

Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 6 October 2026

Dear Councillor

CABINET

You are requested to attend a **Cabinet** meeting to be held at **Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk** on **Wednesday, 14th October, 2026**, at **4.30 pm**.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Consideration of reports from Scrutiny Committees
 - i. **Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee - Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 29th September 2026** 1 - 16
 - ii. **Place Committee - Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 1st October 2026** 17 - 18
4. Possible referral to cabinet of the call-in on the establishment of a Gwent Wide Social Care Workforce Development Team
5. Community Asset Transfer – Raglan MUGA 19 - 46

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: This report is brought forward to consider the Community Asset Transfer of the Raglan MUGA and adjacent field to Raglan Community Council.

Author: Nicholas Keyse, Head of Landlord Services

Contact Details: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

6. Scrutiny Self-Evaluation 2026 and Scrutiny Committee Reports 47 - 94

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To present the 2025–2026 Scrutiny Self-Evaluation for Monmouthshire County Council, along with the four Scrutiny Committee

Reports.

Author: Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager

Contact Details: hazelilett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

7. 2026/27 Revenue Budget - Financial Update

95 - 138

Division/Wards Affected: All

Purpose: To provide Cabinet with an update of the progress against the Council's revenue budget for the 2026/27 financial year.

Author: Jonathan Davies, Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 officer)

Contact Details: jonathandaivies2@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely,

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

CABINET PORTFOLIOS

County Councillor	Area of Responsibility	Ward
Mary Ann Brocklesby	Leader Lead Officers – Paul Matthews, Matthew Gatehouse, Peter Davies, Will Mclean Whole Authority Strategy and Direction Whole authority performance review and evaluation, including DDAT Relationships with Welsh Government, UK Government and local government associations Regional Relationships including CJsCs. PSBs and cross boarder Emergency Planning	Llanelly
Paul Griffiths	Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development Deputy Leader Lead Officers – Will McLean, Craig O'Connor Economic Strategy Skills and Employment Replacement Local Development Plan Placemaking and the development of market and affordable housing Placemaking and Transforming Towns Car parking and civil parking enforcement Development Management Building Control	Chepstow Castle & Larkfield
Ben Callard	Cabinet Member for Resources Lead Officers – Peter Davies, Matt Gatehouse Finance including MTFP and annual budget cycle Revenue and Benefits Human resources, payroll, health and safety Land and buildings Property maintenance and management Strategic procurement	Llanfoist & Govilon
Laura Wright	Cabinet Member for Education Lead Officers – Will McLean, Deb Hill-Howells Early Years Education All age statutory education Additional learning needs/inclusion Post 16 and adult education School standards and improvement Community learning	Grofield

	Sustainable communities for learning Programme Youth service School transport	
Ian Chandler	Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services Lead Officer – Jane Rodgers Children’s services Fostering & adoption Youth Offending service Adult services Whole authority safeguarding (children and adults) Disabilities Mental health Wellbeing Relationships with health providers and access to health provision	Llantilio Crossenny
Catrin Maby	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment Lead Officers – Debra Hill-Howells, Craig O’Connor, Decarbonisation Transport Planning Highways and MCC Fleet Waste management, street care, litter, public spaces and parks Pavements and Back lanes Flood Alleviation Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and River health	Drybridge
Angela Sandles	Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement Lead Officers – Matthew Gatehouse, Paul Matthews, Jane Rodgers, James Williams Community development, inequality and poverty (health, income, nutrition, disadvantage, discrimination, isolation and cost of living crisis) Citizen engagement and democracy promotion including working with voluntary organisations Citizen experience - community hubs, contact centre, and customer service and registrars, communications, public relations and marketing Leisure centres, play and sport Public conveniences Electoral Services and constitution review Ethics and standards Welsh Language Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Public Protection, and Licencing	Magor East with Undy

Sara Burch	Cabinet Member for Rural Affairs, Housing & Tourism Lead Officers – Craig O'Connor, Jane Rodgers Local Food production and consumption, including agroforestry and local horticulture Homelessness, Temporary accommodation, private sector housing, (empty homes leasing schemes, home improvement loans, disabled facilities grants and adaptive technology), Allocation of social housing Broadband connectivity Active Travel Countryside Access and Rights of Way Tourism Development and Cultural Services	Cantref
------------	---	---------

Public Information

Please note that Monmouthshire County Council will film this meeting and it will be made available to view in live and archive form online. It is possible that the public seating areas could be filmed and by entering the Chamber you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting purposes. If you make a representation to the meeting you will be deemed to have consented to being filmed.

Recordings of the meeting will be stored in accordance with the Council's data retention policy. Archived webcasts or parts of webcasts shall only be removed from the Council's website if the Monitoring Officer considers that it is necessary because all or part of the content of the webcast is or is likely to be in breach of any statutory provision or common law doctrine, for example Data Protection and Human Rights legislation or provisions relating to confidential or exempt information.

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.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 29th September 2026

Report Item: Annual Director's Report for Social Care

Key Issues raised by the Committee:

- The social care budget appears broadly balanced, but this masks a £594k overspend in Children's Services; and a £665k underspend in Adult Services. Can officers assure members that the Adult Services underspend reflects genuine demand management rather than unmet need or staff capacity issues?
- What reduction in external placements and costs is expected from the development of in-house provision? How many children are currently in external placements? Are in-house placements genuinely more cost effective once staffing, property and support costs are included?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The Adult Services position was supported by late Welsh Government grants, particularly the Pathways of Care grant. Funding was used to support hospital discharges, residential placements and care-at-home provision. The underspend did not reflect unmet need and officers were confident services continued to meet demand.

Children's Services continues to reduce reliance on external placements through investment in in-house residential, supported accommodation and fostering provision. At the end of the year there were seven children in Monmouthshire's in-house residential provision; that number had since increased to eight. Four young people were accommodated within supported accommodation provision.

A further residential children's home and supported accommodation provision are planned, increasing capacity further. External placements can cost from approximately £4,000-£4,500 per week up to £15,000-£17,000 per week depending on need. Business cases demonstrate that in-house provision delivers both better value for money and improved outcomes for children.

- The Member welcomed the evidence that in-house provision appears to be benefiting children and young people and asked whether officers wished to add anything further regarding placement provision.

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

The Chief Officer highlighted the success of the council's fostering strategy. Increased support and incentives have helped increase the use of Monmouthshire foster carers. For the first time there is now a clear gap between the number of children placed with Monmouthshire foster carers and those placed with independent fostering agencies. This has improved outcomes and generated significant cost savings.

- Given the high cost of external placements, how many in-house residential settings does Monmouthshire now operate? How many external children's homes are operating within the county?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

Monmouthshire currently has 3 registered in-house children's homes, with 1 additional residential home due to open. Also we have 1 supported accommodation provision open with 1 further supported accommodation provision due to open this year. A further supported accommodation provision planned for the following year. There are a significant number of external children's homes in the county, although many do not accommodate Monmouthshire children. Many placements are highly competitive and children are often placed outside the county depending on availability and needs. The exact number of external homes and Monmouthshire placements could be provided following the meeting.

- The Chair noted it would be useful to know how many Monmouthshire children are accommodated within county-based external provision, as this would help assess whether children are remaining closer to home while in care.
- What support is available for the 43% of care leavers not in education, employment or training? How many young people does this represent? Given concerns about wellbeing and suicide risk among care leavers, how are these young people being supported?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

A significant proportion are unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people who do not yet have the right to work. Others may not yet be ready for employment or education, may be parents themselves, or can be affected by benefit-related issues. Every care leaver has access to a Personal Adviser and support can continue until age 25. The service works to build support networks, peer relationships and ongoing connections to reduce isolation and vulnerability. Officers agreed to provide the actual numbers behind the percentage.

- The complaints table is difficult to understand. What does the outcomes column mean? What learning has come from complaints, particularly around communication, assessments and charging? How is feedback from the social care survey collected and why do only some people receive it?

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The outcomes column records whether complaint elements were upheld, not upheld or partially upheld by an independent investigator. Some complaints contain multiple strands, making the outcome column complex to present. The report could be made clearer for readers. Learning from complaints is shared through staff discussions, supervision and training. Common themes include communication, financial assessments and helping families understand complex processes. Additional staff training has been provided where recurring issues have been identified.

- A Member requested the criteria used for selecting recipients of the social care survey.

Response by Head of Adult Services and Commissioning

The survey follows a Welsh Government methodology with specific eligibility criteria and exclusions. Approximately one twelfth of people with an active care and support plan receive the survey each month, subject to those criteria. Feedback is gathered continuously throughout the year rather than through a single annual exercise. Anyone with concerns about their care can contact the service directly at any time.

- For care leavers who are unaccompanied asylum seekers and cannot access employment or benefits, what ongoing support is available? Does the council continue to have responsibilities towards them? Is language support a significant barrier that needs to be addressed?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The council retains ongoing responsibilities because these young people continue to be supported as care leavers. Support includes accommodation, access to services, personal adviser support and assistance with their wider needs. Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people are connected to language support, legal advice and culturally appropriate services when they arrive. Monmouthshire has built considerable experience in supporting this group and following them through into care leaver status. Support remains available until they reach the end of the care leaver support period.

- Are current vacancy and sickness levels causing concern? What impact are they having on service delivery? Have vacancy and sickness levels improved or worsened?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

Vacancy levels average around 30 posts across both Adult and Children's Services. Recruitment has improved over the last 18 months, although some areas remain difficult to recruit to, particularly reablement and child protection social work. Vacancies can affect

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

timely service delivery and place additional pressure on existing staff. Where statutory roles must be filled, agency workers are used if necessary. Children's Services staff turnover is around 10%, which officers consider comparatively positive.

In terms of sickness absence, the service is using the council's revised attendance-management approach, focusing on individual support and return-to-work arrangements. Managers receive detailed data on both short and long-term absence to support intervention. Some absence reflects the nature of social care work and the age profile of the workforce. Recruitment, retention and attendance continue to be actively managed rather than accepted as normal.

- What impact will the proposed Gwent-wide Social Care Workforce Development Team have on workforce development and learning within the service?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

Learning from complaints and practice issues is delivered locally through supervision, team discussions and management arrangements. The Workforce Development Team's role is to coordinate training programmes, support student placements and manage workforce development grant activity.

- How will local learning and service improvement be maintained if workforce development becomes a regional function?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The proposed regional arrangements would not replace service-based learning and professional supervision. Practice improvement, learning from complaints and staff development will continue to be led within the service through managers and supervision arrangements. The regional team would provide training infrastructure and support, while responsibility for day-to-day professional learning remains local.

- With the proposed move to a Gwent-wide Workforce Development Team, can members be assured that the strong local relationships, training support and social work student development currently provided in Monmouthshire will be maintained? Will support for foster carers and the quality of local training continue?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The Workforce Development Team plays a critical role in student placements, newly qualified social worker support, training delivery and workforce development. A regional model could improve resilience, reduce duplication and strengthen links with universities and training providers. Officers recognise the importance of retaining close links with local

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

services and supporting service change. The proposed business-partner approach is intended to ensure Monmouthshire's specific workforce needs continue to be met while benefiting from regional capacity and expertise.

- What does the new START (Short-Term Assessment and Reablement Team) model look like? How is the workforce being trained? How are external care providers being involved so that care plans reflect reablement outcomes?

