

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 9 July 2025

## Notice of meeting

## County Council

**Thursday, 17th July, 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 on the 26th June 2025	3 - 18
5.	Reports to Council	
5.1.	Chepstow Integrated Transport LUF Project	19 - 24
5.2.	Strategic Director, Children, Learning and Economy Annual Report	25 - 88
6.	Motions to Council	
6.1.	<b>Submitted by County Councillor Frances Taylor</b>  That this council notes that the Leader, Cllr Brocklesby is also the chair of the Cardiff Capital region and recently attended a Senedd Inquiry into City and Growth Deals. It appears the Leader was able to tell a very positive story (her words).  The leader also recently advised that the contract to demolish Aberthaw Power Station was the subject of a legal challenge regarding	

the procurement exercise. The leader reported to the Senedd Inquiry that a settlement sum of £5.25 million has been agreed through mediation and this cost has been fully funded from interest accrued on capital balances held by Cardiff Capital Region, with no impact on core programme budgets or any requirement for further public funding.

That this Council clarify the protocols and reporting mechanisms to provide detailed reports to all members on the balances held, investment requirements, opportunity cost and outcomes for Monmouthshire residents in respect of the progress of the Cardiff Capital Region or CCJC.

## **6.2. 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.

## **7. Member Questions**

### **7.1. 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.

### **7.2. 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?

### **7.3. 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 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?

**7.4. 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?

**7.5. 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?

**7.6. 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?

**7.7. 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?

**7.8. 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?

**7.9. 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?

**7.10. 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?	
<b>7.11.</b>	<b>From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Sara Burch, Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing &amp; Tourism</b>  What steps is the Council taking to promote Monmouthshire as a tourist destination?	
<b>7.12.</b>	<b>From County Councillor Jane Lucas to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment</b>  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?	
<b>7.13.</b>	<b>From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Laura Wright, Cabinet member for Education</b>  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.	
<b>8.</b>	<b>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</b>	89 - 90
<b>9.</b>	<b>APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE MONMOUTHSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) FOR RELIGION, VALUES AND ETHICS</b>	91 - 104
<b>10.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting - 18th September 2025</b>	

**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;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Christopher Edwards	St. Kingsmark;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt	Lansdown;	Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Simon Howarth	Llanelly Hill;	Independent Group
County Councillor Richard John	Mitchel Troy and Trellech United;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor David Jones	Crucorney;	Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones	Raglan;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Malcolm Lane	Mardy;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Phil Murphy	Caerwent;	Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor 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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### 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 23<sup>rd</sup> June – 19<sup>th</sup> July

Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> June 10 a.m.	Fly a Flag for our Armed Forces County Hall, Usk
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> June 1 – 3 p.m.	Caring is Sharing – Dementia Group Celebration Event Severn View Residential Home
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	National Armed Forces Day Caldicot Castle
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> July 11 – 5 p.m.	Alfred Russel Wallace Day Sessions House, Usk
Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> July 5 – 7 p.m.	Museum Event Abergavenny
Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	King Henry 3-19 official opening King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny
Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> July	Friday Club – Picnic Caldicot Castle
Saturday 19 <sup>th</sup> July 12 p.m.	Abergavenny Civic Service The Angel Hotel, Abergavenny

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
on Thursday, 26th June, 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, Ian Chandler, Sara Burch, Alistair Neill, Su McConnel, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Fay Bromfield, Jane Lucas, Emma Bryn, Meirion Howells, Paul Griffiths, Jackie Strong, Rachel Garrick, Maria Stevens, 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, Armand Watts and Ann Webb

### **OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Paul Matthews	Chief Executive
Peter Davies	Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources
Nicola Perry	Senior Democracy Officer
James Williams	Chief Officer Law & Governance
Geraint Edwards	Head of Litigation and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Deb Hill-Howells	Head of Decarbonisation, Transport and Support Services

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

None.

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

Noted.

#### **3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th May 2025**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 were approved as an accurate record, with the following amendments noted:

County Councillor John referred to item 7. Appointments to Committees and made the following amendment:

The Chair invited nominations for the post of Chair of Democratic Services. There were two nominations for Cllr Lisa Dymock and Cllr Meirion Howells. After considerable discussion and officer intervention, it was ruled that Cllr Howells' nomination was invalid as a member of the executive group is ineligible to hold the position under section 14 of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2011.

County Councillor Lisa Dymock referred to item 19. From County Councillor Lisa Dymock to the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement and made the following amendment:

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 26th June, 2025 at 2.00 pm**

As a supplementary Councillor Dymock referred to the condition of Caldicot Skate Park and Chepstow Skate Park.

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

#### **5. Licensing Act 2025 Policy Statement**

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report for Council to consider the proposed 'Licensing Act 2003 Policy Statement 2025', as previously debated by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

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

**Members approve the updated Licensing Policy statement for adoption by Monmouthshire County Council, to come into force on 1st July 2025 (Attached as Appendix A).**

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

#### **6. Separation of licensing functions**

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report to provide Council with details of the proposed arrangements to reconfigure the functions of the existing Licensing and Regulatory Committee as set out in the report.

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

- a) approve that the existing Licensing and Regulatory Committee be abolished.
- b) approve the establishment of two new Committees, each comprising of the same members and the same Chair and Vice-Chair as each other, to be titled the Licensing and Gambling Committee and the Taxi and Regulatory Committee ("the Committees") respectively.
- c) approve that the functions of the existing Licensing and Regulatory Committee be divided between two newly constituted Committees, such functions and delegations being as set out in the terms of reference for each Committee, attached to this report at Appendices 1 and 2.
- d) instruct the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution to reflect the above changes.

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#### **7. Appointments to Outside Bodies**

## **MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 26th June, 2025 at 2.00 pm**

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement presented the report to appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies.

County Councillor Richard John expressed frustrations that the changes to the appointment list had not been made when the original paper was presented at the AGM in May 2025.

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

**That Council notes the new appointments highlighted below and included in the full list of appointments at appendix A.**

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#### **8. Shape and Leadership Structure of Monmouthshire County Council**

The Chief Executive presented the report to set out a refreshed permanent Strategic Leadership Team design and organisation structure for the Council. The report sought to improve the operational and delivery capability of the organisation through a clear permanent design that aligns accountability and responsibility within balanced directorate portfolios that lend themselves well to officer development opportunity across the Council without compromising current delivery.

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

- a) **Notes the revised strategic leadership team design and organisation structure proposed by the Chief Executive set out in sections 4 and 5 below and supplemented at Appendix 1 in accordance with paragraphs 14.2.1 – 14.2.3 of the Council Constitution.**
- b) **Agrees to the creation of the permanent positions of Chief Officer Infrastructure and Chief Officer Place and Community Wellbeing.**
- c) **Agrees to the deletion of the posts Chief Officer Communities and Place, and Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing.**
- d) **Agrees to the positions set out in paragraph 2.2 above, being advertised within the Council to all officers on Head of Service grades, as Tier 4 positions with a pay grade up to £93k. This approach satisfies paragraph 36.1.3 of the Council Constitution.**
- e) **Authorises the Monitoring Officer to update the Council's Constitution to reflect changes to Chief Officer delegations brought about by agreeing to the above recommendations.**

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#### **9. Motions to Council**

##### **10. Submitted by County Councillor Meirion Howells**

*This Council notes the growing problem of roadside litter across Monmouthshire, much of which is the result of litter being discarded from Public Document Pack moving vehicles.*

*Therefore, this Council resolves that the Cabinet Member for Climate Change :*

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

### Minutes of the meeting of County Council held on Thursday, 26th June, 2025 at 2.00 pm

- *Formally write to the Welsh Government, specifically the Minister for Climate Change, requesting that legislation be introduced to enable the prosecution or fining of the registered keeper when litter is thrown from a vehicle.*
- *Request that the Welsh Government provide appropriate guidance and resources to local authorities to support effective enforcement of such measures.*

Seconded by County Councillor Emma Bryn.

County Councillor Paul Pavia proposed an amendment, seconded by County Councillor Tony Kear:

*This Council notes the growing problem of roadside litter across Monmouthshire, much of which is the result of litter being discarded from moving vehicles.*

***It reaffirms the longstanding and cross-party concern regarding the persistent issue of roadside litter and resolves to work collaboratively across all parties to deliver effective enforcement, comprehensive public education, and sustained initiatives that promote long-term behavioural change***

***It acknowledges the recent publication of the manifesto by the Senedd Cross Party Group on Littering, Fly-tipping and Waste Reduction, which focuses on developing effective and sustainable public policies around the four 'Ds' of deterrence, detection, disposal, and duty-of-care.***

Therefore, this Council resolves that the Cabinet Member for Climate Change:

- *Formally write to the Welsh Government, specifically the ~~Minister for~~ **Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs**, requesting that legislation be introduced to enable the prosecution or fining of the registered keeper when litter is thrown from a vehicle.*
- ***Urges the Cabinet Secretary to urgently implement the long-delayed Wales 'all-in' Deposit Return Scheme and publish its long-awaited National Litter and Fly-tipping strategy.***
- *Request that the Welsh Government provide appropriate guidance and resources to local authorities to support effective enforcement of such measures.*
- ***Makes use of existing powers that this Council already has to properly detect, pursue and prosecute offenders and publicise outcomes to boost deterrence.***

County Councillor Howells accepted the amendment and debate ensued.

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

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

*Following the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement which does not appear to include the relief lines upgrade, that this Council utilise its position as a key stakeholder in the Burn's Southeast Wales sustainable travel prospectus to ensure that all partners are clear that Magor station is not only unique, but also cost effective, offers mitigation to the climate emergency and can be delivered now, as it is not dependent on the relief lines upgrade.*

*That this council urgently writes formally and steps up its lobbying of all relevant decision makers, Department for Transport, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, and Network Rail*

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*to ensure that Magor Station is recognised as a quick win and is delivered immediately and without delay with the CSR funding.*

County Councillor Catrin Maby proposed an amendment, seconded by County Councillor Jill Bond.

County Councillor Taylor declared a non-prejudicial interest as a founder member of the Magor Group.

*Following the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement which does not appear to include the relief lines upgrade, that this Council utilise its position as a key stakeholder in the Burn's Southeast Wales sustainable travel prospectus to ensure that all partners are clear that Magor station is not only unique, but also cost effective, offers mitigation to the climate emergency and can be delivered now, as **it's construction** is not dependent on the relief lines upgrade.*

***That this council writes formally and steps up its lobbying of all relevant decision makers, to ensure that Magor Station is recognised as a quick win and is delivered as soon as possible with the CSR funding, and that a timeframe for the relief lines upgrade is clarified.*** ~~*That this council urgently writes formally, and steps up its lobbying of all relevant decision makers, Department for Transport, Welsh Government, Transport for Wales, and Network Rail to ensure that Magor Station is recognised as a quick win and is delivered immediately and without delay with the CSR funding.*~~

Upon being put to a vote the amendment was defeated.

For the amendment: 21

Against the amendment: 23

**Debate on the original motion ensued.**

**Upon being put to a vote the motion was carried.**

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#### **12. Member Questions**

#### **13. From County Councillor Meirion Howells to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services**

*Can the Cabinet Member give an update on progress made to implement the recommendations from the review into My Day My Life, and the associated accessibility improvements that were to be made to the Melville Centre for the Arts in Abergavenny and the Overmonnow Learning Centre in Monmouth?*

The Cabinet Member welcomed the opportunity to provide an update on the implementation of the remodelling of the service which has been completed with a new staffing structure. This has merged the form of My Day My Life with the individual support service team to create one integrated service which is called My Support Service, and this provides a range of support to adults with a learning disability and to people with other disabilities and mental health needs. The service now offers support during evenings and weekends instead of the traditional 9-to-5

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schedule and an adjustment to employment terms and conditions, hiring new staff under updated contracts.

The support offered by this new service is individually tailored to deliver the outcomes agreed within people's social work assessments and would either be short-term with a reablement focus or longer term where people are supported to gain independence, develop skills and to enable their participation in meaningful activities that help achieve their personal goals and development. The support may be solely community-based or within one of the service bases. The My Support Service has reinstated the original principle of person-centred planning that was recommended in the review, and it incorporates approaches that support people in expressing their needs and desires including methods such as easy read materials, sign language, creative activities and photo symbols. There is a robust referral pathway and assessment to ensure that the person is part of identifying outcomes. The proposals for the new bases for the service gained much attention last year and both buildings are now fully accessible with accessible toilet facilities and changing facilities having been installed for the benefit of all members of the community and not just service users. Both are conveniently located near to the town centres ensuring easy access and within each of the venues comfortable and attractive rooms have been set up for the exclusive use of the My Support Service so that those individuals that are supported by the service have secure and personal spaces to meet up with friends and to undertake activities. The venues also offer various other spaces for different activities.

As a supplementary Councillor Howells asked how those being supported by My Day My Life will be affected by the closure of Abergavenny Leisure Centre over the summer. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the closure of Abergavenny Leisure Centre impacts on three individuals who are part of the My Support Service and those individuals will be supported to travel to alternative leisure facilities.

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

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

*Could the administration please provide an update on the implementation of the HGV weight restrictions on the M48 Severn Bridge?*

The Cabinet Member reminded Members that from the 27<sup>th</sup> May 2025 restrictions were placed for vehicles over 7.12 tons except for emergency services and timetable public transport and at present there are no arrangements for any other discretionary use, for example, based on geographical location; ease of use; or volumes of company traffic. It was understood that number plate recognition technology has now been installed and how useful that is will depend a lot on police back-office capacity to enforce it. National Highways and County Council officers are meeting on a weekly basis, and had planning meetings in advance to ensure things were implemented correctly. National Highways came to our Public Service Scrutiny Committee on 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025 and attended MCC Transport Forum on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2025. The Deputy Leader has met with local businesses and taken their concerns to the decision makers, as had Councillor Maby, Leader and MP who have emphasized the impact on the local economy and the job losses that may occur with over 2,500 jobs at risk at New House. They have also highlighted the impact on the local road network and our concerns about the motorway junction roundabout. These concerns have also been communicated to Welsh Government and with the Cabinet Secretary last week where they again emphasized the importance of the M48 link road. A letter has been received from the Minister for Future Roads at Westminster dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 indicating that the concerns have been taken on board and they aim to find solutions to enable normal traffic movements to resume in late 2026.



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As a supplementary Councillor Pavia sought to capture the air quality management monitoring evidence as there are concerns around residents who live in that area, noting the possibility of increased nitrate and oxide levels.

The Cabinet Member did not have the information at hand and agreed to share the information if it is available.

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

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

*Could the administration please provide an update on the discussions held with national governments and Network Rail regarding investments in improvements to Chepstow Railway Station?*

The Cabinet Member explained that the bid to the levelling up fund was prepared during 2020 to 22. It was limited to providing an opportunity for buses to turn around at Chepstow Station and it included a consequential loss of car parking since the allocation was announced by the UK government in 2024. The Cabinet Member has been in close dialogue with UK Government seeking to expand the remit of the original allocation which could lead to Chepstow Station moving towards its full potential as a hub which attracts travellers and businesses to Chepstow. Since the time of the allocation, we have been working on a further agreement with UK Government which would allow the expenditure to be flexed so that it can include an enhanced station environment potentially including public toilets and waiting facilities, improved walking and wheeling routes from the station into town and further afield, with enhanced signage. It is the intention to bring a full report to the July meeting of Council where approval will be sought for the required match funding and providing further details of this investment in advance. He also advised that he was looking to provide a briefing note to members and to arrange a meeting for members to fully explain how the bid has developed, how the project is developing and the funding implications of it.

As a supplementary Councillor Pavia asked if the Cabinet Member would confirm that making the land adjacent to the westbound platform into additional accessible car parking would be part of the bid's consideration, and there would be accessibility to the westbound platform from that side of the track.

The Cabinet Member was unable to give that commitment and was also shocked that over the past two decades Network Rail has been able to operate stations without disabled access. He concluded that it would not be possible to get agreement from Network Rail on the same timetable as we need an agreement with UK Government on the use of the levelling-up fund so we will make best use of that money in the here and now. He added that they will continue over the next decade to put every pressure on Network Rail to release, and make best use of, the land on that westbound platform and to provide the disabled access which residents and visitors of Chepstow desperately need.

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

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

## MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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*Would the Cabinet Member please provide an update on plans for the permanent engineering works required to restore the chain bridge at Kemeys Commander to full working order including removal of the temporary 7.5T weight restriction.*

The Cabinet Member explained that the County Council are working with consultants on the detailed design for repairing this bridge. At the moment the work has been complicated by the major landslip on the adjacent road at Chainbridge. The aim is for the contractors to undertake both schemes at the same time and for design and planning to be completed to allow construction phase to commence in spring next year, with completion Spring 2027. It was hoped that the bridge can remain as a 7 and 1 half ton weight restriction until that construction phase starts. During construction the bridge will be closed and an official diversion signed via the A472, A449, R64 and A4042 is required. Improvements will be carried out during the autumn of 2025 to facilitate local traffic.

As a supplementary Councillor Neill requested that information and experience is put to good use and that speed warnings and speed checks are also introduced and that the signage is appropriately located at an early enough stage to allow drivers to divert more appropriately.

The Cabinet Member made a note of the points raised and would discuss them with officers.

