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County Hall
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Usk
NP15 1GA

Monday, 2 February 2026

Notice of meeting

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

**Tuesday, 10th February, 2026 at 10.00 am,
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK**

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.	Declarations of Interest	
3.	Public Open Forum	
4.	Financial Update - To scrutinise the budgetary position (revenue and capital) for services falling within the committee's remit.	1 - 62
5.	Draft Revenue & Capital budget proposals (invite other members) - To scrutinise the 2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals.	63 - 80
6.	Council and Cabinet Work Planner	81 - 88
7.	Performance and Overview Work Planner and Action Lists	89 - 100
8.	To confirm minutes of previous meetings • 18th November 2025 • 3rd December 2025 (Special) • 27th January 2026 (Special)	101 - 122
9.	Next Meeting: 10th March 2026	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Jill Bond, West End;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Rachel Buckler, Devauden;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor John Crook, Magor East with Undy;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Steven Garratt, Overmonnow;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Meirion Howells, Llanbadoc & Usk;, Independent
County Councillor Alistair Neill, Gobion Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martin Newell, Town;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Paul Pavia, Mount Pleasant;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Peter Strong, Rogiet;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
Clare Werrett

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Welsh Language

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

Public Open Forum

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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

Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

Our purpose

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

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

Fairness. We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and

consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

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

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

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

Role of the Pre-meeting

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?
- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
 - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

Questions for the Meeting

Scrutinising Performance

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?

Scrutinising Policy

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

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SUBJECT: 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGET – FINANCIAL UPDATE
MEETING: PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE: 10th February 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Scrutiny and Cabinet with an update of the progress against the Council's revenue budget for the 2025/26 financial year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- i. That the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee scrutinise the latest revenue budget forecast for the 2025/26 financial year;
- ii. That the Committee as part of their role assesses whether effective budget monitoring is in place; the extent to which budgets are spent within the agreed budget and policy framework, including the reasonableness of the explanation for variances and; consider the achievement of progress in meeting budget savings targets.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS (to Cabinet):

- 3.1 That Cabinet note a forecast revenue budget underspend at update 3 of £1,146,000, representing a variance of 0.5% of total budget. This is a significant improvement of £1,117,000 from the forecast underspend of £29,000 that was reported at the second financial update.
- 3.2 The improved forecast is primarily driven by changes in Social Care where the ability to maximise the impact of grant funding to meet core expenditure has benefited the forecast by around £600,000, alongside improvements in debt financing budgets of around £500,000.

- 3.3 That Cabinet notes that £800,000 of any confirmed underspend that is realised at year-end will be required to maintain the Council fund reserve at a level of 5% of the proposed net revenue budget for 2026/27.
- 3.4 That Cabinet notes the projected increase of £3,426,000 in the cumulative schools' reserves deficit, a deterioration of £456,000 compared to the previous forecast. School balances are expected to close the financial year at a deficit of £7,517,000, with nineteen of thirty-five schools anticipated to have a deficit balance. Further detail of individual schools' movements are shown in **Appendix 4**.
- 3.5 That Cabinet notes that 75% of the forecast deficit relates to three schools - King Henry VIII 3-19 School, Chepstow Comprehensive School and the Pupil Referral Service, with all three of these schools being a focus of support and challenge from the Local Authority to ensure budgets return to a surplus within the agreed recovery plan timeframe.
- 3.6 That Cabinet notes the forecast Capital budget expenditure for the year of £50.8 million, alongside projected slippage of schemes into 2026/27 of £21.0 million. No significant variances are anticipated at the current time with minor underspends of £35,000 reported across a small number of grant funded schemes. Additionally, the Council's capital contingency budget of £1.3m has not been required and will be released with the funding utilised as part of the 2026/27 budget proposals.
- 3.7 That Cabinet approves the capital budget revisions outlined in **Appendix 5** that have resulted from the receipt of new, or variation of existing grants and external contributions that weren't included in the original capital budget approved at the start of the year. Under the Council's financial procedures, any changes to the capital budget that are fully funded by grants or external contributions must be approved by Cabinet.
- 3.8 That Cabinet notes that as we move towards the remaining weeks of the financial year, many of the risks highlighted in previous updates begin to fall away. There remain a small number of specific budgetary risks that do still have the ability to further impact upon the revenue budget during 2025/26:
- Inflation increased by 3.4% in the year to December 2025, exceeding government targets and budget projections, which will impact costs for the remainder of the financial year.
 - Debt recovery rates are declining, especially in Council Tax and Social Care.
 - The number of Council tax discounts and exemptions continue to rise which impacts overall collection values.
 - The growing cumulative schools' reserves deficit weakens the Council's financial resilience.

4 KEY ISSUES:

4.1 Context

- 4.2 The 2025/26 budget round reflected the sustained period of increased levels and complexity of demand within School ALN provision, and Adults and Children's social care, which were addressed through significant base budget increases.
- 4.3 The budget set by Council in March also needed to consider other headwinds which continued to impact the Councils service operating environment:
- The wider socio-economic landscape and cost of living challenges that continue to have an impact on our communities, with a consequential increase in demand for Council services, and impact upon income generating services.
 - The wider public sector challenges which impact upon Council services, notably within Health where efforts to improve patient pathways impact upon the level and complexity of demand for Social care.
 - Headline inflation rates remaining above UK Government targets, with some discrete areas of Council services continuing to experience cost pressures on supplies and services.
 - In continuing efforts to combat inflation, interest rates have remained higher for longer and above previous UK Government forecasts.
- 4.4 The above results in a growing need for supportive Council services, pressure on income generating services, increased risks around debt recovery, and a higher-cost operating environment.

4.5 Latest revenue budget position

- 4.6 Full Council approved a total revenue expenditure budget of £236,778,000 for the 2025/26 financial year. This is inclusive of £28,352,000 of precepts or levies for Police, Fire, and Community Council services that are paid directly to these organisations. The Council's net controllable revenue budget spent on delivering Council services is therefore £208,426,000.
- 4.7 The latest financial update indicates significant improvement against the revenue budget from earlier forecasts:

Financial Update	Forecast Over / (Under) Spend
1	£533,000
2	(£29,000)

3	(£1,146,000)
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4.8 This is broken down at a directorate level as follows:

Table 1: Revenue budget forecast by directorate

Directorate	Budget £000's	Forecast £000's	Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) £000's	% Variance to budget
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	78,187	77,710	(477)	-0.6%
Learning, Skills & Economy	72,635	73,098	462	0.6%
Infrastructure	21,462	20,989	(473)	-2.2%
Place & Community Wellbeing	6,223	6,140	(83)	-1.3%
People, Performance & Partnerships	6,273	6,280	6	0.1%
Legal & Governance	3,089	3,165	76	2.5%
Resources	8,803	8,651	(151)	-1.7%
Debt financing, reserves, precepts & levies, insurances	40,106	40,579	473	1.2%
Expenditure to be financed	236,778	236,612	(166)	-0.1%
Financing	(236,778)	(237,758)	(980)	-0.4%
Total	0	(1,146)	(1,146)	-0.5%

4.9 The principal areas of variance across service budgets are noted below, along with a summary schedule at **Appendix 1** at the end of this report, and a more detailed explanation outlined in **Appendix 2**.

4.10 The position within **Adult Social Care** reflects a significantly improved outlook, with the service now forecasting a year-end underspend of £861,000, representing a £535,000 positive movement since Update 2. This improvement is largely attributable to the in-year allocation of external funding - most notably £914,000 from the Pathways of Care Transformation Grant, and full utilisation of the Regional Integration Fund. Alongside these financial gains, the service has delivered operational efficiencies, including reduced internal care-at-home staffing expenditure and progress in expanding reablement capacity. The service has also exceeded its case review

savings target, achieving £313,000 against a target of £250,000. These actions demonstrate continued focus on cost avoidance, early intervention and supporting individuals to maximise independence.

- 4.11 Despite the improved position, underlying demand pressures remain considerable. Residential care activity continues to rise, with seven additional placements since update 2 and a total of 367 placements across the County, reflecting demographic pressures and increasing complexity, particularly related to later-stage dementia. Demand for care at home is also increasing, coinciding with ongoing winter pressures and sustained hospital discharge activity. Further challenges remain around progressing CHC cases for younger adults with mental health or learning disabilities - a Wales-wide issue impacting the ability to transfer eligible costs to health budgets. While debt linked to unpaid care charges has remained stable over the last period, it continues to require active monitoring and intervention.
- 4.12 **Children's Social care** has experienced its first significant rise in the number of children looked after for several years, increasing from 190 at update 1 to 199 at the end of October, and to 206 by the end of December, including 16 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC). Despite this increase, the longer-term trend remains relatively stable, but service activity continues to be intense, with 28 children becoming looked after and 23 leaving care in the first six months alone - levels of movement that have continued throughout the year. The financial impact has been partially mitigated by prioritising fostering and kinship placements in line with the placement strategy, and in part by UASC grant funding.
- 4.13 A significant ongoing cost pressure relates to the £368,000 over spend on external counsel and barrister fees, reflecting the complexity and necessity of public law family court proceedings, including two exceptionally complex cases this year. Further pressure has arisen from a £332,000 reduction in the Welsh Government grant that supports Family Support services. Despite the financial impact, Family Support provision has been maintained due to its critical role in safe family functioning, preventing escalation into care and supporting safe reunification. This area remains central to cost avoidance, given the high cost of placements, and forms part of the 2026/27 budget proposals. The service remains on track to achieve 100% of its £1.9 million savings linked to practice changes and placement development. However, the financial position remains highly sensitive to any new high-cost demand entering the system - an area that inherently carries unpredictability and continues to represent a material risk to the service's overall budget sustainability.
- 4.14 **Housing Services** is forecasting an overspend of £501,000, a further deterioration of £135,000 since the last update. The overspend is driven primarily by the delayed opening of Severn View, alongside several voids within existing provision, higher maintenance and repair costs, make-good works following the hand-back of B&B units, rising costs within private leasing arrangements, reduced income from rent arrears and bad debt, and staffing pressures. These issues reflect the inherent complexity and cost of providing emergency and temporary accommodation for individuals with high support needs. Although the service has benefitted from a £254,000 reduction in Housing Benefit clawback, this has not been sufficient to offset the wider cost pressures. Mitigating actions include reducing voids where

possible and progressing the new temporary accommodation model at Severn View, which is expected to ease future financial pressures depending on demand. Positively, the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation remains at its lowest level for many years, indicating progress in providing more stable and appropriate accommodation, and reducing reliance on the most expensive forms of provision.

- 4.15 **Learning, Skills & Economy** is forecasted to overspend of £462,000, an adverse variance of £293,000 since the last update due to an increase in the number of pupils accessing Additional Learning Needs (ALN) bespoke support, which remains a costly option due to the use of third party providers. The draft 2026/27 budget proposals aim to open a local SEMH (Social & Emotional Mental Health) provision which will be able to support these pupils and reduce future costs.
- 4.16 **Facilities and Fleet** is forecasting a £158,000 overspend with higher maintenance, fuel, hire and software costs leading to a forecast overspend in fleet operations. Passenger Transport is also forecast to overspend, mainly from pressure on external operator costs caused by shortfalls in distance-eligibility savings, revised pupil numbers, and routes deemed unsafe. Additional pressures stem from PRS contract growth, higher season-ticket costs and unplanned safer-walking-route assessments, with internal operations also experiencing income loss.
- 4.17 **Schools Catering** is reporting a £214,000 underspend, driven by part-year staffing savings, higher UFSM income and reduced supplies costs - with the service is on track to deliver 791,000 meals this year with a 71% take-up. **Decarbonisation** shows a £173,000 underspend, reflecting strong income performance from the solar farm and wider renewables portfolio supported by favourable ROC rates and improved system efficiency, alongside staffing savings, though partially offset by a £102K pressure from a prior-year corporate mileage saving that will not materialise this year. **Corporate energy savings** of £123,000 are forecast due to lower-than-budgeted energy consumption.
- 4.18 **Leisure and Wellbeing** is forecasting a £200,000 underspend, driven by stronger-than-expected income across leisure facilities. Quarter 3 performance has been particularly positive, with the annual membership campaign delivering high take-up and boosting projected income, while Outdoor Adventure, Sports Development and Play services have seen notable improvements.
- 4.19 **Development Management and Building Control** is forecasting a £127,000 overspend, driven by reduced building control fee income, higher software costs, and lower-than-anticipated planning income. **Highways Development and Car Parks** is projecting a £206,000 overspend, primarily due to under-recovery of fixed-penalty income, the filling of previously vacant posts, and higher publication costs linked to new fees and charges. The adverse movement since update 2 reflects £30,000 in additional maintenance costs to replace pay-and-display machines damaged during Storm Claudia, free December parking introduced as part of the storm response, and an overall downturn in pay-and-display income.

- 4.20 **Increased cost of Employers' National Insurance Contributions (NIC's)** - For the purposes of budget setting, it was assumed that the additional £3.32m pressure relating to the increase in employers' NIC's for directly employed staff would be fully funded. Confirmation was received in July 2025 that Monmouthshire would receive £2.56m of funding, a shortfall of £761k or 23%. Whilst it has been confirmed that the funding will transfer into the Welsh Government grant base for 2026/27, it was necessary to consider the recurrent cost pressure of £761k as part of the budget process for 2026/27.
- 4.21 The **National Joint Council (NJC) pay award** for 2025/26 was agreed in July at 3.2% which is marginally above the budgeted assumption of 3.1%. The resultant additional cost pressure of £0.1m was funded in full by in-year grant support from Welsh Government that was announced in October 2025.
- 4.22 Welsh Government confirmed a 4% **pay award for teaching staff**, implemented from September 2025. This increase is above the Councils budget assumption of a 3.1% increase and represents an additional cost of around £225,000. Welsh Government have provided additional in-year grant funding to meet the increased cost in full.
- 4.23 **Debt financing costs** have moved favourably since the last update and are forecast to be £43,000 under budget, reflective of higher than expected cash balances that have mitigated the need for further borrowing. Overall **Council tax collection** is estimated to out-perform budget by £500,000 which is primarily due to a reduced call on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) budget.

Impact of Storm Claudia

- 4.24 The total revenue cost incurred to date in relation to the response and recovery from Storm Claudia is currently estimated at £556,000. The main categories of expenditure include:
- Additional employee costs, including overtime and time off in lieu
 - Plant and machinery costs associated with clean-up operations
 - Replacement of damaged street furniture and signage
 - Waste disposal costs for flood-damaged goods
 - Repairs to CCTV systems and car park ticket machines
 - Insurance excess costs
 - Specialist cleaning services for sports grounds and skate parks

- 4.25 This expenditure has been incurred within multiple services and is included within the directorate forecasts outlined in this report. A claim for funding support will be submitted to Welsh Government (WG) to access Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (EFAS) funding. The Council's de-minimus funding threshold is £455,000, with WG committing to funding 85% of eligible costs incurred above this threshold. Based on current estimates, this results in a potential reimbursement of approximately £86,000, which will partially offset the overall costs incurred. This potential funding is not currently reflected within the forecast given the early stage of preparation for the claim.
- 4.26 At the time of reporting, £124,000 of householder support payments have been issued, along with £102,000 in payments to support affected businesses. These costs will be met in full by WG grant and have no impact on this forecast.
- 4.27 The impact on the capital costs for repairing and restoring Council assets is still uncertain. Early estimates were a total cost of around £9 million, with approximately £3.5 million likely to be uninsured. This is because infrastructure assets like highways, footways, culverts, street furniture, and public rights of way are typically uninsurable - they make up a unique, continuous network, cannot be resold, and are impractical to replace or relocate. Insuring these assets would therefore not offer good value for taxpayers. At the time of this report, WG has confirmed additional capital flooding grant of £235,000 to partially fund the capital works required. Ongoing discussions continue with WG officials to explore any opportunity for further funding support.

4.28 Budgeted service savings

- 4.29 As part of the approved revenue budget, services were required to bring forward and deliver savings totalling £10,701,000. The current forecast indicates that 93.1% (£9,964,000) of these will be achieved – a slight improvement from the 90.4% reported at update 2 due to Adults social care practice change savings being further clarified.
- 4.30 Full details of progress against individual savings targets can be found at **Appendix 3** to this report. The main variances are as follows:

Table 2: Progress against budgeted savings targets

Savings proposals by Directorate	Budgeted Saving	Current Forecast	Variance	Percentage met	Comment
	£000	£000	£000	%	
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	(2,950)	(2,843)	107	96.4%	£170k Homelessness – Delay in Severn view opening that impacts on 4 months of savings being generated.

					Offset by over-performance of £63k Adult's services practice change.
Learning, Skills and Economy	(745)	(745)	0	100.0%	No variance forecast
Infrastructure	(5,679)	(5,185)	494	91.3%	£334k Passenger Transport routes - Pupil figures have changed, and some routes are unsafe, requiring continued transport. £160k Waste funding – the final extended producer responsibility funding has been confirmed as slightly lower than anticipated.
Place & Community Wellbeing	(606)	(531)	75	87.6%	£75k Planning application fee increase – Fees will be increased from 1 st December, meaning full £100k based on October start cannot be achieved.
People, Performance and Partnerships	(165)	(104)	61	63.0%	Savings anticipated from further structure changes are not deemed achievable following further review. Savings in subscriptions has not been achieved.
Legal & Governance	(1)	(1)	0	100.0%	No variance forecast
Resources	(555)	(555)	0	100.0%	No variance forecast
Totals	(10,701)	(9,964)	737	93.1%	

4.31 Schools' budgets and reserves

- 4.32 The overall level of school reserves are currently forecast to move further into deficit by £3,426,000 by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, to a collective deficit balance of £7,517,000. This is a deterioration of £456,000 since the last update, and £711,000 above the budgets that schools have collectively set for the year.

School reserve balances at 31 st March (Surplus) / Deficit	2022 £000	2023 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	2026 (Forecast) £000
Comprehensive schools	(2,253)	(1,259)	976	1,366	1,917

Middle schools	0	0	329	1,386	2,173
Primary schools	(4,622)	(3,027)	(1,142)	(306)	819
Special schools	(79)	31	742	1,645	2,608
Total	(6,955)	(4,255)	905	4,091	7,517

4.33 The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision.

4.34 All schools with a deficit budget must agree a recovery plan with the Local Authority - this plan will set out clear actions that the school and Governing Body must take to see the school to return to a surplus. These plans are monitored on a frequent basis and where schools do not meet their recovery plans further challenge is provided by the Local Authority to understand the reasons and to look at mitigating actions to bring plans back on track.

4.35 75% of the forecast deficit relates to three schools - King Henry VIII 3-19 School, Chepstow Comprehensive School and the Pupil Referral Service, with all three of these schools being a focus of support and challenge from the Local Authority to ensure budgets return to a surplus within the agreed recovery plan timeframe.

4.36 Capital Programme

4.37 Capital expenditure of £50.84 million is forecast for the year, with no significant variances anticipated at the current time. A small under spend of £35,000 is currently reported across a small number of specific grant funded schemes which has no impact on the Council's available capital funding as it is specific to individual schemes.

4.38 The £1.3m capital contingency budget remains unallocated and will now be released and utilised to fund further capital investment in the 2026/27 capital programme.

4.39 Capital schemes by nature are usually multi-year, and some slippage is to be expected as expenditure profiles change based on flex in project circumstances. A total of 32 capital schemes are indicating that slippage will be required into 2026/27 totalling £21.0 million. This represents slippage of just under a third of the total budget for the year. Recent experience suggests that the final amount of schemes

requiring slippage will increase as the year progresses as scheme progress becomes clearer. A full review of slippage will be undertaken at year-end to establish the need for schemes to continue into 2026/27 or alternatively if any re-prioritisation is required.

- 4.40 **Capital budget revisions** - During the financial year the Council has received a number of new grants to support capital investment that was not included in the original capital budget approved at the start of the year. Additionally, some existing grant budgets have needed to flex as final allocations or timings are clarified. **Appendix 5** outlines the changes that now need Cabinet approval as per the Council's financial procedures.
- 4.41 **Capital receipts** – The table below outlines the latest forecast of capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments. The full balance of banked capital receipts is fully committed meaning there is little scope to support additional capital investment. This also means that the level of capitalisation direction support to the revenue budget is profiled to taper down to zero over the medium term.
- 4.42 A significant capital receipt of £2.5 million was received in December 2025 in relation to the sale of the site of the former Mounton House School, Pwllmeryic, Chepstow.

Table 5: Capital receipts balances

Capital receipt balances	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Balance as at 1st April	6,083	4,627	4,430	3,474	2,819
Capital receipts used for financing	(289)	(367)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(3,770)	(2,708)	(1,708)	(708)	0
Capital receipts Received	2,500	0	0	0	0
Capital receipts Forecast	103	2,878	803	103	103
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	4,627	4,430	3,474	2,819	2,871

4.43 Financial implications and future focus

- 4.44 The budget planning framework for 2025/26 reaffirmed the need to progress the Council on a path towards financial sustainability including conserving an appropriate and prudent level of financial resilience, of which the Council's reserves are a key component. As a consequence, the final revenue budget proposals for 2025/26 did not include any use of reserves to meet recurrent revenue expenditure.

