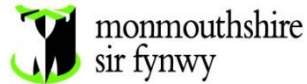


# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Monday, 1 June 2026

## Notice of meeting

### Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Tuesday, 9th June, 2026 at 10.00 am  
The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

*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.	Election of Chair.	
2.	Appointment of Vice-Chair.	
3.	Apologies for Absence.	
4.	Declarations of Interest.	
5.	Public Open Forum.  Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council <a href="#">website</a>  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 <a href="mailto:Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk">Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a>  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](mailto:Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

- |            |  |         |
|------------|--|---------|
| <b>6.</b>  | <b>Building the Foundations for Data and AI Enabled Public Services - To scrutinise the business case for foundational investment in data and AI infrastructure necessary to secure programme funding and deliver sustainable service benefits and outcomes.</b>     | 1 - 44  |
| <b>7.</b>  | <b>Update on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) - Discussion on significant changes that have occurred in the service and the risks around increasing demand (Report to follow).</b>   |         |
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>Specialist Resource Bases &amp; 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 (Report to follow).</b> |         |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Supporting Vulnerable Learners - To follow up from June 25 - annual (Report to follow).</b>   |         |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Council and Cabinet Work Planner.</b>   | 45 - 54 |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and action List.</b>   | 55 - 62 |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting.</b>   | 63 - 78 |
| <b>13.</b> | <b>Next Meeting: 30th June 2026 at 10.00am.</b>  |         |

**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

## Public Information

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

### Welsh Language

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

### Public Open Forum

Our Scrutiny Committee meetings are live streamed and a link to the live stream will be available on the meeting page of the Monmouthshire County Council [website](#)

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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.

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## **Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council**

### **Our purpose**

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

### **Objectives we are working towards**

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

### **Our Values**

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

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

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

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

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

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

**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

## 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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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Building the foundations for a Data and AI Enabled Council</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Performance &amp; Overview Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>9th June 2026</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>Countywide</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval for the Council's participation in, and contribution towards, a phased programme of foundational investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Modernisation through the Shared Resource Service (SRS) partnership.
- 1.2 The proposals look to enhance the Council's ability to deliver better outcomes for residents, improve productivity and service resilience, support staff, and enable more informed and timely decision-making across the Council.
- 1.3 The report brings together two linked investment proposals:
  - a three-year partnership-wide AI programme to create a secure, governed shared AI foundation, including an AI Management Hub, staff productivity tools and a Digital Front Door capability; and
  - Phase 1 of the Data Modernisation Programme, including completion of the core data platform and delivery of the Single View of Child (SVoC) as the first operational use case for joined-up insight and predictive analytics.
- 1.4 The purpose of the report is not to introduce technology for its own sake. It is to ensure that the Council has the right foundations, safeguards, skills and partnership arrangements in place so that the Council can use AI and data analytics in a proportionate, ethical and practical way that reflects public service values and maintains public trust.
- 1.5 The report sets out why investment is required now, the benefits expected for residents, staff and councillors, the safeguards and governance arrangements that will apply, the options considered, the financial and workforce implications, and how success will be evaluated.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO PERFORMANCE AND OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- i. That the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee scrutinise a phased programme of foundational investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Modernisation through the Shared Resource Service (SRS) partnership;

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To approve Monmouthshire County Council's participation in the three-year SRS partnership AI programme, based on the preferred delivery route outlined in the report.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the Council's share of the investment, funded by a one-off contribution from earmarked revenue reserves (specifically the Invest to Redesign Reserve), as set out in this report and summarised as follows:
- a) A combined three-year contribution arising from the AI programme and Data Modernisation Phase 1 of £596,654, profiled as £462,654 in Year 1, £66,000 in Year 2 and £68,000 in Year 3;
  - b) A contribution of £20,500 in year 1 for Microsoft Fabric, with the cost for subsequent years incorporated into the MTFP from 2027/28.
  - c) A contribution of £34,000 in year 1 for transactional AI usage costs for the Digital Front Door, with the cost for subsequent years incorporated into the MTFP from 2027/28.
  - d) An initial budget provision of £200,000 to support services to implement AI and Data projects to the extent that existing capacity and capability does not allow.

The total one-off contribution from earmarked reserves will be £851,154.

- 2.3 To approve Monmouthshire County Council's participation in Phase 1 of the SRS Data Modernisation Programme, including delivery of the Single View of Child and completion of the key components of the unified data platform.
- 2.4 To endorse a phased, gated approach to implementation, including formal stage gates for AI use cases and investment progression; and a pause-and-review point for the Data Modernisation Programme before any Phase 2 proposals are brought forward.
- 2.5 To endorse the principle that AI and predictive analytics will be used to support professional judgement and service improvement, and not to replace human accountability for decision-making.
- 2.6 To delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer Resources, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, to finalise implementation arrangements and release funding in line with the approved profile, subject to the governance arrangements and decision gateways set out in this report.

### **3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The Council has a clear purpose to become a zero-carbon county that supports well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. Digital and data are recognised as key enablers that will help us achieve these outcomes.
- 3.2 Cabinet approved in May 2025 for the Council to transition a shared service model for digital and data in collaboration with Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough, as part of an expanded role for the Shared Resource Service (SRS).

- 3.3 All three organisations, along with Newport City Council, are partners in the Shared Resource Service (SRS) which has successfully supplied our technology services since 2011. The SRS has developed its capability over many years, from network resilience through to cloud migration.
- 3.4 Through the extended collaboration, the authorities are now able to capitalise on economies of scale to take us to the next level in meeting the Council's digital and data ambitions, as set out in the Council's digital and data strategy.
- 3.5 The Digital and Data Strategies of the partner authorities have common themes that made collaboration feasible. These themes centre around:
- Digital Skills Development
  - Customer-Centred Services
  - Collaboration and Innovation
  - Data and Evidence-Based Decision Making
  - Technology and Infrastructure
  - Automation and Efficiency
  - Sustainability and Inclusivity
- 3.6 Collaboration also increases the ability of partners to tackle inequalities through better use of digital and data in line with the Marmot principles endorsed by the Gwent Public Services Board. This includes preventing issues from occurring or worsening and contributing to better health outcomes.
- 3.7 Stemming from the strengthened collaboration this report looks to secure Cabinet approval for the Council's participation in, and contribution towards, a phased programme of foundational investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Modernisation through the SRS partnership.
- 3.8 The SRS Strategic Board considered these proposals at its meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> April and recommended them for approval through partner authorities' own individual decision making. Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council have already secured the necessary approval and funding to proceed. The investment in total across the local authority partners amounts to £2.47m. Monmouthshire, like other local authority partners, is looking to move forward at pace and not get left behind.
- 3.9 These proposals are not simply an investment in technology. They are a targeted investment intended to secure a return through higher productivity, reduced avoidable administrative and process cost, earlier intervention, better targeting of resources and more efficient service delivery. By creating the right shared foundations for AI and data modernisation, the Council will be better placed to release staff time for higher-value work, manage demand more effectively, reduce duplication and improve outcomes for residents, while also creating the conditions for future financial efficiencies and better long-term value for money.

3.10 These proposals have been developed over a period of time and have included specialist support and advice, as well as extensive senior officer and Cabinet member consultation through both SRS and Council governance arrangements.

### **Background and case for change**

- 3.11 Services across the Council and wider SRS partnership are experiencing sustained pressure from rising demand, increasing complexity of need, workforce constraints and growing expectations for accessible digital services. Across partner councils, many core processes remain sub-optimal or dependent on siloed systems and workarounds. New capabilities with AI and data that were unimaginable a few years ago are now within our grasp, enabling us to do more with the same, or even reducing budgets. This will help increase workforce productivity, freeing up our colleagues to focus on tasks requiring a more empathetic and human-centred approach.
- 3.12 The current position also creates risk. In the absence of a coordinated approach to the use of AI, partner councils can end up trialling separate tools, duplicating effort, missing economies of scale and allowing the use of unapproved or "free" AI tools that do not offer the governance, integration or security expected in a public service setting. These proposals look to introduce a shared and governed platform intended to replace this patchwork of ungoverned use.
- 3.13 In relation to data, key information about residents, families and service demand can sit in separate systems across organisations, making it harder to build a full picture quickly, coordinate support, identify risk early or plan resources effectively. Fragmented data is a limitation to earlier intervention, more efficient use of professional time and better outcomes.
- 3.14 This report therefore presents two connected investment proposals designed to address these issues in a practical, phased and controlled way:
- a shared AI foundation to provide a secure, governed platform for staff productivity, citizen contact and future service redesign; and
  - a shared data modernisation capability that can securely bring together information from multiple systems, improve data quality, and provide more timely and holistic data which will improve the speed and quality of decision-making by professionals and enable predictive analytics which can improve and accelerate our work on prevention. This will begin with the Single View of Child and other data use cases that will be identified, prioritised and progressed alongside.
- 3.15 These are 'enabling' investments. They are intended to improve the Council's ability to respond to pressure, use public money more effectively, support and enhance staff capabilities, act earlier where possible and improve the quality of decisions and services over time.

### **What is being proposed - AI foundation**

- 3.16 The AI proposal is a three-year, partnership-wide programme designed to establish a secure, governed shared AI foundation across the four SRS partners. It replaces fragmented, ungoverned and inconsistent use with one shared AI Management Hub and associated delivery capability.
- 3.17 The AI programme has two stages:
- a Foundation stage, which creates a shared AI Management Hub integrated with systems and data, and provides approved AI capabilities for staff such as summarisation, translation, redaction and approved bots, alongside initial Digital Front Door capability for citizen enquiries; and
  - a Scaling Innovation stage, which is intended to support end-to-end automation, more advanced AI use cases, council-wide chatbots, 24/7 digital services, and broader service transformation where value is evidenced.
- 3.18 The preferred delivery route is to use AWS (Amazon Web Services) Professional Services for the AI Management Hub and a professional services partner for the Digital Front Door, together with a preferred option for temporary staffing investment within the SRS Automation Team. Refer to the options appraisal section for more information on options that were considered.
- 3.19 The proposal is designed to deliver value through a single, shared approach rather than through each partner authority procuring separate solutions. This is intended to reduce duplication, strengthen governance, build internal capability and create economies of scale.

#### **What is being proposed - Data Modernisation and predictive analytics**

- 3.20 The Data Modernisation proposal seeks approval for Phase 1, focussed on single view technology, of a wider, phased programme to modernise how partners use data. This will complete the core data capability and deliver the Single View of Child (SVoC) as the first operational use case.
- 3.21 This will utilise two products that will enhance the council's data capabilities. ClearCore cleans, matches, and fixes messy and unstructured data from different sources to create one accurate, trusted record. This cleaned data is then fed into Microsoft Fabric, which analyses it and turns it into actionable information, opening-up greater access to data to our staff and councillors alike, significantly improving efficiency and transparency.
- 3.22 Phase 1 will:
- complete the shared data capability using Microsoft Fabric and ClearCore as the core components of the unified data platform;
  - deliver operational SVoC dashboards across all four councils and at a regional level;
  - provide additional project management capacity to support delivery at pace; and
  - establish a repeatable, outcome-led delivery model for future use cases.

An expectation is set that other future user cases will be developed in parallel. That work is already well progressed across partner councils and an appetite exists within

Monmouthshire to bring forward use cases that have the potential to deliver quick and demonstrable outcomes and results.

- 3.23 The Single View of Child is being used as the first use case because it addresses an area of high demand, high risk and high cost. It is intended to help professionals build a more joined-up view of need, identify issues earlier, improve decision-making and make better use of professional time.
- 3.24 Importantly, the benefit does not come from presenting a single view alone. The benefit comes from how the insight is used to support earlier intervention, targeted support, improved management of demand and better practice. The potential this provides for predictive analytics is intended to support professional judgement, not replace it.

### **Why the proposals matter for Monmouthshire County Council**

- 3.25 The data modernisation papers specifically note that, for Monmouthshire, the wider programme supports the Council's well-being objectives by breaking down data silos, improving insight for decision-makers and helping the Council identify need and target resources accordingly across service areas.
- 3.26 More broadly, both business cases are built around challenges that are directly relevant to Monmouthshire: rising demand, increasingly complex need, workforce pressure, the need to use public money well, and the importance of giving staff better tools and access to timely and reliable information at the push of a button so they can focus on high-value work rather than trawling multiple systems to build a picture.
- 3.27 For residents, the proposals are intended to support quicker and more accessible digital services, more proactive support, and better coordinated responses where multiple services are involved. For staff, they are intended to reduce administrative burden, improve access to trusted information and create more time for professional work. For Members, they are intended to improve insight, planning and assurance.

