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County Hall
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NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 22 April 2025

Notice of meeting :

People Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday, 30th April, 2025 at 2.00 pm,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK and Remote attendance**

Please note that a pre meeting will be held 30 minutes prior to the start of the meeting for members of the committee.

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Declaration of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council website If you would like to speak under the Public Open Forum at an upcoming meeting you will need to give three working days' notice in advance of the meeting by contacting Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the Chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes. Alternatively, if you would like to submit a written, audio or video representation, please contact the team via the same email address to arrange this. The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three clear working days in advance of the meeting. If combined representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting. If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Scrutiny Committees, please do so by emailing Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk	
4.	Yprentis - Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme	1 - 46

	To scrutinise the proposal for closure of Y Prentis and transfer all undertakings to Cyfle, a similar scheme in West Wales.	
5.	People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List	47 - 52
6.	Council and Cabinet Work Planner	53 - 58
7.	To confirm the minutes of the meetings held on 18th February 2025 and 4th March 2025	59 - 80
8.	Next Meeting: 17th June 2025 at 10.00am	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Jan Butler, Goetre Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Simon Howarth, Llanelly Hill;, Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones, Raglan;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell, Pen Y Fal;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Sue Riley, Bulwark and Thornwell;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Maria Stevens, Severn;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Laura Wright, Grofield;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Chepstow Castle & Larkfield;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Public Information

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

A copy of this agenda and relevant reports can be made available to members of the public attending a meeting by requesting a copy from Democratic Services on 01633 644219. Please note that we must receive 24 hours notice prior to the meeting in order to provide you with a hard copy of this agenda.

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.

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.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Question Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues) 2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve? 3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member 	
Questions for the Meeting	
<u>Scrutinising Performance</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why? 2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why? 3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why? 4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic? 5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service? 6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings? 7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives? 8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve? 	<u>Scrutinising Policy</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least? 2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome? 3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective? 4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say? 5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence? 6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities? 7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards? 8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications

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| | <p>9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?</p> <p>12.</p> <p>13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated</p> |
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General Questions:

Empowering Communities

- How are we involving local communities and empowering them to design and deliver services to suit local need?
- Do we have regular discussions with communities about service priorities and what level of service the council can afford to provide in the future?
- Is the service working with citizens to explain the role of different partners in delivering the service, and managing expectations?
- Is there a framework and proportionate process in place for collective performance assessment, including from a citizen's perspective, and do you have accountability arrangements to support this?
- Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out? If so, can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers provide members with copies and a detailed explanation of the EQIA conducted in respect of these proposals?
- Can the Leader and Cabinet/Senior Officers assure members that these proposals comply with Equality and Human Rights legislation? Do the proposals comply with the Local Authority's Strategic Equality Plan?

Service Demands

- How will policy and legislative change affect how the council operates?
- Have we considered the demographics of our council and how this will impact on service delivery and funding in the future?
- Have you identified and considered the long-term trends that might affect your service area, what impact these trends could have on your service/your service could have on these trends, and what is being done in response?

Financial Planning

- Do we have robust medium and long-term financial plans in place?
- Are we linking budgets to plans and outcomes and reporting effectively on these?

Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?
- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the

actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

- Were the intended outcomes of the proposal achieved or were there other results?
- Were the impacts confined to the group you initially thought would be affected i.e. older people, or were others affected e.g. people with disabilities, parents with young children?
- Is the decision still the right decision or do adjustments need to be made?

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

- (i) Investigate the issue in more detail?
- (ii) Obtain further information from other witnesses – Executive Member, independent expert, members of the local community, service users, regulatory bodies...

Agree further actions to be undertaken within a timescale/future monitoring report...

SUBJECT: Y Prentis – Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme
MEETING: People Scrutiny
DATE: 30 th April 2025
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme as a limited company by guarantee, to become a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Shared Apprentice Scheme – a limited company by guarantee with charitable status.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To scrutinise the rationale for the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme – a limited company by guarantee joint shareholders Melin Homes/Hedyn and Monmouthshire County Council (MCC). Melin Homes/Hedyn provide support and management services for Y Prentis for an annual fee.
- 2.2 To scrutinise the rationale for Y Prentis becoming a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Apprentice Scheme – a limited company of guarantee with charitable status overseen by Carmarthenshire Training Association Ltd, Swansea Bay Construction Support Group and Dyfed Training Group.
- 2.3 To recommend that Cabinet approves the cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis becomes a project within the Cyfle Company and all undertakings to be transferred to Cyfle.
- 2.4 To recommend that Monmouthshire County Council has a seat on the Cyfle Directors Board to provide future updates to Scrutiny committee and Cabinet.

KEY ISSUES:

3.1 Background information

- 3.1.1 In [December 2016 Cabinet](#) approved the dissolution of CMC2 and agreed to formally pass ownership of Y Prentis from CMC2 to Monmouthshire County Council in December 2016.
- 3.1.2 In [April 2017 Economy and Development Select Committee](#) was presented with the Y Prentis Business Plan 2016-2018. No further updates have been provided to Cabinet.
- 3.1.3 In [December 2024, Council](#) approved the appointment of County Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader to the Board of Y Prentis.
- 3.1.4 Y Prentis is referenced in the MCC Corporate and Community Plan – *Promote career paths in shortage areas such as care and construction earlier and more consistently. Commit to specific activity in care apprenticeships and scale up delivery through Y Prentis and similar schemes*
- 3.1.5 Y Prentis was setup in response due to the need for more socially procured goods, services and works associated within the construction industry across

south east region. It's vision 'is to provide long term sustainable apprenticeships for those in communities we serve to help them maximise their potential'. Since the company has been established in 2012, the scheme has made a difference by helping to train more than 340 apprentices and securing more than £1.95 million in funding for training and employment. Apprentices gained level 3 qualifications in carpentry, brick laying, painting and decorating and groundworks.

3.1.6 The scheme is managed on a day-to-day basis by the Y Prentis staff team – (Assistant Programme Manager, Apprentice Coordinator and Administrator), currently headed up by the Assistant Programme Manager. The scheme is hosted by Melin Homes/Hedyn and Melin Homes/Hedyn provide support and management services for an annual fee. The Assistant Programme Manager reports to the Y Prentis management board of Directors which is the following:

- Executive Director Corporate Services Melin Homes
- Head of Economy, Employment and Skills Monmouthshire County Council
- Land Director for Candleston Homes (subsidiary to Melin Homes)
- Director of Property Bron Afon Community Housing
- Social Value Manager Linc Cymru
- Head of Service Communities and Renewal Torfaen County Borough Council
- Construction Industry Training Board [CITB] (Advisory)
- Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development (Advisory)

3.1.7 Y Prentis Business Plan 2020 -2023, (appendix two) priorities for a **fit for purpose** and **sustainable** shared apprenticeship programme over the next three years are:

- Recruit Quality Apprentices: *This has been a challenge in terms of supply of suitable recruits to satisfy apprenticeship opportunities created and enabling the apprentice to complete their qualification within the agreed timeframe.*
- Deployment of a fit for purpose shared apprenticeship scheme which meet needs and expectations of its stakeholders: *Insufficient employer host opportunities identified by the team to sustain scheme business model.*
- Support our stakeholders to achieve sustainable community benefit and social value outcomes. *This did not materialise.*
- Working with CITB, CCR, Colleges and training providers to ensure we deliver apprentices that meet the construction sectors requirements: *Changes to contracts and funding requirements proved a financial constraint and alternative funding sources could have been explored more fully.*
- Support businesses to improve their competitive edge, win new contracts and provide opportunities for social value through shared apprenticeship and community benefit deliver. *This has not materialised due to challenges in sources shared apprenticeship opportunities once contracts have been approved and not part of the consultation for social value benefits.*

3.1.8 There were 60 apprentices as of September 24, split across the 10 local authorities in south-east Wales.

- Blaenau Gwent – 3
- Bridgend – 6
- Caerphilly – 6
- Cardiff – 8
- Merthyr – 3
- **Monmouthshire -1**
- Newport – 10
- RCT – 10
- Torfaen – 7
- Vale of Glamorgan – 6

3.1.9 Completion rates have declined significantly during the past 3 years (the number of apprentices completing the qualification and securing employment):

- 2022: 19 of 42 apprentices (45%) completing with 29 non-completers
- 2023: 12 of 42 apprentices (17%) completing with 24 non-completers
- 2024: 3 of 69 apprentices (4%) completing with 19 non-completers

3.2.0 Y Prentis delivery model is not sustainable and financially viable. The company is running at a loss from 22/23 -£24,311.00 and in 23/24 - £75,123.00

3.2 Financial status of Y Prentis

3.2.1 Table one – income and expenditure

Income & Expenditure	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Income	662,952	579,041	601,840	642,672	805,945	1,180,887
Expenditure	650,481	575,661	596,469	641,082	830,255	1,256,010
+/-	12,471	3,380	5,370	1,591	-24,311	-75,123

3.2.2 Y Prentis relies on income from two primary sources. These are contributions and grant income, including:

- contributions from host employers to the costs of each apprentice
- CITB grant income (regular)
- RSA (Regional Selective Assistance) grant income (regular)
- Other grant income (one-off/short-term)

Table two – grant income

Grant Income	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total Amount	280,708	268,841	252,964	307,275	311,983	342,249

3.2.3 It is estimated that Y Prentis will hold a surplus of £100,000 on closure. If after paying off all the creditors the Company holds a surplus of money, by virtue of Article 65 of the Company's Articles of Association, that money must be transferred to an organisation with similar objects to that of the Company. With agreement from Melin Homes, Board Directors, Monmouthshire Scrutiny committee and Monmouthshire Cabinet all undertakings will be transferred to Cyfle.

3.3 Review of Y Prentis delivery model

3.3.1 The board in July 2024 approved a review of the delivery model of Y Prentis. This review was undertaken by MCC and Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC).
Key Challenges from initial review:

- Model – delivery and financial: deficit budget with significant number of debtors, staff roles and responsibilities.
- Contractors' placements: contractors' relationships, non-payment of apprentice wages and lack of contractors' placements.
- Apprentices and colleges: qualifications (level 3) and lack of placements within reasonable distance.

3.3.2 The review initially provided 5 options, that the board considered from October to December 2024. The primary options considered by the board were to cease operations or continue with delivery model redesign

3.4 Current position of Melin Homes/Hedyn and Board Director organisations

- 3.4.1 Melin Homes merged with Newport City Homes and became Hedyn from 1st April 2025 and no longer wish to provide support and management services for Y Prentis and be a joint shareholder of the company.
- 3.4.2 Board Director organisations were approached to become the joint shareholder of the company with MCC and all declined.
- 3.4.4 MCC and Melin Homes approached the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) on the current challenges facing Y Prentis. CCR offered £40K towards the ongoing mentoring from Y Prentis and a review of Y Prentis through a commercial lens. This was on the understanding that the governance arrangements for Y Prentis as a company would remain the same and therefore was not taken forward following Melin's withdrawal.
- 3.4.5 MCC was then approached by Cyfle with a proposal to bring Y Prentis under the Cyfle umbrella as a project to employ all apprentices with Y Prentis and staff.

3.5 Cyfle Building Skills Shared Apprenticeship Scheme

- 3.5.1 Cyfle is a south west Wales regional model overseen by the three Independent Construction Industry Training Groups which reside in the south west Wales Region: Carmarthenshire Construction Training Association Ltd "CCTAL",

Swansea Bay Construction Support Group “SBCSG” and– Dyfed Training Group “DTG”. In October 2016 Cyfle Building Skills was awarded Charitable Status.

- 3.5.2 Cyfle currently employs over 95 apprentices and has employed 780+ shared apprentices to date and is currently the largest Shared Apprenticeship Scheme in the UK.
- 3.5.3 Cyfle Building Skills Employs Shared Apprentices in the following trades: Bricklaying, Plastering, Carpentry, Electrical, Plumbing, Painting & Decorating, Maintenance/Multi-Skilling, Technical. Currently, around 90% of apprentices who complete the three years have secured full time employment in their chosen trade.