- 4.45 The delivery of the forecast underspend at year-end, alongside budget recovery action being delivered within schools is fundamental in maintaining financial stability and limiting any further impact upon the Council's reserves.
- 4.46 The Council's revenue contingency budget of £850,000 remains fully in-tact despite the in-year budget accommodating some significant cost pressures, notably from Storm Claudia, and from the shortfall in funding for increased employers' national insurance costs. Should the contingency budget remain uncalled upon, it will increase the forecast underspend position currently reported. This will allow the Council the opportunity to maintain reserves at a prudent level in line with the aspirations of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 4.47 Services are forecasting to achieve over 93% of the targeted savings which indicates a strong improvement compared to recent trends and demonstrates the effectiveness of ongoing efforts to implement service changes that preserve quality of provision while reducing overall costs.
- 4.48 The service commentaries provided do indicate that there remain underlying cost pressures that will be recurrent into 2026/27 unless successfully reversed or mitigated. These have been assessed and validated as part of the draft budget process for 2026/27, with additional budget provision made if considered appropriate.
- 4.49 The need for strong collective financial discipline remains crucial. The increasing school's deficit places additional strain on the Council's financial resilience, reducing overall cash balances and the ability to mitigate against financial risks over the medium term.
- 4.50 In light of this, the range of measures that have been used successfully over recent periods will continue to be implemented, including, but not limited to:
- Maximising all grant and income opportunities, including the transfer of core costs into grant where conditions allow
 - Vacancy management with a strategic and thoughtful approach to the filling vacant posts that is in line with the needs of the service, and the longer term objectives of the Council through its Community & Corporate plan.
 - Maximising the opportunity to meet the costs of organisational reform from capital receipts where regulations allow

4.51 **Remaining budgetary risks**

- 4.52 As we move towards the remaining weeks of the financial year, many of the risks highlighted in previous updates fall away. There remain a small number of specific budgetary risks that do still have the ability to further impact upon the revenue budget during 2025/26:

- **Further non-delivery of budget savings targets**, especially where these involve income generation, changes to structures, alternative delivery models or those involving community or other partners.
- The trend of **reducing debt recovery**, particularly within Council tax and Social Care where there has been a slowing down in collection rates, and where there are increasing numbers of discounts and exemptions being awarded.
- The number of **Council tax discounts and exemptions** awarded continues to trend upwards, impacting the overall value of income collected.
- **The recruitment market** remains challenging, with some services encountering difficulty hiring and retaining suitably qualified and skilled staff. Whilst this will result in a reduction in immediate expenditure, it will impact the ability to deliver services in line with the Councils objectives.
- **Inflation** rose by 3.4% in the 12 months to December 2025 and remains well above government targets and above budgeted assumptions. This has the consequence of increasing costs and contracts agreed over the remainder of the financial year.
- **Schools reserve balances** – the further forecast draw on balances for 2025/26 of £3.4 million would significantly increase the cumulative schools reserve deficit that is being carried on the Council's balance sheet. This consequently impacts upon the Council's overall financial resilience and increases its risk exposure by reducing available balance sheet resources.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

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

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

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

CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Summary service variances

Appendix 2 – Detailed service variances and commentary, Schools reserves, Capital programme

Appendix 3 – Progress against budgeted savings

Appendix 4 – Individual school balance forecasts

Appendix 5 – Capital budget revisions

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Appendix 1 – Summary of service variances forecast

Directorate	Update 3 Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) (£000s)	% Variance to budget	Overspend	Underspend
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	(477)	-0.6%	Housing & Homelessness £502k – Delay in opening of Severn view, void and repair costs, rent arrears	Adult services £861k – ability to meet core costs from available grant funding
				Support services £121k – delayed recruitment of Head of housing and public protection
Children, Learning, Skills & Economy	462	0.6%	ALN costs £425k – Primarily due to increased demand for pupil support, offset by out of county placement and transport savings	
			Breakfast clubs £45k – Additional staffing and catering costs	
Infrastructure	(473)	-2.2%	Passenger transport £138k – Shortfall in meeting pupil transport route savings £223k, reduced income on internal operations £98k offset by additional grant	Corporate energy saving £123k – reduction in consumption
			Fleet Maintenance £43k – hire charges and EV charging inspection and maintenance	Decarbonisation £173k – increased income from the Solar farm, staff vacancies, offset by inability to meet corporate mileage savings
				Schools catering £214k – increased grant and staff vacancies
				Highways design, flooding & road safety £106k – savings in professional fees, supplies & services and some staff vacancies
Place & Community Wellbeing	(83)	-1.3%	Car parking £206k – under recovery of fixed penalty charges, higher than anticipated publication costs, reduced P&D income, Storm Claudia impact	Performance, Finance and Resources £174k – staff vacancies

Directorate	Update 3 Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) (£000s)	% Variance to budget	Overspend	Underspend
			Development Management and Building Control £127k - under-recovery of building control fees, increased software costs, lower than anticipated planning fees	Leisure & Wellbeing £200k – Higher income from leisure facilities has offset temporary closure at Abergavenny LC.
People, Performance and Partnerships	6	0.1%	Communications £60k - Staffing structure changes and reduction in income.	Payroll & System Support £113k – reduction in system and supplies & services spend and staff vacancy
			People Management £51k – unachievable staff vacancy factor and extra staff resource being put in place to bolster team capacity	Contact centre £50k – reduction in system and licence costs
			Procurement £45k – higher than anticipated contract costs	
Legal & Governance	76	2.5%	Members £43k – overspend against superannuation contributions plus an inability to achieve vacancy factor savings, coupled with an increase in Mod Gov system charges.	Staff savings £31k
			Legal £64k – inability to achieve staff vacancy factor savings and an anticipated reduction in court fee income	
Resources	(151)	-1.7%	Castlegate £93k - increased operating costs associated with vacant units that fall to the authority to manage	Landlord services £292k - staff vacancies offset by a shortfall in other rental income
			County Farms £77k – Void Property Costs from covering running costs of vacant units, professional fees for valuations and succession reports needed for tenancy management	

Directorate	Update 3 Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) (£000s)	% Variance to budget	Overspend	Underspend
Debt financing, precepts, levies & insurances	473	1.2%	Earmarked reserves £480k – unbudgeted contribution to Council Tax Premium reserve is forecast. This will be mirrored by a corresponding underspend within financing section	Lower net borrowing costs £523k - reflective of higher than anticipated cash balances, forward starting loans, and capital slippage.
			Employers' national insurance £761k – Funding shortfall from Welsh Government to cover increased costs incurred	Non-specific grants £245k – funding relating to pay award pressures that has not been distributed to services
Financing	(980)	-0.4%		Council tax reduction scheme £500k - cases have tracked slightly lower than budgeted for the year
				Council tax premiums £480k – The collection rate is currently higher than anticipated when setting the budget
Total	(1,146)	-0.5%		

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- [Section 1](#) Revenue budget summary forecast
- [Section 2](#) Detailed service commentary
- [Section 3](#) School balances update
- [Section 4](#) Capital programme update

Section 1 - Overall Revenue Position

Table 1: 2025/26 Revenue budget forecast by directorate

Service Area	Original Budget 2025/26	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 3	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Variance from Update 2
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	77,916	271	78,187	77,710	(477)	149	(626)
Learning, Skills & Economy	73,030	(395)	72,635	73,098	462	169	293
Infrastructure	21,442	20	21,462	20,989	(473)	(314)	(158)
Place & Community Wellbeing	6,009	213	6,223	6,140	(83)	(21)	(62)
People, Performance & Partnerships	6,317	(43)	6,273	6,280	6	48	(42)
Legal & Governance	3,050	39	3,089	3,165	76	69	7
Resources	9,083	(280)	8,803	8,651	(151)	(145)	(6)
Corporate	29,147	350	29,497	30,013	516	680	(163)
Net Cost of Services	225,994	175	226,169	226,046	(123)	635	(758)
Appropriations	10,784	(175)	10,609	10,566	(43)	541	(584)
Expenditure to be Financed	236,778	0	236,778	236,612	(166)	1,176	(1,342)
Financing	(236,778)	0	(236,778)	(237,759)	(980)	(1,205)	225
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	(1,146)	(1,146)	(29)	(1,117)

Table 2: 2025/26 Revenue budget forecast by service

Service Area	Original Budget 2025/26	Budget Adjust-ments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 3	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Variance from Update 2
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Adult Services	47,536	284	47,821	46,959	(861)	(326)	(536)
Children Services	24,105	202	24,306	24,308	2	83	(81)
Housing & Homelessness	2,512	199	2,711	3,212	502	366	136
Public Protection	1,886	45	1,931	1,933	2	0	2
SCH Support	1,877	(459)	1,418	1,297	(121)	26	(147)
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	77,916	271	78,187	77,710	(477)	149	(626)
Economy, Employment & Skills	853	(48)	805	812	7	12	(4)
Emergency Planning	178	0	178	195	17	16	0
Individual Schools Budget	58,790	0	58,790	58,665	(126)	6	(131)
Resources	1,217	(50)	1,167	1,280	113	59	54
Standards	11,992	(297)	11,695	12,146	451	77	375
Learning, Skills & Economy	73,030	(395)	72,635	73,098	462	169	293
Enterprise, Housing & Community Animation	559	(213)	345	332	(13)	5	(18)
Facilities, Fleet & Decarbonisation	11,739	84	11,823	11,980	158	385	(227)
Neighbourhood Services	8,668	(34)	8,634	8,528	(107)	(460)	353
Operations	476	183	659	149	(511)	(244)	(266)
Infrastructure	21,442	20	21,462	20,989	(473)	(314)	(158)
Culture and Community Learning	943	(82)	861	879	18	18	(0)
Countryside, Destination and Environment	1,149	(75)	1,074	1,013	(61)	(36)	(25)
Leisure and Wellbeing	1,764	(121)	1,643	1,443	(200)	(2)	(198)
Performance, Finance and Resources	1,639	316	1,954	1,781	(174)	(80)	(94)
Placemaking, Highways & Flooding	515	175	691	1,024	333	78	255
Place & Community Wellbeing	6,009	213	6,223	6,140	(83)	(21)	(62)
Chief Executives Office	2,917	(73)	2,844	2,880	35	48	(13)
People	1,934	(10)	1,924	1,894	(30)	(14)	(16)

Service Area	Original Budget 2025/26	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 3	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Variance from Update 2
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service	1,466	39	1,505	1,506	1	14	(14)
People, Performance & Partnerships	6,317	(43)	6,273	6,280	6	48	(42)
Democratic Services	1,957	39	1,996	2,024	28	27	1
Legal and Land Charges	1,093	0	1,093	1,141	48	42	6
Legal & Governance	3,050	39	3,089	3,165	76	69	7
Commercial, Corporate & landlord Services	2,133	(41)	2,092	1,973	(118)	(151)	33
Corporate Health & Safety	163	0	163	163	0	0	0
Finance	3,791	(239)	3,552	3,540	(11)	24	(35)
Information Communication Technology	2,996	0	2,996	2,975	(21)	(18)	(4)
Resources	9,083	(280)	8,803	8,651	(151)	(145)	(6)
Precepts & Levies	28,699	0	28,699	28,666	(33)	(33)	0
Coroner's	278	0	278	318	40	18	22
Archives	228	0	228	228	0	0	0
Corporate Management	452	0	452	390	(62)	(67)	5
Non Distributed Costs (NDC)	387	0	387	387	0	0	0
Strategic Initiatives	(2,820)	350	(2,470)	(1,899)	571	761	(190)
Insurance	1,923	0	1,923	1,923	0	0	0
Corporate Costs & Levies	29,147	350	29,497	30,013	516	680	(163)
Net Cost of Services	225,994	175	226,169	226,046	(123)	635	(758)
Interest & Investment Income	(788)	0	(788)	(1,198)	(410)	(257)	(153)
Interest Payable & Similar Charges	7,624	0	7,624	7,759	135	429	(294)
Charges Required under Regulation	6,158	0	6,158	6,014	(144)	(215)	71
Other Investment Income	0	0	0	(2)	(2)	(1)	(1)
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	(3,918)	0	(3,918)	(4,020)	(102)	8	(110)
Contributions to Reserves	2,483	0	2,483	2,963	480	576	(96)

Service Area	Original Budget 2025/26	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 3	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 2	Variance from Update 2
Contributions from reserves	(775)	(175)	(950)	(950)	0	0	0
Contribution from Council Fund	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Appropriations	10,784	(175)	10,609	10,566	(43)	541	(584)
Expenditure to be Financed	236,778	0	236,778	236,612	(166)	1,176	(1,342)
General Government Grants	(100,637)	0	(100,637)	(100,637)	0	0	0
Non Domestic Rates	(34,612)	0	(34,612)	(34,612)	0	0	0
Council tax	(110,596)	0	(110,596)	(111,076)	(480)	(785)	305
Council Tax Benefit Support	9,066	0	9,066	8,566	(500)	(420)	(80)
Financing	(236,778)	0	(236,778)	(237,758)	(980)	(1,205)	225
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	(1,146)	(1,146)	(29)	(1,117)

Section 2 - Directorate – Service Variance Comments

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & SAFEGUARDING	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	1,074	149	(477)	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

At update 3 the directorate is forecast to underspend by £477K, a further improvement of £626K since the last update.

The additional improvement is mainly attributable to the full utilisation of the £914K Pathways of Care Transformation (hospital discharge) which has helped support the costs of care and service provision within adult services. The service also largely benefits from the continuation of the £1.1M Social Care Workforce Sustainability grant, as well as the Regional Integration funding which helps to support core costs. However, there remains underlying pressures and risks within adult social care particularly the on-going increased demand for residential placements; the extent of grant funding which supports essential services; increased workforce / operational pressure across the social care and health system.

In terms of the directorate savings target when this year's budget was set, if Housing is excluded, has not only been met in full but has been exceeded slightly by £63K due to Adult review savings pushing past its target. Once Housing's savings are considered, the directorate then falls short of its savings target as Housing has not met its target by £135K due to the delayed opening of Severn View.

Debt due to clients not paying their adult assessed care charges has remained broadly similar to that of update 2, but this is still far too high at £2.3M. Unsecured debt remains an issue and will require further addressing moving forward.

As with Children's, Public Protection is predicted, within £2K, to spend its budget allocation. Support Services is estimating a £121K underspend due to the delayed recruitment to the Head of Housing and Public Protection. This post will more likely be appointed in the new financial year.

Adult Services				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	201	(326)	(861)	0

The position at update 3 highlights a projected underspend at year end of £861K, which is a considerably improved position of a further £535K since update 2.

It is a somewhat complicated picture across the service with a number of over and underspends against different service areas, reflecting both changing patterns of demand, the allocation of grants part way through the year, and the on-going impact of service re-organisation.

The improved position has largely been achieved through the allocation of £914K via the Pathways of Care Transformation Grant, and through ensuring full spend against the Regional Integration Fund revenue grant. The pathways of care transformation grant were allocated part way through the year. Recruitment against the grant is on-going and is now fully committed against spend into the next financial year. We also benefit from the continuation of the £1.1M Social Care Workforce Sustainability grant.

Savings are also being made against the internal care at home staffing salary with increasing amounts of care being commissioned through external providers. Although there are challenges in recruiting to in-house carers, the service is seeking to increase the number of carers employed into our in-house reablement services. This is in line with our service transformation plan to expand reablement so that more people have the opportunity to maximise their independence. This represents cost avoidance for the Local Authority as we continue to reduce the number of people who do not need care and support at the end of a period of reablement.

The main pressure includes the full year effect of care provision and adult placements made at the end of the previous financial year and the ongoing rise in residential placements. There have been an additional 7 residential placements since update 2. Across the County there are a total of 367 residential placements demonstrating the on-going increased demand throughout the year. This is in keeping with the aging demographic of the county together with the complexity of needs experienced by our older residents. Residential placements for people living with later stage dementia are generating a particular budgetary pressure. The demand for care at home is also showing an increase since update 2.

This picture of on-going increased demand reflects the underlying budgetary pressure within adult social care, with the improved position largely being attributable to additional grant money. At month 9 we are still in the middle of winter pressures, whereby the numbers of people needing services to support their discharge from hospital continues to increase and place further pressure on the service.

Since update 2 the services has continued to achieve its target of reviewing cases and has validated the outcomes from the reviews that have already taken place. This has yielded savings of £313K meaning that the service has exceeded its saving target by £63K.

We are still experiencing difficulties in progressing CHC cases for younger people with mental health and learning disabilities that is impacting on our ability to move eligible adults into health service budgets. This is an issue for all Welsh Local Authorities

Despite the unpredictability of the coming months, the service continues to take every opportunity to adopt cost avoidance approaches to care. Our information advice and assistance service (IAA) is now in the initial stages of implementation with 5 new IAA workers now operational. This allows us to develop our preventative offer and will feed our new intake model where reablement is the first consideration to mitigate or prevent care.

Debt due to unpaid Adult social care charges remains a challenge but has not increased since update 2. We are continuing to take actions both preventatively and in ensuring appropriate recovery actions are taken.

Children's Services				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	598	83	2	0

At the end of update 1 there were 190 children looked after including 15 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, increasing to 199 (with 16 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children) at the end of October. At the end of December there were 206 children looked after (including 16 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children). This year has seen the first significant increase in

numbers of children looked after for some time, although the underlying trend remains relatively stable now.

The service activity of assessment, family support and risk management remains intense. For example, during this first 6 months of the year 28 children became looked after and 23 children left care. This level of service activity with children entering and leaving care has continued.

The cost pressure of additional children has been mitigated through placing children within fostering and kinship placements (in line with our placement strategy). Nevertheless, there are cost pressures associated with placement costs at month 9, offset through grant funding for UASC and through a slight delay in our in-house residential provision becoming fully operational.

At update 2 the service showed an improved position because through successful negotiations the costs related to annual uplifts of external placements were contained.

There remains a significant pressure related to the use of external counsel / barrister costs for children who are in a public law process in the family courts. This represents a pressure of £368K based on current activity which is a deterioration of £5K. The service only refers children to the family court if it is the only way to secure a child's safety and long-term stability / welfare. The costs associated with a court process are high, and the use of barristers is often unavoidable. Court costs were inflated this year because of 2 specific complex cases. In terms of corrective action, the service will continue to liaise with the legal team to explore any potential to reduce the costs associated with court.

Another area of reported overspend relates to pressure that has arisen through a reduction in the Welsh Government grant that supports our Family Support services. This is a current pressure of £332k. Family support is critical to supporting children to remain safely at home wherever possible and helps both to safely reduce the numbers of children who need to come into care and safely return children to their families and communities at the earliest opportunity. Although it represents a cost pressure, the service has maintained family support despite the significant reduction in the WG grant. Family support is fundamental to cost avoidance (particularly given the cost of placements) and helps us to secure best outcomes for children and families. Most children open to children's services (normally around 550 at any one time) will be receiving family support of some description, with many others receiving services through early help and community-based support. If these services were disrupted or reduced more children would need to come into care.

Maintaining family support services at their current level has been put forward as a proposal in the 2026/27 budget.

At update 3 the service is on track to achieve 100% of its £1.9M savings related to practice change in care planning for children and placement development.

The current position is predicated on there being no new high-cost demand into the service, something which is not always predictable.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
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Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	238	366	501	0
Housing services is predicting an overspend of £501K, a further deterioration since last update of £135K. The main salient causes of the continued and worsening overspend remain as: - the delayed opening of Severn View leading to additional costs within Bed and Breakfast provision plus the need for extra costs once occupied, - several voids within existing provision, - costs associated with the maintenance and repair of existing provision, - making-good following hand-back of Bed and Breakfast provision, - costs within private leasing arrangements driven by increased repair, maintenance, and cleaning costs, - reduced income due to rent arrears and bad debt and, - staffing costs. These issues are indicative of providing emergency and temporary housing for people who have high support needs. The bottom-line position within housing has benefitted from £254K due to the Housing benefit clawback reduction; however, this has not been sufficient to offset the current costs. The service is looking at potential mitigating actions including reducing voids where possible. As the new temporary accommodation service in Severn View settles, the plan is this can help alleviate future budgetary pressure, dependant on demand patterns. On a positive note, the usage of B&B accommodation continues at the lowest level for many years.				
Public Protection				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(5)	0	2	0
At update 3 the division is forecast to be within £2K of its allocated budget.				
SCH Support				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	42	26	(121)	0
There is a £121K underspend forecast as a result of delayed recruitment to the Head of Housing and Public Protection. This delayed recruitment has helped to mitigate the budget pressure currently forecast in SCH support due to changes in payroll costings following the Chief officer pay review, changes to employer national insurance contribution rates, and from pay awards.				
Learning, Skills & Economy DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	40	169	462	0
CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY				

The Directorate's current position is a forecasted overspend of £462,350. The increase in deficit since update 2 is due to an increase in pupils accessing ALN bespoke support, which is costly, as we are currently having to use third party providers. During 2026-27, we are planning to open an SEMH (Social & Emotional Mental Health) Provision, which will be able to support these pupils and reduce our costs. School balances have deteriorated further by £449,643 with many schools seeing higher supply costs. All schools that are in a deficit budget have a recovery plan in place and where they are not meeting their recovery plan further challenge is being provided by the Local Authority to understand the reasons and to look at mitigating actions that can be taken to ensure recovery plans are met.

