>How effective is the development of data?</b></p>	
<p>We have been implementing projects in line with our digital and data strategy that are focussed on providing insight using our data to inform our service delivery and policy development. For example, we have developed new performance dashboards for each directorate and our Community and Corporate Plan. We have developed a ‘workforce radar’ that brings together a range of data to provide strategic insight on the workforce internally. We have run the national resident survey and analysed responses to provide insights into resident views of their local place and council. We have developed the use of geo-spatial data, including automating updates from internal systems and external sources through our Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to inform service delivery. These are providing data insights to inform future planning and service delivery.</p> <p>We have not been able to fulfil all our data ambitions in the year. We do not have all the skills we require to deliver our actions within the council. We need to further harness and connect data as council-wide asset. We also need to improve our data maturity across the organisation. We have ambitions to use data to inform how we transform the way we work and deliver our ambitions in the Community and Corporate Plan. Developing and accessing the capability and capacity required to develop and generate more advanced insights and move to more predictive analysis is an integral part of the investment case we are developing for a modern data service operating across three authorities.</p> <p>We have begun to develop our training for officers to improve data skills. These include training on the use of business intelligence tools and developed data standards for the organisation. We need to continue to develop training resources to allow staff to continue to improve their data skills.</p>	<p>Performance &amp; Data Insight Service Business Plan</p> <p>Digital and Data Strategy</p>
<p><b>Further areas for development identified through our 2024/25 self-assessment</b></p>	
<p>Strengthen the capacity and capability to deliver the ambition in the digital and data strategy</p>	

**Democracy & Scrutiny** – Evaluation Score: Level 4 - Good

How effectively are resources being used?	How do we know?
<p>The use of remote attendance at Council, Cabinet and committee meetings is fully embedded. This brings positive benefits for those with work or family commitments who are able to participate in meetings they would otherwise not be able to attend. Attendance at meetings has remained high. Revisions to the changes of scrutiny committees have reduced duplication, for example budget and performance reports are now presented to Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee rather than having the same report presented to four separate meetings. There is robust challenge from scrutiny members. The outcomes of scrutiny meetings are</p>	<p>Attendance Figures</p> <p>Scrutiny minutes</p> <p>Annual Governance</p>

<p>clearly captured and shared with cabinet and officers to consider. A forward work planner is used to identify decision making reports due to considered by Council, Cabinet and Individual Cabinet Member decision. This is also used to inform the work programme of scrutiny committees. The use of the planner will be strengthened to ensure decision making reports are included on it at the earliest opportunity to support improved democratic work planning.</p>	<p>Statement</p> <p>Forward work planner</p>
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## Our work with others

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

### Stakeholders and partnership working

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

## Our Actions

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

The action plan focuses specifically on what, and how, we can do better for the significant conclusions of the assessment. All of the findings will inform the development of the council's well-being objectives and delivery plans. They will inform how internal processes and procedures should change to support more effective planning, delivery and decision-making to drive better outcomes, and ways to deliver the council's functions. These also integrate with further actions identified in the council's Annual Governance Statement 2024/25.

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

### Progress with 2023/24 Actions?

We have provided an update on progress against the actions we identified in the 2023/24 self-assessment report. A more detailed assessment of these arrangements is provided in the relevant section of the report.

Section	What can we do better	How	Progress
<b>Outcomes</b>	Ensure interventions to achieve a Fair Place to Live objective are evidence-based, targeted, clearly communicated and evaluated to assess impact	Develop a poverty and inequality action plan to deliver the commitments in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	A Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead was appointed in April 2024. It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option at this time. The Community Development Team, who coordinate delivery of our work on poverty and inequality, have developed a targeted action plan for 2025/26.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Ensure early and help prevention services are effectively able to meet current and prevent, as far as possible, future demand	Complete an evaluation of the performance of early help and preventive services, as part of the Director of social care annual report and use the findings to inform future action	The Social Care & Health Director's report 2023/24 included an assessment of early help and preventive services. The impact of these services is also assessed under the A Connected Place Where People Care Objective.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Increase the focus of council activities on improving the social determinants of health	Use the recommendations in the Building a Fairer Gwent: Improving health equity and the social	The recommendations in the Building a Fairer Gwent: Improving health equity report continue to inform the council's activity. Including, embedding these in the development of a strategy focussed on enhancing



		determinants report to inform the council's service planning	wellbeing, resilience and prevention for adult residents who are on the threshold of needing formal care and support.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Ensure the delivery of the action plan which aims to address recommendations identified by Estyn	Deliver and assess progress on the Estyn recommendation Action Plan	The Children and Young People's Chief Officer's Report provided an assessment of progress against Monmouthshire's Estyn Recommendations.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Develop the support offer for schools and pupils to reduce and prevent exclusions	Develop an Inclusion Strategy for delivery of inclusion services across Monmouthshire	We have developed a new Inclusion Strategy that sets out our priorities to improve outcomes for children and young people in vulnerable groups and their families.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Develop the support offer for disadvantaged learners to achieve their potential	Developing a whole authority approach on supporting disadvantaged learners, including working with the EAS.	We continue to work with the EAS to support disadvantaged learners. This action will be carried forward to the 2024/25 action plan.
<b>Enablers</b>	Increase the focus on outcomes in the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan	Review and revise the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan	The measurement framework for the Community and Corporate plan has been revised and used in this self-assessment report.
<b>Enablers</b>	Strengthen arrangements that support workforce planning and management	Develop and deliver the action plan in the People Strategy	A People Strategy for the council has been developed. An assessment of our arrangements to support our workforce is included in this self-assessment. A separate assessment of performance of the commitments in the People Strategy has been completed.
<b>Enablers</b>	Strengthen arrangements that support officers undertaking procurement to meet the ambitions of the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy	Develop consistent guidance, training, and support for officers undertaking procurement	An assessment of our procurement arrangements is included in this self-assessment. A separate assessment of performance of the commitments in the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy has been completed. This identifies these arrangements require further development. This action will be carried forward to the 2024/25 action plan.
<b>Enablers</b>	Strengthen the capacity and capability to deliver the ambition in the digital and data strategy	Develop and deliver the action plan in the Digital and Data Strategy	We have developed a Digital and Data Strategy. A separate assessment of performance of the commitments in the Digital and Data Strategy has been developed. We have begun the process of transitioning towards a shared service model for digital and data in collaboration with Torfaen County

Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough, as part of an expanded role for the Shared Resource Service (SRS). This action will be carried forward to the 2024/25 action plan.