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

#### **17. From County Councillor Rachel Buckler to County Councillor Laura Wright, Cabinet Member for Education**

*Would the cabinet member make a statement on the breadth of choice in subjects for key stage 5 pupils at Chepstow School?*

The Cabinet Member welcomed the opportunity to state that she recognised the importance of our post 16 education and sustaining as broad an offer as we can across all four of our secondary phase schools. She explained that the key stage five provision in Chepstow is affected by several different factors which includes the number of pupils enrolled in the statutory age school and the ability for students to access other post 16 options nearby in both England and Wales. At a recent meeting with Chepstow school, the headteacher shared that the school has had to pause a number of its post 16 courses due to low take-up. This had been planned for a number of months, and it was shared with parents and students as early as possible. The school is in a significant deficit at the moment and unfortunately it is not economical to run those very low number of enrolment courses because it has a detrimental impact on the whole school budget. On a more positive note, the school is going to retain the skills to teach the courses that are currently paused and as pupil numbers increase it is the intention of the school to restart those courses as soon as possible. The headteacher does understand that some parents and students were disappointed, but the school is continuing to support all students and offer a range of courses as much as possible to support the offering in Chepstow. MCC secondary schools have a collaborative post16 network that is now approaching the end of its first year and that has seen the successful delivery of four different courses through the innovative ESOL remote learning platform, being computer science; economics; Welsh as a second language and Spanish.

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As a supplementary Councillor Buckler asked what message this sends about our commitment to academic breadth and ambitions for our young people, and if the Cabinet Member believes it acceptable that because of this narrowing of subject choice, a growing number of students are now considering leaving Monmouthshire at attend sixth forms.

The Cabinet Member responded that she did not have specific information, but this is a decision that lies with the headteacher and the governors. She would be happy to discuss this further with the headteacher at a meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025.

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

#### **18. From County Councillor Fay Bromfield to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*Can the cabinet member please provide me with an update on the issue of speeding Llanybi?*

The Cabinet Member understood the key problem areas to be at the entry and exit to the village, and, in particular, where children cross the road close to the new housing estate. She added that she took on board the comment about the timing of the speed monitoring and agreed this should be looked at again. In terms of additional physical measures, it was not fully clear what measures would help beyond the SIDS and road markings already in place but there was a meeting scheduled the traffic team to discuss and try to get some clarification.

As a supplementary Councillor Bromfield asked that the Cabinet Member supported her request for something permanent either side of the village at the meeting with highways.

The Cabinet Member responded that she took this on board, and it was important to identify what would work.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUqg?si=3kO6RtcOuf3tBvto&t=9724>

#### **19. From County Councillor Jill Bond to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*Mobility scooters are of great benefit to people with disabilities and mobility restrictions in Monmouthshire. Please can you set out how the Council is helping mobility scooter users to stay safe within our communities?*

The Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism noted the importance of the issue and how mobility scooters are of great assistance to older people and people with disabilities in keeping their independence. Active Travel are very conscious with dropped kerb crossings, shared use paths and any of the active travel interventions designed for everybody from pushchair users to mobility scooter users and everybody in between. It was noted that the issue of training in mobility scooters had been raised at a recent member seminar and it was hoped that this would be looked at alongside the cycle training provided in schools and to young people, as well as to adults. There are two shop mobility schemes in Monmouthshire provide the opportunity to try out a mobility scooter and to receive instruction on its use.

As a supplementary Councillor Bond referred to the ongoing suffering of a resident in her ward who has sustained life-changing injuries from an incident in February in a Caldicot supermarket with a mobility scooter. She asked that the Council writes to our MP and MS to ask them to raise the issues around scooter safety for drivers and pedestrians and for consideration to be given to whether the incident should be investigated by the police; consider whether there

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should be clear guidance for establishments to share if they are liable for incidents on their premises and the need for to risk assess and offer alternatives; consider whether public liability insurance should be extended to class two and three pathway scooters as compulsory as it is for heavier and roadworthy scooters; consider whether more regulation and capability checks especially after an incident and ongoing periodic checks would be relevant for all users of motorised vehicles.

The Cabinet Member agreed to work with Councillor Bond to raise those concerns to the senate and to the MP.

[Click here to view on YouTube](#)

#### **20. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Laura Wright, Cabinet Member for Education**

*Can the Cabinet Member for Education inform council of any proposed future investment the current administration intends to make in both Chepstow School and The Dell Primary School (in their current form), which has remained an unanswered question since full council met in January 2025.*

The Cabinet Member apologised for the delay and reassured Councillor Edwards that the Council has continued to invest in both Chepstow School and the Dell Primary School. Despite the inevitable limitations of a maintenance budget, both schools will continue to be maintained as they have previously. She also confirmed that improvement works to the demountable classrooms at the Dell and the ongoing replacement of cladding in Chepstow School will continue during the summer holidays this year. In relation to future capital investment in the Chepstow cluster, Chepstow School has been included in the draft 9-year rolling program which has been submitted to Welsh Government, and the work has been undertaken by the Sustainable Communities for Learning Team to redline the Chepstow School site to determine its development potential. This provides a range of options for the redevelopment of education provision in the north of Chepstow and officers will be meeting councillors from Chepstow on the 14<sup>th</sup> July to share the projections and the work that's been undertaken to date.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUgg?si=uHZqGFzS1JlgyAJL&t=10288>

#### **21. From County Councillor Christopher Edwards to County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development**

*Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) Study that was commissioned to look at the potential design for improvements at High Beech roundabout in Chepstow.*

The Cabinet Member explained that the WelTAG study has progressed according to the nationally set out methodology. All possible options for improving the movement of people and of goods through Chepstow are being identified and appraised. When the study results are received, there will be a local public consultation and he has assured members in each part of Chepstow and the surrounding areas, including Shirenewton and St. Arvans, that they will be included in the consideration of any proposals for change.

As a supplementary Councillor Edwards asked for a date when local councillors will be briefed on what has been going on, and to be able to contribute on that important issue. Also for a date when councillors will be provided with existing documentation or, any relevant reports or analysis.

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Councillor Griffiths responded that the WelTAG study is commissioned by Welsh Government and there is a client and contractor relationship between Welsh Government and a consultancy undertaking the appraisal of options. The consultant reports back to Welsh Government and Welsh Government shares those reports with himself and officers. The work is ongoing we have not reached the stage where there is a report that makes proposals. When that stage is reached those proposals will be published and subject to public consultation.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUgg?si=WKNeLw2T5HgcirCg&t=10438>

#### **22. From County Councillor Martin Newell to County Councillor Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services**

*What discussions have you had about plans for a new ambulance station in Monmouth?*

The Cabinet Member agreed that the future of Monmouth Ambulance Station is an important issue of concern for residents in Monmouth and the surrounding areas. Last November the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust signed off a proposal for rebuilding the ambulance station and that news was very welcome at the time. Since then MCC planning officers have been in discussions with WAST (Welsh Ambulance Services Trust) and provided them with pre-application advice to inform a detailed planning application. Options have been assessed they have decided to press ahead with the repair and refurbishment of the existing building. They are currently scoping out what can be done with the internal structure with the design team and when the final design is ready, they will look at developing the specifications and going out to tender for the work. The project board is very supportive of the refurbishment option will continue to work closely with planning and building control colleagues as required and it was hoped that the necessary refurbishment work could begin in the early autumn with an ambition to complete the project by the end of this financial year. Councillor Chandler planned to keep in close contact with the trust on their plans and timelines and considered it very positive that we should have a newly refurbished and fully functional ambulance station in Monmouth within the next 9 months.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUgg?si=qDVq71abZYSC9llg&t=10701>

#### **23. From County Councillor Richard John to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*By the end of 2025, how much will the council have spent on fencing above Clydach?*

The Cabinet Member advised that when the road collapse occurred to the extent that it was unsafe the County Council installed locked gates and herea fencing to ensure the safety of residents and visitors. That initial work cost less than £2,000, however it was repeatedly vandalized. This led to the installation of the metal fence to make the area safe. We have an obligation to ensure safety it's not optional. This work will have cost around £42,000 and the changes that will then be made to make it more visually acceptable, given the understandable upset about the way it looked, are expected to cost around £22,000. However, the steel fence will be stored and reused so in effect some of the cost will be recovered. She explained that the need to fully secure the area was in order to avoid the risk of serious injury and death given the condition of this road since parts of it had collapsed into the quarry below, people had been seen on the road unaware that the ground beneath it had been eroded. If further collapse occurred while they were on that road they would have fallen to their deaths and this should be considered when assessing the expenditure.



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As a supplementary Councillor John asked how to quantify the amount of spending as there was clearly wastage; how much money was thought to be unnecessary on this and what steps is the cabinet taking to ensure that we would not going to see huge scales of money wasted on this scale again.

The Cabinet Member reiterated that had no vandalism occurred the cost would have been £2,000 and asked Councillor John how much he though saving a life was worth.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUgg?si=jukrEwt32MSt7VCF&t=10930>

#### **24. From County Councillor Martin Newell to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*How can we best help our residents that have overgrown trees from adjoining MHA properties overhanging and damaging their privately owned properties whilst staying within the rules set in MCCs tree policy?*

The Cabinet Member highlighted that residents were entitled to prune branches, or have them pruned, when they overhang their properties. If it overhangs your property you are entitled to trim what is overhanging your property. The County Council tree policy outlines the law and explains the need to balance the tree owner's right not to have the tree unduly damaged so it must be done carefully. The tree policy also explains that the County Council will prune council owned trees where they were causing damage to build infrastructure such as people's houses. MCC teams are contracted to undertake tree safety assessments of housing association trees and can make recommendations in line with our tree policy. If MHA trees are causing damage, then MCC inspections will pick that up and will make the appropriate recommendations. The housing association would then contact MCC and ask us to carry out the work, but as it is their property we can only do that with their approval. Councillor Maby advised that if there were any specific concerns that the best approach would be to contact the housing association in the first instance and to check the most recent assessment or to ask us to carry out a new assessment. Residents can raise an issue through the tree form on My Mon.

As a supplementary Councillor Newell asked if we could put something into the public domain to break down the rules. The Cabinet Member responded that the tree policy looks to explain what the current law is but would have another look at it, and to let her know if there were anything particularly unclear.

[https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUgg?si=wdt\\_W1Do1k0G9h\\_q&t=11129](https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUgg?si=wdt_W1Do1k0G9h_q&t=11129)

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

*Will the Home to School Transport Policy Consultation for 2026/7 be delayed, as not covered on the People Scrutiny Committee agenda of the 17th of June 2025?*

The Cabinet Member explained that Welsh Government is currently undertaking a consultation on proposed changes to the learner travel operational guidance, so MCC have decided not to make any changes to home to school transport policy for the academic year 2026/27 while that consultation is underway. When the new guidance is finalised the policy will be reviewed to ensure it aligns.

As a supplementary Councillor Brown asked when parents would be notified that there are going to be no changes to the policy for 2026/27 and in terms of parents notification sought reassurance that any appeals in relation to the 2025/26 policy would be expedited as some

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have only just been notified for a September start. She asked if the People Scrutiny Committee would be looking at this consultation.

The Cabinet Member explained that it is up to councillors who are not part of the executive to set their own agenda for a scrutiny committee but could not see a reason why the chair would not be happy to include that on the agenda. In terms of when people would be notified of changes the Chief Officer advised that the website would be updated to demonstrate that the new policy has not changed and it was also being arranged for an email to be sent to all parents to confirm there would be no changes. With regards to the last question appeals would be expedited.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUqg?si=haKbyCEAwUM0YPvk&t=11416>

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

*Will the administration comment on how effectively it feels it has supported the leadership and functioning of the Standing Advisory Council for RE/RVE(SACRE/SAC)?*

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to reassure Council that she understood the importance of a vibrant and engaged SAC in Monmouthshire and how we need to recognize the breadth of religious and spiritual perspectives that we have in Monmouthshire and allow our schools to provide our young people with as comprehensive and compelling a curriculum as possible. She added regret that the last meeting of SAC, which would have been her first as chair, did have to be cancelled due to needing to participate in the People Scrutiny Committees review of the decision to provide a lease establishing a mosque in Abergavenny. She assured Councillor Brown that she would ensure that SAC will be the body we need it to be, particularly as the understanding and acceptance of a range of religious beliefs and spiritual perspectives has never been more important.

As a supplementary Councillor Brown asked if the administration would like to allow the opposition to chair SAC as allowed by paragraph 10.1 of the constitution. The Cabinet Member acknowledged that sometimes cancellations were unavoidable due to health reasons or unforeseen circumstances. She agreed to take the points away for discussion and would be happy to discuss further outside of this meeting.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUqg?si=zPPsOX78uZj8AykY&t=11714>

#### **27. From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*Usk bridge has had a grade 2 listing since 1954 having commenced construction in 1746 and now repeatedly hit by HGVs. Can the Cabinet Member please advise over the past 10 years how many times has the bridge been damaged, the cost of repairs, how many reparation claims were made by MCC against haulage firms and how much has been reclaimed?*

The Cabinet Member replied that the damage to the listed structure is a major concern and is a frequent occurrence. MCC seek to obtain vehicle ownership details from the police etc when damage occurs. The principal structural engineer assesses each incident before pursuing the vehicle owners for costs and consideration to the value of the repair of the vehicle is made before costs are attempted to be pursued. The average repair costs are between £8000 and £10,000, but some were as little as a few hundred pounds. Officers had said that in the past they haven't pursued the claims a great deal under the previous administration, but in most

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recent years they've tried pursue more as there is recognition that by doing this we might impact on behaviours and make the hauliers more careful.

The Cabinet Member provided some data going back to about 2004: in last 10 years there were 15 recorded incidents where the wall had been damaged, and the total amount of repairs was around £57,000. There was no data on successful claims.

As a supplementary Councillor Kear asked that the Cabinet Member arrange a site visit with officers to Usk bridge and Primary School on Monmouth Road to assess the safety issues. The Cabinet Member agreed.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUqg?si=iMt1AtlwzjoM5s2O&t=12013>

#### **28. From County Councillor Tony Kear to County Councillor Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**

*In light of the recent announcement that Monmouthshire County Council will receive a share of £5million of Welsh Government funding to refurbish, improve and create play spaces across the county, what consideration has the Cabinet Member given to improving the play facilities at Usk Island which have been damaged by heavy flooding from the adjacent river Usk?*

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement advised that the funding is being spent wisely across the county. The fixed play park located near the river is known to experience seasonal flooding with significant incidents recorded during the storms Dennis and Bert. Any future development or investment at this site must be designed to withstand and accommodate the impacts of flooding so that we can ensure long-term resilience and usability.

In 2019, MCC undertook an independent play value assessment of all its fixed play areas revealing that many sites scored low in play value and would require significant investment to meet modern standards. Current financial pressures make large-scale investment in play facilities particularly challenging. There were notable successes where the council, in partnership with town and community councils, has successfully secured joint funding to upgrade play parks across the county. Any funding and decisions regarding investments in refurbishments of fixed play areas across the county must align with the MCC Play Sufficiency Assessment, focusing on providing for diverse needs ensuring that play opportunities are inclusive and encourage all children regardless of ability or background to play and interact together matter, and that there is space available for children to play. Audits would be undertaken of all designated play spaces to assess safety, accessibility and play value, and improvements implemented where needed.

In June 2025, People Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from officers representing the Monmouthshire Play Strategy Group outlining the Monmouthshire play opportunities for all report and the associated play spaces and playgrounds. Cabinet will review the committee's feedback and is expected to make a final decision on the approval of the report and associated investment in July. The Council, through their place sufficiency assessment, continue to provide children with better opportunities to play within their local communities as we know that promoting healthier and more active lifestyles and well-being is a priority for all of us.

As a supplementary Councillor Kear urged the Cabinet Member and officers to visit Usk Island to see what is concerning residents. The Cabinet member agreed.

<https://www.youtube.com/live/nAo-bS-dUqg?si=U4GFSWHAPWuLclbh&t=12312>

#### **29. Next Meeting - Thursday 17th July 2025**



**MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the meeting of County Council held  
on Thursday, 26th June, 2025 at 2.00 pm**

Noted.

**The meeting ended at 5.30 pm**

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**SUBJECT:** Chepstow Transport Hub – Request for Match Funding to Progress the LUF project.

**MEETING:** County Council

**DATE:** 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:** All

## 1. PURPOSE:

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.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1 Council agrees to proceed with the Chepstow LUF project and authorises officers to commence the on-boarding process.
- 2.2 Council agrees to underwrite capital match funding of £1,407,692 to be drawn down between the financial years 25/26 and 28/29.
- 2.3 Council asks the Cabinet Member and Officers to use best endeavours to displace the need to draw on capital through the alternative funding mechanisms
- 2.4 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.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Councils Community and Corporate Plan and the Local Transport Strategy recognise the importance of providing improved access to sustainable transport options to reduce inequality, carbon emissions and the reliance on private cars to access work, education, or essential services. A key component of the Local Transport Strategy is developing integrated transport solutions to create a single, unified public transport network.
- 3.2 The transport network in Chepstow is impacted by external factors that have combined to create significant congestion at peak times. The A48 and A466 through Chepstow form the primary routes for traffic travelling to or from the M4, M48 to greater Bristol, Gloucestershire, Chepstow, and Severnside. As the A48 provides the only major river crossing in the area, settlements in Gloucester use this route to access the M48, creating significant traffic movements through the centre of Chepstow. Welsh Government has commissioned studies to improve traffic flows at High Beech, but these have yet to transition into the delivery of agreed interventions.

- 3.3 The Chepstow Place Making Plan highlights the lack of alternative transport options and the impact that this has on the environmental and economic wellbeing of Chepstow. Feedback from the consultation process highlighted concerns over the lack of public transport, safe active travel routes and lack of safe crossing points. The provision of a bus and rail interchange and bus stops in the town centre is cited as one of the primary projects.
- 3.4 In recognition of the increasing congestion, ambitions for residential growth in neighbouring Counties and the need to stimulate improved sustainable transport opportunities, the Council submitted a Chepstow Transport Bid to round 2 of the Levelling Up Fund in July 2022. The bid was made up of three projects borne out of two WelTAG studies; the creation of an integrated transport hub at Chepstow Railway Station; improvements to the Chepstow public bus network and improvements to the active travel network. The total cost of the three projects was £7,467,600 made up of a LUF bid of £5,227,320 and 30% match funding amounting to £2,240,280.