Economy, Employment & Skills

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	12	7	0

Economy, Employment & Skills are currently reporting an overspend of £7k due to not being able to fully meet employee related savings. We have been able to reduce the overspend since Update 2, by being able to fund some salary costs by a grant.

Emergency Planning

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	16	16	0

Emergency Planning are currently reporting an overspend of £16k due to not being able to meet employee related savings.

Individual Schools Budget

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	6	6	(126)	0

The Local Authority funds the actual cost of rates for every school, with King Henry VIII 3 – 19 school opening in April the rates costs were unknown, the actual costs are lower than had been funded and therefore the saving has been taken centrally.

Resources

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	31	59	112	0

The current forecasted overspend of £112k is due to the following:

- £32k increase in Teacher Pension estimate.
- £65k decrease in Photovoltaic Recharge Income, as solar panels on the schools are not generating as much income as expected.
- £8k increase in staff costs (Support Services), as funding does not fully cover costs.
- £2k increase in School & Student Access staff costs, due to a secondment continuing for the remainder of the financial year, and not being able to meet employee related savings

(this was previously an overspend of £14k at Update 2, but we have been able to use a grant to offset staff costs).

- £6k overspend in the Financial Management Services Team (this was previously £14k due to no longer receiving income for the administration of the EIG and being unable to meet employee related savings, but we have been able to use a grant to offset staff costs).
- -£1k saving on Support Services ICT.

Standards

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	3	77	451	0

The current forecasted overspend of £451k, is due to the following

- £55k increased costs across Expansion of Early Years, as WG are not fully covering the costs of the provision (this was an overspend of £89k at Update 2 but has reduced due to take up not being as high as expected).
- £45k increased catering and staff costs regarding Breakfast Clubs (a further increase of £4k since Update 2).
- £5k increase in ALN Equipment Budget (reduced from £10k at Update 2).
- £22k increase in MOST staff costs, due to absence, and loss of SLA income for Autumn & Spring Terms.
- £42k less ALN Recoupment Income due to pupils either moving from a neighbouring LA to Monmouthshire or leaving Monmouthshire Schools (an increase of £15k since Update 2).
- £427k overspend on the LA IDP and Contingency Pot 2 Budgets due to an increase in pupils requiring support (an increase of £234k since Update 2).
- £26k overspend on ALN Independents Budget, due to increase in pupils accessing ALN Bespoke Support (we had previously forecast an underspend of £311k at Update 2, due to several pupils leaving Independent Placements).
- £12k overspend on ALN Management due to a vacancy being filled on a higher pay band and not being able to meet employee related savings.
- £20k overspend on ALN Administration Services, due to training, software and supply covering an absence (increase of £14k since Update 2).
- £6k overspend on Psychology Service, as unable to fully meet the employee related savings.
- -£78k saving on Out of County, as several of our pupils have left out of county schools.
- -£51k saving on ALN Transport, due to a reduction in Personal Travel Budgets.
- -£80k saving on Early Years, due to grants funding staff costs.

INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(61)	(315)	(473)	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

The Directorate is forecasting savings of £473k which is an improvement of £158k since the last update. Whilst Storm Claudia has resulted in additional costs these have been offset by corporate energy savings and an uplift in the unit rate for Universal Free School Meals. There have been

adjustments to service budgets as £487k has been transferred from the Waste budget to partially offset overspends in Fleet (£246k) and PTU (£241k).

Underspends are also being realised through improved renewable energy income and staff vacancies and Welsh Government have recently confirmed that the Sustainable Waste Management Grant will be paid for the current financial year.

Enterprise

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	2	5	(13)	0

The Infrastructure management team is projecting a £13k underspend due to a managed underspend in supplies & services and a part-year staff vacancy. Our forecast for update 2 included the assumption that the Head of Highways post would be filled by January, but this will not now happen until the new financial year and is the reason for the £18k improvement in position.

Facilities & Fleet

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	563	385	157	0

Facilities and Fleet are forecasting a projecting a £157k overspend, due to:

- **Fleet Maintenance** - £43k overspend – due to in-year pressures including an increase in vehicle maintenance & fuel costs, fleet & pool car hire charges, EVCI maintenance expenses and software costs. There is an improvement in outturn position since update 2 and is due to the reallocation of spare budget from Waste.
- **Passenger Transport** – net £138k overspend – The service is projecting a £223k overspend on external operator costs. This is primarily due to a shortfall against the distance-eligibility saving assumed in the 2025/26 budget, as updated pupil numbers differ from original projections and some routes have subsequently been assessed as unsafe, requiring transport to continue. Additional pressures include growth in PRS contracts, increased costs of pupil season tickets purchased from external operators, and unbudgeted expenditure on external safer walking route assessments. Internal operations is forecasting a £98k overspend, driven by income losses following the return of several contracts due to high sickness levels. These pressures are partially offset by a £51k staffing saving within the regional transport team through capitalising core staff costs, £115k of transport administration grant income, and a £17k increase in Public Transport Subsidy Grant. As with Fleet Maintenance, the improvement in the outturn position since Update 2 reflects the budget reallocation from Waste Services.

Neighbourhood Services

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
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Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(381)	(460)	(106)	0
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Neighbourhood services is forecasting to return a £106k underspend, due to :-

- **Waste Services** – Break-even – Waste Services reported a £299k underspend at Update 2, driven mainly by a one-off gain-share receipt from the waste-to-energy partnership, improved income, savings on disposal and recycling contracts, and staff underspends due to vacant posts. Although these efficiencies are still expected to be achieved, DMT has reallocated the available budget to help offset pressures within Passenger Transport and Fleet Maintenance. This reallocation accounts for the adverse movement since Update 2. Welsh Government has now confirmed full allocation of the Sustainable Waste Grant, removing this as a budget risk.
- **Grounds Maintenance** – Break-even – Grounds Maintenance is now forecasting a break-even position. Income projections have been revised down from Update 2, and the service has incurred additional staffing, plant, and material costs in response to Storm Claudia. These pressures were not reflected in the previous forecast and account for the £76k adverse movement.
- **Highways Operations & External Clients** – On Budget
- **Streetlighting** – On Budget
- **Highways Design, Flooding & Road Safety** – £106k net underspend – The service is projecting a net underspend of £106k, primarily due to savings on professional fees, software costs, supplies & services, and staff vacancies across the department. These savings have been partially offset by a £52k increase in flooding related spend including tide watches, sandbagging provision and the recent costs incurred in the response to Storm Claudia.

Operations				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(245)	(245)	(511)	0

Operations are forecasting to underspend by £511k, due to:

- **Schools Catering** - £214k underspend – driven by part year staffing savings, increased Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) income, and reduced supplies and services expenditure. The £126k increase in the underspend since Update 2 reflects a £97k rise in UFSM income following the Welsh Government's £.20p per meal uplift to £3.40 from September (this was not known until December), a £9k reduction in forecast ingredient costs due to a higher take-up of the lower-cost snack option (jacket potato) over the main meal option, and £20k of additional staffing savings arising from continued vacancies and some posts being held pending confirmation of required staffing levels. The unit is projected to serve 791,000 meals by year end, with current take up averaging around 71% (average take up was 58% before introduction of UFSM). Ingredient cost is currently £1.03 per meal.
- **Decarbonisation** - £173k underspend – driven by improved income from the solar farm and wider renewables portfolio because of higher ROC rates, favourable weather conditions, and improved inverter performance. Additional savings have arisen from a part-year staffing

vacancy within the team. These benefits are offset by a £102k pressure relating to a prior-year corporate mileage saving, the pool car scheme is due to become operational in March, although it will not generate material savings in the current financial year.

- **Corporate Energy Saving** - £123k underspend – latest projections indicate that our energy costs will be £123k below budget due to reduced consumption during the year, figures were not finalised until recently, so this underspend was not factored in at update 2.

PLACE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	142	(21)	(83)	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

The Place and Community Wellbeing Directorate is presently forecasting an underspend £83k. This favourable variance is principally attributable to increased income generation within Leisure and Wellbeing along with reduced expenditure within our Countryside, Destination and Environment services as well as the delayed recruitment to vacant posts, which has helped to offset pressures arising from the under-recovery of parking penalty charges, planning fees and building control fees.

The directorate continues to closely monitor areas exposed to income volatility and has proactively implemented mitigation strategies wherever feasible to strengthen the financial position since update 2.

The variance from update 2 to 3 is largely a result of higher than anticipated expenditure due to storm Claudia in particular increased staff costs, reduced income within car parks due to free parking in December and damage to our pay and display machines. A reduction in the level of predicted planning fees due to one large planning application being delayed until 26-27 £65,000. This has been more than offset by continued growth within our leisure income, improvements in sports development, play and outdoor adventure and deferred filling of vacant positions, all of which have contributed to the overall positive outcome.

Culture and Community Learning

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	38	18	18	0

The Culture and Community Learning division is projected to experience an overspend of £18k. This is primarily due to higher than budgeted staffing costs, inflationary pressures and increased expenses relating to supplies and services contracts.

Countryside, Destination and Environment

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(14)	(36)	(61)	0

The Countryside, Destination and Environment division is forecast to underspend by £61k primarily due to income exceeding budget because of increased grants. The positive variance between

update 2 and update 3 is attributable to the Destination Managers post becoming vacant. Recruitment to this post is underway but this is unlikely to be completed until after year end, the section will therefore see a financial benefit from this vacancy.

Leisure and Wellbeing

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	(2)	(200)	0

The Leisure and Wellbeing division expects to underspend by £200k, as higher income from leisure facilities has offset the £89k loss of income due to Abergavenny LC's closure and reduced service agreement income. Quarter 3 has seen the deployment of our annual membership campaign which again has seen high success rate increasing forecasted income, Outdoor Adventure, sports development and play have also seen a substantial improvement in quarter 3 contributing to the overall improved position between update 2 and update 3.

Performance, Finance and Resources

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(5)	(80)	(174)	0

The Performance, Finance and Resources division is forecasting to underspend by £174k due to staff vacancies. The variance from update 2 to update 3 relates to the delayed implementation of the support services restructure.

Placemaking, Highways & Flooding

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	123	78	333	0

The Placemaking, Highways and Flooding division is forecasting to overspend by £255k due to:

- **Development Management and Building Control** – The section is forecasting an overspend of **£127k**, relating to under-recovery of building control fees and increased software costs. Along with lower than anticipated planning fees in particular the delay in one substantial planning application (£65k) until 26-27 has seen an adverse impact on previously forecast income.
- **Planning Policy** – This section is currently on budget. Spending levels will be closely monitored and aligned with the approval of the RDLP.
- **Highways Development and Car Parks** – The section is forecast to overspend by £206k. This is due to the under recovery of fixed penalty charges, filling of previously vacant posts, higher than anticipated publication costs associated with the implementation of the new fees and charges. The adverse variance between update 2 and update 3 relates to increased maintenance costs of £30k to replace damaged pay and display machines due to storm Claudia, free carparking in December as a response to Storm Claudia and an overall downturn in pay and display income.

- **Strategic Projects** – This area is currently on budget.

PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE & PARTNERSHIPS	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	99	48	6	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

People, Performance & Partnerships and the Chief Executives Office are forecasting a combined overspend by £6k. There remains a degree of risk associated with the implementation of changes to the Welsh language translation service, which are scheduled for completion in the second half of the financial year.

Within the CEO's Office, the overall forecast reflects a mixed financial position. Overspends are primarily driven by staffing pressures and reduction in income. Whilst some overspends are offset by other service area underspends, pressures persist and officers will continue to seek mitigation strategies as the year progresses.

Chief Executives Office

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	117	48	35	0

The Chief Executives Office is currently forecasting an overspend of £35k. The principal factors contributing to this position are as follows:

- **Communications - £60k overspend** – The overspend is primarily attributable to a budget pressure of £56k arising from the creation of the Head of Communications and Active Travel post, coupled with a reduction in active travel income of £25k. These pressures have been partially offset by a contribution from Welsh Government relating to the secondment of the Head of Communications.
- **Contact Centre - £50k underspend** – An underspend has been achieved due to system and licence spend coming in below budgeted levels.
- **Strategic Change & Programme Assurance - £8k underspend** – The underspend is due to the capitalisation of the change management program.
- **Libraries, Hubs, and Community Learning** – This area is forecast to **underspend by £14k**, with no significant variances expected.
- **Procurement - £45k overspend** – The overspend is due to higher than anticipated contract costs.

People

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
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Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(14)	(14)	(30)	0
The People sections is forecasting an underspend of 30k for the financial year. The principal factors contributing to this position area as follows: - • Organisational Development & Training- £10k overspend – The overspend is attributable to staff costs exceeding budget, primarily due to the inability to achieve vacancy factor savings offset by a small saving withing the training budget. • Payroll & System Support - £113k underspend – An underspend has been achieved as a result of a reduction in system and supplies & services expenditure of £36k alongside net staff saving of £78k arising from changes in hours and a payroll technician post being held vacant. • People Management - £51k overspend – Additional costs have been incurred due to unachievable staff vacancy factor and extra staff resource being put in place to bolster team capacity. • Occupational Health - £23k Overspend – due to increased demand				
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(4)	14	1	0
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Services is forecasting to overspend by £1k, broken down as follows: • Corporate - £32k overspend – mainly due to the inability to achieve staff vacancy factor savings, SLT Pay award and an increase in subscription costs. • Scrutiny and Customer Complaints - £6k overspend – unable to achieve staff vacancy savings. • GIS - £24k underspend – saving in system and supplies & services spend. • Levies & Subscriptions - £36k overspend – corporate subscription costs (WLGA, LGA) have exceeded available budget, in addition the authority has made the decision to renew the membership of New Local causing a further pressure as this budget was removed as part of 25/26 budget savings. • Performance & Data - £29k underspend – due to staff savings from part year vacant posts. • Equalities & Welsh Language - £3k overspend – the authority is due to enter a new translation SLA with Torfaen, discussions are ongoing around implementation timescales. • Community Safety – Net £23k Underspend– due to staff savings from part year vacant posts.				
LAW & GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	64	69	76	0
CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY				

Law & Governance is forecasting a £76k overspend, an increase of £7k since Update 2. The variance is mainly due to staffing pressures, by-election costs and income shortfalls across service areas. Officers will continue to explore measures to mitigate deficit before year-end.

Democratic Services

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	39	27	28	0

Democratic services is forecasting to overspend by £28k, this is due to:

- **Members** - £43k overspend – primarily due to staffing where there is an overspend against superannuation contributions plus an inability to achieve vacancy factor savings, coupled with an increase in Mod Gov system charges.
- **Committee & Election services** - £15k underspend – due to staff savings from part year vacancies and grant support for an apprentice post in Elections, this has been partially offset by an overspend in by-election costs.

Legal and Land Charges

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	25	42	48	0

Legal & Land Charges is forecasting to overspend by £48k, due to:

- **Legal** - £64k overspend – This is due to a projected reduction in fee income and the inability to achieve staff vacancy factor savings.
- **Land Charges** - £16k underspend – due to savings from a vacant part-time post.

RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(95)	(145)	(151)	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

The Resources Directorate is forecasting a £151k underspend at Update 3, a small improvement on the previous period. This reflects strong vacancy management across several areas, alongside targeted control of non-pay costs.

Despite pressures with investment properties Landlord Services are forecasting an under spend of £118k. These pressures stem mainly from unoccupied units and associated running costs and are more than offset by vacancy savings ahead of a wider staff restructure.

While Benefits and Council Tax show overspends due to increased bad-debt provisions and service pressures, these are balanced by strong vacancy savings, reduced non-pay costs, and modest grant income.

Overall, the directorate remains in a stable financial position, with most pressures mitigated through vacancy management, active cost control, and ongoing recovery work in commercial estates to reduce vacant units. One remaining risk as the directorate approaches year-end is a level of significant arrears accrued by a commercial tenant. Negotiations are ongoing with the aim

of reaching agreement around the recovery of arrears and the tenant securing a viable and sustainable way forward. Consideration will need to be given at year-end to a prudent level of bad debt provision.

Commercial, Corporate & landlord Services

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(27)	(151)	(118)	0

Commercial, Corporate and Landlord services is forecasting to underspend by £118k, due to:

- **Investment Properties** - £121k overspend, due to:
 - **Newport Leisure Park** - £28k overspend – NLP is projecting a surplus of £295k in 25/26, however this is £28k below budget due to unbudgeted costs (such as electricity and rates) associated with a vacant unit. There is potential for this position to improve if a tenant can be found for the unit before year end.
 - **Castlegate Business Park** - £93k overspend – primarily due to increased operating costs associated with vacant units that fall to the authority to manage, including higher-than-expected rates, electricity charges, and one-off fees. As above there is potential for this position to improve if tenants can be found before year end.
- **Landlord Services** – £292k underspend – mainly due to staffing savings arising from in-year vacancies. Staff consultation is shortly to commence for a proposed restructure which would re-establish capacity, strengthening the ability to generate financial returns and placing the department on a sustainable footing to deliver the Council's Asset Management Strategy. Recruitment of two vacant managerial posts are anticipated in March. Update 2 had assumed the two managers posts would be filled by January, and this later recruitment timeline is the principal driver of the increased underspend. These savings are partly offset by a shortfall in rental income.
- **County Farms** - £77k overspend - Mainly due to void property costs of £68k from covering the running costs of vacant farms and cottages, which aren't included in the base budget (this issue is expected to resolve next year as a farm has been re-let and cottage disposals are being considered), and an increase in professional fees of £20k due to increased demand for valuations and succession reports needed for tenancy management. These have partially been offset by improved income of £8k.
- **Cemeteries** – £21k under spend primarily due to savings on supplies and services. There is potential that this could change if any unforeseen repairs or emergency tree works are required between now and year-end.
- **Building Cleaning & Public Conveniences** - £37k underspend – driven by staffing vacancies, along with savings on maintenance and business rates for public conveniences. This represents an £87k adverse movement from Update 2 due to additional agency and overtime costs required to cover staff shortages, which had not been fully reflected in the previous forecast.
- **Property Services** – £6k overspend – Pressures from maintenance and business rates within office accommodation, along with a shortfall in external fee income, have been largely offset by employee underspends resulting from managed staff vacancies.

Corporate Health & Safety				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	0	0	0

Corporate Health & Safety – Break Even – No change from update 2 - all costs incurred in response to directorate H&S matters will be accommodated from within services and reported as part of their outturn position.

Finance				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(58)	24	(11)	0

The Finance division is forecasting to under spend by £11k, this is mainly due to:

- **Revenues, Systems & Exchequer** - £45k net overspend:
 - **Benefits** - £53k overspend - Housing Benefit Subsidy is currently forecast to overspend by £76k and the bad debt provision is estimated to increase by £30k, reflecting current caseload and debts. These pressures are partially offset by a reduction in non pay costs and additional grant income totalling £53k.
 - **Council Tax** - £32k overspend – The overspend comprises £19k of additional service running costs, an £11k increase in the bad debt provision for unpaid court costs and £2k of unmet vacancy-factor savings. These pressures are partially offset by £12k of one-off Welsh Government grant income for administering this year's Retail Rate Relief scheme.
 - **Charity Relief** - £4k underspend – projections indicate that 25/26 awards will be lower than budget.
 - **Debtors** - £6k overspend - Unmet vacancy factor savings and additional National Insurance costs.
 - **Cashiers** - £14k underspend – Although card payment fees are projected to overspend by £21k due to increased card-based transactions, these additional costs are more than offset by savings from reduced security carrier charges, deferring system development work, and temporarily holding a cashier vacancy. The increased underspend since Update 2 reflects a revised, lower estimate of card payment fees based on current activity levels.
 - **Revenues System Administration** - £18k overspend - no change from update 2, primarily due to increased annual contract costs for the Northgate system.
 - **Financial Systems Support & Vat** - £46k underspend – £25k saving resulting from vacant posts plus a £11k saving against the non pay budget and £10k additional recharge income. The underspend has increased by £11k since update 2 due to an additional vacancy and lower than initially anticipated consultancy costs for the Business World System upgrade.

- **Finance** - £56k under spent - due to part year staff vacancies and the reallocation of core staff costs to council tax.

Information, Communication & Technology

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(10)	(18)	(21)	0

The ICT division is forecasting to underspend by £21k, this is due to:

- **SRS & Digital Programme Office** – £4k underspend - The latest information from SRS indicates a £2k overspend on the service contribution, driven by increased costs for O365 licences and PSBA line rentals. However, this pressure has been fully offset by a managed underspend on supplies and equipment, resulting in a net underspend of £4k within the section.
- **Digital, Design & Innovation** – On budget – No Change from Update 2 - As of August 2025, the team moved under the Shared Resource Service (SRS) via the Cabinet-approved Digital, Data and Technology agreement. This caused a forecasted £33,000 overspend due to higher collaboration costs, exceeding the current budget. In line with Cabinet's decision, this shortfall will be covered by the IT reserve, so there is no negative effect on the Directorate's overall financial position in 25-26, with future funding being built in as part of the 26-27 budget proposals.
- **Cyber Security Partnership** - £12k underspend – no change from update 2 - the Cyber Security Partnership has now transferred to SRS (from 1st September 2025), early projections indicate an in-year underspend of £12,000 due to vacancy savings.
- **Telephony** - £6k underspend – no change from update 2 – saving due to a reduction in call charges.