<b>Stakeholder and Partnership</b>	Evaluate if the expected outcomes of partnerships are being realised and impact on delivering the council's objectives	Implement the partnership toolkit to facilitate lead council officers for identified partnerships to evaluate if the expected outcomes of the partnerships are being realised	A partnership toolkit has been developed. This requires further facilitation to support Council lead council officers for identified partnerships to implement it. This action will be carried forward to the 2024/25 action plan.
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New Areas for Development: What and how can we do better?

Section	What can we do better	How	Who	When
<b>Outcomes</b>	Develop more childcare places, including Flying Start and Welsh-medium childcare provision	Implement the action plan as part of Childcare Sufficiency Assessment	Strategic Director Learning, Skills and Economy	March 2027
<b>Outcomes</b>	Understand the reasons for the rise in young people Not in Employment, Education or Training	Implement the NEET Prevention Strategy and targeted support with partners	Strategic Director Learning, Skills and Economy	March 2026
<b>Outcomes</b>	Develop the support offer for disadvantaged learners to achieve their potential	Develop a whole authority approach on supporting disadvantaged learners, including working with the EAS	Strategic Director Learning, Skills and Economy	To be set
<b>Enablers</b>	A programme of service change which identifies sustainable ways to deliver services whilst addressing the forecast funding gap.	Develop a programme of change to enable delivery of required savings over the medium term.	Strategic Leadership Team	September 2025
<b>Enablers</b>	Strengthen arrangements that support officers undertaking procurement to meet the ambitions of the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy	Develop consistent guidance, training, and support for officers undertaking procurement	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Resources	December 2025

<b>Enablers</b>	Strengthen the capacity and capability to deliver the ambition in the digital and data strategy.	Develop and deliver the action plan in the Digital and Data Strategy	Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer Resources  Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships	March 2026
<b>Stakeholder and Partnership</b>	Evaluate if the expected outcomes of partnerships are being realised and impact on delivering the council's objectives.	Implement the partnership toolkit to facilitate lead council officers for identified partnerships to evaluate if the expected outcomes of the partnerships are being realised.	Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships  Partnership lead officers	March 2026


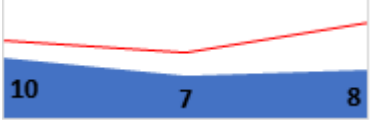
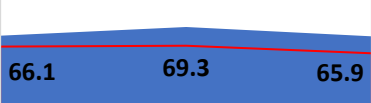
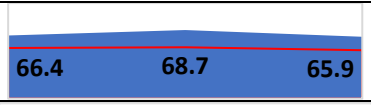
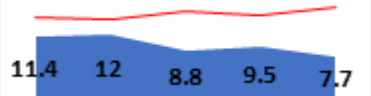
## Performance Measures

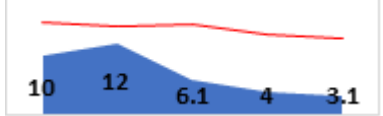
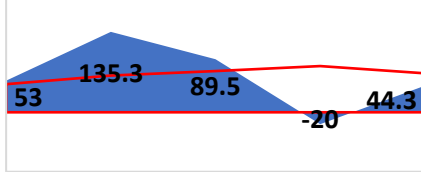

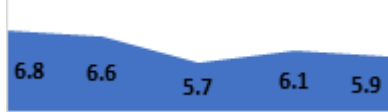
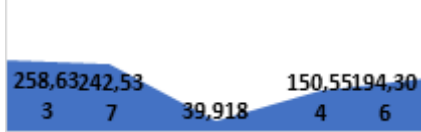

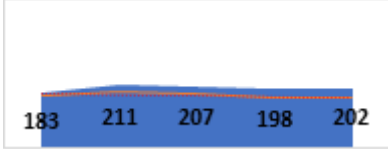
The use of performance measures is one of the important mechanisms we use to assess our performance. Each of our objectives has specific performance measures set to monitor progress. Some further relevant performance indicators we use to assess our services' performance are set out in this section.






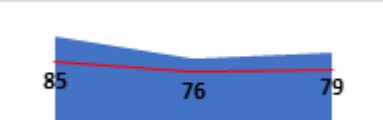
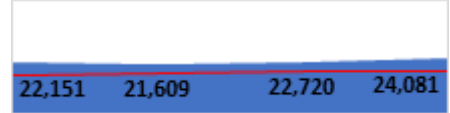
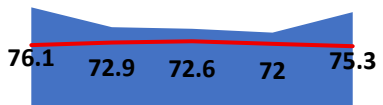
National indicators have been set as part of the Future Generations Act for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals in Wales as a whole. While the national indicators will not measure the performance of individual public bodies or public services boards, it is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

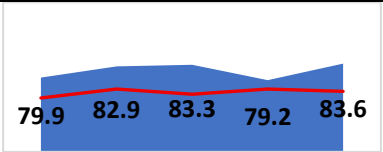
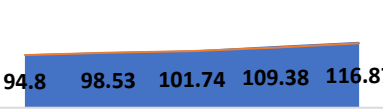

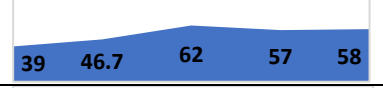

### Longer term measures in the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28

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

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	Trend (Wales trend in red where available)	Latest
<b>A Fair place to live</b>		
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need		86
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation		8
Healthy life expectancy - female (years)		65.9
Healthy life expectancy – male (years)		65.9
Gap in healthy life expectancy between most and least deprived areas - female (years)		7.7