### **Chepstow Transport Hub**

- 3.5 This project proposed the removal of the car parking on the forecourt at Chepstow railway station to provide two bus stops and turning circle, creating a bus / rail interchange. It also included the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, taxi rank, cycle parking and public realm improvements.

### **Local Bus Upgrades**

- 3.6 In order to provide an improved bus network within Chepstow, eight individual projects were identified which included the options of bus stop infrastructure at Moor Street, Mount Pleasant, and Welsh Street. Other proposals include the signalisation of the A48 junction with Hardwick Terrace, a pedestrian crossing on the junction between the A48 and Tesco and a bus only access to Chepstow Community Hospital. These proposals were identified following a WelTAG 2 study completed in 2021 and will be subject to review.

### **Active Travel Network**

- 3.7 The bid proposed the delivery of active travel infrastructure to encourage walking and cycling for shorter journeys. Further consultation is currently taking place.
- 3.8 The Council was advised in early 2023, that the bid had been unsuccessful and the project was put in abeyance. Without any prior contact with the Council, the then Chancellor announced in the Autumn Budget of 2023 that funding of £5,227,320 had been allocated to enable the project to be implemented.
- 3.9 Due to the time that had elapsed since the submission of the bid a review of the project scope and costs was commenced to ensure that the outcomes and outputs specified in the bid remained viable. The process however was once again put in abeyance following the announcement of the General Election and the subsequent spending review.
- 3.10 The delays, however, have afforded the Council the opportunity to review the submission and identify opportunities to broaden the scope thereby maximising the value of the benefits to the local community. A review of the original Transport Hub bid was undertaken with a view to reduce the construction costs and lever in additionality to drive improved

outcomes. As a result, the scheme has now been changed to include two new projects. The first is the refurbishment of the station building to provide public toilets. Discussions have been initiated with the owners to seek their approval to the proposals and explore the opportunity for the provision of a waiting room. The ongoing revenue costs associated with the providing the public toilets will remain with the Council.

- 3.11 We have also reflected on the concerns raised over the loss of car parking at the station forecourt. The purpose of this project is to encourage the use of sustainable transport, and it has become evident that the lack of readily available parking will deter potential train users. To overcome this concern, we are proposing the provision of park and ride car parking spaces through the acquisition of third-party land.
- 3.12 The proposals for public bus and active travel networks remain largely unchanged as further design work is necessary to ascertain the financial viability of the proposals. There are ongoing consultations underway to assist the development of the preferred active travel interventions, maximising the opportunities presented by the 20mph speed limits.
- 3.13 To progress the Chepstow LUF project, the Council is required to complete an on-boarding process with UK government. Part of this process will require a commitment from the Council to meet the match funding requirement. There have been on-going discussions with UK Government officials to seek their views on the inclusion of the additional projects and the potential to reduce the match funding element from 30% to 20%. Whilst no formal decision can be made until the on-boarding process has been concluded, there been no indications that our proposals will be rejected, albeit that remains a risk at this stage of the process.
- 3.14 Whilst the report is seeking the underwriting of the total match funding requirement of £1,407,692, officers will continue to seek alternative funding mechanisms to reduce the Councils capital commitment. The LUF grant funding dictates that the project must have allocated and spent all the grant funding by the end of the 27/28 financial year, however match funding can be incurred in the 28/29 year. Costs at this stage are subject to the completion of detailed designs and subsequent procurement exercises, however it is not anticipated that the funding envelope will change. Should costs be higher than forecast, a combination of value engineering and alternative funding mechanisms will be deployed to avoid a further call on Council resources.
- 3.15 We recognise the importance of ensuring that the scheme delivers the specified outcomes and outputs of the bid submission, but more importantly meets the needs of the local community. Ongoing engagement will be undertaken with local representatives, stakeholders, and the community to ensure that we derive the maximum value from the scheme.
- 3.16 The proposals will not result directly in the provision of an accessible footbridge; however, we will continue to support Network Rail and other stakeholders in lobbying for the construction of this much needed footbridge.

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

The proposal will result in increased access to sustainable public transport in the Chepstow area improving access to employment, education, and services for those who do not have a private car. Reducing private car journeys will also result in a reduction in carbon emissions. The creation of an improved active travel network will provide opportunities for physical activity and improved health and well-being.

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 5.1 The Council has the option to do nothing, thereby rejecting the grant award and not proceeding with the project. It is not recommended that this option is adopted as this will result in the loss of over five million pounds of grant funding and the opportunity to improve access to sustainable transport in the Chepstow area.
- 5.2 We recommend that the Council accepts the recommendations to progress the revised scheme as outlined above. This will lever in a minimum of circa £5.2 million grant funding which will derive broader public transport benefits, improve facilities at Chepstow railway station, and create additional parking opportunities.

#### **6. REASONS:**

- 6.1 The UK Governments Levelling Up Fund (LUF) was established to invest in projects that have a visible impact on local communities, targeting high value local investment priorities such as transport schemes. The Fund was jointly managed by the HM Treasury, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 6.2 Chepstow continues to suffer with increasing congestion arising from commuter traffic movements accessing the M48. Sustainable transport options are limited, and potential train users are disincentivized due to the lack of direct bus links and available parking provision. The train station lacks basic facilities such as toilet provision and disabled access to platforms. The LUF scheme will address a number of these deficiencies and provide increased opportunities for community members to use sustainable transport.
- 6.3 Many studies have been and continue to be undertaken to address the congestion issues, but little or no tangible progress has been made in translating recommendations into delivered outputs/ outcomes. The LUF scheme will have visible and tangible benefits and align with local, regional, and national transport policies to improve access to sustainable transport to reduce the need for private car journeys.
- 6.4 Whilst the scheme outputs and outcomes are fixed, there are opportunities to improve and enhance these through ongoing dialogue with the community.

- 6.5 The Council continues to campaign for the delivery of the Burns recommendations in particular the creation of a new link road between the M48 and the B4245 which will create a direct link to a park and ride at Severn Tunnel Junction railway station, create a new bus access and help re-direct Severnside traffic away from High beech roundabout.

**7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 7.1 The LUF scheme requires the Council to underwrite a capital match funding contribution of £1,407,692, which is equivalent to 20% of the scheme cost. The funding can be spread over a maximum of four financial years commencing in 25/26.
- 7.2 Officers will continue to seek out alternative funding opportunities to reduce the capital commitment of the Council.

**8. CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet  
Strategic Leadership Team

**9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

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**Strategic Director,  
Children, Learning,  
Skills and Economy**  
***Annual Report 2024/25***

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## Strategic Context

### Purpose of the Report

This report offers members a strategic overview of the status and performance of Monmouthshire's education system. It presents my, hopefully, informed perspective on our system's key strengths, areas for development, emerging risks, and opportunities for development.

There are features in the report that Members will recognise and that I hope provide reassurance as to the position and performance of Monmouthshire's services. These include a summary of the performance of our learners at the end of their statutory schooling, the outcomes of last year's Estyn inspections, and detailed analysis of the attendance data for the last year.

This report allows me to present my perspective and view on the position of the Welsh education system to members more broadly and in the early parts of this report I will seek to do this.

Over the course of last year, the Children and Young People's Directorate has developed and following the last report to Council by the Chief Executive (June 2025) is now the Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate. This new directorate offers an exciting opportunity to develop strategic services that will expand and promote opportunities for our children and young people while simultaneously developing our understanding of the economy in Monmouthshire and what it needs to thrive. Given the timeframes for the re-organisation of the Directorate Members will note that this report predominately talks to the activities of the previous directorate. The new Directorate's work will be more fully evaluated in next year's report.

While the primary reporting period of this report is the administrative year 2024/25, I have also included significant developments in the last term of the academic year.

## Introduction and Reflections from the Chief Officer

This time of year, naturally, presents an opportunity to pause, take a breath and consider where we are, what has been achieved and what remains to be done. Our learners and their schools and settings are reaching the end of another year. For some it will be the end of their first year in school, for others it will be their last year and final days of school.

I am approaching the end of my ninth year as the senior officer responsible for education in Monmouthshire. In some ways, compared to the year 2016/17 it is unrecognisable, yet in other ways familiar patterns and issues remain.

Our core purpose remains the same; to advocate for our children and to create a system which gives them the very best start in life. In those nine years, what is important has changed significantly because of the global pandemic. How we create, nurture and support those systems has evolved, and the demands we make of that system have increased.

2024/25 has been a year of further reform. In the last two years the Middle Tier Review has prompted scrutiny of the roles and responsibilities of local authorities, regional consortia, and national bodies, raising questions about coherence, accountability, and the sustainability of support structures. In the last year, the structures that we have developed and invested in supporting our schools have been challenged. I am, however, proud of the work that we have undertaken with partners in Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, Newport City Council and Torfaen County Borough Council to secure the continuation of an overarching school improvement partnership that has a strong record in creating a highly effective school improvement system. This regional partnership is strengthened by the emergence of a purposeful and localised school improvement ambition within Monmouthshire. The new Cabinet Secretary for Education has provided schools and local authorities with a clear set of priorities; literacy, numeracy and supporting the wellbeing of our learners. These align strongly with the priorities of our own strategic plans.

The schools in Monmouthshire have demonstrated a positive approach to greater collaboration. As this academic year closes, we have started to see the emergence of systemic structural collaboration across several areas. The Caldicot cluster of schools has undertaken a year-long developmental project looking at how they can become anti-racist, three of the four primary clusters have commenced a peer review project led by the EAS and the four secondary schools have committed themselves to a formalized partnership to address shared challenges. These locally initiated collaborations provide the local dimension to the school improvement agendas that are being developed at a national and regional level.

As we approach the end of the academic year, it is worth remembering that the set of GCSEs discussed in this report are the first set of results that have not been statistically supported in the post-pandemic period. There is now a theoretical ability to compare learners' outcomes with the class of 2019. In 2024, the Welsh Government reintroduced the All-Wales Core Data Sets (AWCDS), enabling more consistent school-level comparisons.

Monmouthshire's secondary schools are situated in less disadvantaged family groups, reflecting (relatively) favourable socio-economic conditions. In September 2025, our secondary schools will start teaching the new Welsh GCSEs – change in education is relentless.

Monmouthshire has rightly earned a reputation in education for being a forward-thinking service when providing support for learners who have additional learning needs or who face barriers to learning. Our schools are now working with children with far higher demands than has previously been the case. The demands placed on teaching assistants, teachers, and school leaders should not be underestimated.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr. Groucutt for all his work and support as the Cabinet member for Education. His term in office concluded at the same time as the reporting period for this report.

I have structured this year's report around the ambitions of the Community and Corporate Plan.

## Monmouthshire's educational landscape

Monmouthshire has 27 English medium and 3 Welsh medium primary schools, the majority of which are single form entry (a single class). There are three secondary schools, one located in each of the county's main towns and a 3-19 all through-school located in Abergavenny. There is also a Pupil Referral Service (PRS), based north and south of the County, that supports learners who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion from their mainstream school, or those unable to attend school.

Across the whole county there are 94<sup>1</sup> settings; schools, non-maintained nurseries, independent schools, and independent special schools who we are responsible for supporting within various elements of legislation such as *Keeping Learners Safe* which sets out our safeguarding responsibilities.

Everyday Monmouthshire's Schools (last year's numbers are in the):

- educate 11,005 (11,024) pupils across the county, of those learners:
- of which 48.5% are female (49%)
- 11.4% (12.1%) of the population are eligible for free school meals (eFSM)
- 11.7% (12%) of the population have an identified additional learning need (ALN) or Special Educational Need (SEN).
- employ 1,074 members of staff (1,148)

The central CYP directorate employs 89 (88) members of staff.

---

<sup>1</sup> There are currently 44 pre-school settings, 22 out of school clubs and 28 childminders

Alongside the work of our schools, we provide early education for 600 three and four-year-old learners in 25 non-maintained settings.

The recent past has seen an increase in learners who chose to be home educated. We know this population as electively home educated (EHE), and there are currently 162 children who are educated in this way. We have one full-time EHE Officer who meets regularly with these families through home visits and engagement activities such as creative sessions and outdoor experiences in Gilwern. As a result, we have established strong relationships with these families to the extent that our EHE Officer received a gold award from Education Otherwise, voted by parents, for her work during the year.

Our education system, in the broadest sense, operates within the context of both high expectations of all and for all. To achieve those expectations, we always seek to offer 'high challenge and high support' to our schools and settings. We believe fundamentally in the value of strong partnerships at local, regional, and national level.

The core of our work is the statutory role that we hold in monitoring school performance and ensuring high-quality provision to ensure that learners make at least appropriate progress overtime.

In external examinations our schools continue to perform above national averages across most key indicators, including the Capped 9 measure, literacy, numeracy, and science. However, performance among the lower-attaining learners shows greater levels of variability, highlighting a continuing need for targeted support.

The work that is being undertaken in all our schools and the PRS give us assurance that our judgements are made using a wide range of firsthand evidence that is focused on the progress made by learners in all year groups.

More broadly the Welsh education system is navigating a period of significant reform and complexity. One of the foremost challenges remains the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales, which requires our schools to redesign teaching and learning approaches while maintaining standards and securing equity. This shift demands sustained professional learning and leadership capacity, which can be uneven across schools.

Finally, the whole public service system must respond to increasing demands for inclusive education and mental health support, requiring cross-sector collaboration and investment to ensure all learners thrive. This report will refer to children who experience Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). To paraphrase another Director of Education, the issue is often not school avoidance but 'life' avoidance. This is not a challenge that can be resolved by schools or Local Authorities alone.

## A note on the writing style of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an evaluative view of the performance of our systems, the schools, setting and services that work within it. To offer a view of *'how much has been done and how well it has been done'* the following words are used to describe proportions.

- nearly all = with very few exceptions
- most = 90% or more
- many = 70% or more
- a majority = over 60%
- half = 50%
- around half = close to 50%
- a minority = below 40%
- few = below 20%
- very few = less than 10%

In past iterations of this report Members have asked for a glossary of terms and abbreviations used in education services; this is in Appendix 1.



## What are we seeking to achieve?

We have reviewed and considered the strategic goals for our services and how they link to the ambitions of the Community and Corporate Plan. We have also considered a range of evidence that has emerged from our work with schools through supported self-evaluations (SSEs) and Estyn inspections.

The table in Appendix 2 analyses a range of sources of information about our schools and draws them into themes for improvement. The emergent priorities for school-based work were:

- a. **Improving the quality and consistency of teaching and learning**, *focusing on providing appropriate challenge, effective feedback, assessment practices, and fostering pupils' independent learning skills.*
- b. **Strengthening self-evaluation, improvement planning, and assessment processes** *to accurately identify key development areas and evaluate their impact on pupil outcomes and progress.*
- c. **Enhancing pupils' skills development**, *focusing on application across the curriculum, progressive skill-building, and improving skills in key areas such as Welsh language, literacy, numeracy, and digital competency.*
- d. **Developing leadership capacity** *at all levels, including middle leaders and governors, to effectively drive school improvement and monitor provision.*
- e. **Improving pupils' Welsh language skills** *and confidence, particularly in spoken Welsh, and ensuring statutory requirements are met.*
- f. **Enhancing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision** *Strengthening provision for pupils with ALN is a focus, including meeting statutory obligations, tracking progress, and ensuring appropriate support and resources and ensuring a skilled and confident workforce to meet the broad range of barriers to learning and ALN we are facing.*

Aligning the evidence from our schools with the ambition of the Community and Corporate Plan and the residual areas of focus from our last Estyn report has resulted in the following strategic goals. These have been shared with our Headteachers and will be further refined by the Headteacher Leadership Group in the early weeks of the next academic year.

### **1. Raise Standards and Ensure Excellence for all**

*Ensure all learners make strong progress and achieve high standards, with a relentless focus on improving teaching, leadership, and learner outcomes.*

- Strengthening school improvement partnerships and leadership capacity.
- Use evidence and data to drive excellence in learning and teaching.
- Embed the Four Purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.

- Access to modern school environments that are for purpose.

## **2. Deliver Equity by Closing Gaps in Outcomes and Opportunities**

*Ensure that every learner—regardless of background, need, or ability—has access to high-quality education and the support required to thrive.*

- Target support for vulnerable learners (ALN, EAL, FSM, CLA).
- Ensure early identification and intervention.
- Promote inclusive, accessible learning environments.

## **3. Promote Well-being, Inclusion, and Learner Voice**

*Prioritise the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of learners, staff, and families, ensuring safe, inclusive, and nurturing environments.*

- Reduce exclusions and improve attendance through early support.
- Champion learner voice and active participation.
- Strengthen safeguarding and well-being systems.

## **4. Empower School and System Leadership**

*Build the capacity of school leaders, governors, and teachers to innovate and lead continuous improvement within a collaborative system.*

- Support leadership development at all levels.
- Enable shared practice across schools and clusters.
- Work with regional partners to deliver impactful professional learning.

## **5. Celebrate Welsh Language, Culture, and Global Citizenship**

*Promote bilingualism, celebrate Welsh culture, and prepare learners to engage confidently in a changing Wales and global society.*

- Deliver the WESP effectively to increase Welsh-medium provision.
- Promote the Cymraeg 2050 ambition.
- Integrate global citizenship and sustainability education
- Develop a RSE and RVE curriculum that meets the diverse needs of all our learners

## Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils.