Due Diligence check of Cyfle company:

- 3.5.5 Legal and financial governance arrangements have been checked by MCC Governance and Law and MCC internal audit. MCC Governance and Law has carried out a company search. The company are fully compliant with all the governance requirements of a limited company and discloses nothing which suggests they are likely to fail in the foreseeable future.
- 3.5.6 In terms of Cyfle’ s Articles of Association to develop and promote the provision of apprenticeship training for craft trades within the construction industry with the geographical boundaries of the training associations of CCTAL, SBCSG and DTG. The equivalent Objects in Y Prentis Articles refer to operating in south east Wales and the CCR Region. Cyfle will first need to alter their Objects so their defined areas of operation will also include south east Wales and the CCR Region, to enable the transfer of surplus funds from Y Prentis to Cyfle once Y Prentis ceases operations.
- 3.5.7 Cyfle’ s Articles of Association which prevents them making a distribution of money or property to their members so the criteria in Article 65 in respect of a prohibition against distributing funds to its members would be satisfied.
- 3.5.8 As this organisation is a registered charity, internal audit has checked the Charity Commission to ensure that there was compliance with any report requirements and if there were any concerns highlighted. All report were found to be up to date and no concerns were highlighted.

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

- 4.1 The Integrated Impact Assessment detailed in Appendix one, anticipates that the cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis becoming a project under Cyfle company detailed within this report.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 5.1 An options has been undertaken in table one below

Table one – Options Appraisal

Options	Benefits	Risks
Cessation of Y Prentis	No further detriment to financial position	Apprentices not completing their qualification and unable to transition into sustainable employment Redeployment of staff Risk of reputation
Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis transferred to MCC	Refocussed shared apprenticeship scheme for the region	Lack of knowledge and expertise in delivering shared apprenticeship schemes. Lack of uptake for the scheme in Monmouthshire Limitation on staff capacity for work needed Too broad an area but too narrow one sector for the future drive of apprentices in Monmouthshire
Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis as a project comes under Cyfle	Continued delivery of shared apprenticeship scheme – retaining all apprentices and staff Coordination of approach across south east and south west region	Lack of local knowledge and partnerships in south east region Capacity to ensure continued provision for existing and new apprentices and Y Prentis staff.

- 5.2 Our preferred option is 'Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis as a project comes under Cyfle' and the transfer of all apprentices and staff to Cyfle and all remaining finances on the cessation of Y Prentis. This is subject to Cyfle altering its objects prior to the transfer of monies to include an additional area of operation being south east Wales.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 The preferred option 'Cessation of Y Prentis and Y Prentis as a project coming under Cyfle' will enable apprentices to complete their qualifications and transition into sustainable employment.
- 6.2 Cyfle have vast years of experience, knowledge, and expertise operating a successfully Shared Building in Skills Apprenticeship Scheme since 2013.
- 6.3 Currently around 90% Cyfle apprentices who complete the three years have secured full time employment in their chosen trade.

- 6.4 Cyfle in retaining Y Prentis staff will build effective relationships with the apprentices, colleges and contractors enabling a smooth transition of Y Prentis into Cyfle.
- 6.5 MCC would be taking a substantial financial and management risk in becoming the sole shareholder for Y Prentis, a scheme with very low take up in Monmouthshire and broad delivery area across the whole of south east Wales.

7. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 7.1 Following the cessation of Y Prentis (the 'Company'), if there is any shortfall between the monies held by the Company and the total owed to the Company's creditors, the most MCC will have to contribute to that shortfall is £1, that being the sum they have guaranteed to meet.
- 7.2 With agreement from Melin Homes, Board Directors, Monmouthshire Scrutiny committee and Monmouthshire Cabinet all undertakings of Y Prentis will be transferred to Cyfle.
- 7.3 This will include the transfer of approximately £100,000 of surplus held by Y Prentis on closure, subject to Cyfle altering its objects to include an additional area of operation being south east Wales. This is not from local authority resources.
- 7.4 Cyfle will receive additional funding from Welsh Government to support the transition of existing apprentices to Cyfle

8. **CONSULTEES:**

- Melin Homes/Hedyn
- Y Prentis Directors Board
- Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)
- Cardiff Capital Region/Corporate Joint Committee
- DMT – Learning, Skills and Economy
- Medr – Welsh Government
- Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development
- Strategic Leadership Team
- MCC Governance and Law
- MCC Internal Audit

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Appendix one – Integrated Impact Assessment
- Appendix two – Y Prentis Business Plan 2020 -2023

10. **AUTHOR:**

Will McLean, Chief Officer Learning Skills and Economy

Lead officer

Hannah Jones, Head of Economy Employment and Skills

11. **CONTACT DETAILS:**

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**(Incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and
Socio-Economic Duty)**

Name of the Officer Hannah Jones Phone no: 01633 748316 E-mail: hannahjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal This assessment will consider the impact of the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme and becoming a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Apprentice Scheme.
Name of Service area: Economy, Employment and Skills	Date 1 st April 2025

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	This development will positively impact all young people with Y Prentis to complete qualifications and secure employment.	None identified	None identified

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Gender reassignment	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Marriage or civil partnership	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Pregnancy or maternity	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Race	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or

	young people who share the protected characteristic	impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Religion or Belief	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Sex	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic
Sexual Orientation	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic	There is no evidence to suggest that the proposal will positively or negatively impact on young people who share the protected characteristic

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socioeconomic Duty and Social Justice	Y Prentis is a supported shared apprenticeship schemes and enables young people all of backgrounds to engage in further education and a work placement. Y Prentis mentors' young people to breakdown any barriers to engagement and progression. This ethos and practice are the same for Cyfle and will continue with Y Prentis under the Cyfle company.	Not applicable	Not applicable

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably	The use of the Welsh language has been taken into consideration in delivery of Y Prentis under the Cyfle company The promotion of Welsh language will be monitored through Cyfle. Cyfle will continue adhere to the Welsh Language Standards.	None identified	n/a

Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	Cyfle will adhere to their recruitment process and any necessary training offered as needed through Welsh and English.	None identified	n/a
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	Cyfle will promote the use of the Welsh language, and all advertising will be in Welsh and english through various media platforms.	None identified	n/a

- 4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
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<p>A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p>Cyfle provides apprentice opportunities in a number of trades in West Wales, this will expand into south east Wales now with Y Prentis coming under the Cyfle umbrella. A positive impact for both regions of Wales enabling skilled, educated young people to enter employment and working with a number of contractors to source apprentice and employment opportunities.</p>	<p>The Cyfle Board of Directors will oversee the Cyfle management team supporting the monitoring and performance of the Y Prentis project measuring effectiveness and impact.</p>
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Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p>A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p>	<p>Apprentices through their learning in college and on placement can apply methods and practices that support climate change and enhance biodiversity.</p>	<p>The Cyfle Board of Directors will oversee the Cyfle management team supporting the monitoring and performance of the Y Prentis project measuring effectiveness and impact</p>




Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximised, and health impacts are understood	Apprentices are supported by their Y Prentis mentors in terms of their physical and mental wellbeing this will continue under the Cyfle umbrella. All apprentices are provided with PPE and tools on placement and all contractors are risk assessed and have necessary health and safety procedures in place.	Apprentices will have a wider access to services and provisions that can improve physical and mental wellbeing.
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe, and well connected	Y Prentis apprentices will be part of a wider network of support and connectivity across south east and west Wales and will continue to receive mentoring and coaching from the existing staff team.	Through a collaboration approach across the south east and south west region Cyfle will ensure, they maintain cohesive and positive relationships and address any concerns in a proactive and empathetic manner.

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global wellbeing when considering local social, economic, and environmental wellbeing	Apprentices can connect across a wider geographical area, taking ownership for their future and contribute to economic growth and prosperity in Wales.	

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language Culture, heritage, and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art, and recreation	Apprentices will have the opportunity to encourage in team building activity and take part in activities and events that promote and protect the Welsh culture, heritage and language.	Welsh language and culture will actively be encouraged.
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	All apprentices have the support and opportunity to achieve qualifications and work placements experiences regardless of background or circumstances.	Apprentices have regular progress reviews, to monitor attainment and progression.

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p>The short-term plan is to enable Y Prentis apprentices to complete their qualifications in a timely manner and secure sustainable employment.</p> <p>The long-term plan is for Cyfle to grow the Y Prentis element working with colleges and contractors identifying trade skills gaps and future skill gaps and diversifying the range of apprenticeship trade opportunities across south east Wales.</p>	None identified

 Collaboration	Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	Cyfle will build relationships and partnerships in south east Wales to sustain and develop the Y Prentis project. Working with the 5 colleges in south east Wales that deliver the qualifications.	None identified
 Involving those with an interest and seeking their views		Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development has an advisory role on the Y Prentis board and involved in the options being considered for the future of Y Prentis. Preferred option taken to scrutiny to involve committee and seek their views.	The Cyfle team will continue to encourage and promote user feedback as an essential asset with project delivery, design and continuous improvement for Y Prentis.
Sustainable Development Principle		Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Putting  resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse		Cyfle has been providing operational support over from the 1 st of March to support the transition of Y Prentis under Cyfle, which is subject to scrutiny and Cabinet.	None identified

Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	The proposal recommends Y Prentis becomes a project within Cyfle company. A company with vast experience, knowledge and experience of effectively managing and delivering a shared construction apprenticeship scheme in south east Wales and anticipate will have a positive impact in south east Wales	None identified

5. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	Y Prentis project will follow Cyfle's policies and procedures in relation to safeguarding.	Non applicable	Non applicable
Corporate Parenting	Non applicable		

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

The development is informed by the evidence and data in the following strategies and plans

- Y Prentis Business Plan 2020 -2023
- Community and Corporate Plan
- Monmouthshire Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy
- NEET Prevention Strategy

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

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

It is anticipated that the impact of the cessation of Y Prentis Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme and becoming a project within the Cyfle Shared Building Skills Apprentice Scheme will have a positive impact on Y Prentis apprentices: social, emotional, health and wellbeing, education, and skills across south east Wales.

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8. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

What are you going to do	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible
People Scrutiny	30 th April 2025	Will McLean – Strategic Director Learning Skills and Economy
Cabinet	21 st May 2025	Will McLean – Strategic Director Learning Skills and Economy

9. VERSION CONTROL:

The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built-in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Learning Skills and Economy DMT	17 th March 2025	
2	Senior Leadership Team	15th April 2025	



BUSINESS PLAN 2020-2023

Y PRENTIS

1 NOVEMBER 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This 2020-2023 Business Plan outlines how Y Prentis will continue to evolve, diversify and grow to meet the challenges ahead. The plan has been compiled during the economic uncertainty due to the Coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic and will consider how Y Prentis can play a supporting/fundamental role industries recovery in south east Wales. It is unsure how the financial support for projects will continue and with delay to both building and infrastructure projects “business as usual” will not be an option. This business plan will highlight two main areas of focus, the first being a solution to support displaced apprentices due to the pandemic and secondly, providing a cost effective and solution for companies who will not have the long-term confidence following the crisis to support full apprenticeships. These areas reinforce the Y Prentis core business and support our priorities for the next three years.

In early 2021 CITB must consult with the construction industry if it wants to continue raising Levy. It must gain the support of industry regarding the proposals for the next Levy Order. As CITB are the main funding source for the scheme, gaining the consensus and the subsequent funding for apprenticeships is fundamental to the future of Y Prentis. Therefore, alternative sources of funding will be a priority in the coming months.

The re-focused priorities will provide an opportunity for greater participation from private developers and Small Medium Enterprises (SME) through offering collaboration opportunities for apprenticeship delivery. By continuing to attract quality recruits, increasing our partner base and expanding the new routes we offer, we will be able to improve our offer sustainable opportunities in both medium and shorter-term contracts. This has wider benefits for apprentices who in turn will gain more extensive and diverse work experience and develop the skills for now and the future.