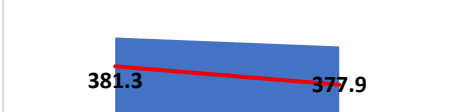
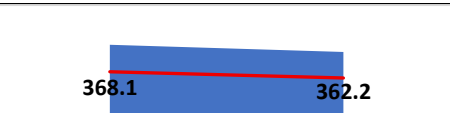

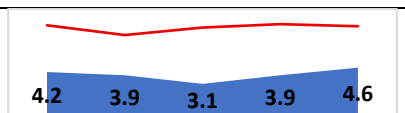
Gap in healthy life expectancy between most and least deprived areas – male (years)		3.1
Difference in average pay between men and women working in the county (£)		44.3
Percentage of children living in relative low-income families		17.4
Percentage of residents who feel 'People in my local area get on well and help each other'	New measure – trend data not yet available	78.1
Percentage of residents who feel 'People in my local area pull together to improve the local area'	New measure – trend data not yet available	63.8
<b>A Green place to live</b>		
Average carbon emissions per capita in Monmouthshire (tonnes)		5.9
Number of rail passenger journeys		194,306
Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the air (µg/m3), measured at Air Quality Management Areas in Monmouthshire		6
Average annual residual household waste produced per person (kilograms)		202
Percentage of the Special Area of Conservation river catchment waterbodies that fail the phosphorus targets	Trend data not available	88 for Usk 67 for Wye

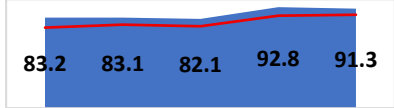
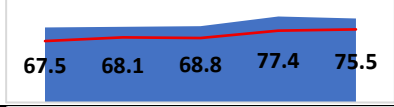
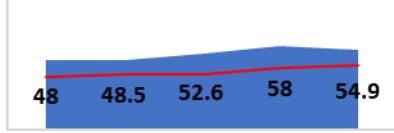
Percentage of people who agree that their local area has a clean environment	New measure – trend data not yet available	58.7
<b>A Thriving and Ambitious place</b>		
Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live		95
Average hourly town centre footfall		288
Percentage of vacant town centre premises		10.9
Annual economic impact of tourism (£)		329.8
Number of tourists visiting the county (million)		2.29
Percentage of people who attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities three or more times a year		79
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework i) no qualifications, ii) qualified to level 2 or above, iii) qualified to level 3 or above iv) qualified to level 4 or above	Update in learning place below	Update in learning place below
Gross disposable household income per head (£)		24,081
Percentage unemployed i) females ii) males	Data not available	Data not available
Percentage employed – female		75.3

Percentage employed – male		83.6
Percentage of council expenditure spent in local supply chain through public sector contracts	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Percentage increase in active travel route usage	New measure – trend data not yet available	4.1
<b>A Safe Place to Live</b>		
Median house prices compared to median workplace-based earnings		8.51
Percentage of all homes in the county with an energy efficiency rating of 'C' or above		50.45
Average weekly rent for social housing in Monmouthshire		116.87
Average time (months) homeless households spend in Band 1 with a homeless duty before moving on to settled/permanent accommodation		10.96
Percentage of social housing allocated to homeless households		58
Number of overall crimes recorded		6152
Number of recorded crimes - sexual offences		200
Number of recorded crimes - public order offences		722

Rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population		13.04
Percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area during the i) day ii) night	New measure - trend data not yet available	i) 90.29 ii) 66.19
Percentage of those referred to the youth offending service who subsequently re-offend		12.5
<b>A Connected Place Where People Care</b>		
Percentage of children supported to remain living with their family (not including children looked after)		67.5
Percentage of adult service users who feel part of their community		50.2
Percentage of children looked after supported to remain in Monmouthshire		45.8
Number of carers and young carers supported by the carers team		97
Percentage of people who are lonely		12
Percentage of adults with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours	Trend data not available	93
Healthy life expectancy at birth (women)		65.9
Healthy life expectancy at birth (men)		65.9
Percentage of people who agree 'People in my local area get on well and help each other'	Trend data not available	78.1
<b>A Learning place</b>		