### **The story of change and opportunity**

- 3.28 These proposals need to be understood as service improvements that will enhance staff productivity and effectiveness by creating more time to spend on the things that only our talented workforce can do, not as an uncontrolled adoption of technology. The Council is investing in the foundations required to use AI and data safely, ethically and effectively, in order to improve services and make better use of its scarce resources.
- 3.29 It is important to be clear and explicit that:
- this is not a programme to remove human accountability from local authority services;
  - this is not a proposal for uncontrolled or ungoverned automation;
  - this is not a substitute for professional judgement; and
  - this is not a one-off technology purchase, but a phased and governed programme combining people, process, governance, data and digital capability.
- 3.30 It is also important to acknowledge openly that residents, staff, trade unions, councillors, auditors and regulators may have legitimate concerns about privacy, fairness, security, job

impact, transparency and bias. Confidence will come not from dismissing those concerns, but from showing that the Council is approaching them openly and putting strong safeguards in place from the outset.

- 3.31 For this very reason programme and project delivery will be phased, gated, reviewed at defined checkpoints, and only scaled where value, control and readiness are demonstrated.

#### **Governance, safeguards and accountability**

- 3.32 Strong governance is central to both proposals. The AI programme is explicitly designed around a secure shared foundation with common standards for governance, data protection and service resilience, and progression through formal stage gates.
- 3.33 The Data Modernisation proposal is similarly structured around a phased and gated approach, with a formal pause-and-review point at the end of Phase 1 to assess evidence of impact, data quality, adoption, governance and scalability before any Phase 2 proposal is considered.
- 3.34 Further safeguards contained in the proposals include:
- secure, governed platforms rather than ad hoc tools;
  - clear governance and decision points before scaling use cases;
  - controlled access, audit and security arrangements for sensitive data;
  - data quality management through the unified data platform and ClearCore;
  - service owner, benefits owner and subject matter expert involvement through the service team model; and
  - success criteria and evaluation reports before further investment decisions are made.
- 3.35 For MCC, all use cases will be reviewed through appropriate existing internal governance before any operational deployment.

#### **Workforce implications and staff confidence**

- 3.36 One of the primary purposes of the investment is to support staff with tools that reduce repetitive work, improve consistency, strengthen decision support and free capacity for higher-value frontline work.
- 3.37 The Data Modernisation proposal aims to give professionals a clearer, joined-up picture so that they spend less time gathering information and more time applying judgement and supporting citizens. Our approach to meeting the needs of residents and communities is dependent on the empathy, compassion and humanity that can only come from interactions with a real person. AI and Data Modernisation can speed up processes, assist with analysis and data gathering and reduce the administrative burden on already busy colleagues. It cannot and will not replace professional judgement.
- 3.38 This again emphasises these proposals as being enabling and supportive. They will affect how some tasks are undertaken and may, over time, create opportunities to redesign processes and use capacity differently. However, the report should give confidence that

the Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes.

3.39 Successful implementation will depend on staff involvement, training, service ownership and change support. We do not want to build a model that leaves us forever dependent on external experts. It is important that this is an opportunity to upskill our own staff with the skills and capabilities they need to succeed and thrive in the workplace of the future. For both proposals a structured service team model involving service owners, benefits owners, subject matter experts, data owners and practitioners, with explicit and proportionate time commitments will need to be secured and engaged from project and use case initiation.

3.40 For MCC, implementation should therefore include:

- early staff engagement and clear communication;
- appropriate engagement with trade unions;
- practical guidance and training;
- clear ownership within services; and
- ongoing feedback and review.

### **Environmental Considerations**

3.41 The proposed investment in AI and data capability has both positive and negative environmental implications which need to be recognised and actively managed.

3.42 On the one hand, the programme has the potential to contribute positively to the Council's environmental objectives. Improved use of data, automation and digital services can reduce duplication, streamline processes and minimise reliance on paper-based and travel-dependent activities. Over time, this can reduce emissions associated with service delivery, support more efficient use of resources, and enable better targeting of interventions that contribute to wider environmental and sustainability outcomes.

3.43 However, it is also important to recognise that the increased use of AI and data analytics has an environmental cost. AI systems rely on large-scale cloud computing infrastructure, including data centres, which require significant amounts of energy and, in some cases, water for cooling. As the use of AI expands, so too does the demand placed on this infrastructure.

3.44 The Council can take direct action to manage environmental impact through its own governance arrangements. As part of the programme, the Council will develop and adopt an AI policy that promotes the responsible and sustainable use of AI. This will include expectations around proportionate use, avoiding unnecessary processing, designing efficient solutions, and considering environmental impact as part of use case approval and governance. This ensures that AI is deployed only where it delivers clear public value and is used in a way that is efficient and sustainable.

3.45 The underlying data and digital infrastructure for the SRS partnership has already been migrated to a shared cloud environment using Amazon Web Services (AWS). As a result, these proposals do not introduce a new infrastructure footprint, but instead build on an

existing, consolidated platform that is already designed to operate at scale and with greater efficiency than traditional, locally hosted systems. This migration has reduced duplication across partner authorities and enabled more efficient use of computing resources. Notwithstanding an increased use of AI and data will draw on more compute power from its cloud environment.

- 3.46 The use of AWS also provides an element of mitigation at provider level. AWS has committed to reaching net-zero carbon by 2040 and continues to invest in renewable energy, energy efficiency and water stewardship across its global data centre operations. By utilising a hyperscale cloud platform, the Council and its partners benefit from these efficiencies and from infrastructure that is typically more energy-efficient than equivalent on-premise provision.
- 3.47 The overall environmental impact is therefore considered to be manageable and proportionate. The proposals support a more efficient and sustainable operating model for the Council, while recognising and mitigating the environmental costs associated with increased digital and AI capability through a combination of shared infrastructure, supplier commitments and local governance controls.

#### **Risks of inaction**

- 3.48 Inaction is not cost neutral. Without developing the use of AI and data technology, demand pressure would increasingly need to be absorbed through higher staffing levels, manual processes and fragmented solutions, with avoidable risk from ungoverned AI use.
- 3.49 Without the Data Modernisation investment, partners would remain dependent on fragmented data, slower and more reactive ways of working, duplicated reporting approaches and reduced ability to identify risk, manage demand and intervene early. This in turn increases medium-term cost exposure and reduces the ability to manage demand proactively within existing resources.
- 3.50 In practical terms, the risk of not proceeding is that MCC would continue to experience avoidable inefficiency, slower modernisation, weaker insight, greater duplication and missed opportunities to improve services and make better use of public money.

#### **Principal risks and mitigations**

- 3.51 It is important that the principal risks associated with proceeding are understood and suitably mitigated. These can be summarised as follows:
- Delivery capacity risk – the current automation and data delivery teams do not have sufficient capacity to deliver the programmes at pace without temporary staffing and specialist support. This is why the preferred AI option includes temporary Automation Team posts and the Data Modernisation proposal includes project management capacity.
  - Service capacity, capability, skills and change risk – progress depends on service leads and practitioners being available to shape, test and adopt use cases. It also depends on services having the capability and skills to implement and maintain the tools. The service team model and the staged approach are intended to make that commitment explicit and proportionate.

- Data quality and integration risk – benefits depend on the quality of source data and the ability to integrate systems reliably. The Data Modernisation proposal specifically relies on Microsoft Fabric and ClearCore to improve matching, standardisation and data quality. This will require service ownership to address and improve data quality.
- Security, privacy and governance risk – both programmes rely on careful control of sensitive information, secure platforms and proper access controls. A rigorous DPIA and governance approach will be implemented and user access will be role-based and audited.
- User adoption risk – benefits will not be realised if staff do not trust or use the tools. The proposals therefore emphasise early design involvement, training, implementation support and benefits tracking. The phasing and scaling of adoption aids staff and services being adopted the change in incremental manner.
- Financial risk – the programmes involve up-front investment and, in the case of AI, transactional usage costs that are not yet fully modelled. The mitigating control is staged delivery, formal review points and cost management and benefit realisation as the programmes progress.

3.52 The key point here is that these risks are real, but they are being addressed through a deliberate, phased and governed approach. That is preferable to fragmented or unmanaged adoption.

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

- 4.1 The proposals have significant potential positive impacts. They are intended to support earlier intervention, more joined-up services, more effective safeguarding, better use of professional time, improved access to services, and better targeting of resources. The Single View of Child is intended to improve the ability of professionals to identify concerns earlier and coordinate support more effectively, supporting professional judgement and decision-making.
- 4.2 The proposals also support the Council’s long-term resilience and prevention agenda. The Data Modernisation programme aims to be an enabling investment that supports a more preventative, sustainable and evidence-led model of service delivery, including improved understanding and management of demand over time, aligned with wider well-being and Marmot-related ambitions across the partnership.
- 4.3 There are also potential negative impacts and risks if implementation is not well governed. AI and predictive analytics can create concerns about bias, fairness, transparency, privacy, digital exclusion and workforce anxiety. There is also a risk that AI outputs could be over-relied upon or misinterpreted, and that poorly interpreted insight could increase reactive or risk-averse practice rather than support proportionate early intervention. These risks have been assessed in the impact assessment, are acknowledged and will be actively managed.
- 4.4 The Council will therefore ensure that equality, Welsh language, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and social justice considerations are built into both programmes and

into each individual use case, supported by appropriate impact assessment where required, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.

- 4.5 The proposals support longer-term sustainability by improving the Council's ability to understand and manage demand, intervene earlier, share learning across partners and build enduring capability rather than rely on short-term fixes, supporting long-term service sustainability and resilience.
- 4.6 The environmental impacts and considerations are separately considered above in the report. The proposals could support environmental goals by reducing paper, travel and duplication, but increased AI use also carries energy and water costs through cloud infrastructure. The overall impact is considered manageable through shared infrastructure, AWS mitigation commitments, and local governance to ensure proportionate, sustainable use.
- 4.7 The full integrated impact assessment is shown in **appendix 1**.

## **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:**

- 5.1 Two stages of options appraisal were undertaken in considering these investment proposals:

### **1. AI and Data Approach**

#### Option 1 – Do nothing / continue with current arrangements

- 5.2 Under this option, the Council would not make a dedicated foundational investment and would continue to use existing systems, skills and reporting arrangements.
- 5.3 This option has the advantage of avoiding immediate cost and organisational disruption. However, it does not address existing limitations to deliver the Councils digital and data strategy aims, does not reduce the risk of inconsistent or unmanaged use of AI tools, and does not position the Council to realise service, productivity and prevention benefits. It is therefore not recommended.

#### Option 2 – Introduce isolated AI tools without wider foundational investment

- 5.4 Under this option, the Council would procure selected AI-enabled tools for immediate service or productivity use without making broader investment in governance, data foundations, skills and programme management.
- 5.5 While this may appear quicker, it carries significant risks. Benefits may be short-lived or uneven, governance may be insufficient, data quality issues may be unresolved, and the Council may create fragmented practice across services. This option is therefore not recommended.

#### Option 3 – Approve phased foundational investment in AI and Data Modernisation

- 5.6 Under this option, the Council would establish the required foundations first, prioritise use cases carefully, and implement in phases with governance and assurance built in from the outset.

- 5.7 This option provides the best balance between ambition and control. It enables the Council to modernise responsibly, realise measurable benefits over time, support staff, and maintain public confidence. This is the preferred option.

## **2. Delivery method options**

### AI Programme

- 5.8 Option 1 – AWS Professional Services for all phases – This option would use AWS Professional Services across the full AI programme. It offers broad and flexible opportunities for AI development, but the preferred papers conclude that a mixed model using a specialist partner for the Digital Front Door offers faster delivery in that area.
- 5.9 Option 2 – AWS Professional Services plus a Pro Services Partner for the Digital Front Door – This is the preferred option in the AI business case. It uses AWS for the shared AI hub and a specialist Pro Services Partner for the Digital Front Door, drawing on proven local government experience and enabling faster deployment while retaining a shared platform and knowledge transfer approach.
- 5.10 Option 3 – Third-party single vendor platform – This option offers a more packaged and rapid route but at significantly higher cost, with annual software licensing and increased vendor lock-in.

### Staffing option for AI delivery

- 5.11 Option 1 – temporary staffing uplift within the SRS Automation Team – This is the preferred option because it provides the delivery capacity required while maximising knowledge transfer and protecting other critical digital and compliance work.
- 5.12 Option 2 – reallocate resource from the Applications, Management and Development (AMD) team – This option is not preferred because it introduces significant risk to other critical projects, compliance work and service levels at the SRS.