For the next three years focus centers around the core business of Y Prentis and are based on six interdependent priorities. They include attracting and delivering apprenticeships for talented people and creating sustainable opportunities from a strong partnership base which are embedded in social value ethos. This will be underpinned by supported priorities which determine how we will encourage and develop viable opportunities through community regeneration, whilst underpinning those principles through championing community benefits design and delivery. Consequently, maintaining collaborative relationships with our partners and stakeholders is a vital to our success. **Page 25**

INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Y Prentis was founded by Melin Homes and Monmouthshire County Council, in partnership with CITB, as a not for profit company delivering a shared apprenticeship scheme to meet the increasing demands of socially procured goods, services and works associated with the construction industry in south-east Wales.

The scheme has become an established brand within the construction sector since being formed in 2012, delivering quality apprenticeship support to the south-east Wales region. In the eight years that the programme has been operating, Y Prentis has made a real difference by helping to train more than 300 apprentices, supporting more than 120 partners and helping to deliver in excess of 650 qualifications - making a positive contribution to the region.

The current business model

Shared apprenticeship support and delivery;
Consultancy, community benefit and social value

Y Prentis is an evolving business effectively representing regional interests to inform a demand-led and sustainable apprenticeship programme. Ensuring that this is informed by strong industry engagement and considers the level of skills utilization, it has a robust governance structure and strong focus on partnership which enables the company to remain in line with industry trends in the region and both industry and Government priorities. It is the Construction Industry Training Board's (CITB) preferred supplier of shared apprenticeships in construction for south-east Wales and is ambitious in its direction. It currently supports the delivery of trade and technical apprenticeships.

Progressively Y Prentis will continue to diversify and tailor services to ensure we remain current and future ready. This will be achieved through a coordinated approach within the Valleys Taskforce area and the wider Cardiff Capital Region. In capturing and developing future skills opportunities within the construction and associated sectors, Y Prentis will fulfil the needs and ambitions of a wide variety of stakeholders.

This is essential for the scheme if it is to increase the range of apprenticeships being supported throughout the associated supply chains. Growing demand to maximise positive community benefit outcomes and social value through procurement has driven Y Prentis to create a suite of consultancy services for procuring clients and contractors to assist them in creating sustainable outcomes for the communities they service.

Y Prentis will capitalise on this innovative approach in the coming years and will place greater importance on ensuring that the mandate for community benefits and social value is reflected in all construction-based projects be satisfied by offering consultancy services that have been developed in support of this challenge. This is reflected within the priorities of this business plan over the next three years.

The current skills shortage has been further exacerbated by Brexit and the subsequent availability of migrant labour increasing pressure on the supply chains and businesses. This means the demand for skilled labour should drive an increase in apprenticeship opportunities.

We have been awarded an extension to the funding via CITB by Welsh Government to increase our apprentice numbers in the Valleys Taskforce area. The funding has enabled us to sustain the roles of Senior Marketing and Engagement Officer and an Engagement officer. These roles will continue ensure we have the suitable and enough resources to deliver sustainable apprenticeship opportunities in the area, fulfill our contracts and ensure the scheme meets the needs of the industry in the future.

Y Prentis success also requires a strong partner base. Our dedicated board of directors and the robust advisory panel has strengthened existing and developed new relationships with partners, clients and training providers. We will continue to strengthen our links with employer training groups and federations to grow SME participation in the scheme.

We are playing a strategic role within the Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership for south-east Wales. As a key member of the Construction Cluster group Y Prentis will align with the future priorities of skills funding in line with regional employment and skills plan, industrial and economic plan along with Welsh Governments Policy on skills and their skills implementation plan.

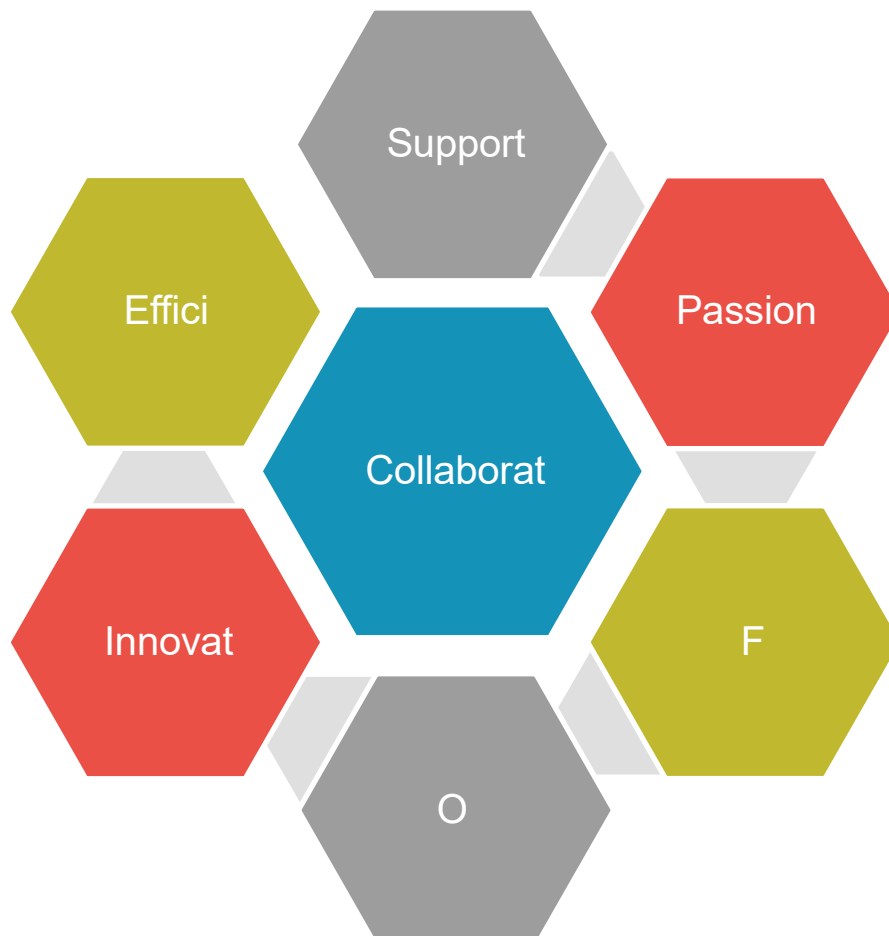
The sustainability of the Y Prentis scheme is underpinned through being specified as the preferred apprenticeship provider in the procurement of frameworks, contracts and subcontracts. Currently Y Prentis are stipulated as an apprenticeship solution in the Build for Wales (NHS) for SEWSCAP 3, SEWH, frameworks. We are linking with Transport for Wales Sustainable Transport Infrastructure contracts and the development and apprenticeships using the shared model. This ensures Y Prentis demonstrates and provides high quality services to the communities and companies it serves through innovative approaches to community benefits and social value design and delivery and the support and development of solutions. The model which is flexible in meeting the demands of the construction sector and its associated partners put Y Prentis in a unique position when creating apprenticeship opportunities to young people within the south-east Wales.



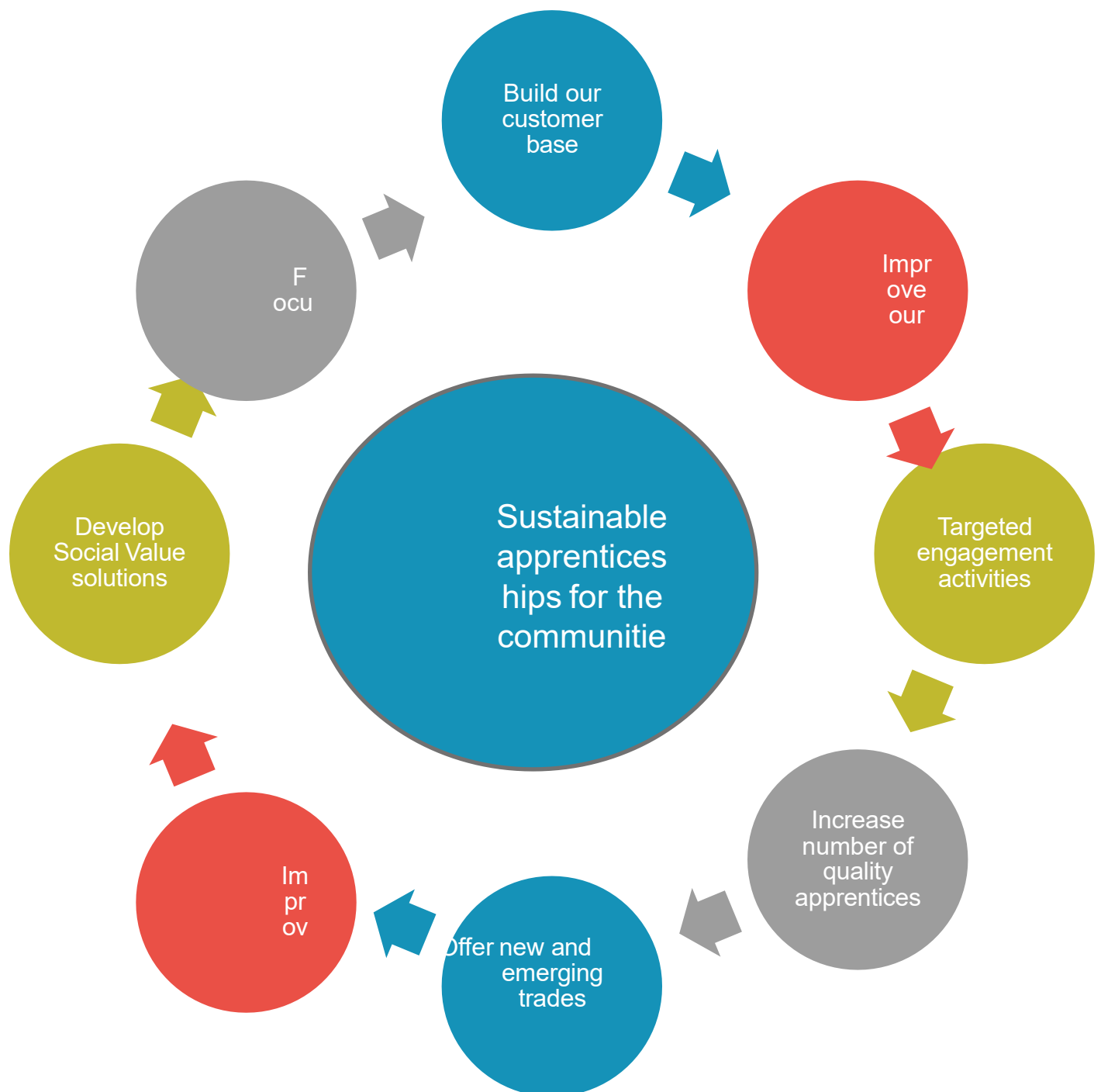
OUR VISION

"To provide long term sustainable apprenticeships for those in communities we serve to help them maximise their potential"

OUR VALUES



To support its vision and values, Y
Prentis also has a list of aims and
objectives:





Y Prentis Objectives

- Attract, develop and retain the next generation of apprentices through demonstrating measured success, efficiency and sustainability
- Encourage confidence of learners through positive mentoring so they too can become future employers of apprentices.
- Maximise the earning capacity of our young people by ensuring they have the right skills and qualifications to enhance their future career and economic resilience.
- Promote a career offer and positive image of the sectors when engaging and marketing careers activities.
- Act as an ambassador organization, creating sustainable careers through a variety of trade and technical apprenticeships.
- Promote a career offer for the construction and the associated sectors as a route to economic prosperity for people of all backgrounds.
- Expand the schemes parameters to include sectors where there are similar characteristics that have led to market failure.
- Introduce of a fee- based model through foundational economy and Cardiff Capital Region funding to compliment or replace CITB funding should there be changes in the funding during 2021.
- Provide direct social value support for businesses through collaborative partnering in the procurement process improving their competitive edge and maximizing impact.
- Grow the potential of our young people and communities by providing wide ranging employment support through collaborative partnerships and the delivery of community benefits.