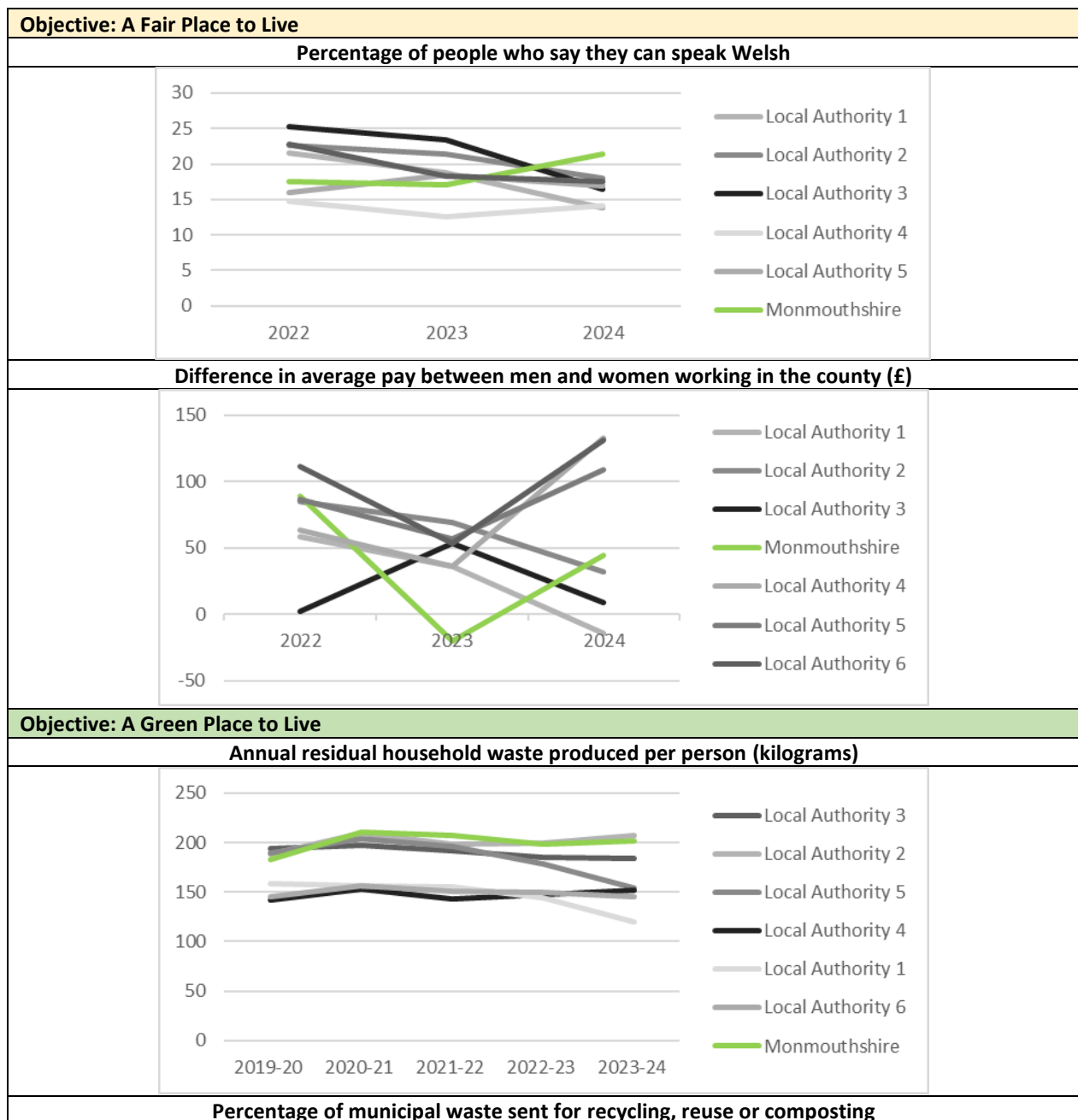
Number of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools		22
Rate of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools		2.34
Rate of fixed term exclusions 5 days or less i) primary ii) secondary More than 5 days iii) primary iv) secondary	Trend data not yet available	i)29.1 ii)394.0 iii)1.1 iv)9.0
Capped 9 Point Score – All pupils		369.8
Capped 9 Point Score - Females		377.9
Capped 9 Point Score - Males		362.2
Capped 9 Point Score - eFSM		304.7
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework i) no qualifications		4.6

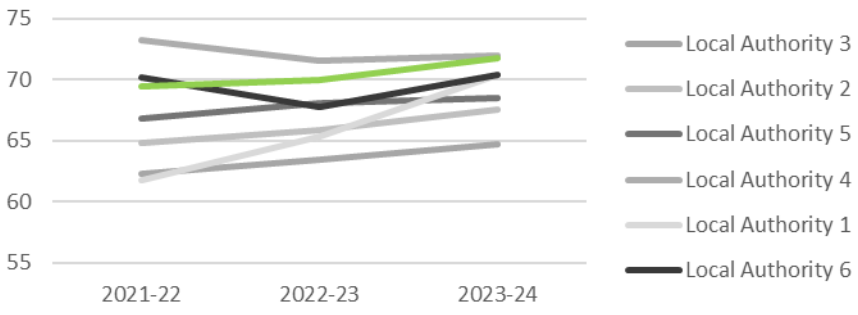
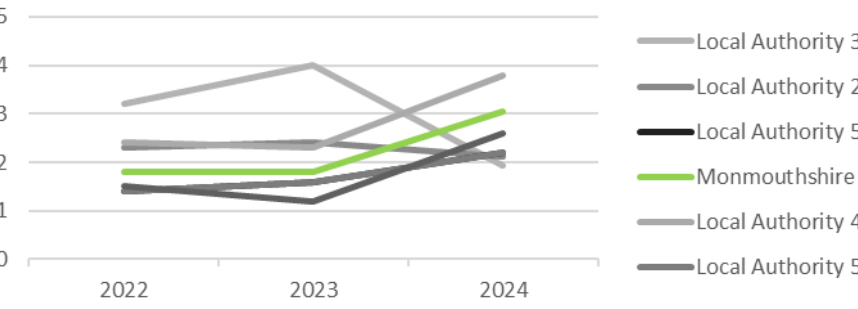
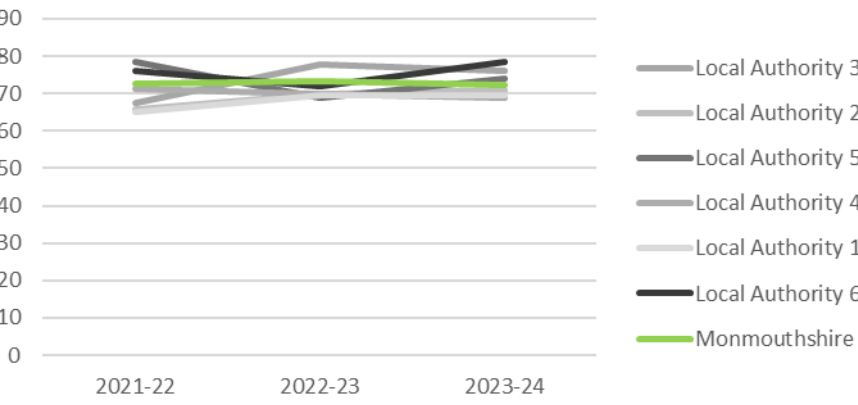
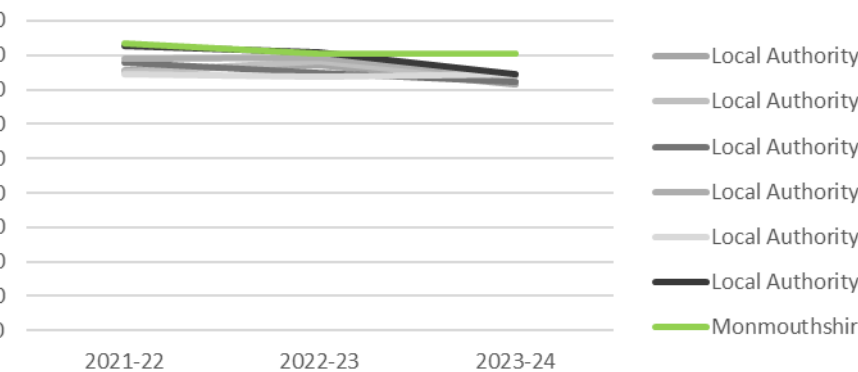
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework ii) qualified to level 2 or above	 <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>83.2</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>83.1</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>82.1</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>92.8</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>91.3</td></tr></table>	Year	Percentage	2012	83.2	2013	83.1	2014	82.1	2015	92.8	2016	91.3	91.3
Year	Percentage													
2012	83.2													
2013	83.1													
2014	82.1													
2015	92.8													
2016	91.3													
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework iii) qualified to level 3 or above	 <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>67.5</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>68.1</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>68.8</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>77.4</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>75.5</td></tr></table>	Year	Percentage	2012	67.5	2013	68.1	2014	68.8	2015	77.4	2016	75.5	75.5
Year	Percentage													
2012	67.5													
2013	68.1													
2014	68.8													
2015	77.4													
2016	75.5													
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework iv) qualified to level 4 or above	 <table><tr><th>Year</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>2012</td><td>48</td></tr><tr><td>2013</td><td>48.5</td></tr><tr><td>2014</td><td>52.6</td></tr><tr><td>2015</td><td>58</td></tr><tr><td>2016</td><td>54.9</td></tr></table>	Year	Percentage	2012	48	2013	48.5	2014	52.6	2015	58	2016	54.9	54.9
Year	Percentage													
2012	48													
2013	48.5													
2014	52.6													
2015	58													
2016	54.9													
Percentage of learners studying for an assessed qualification in Welsh as a subject	Trend data not yet available	93.3%												