### Data Modernisation

- 5.13 Option 1 – Do not proceed / continue with current arrangements – This would avoid immediate expenditure but would leave the Council dependent on fragmented data, manual workarounds, slower insight, under-utilisation of existing investment and weaker ability to intervene early. It is not recommended.
- 5.14 Option 2 – Approve Phase 1 only, with a formal gateway before Phase 2 – This is the recommended option. It enables Monmouthshire to complete the shared data foundation, deliver the Single View of Child and assess evidence of benefit, adoption and scalability before considering further phases.
- 5.15 Option 3 – Commit now to wider Phase 2 scaling – This is not recommended at this stage because the Data Modernisation papers are clear that further investment should only be brought forward where Phase 1 evidence supports it and where delivery capacity and partner readiness are understood.

### **Preferred option**

5.16 The preferred overall approach is therefore to approve phased foundational investment in AI and Data Modernisation achieved by:

- AI Option 2 plus Staffing Option 1; and
- Data Modernisation Phase 1, with a formal gateway before any Phase 2 commitment.

## **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:**

- 6.1 There are already robust governance arrangements in place in both the SRS and the Council to maintain appropriate oversight of strategic and operational delivery of digital and data programmes and projects.
- 6.2 The SRS Strategic Board, supported by the SRS Finance & Governance Board and the SRS Business & Collaboration Board, will maintain oversight of the wider delivery of partnership priorities.
- 6.3 The Council has a Digital & Data Steering Group to maintain oversight on programme and project governance and delivery. Separate strategic briefings are maintained with the Leader as Cabinet portfolio holder for digital and data. Appropriate senior representation from the Council and SRS sits on the FPOP Programme Assurance Board to ensure there is appropriate scrutiny and challenge from the perspective of the Council's overall change programme.
- 6.4 All governance structures have been involved in the development of these investment proposals. Each will maintain its own specific interest to ensure that the stated objectives, outcomes and benefits are delivered on time and to budget.
- 6.5 A benefits and value framework has already been established against which outcomes will be monitored through programme governance and normal performance reporting arrangements. Success will be measured through:
- delivery of agreed capabilities, outcomes and efficiencies;
  - uptake by staff and services;
  - improvements in service performance and satisfaction; and
  - evidence of better decision-making and earlier intervention.
  - assessment of impact on service outcomes

### AI Programme

6.6 Success measures for the AI programme will include:

- delivery of the AI Management Hub and Digital Front Door capability within agreed timescales;
- adoption of governed AI tools by partners;
- completion of structured discovery and prioritisation for priority use cases;
- evidence of staff upskilling and knowledge transfer into the SRS Automation Team; and

- evidence of measurable service or productivity and outcome benefits in implemented use cases.

### Data Modernisation

6.7 The success criteria for Single View of the Child to be used for Phase 1 evaluation include:

- dashboards live and operational across all four councils and a regional view;
- agreed data sources integrated and refreshed at a frequency that meets service needs;
- strong data quality and matching performance;
- evidence of user adoption and confidence;
- evidence of early improvement in decision-making, practice or earlier intervention; and
- no major governance, privacy or security concerns.

6.8 Formal review points will be built into overall programme delivery, including:

- ongoing programme monitoring;
- an end of Q3 / Q4 FY2026 pause-and-review point for Data Modernisation; and
- stage gates for progression of AI use cases.

6.9 A formal review will take place for data modernisation / single view of the child at the end of Year 1 / Phase 1 before any further investment consideration is taken around wider rollout.

## **7. REASONS:**

7.1 As outlined in the key issues section of the report and the strategic case for change these proposals wholly align with the key aims and objectives of the Council's digital and data strategy. This 'enabling' investment supports both the delivery of the Community and Corporate Plan and the Council's FPOP (*For Purpose On Purpose*) change programme.

7.2 These investment proposals are required because the Council needs to improve its ability to use data, digital tools and insight in order to respond to rising demand, financial pressure and increasing service complexity.

7.3 The proposed investment will help the Council move from fragmented and largely retrospective use of data towards a more joined-up, proactive and preventative model.

7.4 The decision is also required to ensure that any use of AI and predictive analytics develops within an appropriate framework of governance, legal compliance, ethical safeguards, accountability and workforce engagement.

7.5 In summary, the decision is needed to improve service effectiveness, strengthen organisational resilience, support staff, make better use of Council resources, and modernise in a way that is controlled and consistent with the Council's values.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 Subject to Cabinet approval, expenditure will be phased and linked to implementation milestones and decision gateways. The investment will support:
- programme leadership and delivery capacity;
  - technical and data capability;
  - governance and assurance activity;
  - workforce training and change management;
  - early priority use cases capable of demonstrating practical value.
- 8.2 The combined direct one-off investment commitment for Monmouthshire arising from the two proposals and to be met from the Invest to Redesign reserve, is £596,654 profiled as:
- Year 1: £462,654  
Year 2: £66,000  
Year 3: £68,000
- 8.3 Of which the AI programme requires a three-year contribution of £516,000 per partner, profiled as:
- Year 1: £382,000  
Year 2: £66,000  
Year 3: £68,000
- 8.4 This covers the preferred delivery route via AWS and a temporary staffing model within the SRS Automation Team. The proposed temporary roles required are:
- Lead Automation Engineer;  
Senior Automation Engineer;  
2 x Automation Engineer; and  
Project Manager,
- with a total annual staffing cost of £253,400 across the partnership, equivalent to approximately £64,000 per partner, subject to annual review.
- 8.5 The AI totals above do not include recurring transactional AI usage costs for the Digital Front Door. This will be met via a contribution from the Invest to Redesign reserve of £34,000 in year 1 (2026/27), with the cost for subsequent years incorporated into the MTFP from 2027/28.
- 8.6 The Data Modernisation Phase 1 proposal requires:
- a one-off cost of £80,654 per partner in Year 1; and
  - a recurring Microsoft Fabric licence cost of £20,500 per partner per annum. This will be met via a contribution from the Invest to Redesign reserve of £20,500 in year 1 (2026/27), with the cost for subsequent years incorporated into the MTFP from 2027/28.

- 8.7 The proposal also has wider resource implications beyond finance and that may need to be separately considered to the extent they cannot be accommodated within the Council's existing revenue and capital budgets. These will be considered separately on a case-by-case basis and include:
- staff time and leadership capacity;
  - digital, data and information governance capability;
  - organisational development and communications support.
- 8.8 In recognising these wider potential resource implications a contribution of £200,000 is proposed to be drawn from the Invest to Redesign reserve to act as initial budget provision to support services to implement AI and Data projects.
- 8.9 Services will be expected in the first instance to accommodate the necessary investment of staff time from within existing resources and budget. To the extent that this is not possible and backfill arrangements or further capability is required then evidence based requests will need to be made to the Digital & Data Steering Group for consideration.
- 8.10 The total contribution requested from the Invest to Redesign reserve will therefore be £851,154.
- 8.11 It should also be noted that ClearCore costs of £27,500 per annum are already included within existing partner contributions and are not part of the new funding request.
- 8.12 The investment proposal outlines where financial benefit and return on investment can be secured, particularly where the Council can translate improved productivity and insight into service redesign, demand management and more efficient deployment of resources. This is expected to be most visible through:
- productivity gains that release staff time for higher-value frontline and resident-facing work;
  - avoidance of unnecessary process cost, duplication and manual administration;
  - improved targeting of resources so support is directed sooner and more effectively where need is greatest;
  - earlier intervention and reduced downstream demand, particularly in high-cost and high-risk service areas; and
  - better decision support and service planning, enabling councillors and residents to see that investment is being converted into more timely, effective and efficient services.
- 8.13 For AI, these include productivity gains, improved digital access, demand reduction and service redesign, with benefits to be validated through discovery and use-case development. The strongest return on investment case will come where those gains are deliberately converted into measurable improvements such as faster response times, reduced avoidable contact, lower process cost, and capacity released for frontline delivery. Benefits will therefore need to be validated, quantified where possible, and owned through structured discovery and benefits realisation processes.

- 8.14 For Data Modernisation, total Children's Services net spend across the four partners is approximately £162m per annum, and with even modest improvements in demand management and deployment of resources could have a material impact. While stressing that these are not savings targets but illustrations of scale, a 0.1% improvement equates to approximately £162,000 per annum, 0.5% equates to approximately £810,000 per annum, and 1% equates to approximately £1.62m per annum. The opportunity to derive benefit lies in using this improved insight not simply to report demand, but to intervene earlier, redesign pathways, reduce avoidable escalation, and improve allocation of staff and resources in ways that can generate both better outcomes for residents and stronger medium-term financial value.
- 8.15 While these benefits are material, it is important that they are presented realistically. Not all benefits will be seen to cash-release immediately. In many cases, value will be realised through improved capacity, demand management, reduced administrative burden, avoided cost growth and stronger service outcomes. However, this is also the means by which the Council can build a credible narrative around return on investment. Showing that the investment is allowing Council priorities to be met, helping staff spend more time where need is greatest, helping services respond earlier and better, and creating the conditions for future efficiencies and better use of public money.
- 8.16 This investment should therefore be seen as capable of benefiting the MTFP through cashable efficiencies being realised over time through resultant budget proposals, service redesign and tighter management of demand and capacity. The opportunity to realise savings will depend on services actively using the new capability to change processes, reduce avoidable activity, and manage vacancies, turnover and resource deployment more strategically. Any workforce reduction will need to be carefully managed through natural turnover and vacancies arising.
- 8.17 Financial risks include implementation cost pressure, slower-than-expected benefits realisation, and the risk of underestimating change and capacity requirements, especially from within services. These risks will be managed through phased delivery, milestone-based approvals, programme oversight, and regular financial and benefits review.
- 8.18 This programme should be viewed as a corporate change programme rather than a stand-alone technology purchase, and thus why it is embedded as a core theme of the Council's FPOP change programme.

## **9. CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet  
Strategic Leadership Team  
Digital & Data Steering Group  
F-POP Programme Assurance Board  
Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee

Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee will consider this report at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> June. Feedback from the scrutiny committee, including Chair's comments will be provided via verbal and/or written representations at the Cabinet meeting itself.

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 – Integrated Impact Assessment

SRS Strategic Board papers – meeting dated 21<sup>st</sup> April 2026 (background papers)

**11. AUTHOR:**

Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive & Strategic Director for Resources

**12. CONTACT DETAILS:**

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# Integrated Impact Assessment Template

(incorporating Equalities, Socio-economic Duty, Future Generations, Welsh Language Measures, Corporate Parenting)

<p><b>Name of the Officer</b> Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive &amp; Statutory Director for Resources</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 07398 954828 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk">peterdavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal:</b></p> <p>To approve a three-year, SRS partnership-wide investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data capability to establish secure and governed AI and data foundations; improve resident and customer access to services; support staff by reducing administrative burden; and deliver measurable improvements in service quality and demand management.</p> <p>This will be delivered through a phased and controlled approach, with strong governance and safeguards to ensure lawful, ethical and transparent use of data, with human accountability retained for all decision making.</p>
<p><b>Name of Service area</b></p> <p>Resources directorate</p>	<p><b>Date:</b> 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026</p>

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

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<p><b>Age</b>  <i>Consider the impact on our community in relation to age, e.g. how do we engage with older and younger people about our services, access issues etc. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents. Including services provided to older and younger people.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p> <p>Some older residents may have lower digital confidence or access, creating a risk of digital exclusion if alternative access routes are not maintained.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review</p> <p>Retain telephone and face-to-face routes; assisted digital support via customer services, libraries and hubs. Apply simple, accessible design standards.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<p><b>Disability</b>  <i>Consider the impact and what issues there are around each of the disability needs groups e.g. access to buildings/services, how we provide services and the way we do this; producing information in alternative formats, employment issues etc.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents. Including services provided to disabled people.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery.</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p> <p>There is a risk that not all accessibility needs are met digitally.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p> <p>Accessibility-by-design approach; testing against WCAG standards; user testing with people with lived experience of disability; and ongoing monitoring of accessibility compliance, supported by human oversight of AI outputs.</p>

<p><u>Protected Characteristics</u></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Gender reassignment</b>  <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for transgender people and groups. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery.</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<p><u>Protected Characteristics</u></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Marriage or civil partnership</b>  <i>Same-sex couples registered as civil partners have the same rights as married couples and must be provided with the same benefits, such as survivor pensions, flexible working, maternity/paternity pay and healthcare insurance. Consider the impact of your proposal on these rights.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery.</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<p><u>Protected Characteristics</u></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Pregnancy or maternity</b>  <i>A woman is protected from discrimination during her pregnancy, maternity leave and 26 weeks from the day she gives birth. Including the provision of services, goods and facilities and recreational or training facilities. Consider the impact of your proposal on these protections.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery.</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<p><b><u>Protected Characteristics</u></b></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Race</b>  <i>What will the proposal do to promote race equality with the aim of eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between different racial groups. Think about the potential to affect racial groups differently. Possible issues include providing translation/interpreting services, cultural issues and customs, access to services, issues relating to Asylum Seeker, Refugee, Gypsy &amp; Traveler, migrant communities and recording of racist incidents etc.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p> <p>There is a recognised risk that AI models may reflect or amplify existing bias within underlying data or algorithms, which could disproportionately affect people from minority ethnic backgrounds.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p> <p>Use of a governed AI platform; bias testing and monitoring; transparency of outputs where appropriate; and mandatory human review and escalation routes before decisions are acted upon.</p>

<p><u>Protected Characteristics</u></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Religion or Belief</b>  <i>Consider the impact e.g. dietary issues, religious holidays or days associated with religious observance, cultural issues and customs. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<p><u>Protected Characteristics</u></p>	<p><b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>Sex</b>  <i>Consider what issues there are for men and women. Will this impact disproportionately on one group more than another e.g. equal pay, responsibilities for dependents, issues for carers, access to training, employment issues.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<u>Protected Characteristics</u>	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p><b>Sexual Orientation</b>  <i>Consider the provision of inclusive services for e.g. older and younger people from the Lesbia, Gay and Bi-sexual communities. Also consider what issues there are for employment and training.</i></p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

## 2. The Socio-economic Duty

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions.