CURRENT & NEW MARKETS

Our Current Market is where Y Prentis core business is founded. We currently work with our current partners on New School Build frameworks, including SEWSCAP 3, Local Health Board Builds and Maintenance with Build for Wales (NHS) and new home building projects that cover both the public and private sector through the Housing Association network. A recent addition to our range of apprenticeships which spans across these is quantity surveying. We will work with Cardiff Capital Region Skills Partnership to address the key themes from their employment and Skills Plan such as *"Broaden the apprenticeship offer at levels 3, 4, higher and degree by responding to government policy changes"*

There is a greater emphasis is being placed on the opportunities for social value through infrastructure projects. The sectors biggest pipeline projects in the south-east Wales region include the Dowlias to Hirwaun dueling on which work is likely to start in Spring 2021.

Y Prentis will be exploring new opportunities within and through variety of other sectors where the model can be adopted to enable all sizes of companies to participate in apprenticeships. These include timber frame, modular building/off site construction and retrofit. There are also potential opportunities in both the rail and creative sectors and Plumbing and electrical apprenticeships within the Valleys Taskforce area.



OUR PRIORITIES

The delivery of our priorities for a fit for purpose and sustainable shared apprenticeship programme over the next three years are:



1. Recruit Quality Apprentices.



2. Deployment of a fit for purpose shared apprenticeship scheme which meet needs and expectations of its stakeholders.



3. Support our stakeholders to achieve sustainable community benefit and social value outcomes.



4. Working with CITB, CCR, Colleges and training providers to ensure we deliver apprentices that meet the construction sectors requirements.



5. Support businesses to improve their competitive edge, win new contracts and provide opportunities for social value through shared apprenticeship and community benefit delivery.



1. Recruit Quality Apprentices.

Strategy:

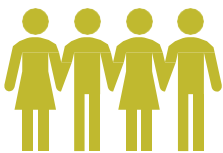
- Work collaboratively with colleges, into work agencies to promote opportunities and success of our high-quality apprenticeships across south east Wales
- Use work experience opportunities as selection tool for recruiting apprentices.
- Act on Y Prentis Apprentice Advisory Panel feedback to ensure exiting apprenticeships are fit for purpose

Actions:

- Attract applicants through our website, promotional materials and engagement activities that reflect our quality offer.
- Using quality recruitment process and criteria in the selection of apprentices
- Continuously review our engagement, recruitment and selection process

Results:

- Result driven engagement and recruitment resulting in increased quality of recruits.
- Increased retention and attainment rate of our apprentices



2. Deployment of a fit for purpose shared apprenticeship scheme which meet needs and expectations its stakeholders.

Strategy:

- Increase our partner base through more effective communications and collaboration.
- Build credibility and strong relationships through our strategic board and employer forum.
- Identify market by need through industry research and insights to inform business cases for routes in routes to expand apprenticeships into other sectors.

Actions

- Effectively engage with key stakeholders such as local authorities through our alliance with Cardiff Capital Region.
- Expand the Y Prentis board with members that reflect the geographical area and diversity of the scheme.
- Utilize Welsh Government investment to increase to engage with a wider range of partners and potential talent in the Valleys Taskforce area
- Collaborate and undertake research and development to form business cases for funding existing and new routes.

Results:

- A flexible and diverse scheme tailored to industry needs, providing an increased range of opportunities for young people entering the sector.



3. Support our stakeholders to achieve sustainable community benefit and social value outcomes.

Strategy:

- Provide our stakeholders with an efficient cost-effective solution for the delivery of community benefit services and social value.
- Influence procuring clients and planning departments to deliver apprenticeships employment and work experience through project objectives.
- Embed Y Prentis as the preferred provider in the delivery of shared apprenticeships in south-east Wales.

Actions:

- Work with our stakeholders with a view to include social value outcomes within the planning and procurement process and position Y Prentis delivery options to those being adopted.
- Expand our partner offer to include delivery community benefits outcomes as an extension of our support service when engaging apprentices.
- Offer a value based commercial community benefits delivery service to partners.

Results:

- Increased opportunities for talented people to enter the construction sector through our community benefit services.
- Increased opportunities for talented people to enter the construction sector through our community benefit services.



4. Working with CITB, CCR, Colleges and training providers to ensure we deliver apprentices that meet the construction sectors requirements.

Strategy:

- Utilise our partners to inform and develop business cases and reports that inform the current and future skills needs in the region.
- Develop links with CCR, local authorities and providers and to tailor the training and learning provision to meet industry requirements.
- Support Qualifications Wales in the development and implementation of qualification development.

Actions:

- Create diverse stakeholder intelligence within our board engagement groups which support collaboration and the development, knowledge and understanding of the construction sector requirements.
- Work in alliance with CCR to deliver its mission and priorities.

Results:

- Progressive apprenticeships and effective collaboration with stakeholders which shape the future skills and qualifications for the sector.
- Successful business case collaborations and the delivery and funding for future skills requirements.



5. Support businesses to improve their competitive edge, win new contracts and provide opportunities for social value through shared apprenticeship and community benefit delivery.

Strategy:

- Provide cost effective solutions support to clients, contractors and SMEs in the creation and delivery of sustainable apprenticeships through projects and frameworks
- Offer a holistic social value delivery proposition to stakeholders which compliments creation of sustainable apprenticeships.
- Increase our measured impact on Valleys Task Force areas with increased resources.

Actions

- Offer a consultancy delivery service that supports clients, main contractors and SMEs through the creation and demonstration of social value.
- Provide a link between partners, groups and forums to support local community initiatives and those who are economically inactive.
- Forge links with community engagement and third-sector groups to promote social value and corporate social responsibility.

Results:

- In company support to partners utilising Y Prentis' services when completing tenders, sub-contract bids and when delivering social value outcomes.
- A collection of case studies and reports which demonstrates our impact in our partners social value outcomes.



GOVERNANCE - MEET THE TEAM

Y Prentis is fortunate to be supported and guided by a strong Board of Directors drawn from representatives from Y Prentis's founder companies. This enables service delivery via an innovative and energetic delivery team. The Board also benefits from the support and representation of CITB, industry, clients and colleges in an advisory capacity. The Board's make up ensures that industry, training providers and clients have a voice, enabling us to ensure that our services are flexible in meeting the demands of a range of partners. They are responsive to the needs of industry and as such have created a robust Advisory Panel, consisting of representatives from the construction sector who advise the Board on the requirements of the sector. Y Prentis is also pleased to benefit from support and guidance from Cardiff Council, Coleg Gwent and the Civil Engineering Contractors Association (CECA).



Adrian Huckin

Executive Director of Innovation, Culture and Improvement

Adrian is a graduate of the University of York and a fellow of the Institute of Housing. Adrian joined Melin Homes in September 2010 having previously worked in both the public and housing association sectors. His housing career spans a total of 35 years and includes senior management role with Newport and Torfaen Councils and Bron Afon Community Housing.

He is passionate about services excellence, equality of opportunity and making a difference to people's lives. He is also a company Director of Y Prentis



Hanna Jones

Youth Enterprise Manager at Monmouthshire County Council

Hannah started working with Monmouthshire County Council's Youth Service as a part-time coordinator for the young people's centre in Chepstow, the first of its kind in Monmouthshire. It was from here she became full-time, taking the lead in developing three more centres in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny and supporting a team of youth workers. She then went on to work with the Youth Service, leading post 16 projects.

Hanna is driving the skills and employability agenda forward for the local authority. She recently wrote the apprenticeship, graduate and internship strategy which focuses on working with people services and creating new employment opportunities for young people and adults throughout Monmouthshire.



Lyndon Griffiths

Land Director for Candleston

Lyndon is responsible for acquisition of new land opportunities, key client relationship management with both Private and Public Sector, networking with the wider professional development sector and co-ordination of land bids. He has been the lead officer on strategic developments such as Crick Road, Grove Farm and Coed Glas.

Lyndon has previously held senior positions in both the Housing Association sector and also with large private construction developers. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Candleston in relation to liaison with Welsh Government, Local Authorities and the construction industry for the delivery of both private and affordable housing across many counties of operation.

In his previous roles he has been responsible for co-ordinating new business opportunities, including land bids, securing S106 opportunities, package deals, PQQ/ITT bid submissions and marketing of the business.



Robert O'Dwyer

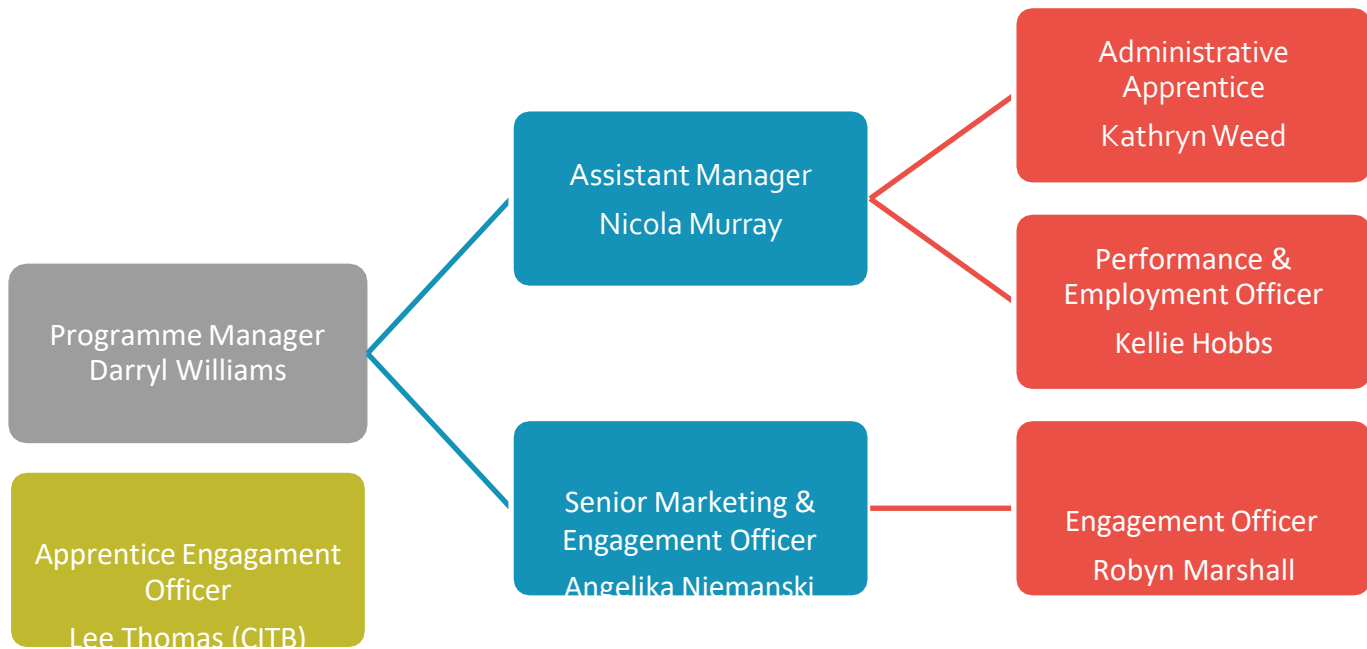
Head of Infrastructure for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal

Rob has been a director of Y Prentis for the past five and is passionate about opportunities for young people and making a difference to people's lives in the region. Rob is the Head of Infrastructure for Cardiff Capital Region City Deal with responsibility for oversight of the Compound Semiconductor Cluster Engagement, Sites and Premises Fund and Regional Energy Strategy.

Rob graduated as a quantity surveyor from Bristol University. He has held senior positions within local government for over 20 years, as Head of Business Transformation and formerly Head of Property Services & Procurement. During this time he was responsible for delivering major capital investment projects and operational facilities management.

Outside of work Rob is a keen traveller, cyclists and tennis player. More recently he has purchased a VW camper van and is looking forward to touring around the UK.