Response by Head of Adult Services and Commissioning

START has been moved to the beginning of the care pathway so support is provided earlier. Reablement workers have been trained and upskilled to undertake functional assessments. This has increased access to reablement and reduced waiting times for assessments. Staff work closely with social workers to provide proportionate support at the earliest stage. A Trusted Assessor approach is being developed with external care providers to improve information sharing and responsiveness. The overall aim is to create a more outcome-focused and preventative model of care.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked officers and the Cabinet Member and all staff for their work supporting vulnerable children, adults and older people across Monmouthshire, highlighting the value of the Director's Report and the way information had been presented accessibly through case studies and infographics. He noted the importance of ensuring reports remain understandable and engaging for residents as well as members and suggested it would be useful in future to explore the potential role of AI and assistive technology within social care, particularly how it might improve outcomes and efficiency. He commented that the nature of members' questions demonstrated how highly valued social care services are and asked that the committee's appreciation be passed on to managers, practitioners and wider staff teams for the work undertaken every day to support residents.

Points requiring a further response by the Cabinet Member:

None.

This page is intentionally left blank

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 29th September 2026

Report Item: 2026-2027 Financial Update Report

Key Issues raised by the Committee:

- Will the 3.5% teachers' pay rise in Wales be funded in the same way as England? Is a similar reduction anticipated in employer contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme, and what would the financial implications be?

Response from Head of Finance/Deputy Section 151 Officer

The council expects a similar reduction in Teachers' Pension Scheme contribution rates, but this will be offset through Welsh Government funding so will not create a direct saving to the authority. Local Government Pension Scheme contribution rates were agreed around 12 months ago at 3% lower than previous rates for the next three years. The reduction is already benefiting the budget and reflects the strong position of the pension fund.

- The latest local authority forecast overspend of £464k masks significant pressures including £614k of undelivered savings and £442k shortfall in children's placement savings. School deficits are now forecast at £9.337m over budget, which is £2.456m worse than the previous quarter. What specific interventions are being triggered for the highest-risk schools? At what stage is a recovery plan considered no longer credible and replaced with a different approach?

Response from Head of Finance/Deputy Section 151 Officer

The worsening school deficit position has been transparently reported and reflects a long-term trend, not a new issue. Recovery plans are in place and are being actively monitored by governors and officers. The purpose of the review is to provide assurance that existing plans remain realistic and responsive to changing circumstances. Schools retain responsibility for managing their budgets, with support provided by the council. The key question now is whether existing plans remain realistic or whether fundamentally different solutions need to be considered, which will be explored through the further review.

- Over the last five years, school balances appear to have moved from a surplus position of around £2.3m to a deficit position approaching £10m. Is this correct? The Chief officer for Children and Young People's description of the situation as a "crisis engulfing nearly every local authority in Wales" including MCC, and earlier reports describing it as a "very serious

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

financial risk" for the authority indicate the heightened scale of concern. More information is requested on the contingency funding available to schools. What will the planned review of the highest-risk schools involve, particularly regarding the adequacy of recovery plans and any additional support, challenge or intervention required? Does the director's statement that a teacher and teaching assistant can no longer be assumed in every classroom mean schools will need to reduce teaching assistant provision?

Response by Head of Finance/Deputy Section 151 Officer

The deterioration in school balances is not recent. The position had already been worsening before the pandemic. Around 2016-17 there were 12 schools in deficit. By 2019-20, before the pandemic, there were 15 schools in deficit and the overall position had moved into deficit. The pandemic period temporarily altered the trend because schools received significant additional funding from government.

Additional Response by Chief Officer for Children and Young People

The pressures facing schools are being experienced across Wales, not just in Monmouthshire. Discussions with Directors of Education across Wales indicate that demand pressures and funding pressures are being felt in virtually every local authority. These pressures are contributing to ongoing discussions about additional ALN (Additional Learning Needs) funding from Welsh Government.

The authority retains small contingency funds to support schools where pupils with additional learning needs arrive outside the normal funding cycle. Most ALN funding is already delegated directly to schools. The contingency fund is limited and has been heavily drawn upon. Changes expected to Welsh Government funding arrangements mean these contingency pots are likely to be fully allocated to schools in future, leaving no centrally held contingency funding for additional requests.

The council has statutory powers to issue warning notices where a school loses control of its budget. Schools would be given an opportunity to respond and implement recommendations. Ultimately, the authority could remove budget delegation and take control of a school's budget. However, this would create significant practical and resource challenges because the council would then be responsible for managing financial decisions within a school it does not operate day-to-day.

The authority does not fund a teaching assistant in every Key Stage 2 classroom through its funding formula. Teaching assistants are funded where there is an identified Additional Learning Need (ALN). If schools choose to place teaching assistants in classes beyond what the funding formula supports, that creates budget pressure for the school. Schools may need to review staffing and class structures to ensure they remain affordable. Examples

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

include combining small classes where pupil numbers allow while remaining within class-size regulations. Future funding regulations are expected to provide greater transparency about what school funding is intended to cover.

- What coaching, in addition to training, is available to help governors and headteachers manage school budgets and deliver financial recovery?

Response by the Chief Officer for Children and Young People

Governors play a critical role in financial management, safeguarding and providing support and challenge to school leaders. There is no formal coaching programme specifically for governors. Where schools face significant challenges, officers work closely with Chairs of Governors and Headteachers through ongoing discussions and support, which effectively takes a coaching-style approach. Through the Monmouthshire Association of School Governors, governors are encouraged to raise concerns and seek support when needed.

- Where has the council reached with its review of surplus school places? Is this work being undertaken across all school clusters as part of improving the financial position?

Response by the Chief Officer for Children and Young People

Monmouthshire's schools operate within four clusters centred on the secondary schools. Abergavenny and Caldicot currently have a broadly appropriate level of surplus places. Monmouth and Chepstow have significant surplus places. Officers are reviewing September pupil numbers, live birth data and future demand. Further proposals will be developed for Monmouth and Chepstow, but more local engagement and analysis are needed before options are brought forward. Addressing surplus places is recognised as an important factor in delivering education more sustainably and efficiently.

- Why is the Council reporting a £464k revenue overspend when school balances are forecast to move to a cumulative deficit position of £9.337m by 31 March 2027, including a forecast £2.456m deterioration during 2026/27? In the interest of accuracy and transparency, shouldn't the actual local authority forecast overspend be combined with the school deficit forecast for 2026/27? Is the 10-year school recovery forecast still credible given deficits have worsened by around 30% since this forecast was produced just a few days ago? Was there ever a 5-year, or even 1-year forecast showing deficits reaching today's level?

Response by Head of Finance/Deputy Section 151 Officer

That is a valid point, however school and non-school budgets are reported separately because schools hold delegated budgets and are responsible for managing them. Both positions are reported together in the report and neither is being hidden. The 10-year forecast is intended to provide strategic oversight and track progress over time. The

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

worsening starting position raises valid questions about whether recovery assumptions remain realistic. A significant proportion of the deficit sits within a small number of schools, which will be the primary focus of future recovery action.

- The question is whether residents would see the position as a combined financial pressure on the authority. The issue extends beyond a handful of schools, noting all four secondary schools and 18 schools overall are forecasting deficits.

Response by Deputy Chief Executive/Section 151 Officer

I acknowledge concerns about the underlying financial pressures. The council is applying all available levers to address school deficits. School deficits and non-school budgets should remain separate because responsibility for managing school deficits sits primarily with schools. Recovery plans exist for all schools in deficit and are being reviewed. Significant financial pressures also exist outside education, particularly in children's services, adult services and transport. Both the schools challenge and wider council financial pressures require equal attention.

- Castle Gate Business Park continues to show a forecast overspend of £227k. What are the discussions with significant tenants about? If negotiations go well, what impact will that have on the overspend? If they do not go well, what is the downside risk?

Response by Deputy Chief Executive/Section 151 Officer

Castle Gate remains a focus because of vacant floor space (around 38,000 sq ft). The council is actively seeking tenants and working with Cardiff Capital Region to attract high-value occupiers. Details of negotiations cannot be discussed publicly due to commercial confidentiality. A further update report on the investment property portfolio, including Castle Gate, will be brought to scrutiny later in the year, with commercially sensitive details likely considered in private session.

- Are reported pressures representing ongoing recurring resource pressures?

Response by Deputy Chief Executive/Section 151 Officer

The overspend is primarily driven by vacant units. Unoccupied space results in lost rental income and service charges falling to the council rather than tenants. Improving occupancy is the key way of reducing the ongoing pressure.

- Passenger transport is showing a £268k underspend due to Home to School Transport eligibility changes. Are savings being achieved at the expense of pupils experiencing late buses, non-arrivals and overcrowding? Could contingency arrangements be considered for pupils affected?

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Response by Chief Officer for Infrastructure

- Savings have been achieved by increasing use of public bus services. Routes are being monitored and dedicated transport introduced where overcrowding exists. Increased use of public buses has been driven by the £1 fare scheme. The authority has moved entitled learners from some congested services to dedicated buses. Officers have travelled on routes and found some pupils standing despite seats being available.
- A member raised concerns about buses not turning up.
- If seats are available, should drivers require pupils to sit down rather than allowing them to stand?

Response by Chief Officer for Infrastructure

Officers will continue to challenge operators and investigate reported service failures. Public bus services operate under different rules from dedicated school transport. Public buses are permitted to carry standing passengers up to a regulated capacity. Drivers can ask passengers to sit down but cannot compel them to do so. Officers have witnessed drivers asking students to sit, with some choosing not to.

- The Chair suggested the council may wish to explore stronger guidance or representations to Welsh Government on the issue of standing pupils/passengers.
- Several service overspends are attributed to failure to achieve staff vacancy factor savings.
- What does this mean? Are staff vacancy assumptions and savings targets being reviewed to ensure they remain realistic?

Response by Head of Finance/Deputy Section 151 Officer

The vacancy factor is a budget assumption that a proportion of posts across the organisation will be vacant during the year through turnover, retirement or recruitment delays. It is not linked to specific posts but applied as a general budget-saving assumption across the authority.

- Looked After Children numbers have risen by around 13-14% in recent months. What has driven this increase? Is there a route to reducing the numbers again?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

- Numbers had previously been stabilised but have increased since the start of the year. A key factor has been several large sibling groups entering care. Some children have also moved into Monmouthshire already requiring care and support. Wider pressures on

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

families and communities are increasing demand on children's services. The issue is not solely due to one trend but a combination of individual family circumstances and broader societal pressures.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked members and officers for their contributions and noted that the topic would likely be explored further under the Director's Report.

Points requiring a further response by the Cabinet Member:

None.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 29th September 2026

Report Item: Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report

Key Issues raised by the Committee:

- The report suggests the Adult Strike Process for anti-social behaviour is being hindered by limited police resources. Is a lack of police resource affecting safeguarding work more generally?

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

The Adult Strike Process has been more difficult to implement because of the complexity of adult cases and resource constraints. The Children's Strike Process is already established. Monmouthshire has strong working relationships with the police, which support safeguarding activity. Officers are aware of police resource pressures and these can create challenges. Safeguarding work continues effectively through good partnership working and issues are escalated through the Gwent Safeguarding Board where necessary.

- Is it fair to conclude that more police resources would improve safeguarding responses.

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Additional police resources would benefit all agencies. Despite pressures, strong relationships with the police enable safeguarding responsibilities to be carried out effectively. Resource pressures have been particularly evident in progressing the Adult Strike Process.