*Socio-economic disadvantage can be defined as living in less favorable social and economic circumstances than others in society. It also includes social justice, which is about reducing inequalities by working towards more equal distribution of wealth and opportunities so everyone can achieve their full potential.*

**Consider how the proposal could affect the following vulnerable groups:**

Armed Forces Community (including veterans)

Single parents

Vulnerable families

Single adult households

Carers

Students

People living in the most deprived areas

Pensioners

Homeless People

People misusing substances

People who have experienced the asylum system

People involved in the criminal justice system

<u>Socio-economic Duty</u>	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering from socio economic disadvantage.</b>	<b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts in relation to the Socio-economic disadvantage?</b>
<p><i>Think of what evidence you have about socio-economic disadvantage and inequalities of outcome in relation to this proposal. Will it impact disproportionately on certain groups? Can the proposals be improved to reduce inequalities of outcome?</i></p> <p>Page 29</p>	<p>The investments aim to support improvements in service accessibility and responsiveness that will benefit all residents.</p> <p>For example the digital Front Door aims to improve access for deprived communities and vulnerable households. The Single View of the Child project will use data to generate insight to enable earlier identification of need and more targeted interventions.</p> <p>The investment also aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of work practice for staff. This will help increase workforce productivity, freeing up our colleagues to focus on tasks requiring a more empathetic and human-centred approach.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these</p> <p>People experiencing socio-economic disadvantage may be digitally excluded and initially benefit less from digital improvements, if alternative access routes are not maintained.</p> <p>These proposals will affect the council's workforce and how some tasks are undertaken. They may over time, create opportunities to redesign processes and use capacity differently. The Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p> <p>Retention of assisted and face-to-face access; targeted support for digitally excluded groups; and ongoing monitoring of service usage, access and outcomes through programme governance.</p> <p>To upskill our own staff with the skills and capabilities they need to succeed and thrive in the workplace of the future</p>

### **3. Policy making and the Welsh language**

*What are the effects that the proposals would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than English? How could positive effects be increased, or negative effects be mitigated? Explain how you believe the proposals could be improved so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.*

<p><b>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the <a href="#">Council's Welsh Language Standards</a>:</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</b></p>	<p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</b></p>
<p><b>Policy Making:</b>  <i>Consider what impact this policy decision will have on the Welsh Language. This includes opportunities for people to use the language, opportunities to promote the language and treating the language no less favourably than the English language. Include any data and evidence e.g. WESP, Census Data, Cymraeg 2050, Welsh Language Strategy.</i></p>	<p>AI tools will be designed to operate bilingually from the outset, embedding Welsh Language Standards consistently across services and ensuring opportunities to promote and use the Welsh language are enhanced.</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>Welsh language requirements will be specified in design and procurement.</p> <p>Testing of bilingual functionality before deployment; and ongoing monitoring to ensure Welsh language services is provided as residents move through the customer journey.</p>
<p><b>Operational:</b>  <b>Recruitment &amp; Training of workforce</b>  <i>Carefully consider whether vacant posts require Welsh language skills as a desirable or essential skill. This is especially pertinent with front line roles as more than 10 % of the population of Monmouthshire speak Welsh. Also, when assessing the need for Welsh language skills keep in mind the existing Welsh language skills within the workforce. In service areas where there is a current lack of Welsh language skills, posts should be advertised as Welsh language essential. Additionally, consider where further training may be needed to increase the number of staff who can speak Welsh and to enhance the skills of current Welsh speakers.</i></p>	<p>AI tools will be designed to operate bilingually from the outset, embedding Welsh Language Standards consistently across services and ensuring opportunities to use Welsh are enhanced.</p> <p>AI tools can be used to support Welsh language use and skills development.</p>	<p>These proposals will affect the council's workforce, including colleagues delivering services through the Welsh language, and how some tasks are undertaken. They may, over time, create opportunities to redesign processes and use capacity differently. The Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes</p>	<p>To upskill our own staff including in roles delivering services through the Welsh language with the skills and capabilities they need to succeed and thrive in the workplace of the future.</p>

<p><b>Service Delivery:</b>  <b>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</b>  <i>When advertising our services you must promote the fact that people can deal with the council in Welsh by phone, email, twitter, Facebook, letters, forms, website transactions etc.</i></p>	<p>AI tools will be designed to operate bilingually from the outset, embedding Welsh Language Standards consistently across services and ensuring opportunities to use the Welsh language are enhanced.</p> <p>The tools will improve the ability to deliver services in Welsh consistently across channels (web, chat, correspondence).</p>	<p>No impact identified at this stage.</p>	<p>Welsh language requirements will be specified in design and procurement.</p> <p>Testing of bilingual functionality before deployment; and ongoing monitoring to ensure Welsh language services is provided as residents move through the customer journey.</p> <p>Governance oversight to ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards and consistent user experience.</p>
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**4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

<p><u><a href="#">Well Being Goals</a></u></p>	<p><b>Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b>  <i>An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises global limits and uses resources efficiently (including acting on climate change); a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides jobs.</i></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and work practice for staff and delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.</p>	<p>The proposals will affect the council's workforce and how some tasks are undertaken. They may over time, create opportunities to redesign processes and use capacity differently. The Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of</p>	<p>Stage-gated investment to ensure value for money. To implement clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p> <p>To upskill our own staff with the skills and capabilities they need to succeed</p>


<p><u>Well Being Goals</u></p>	<p><b>Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
		<p>professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes</p>	<p>and thrive in the workplace of the future</p>
<p>Page 33</p> <p><b>Resilient Wales</b>  <i>Maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).</i></p>	<p>The programmes have the potential to contribute positively to the Council’s well-being and environmental objectives. They have the potential to reduce duplication of systems and infrastructure across organisations, support the more efficient and sustainable use of resources and targeting of interventions to deliver the Council’s objectives.</p>	<p>The increased use of AI and data analytics has an environmental cost. AI systems rely on large-scale cloud computing infrastructure, including data centres, which require significant amounts of energy and, in some cases, water for cooling.</p> <p>The proposals will not introduce any new infrastructure, it will build on existing, consolidated platform that already exist. Notwithstanding an increased use of AI and data will draw on more compute power from its cloud environment.</p> <p>The supplier also has some environmental mitigation measure commitments.</p> <p>Increased digital infrastructure energy use.</p>	<p>The use of cloud efficiency and shared platforms reduce duplication.</p> <p>To develop an AI policy that will provide clear guidance on appropriate and efficient use of AI.</p>


<p><u>Well Being Goals</u></p>	<p><b>Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>A healthier Wales</b>  <i>People's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.</i></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.</p>	<p>The proposals will affect the council's workforce and how some tasks are undertaken. They may over time, create opportunities to redesign processes and use capacity differently. The Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes</p>	<p>To implement clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>
<p><b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b>  <i>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected</i></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.</p>	<p>None identified at this stage</p>	<p>To implement clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b>  <i>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</i></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives</p>	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>	<p>To implement clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>


<p><u>Well Being Goals</u></p>	<p><b>Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.</b></p>	<p><b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b>  <i>Promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and participation in the arts, and sports and recreation</i></p> <p>Page 35</p>	<p>AI tools will be designed to operate bilingually from the outset, embedding Welsh Language Standards consistently across services and ensuring opportunities to use the Welsh language are enhanced.</p> <p>Supports bilingual service access and modern promotion of Welsh language use.</p>	<p>None identified at this stage.</p>	<p>Welsh language requirements will be specified in design and procurement.</p> <p>Testing of bilingual functionality before deployment; and ongoing monitoring to ensure Welsh language services is provided as residents move through the customer journey.</p> <p>Governance oversight to ensure compliance with Welsh Language Standards and consistent user experience.</p>
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b>  <i>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances. (This includes the protected characteristics listed in Section 1 above. You can add more detail there. Don't forget to think about the impacts on poverty)</i></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives. Including, helping reduce inequalities of outcome, particularly for disadvantaged or vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Governance arrangements will be established to ensure human accountability and professional judgments remain integral to council service delivery</p>	<p>The use of AI and data analytics requires risks, issues and concerns with privacy, fairness, security, job impact, transparency and bias to be recognised and addressed. The council is approaching them openly and putting safeguards in place from the outset to mitigate these.</p>	<p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review</p>



<u>Well Being Goals</u>	Describe the positive impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	Describe the negative impacts the proposal has on the wellbeing goal.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?

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

<u>Sustainable Development Principles</u>	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
<p data-bbox="98 702 145 861">Page 36</p>  <p data-bbox="129 943 264 970"><b>Long Term</b></p> <p data-bbox="320 722 600 866">Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p data-bbox="320 906 600 1002"><i>We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for</i></p> <p data-bbox="107 1010 600 1145"><i>financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (guidance says at least 10 years, but preferably 25)</i></p>	<p data-bbox="636 722 1308 866">The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives. This will inform long term planning in the Council.</p> <p data-bbox="636 906 1308 975">The investment provides the foundations for longer term AI and data capability.</p>	<p data-bbox="1352 722 2123 866">Stage-gated investment and formal evaluation points to ensure value for money and benefits are realised before further scaling. To implement clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<p><b><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></b></p>	<p><b>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</b></p>	<p><b>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.</p> <p>The investment will be delivered collaboratively across the SRS partnership on a shared platform.</p>	<p>To continue to maintain and review opportunities for partner engagement and collaborative working.</p>

<p><b><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></b></p>	<p><b>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</b></p>	<p><b>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
<div data-bbox="100 598 280 813">  <p data-bbox="100 782 280 813"><b>Involvement</b></p> </div> <p data-bbox="302 582 616 694">Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p data-bbox="302 726 616 829"><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your</i></p> <p data-bbox="100 837 616 933"><i>proposal? Have they been involved? Do those people reflect the diversity of the area which is served?</i></p>	<p data-bbox="638 255 1332 375">The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives.</p> <p data-bbox="638 414 1332 582">There are established governance arrangements across the SRS and partner organisations have been involved throughout. Service leads have been involved in discovery and prioritization.</p> <p data-bbox="638 622 1332 782">The proposal will affect how some services are delivered. Understanding service user needs and involvement and engagement in any changes in services delivery will be integral.</p> <p data-bbox="638 821 1332 1117">The proposals will affect the council's workforce and how some tasks are undertaken. They may over time, create opportunities to redesign processes and use capacity differently. The Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes.</p>	<p data-bbox="1355 255 2116 367">To undertake wider engagement with staff and service users during phased implementation and individual use case design.</p>

<p><b><u>Sustainable Development Principles</u></b></p>	<p><b>Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.</b></p>	<p><b>Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>
 <p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives. Including developing data insight and AI processes to inform the delivery and development of preventive services to manage demand and reduce inequalities.</p>	<p>To identify use cases that support the Council's objectives to deliver preventive services.</p> <p>Stage-gated investment and formal evaluation points to ensure value for money and benefits are realised before further scaling</p>
 <p><b>Integration</b></p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p><i>Focus here on how you will better integrate the Wellbeing Goals impacts on people, economy and environment described above and balance any competing impacts. Think about impacts the proposal may have on other organisations</i></p>	<p>The investment aims to support improvements in efficiency and effectiveness of council services and the delivery of the Council's well-being objectives</p> <p>The investment will be delivered collaboratively across the SRS partnership on a shared platform</p>	<p>Stage gated investment and formal evaluation points to ensure value for money and benefits are realised before further scaling</p>