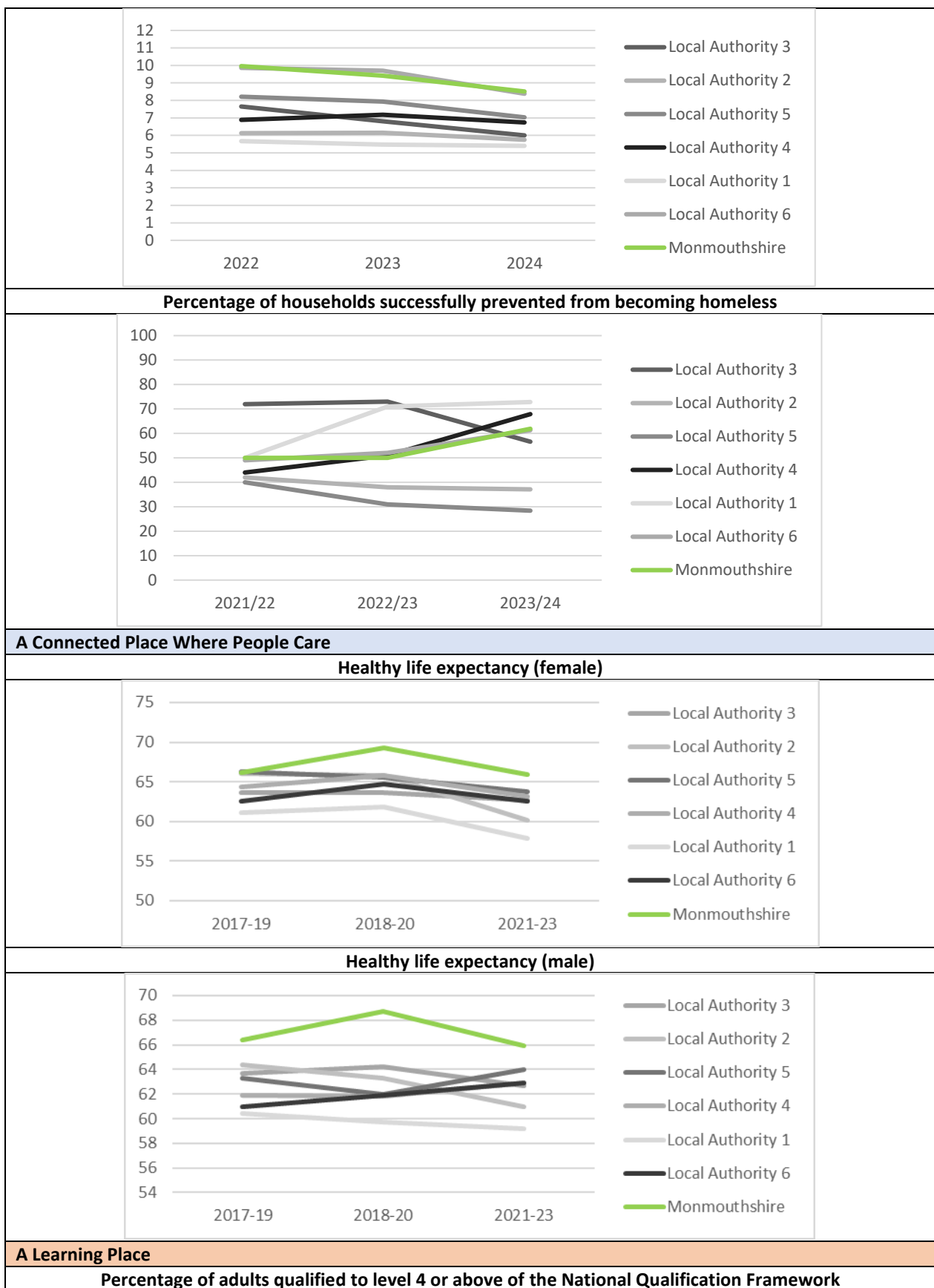
## Performance comparable with other areas