- The Chair noted that police are often the first point of contact for safeguarding concerns and reminded members that the Chief Constable had been invited to Public Services Scrutiny Committee on 12 October to discuss policing resources and related matters.
- Group B safeguarding training compliance is only 64%. Child protection conferences have increased by 20%. Harmful sexual behaviour cases are becoming more severe and complex. At what point would these issues trigger escalation and what additional actions are being taken?
- **Response – Jane Rodgers**

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

The lower Group B training figure reflects the transfer of Housing colleagues into the directorate. Additional training is being delivered and compliance is expected to improve significantly during the year.

- Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Harmful sexual behaviour increased significantly in the previous year but has reduced following closer joint working between Education, Social Care and Youth Services. Early intervention appears to be having a positive impact. However, there has been an increase in more serious harmful behaviours that meet a criminal threshold, which are managed through child protection and court processes where required.

- Harmful sexual behaviour is clearly an area of growing concern. How confident are officers that current interventions are addressing the issue effectively?

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Earlier intervention and stronger joint working between Education, Social Care and Youth Services are having a positive impact on reducing lower-level harmful sexual behaviour. However, the cases now being seen are often fewer in number but more serious and complex. The most serious cases are managed through established child protection processes and, where necessary, court proceedings. The increase in child protection conferences is being monitored. The service builds flexibility into staffing and capacity planning to respond to fluctuations in demand. Current levels remain manageable and officers are confident that statutory responsibilities can continue to be met.

- How do Monmouthshire's Position of Trust referral figures compare with Wales and the UK? Is there learning from elsewhere that could help improve safeguarding arrangements? At what point do issues such as misogynistic behaviour, hate-related incidents and the misuse of AI-generated imagery involving young people become safeguarding matters?

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

Wales is moving towards more consistent reporting of Position of Trust referrals following national review work. Monmouthshire already has established reporting arrangements and reviews data through the regional safeguarding board. Monitoring referral trends helps identify emerging themes, risks and areas for learning.

Response by Service Manager for Safeguarding

Incidents involving misogyny, harmful behaviour or AI-generated imagery would be assessed through safeguarding processes and multi-agency discussions where

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

appropriate. The focus is on assessing risk, supporting those affected and determining which agency is best placed to provide ongoing support.

Additional Response by Head of Children's Services

Emerging issues around misogyny, online harms and AI-generated imagery are being identified through the Monmouthshire Exploitation Group. These themes have been escalated to the Gwent Safeguarding Board for wider consideration and potential multi-agency work across the region.

- The self-assessment rates the safeguarding workforce positively, yet four of the five priority actions remain amber. Why do actions with target dates of March 2026 remain amber rather than green? Does amber indicate incomplete work or ongoing development?

Additional Response by Head of Children's Services

Amber reflects work that is ongoing rather than work that has failed. Safeguarding is continually evolving, with new risks and complexities emerging as work progresses. Some actions involve regional or national dependencies, such as training standards, which are outside the council's direct control. The RAG status is therefore intended to show that work is progressing but not yet fully complete.

Response by Chief Officer Social Care and Safeguarding

The workforce self-assessment score has remained at 4. Some actions have longer implementation periods than originally anticipated. Future action plans may need more realistic timescales or interim milestones to better reflect progress.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair suggested a short explanatory note in future reports to clarify why actions remain amber past their deadline and what progress has been made, and referred to the recent Estyn report, which recognised a strong safeguarding culture within Monmouthshire and acknowledged the committee's role in supporting and scrutinising safeguarding arrangements throughout the year. He thanked safeguarding officers and staff for their work and commitment and asked that the committee's appreciation be passed on to staff across the service.

Points requiring a further response by the Cabinet Member:

None.

This page is intentionally left blank

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Place Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 1st October 2026

Report Item: Road Safety Transport 2026-2040

Key Issues raised by the Committee:

Councillors questioned whether the strategy gives sufficient weight to local knowledge alongside recorded collision and casualty data. They raised concerns that near misses, minor incidents, reports made through 101 and repeated damage to infrastructure may not appear in the formal evidence base, meaning some dangerous locations could be overlooked. Members called for a dedicated and accessible reporting system through which councillors and residents could record near misses, emerging risks and damage to features such as bollards and pedestrian refuges. They also questioned whether the strategy's definition of success should extend beyond reductions in deaths and serious injuries to include wider indicators, such as safer conditions and increased walking and cycling.

A recurring concern was the effectiveness and availability of enforcement. Councillors asked how the Council could strengthen its work with Gwent Police and GoSafe, particularly in relation to dangerous driving, speeding in 20mph areas and rural-road risks to pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders. Questions were raised about the limited number of enforcement vans and fixed speed cameras, the criteria governing where enforcement can take place and whether reports made through 101 are being consistently recorded and acted upon. Members noted that gaps in police reporting could weaken the data used to identify hotspots and justify future enforcement.

Councillors also focused on school and community safety. They asked how the safe-routes-to-school programme operates, what more could be done about vehicles parking on pavements and outside school gates, and whether additional enforcement could be provided around Durand Primary School. Questions were raised about the travel arrangements and school travel plan for pupils travelling from Severnside to Chepstow School. More broadly, members queried why some communities appeared more prominent in the strategy than others and highlighted specific concerns in Llanellen, including the A4042 trunk road and the B4269, as examples of locations where community intelligence and monitoring data should help shape future action.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

The safety of vulnerable and emerging groups of road users featured prominently. Members questioned the absence of information about e-scooters and e-bikes, the limited data on incidents involving them and the appropriate route for reporting dangerous or antisocial use. They also asked whether incidents involving mobility scooters should be captured and how collisions and near misses would be recorded on shared-use routes involving cyclists, pedestrians and wheelchair users. Further questions concerned whether children and young people should be identified as a separate priority group, the safety of horse riders on rural roads and whether better-maintained bridleways could reduce the need for horses to use the highway.

Motorcycle safety and practical highway measures were another major theme. Councillors asked whether the 40mph restriction near the M48 junction on the B4235 could be extended following collisions involving motorcyclists, whether temporary motorcycle warning signs could become permanent and whether the Council could learn from approaches used elsewhere. Members suggested more targeted engagement with motorcyclists at popular meeting points and sought clarity on when the Council's motorcycle safety study and consultation findings would be available. The discussion also covered horse-rider warning signs, the importance of road-safety education and driver awareness, the preventative value of the Mature Driver Course, and the contribution that well-maintained road markings and reflective studs can make to safer driving.

Chair's Conclusion:

The Chair thanked the officers for the work that has gone into the strategy, and for their responses at the meeting.

Points requiring a further response by the Cabinet Member:

None.

SUBJECT:	Community Asset Transfer – Raglan MUGA
DIRECTORATE:	Resources
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	14th October 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

This report is brought forward to consider the Community Asset Transfer of the Raglan MUGA and adjacent field to Raglan Community Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet agrees the following:

- (i) To dispose of the freehold interest in Raglan MUGA and the adjacent amenity field in accordance with the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.
- (ii) To delegate responsibility to the Deputy Chief Executive and Statutory Director for Resources and Cabinet Member for Resources for approval of the legal terms and transfer to Raglan Community Council.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Background

3.1 The Council was approached by Raglan Community Council to consider a Community Asset Transfer of the existing Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The MUGA is managed for hire by MonLeisure via staff at Monmouth Leisure Centre. The physical distance between the site and site managers introduces sub-optimal efficiency as it relates to maximising the use of the asset.

3.2 Cabinet approved the potential transfer of the MUGA to Raglan Community Council in 2015, at which time it was to form part of a wider redevelopment proposal inclusive of a new Community Hub on the footprint of the former dilapidated Raglan School. Redevelopment plans did not proceed as a consequence of insufficient funding and legal considerations in relation to the respective land titles.

3.3 Proposing to enhance the use of the MUGA, Raglan Community Council have produced an updated business plan which outlines their intention to secure ownership and facilitate the hire of the space by local sports and community groups. The adjoining land also presents opportunities to create new biodiversity enhancements, as well as improve the access and enablement of outdoor entertainments. The business plan can be located in Appendix B.

3.4 As part of the business plan, Raglan Community Council have assigned funding for MUGA operation, maintenance and enhancement. This includes allocated funding to improve the existing flood lighting and the dilapidated boundary fencing

surrounding the site. The CAT application will safeguard the long-term future of the amenity space and playing facility.

3.5 The Raglan MUGA and adjacent field sits within the TAN15 C2 flood zone, therefore alternative uses are limited. The extent of the proposed transfer is included within the redline plan in Appendix A.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION:

4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken, attached as Appendix C.

4.2 A summary from Section 8 of the Integrated Impact Assessment identifying the significant positive and negative impacts is detailed below.

Positive Impact

- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal will better enable the site to be accessed for community use which will enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.

Negative Impacts

- None identified.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Recommendation
Do not transfer the property	• Whilst the property would remain underutilised, the property would be retained and it's use remain in MCC's control.	• That the property falls into disrepair and remains underutilized, in conflict with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy to maximise the use of property.	No
Grant the Community Asset Transfer	• The property is a well-known but under-utilised asset. • Transfer would enable greater use and advertisement of the opportunity, as well as expanding opportunities for amenity use on the adjacent field. • MCC would offset any ongoing running costs associated with the asset.	• That the property fails to be maintained and falls into disrepair. • That limited additional uses or community benefit is achieved, albeit the business plan demonstrates demand for the intended use.	Recommend the site is transferred to Raglan Community Council.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Landlord Services are responsible for assessing the merits of CAT proposals received and evaluating the extent to which they can be delivered or are

sustainable alternative uses. The associated business plan suitably evidences the purpose and intent of the proposed transfer.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 Transfer of the MUGA will enable a local community facility to be maximised, introducing more regular maintenance and monitoring arrangements, and enabling greater connectivity with local sports and community groups.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The annual running costs of the MUGA are nominal and will be transferred to Raglan Community Council. MCC will surrender an ongoing maintenance liability.
- 8.2 The transfer of the MUGA will require installation of a submeter to Raglan Primary School, such to enable recharges for electricity usage.

9. CONSULTEES:

- Cabinet
- Strategic Leadership Team
- Mike Moran, Community Infrastructure Coordinator
- Joanne Chase, MCC Legal Services
- Nick John, MonLeisure Services Manager
- Cllr Penny Jones, Ward Member

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix A – Redline Plan
Appendix B – Business Plan
Appendix C – Integrated Impact Assessment

12. AUTHOR:

Nicholas Keyse, Head of Landlord Services
nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank



	Rel Raglan MUGA and associated field		
	Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk. NP15 1GA		
	Scale 1:1200	Printed on:2026-09-08 10:33:53 by NicholasKeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk Page 31	

This page is intentionally left blank



Raglan Community Council

Business Case

For The Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) and Adjoining Field

Amended in September 2026

**Submitted to Monmouthshire
County Council
in
September 2026**

Table of Contents

This business case contains information on the management of the land and asset at the MUGA and adjoining field.

The following information is the intellectual property of Raglan Community Council under copyright.