**6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers, Care Experienced People and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

	<b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has</b>	<b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has</b>	<b>What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>
<p><b><u>Safeguarding</u></b>  <i>Safeguarding in this context applies to children (not yet reached 18th birthday) and adult at risk (identified as a person over the age of 18 and who (a) is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect, (b) has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs), and (c) as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.) Safeguarding is about ensuring that everything is in place to promote the well-being of children and adults at risk, preventing them from being harmed and protecting those who are at risk of abuse and neglect.</i></p>	<p>The proposals are intended to support earlier intervention, more joined-up services, more effective safeguarding, better use of professional time, improved access to services, and better targeting of resources. The Single View of Child is intended to improve the ability of professionals to identify concerns earlier and coordinate support more effectively, supporting professional judgement and decision-making.</p>	<p>There are also potential negative impacts and risks if implementation is not well governed. AI and predictive analytics can create concerns about bias, fairness, transparency, privacy, digital exclusion and workforce anxiety.</p> <p>There are risks if data used is incomplete, not accurate or misinterpreted.</p> <p>There is also a risk that AI and predictive analytics outputs could be over-relied upon, misinterpreted, or used without sufficient professional judgement in safeguarding contexts.</p>	<p>AI and data insight outputs will be advisory only. Safeguarding decisions will remain the responsibility of qualified professionals.</p> <p>Clear protocols, training and governance arrangements will ensure data insight and AI supports—not replaces—professional judgement, with audit and oversight mechanisms in place.</p> <p>Ensure that equality, accessibility, safeguarding, privacy and workforce considerations are built into both programmes and into each individual use case. Supported by appropriate impact assessment, clear governance arrangements, and ongoing human oversight and review.</p>

<p><b><u>Corporate Parenting, Care Leavers and Care Experienced People</u></b></p> <p><i>This relates to those children who are 'looked after' by the Local Authority either through voluntary arrangements with their parents or through a Court Order. The Council has a corporate duty to consider 'children who are looked after especially and to promote their welfare (in a way, as though those children were their own). It also relates to care experienced people (people who have spent time in care when they were under 18 years old). The Council must consider how to help overcome the disadvantages and discrimination they experience.</i></p>	<p>The proposals aim to improve access to joined-up information (including through the Single View of Child) support earlier identification of need, improved coordination of support, and more timely interventions for looked-after children, care leavers and care experienced people.</p>	<p>There are risks if data is incomplete, not accurate or misinterpreted. .</p> <p>There is also a risk that AI and predictive analytics outputs could be over-relied upon, misinterpreted, or used without sufficient professional judgement for looked-after children, care leavers and care experienced people.</p>	<p>Mitigated through professional oversight, data quality controls, safeguarding governance arrangements and clear accountability for decision-making.</p>
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**7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

*This will include your baseline position, measures and studies that have informed your thinking and the recommendation you are making. It should allow you to identify whether any changes resulting from the implementation of the recommendation have had a positive or negative effect. Key strategies and documents that may help you include: Community and Corporate Plan, Asset Management Strategy, Digital and Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: [Enabling Strategies](#) See Guidance for more examples.*

- SRS AI Foundation Executive Summary and business case
- SRS Data Modernisation Executive Summary and business case
- MCC Digital and Data strategy
- Wider enabling strategies – notably financial strategy and people strategy
- Serious Case Review findings, and evidence from UK local authorities implementing AI and Single View approaches have informed the development of this proposal.

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

*This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee Report Template*

Overall, the proposal delivers significant positive impacts through improved service access, better use of data, increased workforce capacity and stronger prevention.

These proposals will affect the council's workforce and how some tasks are undertaken. They will also affect how some services are delivered to residents. The Council's intention is to equip staff better, not to remove the importance of professional expertise or to bypass normal workforce processes. There will be wider engagement with staff and service users during phased implementation and individual use case design.

The principal risks relate to digital exclusion, bias in AI systems, and the use of data in sensitive decision-making contexts. These risks have directly informed the design of the programme, which adopts a phased, controlled approach with strong governance, human oversight and explicit safeguards to maintain public trust and accountability.

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

What are you going to do?	When are you going to do it?	Who is responsible?
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Embed equality, Welsh language and safeguarding requirements into AI and Data governance	Programme initiation	SRS Automation team; MCC Digital and information governance teams
Monitor equality, Welsh language and socio-economic impacts impacts through stage gates	Ongoing	SRS Governance Boards MCC Digital & Data Steering Group
Review digital inclusion outcomes and adjust mitigations	Annual	SRS and MCC Digital teams

**10. VERSION CONTROL: The Integrated Impact Assessment should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.**

<b>Version No.</b>	<b>Decision making stage</b> <i>e.g. budget mandate, DMT, SLT, Scrutiny, Cabinet etc</i>	<b>Date considered</b>	<b>Brief description of any amendments made following consideration</b>
V0.1	Initial draft	5 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	
V0.2	Updated draft following feedback and consultation	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	

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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
Cabinet	07-Mar-28	Strategic Equality Plan	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To To seek Council approval of the Strategic Equality Plan 2028-2033 in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty	Pennie Walker	
Council	31-Mar-27	Welsh Language Strategy	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To approve the publication of the Welsh Language Strategy 2027 - 2032 in line with the Welsh Language Standards.	Pennie Walker	19-Feb-26
Council	04-Mar-27	Adoption of Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)2018-2033	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To consider adoption of RLDP following the public examination by PEDW	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	20-Jan-27	Caldicot Placemaking Plan	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To consider adoption of the Caldicot Place making Plan	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual letter	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To fulfil the expectation of the PSOW that their report is brought to the attention of Cabinet.	Annette Evans	2-Mar-26
Council	12-Nov-26	Annual Director's Report for Social Care	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Present the annual report to Council	Jane Rodgers	3-Mar-26
Council	12-Nov-26	Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Present the annual evaluation of safeguarding across Council services	Jane Rodgers	3-Mar-26
Council	24-Sep-26	Self-Assessment Report 2025/26	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2025/26 to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2026 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Hannah Carter	10-Feb-26
Cabinet	08-Jul-26	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 2026, setting out how the authority 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	9-Feb-26
Cabinet	08-Jul-26	Statutory consultation regarding Durand Nursery	Laura Wright - Education	Following the Statutory Objection Period, this report seeks to provide Cabinet with final feedback on the Statutory consultation process concerning the nursery at Durand Primary School, and asks Cabinet Members for a decision on whether proposals should proceed to implementation	Matthew Jones	5-May-26
Council	25-Jun-26	Code of Corporate Governance	Ben Callard - Resources	For Full Council to approve the revised Code of Corporate Governance and it's inclusion into the Councils Constitution following it's endorsement by the Governance & Audit Committee on 16/04/26.	Jan Furtek	7-May-26
Council	25-Jun-26	Re:fit Phase 2	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek approval to submit a Salix loan application to enable MCC to progress with the next programme of energy efficiency works.	Deb Hill Howells	9-Apr-26

Council	25-Jun-26	Panel Performance Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To receive the Panel Performance Assessment report and the authority's response to the recommendations.	Matt Gatehouse	17-Mar-26
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Investment Package for Caldicot Leisure Centre	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Consideration of proposed investment to improve facilities at Caldicot Leisure Centre	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Llanfoist to Abergavenny Active Travel Bridge	Sara Burch - Rural, Tourism & Housing	To update cabinet on the progress of the Llanfoist to Abergavenny active travel bridge project and to seek approval to enter into the stage 2 contract with updated cost figures	Nick Tulp	10-May-26
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Building the Foundations for Data and AI Enabled Public Services	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To present the business case for foundational investment in data and AI infrastructure necessary to secure programme funding and deliver sustainable service benefits and outcomes.	Peter Davies	27-Apr-26
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Allocation of Crick Road S106 Offsite Recreation Funding - Portskewett Recreation Hall and Caldicot Skatepark	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To seek Cabinet approval for the allocation of Section 106 offsite recreation funding received from the Crick Road development towards Portskewett Recreation Hall and Caldicot Skatepark	Mike Moran	
Cabinet	10-Jun-26	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	20-May-26	Self Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To enable Cabinet to input to the development of the authority's Self Assessment at an early stage. The assessment will subsequently be considered by scrutiny committees before being subject to a decision of full Council in September	Matt Gatehouse	20-Apr-26
Cabinet	20-May-26	Panel Performance Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To consider the Panel Performance Assessment report and the council's response to the recommendations	Matt Gatehouse	20-Apr-26
Cabinet	20-May-26	S106 Affordbale Housing Contributions	Sara Burch	To recommend options to commit and spend some of the contributions	Louise Corbett	#
ICMD	20-May-26	REVOKING THE USK AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA ORDER 2005	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To request the Cabinet Member (Cllr Angela Sandles) to agree to the revocation of the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005.	Huw Owen	9-Apr-26
Council	14/05/26	Local Resolution Protocol	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To seek Council's approval and adoption of a new Local Resolution Protocol to deal with low level	James Williams	15-Apr-26
Council	14/05/26	Appointments to Outside Bodies	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies.'	John Pearson	15-Apr-26
Council	14/05/26	Appointment of Committees	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To appoint representatives to serve on outside bodies.'	John Pearson	15-Apr-26
Council	14-May-26	Representation of Political Groups	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To review the representation of different political groups on the bodies to which the Council makes appointments pursuant to Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.	James Williams	15-Apr-26
Cabinet	15-Apr-26	Consultation concerning the provision of Early Education at Durand Primary School	Laura Wright - Education	To provide Members with feedback following the statutory consultation process concerning proposals to replace the Local Authority Nursery with a non maintained setting at Durand Primary School	Matthew Jones	4-Mar-26

ICMD	08-Apr-26	Goldwire Lane ICMD - Prohibition of Driving Except for Access, Goldwire Lane, Monmouth	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek Cabinet Member approval to proceed to make permanent the MCC Goldwire Lane prohibition of driving (except for access) traffic order	Graham Kinsella	26-Mar-26
ICMD	08-Apr-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 4 held on Thursday 05th March 2026.	Dave Jarrett	6-Mar-26
Cabinet	30-Mar-26	Proposed acquisition of land to construct a road diversion at Llanthony Valley	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek Cabinet approval to the acquisition of land to enable the Highway Authority to construct a road realignment away from the land slip at Llanthony Valley.	Deb Hill Howells	19-Feb-26
Council	05-Mar-26	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025 - 2028	Ian Chandler - Social Care &	Reason is to endorse a new Corporate Parenting	Jane Rodgers	24-Oct-25
Council	05-Mar-26	2026/27 Capital Strategy and 2026/27 Treasury Management Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the Council's 2026/27 Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy.	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION and REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
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
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	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 - <b>withdrawn 11/02/26</b>	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	To consider the purchase of a Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) property Castlewood	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	Monmouthshire Draft Local Growth Fund Investment Plan	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To present to elected members UK Government's new Local Growth Fund and Monmouthshire Draft Fund Investment Plan.	Hannah Jones	12-Feb-26

Cabinet	04-Mar-26	To agree funding options for additional work at the former Deri View Primary School Site	Ben Callard - Resources	To review and agree funding options for additional work at the former Deri View Primary school site, this needs to be completed prior to the relocation of Ysgol Y Fenni to the site.	Nikki Wellington	16-Feb-26
ICMD	25-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
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Cultural Strategy	Sara Burch		Tracey Thomas	20-May-25
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	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
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	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
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	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
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	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	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	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	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
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
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 subsequent updates to reflect national Guidance and/ or meet new legislative requirements, to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Resources.	Cath Fallon	20-Oct-25
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	Jane Rogers	24-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	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
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	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	

Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Safeguarding Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Diane Corrister	18-Jul-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Director's Annual Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	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	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
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	Destination Management Plan	Sara Burch & Paul Griffiths		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	2025/26 Revenue & Capital Monitoring Update 2	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-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
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	Medium Term Financial Plan update - November 2025	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Nov-25
Council	23-Oct-25	RLDP for Adoption	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Rachel Lewis	17-Apr-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
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	2025/26 Revenue Monitoring Update 1	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12/76/25
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	Review of Housing Support Grant Programme. County of Sanctuary Strategy	Sara Burch 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.	Ian Bakewell	23-May-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25				Sharran Lloyd and Jane Harvey	27-May-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	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
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	Strategic Director's Report, Children, Learning, Skills and the Economy'	Laura Wright - Education		Will Mclean	18-Jun-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Chepstow Integrated Transport LUF project			Deb Hill Howells	24-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Shire Hall Delivery Stage - Financial Approval	Ben Callard - Resources		Tracey Thomas	25-Mar-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Play Sufficiency Update	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Play sufficiency assessment update.	Nick John	28-Mar-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	<b>ADD AS FIRST ITEM</b> 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	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
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 <sup>st</sup> July 2025	Linda O Gorman	10-Jan-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Appointments to Outside Bodies	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	23-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Separation of Licensing Functions	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Linda O Gorman	28-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Strategic Officer Leadership and Organisation Structure changes	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Paul Matthews	5-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	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	21-May-25	Y Prentis Update	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	26-Feb-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	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	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies / Cath Fallon	1-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Placemaking Grant 25/26 & 26/27	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Craig O Connor	29-Apr-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	Senior Pay Review	Ben Callard - Resources		Julie Anthony	3-Mar-25
Council	10-Apr-25	Constitution Review	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	25-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	Reponse to Boundary Commission Electoral Review Consultation	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	12-Feb-25
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies - Lead (Cath Fallon)	3-Mar-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	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
Council	06-Mar-25	Contract Procedure Rules	Ben Callard - Resources		Scott James	9-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	Appointment of Chief Officer - Head of Transport - Exempt info	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Deb Hill Howells	21-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
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	Approval of a Discretionary Policy for Council Tax Premiums	Ben Callard - Resources		Ruth Donovan	27-Jan-25

ICMD	26-Feb-25	County of Sanctuary: Homes for Ukraine	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To confirm future support arrangements for Ukrainian's living in Monmouthshire as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme following changes to the national arrangement for both funding & visas	Richard Drinkwater/Matt Gatehouse	7-Feb-25
ICMD	26-Feb-25	Housing Allocations Policy				
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	2024/25 Revenue and Capital Monitoring Month 9	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	UK Shared Prosperity Fund post March 2025 – financial implications and impact	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	10-Jul-24
ICMD	29-Jan-25	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts final	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	17-Dec-24
Council	23-Jan-25	Council 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	2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Education Middle Tier	Martyn Groucutt - Education		Will McLean	20-Nov-24
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
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 3	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	13-Jun-24
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Decision to transfer Dixton Archive from Monmouth Museum to Herefordshire Record Office			Rachael Rogers	9-Dec-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
<b>INVITATION TO PEOPLE SCRUTINY – DATE TBC</b>	<b>WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan)</b>	To scrutinise performance against the plans.	Sharon Randall Smith Will McLean Cllr Wright	Performance Monitoring
<b>4<sup>th</sup> June 2026 – INVITATION TO G&amp;A COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Panel Performance Assessment</b>	To receive the Panel Performance Assessment report and the authority's response to the recommendations.	Cllr Brocklesby Matt Gatehouse	Performance Reporting
<b>9<sup>th</sup> June 2026</b>	<b>Building the Foundations for Data and AI Enabled Public Services</b>	To scrutinise the business case for foundational investment in data and AI infrastructure necessary to secure programme funding and deliver sustainable service benefits and outcomes.	Peter Davies Cllr Brocklesby	Pre-decision Scrutiny
	<b>Update on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS)</b>	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
	<b>Specialist Resource Bases &amp; Additional Learning Provision (including progress with ALN implementation)</b>	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
	<b>Supporting Vulnerable Learners</b>	To follow up from June 25 – annual.	Morwenna Wagstaff Lucie Doyle Cllr Wright	Performance Reporting

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
30 <sup>th</sup> June 2026 <b>[slightly later start]</b>	<b>2025/26 Financial Outturn Report</b>	To scrutinise the budgetary position (revenue and capital) for services falling within the committee's remit.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
	<b>Self-Assessment</b>	To scrutinise and be updated on the 2025/26 performance of the Council's Community & Corporate Plan objectives as part of the Self-Assessment process.	Richard Jones	Performance Reporting
	<b>Strategic Risk Assessment (Additional Business)</b>	To scrutinise the overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority and suggest any further topics for scrutiny.	Richard Jones Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
8 <sup>th</sup> September 2026 (Special)	<b>Enablers update</b>	To scrutinise the performance of the Council's Enabling Strategies 2025/26.	Peter Davies Matt Gatehouse Richard Jones	Performance Reporting
	<b>For Purpose On Purpose (F-Pop) (invite G&amp;A members?)</b>	To update the committee about F-Pop and its implications for the reorganisation of Project Management.	Paul Matthews Carly Rogers	Performance Reporting
29 <sup>th</sup> September 2026	<b>Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report</b>	To scrutinise the performance of safeguarding arrangements.	Jane Rodgers Cllr Chandler	Performance Reporting
	<b>Annual Director's Report for Social Care</b>	To scrutinise the progress and strategic direction for the service area.	Jane Rodgers Cllr Chandler	Performance Reporting

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
24 <sup>th</sup> November 2026	<b>Infrastructure Project Management</b>	To scrutinise project management arrangements in Infrastructure.	Nick Tulp Deb Hill-Howells	Performance Reporting
	<b>NEET Reduction Strategy</b>	To scrutinise the strategy's performance. [1 page summary – see minutes]	Hannah Jones Louise Wilce Cllr Griffiths	Performance Monitoring
27 <sup>th</sup> January 2027	<b>2027/28 draft Budget proposals (invite other members?)</b>	Draft Revenue & Capital budget proposals - To scrutinise the 2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies Cllr Callard	Budget Monitoring
	<b>Strategic Risk Assessment (Additional Business?)</b>	To scrutinise the overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority and suggest any further topics for scrutiny.	Hannah Carter Richard Jones Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
	<b><i>Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan update?*</i></b>			
23 <sup>rd</sup> February 2027	<b>2026/27 Financial Update Report</b>	To scrutinise the budgetary position (revenue and capital) for services falling within the committee's remit.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies Cllr Callard	Performance Reporting
<b>To be confirmed</b>	<b>Grants item – with People members?*</b>	To scrutinise the Council's use of grant money, to assure that it is fit for purpose.	Jonathan Davies	Performance Monitoring

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
<b>To be confirmed</b>	<b>Consultants and Agencies – with People members?*</b>	To scrutinise the Council's use of consultants and agency workers – the number, relative value, reasons, etc.	Jonathan Davies Peter Davies?	Performance Monitoring
<b>To be confirmed – best end of 2025?</b>	<b>Shared Prosperity Funding 2023-25 +</b>	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
<b>To be confirmed</b>	<b>Curriculum Impact</b>	<i>To scrutinise the impact of the new curriculum on learners and results.</i>	<i>Will McLean Sharon Randall-Smith Ed Pryce Cllr Wright</i>	<i>Performance Reporting</i>
<b>To be confirmed (Dec/Jan – 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 27?**) </b>	<b>Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan update</b>	<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>
<b>To be confirmed</b>	<b>Recruitment and retention</b>	<i>Effect on the Council's performance and ability to deliver.</i>		
<b>To be confirmed</b>	<b>Use of Reserves</b>	<i>Future proofing and resilience planning as well as supporting long-term strategic priorities.</i>	<i>Peter Davies Jonathan Davies Cllr Callard</i>	
<b>To be confirmed Spring 2027 (23<sup>rd</sup> March?)</b>	<b>Development of Children's Placements – 12mth update</b>	<i>To update the committee following scrutiny in April 26.</i>	<i>Jane Rodgers Scott Hereford Diane Corrister Cllr Chandler</i>	<i>Performance Reporting</i>

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
Social Justice Strategy progress				
Business Monmouthshire Project monitoring				
'Learning led' review of 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

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## Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

### Action List

21<sup>st</sup> April 2026

<b>Minute Item:</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Officer / Member</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
4	To provide an updated number of private children's residential homes in the county	Jane Rodgers, Scott Hereford	Requested

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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, NP15 1GA on Tuesday, 21st April, 2026 at 10.00 am**

### **Councillors Present**

County Councillor Alistair Neill (Chair)  
  
County Councillors: Jill Bond, Rachel Buckler, John Crook, Steven Garratt, Meirion Howells, M. Newell, Paul Pavia, Peter Strong, and Ben Callard  
  
C. Werrett

### **Officers in Attendance**

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager  
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
Scott Hereford, Service Manager Residential and Resource Management  
Nicholas Keyse, Head of Landlord Services  
Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health  
Peter Davies, Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

None.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Pavia declared an interest due to his employment with Practice Solutions Limited, involving work with ADSS Cymru on implementation of legislation relating to the removal of profit from the care of looked-after children.

#### **3. Public Open Forum**

None.

#### **4. Development of Children's Placements - 12 month update - To update the committee following scrutiny in April 2025**

Jane Rodgers introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Scott Hereford.

*Do you foresee the remaining elements of the programme being delivered on time, and what are the main blockers, aside from difficulties in finding suitable premises?*

Yes, we are confident that the remaining two schemes will be delivered in line with the timescales set out in the report, with both due for completion in October 2026. Previous delays have largely been caused by the amount of time required to tender and commission contractors. Once contractors are on site, projects have tended to progress to schedule, and so far we have not encountered unexpected structural issues that might otherwise cause further delay. We meet monthly with contractors to monitor

progress, and we have strong, well-established working relationships with our Registered Social Landlords, which gives us further confidence that both schemes will be delivered on time.

In terms of wider blockers, identifying suitable properties has been a significant challenge. It is not straightforward to find properties that meet all operational requirements and also satisfy the necessary legal and due-diligence checks. We have learned from earlier experiences and now carry out detailed checks, including land registry and covenant reviews, much earlier in the process to avoid issues arising at a later stage. While this does add time to transactions, it is essential to ensure we do not encounter problems after purchase. We remain actively engaged in identifying opportunities, with officers working closely together to progress the final acquisition.

*What difficulties can arise from having a mix of ages, for example five to sixteen year olds, within one residential setting, and how are potential problems identified and managed?*

Having a mix of ages within a residential setting can work very well, but it does require careful consideration. We manage this primarily through detailed and thoughtful matching, drawing on our in-depth knowledge of each child. Because this is our own in-house provision, we are able to place children together where we believe their needs, personalities and circumstances will align appropriately. While this is not an exact science, knowing the children well allows us to judge where age differences can be beneficial and where greater separation may be needed.

Where challenges do arise, we manage them through strong daily practice within the homes. Each child or young person is allocated a key worker, and staff teams work closely together to address issues as part of normal residential life. There is close collaboration with social workers and other professionals involved in the child's care, ensuring that emerging concerns are identified early and addressed consistently. Continuity of staff is a key factor in reducing difficulties, and regular oversight visits help to ensure children are safe, well cared for and supported to achieve positive outcomes.

*Does getting the residential homes "just right" relate only to the structure and design of the property, or does it also include the location, such as whether a home is in a town or a more rural setting?*

It includes both. We always start from the statement of purpose for each home and what we are trying to achieve for the children placed there. In some cases, such as Teach Tudor, we deliberately wanted a location close to local amenities so that children could develop independence and experience living within a community. In other cases, we provide homes in more rural locations where children may need greater levels of support to access amenities. The design of the property itself is also critical: we need good communal spaces to encourage positive interaction, alongside quieter, private areas where children can withdraw when they need to. Alongside the property and location, the workforce is absolutely key. Well-trained, consistent staff who are properly supported by strong leadership make a fundamental difference to whether a home works well.

*Given the importance of helping children develop independence, doesn't that generally point towards town-based locations rather than highly rural settings, where access to services and amenities may be more difficult?*

Not necessarily, as it depends very much on the individual needs of the children. Some children, because of the trauma and adversity they have experienced, are not yet at a stage where they can safely or confidently access community amenities independently. For those children, a quieter or more rural setting can be more appropriate, where they can receive higher levels of support in a calmer environment. While every child has the right to access their community, the key difference is the level of support required to do so. Rural homes often cater for fewer children, have higher staffing ratios, and provide more space, which can better meet the needs of children requiring intensive support. There is no single right or wrong approach – it is always about matching the setting to the needs of the children concerned.

*Given that the balance in a home inevitably changes over time – for example, when the eldest child moves on and a new child moves in – how do you manage those changes so that the dynamic within the home remains stable?*

Transitions are an inevitable and challenging part of residential care, and we manage them through very careful planning and communication. When a place becomes available, we take time to understand not only the needs of the child who may be moving in, but also the needs, personalities, aims and aspirations of the children already living in the home. Compatibility and matching are again central to that decision-making. A new placement represents a transition not just for the incoming child but also for the existing children, so we plan for that collectively. While it is not always straightforward and there can be periods of adjustment, our staff teams are experienced in managing these changes. This approach mirrors challenges seen in other care settings, such as foster care, and is part of the everyday professional practice of our social workers and residential staff.