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### Attendance

#### Attendance of all pupils – Primary and Secondary

The overall attendance of pupils in Monmouthshire schools, post-pandemic, has improved. In primary schools, improvement has been strong and is moving rapidly towards pre-pandemic levels. However, attendance in secondary schools is slower to recover.

All Pupils	2022/23	2023/24	Rate of increase
Monmouthshire	89.50%	90.00%	+ 0.5pp
Wales	88.50%	89.00%	+0.5pp

Data source: WG Attendance Data September to July 2022/23 and 2023/24

Primary Pupils	2022/23	2023/24	Rate of increase
Monmouthshire	92.90%	93.60%	+0.7pp
Wales	91.50%	92.20%	+0.7pp
Secondary Pupils	2022/23	2023/24	Rate of increase
Monmouthshire	88.10%	88.20%	+0.1pp
Wales	87.50%	88.10%	+0.6pp

(Welsh Government Attendance data source)

Despite the drop in attendance levels since the pandemic, overall attendance levels in Monmouthshire have remained amongst the highest in Wales, above the average across Wales as a whole, and significantly above attendance across the south east Wales region.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) supports efforts to improve school attendance and reduce persistent absence. Over the past year, the EWS updated its policies to align with recent Welsh Government guidance and created a handbook to clarify roles and responsibilities for schools and families. This has helped schools develop enhanced strategies to improve attendance.

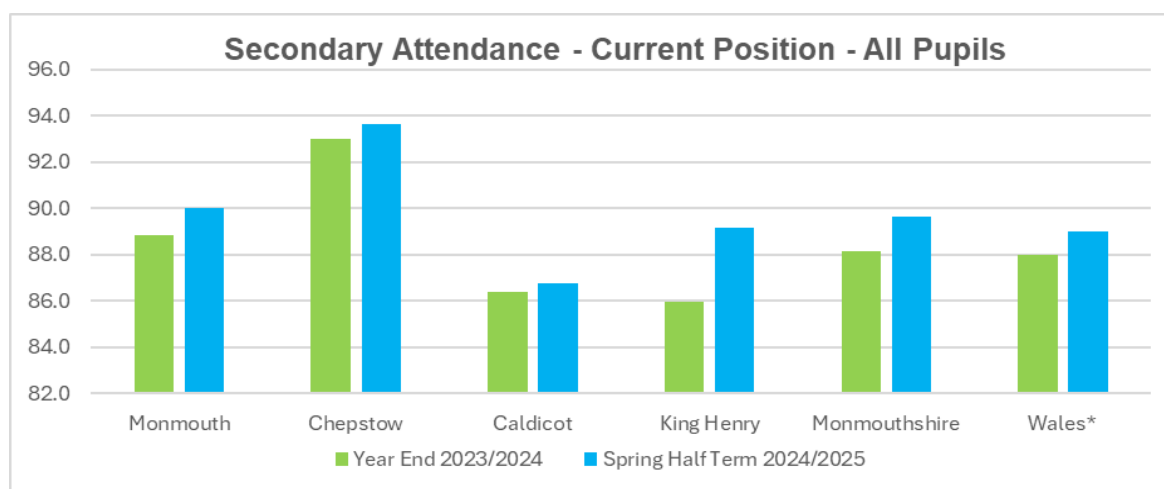
The service offers holistic support to schools, pupils, and parents to address non-attendance issues. It focuses on building positive relationships and connecting with other relevant agencies. In Monmouthshire, formal prosecution is rarely used. Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) meet with schools to discuss attendance, perform register checks, and support tracking and monitoring approaches. Schools can refer to the EWS when they have

exhausted their resources and the graduated response<sup>2</sup>. The EWS team meets regularly to allocate support to families and schools as needed.

### Secondary School Attendance

#### All Pupils

By the end of 2023/24, secondary attendance showed a very small improvement of 0.1pp. However, the rate of improvement is 0.5pp below the average rate of improvement across Wales. During the current academic year 24/25, secondary school attendance is beginning to show improvement. However, secondary school attendance remains well below pre-pandemic levels and our corporate target of 94%.



#### Pupils eligible for Free School Meals - Secondary Attendance

Although there is some improvement in eFSM attendance data, the rate of recovery for this group is slower than for non eFSM pupils. This means that in 2023/24, the attendance of FSM pupils in Monmouthshire secondary schools continued to be significantly below that of non-FSM pupils (14.4pp) and is below where this should be. This is a significant risk to a cohort of vulnerable learners and has a direct impact on their ability to access high quality teaching and learning, which will aid their future opportunities.

However, we recognise that there are many underlying factors which can have an adverse impact on attendance for this group of pupils. For example, they are more likely to need higher levels of support to overcome their barriers to school so that they can achieve regular levels of attendance.

At the end of the academic year 23/24, secondary FSM attendance was 75.8% and 4.4pp lower than the national average across Wales of 79.9%.

### Primary School Attendance

Attendance at Monmouthshire primary schools is consistently amongst the highest in Wales. Although there was a decline in primary attendance during the pandemic, it

<sup>2</sup> This is set out in Appendix 3

recovered steadily, reaching 1.4pp above the Wales average at the end of the academic year 23/24.

Many primary schools have well-established and effective processes in place to support and sustain high levels of attendance. Leaders monitor attendance effectively and work closely with parents and a wide range of external agencies to improve their attendance. As a result, attendance in all primary schools is now over 90% and attendance in almost a third of schools is over 95%. The performance of primary schools in the current year is set out in Appendix 3.

#### **Pupils eligible for Free School Meals - Primary Attendance**

The attendance of FSM pupils is over 90% in around half of primary schools, over 88% in 7 schools, and 87% or below in the remainder. Lower levels of attendance may be due to a range of circumstances, and in some schools the very low level of FSM pupils can have an impact.

#### **The Impact of the Education Welfare Service and Family Liaison Officer**

The introduction of Family Liaison Officers (FLO) to the team during the last year has strengthened the work of the EWS team and is enabling the service to provide high quality support at an earlier stage to minimise longer term disruption to learning and engagement. The FLOs work closely with Community Focused Schools officers and Acorn staff to establish positive relationships with parents at the earliest opportunity. This enables them to provide advice and support for families, whilst removing barriers to school and setting high expectations for attendance.

#### **Exclusions**

Unfortunately, the data currently shows that rates of fixed term exclusions remain high and are on an upward trend. With regards to permanent exclusions the number has fallen significantly in the last year. The increasing presentation of behaviour that challenges in our schools and settings is also seen in authorities across Wales.

In the last academic year (23-24) 518 learners received fixed term exclusions from Monmouthshire schools. There were 285 (55%) learners who received repeat exclusions (249 Secondary, 36 Primary). Nearly all exclusions (98%) were for 5 days or fewer, with an average length of 1.5 days. Whilst 59% of schools issued more exclusions in 2023/24 than the previous academic year, of our 30 primary schools, 13 (43%) issued no exclusions.

The rise in the use of fixed term exclusion in secondary schools is predominantly linked to the rise in persistent disruptive behaviour. In primary schools a significant rise in the number of fixed term exclusions is for damage to property and causing injury to pupils and staff.

In the current academic year (2024-25) there have been no permanent exclusions upheld at a Pupil Disciplinary Committee (PDC), although 20 have been issued. 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. This has involved provision from the Pupil Referral Service or the use of a Managed Move.

It is a core ambition to reduce the number of 'days lost' by learners to exclusions, especially for those from vulnerable groups. The Welsh Government's statutory guidance states that the LA should do all it can to avoid the permanent exclusion of these learners. Data shows that despite a range of efforts to support the inclusion of these learners, the use of exclusions for learners with an ALN and those who are eFSM is still too high.

We address these issues on a case-by-case basis by responding to parental representations, attending PDC hearings, and liaising with colleagues in EWS, social workers, and external advocates. The team also works at a school level through the established Team Around the School (TAS) approach, monitoring data and proactively developing bespoke training offers. Some of the areas where we have focused our work in the last year include managing risks around Harmful Sexual Behaviours (HSB) and minimising the risks of weaponised objects. These training sessions and briefings are offered through Headteacher meetings, the CLA forums, the Monmouthshire Inclusion Network, and promoting good practices from Estyn thematic reports. We have also held one-off events such as the Exclusion Summit, which brought a range of school-based professionals, local authority teams and other agencies together.

### Emerging themes and areas of risk

As set out above there can be many reasons for exclusions in schools but there are two areas that I feel are worthy of attention. Peer on peer HSB is an increasing reason for the issue of FTE as shown in the table below. Managing these risks to safeguard all learners is a priority for the authority. This may mean increased use of PRS provision pending further understanding of the risks and management of these through multi-agency processes. Officers have worked across education and social care to promote greater understanding and the use of a shared language. Furthermore, they have developed the understanding of risk using *Assess, Intervene, Monitor* (AIM) HSB risk assessments, these will seek to enable the safe management of learners returning to, or staying in, mainstream settings when appropriate.

<b>Primary:</b>				
<b>Academic Year to Summer Half Term</b>	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
<b>Sexual misconduct</b>	0	0	0	2
<b>Secondary:</b>				
<b>Academic Year to Summer Half Term</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>
<b>Sexual misconduct</b>	1	1	5	10

A second area of concern is the use of threatened or actual violence and the misuse of items to weaponise them or the presence of bladed items in schools. A multi-agency approach continues to make use of Home Office grants to reduce violence in schools and to enhance the advice and guidance to schools regarding managing such risks whilst ensuring safety to staff and learners. This work is ongoing and reflects Wales wide patterns.

<b>PRIMARY:</b>				
<b>Academic Year to Summer Half Term</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>
<b>Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil</b>	2	1	13	10
<b>Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult</b>	12	14	13	14
<b>Physical assault against a pupil</b>	15	27	37	57
<b>Physical assault against an adult</b>	17	15	42	51
<b>SECONDARY:</b>				
<b>Academic Year to Summer Half Term</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>
<b>Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against a pupil</b>	25	38	51	40
<b>Verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult</b>	85	117	180	194
<b>Physical assault against a pupil</b>	66	98	129	100
<b>Physical assault against an adult</b>	7	8	18	37

Primary FTE for reasons of actual or threatened behaviour to peers or staff has risen from 105 to 132 this academic year. For secondary the number dropped slightly from 378 to 371 but concerningly, the number of FTE for staff assault rose from 18 to 37.

#### **Pupil Referral Service capacity and interventions**

An emerging theme from this part of the report is the weight placed on the Pupil Referral Service to provide support and provision for learners who have been at risk of permanent exclusion or whose presence in a mainstream setting presents too great a risk to staff or peers. Following an extensive review undertaken by Monmouthshire and EAS staff, the Pupil Referral Service has undergone a period of intense and significant change which has enhanced the capacity to provide education for children and young people who, because of illness, exclusion or otherwise, may not receive education in a mainstream school. The opening of two new, refurbished Pupil Referral Units in the North and the South of the county this academic year has significantly broadened the breadth and depth of the curriculum offer and intervention available from the service. Alongside an increased, refreshed leadership structure, the service finds itself in a better position to meet the growing numbers and complexity of the pupils needing the service.



## The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning.

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### System Performance and Improvement

Through our close work with schools and our partners in the EAS we have a strong understanding of our schools and settings, and we effectively monitor teaching quality and leadership to ensure positive pupil outcomes and wellbeing. The team maintains constructive relationships with schools and fosters a culture of trust where support is valued, and challenge is welcomed. We can use a broad range of data and intelligence from various services to identify strengths and areas for improvement, enabling targeted support and intervention.

This strategic approach has led to a reduction in the level of support required by schools over time. Most primary and many secondary schools show suitable progress among pupils, including vulnerable groups. One secondary school is in a statutory category following an Estyn inspection. The collaboration between School Improvement Partners (SIPs), Principal SIPs (PSIPs), and our officers across all parts of the directorate enhances the use of local knowledge and systems to drive improvement.

The close working relationship with the EAS has been invaluable, but it is a relationship where, as the school improvement partner, it is held to account for its impact on pupil progress. Strong communication and shared analysis between both parties ensures timely and effective support. Partner SIPs, from schools across the region, are well-informed about our strategic priorities, particularly in supporting vulnerable pupils, and thematic reports provide clear insights into strengths and areas for development.

Alongside the wider school improvement work to ensure that ongoing focus on vulnerable learners we also monitor the use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) through SIPs and thematic reviews, gaining a clear understanding of how schools use the funding to address poverty-related challenges to ensure that it impacts positively on the wellbeing and progress made by learners. Most schools have submitted their 2024/25 PDG plans using approved templates.

We have developed the use of Professional Discussions (PDs) with schools to help identify support needs and share good practice. The TAS model offers early, tailored intervention, often preventing issues from escalating. As the legally responsible body we have used our statutory powers, such as warning notices and appointing additional governors, to address urgent performance concerns.

Professional learning is widely accessed, focusing on teaching, curriculum, and leadership. Networks support the sharing of effective practice. An area for development, especially considering the new more localised school improvement approaches, is to ensure that more

than a minority of headteachers contribute to system leadership. More positively many middle and senior leaders engage in national development programmes.

We have successfully implemented school reorganisation through federations and executive headship, enhancing leadership capacity and resource sharing. Governors receive strong support, including through the Monmouthshire Association of School Governors.

Inspection outcomes align with national averages, and nearly all pre-inspection commentaries match actual outcomes. Attendance has improved post-pandemic, supported by the LA's strategy and Education Welfare Service. Inclusion services and partnerships are well-established and effective.

## Estyn Inspection Outcomes

The time frame for this report is 2024/25. However, to allow the full view of MCC's experiences of Estyn since the return to inspecting post-pandemic is referenced to allow trends overtime to be seen

### Non-maintained Settings

Across Wales and Monmouthshire non-maintained settings are inspected jointly by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) against the following six areas:

- Wellbeing
- Learning (three and four-year-olds)
- Care and development
- Teaching and assessment (three and four-year-olds that do not receive education in a maintained (school) setting)
- Environment
- Leadership and management

There have been seventeen non-maintained settings inspected by Estyn since May 2022. Appendix 4 shows that there has been no Estyn follow-up in any of these settings, and five have been asked to submit a case study to Estyn for publication. In four of the settings, all inspection areas were judged to be excellent. This is a particularly strong area of our work, giving many of our children the best start to school life.

### Schools

Estyn made initial adjustments to the common inspection framework in 2022, moving away from grades such as 'excellent' and reducing the notice period schools receive ahead of a core inspection. More recently, Estyn introduced interim visits where schools are visited a second time in the six-year inspection cycle to ensure that their standards remain high, and any recommendations made are being addressed. The amendments to Estyn's approach also saw the removal of Estyn monitoring as a follow-up category. This means there are

now only two follow-up categories, Significant Improvement and Special Measures. Estyn also streamlined the framework to focus on three key areas; Teaching and Learning; Well-being, care, support and guidance; and Leading and improving.

Inspection reports from September 2024 onwards do not report on each area separately. Instead, they reflect on the effectiveness of the school and its impact on pupils' progress and well-being across all areas.

Estyn has inspected twenty-two Monmouthshire schools since May 2022, and ten of these in the period April 2024 to the end of March 2025. During this time, Estyn inspected four of these schools using the previous framework, and six under new arrangements.

#### Interim visits

Estyn has carried out an interim visit in four Monmouthshire schools since their introduction in September 2024.

In all four schools the focus was on two recommendations from their last inspection. The period between the inspection and the interim visited varied from eight months to two years and one month and inevitably, this has an impact on the amount of progress a school can reasonably be expected to make. Interim visit reports indicated that all schools have made strong progress in one area and are working well towards addressing the second. Schools have welcomed the interim visits, reporting them helpful and supportive in continuing their improvement journey.

#### Primary Schools

Since 2022, Estyn inspected eighteen Monmouthshire primary schools. As part of this process, Estyn judged that two schools required follow-up, one Estyn review and the other special measures. The remaining sixteen schools were not placed in any form of follow-up. Six schools were asked to prepare a case study, or where an area of strength was noted by inspectors, it was highlighted within the report, in the form of a spotlight.

The table in Appendix 6 shows the level of follow-up for all Monmouthshire schools inspected since May 2022 and those that were asked to submit a case study to Estyn or had a spotlight on an area of strong practice.

#### Secondary Schools

All four secondary schools have been inspected in the last three years. Monmouth and Chepstow schools did not require any follow-up. Monmouth was asked to prepare two case studies in relation to its work and Chepstow had two spotlights on strong aspects of its work highlighted within the written report. Estyn judged both King Henry VIII School and Caldicot School in need of significant improvement.

Recommendations vary from school to school, however, improvements in self-evaluation processes are a consistent theme across all four schools. Attendance, teaching and learning, and the development of pupils' skills are common themes in Monmouthshire's secondary schools.

Estyn has not inspected the PRS since 2018.

#### A School's Recovery Journey

When a school has been placed into a category, the time it takes to improve it is a key measurement. It acts as a proxy for the quality and caliber of support that the local authority can bring together to support the school. The table below shows the time schools remained in a follow-up category. On average, schools in Estyn review which are highlighted as yellow, (schools needing Significant Improvement are Amber and those in Special Measures Red) were in this category for between 18 to 20 months. However, schools in need of significant improvement or special measures remained in this category for up to 24 months as they had more areas to improve. These timescales reflect the expectations of the local authority so that they can ensure schools address the concerns, embed practice, and are able to continue their journey of sustained improvement with minimal external support.

Schools marked with \* remained in a category for longer than expected because the local authority and Estyn were unable to determine the level of progress until after the first wave of the pandemic at the end of 2020.