- 1. Executive Summary**
- 2. Overview**
- 3. Community Asset Transfer (CAT):**
- 4. Who We Are**
- 5. Why are we doing this**
- 6. Discussions**
- 7. How will we deliver this in a sustainable way?**
- 8. Anticipated expenditure**
- 9. Monitoring and evaluation**
- 10. Conclusion**

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Raglan Community Councils vision is to enhance and improve the community facilities in Raglan.
- 1.2 Raglan Community Council is financially sound, and all finances are independently audited and audited annually by Audit Wales, whilst exercising robust, sensible cash and risk management, when committing public funding to projects and resources
- 1.3 Many funding avenues will, understandably, not provide any assistance to facilities that have no tenancy or ownership. Raglan Community Council will need to be able to demonstrate future security for the wider community to reassure funders that any development that's undertaken would be for the benefit, wellbeing, and successfulness, of any permanent improvement to facilities and services for the local community.
- 1.4 The Community Council wish to develop and sustain the MUGA recreational facility as a community resource that will be available to current and future generations of Raglan community.
- 1.5 Raglan Community Council are seeking a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the MUGA and the adjoining field from Monmouthshire County Council to Raglan Community Council.
- 1.6 This proposal has been developed as a result of several consultations with the local community to facilitate the development of the current Community Led Plan. This plan has established the key priorities for the local community in terms of the development of the village and the proposed transfer of these facilities to the Community Council will be fully in accordance with this strategic framework.
- 1.7 The long-term management arrangements for the asset are to be determined. This may involve a management board aligned to the Community Council or alternatively a social enterprise may be created if it can be evidenced that this will enable greater

access to funding streams whilst maintaining local control and responsibility for the facility.

- 1.8 Should a social enterprise be created any obligations imposed as per the proposed CAT will be transferred to the new delivery model.

2. Overview:

- 2.1 The transfer of the MUGA and existing field is a keystone in the vision to develop the community facilities in Raglan. Evidence has been gathered using the Community Led Plan (CLP), clearly showing a need for both indoor and outdoor community facilities within the village. Discussions have taken place, facilitated by the steering group of the CLP, with some of the Community Groups, to assess the types of projects they would like to become involved with and their ability to fund-raise and work in partnership with the Community Council. Several groups have expressed an interest and, should the CAT be successful a working group would be established to progress this.
- 2.2 The transfer of the MUGA is seen as the first steppingstone in a plan to bring much-needed facilities to a village which currently has demonstrated a need for leisure facilities for a growing and vibrant community. therefore, school opened in 2015; Planning permission has been granted for new dwellings on Chepstow Road in Ragan, therefore the need for additional facilities exists and there were plans to seek funding for a new community centre. The location of the MUGA and adjoining field are close to the development on Chepstow Road and would provide an ideal amenity space linking them all up.
- 2.3 The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) would also be an integral part of the revision of the LDP for Monmouthshire and the community of Raglan.
- 2.4 In line with the draft Revised Local Development Plan (RLDP) para 1.5 the Community Council will be setting the parameters to work in partnership with the principal authority.

2.5 Monmouthshire County Council, RLDP

Purpose of a Delivery Agreement 1.5

The RLDP will cover the 2018-2033 period. Preparation of a Delivery Agreement is a key requirement in preparing a replacement Plan. This document provides details of the various Plan-making stages, the time each part of the process is likely to take, and the resources that the Council will commit to Plan preparation. It also sets out the way in which the Council proposes to involve the local community and other stakeholders in the preparation of the RLDP. The RLDP will be examined by an independent Inspector to test whether the Plan is sound and has been prepared in accordance with its Delivery Agreement.

Under one of the key parts of the RLDP, the Community Involvement Scheme outlines the Authority's principles of community engagement; its approach in relation to who, how and when it intends to engage with the community and stakeholders, how it will respond to representations and how these representations will inform later stages of Plan preparation. This is included as Part 3 of this Revised Delivery Agreement.

3. Community Asset Transfer (CAT):

3.1 The transfer of the MUGA and adjoining field would support Monmouthshire County Council's agenda for devolution of services to local communities. Following the CAT the Community Council would encourage local groups and societies to become stockholders and facilitate access to grant funding of the community facilities.

3.2 This transfer will enable the Community Council to provide a community facility that residents from Raglan and the surrounding communities can use and enjoy. During the cycle of democracy, there may be changes to the elected members of the Community Council, but the Community Council, **as a corporate body**, will remain a constant in the community.

3.3 It is important to have extensive community consultation which will generate a strong sense of engagement in the community - in the early days of partnership the Community Council will continue to hold meetings, for example to gauge the community feeling about

community projects. The more the local people participate and engage, the greater the sense of well-being, which will promote buy-in from the local and wider communities.

4.0 Who we are?

4.1 Raglan Community Council are the closest arm of local Government to the electorate and can undertake the devolution of services from the principal authority. Raglan Community Councils elected members, who have been elected to represent the views of the residents, can provide positive support, and establish close, constructive relationships with the principal authority, ensuring everyone benefits from the local knowledge councillors have about other organisations in the community.

4.2 Raglan Community Council will set up a Community Meadow working group who will be run by council representatives and community volunteers. It is expected it can be managed by community volunteers with terms of reference set by the Community Council. All service and facility outcomes will be linked to the published updated Community plan.

4.3 The Community Council will work to develop a range of relationships with public and private sector agencies, particularly to communicate the local views and expectations. The Community Council will also seek the views and aspirations of the local community and be able to demonstrate that steps can be taken to consult the local community when appropriate, and in all cases be sure, as far as possible, that the views expressed are representative of the communities served.

4.4 The Community Council can/will contribute towards the regeneration of the community and can act as a catalyst for social, environmental, and economic well-being, including the development of a community enterprise.

4.5 This will provide opportunities to extend the use of the MUGA and the adjoining field, increasing its value in relation to the number of people benefiting from it and the range of opportunities it offers, ensuring more effective and more intensive use of local resources.

5. Why are we doing this?

5.1 Raglan Community Council was a partner in the development of the MUGA and has been supporting the use and operation of the facility. Raglan Community Council therefore have

a clear understanding of both the operational and financial requirements necessary to safeguard it in the longer term.

5.2 As part of the County Councils Rural Development Programme the Community Council developed a Community Led Plan based upon extensive local consultation. This identified the need for more amenity/ community land in the village.

5.3 Now the residential development on the Brooks Holding site on Chepstow Road has commenced the requirement for open space will increase. The proximity of the MUGA to the school and the village will create a strategic community resource at the centre of the village which will be accessible and available to all residents.

6.0 Discussions

6.1 Initial discussions with existing groups and residents have identified the following aspirations:

- *Eco/wildlife area*
- *Bat boxes along the brook*
- *Community orchard*
- *Community vegetable plot*
- *Community composting*

6.2 These ideas have been tested with local groups e.g. Raglan in Bloom, local allotment holders, to assess their viability and deliverability of the project.

6.3 Raglan Community has a vibrant annual Raglan Music Festival, where this annual festival could be extended to use this location to improve access and enable the development of an outdoor entertainments programme.

6.4 The facility would still be a resource available to the school and the Community Council would be keen to work in partnership with the Head Teacher to facilitate this. The Community Council is keen to promote equality of access and will be seeking to improve this through the provision of new footpaths to link in with the new car park.

7. How will we deliver this in a sustainable way?

7.1 Insuring equality of access to the MUGA and adjoining field prohibits the implementation of a general charging system which necessitates revenue generation through other funding streams. Raglan Community Council are intending to implement the following income channels and resources:

7.2 To bring this facility up to the current standard and become sustainable for the next decade, the Community Council would be looking to upgrade the current lighting columns with new LED or latest upgrades that will provide a minimum maintained average lighting level with floodlights and supply & install 8 x Athlima 250W LED floodlights mounted on the existing 4 x 8m columns of 200 lux on the pitch.

7.2.2 This will be accompanied with new GSM 'text' switching control that will also have a manual override switch system installed at the feeder pillar position. It is proposed that the GSM system will be connected to the current power supply located at the school consumer board, with an inline submeter, where any power used during any use of the MUGA will be reimbursed to the billing account of the Raglan CiW VC Primary School, Station Road, Raglan, Monmouthshire, NP15 2EP. Using an inline submeter will give accurate usage for billing accounts.

7.2.1 Raise funding through the annual precept. The aforementioned consultation exercise gave the Community Council the mandate to raise the precept on the basis that this would be allocated for improvements in local provision. We have already applied this mandate to raise funds to finance projects such as maintenance of the asset and grass cutting over and above that undertaken by MCC.

7.2.2 Charge for events and functions. A charge would be applied for specific entertainment events or the hire of specific areas, e.g. Raglan Music Festival, Raglan Fun Day, French Boules tournament, yoga workshops, band/choir events. This facility will provide a place for refectation and wellbeing.

7.2.3 It is unclear at this stage the level of funding that could be achieved through events etc.

therefore it is anticipated that the precept funding will be the primary source of revenue funding in the initial years following a community asset transfer

7.2.4 Funding for specific projects will be explored with partners either for specific grant funding, e.g. S106, Rural Development Plan (RDP), crowd source funding or joint funding campaigns. The County Councils proposed implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will also bring additional funds to the Community Council should development occur post CIL implementation. This would be used to fund improvements or capital costs.

7.3 Clearly communications will be a significant factor in improving the awareness of the facility within the community as well as encouraging volunteers or fund-raising activities. Social media will play a large part in this alongside newsletters, websites, and word of mouth. The management board would be responsible for developing and implementing the Communications strategy.

8. Anticipated expenditure

Revenue	
Operating Costs	Cost £/pa
General maintenance	3,600
Insurance	0*
Ground maintenance	4,500
Floodlights & associated infrastructure	3,300
Community orchard	550
Surface repairs & cleaning	1,380
Total	13,330.00
Capital	
Major repairs 3 - 5 years	5,500

Construction of footpaths & seating areas	3,000
Construction of raised beds	2,800
Equipment procurement	3,400
Community Orchard expansion	2,000
Creation of wildflower area	280
Recreation benches	4,500
Sustainable environmental projects	2,600
Total	24,080

NB: All capital costs to be incurred over a 3 - 5-year timescale.

* Insurance included within existing policy with no additional premium

9. Monitoring and evaluation

9.1 The Community Council understands the importance of collecting performance data to evaluate and improve the facility.

9.2 Given that the MUGA and adjacent field will be funded using public funds it is essential that the process of monitoring and review is undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner. Arrangements will be put in place that undertakes the following:

- Collection of user feedback to enable quarterly performance review.
- Terms of reference for the Management Group to include performance expectations.
- Communications strategy
- Financial review

10. Conclusion

10.1 The CAT of the MUGA and adjoining field to the Community Council will enable the maintenance and improvement of a local resource. The Community Council understands its obligations for the stewardship of local assets and has a financial strategy to manage these implications.

- 10.2 The Community Council has been given a local mandate to undertake these discussions through the Community Led Plan which was adopted in 2014 and is appended hereto. To convene a further meeting to collect residents' views and expectations.