*What evidence do we have that children placed in in-house residential and supported accommodation achieve better outcomes – such as education, emotional wellbeing and placement stability – than when they were placed externally, and how are we tracking this over time?*

Outcomes are monitored through a combination of qualitative and ongoing indicators rather than a single performance metric. These include observations of children's behaviour and interactions, school attendance and engagement in education, emotional regulation and wellbeing, participation in hobbies and leisure activities, ability to form and maintain relationships, and the quality of contact with birth families where appropriate. These matters are routinely considered at statutory Looked After Children reviews, through social worker visits, and via regular key-worker engagement. Over time, outcomes will also be assessed as children progress into young adulthood, including their education, training and employment pathways.

*Why have targets been reduced – does this reflect reduced demand, or constraints on capacity and delivery?*

The reduction reflects a combination of factors rather than a single constraint. Since the strategy was agreed, the number of children in care and the demand for residential placements have stabilised rather than increased. In addition, a more suitable service delivery model has been developed for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, with placements often being made outside the county in areas where young people prefer to be located, such as Newport and Cardiff. This has reduced the immediate need for additional supported accommodation within Monmouthshire. The position remains under review and may change in future.

*How do we know that these in-house placements represent better long-term value for money, and what is the overall goal – cost control or best outcomes for children?*

In-house provision supports improved outcomes by allowing greater control over placement quality, matching and stability. Children can remain closer to their communities and care teams, and placements can be tailored to their specific needs. Reduced reliance on external placements contributes to better value for money over time, while the primary focus remains on achieving positive, stable and healthy outcomes for children as corporate parents. Continuous monitoring of both outcomes and costs informs future planning and decision-making.

*When the placement strategy was endorsed in April 2024, it appeared to be driven primarily by the need to get costs under control rather than by outcomes for children. Has the approach since moved on from that position, or that cost control and improved outcomes were always intended to go hand in hand?*

We would disagree with the suggestion that the strategy was ever primarily about cost control. From the outset, the intention has always been to achieve better outcomes for children and young people while also delivering good value for money for the Council. That has been the clear priority throughout. The focus has consistently been on improving outcomes first, with cost control sitting alongside that as a necessary and responsible consideration. By developing our own in-house provision, we are better able to ensure children are placed in settings that meet their needs, closer to home and with greater stability, while also taking greater control of costs that were previously driven by the external market.

*What is the current average weekly cost of external residential placements and independent fostering agency placements, and how does this compare with projected in-house costs? Would a performance dashboard setting out cost, demand and capacity be helpful for Members?*

The average weekly cost of an external residential placement was reported to be between £7,000 and £8,000, noting that costs have continued to escalate. In comparison, the average unit cost for an in-house residential placement was cited at approximately £4,000 per child per week, incorporating staffing, building costs and operational overheads. This was identified as a significant saving. It was acknowledged that illustrating cost savings more clearly, potentially through a performance dashboard, would be useful as the programme progresses.

*With changes to how children's homes will operate by 2030, how confident are we that the scale of planned in-house provision will be sufficient over the next 3-4 years? Do we*

*have intelligence on whether existing providers intend to exit, convert or remain in the market?*

The future landscape is uncertain at both a local and national level. Ongoing engagement is taking place with private providers and commissioning teams to understand their intentions in relation to the 2030 reforms, including whether providers plan to exit, convert or continue operating. Some providers have begun sharing their plans, but the situation remains evolving. The Council continues to review sufficiency regularly and works collaboratively with providers to understand future capacity, while recognising that no local authority can be fully assured at this stage.

*The refurbishment costs for the homes appear high. What are the main reasons for these costs, what caused slippage in delivery, and have we considered building purpose-built new homes rather than refurbishing existing properties?*

The refurbishment costs reflect the fact that these properties must meet stringent regulatory standards. This includes significant fire safety requirements, such as sprinkler systems, as well as design changes to ensure the homes are suitable for children's needs, including appropriate communal areas, private spaces and accommodation for staff. Some properties, particularly older ones, require more extensive work, which drives costs up.

All costs funded through the Housing with Care Fund are subject to technical scrutiny and oversight by Welsh Government, and we are required to demonstrate that they represent good value for money. In terms of delivery slippage, the main causes have been delays in tendering processes, appointing contractors and, in some cases, unforeseen issues once building work commenced. These challenges have been actively managed, with regular engagement through the regional partnership board and ongoing communication with funders.

We have considered the option of new-build provision, and it remains something we would look at where appropriate. However, new builds bring additional challenges, including land acquisition, planning processes and longer lead-in times. As a result, we consider each opportunity on its own merits and take a measured approach rather than rushing decisions.

*Once the current schemes planned for this year are completed, will the Council have reached what it considers to be the appropriate level of capacity, or is there further development planned beyond that?*

Once the schemes currently in progress are completed, we expect to reach what we believe is the appropriate level of capacity at this point in time. Our intention is to pause further development at that stage rather than proceed immediately with additional schemes. However, this is not a fixed endpoint. Capacity and demand will continue to be kept under review, and any future decisions will be informed by changes in need, market conditions and wider policy developments.

*The report notes that some children's care plans were adjusted as a result of project slippage. Can you clarify how many children were affected and in what way?*

Only a small number of children were affected due to the limited scale of the placements. Where slippage occurred, care plans progressed in alternative ways, including children moving to different placements or remaining longer in existing arrangements. Adjustments did not result in negative outcomes and, in some cases, enabled smoother transitions through additional preparation and relationship-building with staff prior to admission.

*Given the statutory requirement for ongoing sufficiency planning, what formal review mechanisms are in place to ensure the committee is alerted if demand projections change materially?*

Although we have reached a key stage in the delivery of the current strategy, this does not represent an endpoint. There are several formal mechanisms in place to ensure ongoing oversight. We expect to return to Performance and Overview Scrutiny with a further update once the remaining schemes – such as the Abergavenny supported accommodation and the second children's home – are operational, likely within the next year.

In addition, we produce commissioning and sufficiency plans on an annual basis, which under new legislation will be formally overseen by Welsh Government. Placement sufficiency is also covered through the annual Director's Report and through regular submission of checkpoint data, which includes information on looked-after children numbers, placements and unmet need. These processes provide multiple opportunities for emerging pressures or changes in demand to be identified and reported through both internal governance and formal scrutiny channels.

*The report describes the private provider market as being significantly destabilised by legislative change. What is the current financial impact of this on the children's services budget, and is this reflected in the medium-term financial plan?*

We are already experiencing higher costs in the external placement market, and where children remain placed with private providers, those costs are projected directly into the budget. We therefore account for current expenditure levels, alongside anticipated inflationary pressures, in our financial planning processes. At the same time, we factor in expected savings linked to the delivery of new in-house provision, which helps offset market volatility.

These pressures and projections are built into both year-on-year budget planning and the medium-term financial plan. There is close working between Children's Services and finance colleagues to ensure that baseline costs, projected placement demand and market conditions are properly reflected. This allows us to plan realistically for ongoing instability in the external market while continuing to bring costs under greater local control.

*How are we communicating these significant changes in placement strategy to looked-after children and young people themselves, given the potential for uncertainty and upheaval?*

Communication is tailored to the age and needs of individual children. Older care-experienced young people are engaged through corporate parenting arrangements

and are involved in strategic discussions. For younger children, information is provided in a child-friendly way, focusing on their day-to-day care, relationships and placements. Preparation work, visual materials and relationship-building with staff are used to support transitions, alongside life-story work to help children understand changes.

*What engagement has taken place with neighbouring residents in relation to the new children's home in Caldicot, and how are we ensuring that communication and engagement continue once the home is open?*

We place a strong emphasis on early, open and transparent engagement with local communities, particularly with immediate neighbours. In the case of the Caldicot property, we held engagement events prior to refurbishment works beginning, where neighbours were invited to meet us, ask questions and understand the purpose and ethos of the home. These events were designed to provide clear information, address concerns and help avoid misunderstandings that might otherwise escalate, including on social media.

Engagement does not stop once the home opens. We continue to maintain regular contact with neighbours through newsletters and updates, and we recognise the importance of including local councillors in these communications so that they are well informed and able to respond to queries. We want neighbours to feel comfortable approaching staff directly with any concerns, and we actively encourage informal, early conversations so that minor issues can be resolved quickly without escalation. Our aim is for the homes to be a positive and valued part of the local community.

*What arrangements are in place to ensure neighbours feel able to raise concerns without fear of repercussions, and how are those relationships managed on an ongoing basis?*

We want neighbouring residents to feel confident that raising concerns will be welcomed and addressed constructively. Each home will have a designated manager who acts as a clear and accessible point of contact for neighbours and the wider community. Prior to children moving in, we intend to host an opening event so neighbours can visit the home, meet staff and see that the environment is homely and non-institutional, as we had outlined during earlier engagement.

Beyond that, there are robust and clearly defined processes in place. The home manager is responsible for maintaining ongoing, friendly communication, and there are escalation routes through service managers and the responsible individual if needed. As responsible individual, regular statutory visits are undertaken and reports produced, which include feedback from professional stakeholders and the community. There is also a formal complaints procedure should issues arise. Overall, our intention is to be more than just a good neighbour: we want these homes to be well integrated into their communities, with open channels of communication and a culture of early resolution.

*The service now uses a mix of local authority-delivered provision and third-sector provision. How and why was that mix chosen, and what is the process for deciding whether a service should be delivered in-house or by the third sector?*

When we developed the placement strategy, we were very clear about where different delivery models were most effective. For supported accommodation, particularly for 16- and 17-year-olds, we already had strong and well-established relationships with third-sector organisations that had the right values, experience and expertise. That market is relatively well developed, and when we tender for supported accommodation support, we receive good responses from providers who align closely with the outcomes we want to achieve for young people.

In contrast, the market for externally provided residential children's homes is much less well developed and significantly more expensive. For that reason, it made sense for us to focus our efforts on building a skilled in-house workforce for residential provision, where we can directly control quality, practice and outcomes. This split approach has allowed us to concentrate internal capacity where it is most needed, while still benefiting from the strengths and flexibility of the third sector in supported accommodation. We are satisfied that this balance has worked well and have replicated the same model for newer supported accommodation schemes.

*Does this approach still allow third-sector providers to be involved going forward, rather than excluding them as provision develops?*

Yes, absolutely. Third-sector providers are not being excluded, and we continue to work closely with them through open and transparent procurement processes. Where services are tendered, providers are able to bid, and decisions are made based on quality, value and alignment with our values and objectives. This approach ensures that we do not put all our eggs in one basket and that we retain a diverse and resilient care system.

We see this as a partnership approach. The third sector continues to play an important role alongside our in-house residential provision, and contracts are kept under review as they come up for renewal. At present, we are very pleased with the quality of care being delivered across both local authority and third-sector provision, and we believe this mixed economy strengthens overall placement sufficiency and outcomes for young people.

*Given that the Council directly manages its own children's homes but does not control private residential provision, is there a risk that problems arising from private homes could affect community perceptions of all children's homes, including our own? Is there more that the Council can do to mitigate this?*

There are clear limits to what we can control, but we are not without influence. While private residential homes operate independently, they are required to notify us when children from other local authorities are placed within our area, and we maintain ongoing working relationships with the appropriate inspectors and regulatory bodies. Where issues arise, our role is to ensure that the right information is shared with placing authorities, responsible individuals for those homes and inspectors, so that concerns can be addressed appropriately.

If community cohesion issues emerge, we can also engage internal teams such as community safety or local policing, depending on the nature of the concern. Where private providers are open to it, we will offer advice and share learning based on our

own experience of managing homes and engaging positively with communities. Our focus is on coordination, communication and ensuring that safeguarding thresholds are applied correctly where there is a risk to a child or the wider community.

*Do we know how many private children's residential homes currently operate within the county, and how well sighted are we on that landscape?*

We do hold information on the number of private residential children's homes operating within the county, though the figure can change over time. The most recent confirmed figure was nine, but we believe the number has increased since then. We can provide an updated figure to the committee outside the meeting. **ACTION: to provide the precise number of private facilities**

Whilst we do not oversee these homes in the same way as our own provision, we remain sighted on the sector through regulatory notifications, liaison with inspectors and contact with placing authorities. This enables us to monitor trends and identify potential risks, even though direct operational control does not sit with the Council.