School	Date in follow up	Date out of follow up	Time taken
PRS	April 2018	December 2019	20 months
Llantillio Pertholey	September 2016	April 2018	19 months
Raglan	November 2016	June 2018	19 months
Magor	May 2017	December 2018	18 months
Chepstow	September 2017	December 2020	39 months*
Deri View	October 2018	February 2020	16 months
Caldicot	October 2018	December 2020	26 months*
Goytre	May 2019	December 2020	19 months*
Dewstow	May 2022	April 2024	24 months
Gilwern	October 2022	December 2023	14 months
King Henry VIII	November 2022	School closed	NA
Caldicot	October 2024	Not applicable	NA

Strengths identified in Monmouthshire schools inspected by Estyn since May 2022.

The following themes have been identified in feedback, and Estyn inspection notes for the twenty-two schools inspected since summer 2022. This extended period of reference has been included to ensure that any trends can be identified.

- Many leaders know their school well; they provide strong leadership; they are clear about the strengths and areas for improvement, and they work effectively with partners to fulfil the vision for the school.
- Provision for wellbeing and its impact on pupils and staff is a strong feature in nearly all schools.
- Most schools have a clear vision for the curriculum and are making good progress towards developing a curriculum that reflects the aspirations of the new Curriculum for Wales.
- Most schools provide an increasingly broad and interesting range of learning experiences.
- Many schools ensure pupils have worthwhile opportunities to develop a range of skills. As a result, most pupils make good progress during their time in school with a minority making strong progress.
- Behaviour in many schools is good and supports learning well.
- Schools promote pupils' moral and social development effectively
- There are positive relationships between staff and pupils in many schools which contribute well to effective learning and good behaviour in nearly all schools. The positive ethos in many schools enables pupils to develop confidence and self-assurance well.
- Pupils of all ages have beneficial opportunities to develop leaderships skills in most schools.
- Overall, schools provide a welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and secure.
- Most schools provide a stimulating and rich environment for pupils both inside and outdoors.
- Pupil's attitudes to learning are good, pupil voice is strong, and wellbeing is good. As a result, many children enjoy going to school.
- In a few primary schools, the development of Welsh language and culture is a strength.
- Schools make effective use of grants to support pupils' progress and wellbeing.
- Many governors have a good understanding of their role and discharge their duties effectively.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in Monmouthshire schools.
- Children from all socio-economic backgrounds make good progress in their learning and well-being.

This information is based on the 65% of Monmouthshire schools inspected since 2022 and aligns well with our monitoring across the remaining schools.

## Areas for Improvement

Whilst there are many strengths across our schools, there are also areas in need of improvement. Estyn captures the most significant of these in the form of recommendations for the school to address.

Monmouthshire schools showed both strengths and areas for development compared to national trends.

In Monmouthshire, 44% of primary schools were advised to improve opportunities for pupils to develop or apply their skills, this was higher than the national average of 32%. Similarly, 33% were encouraged to enhance pupils' independent skills, nearly double the national figure of 17.6%. Positively, only 5.5% of Monmouthshire schools were advised to improve how teaching challenges all pupils, significantly lower than the 18.2% seen nationally. Notably, no Monmouthshire schools were flagged for attendance issues, compared to 10% nationally.

Half of Monmouthshire primary schools were advised to improve self-evaluation processes—substantially higher than the 17% national average. Health and safety concerns were raised in 5.5% of Monmouthshire schools, slightly above the 3.5% national rate. No safeguarding concerns were reported in Monmouthshire, whereas 2.7% of schools across Wales received such recommendations.

In the academic year 2023/24, 28 secondary schools across Wales were inspected. When comparing this national picture to the local outcomes all four Monmouthshire schools received recommendations to strengthen and refine their self-evaluation processes, compared to about two thirds nationally. This is an ongoing focus of the local authority's work with schools and the PRS.

However, only one Monmouthshire school was advised to improve the progressive development of pupils' skills through teaching, provision, planning, and coordination—well below the national figure of 65%. The quality of teaching was flagged in 50% of Monmouthshire schools, closely aligning with the 52% national average.

Attendance emerged as a more prominent concern locally, with three of the four Monmouthshire schools receiving recommendations to improve it, compared to 48% across Wales. Welsh language provision was also highlighted more frequently in Monmouthshire.

Overall, Monmouthshire's secondary schools face challenges in self-evaluation, attendance and Welsh language provision, with fewer concerns raised around governance and curriculum planning than the national average. There remains, of course, an ongoing focus on the quality of teaching and learning.

## Key Stage 4 Outcomes: Summer 2024

The report provides an overview of Key Stage 4 outcomes for our three secondary schools and the through school in Abergavenny in the summer of 2024. They are contextualised against national benchmarks, family groupings, and Welsh Government modelled expectations. Whilst national outcomes have declined to pre-2020 levels, Monmouthshire schools generally outperform both family and national averages across most indicators.

Notably, two schools exceed their family averages in the Capped 9 measure, with Chepstow and King Henry VIII schools showing particularly strong performances. Literacy and numeracy outcomes are robust, with three schools above family averages in each, although one school underperforms in both domains. Science and Welsh Baccalaureate results are more mixed, with modest gains in most schools but one notable underperformance in science.

The analysis by attainment thirds reveals strong outcomes for higher and middle achievers but concerning underperformance among the lowest third in two schools—one significantly so. This suggests a need for targeted intervention to support lower-attaining learners.

At the authority level Monmouthshire exceeds Welsh averages in all key measures, with particularly strong performance among FSM and non-FSM learners. However, the literacy score slightly underperforms against modelled expectations. Members should note that our expectations for our schools should be significantly higher than the Welsh average and arguably the modelled expectation because these are predicated on the performance of the whole Welsh cohort.

For 2024 Monmouthshire secondary schools are in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> least disadvantaged families.

If members would like more details regarding the Key Stage 4 outcomes there was a substantive item at the Performance and Overview Committee on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2025.

### **Reviewing and using the data:**

For all GCSE subjects the difference between each grade is 6 points. For example, a B is worth 6 more points than a C. The one exception to this is the difference between a 'U' grade and a 'G' where the difference is 16 points.

This means that, for example, for the Capped 9, a difference of 54 points indicates that on average, every learner in a school is performing above or below the family by a whole GCSE grade in every subject. (6 points x 9 subjects=54 points).

For reference if a student were to achieve 9 A\* (or equivalents) they would achieve a Capped 9 of 522, a student achieving all Cs would score 360.

In last year's examinations Chepstow school learners, on average, performed approximately half a grade better in every subject compared with their peers in the family, and King Henry VIII by approximately one third of a grade.

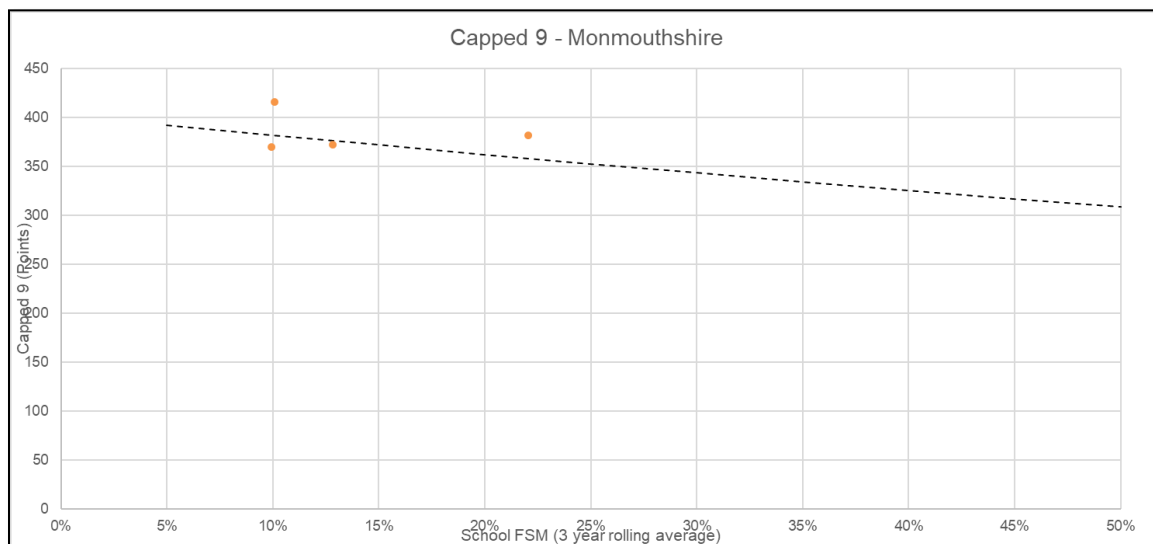
Capped 9 – all pupils – compared with the family average<sup>3</sup>

The table below shows the Capped 9 performance of all learners in each school compared with their individual family. Two schools are above their family, significantly so, and two below, but both by small margins.

School Name	FSM	Capped 9	Family Capped 9	Capped 9 - School-Family difference
Caldicot School	12.8%	372.8	379.1	-6.3
Chepstow Comprehensive School	10.1%	416.3	380.5	35.8
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	22.1%	382.0	359.3	22.6
Monmouth Comprehensive School	9.9%	369.9	380.5	-10.7

Capped 9 – all pupils – compared with WG ‘Modelled Outcome’ line

The chart below does not compare with the family, but rather the Welsh Government ‘Modelled outcome’.



Two schools in Monmouthshire are above the modelled outcome line and two below.

### Capped 9 – Comparison by ‘Thirds’ with WG ‘Modelled Outcome’ line

The chart below groups learners in each individual school into ‘thirds. For example, if 120 learners in a cohort, they would be split into three groups of 40 by their Capped 9 scores. Three averages would then be calculated for each of these groups. The table below gives the average of each third. The differences are in effect contextualised.

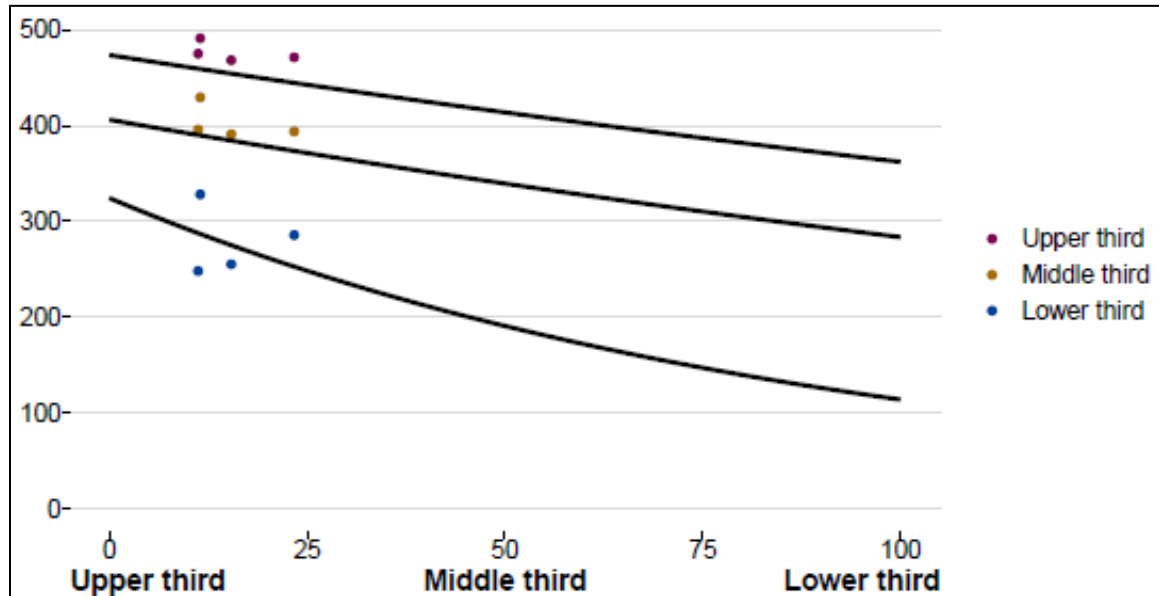
<sup>3</sup> Please note that the indicative bars on the right for this table and all below are adjusted to the minimum (negative) and maximum (positive) values for each table individually and automatically. Therefore, a bar ‘35.8 points’ long will not be consistent across each chart.



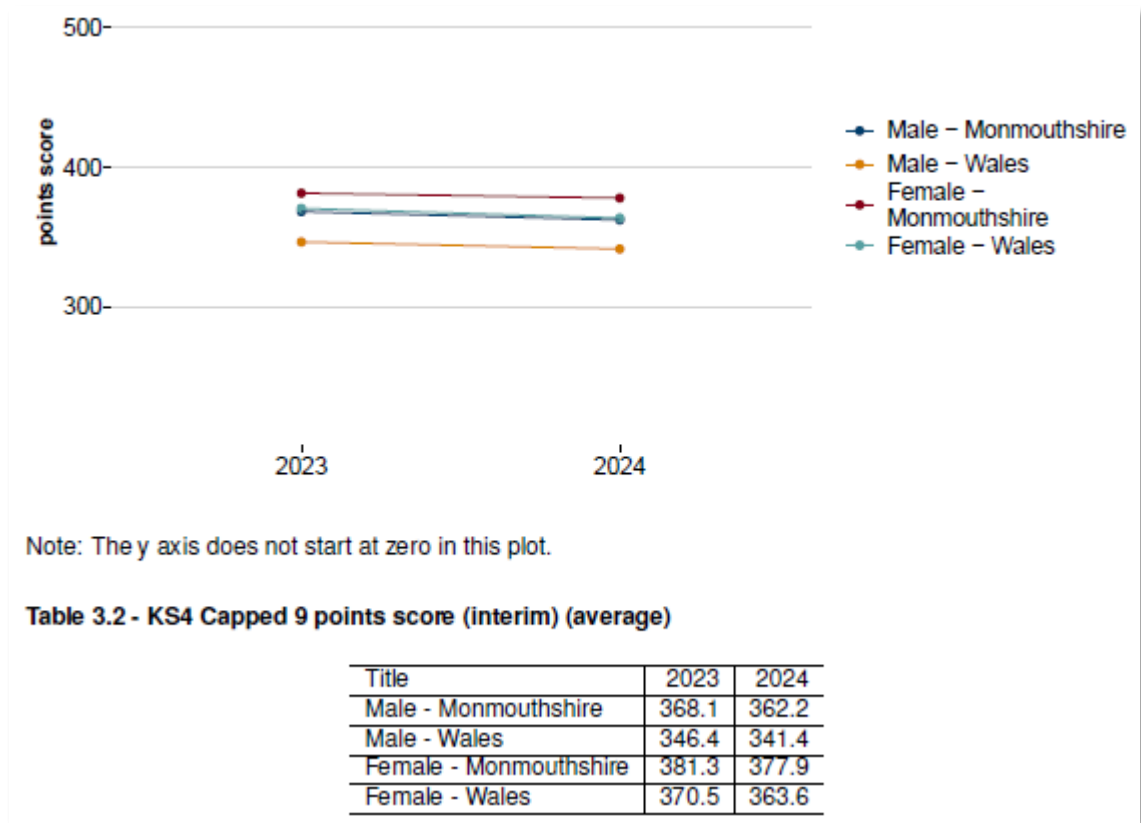
School Name	Upper Third			Middle Third			Lower Third		
	Achieved	Modelled	+/-	Achieved	Modelled	+/-	Achieved	Modelled	+/-
Caldicot School	468	456	13	391	384	7	255	271	-16
Chepstow Comprehensive School	491	461	30	430	389	41	328	283	45
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	472	445	27	394	373	21	286	248	37
Monmouth Comprehensive School	475	461	14	396	389	7	248	284	-36

For the highest and middle achieving thirds, all schools are above expectation. 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).

The same data represented by three dots (one per third) in each school and 3 regression lines based on eligibility. This shows the relatively low level of variance for Monmouthshire schools, in both the upper third and middle third, but more variance for the lower third.

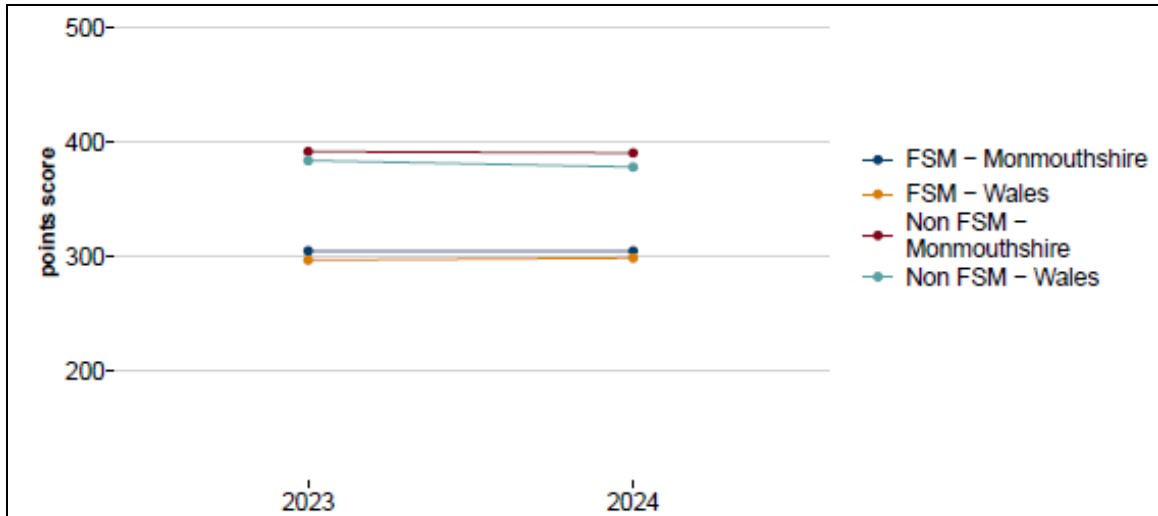


The Capped 9 score is also analysed by comparing the performance of males and female students.