CORPORATE COSTS & LEVIES DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(27)	680	516	0

Coroners

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	18	18	40	0

Final levy is expected to be higher than budgeted due to additional requirements of the services following Chief Coroner review.

Precepts & Levies

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(33)	(33)	(33)	0

Forecast saving due to the South Wales Fire Service precept being lower than originally anticipated for the financial year.

Archives

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

No variance forecast

Corporate Management

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(13)	(67)	(62)	0

Unbudgeted income that cannot be attributed to services

Non-Distributed Costs

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

No variance forecast

Strategic Initiatives

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	761	571	0

Funding shortfall in relation to increased employer's national insurance contributions. The final funding allocation received from Welsh Government was considerably short of the increased costs incurred.

Insurance

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

No variance forecast

TREASURY & RESERVES

Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
486	541	(43)	0

Interest & Investment Income

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(257)	(257)	(410)	0

Cash balances have further increased since update 2 while investment rate return hasn't reduced at the expected rate. The subsequent increase in investment income has increased the underspend to £409k.

Interest Payable & Similar Charges

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	423	429	135	0

The authorities borrowing requirement has been less than expected reducing borrowing costs. These have further been reduced due to the authority utilising advantageous rates when available. This has reduced the overspend to £135k.

Charges Required Under Regulation

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(215)	(215)	(144)	0

Capital slippage funded from borrowing was higher than anticipated at the end of the previous year which has resulted in lower than anticipated charges. Underspend has decreased due to disposal of vehicles in year resulting in additional MRP charges being made. The adverse movement is matched by an increase in underspend against borrowing recoupment.

Other Investment Income

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

Minor income received. Slightly increased from Update 2.

Borrowing Cost Recoupment

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	8	(102)	0

The underspend is due to several vehicles being disposed of in year and all remaining borrowing charges being made in year. This underspend is offset by an increase in charges required under regulation.

Contributions to / from Reserves

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	535	576	480	0

An unbudgeted contribution to Council Tax Premium reserve is forecast and has increased since update 1. This will be mirrored by a corresponding underspend within Council tax.

FINANCING	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(1,185)	(1,205)	(980)	0

Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(400)	(420)	(500)	0
Anticipated underspend as in year caseloads are lower than the budget set, a continuing trend throughout the year.				
Council Tax				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	(785)	(785)	(480)	0
The tax base for the year has been met and continues to increase. However since update 2 there has been a significant upward shift in the number of properties awarded an exemption or discount. This is partly as a result of the recent floods which have rendered some properties uninhabitable and requiring significant remedial works. The Council Tax Premium collection rate for 2024/25 is currently at 76%, which is higher than anticipated when the budget was set. The downward shift since update 2 reflects adjustments to in year premiums applied to rate accounts as ratepayer circumstances change.				
General Government Grants				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit/(Surplus) '000s	0	0	0	0
No Variance forecast				

2. School Balances

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

Cluster	(A) Opening (Surplus) / Deficit 2025/26	(B) Draw / (Contribution) @ Update 1	(C) Draw / (Contribution) @ Update 2	(D) Draw / (Contribution) @ Update 3	(A+D) Closing (Surplus) / Deficit 2025/26
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Abergavenny	1,351	635	817	1,025	2,375
Caldicot	(37)	641	826	866	829
Chepstow	989	26	(27)	139	1,127
Monmouth	144	407	392	433	578
Special	1,645	1,126	961	963	2,608
Total	4,092	2,835	2,970	3,426	7,517

2.2. Collective School balances at the beginning of the Financial Year amounted to a deficit of £4,091,578. The anticipated further draw on reserves at Update 1 was £2,834,735, against a budgeted draw on reserves of £2,714,668, which resulted in a forecast deficit balance of £6,926,313 by year end. At Update 3, the draw on reserves has increased to £3,426,138, resulting in a forecast deficit balance of £7,517,453 by year end.

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

Start of year	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Total: 15	Total: 18	Total: 18	Total: 19	Total: 0
KHS VIII 3-19	KHS VIII 3-19	KHS VIII 3-19	King Henry VIII 3-19	
Gilwern	Gilwern	Gilwern	Gilwern	
Our Lady & St Michael's	Our Lady & St Michael's	Our Lady & St Michael's	Our Lady & St Michael's	
Ysgol y Fenni	Ysgol y Fenni	Ysgol y Fenni	Ysgol y Fenni	
Caldicot School	Caldicot School	Caldicot School	Caldicot School	
Rogiet	Rogiet	Rogiet	Rogiet	
Ysgol y Ffin	Ysgol y Ffin	Ysgol y Ffin	Ysgol y Ffin	
Chepstow School	Chepstow School	Chepstow School	Chepstow School	
The Dell	The Dell	The Dell	The Dell	
Thornwell	Thornwell	Thornwell	Thornwell	
Kymin View		Kymin View	Kymin View	
Osbaston	Osbaston	Osbaston	Osbaston	

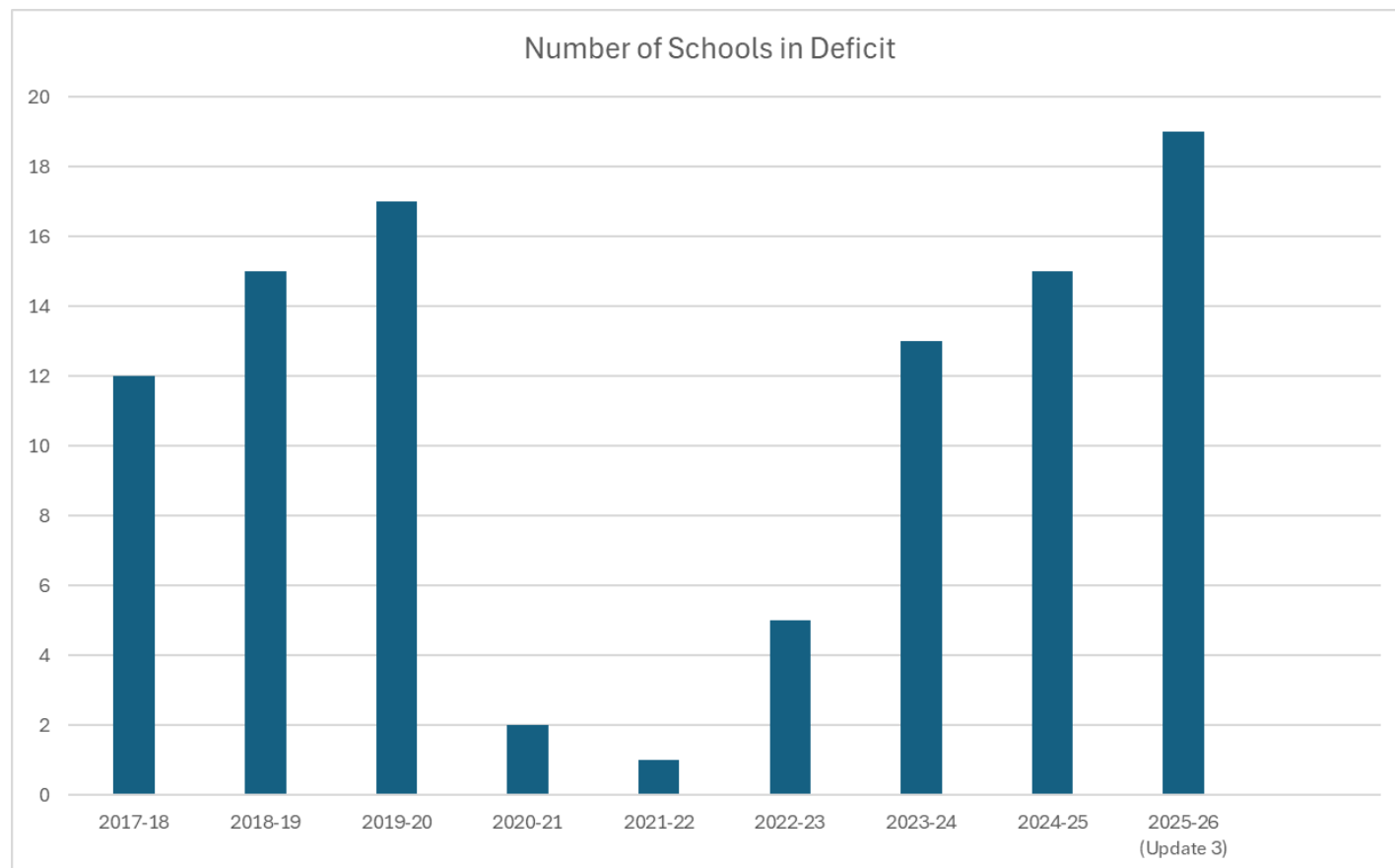
Overmonnow	Overmonnow	Overmonnow	Overmonnow	
Ysgol y Trefynwy	Ysgol y Trefynwy	Ysgol y Trefynwy	Ysgol y Trefynwy	
PRS	PRS	PRS	PRS	
	Castle Park	Castle Park	Castle Park	
	Monmouth Comprehensive	Monmouth Comprehensive	Monmouth Comprehensive	
	Cross Ash	Cross Ash	Cross Ash	
	Llandogo			

- 2.4. The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision.
- 2.5. All schools with a deficit budget must agree a recovery plan with the Local Authority, this plan will set out clear actions that the school and Governing Body must take to see the school to return to a surplus. These plans are monitored on a frequent basis and where schools do not meet their recovery plans further challenge is provided by the Local Authority to understand the reasons and to look at mitigating actions to bring plans back on track. The majority of the deficit (75%) relates to three schools, King Henry VIII 3 – 19 School, Chepstow School and the Pupil Referral Service, all three of these schools are a focus of support and challenge from the Local Authority to ensure budgets return to a surplus within the agreed recovery plan timeframe.

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

2024-25	4,092
2025-26 (forecast)	7,517

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



3. Forecast Capital Budget Outturn

3.1 The summary Capital forecast outturn position at Update 3 is as follows:

Category	Slippage B/F	Original Budget	Budget Adjust-ments	Slippage to 2025/26	Revised Budget 2025/26	Forecast Outturn	Over / (Under) spend
	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Expenditure							

Capitalisation Directive	63	3,708	0	0	3,770	3,770	0
Development Schemes Over £250k	9,083	730	1,354	(6,097)	5,069	5,069	0
Development Schemes Under £250k	1,955	90	0	(1,357)	688	687	(1)
School modernisation programme	33	12,282	277	(2,608)	9,984	9,984	0
Infrastructure	3,958	6,076	829	(3,442)	7,421	7,421	0
ICT Schemes	272	463	(24)	(98)	612	617	6
Property Maintenance	2,016	2,659	579	(200)	5,054	3,754	(1,300)
Renovation Grants	192	900	341	(300)	1,132	1,132	0
LCHO	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Section 106	1,454	288	0	(771)	970	970	0
Regeneration - Specific Grant Funded	6,009	500	15,574	(6,143)	15,939	15,899	(40)
Vehicles	0	1,500	0	0	1,500	1,500	0
Total Expenditure	25,033	29,195	18,929	(21,017)	52,139	50,803	(1,335)
Financing							
Supported Borrowing	0	(2,432)	(103)	0	(2,535)	(2,535)	0
General Capital Grant	0	(3,046)	0	0	(3,046)	(3,046)	0
Grants and Contributions	(8,860)	0	(19,103)	6,840	(21,123)	(21,083)	40
S106 Contributions	(1,621)	(288)	0	771	(1,137)	(1,137)	0
Unsupported Borrowing	(13,661)	(18,069)	253	12,841	(18,635)	(17,335)	1,300
Earmarked Reserve & Revenue Funding	(272)	(103)	24	248	(103)	(108)	(5)
Capital Receipts	(619)	(3,758)	0	317	(4,059)	(4,059)	0
Leasing	0	(1,500)	0	0	(1,500)	(1,500)	0
Total Financing	(25,033)	(29,195)	(18,929)	21,017	(52,139)	(50,803)	1,335

3.2 The capital expenditure forecasted at outturn demonstrates a net underspend £1,335,000 due to the following schemes:

Scheme	Budget £000's	Over / (Under) spend £000's	
IT Schemes	612	6	Forecast business world upgrade over spend. Alternative funding or minor under spends currently be sought to offset.
Grant Schemes	15,939	(40)	Minor under spends across numerous grant funded schemes where final costs were below initial estimates. This will not result in any useable funding being available for other schemes.
Property Maintenance	5,054	(1,300)	Capital contingency budget of £1.3m is to be released to fund 2026/27 capital investment in line with draft budget proposals

3.3 Capital Slippage

3.4 Capital slippage forecast for the year is forecast to be £21.017 million. The principal schemes reporting slippage are:

Scheme Category	Scheme Name	Slippage £000's	Comment
Specific Grant Funded	Chepstow Transport Hub & Connectivity Improvements	5,208	Multi-year scheme, to be completed by end of March 2028.
Development schemes	Capital City Region	2,678	Confirmation awaited from SEWCJC of future capital funding profile.
Education Development	King Henry VIII - Future Schools Tranche B	2,608	School remedial works to be completed by August 2026.
Infrastructure	Wye Bridge Monmouth works	2,166	Design / Survey stage progressing, main construction works 2026/27.
Development schemes	Asset Investment Fund	1,781	Budget remains available as required to support any requirement for further capital investment at existing commercial investment sites.
Social Care development Schemes	Property Acquisition for Children and Young People with Complex Needs	1,540	Acquisition of properties as and when suitable sites become available – dependant on supply.
Development schemes	Housing Provision Borrowing Headroom	773	Further housing purchases are unlikely to complete in 2025/26 – dependant on supply.
Specific Grant Funded	Grant –Match Funding Support Allocation	611	Funding has not been required to match any schemes to date in 2025/26. Full requirement for slippage will be assessed at year-end
Infrastructure	Reconstruction of Bridges & Retaining Walls	362	Funding required for Chainbridge Refurbishment - construction works for diversion routes need to be undertaken before the bridge is closed for refurbishment.
Infrastructure	Carriageway improvements - additional	340	Inclement weather has delayed planned highways refurbishment works
Renovation Grants	Disabled Facilities Grants (Private)	300	New procurement rules, extended lead times for works and increased pressure on housing surveyor are leading to an impact on delivery timelines. Slippage to ensure completion of planned committed adaptations.
Infrastructure	Carriageway Resurfacing - Various	245	Inclement weather has delayed planned resurfacing works
Development schemes	Shire Hall/Monmouth Museum Move	234	Multi-year project due for completion in 2026/27.

Scheme Category	Scheme Name	Slippage £000's	Comment
Infrastructure	Clydach Gateway Reinstatement and Devil's Bridge Associated Works A465	229	Scheme ongoing but now due for completion in 2026/27 following external factors.
Maintenance Schemes	County Farms Maintenance & Reinvestment	200	Funding required in 26/27 for refurbishment of two vacant cottages and other estate works. Works dependant on need.
Specific Grant Funded	Placemaking Grant programme	170	Delays due to sub-contractor work commitments
Development schemes	Solar Farm Development Cost	150	Initial feasibility works have yet to be progressed.
Development schemes	Depots – Feasibility works: Transport Depot South of County	149	Ongoing site evaluations are in progress but slightly behind schedule.
Specific Grant Funded	HLF Woodland Investment Grant	123	Slippage due to grant spending profile conditions
Infrastructure	Wye Bridge Chepstow works	100	Works to finish in 2026/27.
Development schemes	Decarbonisation Investment	98	Delay to planned de-carbonisation works in energy management systems.
Social Care development Schemes	Social Care Case Management System Replacement	98	To support Social Care Case management software implementation depending on final costs.
Development schemes	Fixed Asset disposal costs	51	Surplus assets are being assessed for disposal in 2026/27 – dependant on need.
Specific Grant Funded	Brilliant Basics Fund – WG- Tintern Welcome	31	Assessments being undertaken
Section 106 Schemes	Various S106 Schemes	771	Various community recreational improvement schemes are delayed mainly due to external factors.
Total		21,017	

3.5 Useable Capital Receipts Available

- 3.6 The table below outlines the latest forecast of capital receipts balances available to meet future capital commitments. Whilst overall balances remain healthy, it should be noted that all banked capital receipts have been committed to funding the indicative forward capital programme. Any further use will be dependent upon forecast capital receipts being realised.

Capital receipt balances	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	2029/30
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	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
Balance as at 1st April	6,083	4,627	4,430	3,474	2,819
Capital receipts used for financing	(289)	(367)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction	(3,770)	(2,708)	(1,708)	(708)	0
Capital receipts Received	2,500	0	0	0	0
Capital receipts Forecast	103	2,878	803	103	103
Forecast Balance as at 31st March	4,627	4,430	3,474	2,819	2,871

Appendix 3 - Budget savings progress

	Savings proposals by Directorate	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance	% Met	
		£000	£000	£000		
	Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	(2,950)	(2,843)	107	96.4%	
	Learning, Skills and Economy	(745)	(745)	0	100.0%	
	Infrastructure	(5,679)	(5,185)	494	91.3%	
	Place & Community Wellbeing	(606)	(531)	75	87.6%	
	People, Performance and Partnerships	(165)	(104)	61	63.0%	
	Legal & Governance	(1)	(1)	0	100.0%	
	Resources	(555)	(555)	0	100.0%	
	Totals	(10,701)	(9,964)	737	93.1%	

Ref	Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
SCH S2	Community Meals - cost neutral or cease	(15)	(15)	0		
SCH S3	Adults Practice Change	(250)	(313)	(63)		Full assessment has been made at update 3 which indicates slight out-performance of target
SCH S4	Fees and Charges	(336)	(336)	0		
SCH S5	Public protection Workforce reduction	(100)	(100)	0		
SCH S6	Wedding fees (registrars)	(30)	(30)	0		
SCH S7	Childrens Practice Change	(1,887)	(1,887)	0		
SCH S10	Adults workforce review	(125)	(125)	0		

C&P S20	Savings driven from the reduction of B&B usage and full year effect of Severn View	(207)	(37)	170		Saving assumed Severn View would be open from 1st April, but due to building delays tenants did not move in fully until early August - this meant we had to incur 4 months of additional of B&B costs that were not budgeted. This has been mitigated in part by the overall use of B&B reducing over and above the target set.
Total	Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	(2,950)	(2,843)	107		

Ref	Learning, Skills and Economy	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
CYP S1	Reduce 0.6 FTE Most (Monmouthshire Specialist Teachers) team	(40)	(40)	0		
CYP S3	Grant funding increase to meet costs of EWS post	(51)	(51)	0		EWS has not been reduced by 1 FTE, a grant funding increase was able to meet the costs of the EWS post
CYP S4	Bring ALN MCC pupils from OOC back to MCC	(100)	(100)	0		
CYP S5	KH8 Maintenance costs	(40)	(40)	0		
C&P S21	Youth Service - Passport more core service costs to grant funding.	(45)	(45)	0		
C&P S14	Reduction in utility costs for education estate	(429)	(429)	0		
ML S4	Reduction in Youth Service Provision (delete 1 FTE post)	(40)	(40)	0		
Total	Learning, Skills and Economy	(745)	(745)	0		

Ref	Infrastructure	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
C&P S4	Passenger Transport Commissioning - We revert to the statutory distances of 2 miles for primary and 3 miles for secondary - Subject to political approval - will commence from 01/09/2025	(447)	(113)	334		Numbers have changed since original projections were prepared and some routes have been deemed unsafe meaning transport still has to be provided to pupils impacting on the amount of saving achievable.
C&P S7	Savings in C&P senior Mgt costs as a result of SLT restructure	(170)	(170)	0		Achieved - restructure completed - posts deleted.
C&P S8	Grass routes - Introduce an annual £10 membership charge for users	(3)	(3)	0		Achieved
C&P S9	Reduce gritter fleet by extending the working hours of each vehicle	(20)	(20)	0		Fleet reduced - achieved
C&P S10	Reduction in utility prices for the corporate estate	(136)	(136)	0		Early year projections are indicating that this saving will be achieved.
C&P S11	Undertake energy audit of invoices to identify discrepancies and potential savings	(20)	(20)	0		Currently in process of appointing firm to undertake audit - assume achievable.
C&P S22	PTU Increase the cost of concessionary season tickets by 10%	(6)	(6)	0		Fees have been uplifted - saving will be achieved.
C&P S23	Increase in Highways fee income to external clients to reflect recovery of pay award and inflation.	(52)	(52)	0		Fees have been uplifted - saving will be achieved.
C&P S24	Indicative EPR funding	(4,825)	(4,665)	160		Final award was confirmed to be £160k under original figure - this has been managed by other savings within the service.
Total	Infrastructure	(5,679)	(5,185)	494		