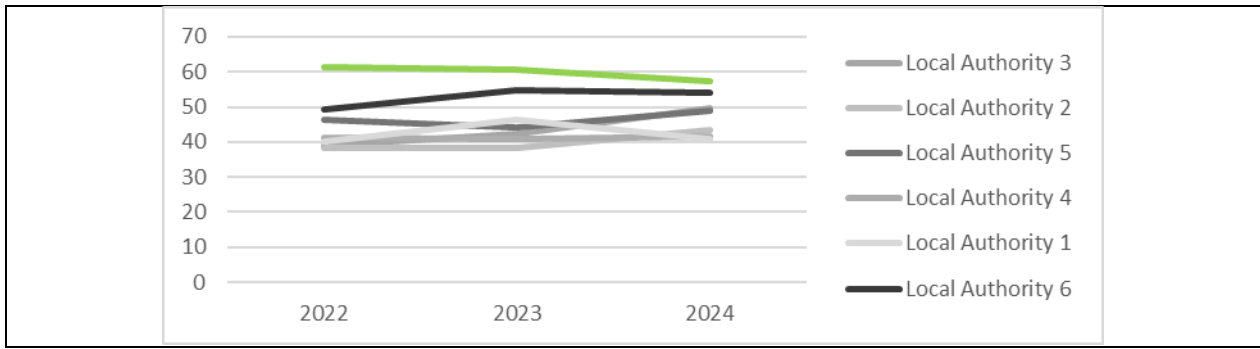
When assessing performance, it is essential to ensure wider context and relative performance is considered to offer a well-rounded evaluation.

Through our self-assessment we have assessed our progress using both local and national metrics. Some of these national metrics are comparable with other local authorities across Wales. The table below provides an overview of how we are performing against some of our 'nearest neighbours'. These 'neighbours' are those authorities with which we share a wide range of similar characteristics, for example rurality, population demographics, and local economic factors. These may not always correlate with nearest geographic neighbours. The selection of nearest neighbours is based on ONS analysis which assesses a range of data and evidence to ensure a fair comparison.



	 <p>Local Authority 3 Local Authority 2 Local Authority 5 Local Authority 4 Local Authority 1 Local Authority 6</p>	
<b>Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place</b>		
<b>Percentage of school leavers known not to be in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)</b>		
	 <p>Local Authority 3 Local Authority 2 Local Authority 5 Monmouthshire Local Authority 4 Local Authority 5</p>	
<b>Percentage employed (aged 16-64) - Female</b>		
	 <p>Local Authority 3 Local Authority 2 Local Authority 5 Local Authority 4 Local Authority 1 Local Authority 6 Monmouthshire</p>	
<b>Percentage employed (aged 16-64) - Male</b>		
	 <p>Local Authority 3 Local Authority 2 Local Authority 5 Local Authority 4 Local Authority 1 Local Authority 6 Monmouthshire</p>	
<b>Objective: A Safe Place to Live</b>		
<b>Median house prices compared to median workplace-based earnings</b>		

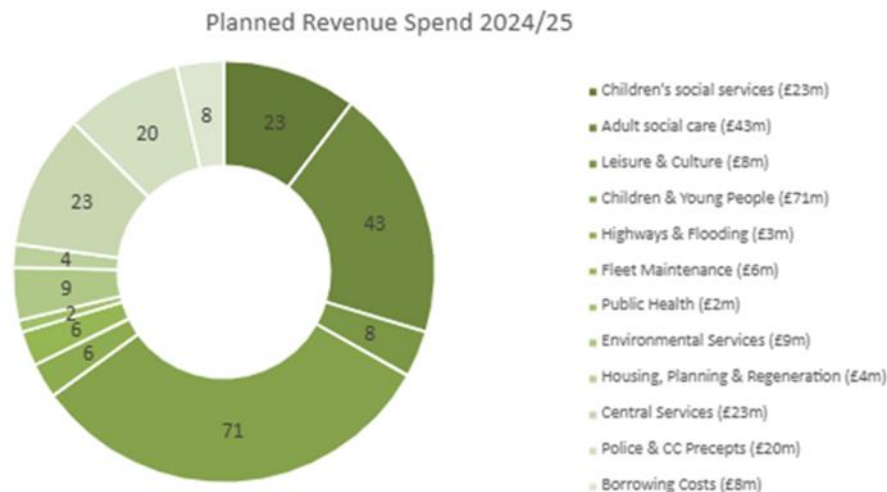




## What we spent in 2024/25

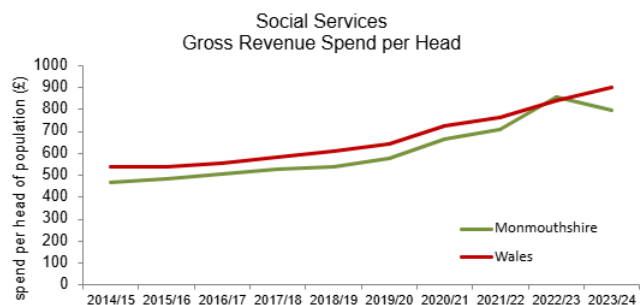
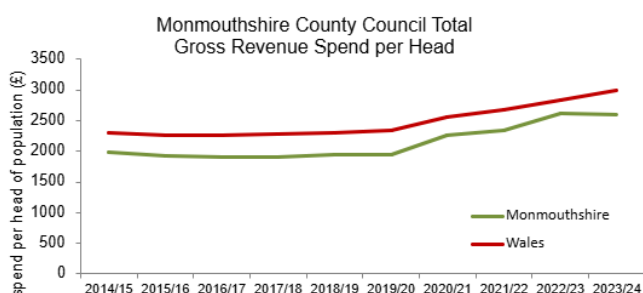
In 2024/25, the council's planned spend was £220 million to provide services for Monmouthshire residents.