This page is intentionally left blank



Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Nicholas Keyse Phone no: 01633 644773 E-mail: nicholaskeyse@monmouthshire.gov.uk	Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal To dispose of the freehold interest in Raglan MUGA and the adjacent amenity field in accordance with the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.
Name of Service area Landlord Services	Date 07/09/2026

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

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Age	The transfer will promote healthier and local living, with the better utilization of a multi-use space and associated field that can supported principles of the local community. The proposals will improve access to a positive environment for physical and mental health of all users. The facility will accessible any local residents of all ages.	None identified.	
Disability	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Gender reassignment	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage
Marriage or civil partnership	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage
Pregnancy or maternity	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage
Race	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage
Religion or Belief	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage
Sex	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage
Sexual Orientation	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice	The proposed transfer will enable RCC to enhance local provision of community facilities. The Community Council wish to develop and sustain the MUGA recreational facility as a community resource that will be available to current and future generations of Raglan community.	<i>None identified at this stage</i>	

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:	Describe the positive impacts of this proposal	Describe the negative impacts of this proposal	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts
Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language no less favourably	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage.	MCC will recommend that Raglan Community Council continue the measures currently taken by MonLife (e.g translation and Welsh Language Standards) In order to ensure Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English.
Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage.	
Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage.	

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

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs	The proposals will enhance the access to community facilities in the area. Local housing developments and an expanding population increases the potential for this asset to contribute to the nurturing of cohesive and inclusive communities, that are central to people's sense of wellbeing.	The proposals are to improve and enhance the existing facilities through continued engagement with the local community.
A resilient Wales Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	The proposals include an intent to enhance the biodiversity offering of the asset, including the installation of an eco/wildlife area, bat boxes, wildflower area, etc.	None identified
A healthier Wales People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	The multi-use design of the space will enable increased outdoor activity, all year round sport/recreation and physical activity.	None identified
A Wales of cohesive communities Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	Given that the MUGA and adjacent field will be funded using public funds it is essential that the process of monitoring and review is undertaken in a consistent and transparent manner. Arrangements will be put in place that collects user feedback to enable quarterly performance reviews, establish a management group to monitor performance expectations and a communication strategy to promote the asset.	By definition, the proposed occupiers are community focused and able to offer an accessible space for a range of uses.
A globally responsible Wales Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing	The development will address the importance of the wellbeing of current and future residents (prescribed in the 2015 Wellbeing and Future Generations Act) through the improved availability of outdoor and recreation space.	None identified
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	Activities assessing the spaces, including any appropriate signage or advertisement of the opportunity, will give due consideration to the welsh	None identified

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation	language and promotion of local recreation. The promotion of the development, and intended use by the community group, align with the Future Generations Act 2015 and Wellbeing promotion.	
A more equal Wales People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances	The asset will enable community use without prejudice, and support access to facilities for the benefit of all residents.. The Council is keen to promote equality of access and will improve this through new footpaths and no general charging system, ensuring the facility is accessible to all.	None identified

Page 50

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future	Raglan Community Council, through CAT, will be able to demonstrate future security for the wider community to reassure funders that any improvement that's undertaken would be for the benefit, wellbeing, and successfulness, of any permanent improvement to facilities and services for the local community. The Community Council wish to develop and sustain the MUGA recreational facility as a community resource that will be available to current and future generations of Raglan community. This will include recognition of the biodiversity value of the asset and contribution to local community events.	None identified

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 Working together with other partners to deliver objectives	This proposal has been developed as a result of several consultations with the local community to facilitate the development of a Community Led Plan. This plan has established the key priorities for the local community in terms of the development of the village and the proposed transfer of these facilities to the Community Council will be fully in accordance with this strategic framework. This may include the creation of opportunities for community volunteers to manage and develop the facility, and with continued collaboration with Raglan Primary School.	None identified
 Involving those with an interest and seeking their views	Extensive community consultation has been undertaken including in planning and management, with consideration given for working groups and volunteer opportunities. The asset is intended to support local community events like Raglan Music Festival, Fun Day, and community orchard/eco projects foster social interaction and inclusion.	None identified
 Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse	To bring this facility up to the current standard and become sustainable for the next decade, the Community Council would be looking to upgrade the current lighting columns with new LED upgrades that will provide a minimum maintained average lighting level with floodlights and supply & install 8 x Athlima 250W LED floodlights mounted on the existing 4 x 8m columns of 200 lux on the pitch. The facility will provide a place for reflection, well-being, and physical activity (sports, yoga, outdoor events)	None identified

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies	Providiing suitable, fit for purpose, multi use space will enhance the quality of recreational space in the area. It is a needs-led, community driven approach which supports active citizenship and an asset-based development approach, advocated by statutory and Third Sector partners across the County..	None identified

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

	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has	What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Safeguarding	. None identified at this stage	.None identified at this stage.	.
Corporate Parenting	None identified at this stage	None identified at this stage.	

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

The proposal is informed by an established Business Case and proposal in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Strategy and Community Asset Transfer policy. Extensive community engagement has occurred to develop these proposals, following a number of years of consideration for enhancement of community facilities in this area including a new community hub. Details of the business case can be found within the Appendices of this report.

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?

Positive

- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal to better enable the site for community use which will enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.

Negative

- None identified

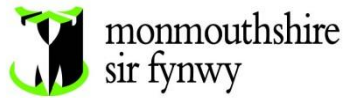
--

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
Cabinet decision to transfer asset via CAT to Raglan Community Council	October 2026	Landlord Services

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

Version No.	Decision making stage	Date considered	Brief description of any amendments made following consideration
1	Cabinet	14/10/2026	



SUBJECT: SCRUTINY SELF-EVALUATION 2026 AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORTS

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 14TH October 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1** To present the 2025–2026 Scrutiny Self-Evaluation for Monmouthshire County Council, along with the four Scrutiny Committee Reports.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1** That Cabinet receives the Scrutiny Self-Evaluation 2025–2026 and the four Scrutiny Committee Reports and provides any feedback for future consideration by the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1** The Scrutiny Self-Evaluation for 2025–2026 concludes that Scrutiny at Monmouthshire County Council is operating effectively, independently and apolitically, and continues to add clear value to governance, decision-making and service improvement and helps ensure that services and policies are shaped in a way that delivers better outcomes for Monmouthshire residents.
- 3.2** It highlights strong committee culture, effective chairing and constructive relationships with Cabinet Members, officers and external partners. It also demonstrates that meaningful public engagement takes place in the development of policy and services and that decision-makers are being held to account effectively on issues of importance to residents.
- 3.3** The Scrutiny Self-evaluation has provided an opportunity to review the Council's scrutiny arrangements ahead of the May 2027 elections. The Scrutiny Self-Evaluation is based on the recognised "Characteristics of Good Scrutiny", developed by the National Scrutiny Officers Network as a performance framework for evaluating the effectiveness of scrutiny and reflected in the WLGA Framework for Self-Evaluation. The framework considers three components: the scrutiny environment, scrutiny practice and scrutiny's impact.
- 3.4** The Scrutiny Chairs Group undertook the annual review using the WLGA framework. Scrutiny Chairs completed the Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Survey, considered the evidence collectively, drew conclusions on current performance and identified areas

where continued improvement would strengthen scrutiny's effectiveness, transparency and impact.

- 3.5** Self-evaluation is a beneficial process which supports reflection, shared learning and continuous improvement and enables the scrutiny function to identify its strengths and priorities for development. However, a rounded assessment of the performance of the scrutiny function also requires external challenge and peer assessment, so that internal conclusions can be tested against independent evidence and recognised good practice.
- 3.6** This wider external oversight includes the Panel Performance Assessment, reported to Council in June 2026, which highlighted areas for consideration, and an Audit Wales review of the scrutiny function scheduled for Autumn 2026. The improvement actions arising from this Self-Evaluation will therefore need to take account of the findings and recommendations from these external reviews, ensuring that the future improvement programme is coherent, evidence-based and informed by both internal reflection and independent assessment.
- 3.7** The Scrutiny Self-Evaluation is being tabled to Cabinet to provide assurance that the scrutiny function is performing effectively in its role, is outcome-focused and has a clear understanding of the areas for continued improvement. The review identifies targeted opportunities to strengthen impact further, particularly by improving Cabinet engagement with Scrutiny feedback and enhancing forward planning and transparency. It highlights the need to reduce duplication of effort in providing external accountability, enabling the relevant scrutiny committee to take the lead. Other key improvement areas identified are the need to better evidence Scrutiny's influence and impact and to continue to invest in Member and Chair development.
- 3.8** The Scrutiny Committee Reports are being brought to Cabinet for information. They highlight the outcomes of the scrutiny undertaken and the breadth of subject matters that have been scrutinised, demonstrating the added value of the scrutiny function and its overall role in ensuring good governance and accountability. Scrutiny Committees also provide regular written feedback to Cabinet through a standing item on Cabinet agendas on matters they have scrutinised. This ensures that the Committees' key conclusions, observations and recommendations are formally brought to Cabinet's attention, supports transparent consideration of Scrutiny's contribution and enables its views to inform onward decision-making.
- 3.9** The next stage will be the Audit Wales review of the scrutiny function in the Autumn. Its findings, together with those of the Panel Performance Assessment and the Scrutiny Self-Evaluation, will inform a programme of improvement for immediate implementation, supporting a robust and effective scrutiny function in preparation for the new Council term in May 2027.

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

- 4.1 Through the examination of policies, strategies and service performance, scrutiny provides independent challenge and assurance that decisions have considered the needs of people with protected characteristics, helped identify any unintended adverse impacts, and promoted fair and equitable access to services. Scrutiny also supports the sustainable development principle by challenging report authors, and therefore decision-makers, to take a longer-term view and involve communities in shaping services in line with the council's commitment to work with and alongside communities. As a result, scrutiny strengthens transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making.

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 5.1 Not applicable.

6. REASONS:

- 6.1 To provide Cabinet with assurance that the scrutiny function is performing effectively in its role, to demonstrate the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees and the added value of the scrutiny undertaken, and to invite feedback for future consideration by the Scrutiny Chairs Group.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTEES:

Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships
Departmental Management Team
Cabinet Member for Equalities & Engagement
Cabinet
Senior Leadership Team

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- 9.1 [Monmouthshire Scrutiny Self Evaluation 2025-2026 Full Report.pdf](#)
9.2 [Report of Monmouthshire's People Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)
9.3 [Report of Monmouthshire's P&O Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)
9.4 [Report of Monmouthshire's Place Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)
9.5 [Report of Monmouthshire's Public Services Scrutiny Committee 2025 - 2026.docx](#)

10. AUTHOR:

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644233

E-mail: hazelilett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Scrutiny Self-Evaluation 2025-2026

Executive Summary

This Scrutiny Self-Evaluation for 2025–2026 concludes that Scrutiny at Monmouthshire County Council is operating effectively, independently and apolitically, and continues to add clear value to governance, decision-making and service improvement.

The report highlights strong committee culture, effective chairing, constructive relationships with Cabinet Members, officers and external partners, and meaningful public engagement, alongside evidence of Scrutiny influencing policy development, monitoring performance and risk, and holding decision-makers to account on issues of importance to residents.

It also identifies targeted opportunities to strengthen impact further, particularly by improving Cabinet engagement with Scrutiny feedback, enhancing forward planning and transparency, reducing duplication of effort, evidencing Scrutiny's influence more clearly, and continuing to invest in Member and Chair development, ensuring Scrutiny remains outcome-focused and effective for the communities of Monmouthshire.

The Role of Scrutiny

The Scrutiny function is a fundamental component of Monmouthshire County Council's governance arrangements, providing independent, non-Executive oversight of decision-making, policy development, performance and service delivery. Established as part of the Executive–Scrutiny split introduced by the Local Government Act 2000, Scrutiny's purpose is to improve transparency, accountability and openness by ensuring that decisions taken by the Cabinet and the Council are robust, well-evidenced and focused on delivering the best outcomes for communities in Monmouthshire.