Delivery Team



Partner and Apprentice Advisory Panels

well-established Partner advisory panel helps guide the Prentis Board in identifying trends and opportunities within the construction sector. The panel meets quarterly and is comprised of representatives from construction companies, clients and support agencies. The panel is chaired by Tom Davies from Morgan Sindall and is an important vehicle in identifying the needs of industry and our partner companies that provide host placements for apprentices, advise about recruitment patterns help us to plan our future activity.



Apprentice panel was introduced to obtain feedback from our apprentices on their experiences with our host partners, their opinions of Y Prentis as an employer and the shared model. It has been and will continue to be an important vehicle for giving our apprentices a voice and acting as a continuous improvement conduit to views and opinions that shape our scheme.

THE BUSINESS MODEL

Y Prentis is supported by the Construction Industry Training Board CITB and Welsh Government. The scheme has been developed to offer the construction industry a flexible apprenticeship provision which assists in meeting corporate social responsibility targets within government contracts.

The business model is based on the requirement on commissioners to consider early on, not only economic and environmental issues, but also the social benefit of their approaches to procurement. Part of the requirements to secure new work will often include Apprenticeship recruitment as a requirement of the tendering process. Employers that support apprentices can generally expect to get more invitations to tender.

The Y Prentis Shared Apprenticeship business model allows employers to enjoy all the benefits of an apprentice, without the direct employment responsibility as this is taken up by the Y Prentis. The scheme aims to provide a solution to employers involved in the procurement process so they can make a commitment to a young person, even though their contract on site may only be for a short period.

Procurement is pooled within a region and the apprentice rotated from one contractor to another, until they have completed their full Apprenticeship framework at Level 2 or 3. This means that employers can still play an important part in training as the scheme allows them to take on an apprentice, for as short a duration as three months, with no commitment to the apprentice at the end.

BENEFITS TO THE EMPLOYER

- Hassle-free hiring
- Interview and selection taken care of
- Flexibility of short or long-term placements with no commitment to employ the apprentice at the end
- Saves a company HR, payroll and holiday pay from directly employing an apprentice
- All mandatory training and CSCS card taken undertaken
- A skilled apprentice ready to be taken on once qualified
- Additional support offered around community benefits and social value
- Wide ranging client knowledge of 'graduating' apprentices.

BENEFITS TO THE EMPLOYEE

- A chance to complete a full framework and secure an apprenticeship
- A broad and diverse experience offered through movement between different contractors
- An opportunity to secure long term employment
- Experience with several companies giving apprentices 'long interview processes' with each for potential employment opportunities
- Job search support from the Y Prentis team
- All college fees and additional training paid
- A full range of trades covered
- Over 95% of our apprentices go onto permanent employment
- Employment support offered after completion of apprenticeship

FUNDING

the number of apprentices which can be supported by CITB through the shared model has been capped at 50 new starters per year. However, special funding has been secured from WG to increase the number of apprentices within the Valleys Taskforce area by 30, increasing our annual intake from 50 to 80.

Y Prentis benefits from funding from the following sources:

- CITB Attendance and Achievement Grants
- Young Recruits Programme Funding
- Hosting fees
- Welsh Government wage subsidy (Valleys Task Force Area)
- Community benefit delivery sales
- Consultancy sale

CHANGES TO FUNDING

In early 2021 CITB must consult with the construction industry for permission to continue raising Levy. It must gain the support of industry regarding the proposals for the next Levy Order. As CITB are the main funding source for the scheme, gaining the consensus and the subsequent funding for apprenticeships is fundamental to the future of Y Prentis. In addition, Welsh Government will cease Young Recruits payments in 2021 creating a further shortfall. And with the managing agency contact also out for tender in 2021 the future apprenticeship picture is an uncertain one. Therefore, alternative sources of funding will be a priority in the coming months.

Y Prentis is a regional programme and benefits from the special status of being CITB's partner of choice in the delivery of shared apprenticeships across south-east Wales. Y Prentis by its very nature supports the construction industry and key investment projects in south-east Wales. Working across the ten local authorities places Y Prentis in a position to attract funding through project based investment. Other potential funding streams includes:

- Cardiff Capital Region Funding
- National Lottery Funding
- Welsh Government Valleys Taskforce Funding
- Welfare to Work

INVESTMENT

We are conscious that our funding sources drive the types of activity that could be funded. At present, these would be restricted to capital or revenue-based projects that enhance the training facilities or provision to support the construction industry, particularly relating to up-skilling within companies. Y Prentis is developing a strategy to deal with surpluses. This will involve the following:

- An agreement of the principles around expenditure with the Y Prentis Board
- Development of projects and frameworks in consultation with construction. investment partners such as Cardiff Council who are leading on SEWSCAP3 and SEWH respectively.

Investment from the local authorities in south east Wales through Cardiff Capital Region alliance

Special Status and Competition



The Board is advised by Y Prentis Management and observed by CITB. It operates an open accounting procedure. It's terms of reference state that surpluses generated by the company will be reinvested to support further apprenticeship development or added value activities. The conditions of CITB grant require that a special purpose vehicle is established to run shared apprenticeships, the rationale being that the organisation's core purpose is to deliver shared apprenticeships and it will not be diverted to deliver other activities.



Our host employers are private sector construction companies who are within CITB 'scope'. They understand the operations of a small business and the importance of good cash flow. Our client organisations reinforce this principle through their procurement frameworks to protect small suppliers. As a 'small private sector supplier' of apprenticeships developed to support client's targeted recruitment and training, client's contracts support our cash flow. This gives Y Prentis weight that we would not have as a department of a larger organisation.



Sustainability of Y Prentis

Y Prentis is the only CITB approved deliverer of shared apprenticeships in south-east Wales and as such has special status without a competing scheme. Unlike project-based funding, Y Prentis is not time limited. The funding for the opportunities comes from several key sources, CITB grants, Welsh Government special funding, Young Recruits Programme funding, consultancy services and community benefit delivery which are funded by the construction companies themselves. CITB grants are paid from the levies they receive from in scope companies. This provides Y Prentis with sustainable, core funding, which provided we continue to perform well for CITB, will continue.

The Y Prentis Advisory Panel is made up of members of industry and clients offering contract opportunities and guides the future development of the company. In this way, Y Prentis will be driven and directed by the needs of the industry. CITB observe the Y Prentis Board and work closely with Y Prentis management, advising on trends and requirements for additional opportunities. We work closely with these two groups to develop an ongoing programme of work to inform our apprentice volume projections. This information also helps our discussions with training providers about our future and existing needs.



Equality & Diversity

Y Prentis is committed to the sharing of good practice in relation to equality and diversity as laid out in our policy. As well as engaging with traditional apprentices we will aim to encourage individuals who are underrepresented in construction trades, including females, BME groups and those with a disability.

Marketing Strategy



Y Prentis will we will support 80 apprentices per year, including 30 from the Valleys Taskforce area. To do this effectively a marketing strategy has been developed that will deliver a response to both recruitment of apprentices and support from suitable host contractors.

A Senior Marketing and Engagement Officer and Engagement Officer have been appointed who are continuing to develop and implement the marketing and business development strategy and take it forward in conjunction with this business plan.

Key Performance Indicators 2019/20

KPI	Description	Measure Source	Yearly Target	Actual Q 1	Actual Q2	Actual Q3	Yearly Actual
1	Number of apprentices on scheme	Payroll report	80				
2	Number of apprentices from the Valleys Taskforce area	Cascade HR	60				
3	Percentage of apprentices who have Perfect Start	Audit report	100%				
4	Apprentice Retention rate	Tracking report	95%				
5	Percentage of Apprenticeship Framework completions	CITB report	85%				
6	Percentage of apprentices in full time employment after completion	Exit interview	95%				
7	Amount of revenue lost to YP leave	Monthly accounts	£8K				
8	Number of Riddor Reportable health and safety incidents	Database	0				

Management Information and Systems



An information database and management system is in development which will capture all associated data in relation to apprentice tracking and progress. In addition to adding value to the apprenticeship programme it will enable the team to maximise the wrap around services and support available to apprentices. The system will be operated in line with current GDPR guidelines. Administrative staff check 100% of data gathered for quality and will provide SMART reporting.



Finance



Y Prentis financial forecasting, monitoring and reporting is undertaken by the Melin Homes accounts team in consultation with the Programme Manager and is overseen by the Y Prentis board.

Risk Assessment Table

In relation to managing the risks identified, some risks factors are out of our control. Y Prentis rely upon CITB and Welsh Government as our key funders. Risk factors will be managed on a day-to- day basis by the Shared Apprenticeship Management Team with assistance where identified by the Board.

Risk	Impact	Mitigating Action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inadequate supply of suitable recruits to satisfy apprentice-ship opportunities created. Standards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letting partners down. Failure to deliver business plan objectives. Reputation and perception of scheme. Loss of business as partners will look elsewhere. Loss of income due to not fulfilling contracts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive marketing and promotion of Y Prentis in Colleges, careers and job fairs. Improved offer and more effective support from the Y Prentis team. Effective staff monitoring and reporting of scheme performance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient employer host opportunities identified by staff to sustain scheme business model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of apprentice placements and failure of scheme. • Financial loss and poor reputation of scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of strong advisory panel and development of an extensive partner database. • Introduction of partner memorandum of understanding. • Scheme embedded in major project and framework community benefit and targeted recruitment and training key performance indicators. • Extension and development of the route offered.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Removal, cancellation or changes in CITB and/or Welsh Government contracts and funding. • Apprenticeship levy - bad debtors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficiency in funding. Inability to fund apprenticeships. • Negative cash flow - scheme cannot self-sustain. • Scheme ends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploration of other sources of funding i.e. direct employer and client funding through framework and major project community benefits and social value funding.

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2024-25

People Scrutiny Committee (Meetings at 10am unless stated otherwise)				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
30 th April 2025	Yprentis - Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme	To scrutinise the proposal for closure of Y Prentis and transfer all undertakings to Cyfle, a similar scheme in West Wales.	Hannah Jones Will McLean	Policy Development
17 th June 2025	Audit Wales Report on Hospital Discharge (Gwent Wide)	For Audit Wales to present their findings of the inspection report on hospital discharges in Gwent.	Audit Wales Jane Rodgers Councillor Chandler	Performance Monitoring
	Play Sufficiency Assessment Report	To conduct pre-decision scrutiny of the report.	Nick John Councillor Sandles	Pre-decision Scrutiny
22 nd July 2025	Strategic Equality Plan 24/25 AMR	To scrutinise the council's progress in delivering the Strategic Equality Objectives for the year 2024-2025.	Pennie Walker Matt Gatehouse Councillor Sandles	Performance Monitoring
	Adult Services Inspection Report	To present the finding of the Adult Services Inspection.	Jane Rodgers Councillor Chandler	Performance Monitoring
30 th September 2025				
25 th November 2025				
<i>To be confirmed</i>	Planning and Provision of School Places	To scrutinise data and projections for pupil places and the impact of future housing development.	Will Mclean Matthew Jones	Policy Development

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2024-25

People Scrutiny Committee (Meetings at 10am unless stated otherwise)				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
Corporate and Community Plan Items for the Committee's consideration for inclusion into the People Scrutiny Forward Plan:				
Disability Confident Pledge				
Participatory Budgeting Programme				
Race equality action plan for Wales				
LGBTQ+ action plan				
Disability Action Plan				
Gender Equality Action Plan				
Homes for Social Rent and work to bring empty properties back into use				
Review and update shared housing allocations policy				

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2024-25

People Scrutiny Committee (Meetings at 10am unless stated otherwise)				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
	Rapid Rehousing approach/rapid rehousing action plan delivery			
	Care without profit – increase in-county placement options			
	Support effective discharge from hospital – integration between health and social care			
	Provide a high-quality residential care facility for people with dementia			
	Chief Officer for Social Care and Health Annual Report			