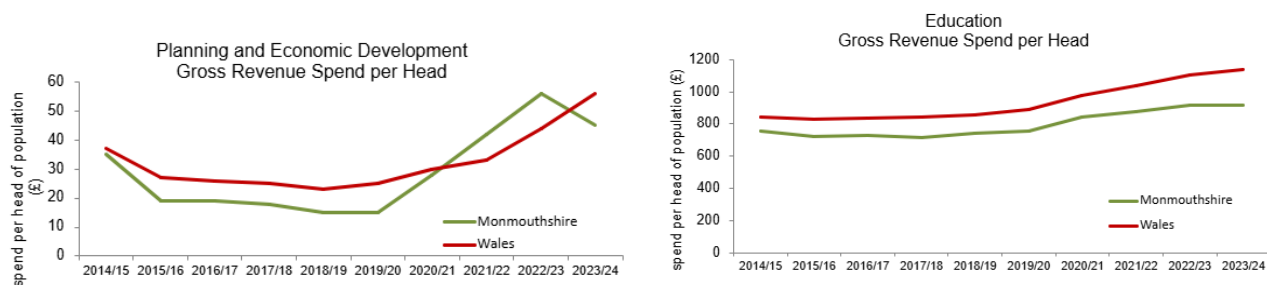
The proportion of our spending on different services in 2024/25 is shown in the diagram. These services are paid for by a combination of central government grants, council tax and non-domestic rates. Council tax is also used to fund the services of the Police and crime commissioner for Gwent and Community Councils.



## How our revenue spend compares with other areas

The graphs below show how much we spend per head of population in some of our priority areas. In 2023/24, the latest year comparative data is available, we had the lowest gross revenue spend per head of all councils in Wales. We spend less than the Wales average on education services, social services and planning and economic development. We have continued to work hard to make sure this money goes where it matters. For 2024/25 we received an increase in core funding; however, our budget settlement from the Welsh Government was the lowest per head of population of councils in Wales.





## What citizens said

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

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

**Budget engagement:** Monmouthshire County Council launched its draft budget proposals for 2025-2026 in January 2025. Communities were invited to share their views on these possible changes in an open consultation process. A range of information on the proposals and their potential impacts was shared. Face-to-face budget consultation events took place, as well as online budget sessions. For those unable to join the livestream, the session was uploaded to the website to watch after the event. As part of the consultation process, residents were also asked to share their thoughts via a feedback survey on the budget proposals, which were shared across our social media platforms. The feedback received informed the development of our final budget proposals.



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

**Replacement Local Development Plan:** In October, Council endorsed the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for public consultation which was held between November and December 2024. This included



a series of both in-person and online events as well as specific engagement with local businesses. Residents and local businesses were invited to share their thoughts on the Deposit Plan to enable them to shape its development. The findings of the consultation will be considered by full Council in Autumn 2025.

**Customer Complaints and Compliments:** We monitor and learn from feedback received from customers. These are reported to the Governance and Audit Committee. Issues included the length of time we can take to respond to people. Not only is it important to deal with complaints effectively, investigating and putting things right for the complainant where necessary, it is also vital to learn from them to minimise the chances of the same problem occurring twice. Twenty-nine complaints about Monmouthshire County Council were received by Public Service Ombudsman for Wales in 2023-24, the last year for which data is available, an increase from twenty-three during 2022-23. Monmouthshire is below the average levels of complaints reported to the Ombudsman at 0.31 per 1,000 residents. This ranges from 0.15 to 0.58 with an average of 0.36.

**National Residents Survey:** During the Autumn of 2024, we conducted a resident survey on everyday life in Monmouthshire. Hosted by Data Cymru, the survey was part of their National Residents Survey, designed to support local councils in increasing their understanding of performance and perception. Residents were asked about their experiences in the local area, their views on the council's services, and how we, as a council, can improve things. Thanks to the engagement from residents, we received 1,465 responses. We have analysed the survey results to understand what respondents said about their local area, the council and their interactions with the council. The evidence from the survey provides us with a fuller picture of how people feel in the county and the valuable feedback will help inform our services. The full results are available on <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/monmouthshire-resident-survey/>. The survey is one mechanism to help us understand residents' views, alongside a range of feedback collected across services, which will provide a more detailed understanding of the council's services.

Respondents were asked questions about their local area, some of the key results are shown in the graphic below:



The responses show that residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live, assist each other in their communities and support their local place in Monmouthshire. We know this isn't always the case for everyone, and we are focussed on our objective in the Community and Corporate Plan to make Monmouthshire a fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced.

Overall, a significant majority of respondents felt safe in the day, with most feeling safe at night, although fewer than in the day. Feelings of safety varied by age and place. We are focussed on delivering our objective for Monmouthshire to be a safe place to live where people have a home and community where they feel secure.

Those younger people who responded to the survey reported lower levels of satisfaction with Monmouthshire as a place to live. The council's deposit Replacement Local Development Plan identifies this as one of its key issues, ensuring our communities are socially and economically sustainable by providing accessible places to live and work and a choice and range of homes to retain and attract younger people and rebalance our ageing demography.

We asked questions about the council to understand people's views on local service delivery, interaction with the council and democratic representation. Key results about the council are shown below:



Overall, fewer than half of the respondents were satisfied with how the council operates, its communication methods, and the level of trust they felt toward the council. We are dedicated to upholding the council's core values of Teamwork, Openness, Fairness, Flexibility, and Kindness in the delivery of our services, and the survey responses highlight the importance of consistently reflecting these principles in all the council's activities.