A key role of Scrutiny is to act as a "critical friend" to the Cabinet and other decision-makers. Scrutiny is not about political opposition, adversarial challenge or pursuing personal agendas. Instead, it provides constructive, apolitical challenge, testing how and why decisions are made, scrutinising their likely impact and recommending improvements where necessary, while maintaining a respectful and professional relationship with Cabinet Members, officers and external organisations.

Scrutiny adds value by assessing policies and services to ensure they are fit for purpose. Through pre-decision Scrutiny, Committees can influence proposals at an

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

early stage, helping to identify risks, unintended consequences or alternative approaches before decisions are finalised. Scrutiny can also review decisions that have been made prior to them being implemented should they have concerns about them. As part of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements, there is a Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee dedicated to monitoring performance, risk and budget management. The ongoing oversight by this Scrutiny Committee drives continuous improvement in service delivery and strengthens public confidence in the Council's governance.

The Scrutiny function also enhances service improvement through evidence-based inquiry and meaningful engagement. Scrutiny Committees gather evidence from a wide range of sources, including officers, Cabinet Members, external partners, service users and the wider public, using methods such as public meetings, workshops, research and consultation. This inclusive approach ensures that Scrutiny recommendations are grounded in real experience and robust analysis, and that the public voice is actively heard in shaping council services and policies.

Through making clear, evidence-based recommendations, Scrutiny Committees drive improvement and ensure accountability for their implementation. Conclusions and recommendations are formally reported to Cabinet and decision-makers and are also embedded within officer reports. Cabinet Members are required under the Council's Constitution to consider Scrutiny's recommendations, and if requested, to respond with rationale and actions and to attend Scrutiny meetings to account for their progress. Scrutiny arrangements are underpinned by legislation, because it is essential in terms of effective governance, that Scrutiny Committees are not simply forums for debate, but are able to be powerful mechanisms for learning, accountability and sustained improvement in service delivery for the people of Monmouthshire.

The Self-evaluation Process

The Scrutiny function undertakes detailed self-evaluation towards the close of each administrative term to review/reflect on their own effectiveness and, in doing so, to identify areas for future improvement. In addition, a shorter self-evaluation is conducted annually by the Scrutiny Chairs Group. The self-evaluation process was introduced as a national benchmark exercise by Audit Wales in 2013 in preparation for the national study "Good Scrutiny? Good Question" report, published in 2014. The process applied the "Characteristics of Good Scrutiny" as performance measures for determining the effectiveness of Scrutiny, the measures having been compiled by the National Scrutiny Officers Network in 2012 for both the purpose of self-evaluation and the need for a recognised performance evaluation framework for Scrutiny. The WLGA Framework for Self-Evaluation is based upon this framework but has been revised to

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

consider the latest developments in the Scrutiny arena, such as the development of joint scrutiny arrangements for Corporate Joint Committees.

Previous comprehensive self-evaluations have been informed by three evidence sources: a self-evaluation conducted internally by scrutineers, a peer-observation exercise conducted by experienced Scrutiny practitioners from other local authorities, and a survey of Scrutiny Members, Executive Members and officers. This led to a restructure of Scrutiny arrangements which was fully implemented for the new administration in May 2022. It is important to continue self-evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the new arrangements and scrutiny practice to identify where further improvements could be made. Self-evaluation also ensures there are continued efforts to consider how the function can best achieve added value for the Council and the public. It provides evidence to assist future scrutineers to develop and implement the priorities for improvement.

The Scrutiny Chairs Group has conducted annual reviews since May 2022 and produced reports of its findings. The review applied the “Characteristics of Good Scrutiny” (the national performance measurement framework for evaluating the effectiveness of Scrutiny) using the WLGA Framework for Self-Evaluation. The model seeks to provide a situational analysis and to identify actions to address shortcomings, through focussing on the following components:

- **The Scrutiny environment** ~ i.e. the culture within which Scrutiny operates in a council and how conducive that is to effective Scrutiny, the recognition of Scrutiny as a key improvement mechanism and a vehicle for citizen engagement, the level of support Scrutiny Members are given to perform their role (by dedicated officers and wider officers in terms of research and information) and whether Scrutiny Members have access to development programmes that support them in performing their role.
- **Scrutiny practice** ~ i.e. whether Scrutiny operates apolitically, is member-led and well chaired, whether it utilises a wide range of evidence to inform its work, whether it builds good relationships with stakeholders, partners and regulators, the extent to which it balances the prioritisation of community concerns against issues of strategic risk and importance, and whether it actively encourages the public to participate in democratic accountability.
- **Scrutiny’s impact** ~ i.e. whether Scrutiny’s challenge of decision makers and service providers is evidence based, whether Scrutiny offers viable and well evidenced solutions to recognised problems, whether decision makers are held to public account for their responsibilities, and the extent to which Scrutiny enables the ‘voice’ of local people to be heard as part of the decision-making process.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Chairs were asked to complete the 'Scrutiny Self-Evaluation Survey' (Appendix 1) to draw their conclusions and to identify key areas for continued improvement.

Key Findings

Culture

Cabinet Member attendance at Scrutiny meetings should always be at the Scrutiny Committee's discretion to ensure they are not exerting influence on Members of a Scrutiny Committee by their presence. There have been instances where Cabinet Members have wished to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings when they may not have been invited, so the Scrutiny Manager has attended a Cabinet Meeting to explain the parameters of the Scrutiny and Executive roles. The varied roles of the four Scrutiny Committees were discussed, emphasising the difference in requiring a Cabinet Member to be present for accountability purposes on matters of service performance versus allowing a Scrutiny Committee to conduct policy review or pre-decision Scrutiny without Cabinet Member presence, in line with the Council's constitution and best Scrutiny practice.

Attendance by Cabinet Members at Performance and Overview Scrutiny Meetings has been consistently strong and their engagement is valued and helps ensure understanding of key issues and performance matters. While questions can be challenging, they reflect the seriousness of the reports and services being scrutinised, and officers are consistently available to provide clarification.

In the first year of the new Cabinet and Scrutiny arrangements (2022), Scrutiny Chairs were attending Cabinet Meetings in person to provide feedback on key points from Scrutiny meetings. With full Cabinet agendas, a compromise has been implemented whereby written feedback is provided on every Cabinet agenda from the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and the other Scrutiny Committees where appropriate.

Chairs highlighted during their review that the feedback from Scrutiny Committees is routinely noted but not discussed at Cabinet meetings, and that this could be viewed by the public as a lack of engagement from the Cabinet, especially if the views of the Scrutiny Committee are at odds with the Cabinet's view. There is an opportunity therefore to consider how engagement with the issues raised through Scrutiny could be more meaningful. It was felt to be critical that the Cabinet and officers recognise the contribution of Scrutiny in enhancing decision-making and driving improvements in service delivery. As the Scrutiny feedback is apolitical and focusses on

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

'improvement', addressing the points made by Scrutiny in a concise manner would support collective awareness of emerging issues and strengthen oversight of the topics scrutinised, whilst also improving transparency for residents who may view Cabinet meetings, but not necessarily Scrutiny Committee meetings.

To improve this, Cabinet Members will be requested to provide a concise response to a small number of specific points, which will be included in the next Scrutiny Committee meeting agenda. This should assist Scrutiny to develop smarter recommendations and should make the process more effective.

Politics

Chairs felt that Scrutiny meetings are conducted in an apolitical way, and that it is very important to reinforce this in Scrutiny pre-meetings. It was highlighted that a small number of Scrutiny Members ask no questions of the Cabinet Member, leaving the work for the remaining Committee Members. The Council's Constitution under section 8, paragraph 8.1.2 states that "Scrutiny Committees should not shy away from the need to challenge and question decisions and make constructive criticism". Chairs are remedying this by making greater efforts to encourage fuller engagement by those who are not participating, but overall, it was felt that most Members engage well, asking constructive and useful questions and that meetings are respectful and acknowledge good performance and helpful contributions from Cabinet Members and officers.

Over the past year, improvements have been evidenced in how Committees are working together as a group, rather than along political lines, and there are greater efforts amongst Scrutiny Members to contribute constructively. It was felt that political tensions tend to dissipate as Members interact more and understand each other's perspectives and that this has led to more constructive and friendly relationships.

The issue of duplication of workload was highlighted as a matter that has featured throughout the past year, whereby Cabinet Members may have inadvertently asked officers to arrange Member Seminars on topics that feature in the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme. Often the seminars were requested several days in advance of a Scrutiny Committee that was due to scrutinise the same issue. This resulted in duplication of effort and significant confusion in cases where the guests invited were external. It could be the case that the need for a special Scrutiny Committee meeting may not have been fully understood, but despite efforts by Chairs to be proactive, such occasions led to scheduling conflicts and inefficiencies, which proved frustrating and reflected poorly on the Council as a whole.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

It is incredibly important that the prerogative of a Scrutiny Committee to schedule external witnesses to attend its meetings to discuss issues at the sole discretion of the Scrutiny Committee is respected. Whilst such occasions may have arisen accidentally, it could be perceived as a lack of parity and respect towards the Scrutiny process and an ultimate undermining of Scrutiny's role. The Scrutiny Team has therefore requested that Democratic Services approach them prior to booking Member Seminars to ascertain whether the topics are scheduled for Scrutiny. This should avoid duplication of effort and less impactful Scrutiny.

Councillor-led

Feedback from Committee Members, Cabinet Members and officers suggests that the role of Scrutiny is valued and well understood, and Chairs feel this is due to effective running of their Scrutiny Committees.

Scrutiny Committees set their work programmes, although officers often request items be scrutinised. There have been some issues with the timing of reports and there is a need to balance officer-led reports with Member-initiated topics of public interest. Sometimes it has appeared that officer reports have been last-minute additions, rather than part of a planned approach. Further improvements could be made to ensure reports are properly planned in the Council and Cabinet Forward Planner and that matters of public interest are included in good time, because if significant decisions are not included early in the forward plan, it becomes challenging for Scrutiny to identify and undertake effective pre-decision Scrutiny.

Recent improvements to the structure of the Cabinet and Council Forward Planner which were intended to address issues like the duplication of Member Seminars on subjects being scheduled for Scrutiny should also improve Scrutiny's ability to plan effectively.

Public Engagement

Public involvement in the work of Scrutiny Committees has been greatly enhanced through the expansion of ways in which the public can participate. The potential for public involvement in each Scrutiny meeting is set on the agenda and the Council's website, and Chairs cover ways they can become involved in each meeting. There has been significant interest in public participation in the two policy Committees where key topics of public interest are debated. The public have sent videos, written submissions and have attended meetings, which has added value to the Scrutiny activity and the public have fed back that they have been made to feel welcomed and were respected.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

There is lesser direct public input in the meetings of Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Public Services Scrutiny Committee, largely due to the nature of their accountability roles; however, there have been quite a number attending in the public gallery. Chairs felt that it would assist public engagement if the Cabinet were to discuss the key points arising from Scrutiny meetings at Cabinet meetings.

Effective Scrutiny Meetings

It was felt that good preparation is carried out by most Members, and this is reflected in questions raised. Pre-meetings are held before every Scrutiny meeting and are well attended. These are very useful in preparing questions and additional lines of inquiry arise through those discussions.