Ref	Place & Community Wellbeing	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
ML S1	Borough Theatre - Reduced production days (3 days a week)	(50)	(50)	0		
ML S5	Increase Income across the four Leisure Centres	(150)	(150)	0		
ML S7	Lease Old Station Tintern	(30)	(30)	0		
ML S9	Externalise Markets Waste Collection	(20)	(20)	0		
ML S13	S106 - Increase office time recharge	(24)	(24)	0		
ML S14	Rights of way - Charge officer time to capital	(20)	(20)	0		
C&P S2	Request to WG to increase statutory planning application fees by 25% - Consultation Autumn - potential uplift for 1st April or 1st October	(100)	(25)	75		Fees will be uplifted from 1st December 2025
C&P S3	Increase car park fees by 10%	(180)	(180)	0		Carparking fees have been increased and delivering the saving the income pressure declared
C&P S15	Increase Building Control Fees	(32)	(32)	0		Fees have been uplifted.
Total	Place & Community Wellbeing	(606)	(531)	75		

Ref	People, Performance and Partnerships	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		

CEO S2	Welsh Language translation	(82)	(82)	0		Entered SLA with Torfaen in October - current forecasts project that this saving will be achieved.
CEO S4	New staffing model in Systems and Payroll	(22)	(22)	0		Achieved
CEO S5	Implement Apprentice First approach	(8)	0	8		Currently no progress on this initiative - further update to be provided at Update 3
CEO S8	End membership of New Local from June 2025	(15)	0	15		Not achieved - decision made by senior leadership to continue with membership.
ML S12	Phase 2 - Restructure	(38)	0	38		Not Achievable
Total	People, Performance and Partnerships	(165)	(104)	61		

Page 53	Legal & Governance	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
	LG S1	(1)	(1)	0		Achieved
	Total	(1)	(1)	0		

Ref	Resources	Budgeted Saving	Update 3 Forecast	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
RES S1	Cease our Cyber Security Insurance provision	(98)	(98)	0		Achieved - insurance cover has ceased.
C&P S13	Building Cleaning - Release of recurrent service saving	(20)	(20)	0		Achieved

RES S3	Freeze/Remove Head of Digital, Design & Innovation Post (Net of cover/honoraria arrangements)	(64)	(64)	0		Achieved - Post deleted
RES S5	Finance - HB penalty will reduce as Severn view comes online and temporary accommodation reduces	(250)	(250)	0		Reduction in B&B usage down to 5 has had a beneficial impact on reducing the HB subsidy penalty - forecasts project that this saving will be made in full.
RES S6	Finance - HB penalty reduction as a result of a further reduction in the remaining B&B portfolio.	(100)	(100)	0		
RES S7	Reduction in Chief officer admin Support (0.6 FTE)	(23)	(23)	0		Achieved - Post deleted
Total	Resources	(555)	(555)	0		

Appendix 4 - Forecast movement in school balances

	Opening Reserves 2025-26 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position Forecast (Surplus)/Deficit Update 3	Forecast closing Reserves 2025-26 (Surplus)/Deficit	Risk Category
Abergavenny cluster				
King Henry V111 3-19 School	1,386,169	787,060	2,173,229	
Cantref Primary School	(101,495)	11,910	(89,585)	
Gilwern Primary School	15,717	65,526	81,243	
Goytre Fawr Primary School	(43,645)	33,828	(9,817)	
Llanfoist Fawr Primary School	(87,620)	72,226	(15,394)	
Llantillio Pertholey CiW Primary School (VC)	(74,764)	65,713	(9,051)	
Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School	(83,609)	24,598	(59,011)	
Our Lady and St Michael's RC Primary School (VA)	53,889	(1,346)	52,543	
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	286,080	(34,429)	251,651	
Caldicot cluster				
Caldicot School	267,256	436,110	703,366	
Archbishop Rowan Williams CiW Primary School (VA)	(82,144)	40,851	(41,293)	
Castle Park Primary School	(18,741)	80,798	62,057	
Dewstow Primary School	(6,305)	(30,667)	(36,972)	
Durand Primary School	(93,396)	34,174	(59,222)	
Magor CiW Primary School (VA)	(206,124)	18,743	(187,381)	
Rogiet Primary School	169,213	72,644	241,857	
Undy Primary School	(142,211)	89,814	(52,397)	
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin	75,216	123,873	199,089	
Chepstow cluster				
Chepstow School	1,130,990	(87,098)	1,043,892	
Pembroke Primary School	(268,044)	36,667	(231,377)	
Shirenewton Primary School	(130,917)	53,655	(77,262)	
St Mary's Chepstow RC Primary School (VA)	(70,363)	68,854	(1,509)	
The Dell Primary School	158,181	16,395	174,576	
Thornwell Primary School	168,782	50,170	218,952	
Monmouth cluster				

Monmouth Comprehensive	(31,922)	201,815	169,893	
Cross Ash Primary School	(14,677)	41,329	26,652	
Kymin View Primary School	63,486	(15,609)	47,877	
Llandogo Primary School	(7,412)	2,928	(4,484)	
Osbaston CiW Primary School (VC)	63,807	10,829	74,636	
Overmonnow Primary School	255,229	89,778	345,007	
Raglan CiW Primary School (VC)	(161,289)	38,116	(123,173)	
Trellech Primary School	(92,530)	17,656	(74,874)	
Usk CiW Primary School (VC)	(19,112)	(9,173)	(28,285)	
Ysgol y Trefynwy	88,855	55,444	144,299	
Special School				
Pupil referral unit	1,645,026	962,956	2,607,982	
Total	4,091,578	3,426,138	7,517,716	

Appendix 5

Capital Budget Revisions – Grants and contributions

The Council has received a number of new capital grants and external contributions that weren't included in the original capital budget approved at the start of the year.

According to the Council's financial procedures, any changes to the capital budget that are fully funded by grants or outside contributions must be approved by Cabinet.

Whilst some of the more significant capital grant funding programmes, such as the Shared Prosperity Fund, would have been subject to a standalone Cabinet report to endorse them, for completeness this schedule includes all grant related changes to the capital programme during the year.

These changes are either:

- New grants or contributions that have been received, or
- Adjustments to existing grants or contributions that were already part of the budget. This could be due to final grant allocations being lower/higher than indicative values, or if the timing of expenditure differs to the grant timings.

Grant. ref	Scheme Category and Scheme	Budget revision	Purpose of Funding	Notification Date
Asset Management Schemes				
M-MON-0004	School Refurbishment Grant	328,916.00	Capital Repairs and Maintenance 2025-26	21/05/2025
M-MON-0004	Schools Repair & Maintenance Grant	250,000.00	Capital Repairs and Maintenance 2025-26	21/05/2025
Welsh Government	School Refurbishment Grant	385,943.00	Welsh Government Support funding for the Schools Maintenance program	12/01/2026
Insurance Company	Drybridge House Flood Insurance Claim	5,000,000	Funding to cover the refurbishment of Drybridge House after recent flooding	21/01/2026
		5,964,859.00		
School Development Schemes				
Welsh Government	King Henry VIII - Future Schools Tranche B	1,256,628.72	Secondary School Replacement – multi-year scheme till 2026/27	n/a
CFS-MON-1004	Projects to Safely and Effectively Open Schools to the Community Outside Traditional Hours	482,429.00	support delivery of MCC	14/07/2025

Grant. ref	Scheme Category and Scheme	Budget revision	Purpose of Funding	Notification Date
			Community Focused Schools Projects	
ALN-MON-0003.	Capital Support for Learners with ALN	482,429.00	Support Learners with Additional Learning Needs in 2025-26	08/07/2025
Small Grants Funding	Early Years – Childcare Capital Funding	389,000.00	support the delivery of the Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme	11/04/2025
Welsh Government	Welsh Medium School and Nursery	(2,668,002.89)	Funding has been withdrawn due to a new restructuring scheme being developed for Welsh Medium Education in Monmouthshire	09/01/2026
		(539,945.17)		
	Inclusion			
HCF- 3- GWE – 02 DFG	Housing with Care Fund	116,200.00	Funding solely for the purposes of supplementing your existing internal Minor and Major DFG Adaptation programme	23/06/2025
ENABLE – Support for Independent Living	Enable – Support for Independent Living WG	224,377.00	a) Accelerating discharge from hospital to a safe and comfortable home and reducing delayed transfers of care. b) Preventing inappropriate hospital admission by tackling preventable accidents within the home. c) Reducing care packages and dependency on carers (paid and unpaid).	31/03/2025

Grant. ref	Scheme Category and Scheme	Budget revision	Purpose of Funding	Notification Date
			d) Improving the individual's ability to maintain independence at home. e) Promoting the well-being of the individual.	
		340,577.00		
	Infrastructure & Transport			
Safer Routes	Safer Routes in the Community	338,000.00	Kingwood Gate to Williamsfield Lane route links	27/03/2025
Road Safety; Capital	Road Safety Capital Grant	470,000.00	A4136 Staunton Road - Collision Reduction Scheme (258k); B4235 Chepstow to Mynydd Bach - Collision Reduction Scheme (212k)	27/03/2025
20 Mph Grant	20 MPH Capital Grant	37,000.00	The Purpose of this funding is to support the implementation of the 20mph default speed limit	27/03/2025
Resilient Roads fund	RRF - A4136 Staunton Road Stabilisation	494,000.00	Design, development and WelTAG 3	27/03/2025
LTF Award	Local Transport Fund	700,000.00	Additional real-time information displays; Abergavenny Nevill Hall bus turnround; Bus stop information and shelters; Monmouth bus station improvement	27/03/2025
FCERM Capital Grant 2023/24	Woodside Usk Flood Alleviation Scheme Grant 24/26	368,000.00	Design / development / Full Business Case Development	07/11/2024
		2,407,000.00		
	Other Schemes			

Grant. ref	Scheme Category and Scheme	Budget revision	Purpose of Funding	Notification Date
ATF Award	ATF Core Llanfoist Bridge & Meadow Links	6,000,000.00	Partial award for construction 25/26	27/03/2025
UK Gov – Dept for Levelling Up	Chepstow Transport Hub & Connectivity Improvements	5,227,320.00	Award of LUF funding for improvements at Chepstow transport hub	10/11/2025
ATF Award	ATF Core Consultation	500,000.00	Construction of Caldicot MUR and Monmouth Wye Valley Active crossing	27/03/2025
TT-SE-PM-MCC-001	Placemaking Grant programme (Transforming Towns)	700,000.00	2025-26 allocation. Project 2022-2027 (£1,553,954 in total)	02/04/2025
Welsh Government	Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management Grant	235,000.00	The Purpose of the Funding is to enable Emergency Works to flood assets only following Severe Weather during November 2025	07/01/2026
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Gwent Green Grid	200,000.00	Healthy: Improve health and wellbeing	01/07/2025
EYCP/AWPOG/CAPITAL 2025-26	Chepstow Play Parks - (WG Funded)	128,619.28	The Purpose of the Funding is to support shortfalls identified within Monmouthshire's' Play Sufficiency Assessment 2025	13/01/2026
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF -Town Centre Placemaking 2025-26	100,000.00	additional investment into town centres. Complimentary to existing Transforming Towns funding.	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Monmouth Museum	63,000.00	Shire Hall refurbishment, including internal 'fit out' costs and equipment for movement of exhibits.	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Destination Policy Impact Assessment	55,000.00	Development of the visitor economy	01/07/2025

Grant. ref	Scheme Category and Scheme	Budget revision	Purpose of Funding	Notification Date
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Destination For All	54,000.00	Development of the visitor economy	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Abergavenny Leisure Centre AEFCC	50,000.00	Healthy: Improve health and wellbeing	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Communities Budget	46,744.56	Targeting small scale local investments in the community. Beneficiaries will be community groups, charities, CIC's, etc	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Todays Heritage Tomorrow	26,500.00	Improvements to existing Monmouthshire heritage sites. Currently utilised at Caldicot Castle, Abergavenny Castle & Museum, and Chepstow Museum.	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF - Monmouthshire Circular Economy	20,600.00	Development of the visitor economy	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF – Creative Futures	12,830.00	Inclusive: Bringing communities together, tackling homelessness	01/07/2025
UK Gov - SPF	UKSPF - Granicus	10,000.00	Inclusive: Bringing communities together, tackling homelessness	01/07/2025
Ref: 010251171 Energy Savings Trust (WG)	Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure & Zero Emission Vehicle Grant	54,415.62	Supply, installation, and commissioning Of Ev Chargers at Abergavenny Youth Centre; Old Pill Farm Depot; Raglan Depot and Raglan Enterprise Park.	01/10/2025
TT-SE-REV-MONM-004	Transforming Towns - Caldicot Placemaking 2025-26	30,000.00	development of a placemaking plan for future regeneration activity within Caldicot Town Centre	05/08/2025

Grant. ref	Scheme Category and Scheme	Budget revision	Purpose of Funding	Notification Date
WG - Coal Tip Safety	Coal Tip Safety Grant – WG 2025/26	16,157.00	to enable MCC to undertake the appropriate, inspections, surveys and any necessary maintenance / remediation work on coal tips within your local authority area	18/03/2025
		13,530,186.46		
Grand Total		21,702,677.29		



SUBJECT:	2026/27 DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET PROPOSALS
MEETING:	PERFORMANCE & OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	10th February 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To allow Committee scrutiny of Cabinet's draft revenue and capital budget proposals for the financial year 2026/27.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 2.1 That the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for 2026/27 are considered as part of the Committee's role to conduct robust financial monitoring and to scrutinise the Council's performance in delivering the corporate objectives outlined in its Community and Corporate Plan.
- 2.2 That Committee relay any resultant observations and recommendations back to the executive (Cabinet), to inform the wider ongoing budget consultation process.

3 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The draft budget proposals are now available for formal public consultation and member scrutiny, including the requirement to consult businesses. The formal consultation period will run for a period of four weeks ending on 18th February 2026.
- 3.2 Whilst there are comparatively fewer budget proposals than in recent years, the Council remains committed to the consultation process and listening to feedback. It is important that Cabinet gain views on items such as the proposed rate of Council Tax increase, budget investments proposed, including those for schools and social care, and how budget risks are being managed. This will in turn inform the final budget proposals that are to be considered in March.
- 3.3 This is the opportunity for Council Members, residents, service users, community groups, and other key stakeholders (e.g. town and community councils) to consider the budget proposals and make comments on them.

- 3.4 Cabinet will not be prepared to recommend anything to Council that has not been subject to a Future Generations Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment, and therefore a deadline to receive alternative budget proposals has been set as 18th February 2026.
- 3.5 Final budget proposals following consultation and receipt of the final settlement will go to the Cabinet meeting on 4th March 2026 and approval of Council Tax and final budget proposals is scheduled for full Council on 5th March 2026.

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	2026/27 Budget consultation presentation
Appendix 2	Cabinet meeting 21st January 2026 – 2026/27 Draft Budget papers

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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LET'S **TALK** BUDGET AND PRIORITIES 2026/27

www.letstalkmonmouthshire.co.uk/budget-2026-27



Budget context

How we plan our budget

- The draft 2026/27 budget is built on long-term financial principles set by Cabinet.
- The aim is to ensure responsible, sustainable financial planning over the medium term.
- Budget choices are aligned with the Community & Corporate Plan, ensuring decisions support long-term priorities.
- Resources are directed to where they are needed most and where they will deliver the greatest benefit and opportunities

Our budget is split into two main areas:

- **Revenue** is spent on daily services. This includes services such as schools, support for vulnerable people, transport, waste collection, highways & flooding, and leisure services.
- **Capital** is spent on assets like highway infrastructure, transport, housing, maintaining council buildings, and securing external funding for economic development projects.

Budget context

How does the council get its money?

- **Welsh Government Grant:** Largest funding source. Increasing by £6m (4.4%) to a total of £144.7m in 2026/27 to help meet rising demand and costs.
- **Council Tax:** Proposed 5.95% increase in rate. This will provide a total of £84.7m to support essential local services as cost pressures and service demand continue to grow.
- **Fees & Charges:** Income from services such as leisure facilities, planning applications, and some waste services. Proposed 3.8% increase in line with inflation.

How does the council decide what to fund?

- Spending decisions follow the Medium - Term Financial Strategy, **ensuring services remain strong and financially sustainable.**
- **Choices are evidence-based**, using data, analysis, and feedback from residents to understand priorities.
- The council regularly reviews pressures such as inflation, staffing needs, and rising demand, alongside its ability to make efficiencies - **plans are adjusted as new data becomes available**

Budget context

What does this mean for me?

- The council completes **an impact assessment** for all draft budget proposals to identify and reduce any potential negative effects.
- **Residents' views and priorities** are actively considered to shape decisions.
- **Budget choices affect everyday essential services**, including schools, social care, waste collection, and community safety.
- Through careful planning and assessment, the council aims to **protect vital local services** so they remain available when residents need them.

Cabinet Approach

- Cabinet has focused on a budget that aims **to protect vulnerable residents, address climate change, and ensure value for money.**
- The proposals reflect what residents say matters most, and **public feedback continues to shape final decisions.**
- **For 2026/27, the Council plans a £230m revenue budget**, funded 60% by Welsh Government and the remainder from council tax, fees, and charges. Spending is broadly split into education, social care, and neighbourhood services, and the running of the Council.
- Despite increases in the level and cost of service provision, **no service reductions** are proposed. Instead, the Council aims to **invest in key areas** such as roads, community services, libraries, education, and social care, focusing resources where they matter most to residents.

What we propose to spend to deliver services

How council tax and other funding sources are used to support the services we provide.



**CHILDRENS
SOCIAL CARE**
£27.1m
12%



**ADULTS
SOCIAL CARE**
£50m
22%



**HOUSING &
HOMELESSNESS**
£2.8m
1%



**LEISURE,
CULTURE,
WELLBEING**
£6.2m
3%



**FACILITIES
AND FLEET**
£11.8m
5%



**PUBLIC
PROTECTION**
£2m
1%



**LEARNING,
SKILLS AND
ECONOMY**
£76.3m
33%



**WASTE AND
ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES**
£7.9m
3%



**HIGHWAYS,
FLOODING AND
STREET LIGHTING**
£4.5m
2%



**DEBT
FINANCING**
£11.1m
5%



**RUNNING OF
THE COUNCIL**
£23.2m
10%

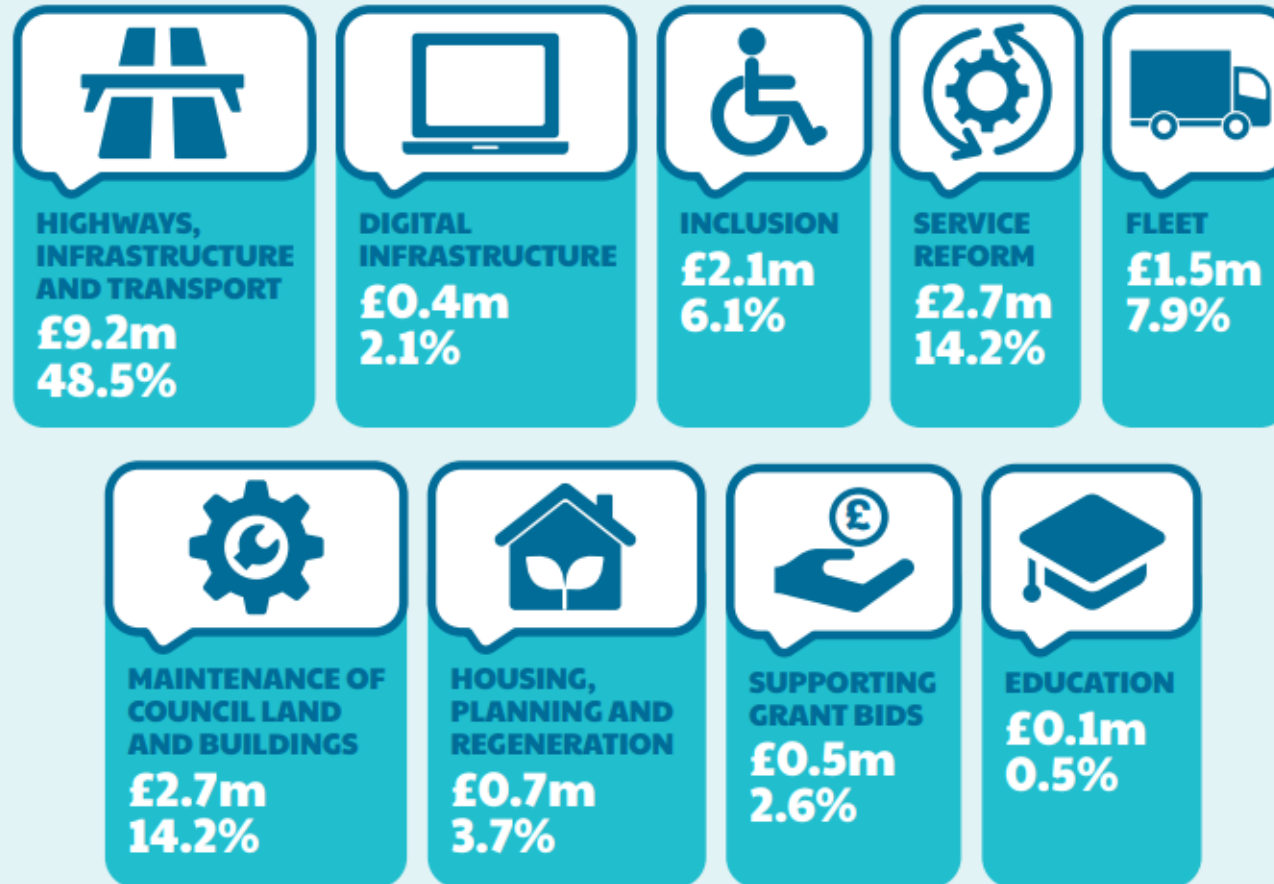


**LEVIES PAID
TO OTHER
ORGANISATIONS**
£7.2m
3%

TOTAL REVENUE £230m

What we propose to spend on our assets

We are continuing to invest in our assets to support your needs.