Both Males and Females in Monmouthshire have higher scores than their peers in Wales, however the difference is approximately double for males as it is for females.

It is also analysed comparing the performance of those students eligible for free school meals and those who are ineligible.



Note: The y axis does not start at zero in this plot.

**Table 6.2 - KS4 Capped 9 points score (interim) (average)**

Title	2023	2024
FSM - Monmouthshire	304.7	304.7
FSM - Wales	296.7	298.6
Non FSM - Monmouthshire	391.7	390.4
Non FSM - Wales	383.8	378.2

Both FSM and non-FSM learners in Monmouthshire have higher Capped 9 scores than their peers in Wales.

Literacy Measure – compared with the Family average

To put all these charts in perspective a difference of +/- 6 points is the equivalent of a GCSE grade difference for every learner. +/- 3 points would therefore be a half a grade difference.

School Name	FSM	Literacy Measure	Literacy Measure - Family	Literacy Measure - Difference
Caldicot School	12.8%	38.9	42.0	-3.0
Chepstow Comprehensive School	10.1%	45.2	41.8	3.4
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	22.1%	41.0	39.3	1.8
Monmouth Comprehensive School	9.9%	41.6	41.8	-0.3

Two schools are above the family average for the literacy measure, one approximately inline and one below by approximately 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a GCSE grade per learner.

All schools have a higher contribution made by literature rather than language.

Numeracy Measure – compared with the Family average

School Name	FSM	Numeracy Measure	Numeracy Measure - Family	Numeracy Measure - Difference
Caldicot School	12.8%	36.2	40.5	-4.3
Chepstow Comprehensive School	10.1%	45.9	40.5	5.4
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	22.1%	40.3	37.3	3.1
Monmouth Comprehensive School	9.9%	42.6	40.5	2.1

For the numeracy measure three schools are above the family average, above by between approximately a third of a grade and whole grade per learner, but one below the family average, by approximately two thirds of a grade per learner.

Science Measure – compared with the Family average

School Name	FSM	Science Measure	Science Measure - Family	Science Measure - Difference
Caldicot School	12.8%	36.4	41.2	-4.8
Chepstow Comprehensive School	10.1%	42.7	40.9	1.8
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	22.1%	38.3	37.4	0.9
Monmouth Comprehensive School	9.9%	41.0	40.9	0.1

For the science measure three schools are above their respective families, but by smaller margins than literacy and numeracy, but with one below, by almost one GCSE grade per learner.

No Qualifications – compared with the Family average

Please note the reversed colour coding on the bars to indicate that a negative difference from the family is positive.

School Name	FSM	No Qualifications (%)	No Qualifications (%) Family	No Qualifications (%) Difference
Caldicot School	12.8%	0.0	0.5	-0.5
Chepstow Comprehensive School	10.1%	0.0	0.7	-0.7
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	22.1%	0.6	0.5	0.0
Monmouth Comprehensive School	9.9%	1.1	0.7	0.4

Two schools have no learners leaving without a qualification. One school however has 1.1% of learners not achieving a qualification which is 50% higher than their family average.

5+ A\*-A – compared with the Family average

School Name	FSM	5+ A*-A (%)	5+ A*-A (%) Family	5+ A*-A (%) Difference
Caldicot School	12.8%	25.5	26.2	-0.7
Chepstow Comprehensive School	10.1%	41.9	25.1	16.8
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	22.1%	25.6	18.8	6.8
Monmouth Comprehensive School	9.9%	28.1	25.1	3.0

Three schools 5+ A\*-A percentage are above the family average, one significantly so. One school's rate is slightly less than the family average.

Since the re-introduction of the AWCDs in 2024 local authority level data has been produced. However, there are no comparative positions with other local authorities instead there is a comparison to modelled outcomes. The full details of Monmouthshire's performance can be found in Appendix 7. Monmouthshire outperforms its expected level in every measure apart from the science indicator that is 0.1 points below the expected level.

## The impact of teaching and leadership on pupils' standards and progress

Overall, based on inspection outcomes since May 2022 and the review of a range of first-hand evidence by School Improvement Partners (SIPs) many primary schools within Monmouthshire consistently ensure that there is sufficient challenge for learners through high quality teaching which impacts positively on pupils' learning, sustaining high standards. In these schools, many pupils take responsibility for their own learning and make strong and steady progress. Within these schools, most pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress from their starting point.

In a minority of schools, practice to further ensure challenge and effective differentiation to meet the needs of learners is developing appropriately. In most of these schools, the SDP has identified these elements of teaching as a priority for further improvement. This is either being suitably addressed this year or is planned for the new academic year.

In a few schools, improvements in the quality of teaching that provides suitable challenge and meets the needs of all learners still requires attention to secure improved outcomes for all pupils. In nearly all cases, these schools are currently accessing targeted or intensive support through the Team Around the School approach and are being well supported by the authority and partners to secure improvements in the key areas of leadership, and teaching and learning.

First-hand evidence from SIPs indicate that many Monmouthshire schools provide consistently strong digital learning experiences. Pupils are making good progress in applying digital skills, supported by well-planned curricula that integrate technology across Areas of Learning and Experience (AoLEs). Learners confidently use a range of digital tools, understand their purpose, and take pride in their work.

Where practice is strongest, digital leadership is strategic and well-coordinated. Schools map digital skills across the curriculum, evaluate progress through Monitoring, Evaluation and Review (MER) processes, and use data to inform staff development. However, around half of schools report staff confidence and knowledge as barriers to digital development. These are being addressed through targeted professional learning. In a few schools, tracking of digital skills remains underdeveloped. Overall, the system reflects a growing maturity in digital provision, with strong examples of pupil leadership, inclusive practice, and curriculum innovation.

#### Youth Employment and Skills -STEM Programme

*This has been implemented with funding from the Welsh Government and UK Government Shared Prosperity Fund and will further develop collaboration between schools, community and local businesses. The programme will develop excitement in STEM and benefit our children and young people's curriculum and learning opportunities and future pathways. In the past year funding has been secured to appoint a STEM Coordinator alongside a significant investment of £625k for STEM Equipment for our Primary and Secondary Schools and Pupil Referral Service. Currently rolling out equipment alongside an exciting package of training, with competitions, engagement events and activities planned across the next year.*

#### Post-16 pathways

Monmouthshire's post-16 Network has engaged with E-sgol, the Welsh Government's collaborative learning partner, to support the more equitable availability of post-16 academic courses across our schools. Our collaborative post-16 Network approaches the end of its first year with the successful delivery of four courses, not previously consistently available across all four of our sixth forms. As these courses move into their A2 year we look forward to welcoming a new cohort in September 2025.

We have engaged with directorates across the council, our schools and further stakeholders, to develop post-16 Pathways to Employment programmes in Sport, Leisure, Play and Childcare. These innovative courses, based both in schools and in the workplace, have been offered as part of the sixth form curriculum for 2025-26. A Childcare course will be in place in the north of the county for the 2025/26 academic year, based in King Henry VIII 3-19 School. Students following the Childcare programme will have the opportunity to be placed in a range of provisions, including Welsh speaking settings, as part of their course. Several learners have expressed an interest in taking up placements in these settings.

#### NEET Prevention Strategy November 2024

We have developed a new NEET Prevention Strategy to prevent young people ending up without education, training or employment, ensuring better outcomes and opportunities for our young people. The strategy demonstrates our commitment as a Council to address NEET prevention in the county to create better opportunities and outcomes for our young people, through collaborative work with our valued stakeholders. We have supported 10 NEET young people into employment, which is fewer than our target. There is reduced capacity across the NEET Prevention team, funded by SPF, to support all young people at risk of NEET. The team is reliant on referrals from those most in need of support. There have been increases in the number of Year 11 and Year 13 leavers, not in education, employment or training. Whilst we have low numbers of young people with unknown destinations (Tier 1), the sharp increase in Year 11 leavers who are NEET to 3.1% is

concerning. Provision at Post 16 remains a key priority alongside early intervention for young people identified as at risk of NEET. Following the publication of the data, work is currently ongoing to track journeys and identify potential areas of improvement with partners. This work will be a priority for the wider Children, Learning, Skills and Economy team in the coming year. The integration of the Youth Service alongside the developmental work to include more Level 2 qualifications at post-16 stage will allow for more learning pathways to be developed.

### Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP)

We have made steady progress in expanding Welsh-medium education. Early years provision increased, with 3-year-old participation rising from 6.45% to 8.58%, and a new Welsh-medium school, Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy, opened in 2024. Reception and Year 1 learners in Welsh-medium education also grew, with projections showing continued upward trends.

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.

Late immersion support reached seven primary pupils, including two from minority ethnic backgrounds. Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni is enhancing its provision ahead of relocating in 2025, which will increase capacity to 420. Plans for a Welsh-medium secondary school are under discussion with neighbouring local authorities.

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. Transition rates from Year 6 to Year 7 improved from 50% to 62%, supported by cluster planning, youth engagement, and immersion support. The Year 11 uptake of GCSE Welsh Second Language in Monmouthshire's secondary schools was 84%. The introduction of E-ysgol is supporting the expansion of A Level Welsh Second Language provision well, and post-16 pathways now include Welsh-medium childcare placements.

All primary schools and 50% of secondary schools participate in Cymraeg Campus. Siarter Iaith is active in three Welsh-medium primaries. Schools engage in Welsh-language activities through Urdd events, residentials, and cultural celebrations. The Youth Service made over 1,200 youth contacts made through Urdd-led clubs and trips, with new clubs launched in Caldicot and Abergavenny.

ALN provision was reviewed, identifying resource gaps and leading to investment in Welsh-language materials. Autism training is now available in Welsh, with more resources launching in autumn 2025. Regional collaboration continues to strengthen provision.

Workforce planning identified the need for one headteacher, three teachers, and three teaching assistants. Development is supported through leadership training, sabbatical schemes, and collaboration with ITE providers and the National Centre for Learning Welsh. All clusters have sabbatical-trained staff, and SWAC data is used to monitor progress.



## A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs

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As a local authority we have an overarching responsibility to be inclusive and support all of our learners, but we also have a clear ambition to provide additional support to those who need it – for whatever reason. Before setting out our actions to support learners in some specific groups there are two areas of activity for all learners: safeguarding and developing a whole school approach to emotional and mental health.

### Supporting Vulnerable Learners

#### Safeguarding

This has been an intensive period of activity. Currently, working with colleagues in the Safeguarding Unit, we are implementing The National Safeguarding Training Standards and Framework across all areas. This has included a review of all school and corporate education posts to determine which level of safeguarding training is necessary. As identified above reported incidents of HSB continue to increase. Consequently, Children's Services are now undertaking HSB strategy meetings, which provide a helpful multi-agency platform to understand and manage risk factors. Training needs were considered and a tiered approach to training around HSB, child sexual abuse and how education practitioners can work with and support children who are harmed and children who harm was developed and cascaded across education settings and CLSE colleagues. The feedback has been positive, the aim being to ensure that school and corporate colleagues can develop the knowledge and skills to identify and support these risk factors appropriately.

#### School Health Research Network (SHRN)

Collaborative approaches to use of the School Health Research Network (SHRN) data continue to impact positively on health and wellbeing provision in schools. For example, introduction of C Card scheme (condom distribution scheme) in all 4 secondary schools with support from ABUHB, increased collaboration with Monmouthshire's Sports Development Team and an increase in cluster physical activity opportunities in one cluster and development of effective practice in transition guidance for early years and school settings. The impact of these will be reviewed when the primary authority wide SHRN data is received in Autumn 2025 and secondary SHRN data in Spring 2026.

The use of SHRN data to review health and wellbeing curriculum planning is embedded within primary and secondary schools. Cluster approaches to collaborative working have been a focus during this academic year, cluster action plans have driven this work, and this approach will continue into 2025/6. The healthy settings team have shared effective practice during a national SHRN webinar and have provided a case study for the SHRN website. [Case Studies - The School Health Research Network](#)

## Additional Learning Needs

Monmouthshire continues to prioritise inclusive education for children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN), aiming to support learners within mainstream schools and local communities wherever possible. We have maintained our commitment to equipping both mainstream schools and Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) with the necessary training and resources to meet diverse learner needs.

Annual reports presented to the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee in 2024 and 2025 highlighted progress in the Additional Learning Provision (ALP) review and the effectiveness of support for vulnerable learners. A well-attended Members Seminar in September 2024 further reinforced the importance of ALN and SRB development.

In line with the Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act 2018, Monmouthshire is on track to transition all learners from the previous SEN system to the new ALN framework by August 2025. A key achievement has been the reduction in the number of pupils placed in out-of-county specialist provision, saving over £1.1 million since 2022.

A bi-annual review employs a self-evaluation model to review ALP sufficiency, supported by ongoing quality assurance at school, cluster, and authority levels. ALN Coordinators (ALNCos) participate in termly forums and cluster meetings, supported by a new training programme and the Inclusion Service's professional learning offer. The SPOT (Specialist Provision and Outreach Team) Network continues to support SRBs, including the development of the King Henry VIII 3–19 SRB and planned primary satellite provision in the Caldicot cluster.

SRB action plans, reviewed termly, show progress toward consistent, equitable provision across the county. A Partnership Agreement between the LA and host schools clarifies roles and responsibilities, enhancing collaboration. A second ALP review in spring 2025 confirmed SRBs' alignment with inclusion goals and integration into whole-school development. SRBs offer tailored, multi-sensory curricula, strong community engagement, and successful post-16 pathways that promote independence and functional skills.

Future plans include reviewing SRB funding models; refining curriculum offers and strengthening collaboration with health-based therapy services. SRBs will also embed good autism practice using the Autism Education Trust (AET) frameworks and support transitions at post-16, 18, and 19 stages in line with the emerging Post-16 Strategy.

Mainstream ALN provision is underpinned by a continuous cycle of quality assurance. Cluster collaboration has led to consistent practices, including exemplar Individual Development Plans (IDPs), annual review templates, and provision pyramids. Twelve primary schools have undergone supported self-evaluation reviews, with all expected to participate over two years. Feedback has been positive, highlighting the value of focusing on ALN within broader school improvement.

Most schools have implemented the ALNET Act effectively, with ALNCos in place and tracking systems established. However, variation remains in IDP quality and ALNCo release time. Staff demonstrate strong knowledge of pupil needs and provide reasonable adjustments despite budget constraints. Recommendations include embedding ALN in school improvement processes, aligning ALN and wellbeing strategies, and enhancing evidence-based interventions.

In secondary schools, self-evaluation reviews show strong understanding of ALN systems. Most schools produce high-quality IDPs and use ALN budgets effectively. Key areas for development include paperwork consistency, clarity of ALNCo roles, and ongoing professional learning. Headteachers have responded by reviewing ALNCo roles and remission, and ALNCos continue to collaborate through half-termly meetings.

A review of Welsh-medium ALN provision in 2024 identified a national shortfall in Welsh-language resources. In response, targeted investment and the formation of a Welsh-medium ALNCo group have been initiated. The Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings (MASS) Programme ensures training materials and frameworks are available in Welsh, supporting inclusive practice.

Overall, Monmouthshire's statutory review process has identified a need to strengthen provision for primary-aged pupils with social, emotional, and mental health needs, particularly those with neurodivergence. These insights will guide future planning, professional learning, and resource allocation to ensure all learners receive the support they need to thrive.

### The partnership with the Autism Education Trust

*The partnership with the Autism Education Trust has led to the creation of Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings (MASS), focusing on training delivery, autism champions, and pupil panels. Pupil panels in secondary schools share their views to shape provision and practice, embedding lived experience messages into training and resources. Each school and setting has an identified autism champion, with termly network meetings to embed good autism practice through standards and competencies frameworks.*

*During 2024/25, the 'Making Sense of Autism' module was delivered to 27 schools, the Pupil Referral Service, and 38 out of 44 childcare settings. Training was also provided to various services and senior LA officers. Feedback highlights the impact and opportunities to refine practice for autistic children and young people:*

*94% agreed the training was appropriate to the Welsh education system.*

*95% gained a higher understanding of autistic children's strengths and needs.*

*95% felt more confident supporting autistic children.*

*92% gained a more extensive range of strategies to support autistic children.*

*Reflections on the training include understanding autistic perspectives, learning new terminology, and considering barriers to learning. Staff plan to celebrate differences, consider the class environment from the pupil's perspective, and celebrate autism strengths. The focus for 2025/26 is to refine the Good Autism Practice training and roll it out to staff in schools and settings.*

## Addressing Poverty and Supporting Learners Eligible for Free School Meals

Monmouthshire schools have made significant strides in addressing the impact of poverty through tailored, community-focused approaches. Nearly all schools have revised their vision, policies, and curriculum to better meet the needs of their pupils and families. Following TAP training, most schools conducted parent surveys to identify local needs, leading to initiatives such as on-site food banks, cookery workshops, and parent engagement groups.

There is a shared commitment across schools to raise aspirations and support wellbeing, with poverty reduction embedded in school development plans. Schools increasingly collaborate with external agencies like CAMHS, EBSA, and local charities to provide holistic support. Many have adapted policies to reduce financial strain, including uniform recycling, low-cost trips, and simplified fundraising.

Curriculum adaptations reflect pupil needs, with pupil voice and learning reviews informing planning. Schools like Osbaston VC Primary have empowered vulnerable groups through leadership roles, while others, such as Usk Church in Wales Primary, have embedded financial literacy into the curriculum.

Many Monmouthshire schools are taking strategic, inclusive, and community-focused approaches to mitigate the impact of poverty on learners. A majority of primary and secondary schools have embedded planning to support socio-economically disadvantaged pupils, with many demonstrating good or better progress among these learners. Schools that have engaged with the TAP training and resources such as “Supporting Vulnerable Learners” and “Thinking Differently” have adopted holistic strategies that integrate curriculum, extracurricular activities, family engagement, and financial support.