The Scrutiny Committees are held in an apolitical way and are engaging. Feedback from Scrutiny meetings is drafted by independent Scrutiny support staff and reports are forwarded to the Cabinet. In addition, report authors taking forward decision reports are provided with the findings of the Scrutiny Committee to include in their report under the 'Consultees' section, to ensure that the conclusions of the Scrutiny Committee are considered in a transparent manner, in line with good governance practice.

Chairs have received training and they play a key role in championing the Scrutiny function and ensuring that the role of Scrutiny is valued. This is not always an easy task, however, the Scrutiny Chairs feel adequately supported to do so and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities to ensure robust Scrutiny which only strengthens the Council's service delivery and decision-making.

Chairs acknowledged the challenges of developing relationships and a positive Committee culture within a hybrid working arrangement, highlighting the need to contact individuals directly and set up video calls to maintain engagement and support Members who primarily participate remotely. It was felt that remote Members often appreciate direct contact, as it helps them feel more connected and involved and that it was important to accept and adapt to hybrid working.

Scrutiny's Contribution

Scrutiny Chairs could evidence many examples of constructive contributions by their Scrutiny Committees that should enable better decision-making but felt that the administration could make better use of those contributions in their decision making, evidenced by the same issues arising annually that have previously been commented upon by Scrutiny Committees during routine performance monitoring reports.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

Similarly, there are many examples of Scrutiny contributing to the development of policies, Cabinet Members and officers acknowledging that the contributions from Scrutiny have been particularly useful, so improvements could be made by clearer evidencing in reports how the Scrutiny activity has informed the policy development.

Chairs felt confident that their Committees are regularly and effectively monitoring performance and risks and their mitigations, focussing on key areas where improvement is needed, with many examples cited. Scrutiny isn't actively involved in the Council's self-assessment process but does scrutinise the draft self-assessment and holds the Cabinet to account for the performance of the Council when scrutinising the self-assessment.

Co-option

The Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee has statutory co-opted Membership for education matters. Other Scrutiny Committees have chosen to call in individual witnesses for topics to maximise their opportunity engage a wider range of individuals to support their work. Thought is given to each topic whereby Members request organisations to invite to Scrutiny; Dwr Cymru, National Resources Wales, Mind, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Police being just a few examples. This has been the preferred option for bringing information, evidence and the required expertise to each topic being scrutinised.

Focus on Outcomes and Adding Value

Scrutiny Committees set their own agendas. It was concluded that the topics selected for scrutiny are relevant and add value to the organisation. There is a clear balance between policy review and proposed improvement and oversight and accountability that has been built into the revised Scrutiny arrangements that were implemented in May 2022. Where it is beneficial, Scrutiny Committees meet jointly or invite other Scrutiny Committees and, in some cases, all Members to its meetings.

There are many examples of feedback that has been provided to Cabinet on key decisions, such as the Gypsy and Travellers Needs Assessment, Active Travel and the Replacement Local Development Plan. Such scrutinies examined the decisions but also played a key role in reflecting the public voice on the topics, with a significant number of public in attendance and expressing views via written submissions.

Whilst it would be difficult to quantify how all the views expressed at the Scrutiny Committee meetings and those submitted through the Council's consultation process individually affected the decisions made, the Scrutiny process enabled public participation in its meetings, which ensured democratic involvement in the major

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

decisions taken by the Council. At each Scrutiny Committee meeting, conclusions are drawn based on the evidence heard by the Committee and the views expressed by the public and this is reflected in the minutes and the feedback report that is prepared for onward decision-making, which ensures the Scrutiny activity is meaningful and adds value.

The work of the Public Services Committee has focussed on ensuring accountability for services delivered in the public sector to residents and their Scrutiny of Dentistry Services, Substance Misuse, Dementia Services, Adult Suicide and Race-related Crime has ensured that the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Chief Constable and the health board have been held to account for their performance in service delivery to Monmouthshire residents.

Where major decisions are taken by external partners which will affect residents, such as closure of hospital services, or restrictions for heavy goods vehicles on the Severn Bridge, being the gateway to Monmouthshire and South Wales, this Scrutiny Committee has called emergency meetings to ensure that a public debate is held on matters affecting its residents.

The Scrutiny Committees have consciously limited the number of topics on their agendas to allow effective and thorough Scrutiny, giving priority to the most important areas. Whilst an improvement in the Council's forward planning has been recognised within this report, there is acknowledgement that together with better understanding by officers and the Cabinet of the need for a planned Council Forward Work Programme, the new 'app' is already assisting in earlier identification of forthcoming decisions. This allows Scrutiny Committees to plan their forward work programmes more effectively. All the Scrutiny Committees are flexible and call additional meetings where necessary to ensure timely Scrutiny to maximise effective outcomes and deliver added value.

Training for Scrutiny Members

Scrutiny Members have received comprehensive training to conduct their roles effectively; however, they have identified that further training upon critical analysis for large volumes of data would be helpful and mid-term short training reminders have been requested. Some further training for Scrutiny Chairs should include advice for Chairs on scrutinising an administration that they may be part of, summarising techniques and seeking consensus on the way forward.

Chairs commented that there may be a perception that Scrutiny is 'opposition', whereas in reality, a large proportion of total Members sit on Scrutiny Committees. They acknowledged that the best Scrutiny Committee meetings are those where it isn't

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

clear which party the Chair and Committee Members belong to. Chairs felt that significant progress had been made in this respect and that the Scrutiny Committees have a positive culture with high attendance levels, these improvements being evidenced in the Chairs' summing up.

Whilst training for Scrutiny Members and Chairs is important, it was felt that it may also be beneficial to include Cabinet Members in refresher Scrutiny training sessions. Extending the invitation to all Members and recording the sessions would allow Members to watch them back if they cannot attend. This approach would also ensure that everyone is on the same page regarding Scrutiny's role and would also clarify mutual expectations of Scrutiny and Cabinet, underpinned by the Scrutiny and Executive Protocol. [MCC - Scrutiny - Scrutiny and Executive Protocol.pdf - All Documents](#)

'Scrutiny of Scrutiny '

The Scrutiny function undertakes annual self-evaluation and will be a subject of the Council's first Panel Performance Assessment. The Scrutiny function has been reviewed on numerous occasions by Audit Wales, the most recent review being during 2018 [Overview and Scrutiny: Fit for the Future? – Monmouthshire County Council](#). Scrutiny Chairs also reflect on the efficiency of each of their meetings to identify how they could further improve. This is evidenced by the increased confidence of the Scrutiny Chairs in dealing with contentious issues and wide-ranging views of Members, whilst simultaneously managing a significant public element to the meeting and conducting robust Scrutiny in a live-streamed environment.

The Chairs benefit from a dedicated Scrutiny resource, with independent and impartial Scrutiny officers who support them to perform their roles effectively. Chairs are coached and receive guidance on policy and governance to manage their Committees' workload effectively and to steer their Members towards delivering outcome-focussed Scrutiny that adds meaningful value. The Chairs felt that their meetings are effective and that time is dedicated to Scrutiny of the right issues at the right time, thus ensuring Scrutiny adds value to the authority.

Improvement Actions

The Scrutiny Self-evaluation undertaken by the Scrutiny Chairs Group has concluded that the Scrutiny function is operating effectively and adds demonstrable value to the Council's governance and decision-making arrangements. However, the process has identified several areas where further improvement would strengthen Scrutiny's impact, transparency and effectiveness. The following improvement actions are proposed as the way forward:

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Scrutiny will work with the Cabinet and officers to strengthen the visibility of reporting Scrutiny's feedback. In line with paragraphs 32.2.4 (a) and (d) and 32.7.3, Scrutiny is required to report its findings and conclusions to Cabinet or Council. In terms of responding to Scrutiny, Scrutiny can also "require any Member of the Cabinet, the Chief Executive and/or any senior Officer to attend before it to explain in relation to matters within their remit" (paragraph 32.12.1). To strengthen accountability and ensure collective oversight of key issues, Cabinet Members will be requested to provide concise responses to key points raised by Scrutiny, which will be tabled to the subsequent scrutiny agenda. Cabinet Members may also be requested to attend and provide explanation, at the discretion of the Scrutiny Committee.
- Further consideration will also be given as to how Scrutiny feedback is considered at Cabinet meetings, with greater reference to the points made by Scrutiny to demonstrate its value of Scrutiny and improve public understanding of its influence.
- The principle that Cabinet Member attendance at Scrutiny meetings is at the discretion of Scrutiny Committees will continue to be exercised. This is essential to protect the independence of Scrutiny and to ensure that pre-decision and policy review work can be undertaken in line with the Council's Constitution and recognised best practice.
- Actions will be taken to reduce duplication of effort between Scrutiny Committees and other meetings arranged, such as Member Seminars. Democratic Services will liaise with the Scrutiny Team before seminars are arranged, to confirm whether topics are already scheduled within the Scrutiny Forward Work Programme. This will improve efficiency, avoid confusion for external witnesses and ensure Scrutiny activity remains impactful.
- Improvements will continue to be made to forward planning arrangements. This includes ensuring that reports and key decisions are identified and included in the Council and Cabinet Forward Planner at an earlier stage, enabling effective pre-decision Scrutiny and better balance between officer requests for Scrutiny and Member-initiated topics of public interest.
- Scrutiny will seek to further strengthen public engagement, building on the positive progress already made. This includes enhancing public visibility of Scrutiny's influence and improving the understanding of how the public's views are considered within the Scrutiny process.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Further work will be undertaken with officers to strengthen how the impact of Scrutiny is evidenced in reports. This includes more clearly demonstrating how Scrutiny activity has informed policy development, service improvement and decision-making, particularly where similar issues re-emerge over time.
- Training and development for Scrutiny Members will continue to be prioritised to reinforce key skills and good Scrutiny practice.
- The Scrutiny function will continue its annual self-evaluation to support its continuous improvement, reinforcing effective practice and ensuring that Scrutiny remains outcome-focused and adds meaningful value to the authority.

Further information on Monmouthshire's Scrutiny function can be accessed via the website www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/scrutiny or via the Scrutiny Team, by contacting scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Report of the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee: The Effectiveness and Added Value of the Scrutiny undertaken during January 2025 to April 2026

Introduction

This report provides a summary of the work undertaken by the Council's Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee during the 2025 municipal year and up to April 2026. It highlights the Committee's important role in scrutinising the performance of services delivered to residents, holding the Executive and Cabinet Members to account, examining strategic risks and mitigating actions, and providing constructive challenge in relation to revenue, capital and medium-term budget management.

The report is informed by the formal minutes of the Committee's ordinary and special meetings during the reporting period. It summarises the principal matters considered, the challenge provided by members, the assurances received from Cabinet Members and officers, the follow-up actions identified, and the ways in which scrutiny contributed to transparency, accountability and improved decision-making.

Overview of Scrutiny Activity

During the reporting period, the Committee considered a broad and significant range of matters central to the Council's overall performance. These included revenue and capital monitoring, draft budget proposals, medium-term financial planning, strategic risk management, self-assessment, service annual reports, safeguarding, health and safety, complaints, school exclusions, attendance, examination outcomes, children's placements, investment and commercial interests, economy and skills, highways, and specific service reviews.