TOTAL CAPITAL £19m

Let's Talk Communities

Investing in Safer, Cleaner and Better-Connected Infrastructure

More funding for key assets

- Extra £5.5m in 2026-27 to maintain roads, footways, bridges and public rights of way
- £4.96m for Chainbridge refurbishment (over two years)
- £1.69m for essential road resurfacing and structural repairs

Cleaner streets & better drainage

Expanding gulley-cleaning and street-sweeping teams to improve maintenance and response during severe weather

Improving public rights of way

Upgrades to signage, drainage and bridges to make walking routes safer and easier to use

Preparing for severe weather & ageing assets

Investment strengthens resilience, protects infrastructure and supports public safety



Let's Talk Care

A plan to strengthen care in Monmouthshire

Increasing support for rising care needs

- Additional £1m investment to meet growing and more complex adult and children's care needs.
- Funding protects essential services and supports people needing long-term or specialist care

Helping families and children early

Continued investment in Family Support Services, even as some national grants reduce, ensures access to early help before problems escalate

Investing in better systems

Upgrading social care record-keeping systems for improved safety, smoother services and stronger data protection.



Let's Talk Care

A plan to strengthen care in Monmouthshire

Supporting adults to stay independent

Expanding reablement services to help people recover after illness or injury which reduces reliance on long-term care and supports better outcomes for individuals.

Improving and sustaining services

- Ongoing investment in in-house Children's Services to provide the right support and reduce costly external placements.
- In Adult Social Care, some vacant posts will remain unfilled, while working closely with care providers to ensure people continue receiving the support they need.



Let's Talk Children & Young People

A plan for every child and young person in our community to have the chance to thrive and enjoy life

More funding for local schools

- An additional £1m added to school budgets on top of inflation
- Equivalent of an extra £96 per pupil or £20,000 for a typical 210-pupil primary school

More support for additional learning needs

- Investment in special resource bases to support children with complex needs, including autism and mental health challenges.
- Enables children to stay in their local schools with the personalised support they need.



Let's Talk Children & Young People

A plan for every child and young person in our community to have the chance to thrive and enjoy life

Promoting Welsh language education

- Recruitment of a Welsh Language Officer to support schools, helping achieve delivering 10% of the curriculum in Welsh by 2030
- Strengthens access to Welsh-medium learning and celebrates local heritage

Keeping young people on track

- Continued investment in the Inspire programme, helping young people who struggle to stay in school, find work, or access training.



Let's Talk Resident Support

A plan to invest in services that help residents stay informed, connected, and supported

Investment in libraries

- Continued investment in library services, providing new books and materials
- Ensures residents of all ages can access reading, learning and community resources

Supporting local organisations

Increased funding for Citizens Advice Monmouthshire, helping residents facing cost-of-living pressures

Reducing homelessness

- Focus on preventing homelessness, improving temporary accommodation and prioritising supported and affordable housing
- Funded in part by additional council tax from second and empty homes



Let's Talk Resident Support

A plan to invest in services that help residents stay informed, connected, and supported

Local services staying open

- Waste and Recycling services will remain unchanged in 2026/27, with no cuts and no reduced collection days
- Community hubs, leisure centres, heritage and cultural sites will stay open and continue to be invested in

Enhancing customer service & communications

- Exploring new technology to improve how residents contact the council and stay informed about service updates



Budget consultation and next steps

“Let’s Talk Monmouthshire”

- 4-week period consultation and engagement
- Face to face and virtual engagement events – Countywide and targeted
- Online survey and social media campaign
- **Council Scrutiny meetings** – Jan-Feb 2026
- **Final Budget Cabinet** – 4th March 2026
- **Council tax setting and budget** – 5th March 2026





Any Questions?

Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Report Title	Cabinet member	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner
Cabinet	Deferred	Pavement Café Policy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To adopt the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences	Carl Touhig	4-Oct-22
Council	05-Mar-26	PUBLICATION OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT AS REQUIRED BY THE LOCALISM ACT	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.	Philippa Green	14-Jan-26
Council	05-Mar-26	2026/27 Capital Strategy and 2026/27 Treasury	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the Council's 2026/27 Capital and	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION and REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources	thompson	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025 - 2028	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Reason is to endorse a new Corporate Parenting Strategy for 2025 - 2028	Jane Rodgers	24-Oct-25
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Revenue and Capital Budget 2026/27 – Final proposals following scrutiny and public consultation	Ben Callard - Resources	To update Cabinet with the consultation responses to the draft budget proposals issued in respect of the Capital and Revenue budgets for 2026/27. To make recommendations to Council on the Capital and Revenue budgets including the level of Council Tax for 2026/27. To receive the statutory report of the Responsible Financial Officer on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves. To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Prudential Indicator calculations for capital financing.	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Property Acquisition for use as Temporary Accommodation	Sara Burch	To seek authorisation to proceed with the purchase of a residential 3 bed property and continue to use it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to support pressures linked to the availability of temporary accommodation.	Louise Corbett	2-Feb-26
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Castlewood - Low Cost Homeownership Future Use	Sara Burch	To consider the purchase of a Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) property Castlewood, Usk following receipt of the owner's intent to sell	Louise Corbett	2-Feb-26
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	2026/27 WCF/Mon Farm treasury strategy	Ben Callard - Resources	To present to Cabinet for approval the 2026/27 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee. To approve the 2026/27 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.	Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Development of a Supported Accommodation Provision for Care Experienced Young People	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	To provide details and seek approval for the acquisition and refurbishing of a residential property in Monmouth for the purpose of developing a supported accommodation provision for care experienced children.	Jane Rodgers	16-Jan-26
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	2025/26 Budget - Financial update 3	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide the third update of the financial year of the Councils progress against the 2025/26 revenue and capita budget	Jon Davies	12-Jun-25

Cabinet	11-Feb-26	26/27 Placemaking Delivery	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To agree funding allocations for Welsh Government Transforming Towns and Pride in Place. Impact Fund.	Craig O Connor	19-Dec-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Cultural Strategy	Sara Burch		Tracey Thomas	20-May-25
ICMD	11-Feb-26	Submission of Section 6 Biodiversity duty report to WG	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To submit report outlining how the Council maintains and enhances biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems	Craig O Connor	7-Jan-26
ICMD	28-Jan-26	Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 The Local Authorities (PRECEPTS) (WALES) Regulations 1995 - Determination of Payment Schedule	Ben Callard - Resources	To determine the schedule of precept payments to precepting authorities for 2026/27 as required by statute and following the results of the consultation process.	Ruth Donovan	28-Jan-26
Council	22-Jan-26	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to: • present arrangements for the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to approve it for 2026/27. • agree to adopt the amendments to the Regulations, proposed by Welsh Government, • affirm that annual uprating amendments will be carried out each year without a requirement to adopt the whole Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	Ruth Donovan	28-Nov-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	2026/27 Draft Revenue & Capital budget proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Review of Nursery provision at Durand Primary School	Laura Wright - Education	To seek permission to enter into statutory consultation processes regarding proposals to replace the Local Authority Nursery at Durand Primary School with a non maintained setting.	Matthew Jones	23/12/25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Disposal of two farm cottages at Leechpool Holdings	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval for the disposal of two vacant farm cottages located in Leechpool Holdings, Portskewett, identified as surplus to requirements following internal review with services that no longer have an identified need.	Nick Keyse	26-Nov-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Agree S106 Funding for Caldicot Multi-User Route that connects the newly constructed Caldicot Links/Greenway Active Travel route with the Country Park	Sara Burch	To agree additional funding for the Caldicot Multi-User Route	Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Annual Health and Safety Report 2024/25	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek the cabinet members approval of the 2024/25 Annual Health and Safety Report including priorities for 2025/26	Kate Thompson	19-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Revoking the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To inform the Cabinet Member (Cllr Angela Sandles) of the need to revoke the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 and agree the principal steps for doing so.	Huw Owen	17-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 3 held on Thursday 04th December 2025	Dave Jarrett	10-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Museum Service - Collections Rationalisation	Sara Burch - Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism	To agree the removal of 2 collections - one of newspapers and one of books from the museum collections, to offer to more appropriate homes. (This is part of a series of similar decisions)	Rachael Rogers	2-Dec-25

ICMD	17-Dec-25	Various Traffic Regulation Orders - Amendment Order No 18	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	The report seeks Cabinet Member approval to proceed with the making and implementation of the MCC Traffic Regulation, speed limit and parking regulations Consolidation Order 2019 (Amendment Order No.18) 2025	Gareth Freeman	26-Nov-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Council TaxBase 2026/27 and associated matters	Ben Callard - Resources	To agree the Council Tax base figure for submission to Welsh Government, together with the collection rate to be applied for 2026/27 and to make other necessary related statutory decisions.	Ruth Donovan	28-Nov-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Annual Performance Report - Planning	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Report the Annual Performance Report to Welsh Government	Andrew Jones	15-Oct-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Section 6 Report to Welsh Government on Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Report of Councils' actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity	Kate Stinchcombe/Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2024-25	Angela Sandles - Engagement	1) To consider the data in this letter, to understand MCC's performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and our compliance with recommendations made by the PSOW's office. 2) To inform the PSOW of the outcome of MCC's considerations and any proposed actions on the above matters.	Annette Evans	
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Joint Committee of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Joint Committee of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales - to consider a Deed of Variation to the current Joint Committee Agreement regarding the required quoracy level for committee meetings	Jane Rogers	24-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Socially Responsible Procurement Policy	Ben Callard - Resources	1. To approve the adoption of the Socially Responsible Procurement Policy. 2. To delegate authority to approve any	Cath Fallon	20-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	29-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Craig O Connor	17-Nov-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Community and Corporate Plan - Q2 Progress Update	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress that has been made to deliver the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.	Hannah Carter	29-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Appointment of Paul Matthews to the board of CCR Energy Ltd			James Williams	27-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2024/25	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	27-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Safeguarding Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Diane Corrister	18-Jul-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2024/2025	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Natasha Harris (Torfaen)	24-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Director's Annual Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	18-Jul-25
ICMD	26-Nov-25	LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 1994 THE LOCAL AUTHO	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek Member approval of the proposals for consultation purposes regarding payments to precepting authorities during the 2026/27 financial year as required by statute	Peter Davies	7-Nov-25

Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Medium Term Financial Plan update - November 2025	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Nov-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	2025/26 Revenue & Capital Monitoring Update 2	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Destination Management Plan	Sara Burch & Paul Griffiths		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Car Parking Review	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	That Cabinet endorses the following recommendations 1. That Cabinet agrees the strategic objectives for the Council's parking strategy 2. That Cabinet agrees the proposed MCC actions in response to the recommendations made in the Monmouthshire car parking review	Craig O Connor	9-Oct-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy	Laura Wright - Education	The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the Inclusion Strategy and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the local priorities as outlined in the Learning Place section of the Community and Corporate Plan.	Morganna Wagstaff	13-Oct-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Panel Performance Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide an update on the proposed approach for the Council's Panel Performance Assessment which is a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Matt Gatehouse	28-Aug-25
Council	23-Oct-25	RLDP for Adoption	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Rachel Lewis	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	2025/26 Revenue Monitoring Update 1	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12/7/25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	Connect to Work and Future Focus programmes	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones / Rory Clifford	21-Jul-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	A strategy to take forward a whole authority approach to wellbeing and prevention	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	19-Jun-25
ICMD	08-Oct-25	WELSH CHURCH FUND WORKING GROUP	Ben Callard - Resources	1.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 2 held on Thursday 18th September 2025.	Dave Jarrett	
ICMD	24-Sep-25	Health & Safety Annual Report	ben Callard - Resources		Kate Thompson	5-Aug-25
Council	18-Sep-25	Self-assessment 2024/25		To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2024/25 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	richard Jones	10-Jun-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Proposed endorsement of the Monmouthshire Local Area Energy Plan	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Welsh Government commissioned the production of Local Area Energy Plans for Local Authority areas which will be used to develop a regional and national Energy Plan. The Local Area Energy Plan for Monmouthshire provides data on the energy requirements of the county and the transition that will be required to support carbon neutrality of the energy demands. The report seeks Cabinets endorsement of the Local Area Energy Plan to enable the development of the regional Area Energy Plan and a supporting Investment Prospectus.	Deb Hill Howells	28-Jul-25

Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Real Living Wage Employer Accreditation	ben Callard - Resources	Further to Cabinet's decision on Wednesday 6th November 2024, and an evaluation of the authority's supply chain, to bring forward a further report detailing the plan to pay the real living wage rate to employees of third parties contracted to work at the authority's sites, and to seek approval to pursue accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer.	Philippa Green	13-Jun-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	County of Sanctuary Strategy	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To approve a county of sanctuary strategy which establishes clear principles which will run through all council services and which promotes inclusion and welcome across the wider community.	Sharran Lloyd and Jane Harvey	27-May-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Review of Housing Support Grant Programme.	Sara Burch		Ian Bakewell	23-May-25
ICMD	20-Aug-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 17	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Gareth Freeman	4-Aug-25
ICMD	23-Jul-25	Lloyds tour of Britain Stage 5 Pontypool to Tumble	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Nick John	2-Jul-25
ICMD	23-Jul-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	2-Jul-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Chepstow Integrated Transport LUF project			Deb Hill Howells	24-Jun-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Strategic Director's Report, Children, Learning, Skills and the Economy'	Laura Wright - Education		Will Mclean	18-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	2024/25 Revenue & Capital monitoring Outturn (incl early update on 2025/26)	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	2026/27 Revenue & Capital MTFP update and process	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	ADD AS FIRST ITEM Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023: Monmouthshire County Council's Annual Report	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval of the Social Partnership Duty Report 2025, setting out how the Council will build on existing practice, and work collaboratively with trade unions, to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.	Philippa Green	6-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Play Sufficiency Update	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Play sufficiency assessment update.	Nick John	28-Mar-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Shire Hall Delivery Stage - Financial Approval	Ben Callard - Resources		Tracey Thomas	25-Mar-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Strategic OfficerLeadership and Organisation Structure changes	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Paul Matthews	5-Jun-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Separation of Licensing Functions	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Linda O Gorman	28-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Appointments to Outside Bodies	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	23-May-25
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	Strategic Risk Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	richard Jones	10-Jun-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Nature Recovery Action Plan & Green Infrastructure Strategy	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Placemaking Grant 25/26 & 26/27	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Craig O Connor	29-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies / Cath Fallon	1-Apr-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	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 economies of scale enabling the authority to access expertise to accelerate progress against delivery of priorities set in the Community and Corporate Plan.	Peter Davies & Matt Gatehouse & Sian Hayward	14-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Y Prentis Update	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	26-Feb-25
Council	15-May-25	SAC Membership Report	Martyn Groucutt - Education	To inform Council of SAC recommendations to appoint members of SAC	Sharon Randall-Smith	16-Apr-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	UK Shared Prosperity Fund post March 2025 – financial implications and impact	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	10-Jul-24
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	2024/25 Revenue and Capital Monitoring Month 9	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-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 Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-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)	
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	Education Middle Tier	Martyn Groucutt - Education		Will McLean	20-Nov-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-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's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
10th February 2026	Draft Revenue & Capital budget proposals (<u>invite other members</u>)	To scrutinise the 2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
	Financial Update	To scrutinise the budgetary position (revenue and capital) for services falling within the committee's remit.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
10th March 2026	School Examination Results	To receive a report on the latest school examination results.	Ed Pryce Sharon Randall-Smith Cllr Wright	Performance Reporting
	School Attendance Report	To scrutinise the latest figures on school attendances.	Sharon Randall-Smith Cllr Wright	Performance Reporting
21st April 2026	Development of Children's Placements – 12mth update	To update the committee following scrutiny in April 25.	Jane Rodgers Scott Hereford Diane Corrister Cllr Chandler	Performance Reporting
	Investment and Commercial Interests Update – 12mth update	To update the committee following scrutiny in April 25.	Nick Keyse Peter Davies Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
9th June 2026 (provisional)	Update on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS)	Discussion on significant changes that have occurred in the service and the risks around increasing demand.	Morwenna Wagstaff Jackie Elias Hayley Page Cllr Wright	Performance Reporting

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
	Specialist Resource Bases & Additional Learning Provision (including progress with ALN implementation)	To review progress at 12-month stage and include reviewing progress with ALN following the implementation of new legislation.	Morwenna Wagstaff Jackie Elias Hayley Page Cllr Wright	Performance Reporting
	Supporting Vulnerable Learners	To follow up from June 25 – annual.	Morwenna Wagstaff Lucie Doyle Cllr Wright	Performance Reporting
21st July 2026 (provisional)	NEET Reduction Strategy?**			
To be confirmed	Grants item – with People members?*	To scrutinise the Council's use of grant money, to assure that it is fit for purpose.	Jonathan Davies	Performance Monitoring
To be confirmed	Consultants and Agencies – with People members?*	To scrutinise the Council's use of consultants and agency workers – the number, relative value, reasons, etc.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies?	Performance Monitoring
To be confirmed – best end of 2025?	Shared Prosperity Funding 2023-25+	Shared Prosperity Funding measures 2023 -2025, update on the measures for transition year 25/26 and future funding risk.	Hannah Jones Will McLean	Performance Reporting
To be confirmed –	NEET Reduction Strategy**	To scrutinise the strategy's performance.	Hannah Jones Louise Wilce Cllr Griffiths	Performance Monitoring

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
April/May best <i>[1 page summary – see minutes]</i>				
To be confirmed	Project Management	<i>To scrutinise the council's approach managing major projects.</i>		<i>Performance Reporting</i>
To be confirmed (Dec-Jan)	Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan update	<i>To update the committee on the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan.</i>	<i>Hannah Jones James Woodcock Will McLean</i>	<i>Performance Reporting</i>
To be confirmed	Recruitment and retention	<i>Effect on the Council's performance and ability to deliver.</i>		
To be confirmed	Use of Reserves	<i>Future proofing and resilience planning as well as supporting long-term strategic priorities.</i>	<i>Peter Davies Jonathan Davies Cllr Callard</i>	
Social Justice Strategy progress				
Business Monmouthshire Project monitoring				
'Learning led' review of				

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
educational provision in Chepstow				
Review of Property Assets				

- **Exclusions** ~ Annual Reporting ~ January/February
- **Additional Learning Provision & Specialist Resource Base development** ~ Annual Reporting ~ June
- **Support for Vulnerable Learners** ~ Annual Reporting ~ June

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Action List

18th November 2025

Minute Item:	Subject	Officer / Member	Outcome
4	To provide a written response about the use of dimmable technology in street lighting: whether it provides savings, and if it is being rolled out across the county	Deb Hill-Howells, Ben Callard	Response sent to members
4	To provide a 'ballpark' figure for the Council's dependency on grants, including breakdowns of core funding, at-risk funding, and agent-distributed grants	Jonathan Davies, Ben Callard	To provide as part of Grants scrutiny?*
6	For officers to have a follow-up discussion with Councillor Newell to explore improved identification and support regarding mental health	Matt Gatehouse	Sent to officers
8	To provide responses to the questions from members, listed below	Cath Fallon, Rhys James, Ben Callard	Responses below sent to members
10	To update members about a potential timeline for scrutinising grants, specifically the Shared Prosperity Fund	Peter Davies, Hannah Jones, Jonathan Davies	Requested*

Members' questions relating to Item 8 – Additional Business: 'Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy update'

1. What do "PTR" and "CAR" mean on page 6 of the SRPP?

PTR – Pre Tender Report; CAR Contract Award Report. These abbreviations have now been removed and the full description provided in the attached, revised Policy.

2. The document is aspirational; how will its success be measured – what about KPIs, and what will the mechanisms be for reporting back to the committee?

Page 22 of the Policy states that 'The Policy will be implemented through each Council's established Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy and Action Plan and assessed using standard KPI's. From 2026 delivery of the policy will be monitored and reported in each Council's annual performance report of its Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy' Paragraph 3.5 of the covering report also states: 'Delivery will be monitored and reported in the Council's annual self-assessment report of the

enabling strategies. The self-assessment report will be presented to the Committee for scrutiny.

3. How will the policy be monitored and reported back to the committee, given the mention of ‘the 2026 policy to be monitored by council’?

Please refer to the response to Question 2 above.

4. Should there not be an Integrated Impact Assessment for the policy?

Paragraph 4.1 of the covering report states: An Equality and Future Generations Evaluation Assessment is not applicable in this case as there are no proposed changes to existing service delivery and policy. For further clarification, the Policy supplements the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy for which an Integrated Impact Assessment was previously undertaken.