King Henry VIII 3-19 School exemplifies this approach, working with the Child Poverty Action Group to identify cost-related barriers and implementing changes such as free trips, uniform support, and financial signposting. Similarly, Castle Park Primary uses the RADY programme to identify and support disadvantaged learners through tailored interventions.

Estyn reports since 2022 highlight effective use of the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) across many schools, funding initiatives that enhance wellbeing, basic skills, and engagement. Examples include musical tuition, literacy and numeracy interventions, and nurture activities for young carers. Schools like Gilwern Primary have improved financial efficiency through shared bursar roles, while others like Trellech and Kymin View have introduced uniform swap shops and free breakfast schemes.

Strong parental and community engagement is a hallmark of many schools. Initiatives include family learning events, workshops, and community hubs like Castle Park’s “Community Cwtch.” Schools such as Kymin View and Llandogo Primary foster inclusive environments by understanding and responding to local needs.

Attendance remains a key focus, with schools implementing both direct and indirect strategies to improve it, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. King Henry VIII 3-19 School has seen a 6% improvement in Year 7 attendance. Schools are also evaluating their impact through data on attendance, wellbeing, and academic progress.

Overall, Monmouthshire schools are increasingly recognising the importance of a coordinated, strategic approach to tackling poverty, with leadership playing a critical role in driving positive change.

### Children Looked After (CLA) learners

By June 2025 all 35 schools had received the 'CLA Friendly, CLA Ready' whole school awareness training. This training highlights the ways in which these learners can achieve their potential if their TrACE (Trauma and Adverse childhood experiences) history is understood. It also covers awareness raising of the cross directorate *Eliminate* agenda around profit and not for profit foster carers and our wider corporate parent obligations and aspirations to support care experienced learners into adulthood. Positive feedback analysis shows that participants welcomed the training and felt it covered new and important topics for them to be better placed to support both current and former CLA learners but also those learners with vulnerabilities but not formally in care.

Since August 2024, the additional capacity to support the Looked After Children Education Coordinator (LACE) role has meant improved compliance in relation to the number of CLA learners with suitable and up to date Personal Education Plans (PEP).

The continued half termly online forum for Designated CLA Leads helps to promote and prioritise the needs of CLA learners, provides relevant updates from the Welsh Government and shares good practice.

### Developing Anti-Racism in Caldicot

The Caldicot cluster of schools recognised a gap in their understanding of what it means to be an anti-racist school. This prompted a collective decision to use their cluster grant to engage work collaboratively with an external consultant to deepen their understanding of anti-racism—clarifying what it is, what it isn't, and how to embed it meaningfully in their schools.

Each school approached the review differently: some began with pupil engagement, others examined existing school practices or involved parents. A shared realisation emerged—true change would require substantial shifts and courageous conversations across the entire school community. This insight became a powerful motivator for action.

The collaborative nature of the project fostered openness and mutual support. Staff shared their experiences, challenges, and learning at a county hall event, reinforcing a collective commitment to long-term change. The initiative has empowered individuals and school communities, acting as a catalyst for broader transformation within the local authority.

This work marks a pivotal step in embedding anti-racism into education, ensuring future generations benefit from inclusive, globally aware learning environments.

### Trauma-Informed and EBSA Approaches

Monmouthshire has prioritised the development of whole-school systems to support young people through universal, preventative EBSA strategies and trauma-informed practices. A key focus has been building a confident, skilled education workforce, particularly in supporting autistic learners, through initiatives like the MASS programme and the Trauma Informed Practice Skills and Strategies (TIPSS) professional learning programme. TIPSS, developed in collaboration with Traumatic Stress Wales and ACEs Hub Wales, aligns with the national Trauma-Informed Wales Framework.

TIPSS training has been delivered to four primary schools and the Education Welfare Service, with enhanced training offered to ELSAs and professionals already trained in trauma-informed practice. Supervision is now available for all TIPSS-trained staff. Tools such as the EBSA Provision Pyramid and Graduated Response Flow Diagram have been introduced to promote consistent support for pupils experiencing EBSA. The rollout of EBSA guidance and professional learning has improved schools' ability to identify and respond to EBSA.

Schools and services are increasingly adopting trauma-informed approaches and language, as seen in Inclusion Panel submissions. Evaluation of the TIPSS pilot showed significant improvements in staff confidence and understanding, with 93% of participants reaching the highest confidence level in understanding trauma's impact.

Next steps include refining TIPSS programmes, refreshing and updating our guidance and resources, and expanding training access. The rollout of EBSA guidance and professional

learning has improved schools' ability to identify and respond to EBSA. The newly formed Inclusion Network will support the sharing of best practice, including EBSA and trauma informed pathways and processes.

Overall, Monmouthshire's integrated approach is fostering a more responsive, informed, and supportive educational environment for children and young people.

### Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA)

The ELSA programme continues to be led and delivered by Educational Psychologists.

Currently Monmouthshire has around 78 active ELSAs across schools, settings and services. In Autumn 2024, a further ELSA Initial Training course was offered and fourteen new ELSAs were trained. In December 2024 (on completion of this Initial ELSA training course) all MCC schools, and the PRS had at least one active ELSA.

Feedback from Headteachers (summer 2024) showed that all respondents agreed or strongly agreed that ELSAs positively impacted the wellbeing of targeted pupils.

High quality Initial ELSA Training and ongoing supervision will continue to be offered by the Education Psychology Service( EPS) with the aim of maintaining at least one ELSA in each school; Schools have indicated that there is a need for further ELSAs to be trained in 2025-26, therefore initial ELSA training will take place in Autumn 2025, alongside an ELSA professional learning event.



## Continue our programme of school modernisation.

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### King Henry VIII 3-19 School progress

The new King Henry VIII 3-19 school opened in September 2023 and for the first 18 months operated on two different sites which was challenging especially when establishing a new school. Phase 1 of the construction project was completed in April 2025 and the school moved into the new building, on one site, at the start of the summer term 2025.

The new school building is approximately 15,800 m<sup>2</sup> and consists of two buildings connected by a 'street' enabling pupils and staff to share resources as well as exclusive areas ensuring safeguarding of all pupils.

Phase 2 of the project commenced immediately after the original schools were vacated and involves demolition of the old secondary building and construction of new 3G pitches, hockey pitch, Multi Use Games Area, and playing fields.

The total cost of the project is £63m and has been funded in partnership with Welsh Government Sustainable Communities for Learning grant funding.

The primary phase building (formally Deri View primary school) is being repurposed, and Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will relocate to the site as part of the Council's plan to increase Welsh medium education in the north of the County. Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni will occupy their new building from September 2025. This project is also funded under the Sustainable Communities for Learning Funding

### Welsh-medium expansion (Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy)

Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy was established and opened in September 2024. The school shares a site with Overmonnow Primary School in Monmouth. They have exclusive classrooms; however, they have a shared hall, dining room, and external play facilities.

The school has a capacity of 60 and currently has 24 on roll, including 15 in nursery. The school continues to grow and the anticipated number on roll for September 2025 is 29, including 9 in the nursery. This increased number on roll for September has meant that the school needs to expand into a second classroom.

The school also provides nursery education and wraparound childcare.

### Chepstow area review

Following the completion of Phase 1 of King Henry 3-19 School, a member working group is being established to look at education provision in the Chepstow area.

Currently there are a significant number of surplus places within the Chepstow cluster. The primary sector has 249 surplus places within the primary schools (18%) and is projected to

increase. Whilst the secondary school has 418 surplus places (32.6%). And this level of surplus places is likely to increase further over the next 6 years.

Welsh Government recommend that “where there are more than 10% surplus places in an area, local authorities should review their provision and should make proposals for school re-organisation if this will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of provision.

Some work has been undertaken to look at various options for the Chepstow school site and the opportunities for the development of the site, taking into consideration the well-used Leisure Centre which is currently attached to the existing school.

An educational review has been undertaken with Chepstow School and the cluster of primary schools. The purpose of the review was to capture the current journey and future aspirations of Chepstow school in areas such as culture, ethos, curriculum and pedagogy, inclusion and wellbeing, sustainability and community.

Both pieces of work mentioned above will inform part of the determinations of the working group.

## Early years and childcare developments

Busy Bodies Playgroup moved into their purpose-built accommodation in February 2025. The construction of a new nursery on the Trellech Primary School site was funded by the Welsh Government Childcare & Early Years Capital Grant. The investment has provided the nursery with a more certain future and provides them with a fit for purpose building to deliver high quality early education and wrap around childcare. It also enables them to have a closer working relationship with their feeder school and provides a smoother transition process for the children moving from the playgroup into the reception class.

Flying Start has consistently provides high-quality, fully funded childcare in deprived areas. Attendance for Monmouthshire's most deprived two-year-olds rose from 80% to 89% in 2025. Regular attendance offers intensive developmental support, enhancing cognitive, social, and emotional growth. Activities boost language, motor skills, and social interactions early on. This early intervention helps identify and address developmental delays, promoting school readiness and better long-term outcomes. Improved attendance at childcare may also lead to better school attendance when children start school.

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.

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 the Welsh Government in Summer 2025. The development of an additional Cylch Meithrin has not progressed as planned due to a lack of suitable accommodation in Monmouth. 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.

## Financial and Operational Risks

### Budget pressures and school deficits

The 2024-25 outturn for schools has an overall deficit balance of £4.1m, with 15 schools in deficit. This is an improvement of £2m from month 9 forecast; the improvement is due to several grants from the Welsh Government being received in the last quarter.

Where schools are in a deficit, a recovery plan is agreed with the Local Authority and dependent on the level of deficit these plans may allow up to 10 years to recover. All significant deficits are discussed and agreed with the cabinet members for both education and resources.

School budgets are a significant concern, during the 2025-26 budget process £1m was invested in schools above pay and non-pay inflation, however even after this, it is projected that the collective deficit will increase to £6.8m with 20 schools in deficit.

In the recent 2024/25 statistic release from the Welsh Government, Monmouthshire's funding per pupil was the lowest in Wales at £5,157, the average being £5,736. However, in the latest Welsh Government statistics<sup>4</sup> the decision to increase schools' funding for the 2025/26 year sees Monmouthshire move above the average for the first time in eight years. There will remain pressures on all schools' budgets in the coming period as inflationary pressures in pay and non-pay expenditure continue. We will work closely with schools and corporate colleagues to manage these pressures and to provide support to schools to manage their costs more effectively.

Central cost centres reported an underspend of £26k, an improvement of £322k on month 9, again this is due to the number of Welsh Government grants received in the final quarter.

ALN remains the highest risk area, with the level of need and support increasing. The work set above means that we have a well-developed tracking system to identify future needs and to ensure that our provision is matched to these. However, as seen across Wales (and the recent developments in England) the pressures in the ALN arena are likely to remain in the long term as higher levels of need are identified.

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<sup>4</sup> [Local authority budgeted expenditure on schools: April 2025 to March 2026 \[HTML\] | GOV.WALES](#)

### School places

We continue to monitor the numbers on roll across our primary and secondary schools and respond appropriately to ensure our that our provision of school places is sufficient and sustainable. Secondary school numbers collectively show a stable position over the last 5 years, recording 4801 in mainstream provision in the January 2025 PLASC submission. Unfortunately, we do not anticipate this trend to continue over coming years with year 6 cohort numbers decreasing over the next 5 years which will undoubtedly impact on the numbers attending our three secondary schools and the secondary phase of the through school in Abergavenny.

The January 2025 PLASC recorded 6,021 young people on roll in our primary schools, which is a 3% reduction from the 6250 recorded in January 2020. The live birth data supplied by Aneurin Bevan University Health Board suggests that we can expect a continued fall in primary intake numbers over the next 3 years, which will be challenging for our schools.

The proposals outlined within the Council's proposed Replacement Local Development Plan are likely to have a positive impact on the numbers on roll across our schools, and we are working closely with planning colleagues, schools and the community to ensure that our provision over the coming years is appropriate.

### Grant dependency

Grant funding is a significant area for the directorate with over half the posts funded via a grant. This can lead to funding being withdrawn at short notice with the directorate either having to lose the posts or find alternate funding. In addition to this, some service areas are put at risk where grant funding is withdrawn, leaving funding shortfalls for community projects supporting residents.

### Transport

The home-to-school transport service and budget are managed in the Infrastructure Directorate. The Children, Learning, Skills and Economy Directorate is responsible for the management of the ALN Transport budget. Given the rurality of Monmouthshire this is significant, the current budget for ALN transport is £2.5m and there is a pressure added each year to support the service. Monmouthshire's strategy to try to meet pupils' needs close to their communities has helped to minimise these costs, however it remains an area of risk.

## Management of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund

In the course of the year the directorate has taken on responsibility for the management of the final transitionary year of the UK Government's Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). This is highlighted in this report because there are natural alignments to the skills agenda and the work with young people. It is also noted because this work was significant for the team in year as they had to manage a significant funding reduction.

### Shared Prosperity Funding 2024/25

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a national funding programme to replace EU Structural Funds, administered at a local level as part of a 'regional investment plan' for the Cardiff Capital Region. The scope of the fund is wide range, but broadly covers community and place-based interventions, support to local businesses and economic development, and employability and skills growth. The original programme commenced in January 2023 and concluded at the end of March 2025 with 45 schemes supported to deliver local interventions of varying scales. Delivery was undertaken by a combination of in-house projects and working with local partners. The fund recorded over 100,000 "reaches", supported 507 organisations and 894 enterprises with non-financial support, engaged over 1000 people in life skills or basic skills courses, and supported almost 500 people to gain new qualifications, licenses or skills, amongst a range of other defined outputs and outcomes. Alongside this, the fund facilitated delivery of a range of non-measurable benefits to communities, businesses and residents.

The local authority experienced a real-terms reduction to its UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation of 46%, when comparing 2024/25 to the 2025/26 "Transition Year", and an increased capital spend requirement of 27% of the fund total. The timing of the announcement of the funding, along with delays to the release of technical information for the transition year, meant that there was an incredibly condensed window within which a local investment plan could be developed towards the end of the financial year. A draft plan was produced following consideration of continuation proposals from within the existing programme, avoiding the cessation of all existing activity at the end of March 2025. In addition, a small amount of funding was retained to deliver a "call-out" for funding proposals to deliver short-term interventions during the 2025/26 financial year.

### UK government Shared Prosperity Funding 2022 -2025

Coordination of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was a key strategic priority for 2024/25, ensuring the opportunity for the fund presented was maximised. Effective utilisation of the grant was essential in demonstrating both the need for and capacity to deliver local priorities through this type of funding ahead of wider funding reform in 2025. The fund supported over 40 projects during the year and was embedded within project and service delivery across a range of local authority departments and partner organisations. These activities both supported and complimented local service delivery and were intertwined

with a broad range of strategic objectives from the Community and Corporate Plan and Service Business Plans. Without intervention from UKSPF, progress against a number of these key objectives would have been significantly hindered, reduced, or completely lost, in addition to significant impacts on a range of other local strategies and action plans.

## Conclusions and Closing Thoughts

This report has sought to provide all Councillors with a view of how our education system is performing. As I state in my introductory comments it is not intended to be all encompassing, recognising every success or addressing every risk that we face but rather it is intended to provide a level of assurance and clarity for the reader.

Through the report there are areas of strong practice; the performance of our schools in external examinations, the attendance of pupils in primary school and the progress that learners make, that is evident in our schools. Our work to support vulnerable learners and promote the wellbeing of all our learners should also be noted.

The delivery of Wales' first operationally net-zero carbon school in Abergavenny is an achievement that should be celebrated. The change in the provision to a through school offers the chance to enhance the opportunities in the most socio-economically disadvantaged part of the County. The school has the potential to be transformative for its learners.

However, the report also identifies the risks that we face and some specific challenges. We can still make further progress in our school-based performance and our continued focus on excellence in the classroom will remain. The performance of our children eligible for free school meals remains (and will always be) a priority. This now also extends to their attendance in school. We are also seeing changes in the range of children's needs present in our schools. Children with neuro-development needs are now the most significant group of ALN learners but we are also seeing the emergence of a cohort of younger children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. The provision for these learners will need to be monitored and potentially enhanced in the coming period.

The challenge for the directorate is to balance a number of competing priorities and we will continue to work closely with our schools in an open and honest way to meet that challenge. The way in which the schools have started the journey to becoming a self-supporting and self-improving system is a positive development.

A risk that underlies all the considerations of educational provision noted above is that of funding. School's budgets are under pressure and that brings pressure on school leaders. Fortunately, the investment in the 2025/26 budget should alleviate some of those challenges but it is likely to require enhanced funding in the future. This will be set against challenging public finances and competing priorities within this Council too.

I will close the report by recognising that none of the achievements recognised, nor the actions taken to mitigate the risks that have been identified, would have been possible without the time and energy of a host of professionals across Monmouthshire. Colleagues in our schools, within the authority and in our partners work tirelessly to ensure that our learners and young people, from our very youngest children supported by Flying Start to our learners preparing themselves for university, apprenticeships and the world of work at the end of their school careers are as well supported and cared for as they can be. I am

***Achieving more together, with fairness and ambition***

grateful that every day I have the opportunity to work with such a group of committed and talented colleagues.