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2024-25

People Scrutiny Committee (Meetings at 10am unless stated otherwise)				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
Safeguarding Performance Report				
Develop a broader 14-19 education offer through collaboration with partners				

Action List for People Scrutiny Committee

Meeting:	18th February 2025	
Minute:	Action	Officer / Member
4	<p><u>Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy</u></p> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <p>The Chief Officer for Children and young People to provide the number of home educated children.</p> <p>The Chief Officer for Children and Young People to highlight to Welsh Government the need to consider the safety and monitoring of home educated children, in line with the imminent change in English legislation.</p>	Will Mclean / Dr Morwenna Wagstaff
5	<p><u>Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals</u></p> <p><u>Action:</u></p> <p>The questions and responses would be summarised and presented formally to the Cabinet, together with the draft minutes of the meeting for the Cabinet meeting on 5th March 2025.</p>	Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager

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Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Report Title	Cabinet member	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner
Council	15th May 2025	SAC Membership Report	Martyn Groucutt - Education	To inform Council of SAC recommendations to appoint members of SAC	Sharon Randall-Smith	16-Apr-25
Council	01-Jul-25	RLDP for Adoption	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To adopt the RLDP following receipt of the Inspector's report, making it the County's Development Plan as defined by S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004	Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis	23-Aug-22
Council	26-Jun-25	Licensing Act Policy 2025	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Policy has to be approved by Full Council and it needs to be in place by 1 st July 2025	Linda O Gorman	10-Jan-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Play Sufficient Assessment	Angela Sandles - Engagement Play sufficiency assessment update.			Nick John 28-Mar-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Shire Hall Delivery Stage - Financial Approval	Ben Callard - Resources		Tracey Thomas	25-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Active Gwent Sports Partnership	Angela Sandles - Engagement For Monmouthshire County Council to formally enter into the Active Gwent sport partnership.			Nick John 28-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Review of Monmouth Cluster and proposed statutory consultation	Martyn Groucutt - Education		Matt Jones	3-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Y Prentis Update	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	26-Feb-25
Cabinet	05-May-25	Pavement Café Policy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To adopt the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences	Mark Hand / Paul Keeble	4-Oct-22
Cabinet	05-May-25	Digital, Data and Technology Collaboration	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To develop proposals to build on existing collaborative arrangements in place for the provision of technology services through the Shared Resource Service. Expanding on these to include digital and data services will generate	Peter Davies & Matt Gatehouse & Sian Hayward	14-Mar-25

Council	10-Apr-25	Constitution Review	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	25-Mar-25
Council	10-Apr-25	Senior Pay Review	Ben Callard - Resources		Julie Anthony	3-Mar-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	PSPO Lane Closure to prevent fly tipping & off roading	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Mark Cleaver	13-Mar-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 4	Ben Callard - Resources			
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies - Lead (Cath Fallon)	3-Mar-25
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Reponse to Boundary Commission Electoral Review Consultation	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	12-Feb-25
ICMD	26-Mar-25	Proposal to increase the fee payments to Monmouthshire Foster Carers	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Charlotte Drury	4-Feb-25
ICMD	12-Mar-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 16	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment			
Council	06-Mar-25	Appointment of Chief Officer - Head of Transport - Exempt info	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Deb Hill Howells	21-Jan-25

Council	06-Mar-25	Publication of the Councils Pay Policy	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.	Matt Gatehouse / Pip Green	17-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	Contract Procedure Rules	Ben Callard - Resources		Scott James	9-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	2025/26 Final Budget sign off including CT resolution	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Council	06-Mar-25	2025/26 Capital Strategy & Treasury Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	Approval of a Discretionary Policy for Council Tax Premiums	Ben Callard - Resources		Ruth Donovan	27-Jan-25
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	2025/26 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	2025/26 WCF/Mon Farm Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
ICMD	26-Feb-25	County of Sanctuary: Homes for Ukraine	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To confirm future support arrangements for Ukranian's living in Monmouthshire as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme following changes to the national arrangement for both funding & visas	Richard Drinkwater/Matt Gatehouse	7-Feb-25
ICMD	26-Feb-25	Housing Allocations Policy				
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	2024/25 Revenue and Capital Monitoring Month 9	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24

Cabinet	19-Feb-25	UK Shared Prosperity Fund post March 2025 – financial implications and impact	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	10-Jul-24
ICMD	29-Jan-25	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts final	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	17-Dec-24
Council	23-Jan-25	Council Diary 2025/26	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	
Council	23-Jan-25	GWENT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD (RPB) AREA PLAN AND RPB ANNUAL REPORT 23/24	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Natasha Harris (Torfaen)	
Council	23-Jan-25	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Business case for the purchase of a property in Abergavenny to develop supported accommodation for care experienced young people	Ben Callard - Resources		Jane Rogers	7-Jan-25
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Education Middle Tier	Martyn Groucutt - Education		Will McLean	20-Nov-24
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Decision to transfer Dixton Archive from Monmouth Museum to Herefordshire Record Office			Rachael Rogers	9-Dec-24
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 3	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	13-Jun-24

ICMD	18-Dec-24	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts draft	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Tuesday, 18th February, 2025 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Laura Wright (Chair)
County Councillor Jackie Strong, (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Jan Butler, Simon Howarth, Penny Jones, Maureen Powell, and Peter Strong substituting for Maria Stevens

Also in attendance County Councillors: Martyn Groucutt, Cabinet Member for Education, Ben Callard, Cabinet Member for Resources and Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Jonathan Davies, Head of Finance
Will McLean, Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Diane Corrister, Head of Children's Services

APOLOGIES: County Councillors Maria Stevens

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting at [People Scrutiny Committee - 18th February 2025 - YouTube](#)

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Penny Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest as an Independent Member of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board.

2. Public Open Forum

No public present.

3. Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy

Dr Morwenna Wagstaff and Jacquelyn Elias introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Will McLean, Chief Officer for Children and Young People.

What has been the effect of the vulnerable learner lead role on the numbers of pupils with reduced absences and levels of exclusion?

The vulnerable learner lead role has been in place since March 2023. While there have been high levels of exclusion recently, this trend is mirrored regionally and nationally. There is

ongoing work to manage and reduce exclusions, with schools are now being better supported and challenged regarding exclusions, and there is a greater understanding of using exclusion as one of the tools in their toolkit.

Are there significant cost benefits from the King Henry School model?

The potential benefits for children with additional learning needs are the continuity and consistency offered by the model at the school, which is expected to provide smoother transitions and build long-lasting relationships with key staff. The inclusion of a Specialist Resource Base (SRB) at King Henry School will further support children with additional needs. This can prevent situations from escalating and potentially offer cost savings by keeping children in local mainstream schools.

Are we seeing pressure from children coming out of private education due to increased fees?

There are not significant numbers of learners leaving the independent sector to join MCC schools. However, there is capacity in the system to accommodate any such students, and the inclusion service would support those with additional learning needs through the usual process.

Have we had any children with additional learning needs coming from private education?

There are around 10 children who have moved from private education to Monmouthshire schools. She also mentioned that there is one child with additional learning needs currently going through an assessment process after moving from an independent setting.

How do you identify children of service families and are you confident that you are identifying them all?

The identification of children of service families is done through close work with the Armed Forces Covenant. There is a service family worker who helps in this process. While there is confidence in the identification process, it is acknowledged that there might be hidden cases, especially among reservist families.

What work is done in relation to supporting service children?

The local authority works closely with the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure support for service children. This includes applying for grants where there are clusters of service children and recognizing the unique challenges they face, such as frequent school changes.

Councillor Peter Strong also paid tribute to Raglan School for their excellent work with service children, noting their recent bronze award from the Supporting Service Children in Education Cymru group.

How much work is done in schools with head teachers and staff in identifying young people with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia)?

There is an ongoing program of raising awareness and training in the whole school community for literacy and numeracy aspects of specific difficulties. The Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service supports schools in meeting the needs of children with literacy-based needs or dyslexia. The approach is holistic, focusing on upskilling school staff and making reasonable adjustments in the classroom.

Has the identification and support for children with specific learning difficulties improved, and who decides the direction of support?

The identification and support for children with specific learning difficulties have improved. The process is needs-led, and the Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service plays a key role in supporting schools. The decision on the direction of support is made through a person-centred approach, considering the individual needs of each child.

How do we ensure that children with specific learning difficulties are identified early, especially before transitioning from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3?

The focus is on identifying children early in Key Stage 2 and ensuring consistent support during their transition to secondary education. Professional learning offers and reasonable adjustments are emphasized to support children even before receiving care plans from health services.

How do you identify children of service families, and are you confident that you are identifying them all?

The identification of children of service families is done through close work with the Armed Forces Covenant. There is a service family worker who helps in this process. While there is confidence in the identification process, it is acknowledged that there might be hidden cases, especially among reservist families.

What work is done in relation to supporting service children?

The local authority works closely with the Armed Forces Covenant to ensure support for service children. This includes applying for grants where there are clusters of service children and recognizing the unique challenges they face, such as frequent school changes.

What percentage of Monmouthshire children are having to go outside the county for specialist provision, and how do we ensure the needs of children with low incidence disabilities are met? How do we ensure that children with specific communication needs, such as those who are deaf, receive the best education possible?

The local authority works with the regional service CENTCOM to support children with low incidence disabilities such as deafness or visual impairments. Most children with these needs are included in mainstream settings with appropriate support. The approach is person-centred, involving the child and their family in decision-making. There are very few children who go outside the county for specialist provision.

Do we have statutory responsibility for home-schooled children, and is there a process to physically see these children regularly?

Yes, there is a statutory responsibility for home-schooled children. The local authority has an elective home education officer who visits families when a child is deregistered from school and conducts regular reviews to ensure the education provided is suitable. However, parents can opt out of visits unless there are safeguarding concerns.

How do we ensure that children with additional learning needs are identified and supported effectively?

The local authority uses a needs-led approach, focusing on individual needs rather than labels. The Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service supports schools in identifying and meeting the needs of children with specific learning difficulties. Professional learning and reasonable adjustments are emphasized to support children effectively.

How do we support children with specific learning difficulties in mainstream settings?

The approach includes upskilling school staff, making reasonable adjustments in the classroom, and using technology to support children with severe writing and spelling difficulties. The focus

is on holistic support within the classroom rather than removing children for separate interventions.

How much provision is made for children when they get to the age of 18 onwards?

Under the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act, provision extends from 0 to 25 years. The local authority supports post-16 learners in further education or vocational paths, ensuring continuity of support for those with individual development plans (IDPs).

Do we have the same facilities as in England for supporting children with special needs until they are 26?

Yes, Wales now mirrors the English system, supporting children with additional learning needs up to the age of 25. This includes maintaining IDPs and ensuring appropriate further education placements.

Do we have statutory responsibility for home-schooled children and is there a process to physically see these children regularly?

Yes, there is a statutory responsibility for home-schooled children. The local authority has an elective home education officer who visits families when a child is deregistered from school and conducts regular reviews to ensure the education provided is suitable. However, parents can opt out of visits unless there are safeguarding concerns.

Is the number of home-schooled children rising significantly, and if so, why?

Yes, the number of home-schooled children has increased significantly across Wales. The reasons for this rise are varied, including lifestyle choices and other personal reasons. The local authority monitors these numbers and provides support where needed.

Do we provide funds or allowances to families who home-school their children?

No, the local authority does not provide funds or allowances to families who home-school their children. Occasionally, grants may be available for learning resources, but it is not the local authority's responsibility to provide educational provision for these families.

How much provision is made for children when they get to the age of 18 onwards?

Under the new Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act, provision is made from ages 0 to 25. Monmouthshire supports children post-16, either in college or independent specialist colleges, and ensures that they receive appropriate education and vocational training.

Do home-schooled children miss out on social interactions with other children?

While home-schooled children may not attend a traditional school, many are part of networks and groups that provide social interactions through various activities and events. These networks help ensure that children still have opportunities for socialisation.

What strategy do we have for identifying children educated 'other than school'? Is there a process to address those needs if it's felt they aren't being met at home?