5. On page 8 of the SRPP, why is ‘need’ 5th out of 8 in identified priorities? Given that the residents are our customers, should we not find out the need from customers first? The emphasis does not suggest the correct priority to meet customer needs (and legal requirements to meet needs).

There is no hierarchy for the priorities or objectives. They are linked to the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and as such are all equally important.

6. In the project process, why is ‘plan’ first – should the need not be defined first? Unless the diagram is misleading?

On page 11 of the Policy, the planning stage is prioritised within the procurement cycle. For instance, if the contract for printers is about to expire in three months, planning for re-procurement starts first. The specific needs of the Authority are then redefined based on recent assessments. Plan, Define, Procure, Manage is also the cycle outlined in Procurement Act 2023 guidance.

7. How does the policy support local small/medium-sized Enterprises and Social Enterprises, and what percentage of procurement spend is expected to be directed to these groups?

Supporting our local economy, including local SME’s and Social Enterprises is one of our key socially responsible objectives. The Policy outlines our ambition to achieve this by:

- Promote our Contract Forward Plan to local businesses and increase the number of opportunities advertised through Sell2Wales.
- Actively promote opportunities for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and Voluntary and Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs) to bid for work by, where appropriate, breaking down larger contracts into ‘lots’, reserving below threshold procurement for MSMEs/VCSEs, and carrying out pre-market engagement including market warming events

- Encourage our suppliers and contractors to support the local economy by using local businesses in their supply chains and local labour wherever possible to fulfil contract obligations and ensuring prompt payment.
- Encourage our suppliers and contractors in the transition to a more circular local economy by waste prevention, reducing waste and closing product and material loops through value retention within the resource hierarchy.
- Work with partners such as Business Wales, Business in Focus, Federation of Small Businesses and South Wales Chamber of Commerce to improve the skills of local SMEs to access public sector opportunities.
- Ensure that payments to contractors and throughout supply chain are made within 30-day payment terms.

Currently the percentage of spend with local businesses is 17.93%. However, work is planned with MCC's Business Support team to develop a profile of businesses in the County. An exercise will be undertaken to identify a full list of local preferred business partners to determine appropriate targets moving forward.

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Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Action List

3rd December 2025

Minute Item:	Subject	Officer / Member	Outcome
3	To provide a response to the question 'Patchy rural broadband is still a critical barrier to businesses in Monmouthshire – what are we doing to improve coverage?'	Hannah Jones	Response sent to members
3	To provide a response to the question 'What effect has the 180-day rule had in the sustaining of tourism businesses in Monmouthshire?'	Hannah Jones, James Woodcock	Requested; reminded
4	To share the list of frequent problem drainage and flooding locations with councillors for review and prioritisation.	Carl Touhig and team	Requested; reminded
4	To share the presentation with members	Carl Touhig and team	Requested; reminded

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Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Action List

27th January 2026

Minute Item:	Subject	Officer / Member	Outcome
3	To provide members with the report on smartphone use among pupils	Hugo Hutchison, Morwenna Wagstaff	Sent to members
3	To invite Heads back to a future meeting to discuss the impact of the new curriculum, and to include how the process is managed for Welsh students applying to English universities	Morwenna Wagstaff, Will McLean, Headteachers	In process
4	To provide a further response from Social Care to Cllr Bond's question about School-based Counselling	Social Care team, Morwenna Wagstaff, Emma Taylor	Requested
5	<i>(Questions from members to be emailed)</i>	Richard Jones, Hannah Carter, Cllr Callard	

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk on Tuesday, 18th November, 2025 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Alistair Neill (Chair)

County Councillors: Jill Bond, Rachel Buckler, John Crook, Meirion Howells, M. Newell, Paul Pavia, Peter Strong, Ben Callard and Ann Webb

Officers in Attendance

Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources
Will McLean, Chief Officer for Children and Young People
Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health
Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships.
Jonathan Davies, Head of Finance/Section 151
Craig O'Connor, Chief Officer, Place and Community Well-being
Deb Hill-Howells, Chief Officer Infrastructure
Kate Thompson, Corporate Health & Safety Manager
Annette Evans, Customer Relations Manager
Stacey Jones, Performance/Finance and Resources Manager
Nikki Wellington, Finance and Support Services Manager
Dave Loder, Finance Manager - Directorate Management Accountant
Tyrone Stokes, Finance Manager
Rhys James, Strategic Procurement Lead

APOLOGIES: Councillors Steven Garratt and Angela Sandles - C. Werrett

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Public Open Forum

None.

3. 2025/26 Revenue Budget - Financial Update - To scrutinise the budgetary position for services falling within the committee's remit

Cabinet Member Ben Callard introduced the report with Jonathan Davies and answered the members' questions with Nicola Wellington, Jane Rodgers and Will McLean:

What is the impact of higher-than-expected interest rates on council finances, noting projections that rates may decrease soon, and how significant might any changes be over the next few months?

Any changes in interest rates in the coming months would have minimal effect on the current financial year, as most forecasts already account for expected reductions. The main concern is the cost of borrowing, which is linked to gilt yields rather than directly to the Bank rate. Most of the council's borrowing is at fixed long-term rates, so only a small portion is exposed to short-term rate changes. The approach is balanced to manage risk, not overly cautious or exposed.

What specific interventions are being taken with the most at-risk schools in deficit, and when is the number of schools in deficit expected to decrease?

The council is working with schools to address both in-year and cumulative deficits, prioritizing stabilizing annual budgets before reducing the overall deficit. The largest pressures are in the Abergavenny cluster and the Pupil Referral Service, with recovery plans in place and ongoing collaboration. Funding increases and savings are being pursued, but changes will be gradual to avoid negative educational impacts. Officers added that deficits may worsen before improving due to the academic year structure, but recovery plans are being monitored monthly, and last year's £1 million investment is helping.

How is the council addressing structural deficits versus in-year overspends, and what is considered the minimum safe level of usable reserves for financial resilience?

The council aims to keep emergency reserves at 5% of the net revenue budget, which is the minimum safe level, and is working to rebuild earmarked reserves for medium-term resilience.

Which budget modelling category is highest risk and what mitigation plans exist if risks worsen?

The highest risk in budget modelling is service demand, especially in social care, homelessness, and additional learning needs, which have been more volatile than traditional risks like pay or inflation. The council remains flexible in its modelling to adapt to changing assumptions.

Is the Welsh Government's Pathways of Care Transformation Grant expected to fund additional services or simply cover shortfalls to maintain current service levels, and what expectations do ministers and civil servants have for additionality?

The grant is intended to support system-wide capacity, with an emphasis on hospital discharge, but recognizes that maintaining whole-system capacity is necessary. The grant supports both increased discharge and broader system needs, with quarterly monitoring and reporting to Welsh Government.

What is the plan and timeline for robustly evidencing savings from the social care practice change programme, and what will be done if the full savings cannot be achieved?

Reviews are ongoing and savings are being made, but the specific savings from practice change have not yet been separately identified; they are reflected in the overall adult social care position.

What are the "red line" triggers for the council to intervene directly in a school's financial management, beyond supporting and monitoring recovery plans, and are any schools close to these thresholds?

Intervention would occur if a school lost budgetary control or failed to execute agreed recovery plans, potentially leading to a warning notice and withdrawal of budget delegation. This has happened once before, but currently no schools are at that threshold, though close monitoring is ongoing for the Pupil Referral Service and King Henry VIII School.

What will be the impact of school deficit recovery plans in the classroom, are the issues due to management or unavoidable needs like pupil referral services, and what about increasing behavioural and emotional needs among students i.e. there being a more proactive, preventative support?

The Pupil Referral Service is addressing increased and more complex needs post-pandemic, with three main service areas (PRU, EOTAS, ALN bespoke). Emotional literacy support (ELSA) remains important, but the level of need is unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels. Budget recovery may sometimes result in staff reductions, but decisions are made by governing bodies. It is agreed that more preventative work is needed to address root causes before students require intensive support; the broader societal challenge is acknowledged.

Is the passenger transport overspend entirely due to unsafe routes, and can you clarify other areas contributing to the overspend?

The overspend is indeed mainly due to identifying more unsafe routes to school and reinstating passenger transport as committed during the review process.

Regarding street lighting being on budget, what is the role of dimmable technology – has it provided savings, and is it to be rolled out across the county? Why are lights no longer turned off at midnight, given dark skies initiatives?

The lights-off policy was reversed for safety reasons. A written response will need to be provided on dimmable technology – **ACTION: to provide a written response**

Does the National Insurance shortfall exclude schools or is it purely for MCC non-schools?

The shortfall includes schools, with additional costs forecast for the year and a funding gap that will be carried as a pressure moving forward.

Is it possible to have a 'ballpark' figure for the council's dependency on grants?

The council budgets for a level of specific grants, noting the nuance that many grants are directly passed to other agencies, such as acting as an agent for Welsh Government for certain services. – **ACTION: Officers to clarify and provide a 'ballpark' figure for the Council's dependency on grants, including breakdowns of core funding, at-risk funding, and agent-distributed grants.**

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for their continuing work and their responses to the members' questions. The report was moved.

4. Medium-term Financial Plan Update - To review the budgetary situation

Cabinet Member Ben Callard introduced the report with Jonathan Davies and answered the members' questions with Nicola Wellington, Will McLean, and Jane Rodgers:

How many schools submitted recovery plans by October half term and how many were returned for improvement?

All required recovery plans were submitted by October half term, reviewed internally, and monitored monthly. Plans are not rewritten if targets are missed; schools are asked to adjust future years to meet commitments.

What is the typical time horizon for recovery plans, and do schools with high deficits face structural financial challenges?

Recovery plans are tailored to each school, aiming for robust and sustainable financial discipline without disruptive changes. Support is provided to allow gradual recovery while minimising impact on pupils.

How can council be assured that adult social care practice change savings are having an effect, and how many care packages have been reduced through the review process?

The practice change programme is complex, focused on responding to rising demand and using resources effectively. Savings are reflected in the bottom line, but isolating specific figures is challenging due to dynamic needs and changes in care delivery. Reviews are ongoing, and a more detailed allocation will be available later in the year.

How much does the review process look holistically at each individual's situation?

The approach is indeed holistic, considering well-being outcomes, carer support, community connections, and assistive technology, not just formal care.

What is the projected number of residential placements by year end and next year, given the rise in dementia and complex care?

The council is predicting three new placements per month based on recent trends, but this is unpredictable and may be affected by winter pressures. The rise is linked to an ageing population and increasing complexity of needs.

What proportion of rising legal costs in children's services are avoidable, and what alternative legal support models have been considered?

The council has tried commissioning external legal support, but it increased costs. In-house advocacy is used where possible, and further analysis is planned to identify cost-saving opportunities. Some costs are mandated by the courts and not fully controllable. *What is the split between Welsh Government funding and Council tax for the county, how does this compare to the Welsh average, and could the Local Development Plan (LDP) and affordable housing affect this ratio?*

The average split in Wales is roughly 70% Welsh Government funding and 30% Council tax, but Monmouthshire relies more on Council tax. The ratio is affected by various factors, including discounts, exemptions, and development bandings. The LDP and affordable housing could influence future assumptions, but the area is complex and modelled prudently.

How will the Cabinet Member ensure that savings and transformation plans over the next few years are genuinely realistic and deliverable, given that only about 80% of planned savings were delivered last year and many services are already at statutory minimums? What criteria are used to decide if a transformational saving is robust enough to be included in the budget, and will scrutiny have the opportunity to test these assumptions?

The Cabinet Member acknowledged the challenge, noting that savings targets have been difficult, but the council has achieved a higher rate (around 92%) so far this year. Savings proposals are scrutinised through the budget consultation process, including scrutiny committees, which will continue to have the opportunity to challenge the robustness and deliverability of proposals.

What is the council's strategy for reducing reliance on capital receipts and borrowing, given that capital receipts are forecast to fall sharply, and how will the council maintain investment in essential assets without letting them deteriorate?

The council is tapering off the use of capital receipts to support the revenue budget, aiming for zero by 2028/29. The pool of receipts is diminishing and will only be replenished through the replacement Local Development Plan. Capital investment will be prioritised based on risk and affordability, with technical assessments guiding decisions. Borrowing will be required for investments above core funding, and the council is assessing the long-term impact and prioritisation of needs.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked the Cabinet Member and officers for the report and their responses to the members' questions, with the members welcoming efforts to deliver more customer-focused, efficient services. The report was moved.

5. Annual Health and Safety report - To scrutinise the report on how the Council's health and safety incidents and risks are managed

Kate Thompson introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Matthew Gatehouse:

Is the high rate of workdays lost due to sickness in Monmouthshire County Council (over double the national average) a trend seen in other local authorities, and what more is being done to address this figure?

Comparative data is hard to obtain, but Caerphilly recently reported a similar high figure. The council is continuing to seek Wales-wide data.

Is any particular directorate most affected by high sickness rates e.g. social care?

Social Care is among the directorates most affected and there have been recent meetings with managers and HR to analyse data and develop action plans to reduce sickness absence.

When will the health and safety dashboard be shared, and does the data include residents using council facilities, as well as staff?

The dashboard is in development and should be ready by year-end after consultation. The data includes staff, contractors, and customers using facilities, but only incidents where the work activity or premises contributed are classified as work-related. All incidents are recorded, but only work-related ones are reported in the figures.

Can you explain the use of the term "psychological illness" versus "mental health," and what is being done about mental health, including stress management courses and linking stress to workload and budget cuts?

"Psychological illness" is the HR classification and covers a range of conditions (anxiety, stress, depression, etc.), with more detailed breakdowns available. Connect 5 well-being training has been rolled out, initially in social care, with plans to expand it council-wide. Managers will be expected to conduct stress risk assessments, which will help identify and address work-related stress factors, including workload.

What is being done about the root cause of the increase in violence against teachers by learners, and is the council addressing behaviour and emotional regulation in young people?

The officer's focus is on supporting affected staff and ensuring reliable data. The Wales directorate team handles child-related issues, including risk assessments and specialist support. The officer meets regularly with safeguarding and directorate colleagues to coordinate support for both staff and pupils.

What is an example of a non-work-related incident? Can we emphasise the importance of linking stress management to work planning?

For example, a child tripping over their laces in a playground would not be work-related unless a workplace factor (like a pothole) contributed. Stress risk assessments will help identify work planning issues.

Is "psychological illness" as a category too broad, and should workplace-related stress should be separated from medically diagnosed conditions? How can the council better support individuals and improve reporting to distinguish between these causes?

Every case is treated individually, and new reporting categories now separate workplace stress from personal factors, with initial data showing about 20% of stress is workplace-related, 10% is mixed, and 70% is due to factors outside work – **ACTION: for officers to pick up with the member outside the meeting to explore improved identification and support.**

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked the officers for the report and their responses. The report was moved.

6. Social Services Complaints Process - To scrutinise the performance of the Council's complaints process, and issues raised by it

Annette Evans introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Jane Rodgers:

Is the statutory 25 working day period for Stage 2 complaints reasonable, what drives delays (complexity, capacity, workflow), and why does poor communication remain a recurring theme? What about actions to address inaccurate assessments and procedural failures, and how can learning from complaints lead to measurable change rather than repeated commitments?

The 25-day timescale is very tight due to the need to commission independent investigators, coordinate with complainants and staff, and the complexity of cases—this has been raised with Welsh Government. Communication issues often arise because social workers are not always available to respond quickly, and capacity is a factor. Inaccurate assessments are sometimes a matter of complainant perspective versus professional judgment; Stage 2 complaints are often complex, sometimes adversarial, and while minor inaccuracies do occur, the council aims for accuracy but operates under challenging circumstances.

How confident is the council that children know how to complain and feel safe to do so, what work is done in schools and with youth services to promote the process, and how does the council test that young people understand their rights and can access advocacy?

For children looked after and those in child protection, there is an active offer of advocacy, which is recorded in the system. Issue-based advocacy is available at any point, and social workers are encouraged to build strong relationships so children feel comfortable raising concerns. The council works closely with NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Service), which reports on its activity and sits on the corporate parenting

panel. While most complaints come from parents, the council aims to ensure children know how to complain and can access support if needed.

Does the council benchmark its complaints performance against other local authorities and does it learn from other authorities' approaches, for example, in improving communication?

The council participates in an all-Wales Complaints Officer Group, meets quarterly, and shares data and approaches with other authorities and the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales. The council provides regular statistics to the Ombudsman, who publishes comparative data online, allowing anyone to see how different authorities perform and the types of complaints they receive. The member's request that some of this benchmarking information be included in future reports for transparency is noted.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked the officers for their thorough answers, noting the report gives the public a good overview of the service's challenges. The report was moved.

7. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS: To note and refer any questions arising: Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy update - To scrutinise the steps the Council will take to implement the Socially Responsible Procurement

Questions from members will be sent to Cath Fallon, Rhys James and Councillor Callard for a response – **ACTION**

8. Council and Cabinet Work Plan

Councillor Bond asked about the Panel Performance Assessment. Matthew Gatehouse explained that the Panel Performance Assessment is a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Elections Act 2021, requiring local authorities in Wales to appoint an independent chair and a panel of peers once every five years to review the effectiveness of their arrangements. This supplements the annual self-assessment process. Monmouthshire County Council's first assessment is scheduled for February 2026, and a report will be made available to the committee for information.

9. Performance and Overview Scrutiny Work Plan and Action List

Officers noted that, where possible, meetings will henceforth only feature two substantive items, with Additional Business as an option for extras. Officers drew members' attention to the Education items coming to People on 21st January, to which committee members will be invited. Members are happy to receive the Risk Assessment report every 6 months (perhaps best under Additional Business).

Councillor Bond raised the need to review the grants allocation process, referencing previous issues from the Call-in earlier in the year and noting that there is still SPF (Shared Prosperity Fund) money remaining, as well as upcoming Pride in Place and Impact Fund opportunities. She emphasised the importance of transparency and timely scrutiny – **ACTION: to follow up again with officers**

10. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes were confirmed.

11. Next Meeting

Wednesday 3rd December 2025 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.41 pm.

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 3rd December, 2025 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Alistair Neill, (Chair)
County Councillor Rachel Buckler, (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: John Crook, Meirion Howells,
M. Newell, Paul Pavia and Peter Strong

C. Werrett

Also in attendance County Councillors:
Paul Griffiths, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member
for Planning & Economic Development and
Catrin Maby, Cabinet Member for Climate
Change and the Environment

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Will McLean, Chief Officer for Children and Young
People
Graham Kinsella, Traffic and Road Safety Manager
Sueanne Sandford, Highway Asset Street Works
Team Manager
Carl Touhig, Head of Neighbourhood Services
James Woodcock, Business Insights Manager
Christopher Mitchell, MCC Group Engineer

APOLOGIES: County Councillors Steven Garratt and Jill Bond

1. Declarations of Interest

None.

2. Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan update

Hannah Jones, James Woodcock and Cabinet Member Paul Griffiths introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Will McLean:

How can Monmouthshire's economy be described as "working to full capacity" while also suggesting it could be "more vibrant"?

"Full capacity" refers to high employment levels, strong business occupancy (particularly in industrial spaces), and a highly qualified workforce. However, achieving greater vibrancy would require additional people and more industrial space to support further growth.

What is behind the increase in NEETs? Was it predictable, due to more children with complex needs, or was it unexpected?

The rise is multifaceted. It reflects increased complexity of needs, the impact of COVID-19 on secondary education, and challenges in post-16 provision – particularly around Level 2 qualifications and transport in Monmouth. Work is ongoing to broaden post-16 options and improve early identification tools. Recent data shows a reduction in NEET numbers, with final figures still pending.

It was noted that while the unemployment rate is low (2.8%), about 20% of Monmouthshire's working-age population is economically inactive, which is only slightly below the UK average. It is important not to overlook this group, as one in five adults aged 16-64 are not working despite being able to. Should the council consider how to support and engage them?

There are ongoing efforts to support economically inactive cohorts into work, with new programmes like Connect to Work with DWP, and the need for bespoke support. 29.4% of the inactive are students

(higher than the Wales average), 18% are long-term sick (lower than Wales/GB averages), and 25% are retired (almost double the rate elsewhere), indicating that students and retirees make up a significant portion of the inactive group.

Why have business numbers fallen from 4,575 to 4,445, and has the council evaluated the long-term sustainability of business support after the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) ends? Which programmes depend on SPF, and what are the plans for sustaining them after March 2026?

The council is working with internal and regional partners to understand the transition from SPF to the new Local Growth Fund, which is currently under consultation. There is no direct read-across, and some projects may need to be refocused. An impact assessment of SPF-supported work is underway and will be shared with the committee.

What is being done to improve extremely patchy rural broadband, which remains a critical barrier for businesses?

The officers will take this question away and provide a written response, as it is not directly within their remit. – **ACTION**

What is the impact of the 180-day rule on sustaining tourism businesses in Monmouthshire?

A research project is underway to assess the impact of the 180-day rule, which will inform lobbying efforts with Welsh Government, but the question will be referred to tourism colleagues for a fuller written response. – **ACTION**

What interventions could reduce the rise in Universal Credit claimants aged 18-24 (from 441 to 729), and what proportion cite transport barriers?