## Appendix 1 - Glossary

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ALN	Additional Learning Needs
ALNCO	ALN Coordinator
ALNET	Additional Learning Needs Education Tribunal Act
ALP	Additional Learning Provision
AOLE	Areas of Learning and experience
CLA	Children Looked After
EAL/ML	English as an Additional Language/Multi-lingual
EBSA	Emotionally Based School Avoidance
eFSM	Eligible Free School Meals
EHE	Elective Home Educated
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
EPS	Educational Psychology Service
EWS	Education Welfare Service
FSM	Free School Meals
IDP	Individual Development Plan
LACE	Looked After Children in Education Officer
LOSIE	Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Education
MASS	Monmouthshire Autism in Schools and Settings
MEP	Monitoring Evaluation Process
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PRS	Pupil Referral Service
RSE	Relationship and Sex Education
RVE	Religious and Values Education
SHRN	School Health Research Network

TIPSS	Trauma Informed Practice Skills & Strategy
TRACE	Trauma and Adverse childhood experiences
VLL	Vulnerable Learners Lead

## Appendix 2 – The Evidence Base

Estyn outcomes (since May 2022) – school and local authority	Outcomes of SIP Supported Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation summaries	SDP priorities	All local authority Evaluative Impact Reports (EIR)
17 inspection reports	All Schools	22 summaries	All Schools	7 EIRs
<p>Based on the recommendations and areas for improvement highlighted in the seventeen inspection reports for Monmouthshire schools, strategic priorities for the local authority could include:</p> <p><b>Strengthening the quality, focus, and impact of school self-evaluation and improvement planning processes</b>, identified as a need in a majority of reports</p> <p>Improving the <b>consistency and quality of teaching</b>,</p>	<p><b>Improvement of Teaching and Learning Quality and Consistency</b> ensuring that teaching is consistently good, supporting and challenging pupils of all abilities.</p> <p><b>Developing Skills, Particularly Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Skills</b>, including ensuring they have opportunities to apply these skills effectively across the curriculum. Specifically, raising standards and providing opportunities for literacy, numeracy, and digital (ICT) skills.</p> <p><b>Strengthening Self-</b></p>	<p><b>Improving pupils' skills in key areas, particularly Welsh language, literacy numeracy and digital competency.</b></p> <p><b>Strengthening the quality and consistency of teaching and learning</b>, including challenge for all learners and effective feedback.</p> <p><b>Developing leadership capacity at all levels, including middle leaders and governors</b>, to drive school improvement.</p>	<p><b>Improving teaching and learning</b> to ensure high-quality teaching, develop pupils' skills and promote independent learning.</p> <p><b>Developing leadership at all levels.</b></p> <p><b>Developing assessment and self-evaluation processes</b> to effectively monitor pupil progress.</p> <p><b>Improving attendance and fostering pupils' social, emotional, and mental wellbeing.</b></p>	<p><b>Improve the quality and consistency of teaching</b>, focusing on challenge, differentiation, and high expectations and explicit planning for skills progression across the curriculum. Leadership needs to ensure this consistency.</p> <p><b>Strengthen leadership capacity and effectiveness</b>, especially for middle and senior leaders, enabling them to drive school improvement and conduct robust self-evaluation, monitoring, and quality assurance.</p>

Estyn outcomes (since May 2022) – school and local authority	Outcomes of SIP Supported Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation summaries	SDP priorities	All local authority Evaluative Impact Reports (EIR)
<p>ensuring appropriate challenge, effective feedback, and fostering independent learning, noted in <b>a majority</b> of reports.</p> <p>Enhancing <b>pupils' skills development</b>, focusing on application across the curriculum and progressive skill-building, an issue in <b>around half</b> of reports.</p> <p>Improving <b>pupils' Welsh language skills</b> and confidence, particularly spoken Welsh in informal situations and understanding culture, highlighted in <b>around half</b> of reports</p> <p>Developing provision to support <b>pupils'</b></p>	<p><b>Evaluation and Improvement Processes</b> improving the rigor and effectiveness of their self-evaluation and monitoring processes. This often includes ensuring these processes accurately identify areas for development, focus on the impact on pupil progress and learning, and involve staff, leaders, governors, and sometimes parents and pupils.</p> <p><b>Developing Leadership at All Levels</b> There is a recurring need to develop leadership capacity, distribution, and effectiveness across schools, including senior, middle, and aspiring leaders.</p> <p><b>Improving Attendance</b> Several schools identify</p>	<p><b>Refining self-evaluation and improvement planning processes</b> to ensure they accurately identify impact on pupil outcomes.</p> <p><b>Addressing specific areas impacting pupil progress and well-being, such as attendance, provision for ALN</b>, and the use of the outdoor learning environment.</p>	<p><b>Enhancing the curriculum</b>, including through the development of digital skills and Welsh language development.</p>	<p><b>Enhance assessment practices</b>, including improving marking and feedback, promoting self and peer assessment, and improving questioning techniques.</p> <p><b>Develop pupils' independent learning skills and resilience</b>, providing opportunities for purposeful independent and collaborative work and reducing over-reliance on adult support.</p> <p><b>Ensure targeted and effective support for vulnerable learners by, maximising</b> resources like the PDG grant and implementing evidenced based strategies to address</p>

Estyn outcomes (since May 2022) – school and local authority	Outcomes of SIP Supported Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation summaries	SDP priorities	All local authority Evaluative Impact Reports (EIR)
<p><b>independent learning</b> and improving the quality and consistency of <b>feedback</b> to help pupils improve their work, noted as areas for development or recommendation in a <b>minority</b> of reports</p>	<p>attendance as an area requiring improvement, sometimes with a specific focus on analysing data effectively or addressing attendance for particular groups like those eligible for free school meals.</p> <p><b>Enhancing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Provision</b> Strengthening provision for pupils with ALN is a focus, including meeting statutory obligations, tracking progress, and ensuring appropriate support and resources. Developing staff understanding of specific needs.</p> <p><b>Improving Assessment and Feedback</b> Schools are working on improving assessment strategies, such as assessment for learning, and strengthening feedback</p>			<p>barriers, improve wellbeing, and accelerate progress.</p>

Estyn outcomes (since May 2022) – school and local authority	Outcomes of SIP Supported Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation summaries	SDP priorities	All local authority Evaluative Impact Reports (EIR)
	<p>processes to ensure they are effective in helping pupils understand how to improve their work. Providing opportunities for pupils to engage in self and peer assessment is also an area of focus.</p> <p><b>Developing Pupils' Independent Learning Skills</b> Providing opportunities for pupils to develop independence and resilience in their learning is a recurring theme.</p> <p><b>Progressive Development of Welsh Language Skills</b> Numerous schools are working on improving pupils' Welsh language skills, particularly spoken Welsh or oracy, and ensuring opportunities to use Welsh across the curriculum or in everyday</p>			

Estyn outcomes (since May 2022) – school and local authority	Outcomes of SIP Supported Self-Evaluation	Self-evaluation summaries	SDP priorities	All local authority Evaluative Impact Reports (EIR)
	situations.			

## Appendix 3 - Primary School Attendance by School 1<sup>st</sup> September 2024 to 21<sup>st</sup> February 2025

Schools above 95%	Schools below 95% and above 93%	Schools below 93% and above 90%
ARW	Castle Park	Cross Ash
Cantref	Dewstow	Kymin View
Goytre	Durand	Llandogo
Llanvihangel	Gilwern	Pembroke*
Osbaston	Llanfoist	Thornwell
Raglan	Magor	King Henry
Shirenewton	OLSM	
The Dell	Overmonnow*	
Trellech	Rogiet	
	St Mary's	
	Undy	
	Y Fenni	
	Y Ffin	

NB: \* Schools with an SRB

Numbers in Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy are too small to be meaningful at this point.



## Appendix 4 – The Education Welfare Service Graduated Response

<b>Model School Graduated response to improving attendance.</b> <b>Attendance is a whole school priority – Everyone’s business!</b>	
<b>97% - 100%</b> Class Teacher Form Tutor Attendance Officer Family Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School attendance is tracked weekly by allocated school member of staff for attendance.</li> <li>Key school staff i.e. FACE, FLO, Attendance Officer, Wellbeing/Pastoral support, Head of Year’s (HoY’s) meet regularly within school – who does what when?</li> <li>Learners and parents are made aware of their attendance (half termly/termly/Parent meetings/Parents Evenings).</li> <li>High/Improved attendance is celebrated (Assembly, meetings etc.)</li> </ul>
<b>96% - 90%</b> Class Teacher Form Tutor Attendance Officer Family Liaison Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Form tutors / class teachers and other key staff in school will discuss changes to attendance with individual pupils and inform parents.</li> <li>On-going tracking of attendance to identify possible barriers to school attendance and appropriate strategies put in place to support pupils (i.e. – Mentoring, ELSA, Nurture group, meet &amp; greet)</li> <li>Letters to parents to share attendance and any concerns, followed up with improvement or continued decline letters.</li> </ul>
<b>90% - 81%</b> Heads of Year Attendance Officer Family Liaison Officer Wellbeing Support Pastoral Support Attendance Lead/HT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents and carers are informed of a continued decline in attendance and concerns and barriers to attendance are explored with school staff and pupil/parents in an arranged school meeting.</li> <li>School-based support continued to be offered i.e. mentoring, ELSA, set quiet zones, Pastoral Support plan consideration.</li> <li>Attendance Plan to look at attendance improvement, outlining barriers and strategies developed by school - A chronology sheet may be useful to record actions.</li> <li>Reasonable adjustments made were appropriate to support attendance (i.e. exit pass, meet and greet on arrival, mentoring, quiet zones for lunch / break)</li> <li>Monitoring and tracking of impact and outcomes of actions taken by the school in relation to attendance plan.</li> <li>Reviewed plans and pastoral support plans with parents and pupils and any additional agencies involved.</li> <li>Consideration by school of One Page Profile and ALNCo/EPS</li> </ul>

	<p>advice/Guidance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Referral to EWS for FLO support following school consultation meeting discussions.</li></ul>
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<p><b>80% - 50%</b></p> <p>Heads of Year</p> <p>Attendance Officer</p> <p>Family Liaison Officer</p> <p>Wellbeing Support</p> <p>Pastoral Support</p> <p>Attendance Lead/HT</p> <p>EWS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key school staff allocated to monitor the Attendance Plan (embedded within existing plan – One Page Profile, Pastoral Support Plan with alternative provision or a reintegration timetable may be considered etc.) and attendance is tracked, with actions taken and impact evaluated and recorded.</li> <li>• Concerns with continually decreasing attendance passed onto HoY / HT / Attendance Lead</li> <li>• Consider referrals to external professionals – Inspire, Face 2 Face Counselling, School Health Nurse, CAMHS In-Reach Group, SPACE Wellbeing</li> <li>• Referral to EWS for FLO support following school consultation meeting discussions.</li> <li>• Discussion with EWS in consultation meetings and consideration of formal referral.</li> <li>• If formal referral is agreed following school having exhausted all possible school supporting strategies, school to meet with parents/carers to share concerns and inform them of any referral to EWS before making the referral.</li> </ul>
<p><b>49% - 0%</b></p> <p>Heads of Year</p> <p>Attendance Officer</p> <p>Family Liaison Officer</p> <p>Wellbeing Support</p> <p>Pastoral Support</p> <p>Attendance Lead/HT</p> <p>EWS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School to carry out frequent reviews of the Attendance Plan with key member of school staff, with regular tracking and recoding of actions taken and impact – A chronology sheet may be useful.</li> <li>• Bespoke support offered, with the potential of more bespoke learning provision within school as identified by the school.</li> <li>• School to monitor the impact of bespoke support on levels of attendance.</li> <li>• Formal consultation with the Education Welfare Service regarding the concerns if a referral has not already been made.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 5 – Non-maintained Settings’ Estyn Inspection Outcomes

Non-maintained Setting	Date	Follow-up	Case studies
Meadowbank Day Nursery*	September 2022	No	Yes
Mathern Day Nursery at Caerwent	September 2022	No	No
Tiny Tots	October 2022	No	No
Crossway Nursery*	October 2022	No	Yes
Ladybirds at OLSM	November 2022	No	No
Sticky Fingers Under Fives	December 2022	No	No
Little Tigers Day Care	February 2023	No	No
Nevill Hall Creche	May 2023	No	No
Sunshines Pre-school	June 2023	No	No
Llandogo Early Years	June 2023	No	No
Ladybirds at Llanvihangel	October 2023	No	No
Little Explorers	November 2023	No	Yes
Little Trees St Arvan’s	March 2024	No	No
Busy Bodies Playgroup*	June 2024	No	Yes
Usk Nursery	October 2024	No	No
Puddle Ducks Nursery”	November 2024	No	No
Hopscotch Nursery	December 2024	No	Yes

## Appendix 6 – Primary School Inspection Outcomes

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School	Date	Follow-up	Case studies
Dewstow	May 22	Special measures	No
St Mary's R.C.	June 22	No follow-up	Yes
The Dell	June 22	No follow-up	No
Gilwern	October 22	Estyn Review	No
King Henry VIII	November 2022	Significant improvement	No
Castle Park	December 22	No follow-up	No
Llanfoist	January 23	No follow-up	No
Llanvihangel	January 23	No follow-up	No
Cantref	April 23	No follow-up	No
Undy	May 23	No follow-up	Yes
Trellech	October 23	No follow-up	No
Monmouth	February 23	No follow-up	No
Kymin View	March 24	No follow-up	No
Llandogo	March 24	No follow-up	No
Cross Ash	May 24	No follow-up	No
OLSM	July 24	No follow up	No
Y Fenni	September 24	No follow-up	Yes
Caldicot	October 24	Significant improvement	No
ARW	November 24	No follow-up	Yes
Magor	January 25	No Follow-up	Yes
Shirenewton	March 25	No follow-up	Yes
Chepstow	March 25	No follow-up	Yes

## Appendix 7 - Local Authority Aggregate Data

### Key measures – Compared with Wales

Please note that these measures are not contextualised but compare with the Wales average.

Table 1.1c - Qualifications outcomes				
Title	2023 - Monmouthshire	2024 - Monmouthshire	2023 - Wales	2024 - Wales
Capped 9 points score (interim)	374.7	369.8	358.1	352.1
WBacc Skills Challenge Certificate indicator – points score	41.1	37.8	31.6	30.2
Literacy indicator – points score	41.9	40.3	39.7	38.5
Numeracy indicator – points score	41.2	39.7	37.1	35.9
Science indicator – points score	38.9	37.8	36.9	36.0
No qualifications - % of pupils	0.8	1.1	1.4	1.8
5+ A* A or equivalent	26.0	27.5	20.3	18.1

For all measures Monmouthshire is above the Wales average, except No qualifications (where lower is desirable).

### Key measures – Compared with 'Modelled' by FSM

Modelled expectations for each indicator are all above expectation indicated by Free School Meals, except literacy indicator which is slightly below. Please note that each table number is from the original data pack, not this report.

Table 4.1 - KS4 Capped 9 points score (interim) - LA Average			
Title	2024 - Capped 9 points score (interim)	2024 - Modelled score	2024 - Difference
Monmouthshire	379.4	372.1	7.3
Wales	364.2	-	-

The Capped 9 score is 7.3 points above the modelled expectation. This is the equivalent of approximately 1/7<sup>th</sup> of a GCSE grade per learner.

Table 4.2 - KS4 WBacc Skills Challenge Certificate indicator - points score - LA Average			
Title	2024 - WBacc Skills Challenge Certificate indicator – points score	2024 - Modelled score	2024 - Difference
Monmouthshire	39.2	36.2	3
Wales	31.4	-	-

The Skills Challenge Certificate score is above expectation, by the equivalent of almost half a GCSE (equivalent) grade per learner.

Table 4.3 - KS4 Literacy indicator - points score - LA Average			
Title	2024 - Literacy indicator – points score	2024 - Modelled score	2024 - Difference
Monmouthshire	41.1	41.3	-0.2
Wales	39.8	-	-

The literacy score is 2.3 points above expectation, the equivalent of 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of a GCSE per learner.

**Table 4.4 - KS4 Numeracy indicator - points score - LA Average**

Title	2024 - Numeracy indicator – points score	2024 - Modelled score	2024 - Difference
Monmouthshire	40.5	38.2	2.3
Wales	37.1	-	-

The numeracy score is also 2.3 points above expectation.

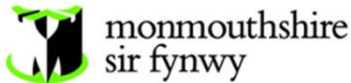
**Table 4.5 - KS4 Science indicator - points score - LA Average**

Title	2024 - Science indicator – points score	2024 - Modelled score	2024 - Difference
Monmouthshire	39.1	39	0.1
Wales	37.3	-	-

The science score is very slightly above expectation, the equivalent of 1/60th of a GCSE grade per learner.

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## **SCHEDULE 12A LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE OF DOCUMENTS**

**MEETING AND DATE OF MEETING:** County Council, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**TITLE OF REPORT:** APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE  
MONMOUTHSHIRE STANDING ADVISORY  
COUNCIL (SAC) FOR RELIGION, VALUES  
AND ETHIC

**AUTHOR:** Sharon Randall-Smith

I have considered grounds for exemption of information contained in the report referred to above and make the following recommendation to the Proper Officer.

### **EXEMPTIONS APPLYING TO THE REPORT:**

Local Government Act 1972, Sch 1A, Part 4 paras 12 and 21

### **FACTORS IN FAVOUR OF DISCLOSURE:**

None

### **PREJUDICE WHICH WOULD RESULT IF THE INFORMATION WERE DISCLOSED:**

The disclosure would allow the identification of individuals and their faith.

### **MY VIEW ON THE PUBLIC INTEREST TEST IS AS FOLLOWS:**


**The report contains information relating to a particular individual and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information. Specifically, the report contains names of nominees to be appointed to vacant posts on SAC.**

### **RECOMMENDED DECISION ON EXEMPTION FROM DISCLOSURE:**

The items should be exempted from disclosure.

Date: 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JMR', followed by a horizontal line.

Post: Chief Officer, Children and Young People

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I accept/do not accept the recommendation made above

Proper Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By virtue of paragraph(s) 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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