The strategy for identifying children educated 'other than school' (EOTAS) involves several key components. EOTAS includes children receiving education outside of a school setting and Monmouthshire has an updated policy out for consultation. The elective home education (EHE) officer within the Education Welfare Service plays a crucial role in tracking and monitoring the numbers of homeschooled children and exploring the reasons behind parents' choices to homeschool. Support and monitoring for homeschooled children are emphasised, with a focus on understanding whether parents are choosing to homeschool due to unmet needs and supporting and challenging this decision when necessary.

If a homeschooled child has an Individual Development Plan (IDP), the local authority must review and decide whether to maintain it, ensuring that the additional provision identified in the IDP is met. Discussions with parents focus on how they plan to meet the additional provision, and if they are unable to do so, the local authority may intervene to ensure the child's needs are met. If the local authority feels a child is not receiving suitable education through homeschooling, they may take further steps through the Education Welfare Service to address the situation.

In terms of children of offenders – how are they identified and what specific support is in place for them?

Children of offenders are typically identified through schools. A person-centred approach is used to assess their support needs and those of their families. Often, a trauma-informed approach is applied to help these children understand and cope with their situation, especially if the offense has had a significant impact on them. A team around the child is formed to provide necessary support, which may include educational psychology services, school-based counsellors, or other relevant professionals. The needs of these children can be complex and vary greatly, requiring tailored support to help them develop a sense of self separate from their offending parent.

Is there a process to regularly see the children who aren't in school? Do we flag to any other organisations or authorities?

The Education Welfare Service has a dedicated Elective Home Education (EHE) officer who visits families when a child is deregistered from school for homeschooling. This officer conducts initial visits and follows up within a few months to ensure the education plan is progressing. Additionally, there is a "Children Missing in Education" policy to ensure that children who come off school rolls are accounted for and receiving suitable education. The EHE officer also offers regular reviews and monitoring of the homeschooling situation to ensure that the education provided is suitable, effective, and efficient. However, parents can currently opt out of visits from the local authority, which poses a challenge. If there are any safeguarding concerns, these are referred to the appropriate systems for further action.

How many children are home educated currently? Is the number significantly raised? Should we be worried about the number being homeschooled?

There are around 150 children being electively home educated in Monmouthshire, which is a number that has grown over time. Parents may choose to homeschool for a variety of reasons, including lifestyle choices and other personal reasons. The Council ensures contact with homeschooling families, providing support and ensuring they can access their own support networks, but does not provide funds or allowances for homeschooling. Sometimes grants are available and learning resources and materials may be provided.

Does home schooling have an effect on children's social development?

Whilst homeschooled children are not attending school, many are part of strong networks and social groups, which organise events and activities, allowing children to socialize and participate in educational outings, such as museum visits. Elective home education is often a conscious lifestyle choice by parents, and the Council aims to ensure these children receive the necessary support.

Chair's Summary:

The Committee would like to keep a watching brief on trends related to exclusions, and to keep an eye on numbers coming in from private school. There is an action for the Chief Officer for Children and young People to provide the specific number of home educated children.

We ask the Chief Officer for Children and Young People to highlight to Welsh Government the need to consider the safety and monitoring of home educated children, in line with the imminent change in English legislation – action for Chief Officer for Children and Young People).

4. Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals

Cabinet Member Ben Callard delivered a presentation, introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Jonathan Davies, Cabinet Member Ian Chandler, Jenny Jenkins and Tyrone Stokes.

Are there any caveats on the £2.9 million expected from the Welsh Government?

Some of the additional funding from the Welsh Government is expected to be earmarked specifically for social care and health. This earmarked funding will offset other funding, allowing redistribution to other services as required. The exact details are still being finalised, but there is confidence in closing the remaining gap without further impact on services or Council tax.

When will the police and Crime Commissioner's precept be available to the public?

The police and community councils have recently provided their precept proposals. This information is being processed and will be included in the final budget papers, which will be presented to the cabinet on March 5th and to the Council on March 6th.

Do we charge for the administration of the police precept?

No, the local authority does not charge an administration fee for the police precept due to regulatory restrictions. The arrangements around the Council tax base and collection rate are strictly regulated.

How does the £125,000 staffing review saving within the home care teams equate with the increased demand and pressure on home care teams?

The saving is part of a broader strategy to right-size care packages and support people within their communities for as long as possible. The review aims to consolidate existing vacancies without compromising the quality of care or delaying transfers of care from hospitals. The Cabinet Member confirmed they believe it is sustainable without impacting service delivery. Officers added that they are confident in maintaining service levels despite the vacancies, as they have been managing with these vacancies for a considerable time and are changing the way services are delivered.

What changes are planned for youth clubs in rural areas?

The plan is to withdraw the standalone rural youth service provision in the South of Monmouthshire and focus on the youth service provision within the four main towns (Caldicot, Chepstow, Abergavenny, and Monmouth). The services required in rural areas will be absorbed by the existing provisions in these towns.

How successful are we in getting maximum Continuing Healthcare (CHC) funding from the NHS?

Securing CHC funding remains a challenge, particularly for younger people with mental health and learning disabilities. While there is more success with older people, the process is complex and often involves long-standing disputes. The local authority is actively lobbying Welsh Government to address these challenges.

Is any of the increased investment in key infrastructure specified for bridge maintenance, particularly the chain bridge?

The work required for the Chainbridge is not specifically covered in the budget. However, a grant application has been submitted to the Resilient Roads Fund to cover the necessary work, and the outcome is expected by the end of March.

How do we budget for the costs associated with bed blocking and how the social care budget manages these costs, particularly when there are delays in discharging patients from hospitals?

The local authority provides care packages based on needs assessments, and the costs are part of the normal budget for externally commissioned services. Negotiations with the health board determine whether costs are covered by social care or continuing healthcare funding.

Does the revenue from car parking fees have to be reinvested into car parking?

The revenue from car parking fees is ring-fenced and goes back into highways, not specifically into car parks.

Please can you explain what the £46,000 allocated for the Together Works project in Caldicot is?

The Together Works in Caldicot was funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund, not the revenue budget. The Shared Prosperity Fund has been cut, putting services at risk, but Cabinet Member Paul Griffiths has been working on a solution to keep Together Works open. The £46,000 mentioned was the remaining allocation from the Shared Prosperity Fund.

What are the savings related to Welsh language services?

The savings are achieved by utilising technology to deliver Welsh translation services more cost-effectively, reducing the labour content while maintaining quality through human validation.

How are the savings in Mon Life's budget being achieved, particularly in leisure services?

The savings in Mon Life's budget are achieved through various measures, including an options appraisal for the Old Station in Tintern, reducing subsidies for the Borough Theatre, and increasing income from leisure centres. The income shortfall across Mon Life is due to the diverse nature of its portfolio, which includes both commercial and non-commercial services. Leisure centres have seen strong income and increasing memberships. The plan is to continue this trend to provide additional income.

Where are the £110,000 savings for community hubs going to come from and are there any redundancies planned? Is the resulting disservice to the community worth it, as reducing opening hours might negatively impact residents, as these services are crucial for the community.

The Cabinet Member explained that savings will come from reducing the opening hours of the four main hubs (Abergavenny, Caldicot, Monmouth, and Chepstow). There are no changes proposed for Usk and Gilwern hubs. The importance of the services provided by the hubs was acknowledged and it was stated that if the financial situation allowed, there would be consideration given to not reduce the opening hours. However, due to the budget pressures, the savings are necessary, the aim being to manage demand, while bringing a budget saving forward.

Could the ceasing of insurance for cybersecurity be explained?

The cybersecurity insurance policy costs just under £100,000 a year and is considered not to represent good value for money. The local authority will self-insure in the event of a data breach, and this decision does not impact the cybersecurity provisions in place, which remain robust and are managed in collaboration with the SRS.

Does the SRS (Shared Resource Service) has its own insurance for cybersecurity?

It is unlikely the SRS would be covered specifically for the costs associated with a data breach, as this type of insurance is quite niche.

Are there plans to extend the opening times of leisure centres to support the trend of increasing memberships?

Despite the reduced opening hours implemented last year, the leisure centres have continued to see strong growth in memberships. Extending the opening hours would incur additional costs, which would reverse the savings achieved and that there are no current plans to revert to the previous opening hours. Should the financial situation improve, extending the opening hours could be reconsidered, however, given the current budget constraints, maintaining the reduced hours is necessary.

:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) been undertaken for the withdrawal for the standalone rural youth service provision in the south of Monmouthshire?

Yes, Integrated Impact Assessments (IIA's) have been undertaken for all budgetary proposals.

Are the documents relating to the capital side of the budget available, to detail specific projects like school modernization and infrastructure improvements?

All the information related to the capital budget proposals is available on the website if there are further questions ahead of the Council meeting, Cabinet Members and officers are available to assist.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair advised that the questions and responses would be summarised and presented formally to the Cabinet, together with the draft minutes of the meeting for the Cabinet meeting on 5th March 2025.

5. People Scrutiny Committee Forward work Programme and Action List

Councillor Jackie Strong requested 'Age-friendly status for Monmouthshire' be added to the forward work programme, with an invitation to the Older Person's Commissioner. It was felt the Committee should have an oversight of the Council's plans for achieving age-friendly status and actions taken over the past year.

Councillor Laura Wright (Chair) raised mentioned discussing with officers the specifics of what the committee wants to cover regarding Tudor Street and when it should be brought to the committee.

In terms of actions from the last meeting in respect of the Homeseach policy, further information would be sent to the committee.

Councillor Simon Howarth highlighted that the forward work programme had many items listed with unconfirmed dates and requested this be taken up with officers and relevant Cabinet Members to ensure there was a clear direction.

6. Cabinet and Council Planner

This was noted.

7. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st January 2025

The minutes were agreed, proposed by Councillor strong and seconded by Councillor Jones.

8. Next Meeting: 2nd April 2025 at 10.00am

The meeting ended at **12.49 pm**

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Tuesday, 4th March, 2025 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Laura Wright (Chair)
County Councillor Jackie Strong (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Jan Butler,
Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth,
Penny Jones, Maureen Powell and Peter Strong
substituting for Maria Stevens

Also in attendance County Councillors: Paul
Griffiths, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a
Sustainable Economy and Mary Ann Brocklesby,
Leader, Jill Bond and Tony Easson

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Peter Davies, Acting Chief Executive
Will McLean, Chief Officer for Children and Young
People
Hannah Jones, Head Of Economy, Employment
And Skills

APOLOGIES: County Councillor Maria Stevens

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting at [Agenda for People Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 4th March, 2025, 10.00 am - Modern Council](#)

1. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Jackie Strong and Councillor Tony Easson declared a personal but non-prejudicial interests, in that they facilitate a group on Fridays in Caldicot, but advised they have no relationship or friendship with anyone from Together Works. Councillor Jill Bond declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest as a long-time friend and supporter of Together Works. Councillor Jan Butler declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest, in that she is a member of a community centre at Goytre which had received some Shared Prosperity Funding.

2. Call In of the decision of Cabinet of 19th February 2025 regarding UK Shared Prosperity Fund 2025/26

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. She asked the Scrutiny Manager to briefly explain the call-in process that would be followed at the meeting, in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The Scrutiny Manager advised that the meeting had been scheduled to debate a decision that had been made but had not taken effect concerning UK Shared Prosperity Fund Allocation 2025-2026.

It was advised that on 19th February 2025, the Cabinet considered a report that informed them of UK Governments one-year extension to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and sought approval for the granting of investment from UKSPF for 2025/26 to projects listed in Appendix one of the Cabinet report.

The Cabinet decision report provides full context of the key issues relating to the decision taken on 19th February 2025, outlined in section 3 together with an options appraisal provided under section 5, accessed via [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 19th February, 2025, 4.30 pm - Modern Council](#) .