Slightly more than half of respondents felt the council provides high quality services, with satisfaction varying by service from higher levels in waste management to lower levels in other service areas. Respondents reported generally higher satisfaction levels with their experience of specific council processes, such as making payments and requests.

We are committed to using residents and services users' views in the evaluation of our performance. Service areas will use the responses from this survey to inform their planning and evaluate their performance against the objectives we have set. We remain committed to working with communities and businesses to improve things and make Monmouthshire an even better place to live.

### **Staff engagement**

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

We have also used evidence gathered from a range of staff events and groups. These include the relaunched People Leaders Workshops and team Q&A sessions which are held face-to-face in peoples' workplaces. We have held two face-to-face staff conferences in the north and south of the County and will be holding an online version. We also completed a new staff survey to enable us to understand how connected people feel to the organisation. The use of these sessions, networks, digital communication, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce.

### **Businesses**

We have established stronger engagement networks with businesses in our area since the pandemic and are working to maintain and improve these connections. We have a better understanding of the types of businesses in our area. We have continued to engage with businesses through our new customer relationship management system which acts as a database of Monmouthshire businesses and a tool to promote the advice and guidance services that we can provide to pre-starts and existing businesses. Our Business Data & Communications Officer has continued to improve our links with businesses and has helped to improve feedback loops with businesses to ensure we are capitalising on the conversations that are taking place and can improve our service as a result. This feedback will continue to inform our self-assessment.

### **Trade Unions**

We engage well with Trade Unions to achieve our outcomes. We have briefed them on the process we undertake to complete our self-assessment and shared our initial findings with them as part of our self-assessment process. We have developed a Social Partnership Duty Report 2025, setting out how we will build on existing practice, and work collaboratively with trade unions, in line with the requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.

## What Regulators and Inspectors Said

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

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

- **Financial sustainability:** The report found that although the council is developing a longer-term approach to financial planning, it is yet to identify how it will close its future funding gap. Given its low reserves levels, the council will need to work at pace to implement its financial strategy and strengthen its financial resilience
- **Performance Management Arrangements:** The report concludes that the council has proper arrangements in place to manage its performance and is proactive in identifying areas for improvement.
- **Digital Strategy Review:** The report concludes the council does not have a clearly articulated strategic approach to digital. The report recognises the council currently does not have a digital strategy and its current digital work is detailed within individual service business plans and some project work. It also acknowledges the council intends to develop a new digital strategy to help clarify the role that digital technology will play in the council. We have now developed a digital and data strategy for 2024-2027.
- **Unscheduled Care (regional review):** The work examined whether health boards and local authorities have effective arrangements in place to ensure the timely discharge of patients out of hospital. The report makes several recommendations for both the health board and local authority to respond to and a collective response to address these has been developed.
- **Assurance and Risk Assessment work in the council during 2024/25.** This reviewed the arrangements the council has put in place to secure value for money in the use of its resources in line with the Auditor General's duties. The assessment is also used to inform our work planning for future years.

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

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

Care Inspectorate Wales carried out an improvement check of Monmouthshire County Council's adult services in April 2025, following up on their Performance Evaluation Inspection (PEI) conducted in July 2022. The inspection assessed the progress made in addressing previously identified areas for improvement. The review found key strengths in our establishment of a place-based approach and implementation of the commissioning strategy, the improved availability of domiciliary care and development of reablement approaches reducing or mitigating the need for ongoing support. Areas requiring further development identified include the need for improvement in risk identification, staff

engagement and communication and support for carers. We have developed a response to address the areas for improvement identified.

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

### **Equality and Diversity**

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

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

### **The Welsh Language**

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

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

## Appendix 1 – Self-assessment process

### Legislation

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

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

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

### Why?

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

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

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

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

### Process

The council has developed a process to undertake its self-assessment under the Act, assessing performance in the 2024/25 financial year. The main component parts of the process and timeline are:

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

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

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



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

### Self-assessment workshops

Directorate workshops	Enabling functions workshops
Learning, Skills & Economy	People
Social Care & Health	Asset Management
Place	Finance
Infrastructure	Procurement
Customer, Culture & Well-being	Digital & Data

The workshops were facilitated through the following questions:

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

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

Following the workshops, the evidence has been reviewed, further challenged, and collated into a corporate level evaluative self-assessment. This has been integrated with the council’s requirement to report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year (2024/25) under the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

The report is structured under these headings:

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

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



<b>Evaluation Score:</b> This provides our assessment of performance against the objective using the evaluation scoring mechanism	
<b>Why we focussed on this?</b>	
Why we are focussing on this objective to improve well-being in Monmouthshire.	
<b>How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?</b>	<b>How do we know?</b>
Row 1 - This sets 'What we want to achieve' from the Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28	
Column 1 - This provides the self-assessment of our performance during 2024/25 based on 'what we want to achieve'	Column 2 - The evidence sources we have used to inform our assessment.
<b>Further areas for development identified through our 2024/25 self-assessment</b>	
These are specific conclusions from the self-assessment that inform our action plan.	

<b>Well-being of Future Generations Act impact</b>				
This provides an explanation of how our activity contributes to the Well-being of Future Generations Act well-being goals and ways of working. It also identifies the council's well-being objective(s) that were set as part of the Community and Corporate Plan in April 2023.				
<b>Measures of progress</b>				
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Latest</b>	<b>Target for 2024/25</b>	<b>Comment</b>
This provides an update using the measurement framework of the Community and Corporate Plan.	Previous data is 23/24 unless otherwise stated	Latest data is 24/25 unless otherwise stated	This is the target we set for 24/25	Any further explanation on the performance measure

<sup>i</sup> This includes both emissions from the council's operations and land-based and supply chain operations

<sup>ii</sup> Percentage of Year 11 school leavers who are NEET. [Pupil destinations | Careers Wales \(gov.wales\)](#)

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