A pilot with DWP offers a 12-week programme for young Universal Credit claimants, focusing on barriers such as confidence, skills, and health. Employer engagement is part of the support. Transport is frequently cited as a barrier, and cohorts are run in different locations to address this.

How can the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programme in schools be strengthened, and how can employers be encouraged to participate?

The STEM programme is in its early stages, with professional learning for staff, cluster leads for sustainability, and active engagement with employers and private sector partners to make the programme self-sustaining.

What factors have contributed to the recent decline in the number of active enterprises in Monmouthshire, and have any been identified that could help reverse the trend?

It is difficult to attribute the decline to any single factor. Business numbers have fluctuated over time, rising before COVID and increasing again post-pandemic. Further analysis will be carried out to identify any specific causes.

What targeted measures are planned to reduce the significant earning disparity between male and female workers?

Exploratory work is underway, including women-in-business events and discussions with employers about flexible working. The council's own policies also aim to address the gender pay gap.

Have any skill shortages been identified in Monmouthshire, and what is being done to address them, including future improvement plans?

The council has engaged with major local businesses to identify skills gaps, which vary by sector but commonly include technical, software, communication, and digital skills. Work is ongoing to collate this information, and succession planning is a noted issue. The council aims to further develop this assessment over the next year.

Is the higher number of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) in Monmouth linked to public transport issues, and what can be done to help given Monmouth's limited transport options?

Transport barriers, such as limited bus services to Hereford and Newport, place a burden on young people and can lead to disengagement if transport is missed. Expanding post-16 provision within local schools, especially at Level 2 and vocational Level 3, is seen as a way to help retain students and reduce reliance on external further education providers.

How can workplace education (e.g., NVQ up to Level 7) be promoted as an alternative to university?

The officers acknowledged the importance of workplace education and agreed on the need to broaden course options in local schools to reduce transport barriers and support young people's aspirations.

How is the governance and monitoring of the Economy, Employment and Skills (EES) strategy being managed now that delivery is distributed across multiple other strategies, and is there a plan for a single dashboard or scorecard with KPIs, baselines, targets, and RAG status?

There is a comprehensive spreadsheet that currently tracks interdependencies, and the team is open to developing a RAG assessment for future reporting. There is agreement on the importance of reviewing indicators, and this exercise will be undertaken.

What tangible evidence demonstrates the benefits and value delivered to Monmouthshire from its financial contributions to the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR), and has any detailed analysis been done?

Regular reports on CCR activities are provided to full Council, and future reports will include quantifiable information. Examples of CCR impact include investments in compound semiconductors and support for medical technology firms, though more detailed reporting is acknowledged as necessary. – **ACTION: the Cabinet Member to liaise with the Leader about including quantifiable benefits in the quarterly report to council**

Chair's Summary:

The Chair concluded that, despite the low unemployment rate, the council should not be complacent and should continue to explore ways to add value and address the needs of the economically inactive. He emphasised the need for a reality check when comparing Monmouthshire's economic competitiveness, noting that while it ranks second in Wales, it is 79th out of 152 in the UK and the UK itself is 30th out of 38 OECD countries, urging the council to focus on raising its game rather than just outperforming local peers. The Chair highlighted the significant economic impact of tourism (£352 million in 2024) and questioned what is being done to support this sector given current challenges. The development of Placemaking Plans was welcomed by the members as a positive way to engage local residents and address local needs. The Chair expressed concern that the report may not fully reflect the challenges faced by businesses, especially in high streets and hospitality, and suggested this should be considered before the report goes to Cabinet. On the matter of any failed CCR procurement, the Chair suggested that such issues be addressed in future council reports to ensure transparency and confidence. He thanked the officers and Cabinet Member for their responses, and the report was moved.

3. Potholes and Road Conditions

Carl Touhig delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions with Christopher Mitchell, Sueanne Sandford, Cabinet Member Catrin Maby, and Graham Kinsella:

Why is there no project plan for major roadworks, and could visibility of the various stages help to manage expectations and improve communication with residents and businesses?

Publishing a detailed programme of work can create unrealistic expectations because plans often change due to factors such as ecology checks or storm damage. However, there is a commitment to improve communication by sharing available plans for major works and engaging with communities earlier, while making clear that changes may occur.

Who is responsible for the A40 in Monmouth, particularly when traffic lights fail, and how should such incidents be handled?

Responsibility for the A40 lies with SWTRA, but some traffic lights may fall under MCC's network. Both teams would respond to incidents, and the police should be the first point of contact for immediate safety. Further investigation can be carried out if specific details are provided.

Are there alternatives to temporary pothole repairs that could provide more permanent solutions and save money in the long term?

Temporary repairs are used for immediate safety and are cost-effective, but the team also undertakes patching and permanent repairs when possible. Materials are chosen for quick installation and minimal

disruption, and engineering expertise is applied to incorporate permanent fixes into wider maintenance programmes.

What qualifies as a pothole, and could addressing smaller defects earlier help to prevent bigger issues?

Potholes and defects are categorised based on road hierarchy and defect size. The urgency and response depend on location and severity, with higher priority given to defects on main roads or in wheel tracks.

Is there an annual work plan for clearing drains, given that blocked drains can worsen potholes, especially in winter?

Drainage is handled reactively due to resource constraints, with no scheduled preventive maintenance. Blocked gullies are addressed when reported, and residents can help by clearing leaf litter from gully tops.

Is the budget split equally between roads and pavements, considering the extensive lengths of both?

The budget is not split equally. There is a long list of pavement works, but funding is capped. Pavement condition analysis is ongoing, and active travel funding is used where possible, particularly in targeted areas like Chepstow.

How can issues with unadopted highways and open manholes be resolved, given the difficulty in identifying ownership and ensuring safety?

Specific cases can be investigated if details are provided. The approach involves working with enforcement and legal teams to resolve ownership and address safety concerns. It is important to use the MyMon app or Council services to report issues, as this helps to prioritise and track repairs.

Is the increased weight of electric vehicles (300-500 kg heavier than combustion vehicles) being monitored for its impact on road conditions, and is there any research on this?

The issue is recognised, and monitoring is underway for technical notes and failures, particularly at junctions, as the situation evolves. Relevant findings will be shared as they become available. It is also noted that some roads lack modern foundations, which affects maintenance.

Does pothole monitoring and prioritisation take into account risks to cyclists, especially on rural roads, and should signage or other measures be considered for cyclist safety?

Inspectors are instructed to consider all road users, including cyclists, when assessing defects. Repairs are prioritised on routes heavily used by cyclists or for active travel. While signage is used in some cases, the preference is to fix hazards quickly rather than rely on signs.

How does the Council balance residents' concerns about potholes and degraded roads with limited budgets and prioritisation of social care, and is this balance communicated effectively?

The issue reflects a long-term accumulation due to constrained public budgets and prioritisation of social services and education. Monmouthshire faces particular challenges as a rural county within a regional funding structure, alongside the impact of climate change and the need for significant infrastructure investment. Efforts are ongoing to raise these concerns with regional and national bodies, and cross-party understanding is emphasised.

At what point do recurring potholes in the same location trigger a permanent repair or further investigation?

When potholes are repeatedly reported through the official My Council Services system, the location is flagged for a more permanent fix. If both temporary and permanent repairs fail, further investigation is carried out to identify underlying issues. Reporting through the official system rather than by email ensures this process is followed.

How is public awareness being raised about the Highway Code changes giving pedestrians priority at junctions?

The guidance has changed to give pedestrians priority at junctions, but behaviour change is challenging. Welsh Government is consulting on introducing simple zebra crossings at minor junctions, which could be implemented in the future to reinforce pedestrian priority.

Could there be a review of how frequent problem locations on smaller rural roads—especially those with blocked drains, culverts, and ditches—are managed, given their impact on flooding and access?

Over the past two to three years, teams have improved pre-emptive action before heavy rain by clearing known problem culverts and drainage points. A list of about 100-120 such locations is maintained and can be shared with councillors to help prioritise. Some issues fall under landowner responsibility (riparian ownership), but the Council works with them to resolve problems where possible. – **ACTION: to provide the list**

Chair's Summary:

The Chair and members thanked the officers present and wider team for their sterling work in dealing with the recent flooding. Thank you to the officers and Cabinet Member for the presentation and responses today. – **ACTION: to provide the presentation to members**

4. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS: Planning Annual Performance Report

Any questions to be emailed to officers for a subsequent response.

5. ADDITIONAL BUSINESS: Community & Corporate Plan progress update

Any questions to be emailed to officers for a subsequent response.

6. Next Meeting : 27th January 2026 (Special) at 2pm and 10th February 2026 at 10am

Members were reminded about the forthcoming invitation to People Committee on 21st January for Education items, and that members can view the Cabinet and Council Planner at any time by following the link on the Democratic Services page of the Hub. It was agreed at the last Scrutiny Chairs meeting that the draft budget proposals in the new year will be tabled to Performance & Overview only, but with the invitation to be issued to all members.

The meeting ended at **12.39 pm**

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Tuesday, 27th January, 2026 at 2.00 pm

Councillors Present

County Councillor Alistair Neill, (Chair)
County Councillor Rachel Buckler, (Vice Chair)

County Councillors: Jill Bond, Steven Garratt, Meirion Howells, M. Newell, Paul Pavia, Peter Strong, and Su McConnel substituting for John Crook

C. Werrett

Officers in Attendance

APOLOGIES: County Councillors John Crook

1. Declarations of Interest.

Councillor McConnel declared a non-prejudicial interest as a member of the school Exclusion Panel at King Henry VIII school.

2. School Exclusions update - To scrutinise the latest figures and the Council's performance. Report to follow.

Dr Morwenna Wagstaff introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Hugo Hutchison, Kelly Waythe and Rachael Roach-Rooke:

Why have the number of exclusions and days lost increased so much, and how does this compare to Wales, the UK, and globally? How many are repeat exclusions and what happens to those pupils?

The increase is attributed to more challenging behaviours post-pandemic, with national trends showing similar rises. Repeat exclusions are tracked, and most exclusions are short-term. Each exclusion is a unique decision, and most pupils do not have repeat exclusions. Support includes restorative meetings and multi-agency plans to prevent recurrence.

How are permanent exclusions rescinded, what is the process, and what happens to those children?

Permanent exclusions are rescinded through collaboration between the school, local authority, and family, often by creating a support package, managed moves to other schools, or intervention via the pupil referral service. The process is based on agreement and tailored support for the child.

Is there opportunity for more proactive support to help young people build resilience and prevent exclusions, beyond staff-focused approaches?

The meeting acknowledged the importance of proactive and preventative strategies, with ongoing professional learning for staff and embedding trauma-informed practices. There is emphasis on building capacity in schools and multi-agency support, with positive impacts starting to show, especially in primary settings.

What happens to a pupil during and after exclusion; specifically, what support is provided to prevent repeat exclusions, and could more be done to assist schools in this area?

The process involves communication with families, restorative meetings, and multi-agency involvement to support reintegration and reduce repeat exclusions. It should be emphasized that most pupils do not reoffend and that internal exclusions are also used as a preventative measure.

What is the significance of the exclusion numbers (noting 5% of pupils are excluded, with an average of about four exclusions per excluded pupil), and is the current trajectory sustainable? Is more/different action needed?

Exclusion is a last resort, but sometimes necessary for safety; numbers have risen due to societal changes, but recent data suggests a possible levelling off. Autumn term data shows a decrease in exclusions, and primary exclusions are often concentrated among a small group of pupils with complex needs.

Can you clarify the process and rationale for rescinding permanent exclusions, and what happens to pupils in these cases?

Rescinding permanent exclusions involves collaboration between the local authority, school, and family to develop alternative support packages, such as managed moves or pupil referral service interventions, aiming for reintegration and transparency in reporting. The Headteachers can cite examples of successful managed moves and would highlight the importance of trust and dialogue between schools and the local authority.

Is there specific support or packages to help excluded pupils return with a different approach, and is there more that could be done to support schools in this?

Support is tailored to individual pupils, often involving collaboration with the local authority to access additional funding and resources. There are examples where bespoke packages have led to significant reductions in exclusions for specific pupils. The inclusion network and multi-agency collaboration are key to providing effective support.

What specific interventions work best to reduce repeat exclusions and days lost (e.g., pupil referral unit, early intervention, managed moves, trauma-informed training, inclusion network)?

Effective interventions include multi-agency collaboration, managed moves, trauma-informed training, and the inclusion network, which enables resource sharing and professional support. No single intervention is universally effective; success depends on individual circumstances. Managed moves, trauma-informed training, and the inclusion network are highlighted as valuable, with multi-agency collaboration and bespoke support packages often leading to positive outcomes.

What formal escalation occurs when exclusion practices differ between schools, and how is disproportionate exclusion in some schools addressed?

The local authority monitors exclusion data and challenges schools with high or increasing exclusions. Formal escalation includes meetings with headteachers, senior leaders, and governors, and exploring professional learning and support strategies. Issues are discussed collectively in the inclusion network. Variation between schools is expected due to differing circumstances and Headteachers would caution against judging schools solely by exclusion numbers.

How early do prevention strategies in primary schools begin, and how are problems identified before they escalate?

Prevention in primary schools involves early monitoring of exclusion patterns, providing support packages, and multi-agency reintegration meetings. Professional learning and capacity building for staff are emphasized to address challenging behaviours before they escalate, and the team was established in response to increasing demand for early support.

How do we tackle increasing parental disengagement and the prevalence of smartphones among young children?

Schools are working to build relationships with parents through direct communication, shared expectations, and community support. Monmouthshire schools have adopted a policy advising parents not to give smartphones to children until Year 10, with positive feedback from families. Schools aim to set clear expectations for parental responsibility and provide signposting to support services. – ACTION: to provide members with a report on smartphone use among pupils

What about trauma-informed training?

Schools and the local authority use a trauma-informed approach to exclusions, recognising that the exclusion process itself can be distressing for pupils and families. Staff trained in trauma-informed practice focus on responding sensitively to incidents, centring the child's voice, and putting clear follow-up plans in place with parents and, in primary schools, the local authority. Schools aim to reduce anxiety by improving communication, ensuring children stay connected to learning, and offering wellbeing check-ins during exclusions. Overall, the approach seeks to minimise additional trauma and support pupils to return positively, reducing the likelihood of repeat exclusions.

Why does the report lack a breakdown of exclusion reasons, and could future reports include more detail on types of offences and parental involvement?

The omission was acknowledged and it was agreed that future reports should include more detail on exclusion reasons and parental involvement.

What happens to a child during a typical exclusion period, including supervision, support, and safeguarding?

Excluded children are the responsibility of their parents during the exclusion period; work is sent home, and the local authority maintains communication for reintegration and support. Schools ensure parents are informed by phone before formal letters, and exclusions are not issued if there are safeguarding concerns about the child being at home. Internal exclusions or alternative arrangements are used if needed.

What is the impact of school budget cuts on exclusions, specifically have reductions in support staff led to more exclusions, especially in primary schools?

It is acknowledged that budget pressures and reduced support staff likely affect the ability to manage challenging behaviours, making it harder to provide preventative and relational support, though no direct correlation is quantified. Monmouthshire schools are adapting creatively, using professional learning and flexible staff deployment, and there is new funding redirected to secondary schools for targeted support of at-risk learners.

Is the new curriculum in Wales sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of pupils at risk of disengagement and exclusion, or does it impose a new rigidity similar to the old national curriculum?

The new curriculum offers opportunities to tailor learning to individual interests and abilities, but successful implementation will require investment and time. The curriculum provides greater flexibility for schools to design diverse pathways, including academic and vocational options, which can re-engage students and support inclusion, provided schools make the right decisions.
– ACTION: to invite Headteachers at a later date to discuss the effect of the new curriculum

What is the importance of consistent coding for exclusion reasons across schools, how do headteachers ensure accuracy, and how do governors scrutinise exclusions and lost days?

Exclusion reasons are clearly coded and communicated, with governing bodies regularly scrutinizing exclusion data, trends, and support measures through well-being committees and professional discussions with the local authority.

Are there local authority officer capacity pressures due to rising demand for support tasks, and has a business case for additional resources been made?

Officer capacity is indeed under pressure and a budget request for increased capacity has been submitted, with robust systems in place for monitoring exclusions and managed moves.

How are managed moves between local authorities monitored to ensure successful reintegration and minimal impact on the hosting school?

Managed moves are monitored through inclusion panels and review meetings, and cross-border moves can be challenging but progress is being made in collaboration with other authorities.

As well as scrutinising the effect of the new curriculum, can we also scrutinise how Welsh students who wish to go to an English university is managed? – ACTION (FWP)

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked officers and particularly the Headteachers for attending today, and extended the members' thanks to their teams for their hard work. In addition, the Chair highlighted the importance of the latest Estyn report on school exclusions and school health research, noting it is a strong report that reflects positively on the council's work and should be recognized and celebrated by residents. He congratulated the council's education team, while also noting that there is still work to be done to improve outcomes compared to other counties.

3. Schools Health Research Network - To inform the committee about the data and insights from the SHRN work led by Cardiff University relating to pupil well-being.

Emma Taylor introduced the report, delivered a presentation and answered the members' questions:

What is the extent of multi-agency involvement, specifically the role of counselling and psychoeducation for pupils, and do young people receive proactive support to understand and regulate emotions before issues escalate?

School-based counselling is available in all secondary schools and play therapy is available in primary on a needs-led basis, but the service sits within Social Care, not Education. Multi-agency support (including educational psychology and the education support team) is provided as needed for excluded pupils. – ACTION: to provide a response from Social Care

How is best practice (such as resilience and emotional regulation initiatives) shared and implemented across schools?

Best practice in areas such as resilience and emotional regulation is shared primarily through the local authority's Wellbeing in Schools Forum, where schools and the local authority collectively identify actions and exchange examples of effective approaches. In addition, cluster-based wellbeing lead groups enable primary and secondary schools within each cluster to share methods, initiatives and practical experience. When a child requires additional support – such as following an exclusion – multiagency practice is applied on an individual basis, involving options like schoolbased counselling, the Education Support Team, and Educational Psychology. These agencies work together to identify any specific interventions the child may need to process difficulties and develop healthier coping strategies, with the aim of preventing future behavioural issues.

Why did not all 30 primary schools participate in the survey, and why were Pupil Referral Units not included?

It was clarified that 28 primary schools participated (correcting the figure of 27 in the report); of the two that did not participate, one was ineligible due to only having foundation phase learners, and one had insufficient consent from families. Pupil Referral Units are currently part of a pilot to test survey suitability.

Are teaching staff sufficiently trained to deliver mental health and resilience education? Is there a potential risk of pathologizing normal stresses?

Secondary schools increasingly have specialist departments and staff receiving extra professional learning to teach these topics, with well-written resources available and ongoing monitoring of new initiatives to ensure positive impact. Monitoring and evaluation are integral when schools introduce new processes, and non-specialist delivery (e.g., during tutor time) is being addressed through more specialist approaches.

Is the reporting focussed on process or outcomes?

This wellbeing dataset is only one source of information and is mainly used to give a broad picture of school ethos, trends and provision. Schools hold other, more detailed data that tracks individual pupils, so this report should be seen as part of a wider set of tools rather than the sole measure of outcomes.

What structure or support exists for excluded pupils and PRU learners?

PRU learners are included within the same expectations as all schools under the new curriculum's Health and Wellbeing Area of Learning. Staff in the PRU also teach this curriculum and gather pupil voice data in line with mainstream schools. The system is therefore not absent, but forms part of ongoing professional development and datagathering across schools and the PRS.

What does it mean that these learners will now be included, and is the structure clear?

Their inclusion relates to using the same anonymised, comparable data sources across all settings – including the PRS – so the local authority can identify themes at school, cluster and county level. This dataset provides a highlevel picture rather than individual tracking, offering consistency in how information is monitored.

Are issues like sleep difficulties being explored, including factors such as physical activity?

Wellbeing themes (including those raised in the survey such as sleep) are identified through data and then explored by schools and the local authority. Earlier surveys showed pupils didn't know how to access wellbeing support, prompting schools to strengthen signposting and community links, showing that identified wellbeing issues do lead to targeted action.

What is the overall aim of this work, and are we prioritising problemsolving over process?

The aim is to build a reliable, longterm picture of trends to inform school and LA action. Officers emphasise caution about drawing conclusions from only one or two years of data, as anomalies can occur, but over time the dataset helps identify issues – such as truancy or school pressure – for further investigation. The emphasis is on using layered evidence to identify and address real needs rather than relying on process alone.

Could the data set be used across the curriculum, including student analysis and ownership of health improvement initiatives?

Schools use the data in curriculum activities and track trends over time, with secondary schools able to monitor improvements using their historical data.

Does the survey account for students giving socially desirable rather than truthful answers?

The concern about response honesty is acknowledged, as some learners might give answers they think are expected, especially on subjective well-being topics, so this is a fair comment.

Chair's Summary:

Thank you to the officers for the data and their time and responses today.

4. Additional Business: Strategic Risk Assessment - To inform members of the authority's risks, and for the committee to consider any areas for further scrutiny.

Questions from members to be received by emailed and passed to the relevant officers for a response. – **ACTION**

5. Next Meeting: Tuesday 10th February 2026 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at **4.46 pm**