For context, the decision that had been resolved by Cabinet on 19th February 2025 was to accept the following recommendations:

That Cabinet:

- a. Approves the recommendations of the Monmouthshire People & Place partnership in relation to the investment of funds from the local authority's allocation for 2025/26.
- b. Approves the draft local investment plan (appendix one) and projects contained within.
- c. Authorises the commencement of activity as outlined in the draft local investment plan from 1st April 2025, ahead of the regional lead local authority (Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC) receiving an updated Memorandum of Understanding from UK Government.

The Chair asked the members who had called in the decision to present their reasons for calling in the decision, as follows:

- Insufficient scrutiny, transparency and accountability as to how projects are identified and evaluated and the process and criteria against which decisions are made. No apparent assessment of the realisation of benefits, as defined in each initial project proposal and where projects are within their lifecycle.
- Little visible assessment of the impact and consideration of mitigation for projects being ceased in the Integrated Impact Assessment, or elsewhere.

The Call-in Members outlined their reasons for calling the decision in (as above) and made the following additional points:

Councillor Bond:

- Emphasised the importance of council processes ensuring correct, robust, and transparent decisions for public fund allocation through scrutiny.
- Highlighted the "Together Works" project as an example of a valuable community project in Caldicot.

Councillor Easson:

- Councillor Easson expressed that he felt that there should have been earlier scrutiny of the issue rather than it being addressed through a call-in.

- Councillor Easson mentioned his concern about not being able to discuss background information not in the public domain that he felt was relevant to the decision.

Councillor Howarth:

- Councillor Howarth felt there was a lack of transparency about the Shared Prosperity Fund application process and insufficient scrutiny overall.
- He emphasised the need for long-term viability and business cases for projects funded by grants, highlighting the issue of sustainability when grant funding ends.
- Councillor Howarth called for better communication and involvement of members in decision-making processes, especially for significant funding decisions.

Response by the Cabinet Member:

The Chair asked the Cabinet Member Councillor Paul Griffiths to respond. The Cabinet Member responded by:

- Acknowledging the scrutiny committee's role in considering the decision-making process for the Shared Prosperity Fund and emphasising the need for scrutiny, transparency, and accountability.
- Explaining that the fund was established in 2022 as the UK government's successor to the EU structural funds, with the intention to centralise control and limit the role of devolved administrations and local authorities.
- Highlighting the haste in decision-making due to the transition from EU funds to the Shared Prosperity Fund, which led to limited engagement with communities and a focus on rolling forward previous programs.
- Detailing the process of submitting business cases for funding, the significant cut in funding (46%) announced in December 2022, and the subsequent need for rapid decision-making by the partnership board.
- Suggesting there is a lack of a clear mechanism for accountability to the council, as the partnership board is accountable to local government officers in RCT and UK government civil servants.
- Advising that he felt that the current governance arrangements are over-centralised, bureaucratic, and lack effective local scrutiny and accountability and suggesting that the scrutiny committee may want to consider new and better arrangements for future funding, engaging with Welsh government to create more transparent and accountable processes.

Key points raised by the Committee Members and visiting Members:

Cabinet Member Paul Griffiths, Chief Officer Will McLean and Hannah Jones answered the members' questions:

- A member asked for reassurance on whether the existing projects still require funding and if the money could be spent better elsewhere within the allotted prosperity

funding headings. He expressed concern about the distribution of funding across Monmouthshire and whether it is being allocated to the most appropriate areas. He enquired about the work carried out to assess the impact and necessity of the currently funded projects since the funding stream commenced. He questioned the role of Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) as the lead partner for the delivery of the overall scheme and how much influence RCT has over the allocation of funds to certain types of projects.

The Cabinet Member explained that Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) performs an administrative role, checking that the required information is provided and forwarding it to the UK government without making political judgments on the allocations. He acknowledged that the process was constrained by time, limiting the ability to scan widely for new projects. However, he expressed confidence that the best possible job was done within these constraints. The Chief Officer reiterated that RCT's role is to hold the piece for the 10 local authorities and interface with the UK central government, ensuring that business cases are constructed and verified positively. He emphasised that the time frame for decisions was severely restricted

due to the one-year extension, but he shared confidence that the right decisions were taken through the cabinet process.

- A member summarised the context of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, noting the changes in funding sources due to the withdrawal of the European fund and the involvement of the Welsh and Westminster governments. She expressed uncertainty about the mix of funding shared between the 10 local authorities and the role of Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) as the lead authority. She questioned why there had been no scrutiny since the cabinet decision in June and why none of the scrutiny committee chairs had brought it to their committees. She highlighted concerns about the lack of scrutiny and transparency in the process, emphasising the importance of these projects for the quality-of-life services provided to Monmouthshire residents. She criticised the cabinet for acting unilaterally without proper scrutiny and questioned the lack of forethought in the process.

The Chair clarified that the cabinet decision was not taken in June; rather, the item was added to the cabinet's forward work planner in June and that the actual decision was made in February. The Cabinet Member then explained that the allocation to individual authorities is done by a group of civil servants in Whitehall, not by RCT. He expressed concern about the formula used for allocation, which gives Monmouthshire about 50% less funding than other local authorities in Wales. He emphasised the need for better scrutiny and transparency in future arrangements, especially when the responsibility reverts to the Welsh government.

The officer provided specific figures for the allocation for 2025-2026: £2,399,940 in total, with £1,730,400 in revenue and £665,000 in capital. She explained that each individual authority across the UK has its allocation, and in Wales, the southeast region is made up of 10 authorities with RCT as the lead.

- A member expressed disturbance about the centralisation of the process and sought clarification on whether the mix of funding from Whitehall and Welsh Government had changed. She asked if there was a similar formula for the Welsh element of the funding and whether Monmouthshire was at the bottom of the pile for this fund as well.

The Chief Officer clarified that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UK SPF) is entirely funded by the UK government, with no investment from the Welsh government. He mentioned that

in the next round of succession funding post-Brexit, it is likely that the Welsh government will have a greater role in its administration and spending decisions. He emphasised that the current funding comes directly from Westminster to the local authorities, without any Welsh government involvement.

- A member questioned whether the scrutiny process itself was being scrutinised, noting that large ticket items of public spending should be discussed at scrutiny. She highlighted the issue of transparency and consultation and asked if large sums of public money were being spent in haste by an autocratic decision process, possibly by one Cabinet Member, and enquired about how to change this.

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that the process is not as it should be, citing issues with haste and lack of transparency. He explained that decision-making is done by a board, not by an individual cabinet member, and that the local accountability of the board is poor due to the arrangements set by the UK government. He emphasised the need for urgent debate in Wales to improve these arrangements. The Chief Officer clarified that the work has not been done by a single elected member but through a proper board process involving a wide range of public service organisations. He highlighted that the decision was taken to a full cabinet meeting to ensure transparency.

The Chair reiterated that it is the collective responsibility of members to suggest things for the forward work programme. A suggestion for more frequent scrutiny meetings could be considered in due course.

- A member asked how it was decided that RCT should be the lead authority in the area.

The officer explained that the decision for Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) to be the lead authority was likely made through a call out across authorities, probably at the chief executive level, and it was agreed that RCT would take the lead.

- A member emphasised the need to consider the impact of the Cabinet's decision on employees, as some projects might either fold or progress. She highlighted the importance of accountability and the need for local authorities to have an expanded role in scrutinising projects meaningfully. She also stressed the necessity of taking into account the employees affected by these decisions.
- A member emphasised that call-ins should address whether the Cabinet acted in the best interests of Monmouthshire's citizens. He observed that no concerns were raised by opposition group leaders during the 2022 discussions on the Shared Prosperity Fund or the February 2025 cabinet meeting. He suggested that much of the current discussion is not relevant to the call-in, as it attempts to scrutinise entities beyond the committee's control, such as the Regional Partnership Board and Westminster. He also expressed a desire to see the Together Works project continue sustainably and suggested moving the discussion to other scrutiny committees for a more appropriate examination.
- A member enquired whether the projects funded last year were aware that the funds could possibly stop at the end of March and if they had exit plans in place for such a scenario. She emphasised the importance of considering the impact on MCC employees who would be in limbo if the committee decided to send the decision back to the cabinet or to full council. She urged the committee to reflect carefully on their decision, considering the potential effects on employees' job security.

The officer confirmed that all projects funded last year were fully aware of the funding time frames and were encouraged to have exit plans in place due to the time-limited nature of the funding.

- A member expressed appreciation for the explanation provided by the Cabinet Member regarding the process and the challenges faced due to the tight timelines. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the current process, highlighting the significant amount of money involved and the need for fairness in the allocation of funds within communities in Wales. He questioned the applications and business cases for the projects, suggesting that some of them might not meet the necessary criteria and that better projects might have been overlooked. He emphasised the importance of transparency and the justification for the call-in, stating that it was necessary to ensure proper scrutiny and to address any potential issues with the allocation process.
- The Chair noted that the call-in grounds referred to “no apparent assessment of the realisation of benefits as defined in the initial project proposal and where projects are within their life cycle” and asked for a comment.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the projects were asked to submit business cases in December, which included information on the impact of different levels of funding. The People and Place Partnership considers the impact in terms of the delivery of the current projects, their financial profile and their performance, but he acknowledged that the Cabinet Paper could have more fully reflected that consideration.

- Members questioned if the committee should go into a closed session to discuss exempt information. Following a brief break to consider the options, the Chair and Acting Chief Executive advised against moving into a closed session, stating that it would not be appropriate given the nature of the call-in, which focuses on transparency and scrutiny. He also mentioned that it would stray outside the scope of the call-in itself.
- A member asked if six members of the partnership board are MCC employees and if they had complete or incorrect information about all projects. She questioned why Monmouthshire residents' money was being sent out of the county to Hartpury when there are farmer training facilities in Usk. She enquired about the use of integrated impact assessments, specifically if they assess the impact of ceasing projects and their life cycle benefits.

The Cabinet Member explained that the process allows for organisations outside Monmouthshire to bid for providing services within the county. The important criterion is that the service benefits Monmouthshire residents, regardless of the provider's location. The officer clarified that the People and Place Partnership Board has three MCC representatives, not six. Other attendees at the board meetings support with minutes and papers but do not participate in decision-making. She explained that the integrated impact assessment (IIA) was written around the projects being taken forward in the draft local investment plan. The partnership board regularly reviews the impact of current projects on communities, businesses, and people in Monmouthshire. She acknowledged the questioning around the impact on projects that are not continuing and mentioned that the IIA has been amended since the decision on Together Works. The updated IIA and local investment plan reflect the significant funding cuts and focus on the projects that have secured funding.

- A member emphasised that the IIA should assess the impact of both continuing and ceased projects. She suggested that even a line in the IIA acknowledging the impact on ceased projects and mentioning any mitigation measures would be helpful.

- A member questioned the process of awarding funds to an establishment in England (Hartpury College) and whether a local Monmouthshire provider would have had a chance to apply given the short application timeframe. He expressed concerns about the fairness and transparency of the process and sought clarification on whether local providers were given a fair opportunity to bid for the funds.

The Cabinet Member explained that the last time organizations were invited to bid for providing services was in 2022, and Hartpury College was the only organisation that offered to provide business support to farming businesses in Monmouthshire. The decision to continue funding Hartpury College was based on the positive evaluation of their service. He acknowledged that if there had been more time for an open bidding process, other providers might have had the opportunity to bid. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that future processes allow sufficient time for open bidding and consideration of all potential providers.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair noted the consensus among the committee members, acknowledging that while there were concerns about the process of the Shared Prosperity Fund, the process itself is not within the local authority's control. Further examination of the process could be achieved through joint scrutiny of the People and the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committees.

The Chair advised the Committee that they had three options available to them, which were:

1. To accept the decision
2. To refer the decision to the Cabinet Member for reconsideration (with reasons)
3. To refer the decision to full Council

The Committee asked for a recorded vote on the above options. Following the recorded vote, the Committee unanimously agreed to accept the Cabinet Member's decision.

6. To confirm the date of the next meeting as 2nd April 2025.

The meeting ended at **12.05 pm**

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