*Is there anything further the Council can practically do to work with private providers to reduce community issues and avoid negative spill-over effects onto perceptions of Council-run homes?*

There are practical limits, but we do take our role seriously. Where concerns arise about private provision, we ensure that they are escalated appropriately and shared with the regulatory and placing authorities who have the power to intervene. We also maintain dialogue with inspectors and, where relevant, contribute local intelligence that can support oversight and enforcement.

We see our role as one of coordination and facilitation rather than control. Where homes are receptive, we will work constructively with them and offer guidance based on our own experience of community engagement and good practice. Ultimately, while we cannot manage private providers directly, we do what we can to ensure issues are identified early, information is shared transparently and safeguarding responsibilities are met.

### **Chair's Summary:**

Thank you for the report, and the officer's responses today. The committee extends its thanks to the team for their hard work. The report was moved.

### **5. Investment and Commercial Interests Update - 12 month update - To update the committee following scrutiny in April 2025**

Cabinet Member Ben Callard and Nick Keyse introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Peter Davies.

As part of the introduction, Nick Keyse advised the Committee that, since publication of the report, a lease renewal has been successfully completed at Castlegate Business Park. The report had highlighted a risk associated with a major tenant whose lease was due to expire during the year, and that this had been included to illustrate the potential

consequences if the space became vacant. He confirmed that this risk has now been mitigated, as the tenant – identified as the third-largest occupier at Castlegate Business Park – has signed a lease renewal, committing to remain on site for a minimum further period of five years.

*How strategic is the Council being in its approach to assets such as Castlegate Business Park, and at what point do we stop considering it a strategic asset and instead recognise it as an under-performing one? Is it genuinely the right fit for the Council?*

We recognise that Castlegate Business Park is a challenging asset and that it does not currently perform in the way originally intended. The format and configuration of the space can feel dated, particularly in a post-pandemic office market that has changed significantly. However, we also see strong strategic value in the asset, particularly because of its location and its potential role in future development, including its relationship to wider regeneration and planning ambitions.

Occupancy levels, while not yet where we want them to be, are moving in a positive direction. We must also balance pure financial performance with wider economic and community benefits, including employment and business support. Any long-term decisions about the future of Castlegate must be taken carefully, particularly in respect of existing tenants who provide local jobs and economic stability. For those reasons, we continue to treat it as a strategic asset while actively reviewing how best to maximise its value.

*Are we confident that the benefits we are deriving from this investment could not be achieved more effectively by deploying that investment differently elsewhere, or by managing it in a different way? In essence, are we getting the best overall return – financial and otherwise – from this asset?*

What distinguishes Council ownership is the ability to derive benefits that a purely private landlord might not prioritise or achieve in the same way. While our core objective remains to maximise occupancy and income, we are also able to use the asset more flexibly to support wider council and community objectives. For example, initiatives such as Monmouthshire's flexible workspace offer have been delivered successfully at Castlegate and would be harder to sustain under a purely commercial model.

We have also been able to support temporary and community-focused uses of the site, provide more flexible tenancy arrangements, and align the asset with broader economic development objectives. While it is always right to ask whether investment could be redeployed elsewhere, we are confident that Council stewardship allows us to extract a broader range of benefits from Castlegate than would otherwise be possible, alongside a steadily improving financial trajectory.

*How often are Council investments such as Castlegate formally reviewed, and how frequently are alternative or innovative approaches considered?*

In practice, assets such as Castlegate are kept under very regular review. At an operational level, we hold monthly meetings with our managing agents, which focus not only on day-to-day performance, occupancy and enquiries, but also on market

intelligence and comparable sites along the M4 corridor. This helps us understand whether performance issues are asset-specific or reflect wider market conditions.

Beyond that, we ensure assets are represented in the appropriate regional and strategic forums, including engagement with the Cardiff Capital Region, where opportunities for future uses, sector clustering and inward investment are explored. We have also tested our approach by engaging multiple commercial agents to review our terms and market positioning, and the consistent feedback has been that our offer remains competitive for an out-of-town business park. Taken together, this ensures that performance, strategy and future options are kept under continual review rather than being assessed on an infrequent or reactive basis.

*What criteria would trigger a decision to dispose of an investment asset such as Castlegate Business Park rather than retain it for long-term income, and has the Council assessed whether releasing capital through disposal could better support core services than continued income generation?*

We continually review investment assets, but any decision to dispose would be taken very carefully and would depend on whether we believe we have maximised the asset's potential and whether disposal would genuinely result in a better overall outcome for the Council. In practice, assets are generally more attractive for disposal when they are performing strongly, rather than when they are under pressure, which is why our focus remains on improving performance rather than exiting prematurely.

In the case of Castlegate Business Park, it was originally acquired as a long-term investment, and we continue to see strategic, economic and employment benefits that extend beyond simple income generation. Disposing of the asset at this stage would also remove a revenue stream and could create additional pressures elsewhere in the Council's finances. While capital release is always something we are mindful of, at present the recommendation remains to retain the asset while continuing to improve occupancy and performance and to reassess options once that position strengthens further.

*On solar energy generation, has the Council expanded this approach elsewhere in the estate, for example through solar canopies or integration with electric vehicle charging, and is this reflected in improved returns?*

Yes, we are actively expanding renewable energy generation across the Council's estate. The solar canopy installation at Innovation House is part of a wider decarbonisation programme aimed at maximising renewable technology, future-proofing our assets and improving their attractiveness to occupiers. Integrating renewable energy, including solar generation and electric vehicle charging infrastructure, supports both environmental objectives and commercial appeal.

The financial uplift referenced in the report primarily relates to the Council's solar farm, but all renewable installations across the estate contribute to long-term resilience and value. These initiatives are closely linked to broader sustainability goals and are increasingly relevant to tenants when considering occupation, particularly in terms of operating costs and corporate environmental commitments.

*My understanding is that the current return on investment at Newport Leisure Park is around 1.8%, rather than the 2% originally planned. Are we therefore still below target, and should we be cautious about presenting this as a strong-performing asset?*

Yes, the current reported return is around 1.8%, and we do acknowledge that this is below the original 2% target. However, it does represent a significant improvement compared with previous years, and it reflects a positive trajectory rather than a static position. Importantly, since the report was finalised, further leasing changes have occurred which mean that the projected return for 2026–27 is now closer to 2.4%, exceeding the original target.

While we are not complacent, we are confident that Newport Leisure Park is increasingly performing as intended, delivering a reliable income stream that contributes directly to funding Council services. Any assessment of performance needs to take account of market conditions, particularly in the leisure and retail sectors, and the fact that performance is improving rather than declining.

*What additional opportunities are being considered for Castlegate Business Park, including potential uses such as expanded solar generation, transport or depot uses, or alignment with the Replacement Local Development Plan, and are local businesses being excluded from occupying space there?*

Castlegate Business Park is a protected employment site, and there are specific planning use classes that determine what activities can and cannot take place there. Where businesses have not been able to locate at Castlegate, this has usually been because their proposed use did not align with those planning restrictions, rather than because we were unwilling to accommodate local businesses. We are also mindful of not drawing businesses out of town centres where that would undermine high-street vitality.

That said, we are actively exploring additional opportunities to maximise the value and utility of the site. These include potential renewable energy uses such as solar installations, consideration of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and more flexible uses of existing space, including Council functions, training, and conference activity. Castlegate is also being considered within the context of wider planning and economic development ambitions, including links to the Replacement Local Development Plan, to ensure it remains strategically relevant.

*Can you confirm that proper checks and balances are now in place to avoid previous issues around large-scale investment decisions, particularly the use of significant public funds, including investments made outside the county?*

Yes, we can give that assurance. The Council's approach to investment has changed significantly. Large-scale acquisitions, particularly those outside the county, are no longer being pursued. Oversight arrangements have also shifted, with the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee now playing a key role in scrutinising the performance and management of existing investment assets.

Decisions on investment, retention or disposal are now subject to clearer governance, stronger financial controls and transparent reporting. There is no active programme of

comparable acquisitions, and any future proposals of that nature would require explicit, robust Member consideration and approval through the Council's formal decision-making processes.

*How are rental income and arrears monitored across the portfolio, and how long do we tolerate ongoing arrears before taking action or seeking a new occupier?*

We have clear and structured processes in place to monitor rental income and arrears across the entire portfolio. Automated financial triggers are in place so that missed or late payments are identified quickly, prompting engagement with tenants to understand the reasons behind the arrears. This applies across all asset types, including commercial estates, county farms and major investments such as Newport Leisure Park and Castlegate Business Park.

Where arrears persist, decisions are taken on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the size of the tenant, the nature of the business and the wider economic context. In some instances, particularly where recovery is not possible, we will move to enforce lease terms and regain possession, as has previously happened at Newport Leisure Park. The overall approach balances commercial discipline with proportionality, but we do not allow unresolved arrears to continue indefinitely.

*To what extent does returning Castlegate Business Park to profitability depend on existing tenants remaining in place, given that new tenants are often offered incentives such as rent-free periods or reduced rents? Does tenant turnover risk delaying a return to profitability?*

The return on investment projections for Castlegate Business Park are based primarily on existing leases and known contractual positions. They do not assume any immediate rent increases from current tenants, nor do they assume that tenants without a contractual mechanism to leave will vacate. Where tenants do have break clauses or impending lease expiries, those risks are explicitly factored into our assessment.

It is correct that attracting new tenants can sometimes involve incentives, such as rent-free periods, and this can temporarily affect income. However, this is a normal part of commercial property management and is balanced against the longer-term benefit of securing stable occupancy. At present, the amount of vacant space—around 31,000 square feet—is significant but manageable, and it can be let either to a small number of larger occupiers or broken down for multiple tenants. Importantly, if we can reduce running costs through efficiency and decarbonisation measures, then even vacant space becomes less of a financial burden, improving the overall return profile while letting activity continues.

*Paragraph 3.26 refers to Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) involvement and decarbonisation work, but the terminology is unclear. Can you explain in practical terms what this means for Castlegate Business Park and the Council?*

Through Cardiff Capital Region, Castlegate Business Park has been selected as one of a small number of pilot sites for a decarbonisation initiative. The first phase involved feasibility work to understand how a large, 1980s-era office building like Castlegate could be decarbonised, recognising that it was not originally designed with renewable

technology or energy efficiency in mind. We are now moving into a second phase that focuses on identifying an investment strategy to deliver those improvements. This includes measures such as improved building management systems, LED lighting and other energy-efficiency interventions. These works align directly with Council decarbonisation objectives, but they also have a clear financial benefit. Reducing energy and operating costs lowers our exposure where space is vacant and makes the building more attractive and affordable for tenants. While CCR is supporting the strategic and technical work, the aim is to deliver tangible outcomes that improve both sustainability and the financial performance of the asset over time.

*Can we expect more concrete outcomes from the Cardiff Capital Region work to be reported back to the committee in future?*

Yes. At present, much of the work has focused on feasibility and scoping, but as we move through the next stages we expect to be in a position to report more tangible progress. This will include clearer detail on what interventions are being taken forward, how they are funded and the practical impact on running costs and asset performance. We fully expect to bring that information back to Members as the programme develops.

*Turning to the north of the county, the report notes positive developments at the Market Hall in Monmouth. With two new tenants moving in and museum storage still occupying part of the building, what is the longer-term vision for the remaining space once the museum vacates?*

At present, part of the Market Hall continues to be used by the museum while refurbishment works to Shire Hall are underway. Alongside that, the vacant areas of the Market Hall are now being let, with tenants moving forward through change-of-use applications and fit-out preparation for new exhibition and commercial activity. This is already helping to re-energise the building and increase footfall.

Once the museum storage relocates back to Shire Hall – currently anticipated towards the end of the calendar year – we will have an opportunity to consider the Market Hall more holistically. The building is unique in its layout and potential flexibility, and our focus will be on identifying uses that both complement the existing occupiers and help drive activity into that part of the town. We intend to begin marketing the remaining space in advance of the museum vacating, to minimise vacancy periods and ensure we secure appropriate, high-quality uses that align with regeneration and town-centre objectives.

### **Chair's Summary:**

Thank you to the Cabinet Member and officers for the report and their responses today. It has been a very helpful discussion. The report was moved.

## **6. Council and Cabinet Work Planner**

Noted.

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

The first meeting of the Task & Finish Group that was established after the last meeting will take place after the Senedd election. Members will be invited to Governance & Audit Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> June for the Panel Performance Assessment item. There will also be an invitation to People Committee for the WESP item in the coming months.

**8. To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes were agreed.

**9. Next Meeting**

9th June 2026 at 10.00am.

The meeting ended at 12.19 pm.

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