Throughout this work, members maintained a clear focus on service effectiveness, the adequacy of risk management arrangements, and the robustness, transparency and outcome focus of financial and performance information, while also recognising the commitment of officers and services working in a challenging context.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Scrutiny by Meeting and Topic

11th February 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2025/26

The Committee undertook detailed pre-decision scrutiny of the 2025/26 draft revenue and capital budget proposals. Members tested the realism of savings plans, the impact of council tax increases on residents, the sustainability of school budgets, pressures in social care and housing, and the balance between service protection and financial resilience. In doing so, the Committee provided robust and constructive public challenge, helping to draw out the practical implications of budget choices for residents and services.

Financial Update 3

At the same meeting, the Committee scrutinised the in-year financial position, including overspends in core services, school deficits, debt recovery, housing and homelessness pressures, and the reliance on balancing finance and treasury measures. Members recognised the work being undertaken in difficult circumstances, but also tested whether the position was sustainable. This reinforced financial oversight by ensuring that reported improvements were considered alongside underlying structural pressures.

29 April 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Key Stage 4 Results

The Committee scrutinised secondary school outcomes, examining what the results meant for learners' life chances, how performance was benchmarked, the position of lower-attaining pupils, the implications of the new curriculum, and how schools and governors used data to support improvement. This moved scrutiny beyond headline results and towards whether performance information was being used effectively to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Development of Children's Placements

Members examined the Council's strategy for developing children's placements, questioning placement costs, market instability, delivery of new provision, reliance on external providers, and the impact on young people. The Committee's challenge helped maintain a clear focus on both improved outcomes and better value in a

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

high-cost, volatile service area, while reinforcing the Council's responsibilities as a corporate parent.

3 June 2025 – Special Meeting

Additional Learning Provision and Specialist Resource Bases

The Committee reviewed progress in additional learning provision, including specialist resource bases, out-of-county placements, transport, capacity, and compliance with statutory expectations. Through detailed questioning, members secured further evidence and follow-up information. This provided constructive challenge on how effectively the Council was supporting vulnerable learners close to their communities while managing demand and cost pressures.

Supporting Vulnerable Learners and Risk Register Update

At the same special meeting, the Committee scrutinised support for vulnerable learners and reviewed the strategic risk register. Members challenged the clarity of risk categorisation, the sufficiency of mitigation detail, the relationship between risk and budget, and whether major risks such as attendance, climate and school deficits were properly understood. This sharpened understanding of both service performance and the Council's wider risk environment.

10 June 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Welsh Language Annual Report, Public Protection Performance and Registration Services

This meeting demonstrated the Committee's core role in reviewing service performance on behalf of residents. Members examined the Welsh Language Annual Report, Public Protection Performance and Registration Services, testing compliance, cost pressures, service standards, staffing resilience, enforcement activity, digital consistency and wider operational pressures. The discussion provided greater clarity on current performance, the factors contributing to service pressure, and the improvement actions or mitigations in place, while also recognising the importance of these services to local communities.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

9 July 2025 – Special Meeting

Review of Domiciliary Care Commissioning in the South of the County

The Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of the process and decision-making associated with the commissioning of domiciliary care contracts in the south of the county. Members examined transparency, procurement design, quality weighting, engagement with service users, continuity of care, workforce stability and democratic oversight. This scrutiny helped identify lessons for future commissioning activity and secured assurances that subsequent processes would be more transparent and better informed by service-user experience.

15 July 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Revenue and Capital Monitoring Outturn and Medium-Term Financial Strategy

The Committee scrutinised year-end revenue and capital monitoring alongside the medium-term financial strategy. Members challenged structural overspends, capital slippage, dependency on one-off grants, school deficits, transport costs, vacancy management and the adequacy of longer-term plans to close future budget gaps. This strengthened financial accountability by ensuring that positive headline messages were tested against the underlying sustainability of the Council's position.

Self-Assessment 2024/25 and Enabling Strategies

Members also considered the Council's self-assessment and enabling strategies, including procurement, digital maturity, workforce issues and decarbonisation. The Committee's questions focused on whether the right data was being collected, how impact on residents was measured, and how enabling functions supported better service outcomes. This broadened scrutiny from service delivery alone to the systems and strategies that underpin organisational performance and continuous improvement.

23 September 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Revenue Monitoring Update, Social Care Annual Report and Safeguarding Annual Report

This meeting illustrated the Committee's broad oversight role across both financial performance and frontline services. Members scrutinised the revenue position, the

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Social Care annual report and the Safeguarding annual report, challenging vacancy management, budget pressures, complaints learning, direct payments, service demand, demographic pressures, harmful sexual behaviour in schools and the evaluative quality of safeguarding reporting. The discussion drew clear links between service performance, resident outcomes and financial pressures.

18 November 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Revenue Budget Financial Update and Medium-Term Financial Plan Update

The Committee continued its close examination of financial management, testing school deficit recovery, reserve resilience, demand modelling, practice-change savings in social care, grant dependency and the realism of future savings and transformation plans. Members sought greater clarity on intervention thresholds, service demand risk and the balance between recurring pressures and one-off mitigations. This sustained challenge strengthened public assurance and reinforced Cabinet accountability for financial stewardship.

Annual Health and Safety Report and Social Services Complaints Process

Beyond finance, the Committee scrutinised how the Council manages operational risk and learns from complaints. Members explored sickness absence, psychological illness, workplace stress, violence against staff, dashboard development, complaint timescales, communication failures and benchmarking with other authorities. This helped ensure that organisational health, safety and learning from service-user feedback were treated as integral elements of overall performance and service improvement.

3 December 2025 – Special Meeting

Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy Action Plan Update and Potholes and Road Conditions

The Committee scrutinised progress against the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy and questioned how effectively the Council was responding to economic inactivity, business sustainability, skills shortages, transport barriers and the ending of Shared Prosperity Fund support. Members then examined highways performance, road condition management, drainage, communication with residents and the realism of operating within severe funding constraints. In both

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

areas, scrutiny highlighted the need for clearer evidence of impact, future monitoring and practical follow-up action.

27 January 2026 – Special Meeting

School Exclusions, Schools Health Research Network and Strategic Risk Assessment

This meeting brought together several strands of the Committee's role. Members scrutinised rising school exclusions and the effectiveness of preventative and restorative approaches, considered Schools Health Research Network data to understand pupil wellbeing trends, and reviewed the Strategic Risk Assessment to identify areas requiring further scrutiny. This demonstrated the Committee's ability to connect operational performance, emerging need and strategic risk in a coherent way.

10 February 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Financial Update and Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2026/27

The Committee again undertook substantial budget scrutiny, questioning recovery plans for deficit schools, legal spend, housing overspends, debt recovery, passenger transport, storm recovery pressures, capital slippage and the structural sustainability of the budget. Members also tested the Cabinet's case for proposed council tax increases, efficiency savings and additional investment in highways and schools. This reflected the Committee's central role in holding the Executive to account for budget management and for the implications of financial decisions for residents.

Focused Challenge on Financial Resilience

This meeting was distinguished by the depth of challenge applied to the assumptions behind the budget, rather than to the headline figures alone. Members explored whether short-term gains were masking longer-term pressures and whether proposed mitigations were genuinely sustainable. In doing so, the Committee examined not only current financial performance but also the resilience, realism and transparency of the Council's financial planning.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Key Themes and Outcomes Across the Year

Several consistent themes emerged from the Committee's work across the year. First, the Committee provided sustained challenge on the Council's financial position, testing both in-year monitoring and longer-term budget sustainability, particularly in relation to schools, social care, housing, transport and capital delivery.

Secondly, it maintained close oversight of frontline service performance, ensuring that annual reports and service updates were subject to detailed questioning on outcomes for residents, operational pressures and improvement actions. Thirdly, it strengthened assurance in relation to the Council's risk management arrangements by examining the relationship between strategic risks, mitigating actions and financial planning.

Finally, the Committee identified matters requiring further work, secured follow-up information where appropriate, and made a constructive contribution to transparency, accountability and service improvement across the Council.

Conclusion

Across the reporting period, the Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee made an important contribution to the Council's governance through consistent, evidence-based constructive challenge in relation to service performance, financial management, strategic risk and executive decision-making. Its work helped ensure that Cabinet Members and officers were held to account for the quality, resilience and affordability of services delivered to residents, while also supporting constructive reflection on how services and decisions can continue to improve.

The Committee strengthened transparency by testing the practical implications of policy and budget decisions, identifying matters requiring further consideration, and ensuring that risk, performance and finance were scrutinised in the round. Taken together, the year's work demonstrates the Committee's central role in supporting effective governance, informed decision-making and better outcomes for residents.

This page is intentionally left blank

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Report of the People Scrutiny Committee: The Effectiveness and Added Value of the Scrutiny undertaken during January 2025 to April 2026

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the work of the People Scrutiny Committee during the 2025 municipal year and up to April 2026. It evidences the Committee's effectiveness in supporting good governance, strengthening decision-making and contributing to improved service delivery for Monmouthshire residents. It also demonstrates how the Committee has fulfilled its role in reflecting the views, experiences and concerns of residents, service users, carers, communities and partners.

The report draws on the formal minutes of the Committee's ordinary, special and call-in meetings. It highlights where scrutiny added value through pre-decision scrutiny, policy review, constructive challenge, public engagement and follow-up action. In doing so, it shows how the Committee has helped to test the quality of evidence, influence the development of proposals, seek assurance on delivery and keep a clear focus on outcomes for residents.

Overview of Scrutiny Activity

During the reporting period, the Committee considered a broad range of strategic and service matters across education, housing, social care, equality, wellbeing and community services. Its work included pre-decision scrutiny of key policies and strategies, review of service performance, examination of budget proposals, consideration of petitions and public forum contributions, and follow-up of actions arising from earlier meetings. Collectively, this work strengthened accountability, improved the quality of policy and service development, and supported more informed and resident-focused decision-making.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Scrutiny by Meeting and Topic

21 January 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Review of Homesearch Policy

The Committee scrutinised the Homesearch Policy with a clear focus on fairness, accessibility and practical impact for residents seeking housing support. Members tested how the policy worked for people experiencing homelessness, applicants with learning disabilities or support needs, rural communities and the armed forces community. This scrutiny added value by drawing attention to the availability of support for applicants, the need for partner agencies to be equipped to help residents use the system, and the importance of understanding emerging housing pressures and patterns of need.

Through its challenge, the Committee secured follow-up action on briefing partner agencies, further information on the rural allocations policy and Capsule, and additional work to explore homelessness among veterans. The discussion illustrated the Committee's role in reviewing policy not only for procedural soundness but also for how effectively it serves residents in practice and reflects community concerns.

Forward Work Planning and Budget Scrutiny Preparation

The Committee also used this meeting to shape its forward programme and identify issues requiring further scrutiny, including areas of emerging public concern and upcoming budget discussions. This early prioritisation added value by ensuring that scrutiny time was directed towards matters with the greatest potential impact on residents and by supporting a planned and purposeful approach to committee business.

18 February 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy

In reviewing the Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy, the Committee focused on whether children and young people are identified and supported early enough, whether mainstream provision is sufficiently inclusive, and whether vulnerable groups are visible within the system. Members tested the Council's arrangements for service children, children with specific learning difficulties and children educated other than at school. This scrutiny strengthened

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

oversight of how policy translates into practice for children and families and kept a clear focus on the best start in life for learners in Monmouthshire.

Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals

The Committee also examined the draft budget proposals affecting people services, testing the practical implications of savings and investment decisions for social care, youth provision, community hubs and support for residents. This provided an important opportunity for scrutiny to challenge assumptions before decisions were finalised and to ensure that budget choices were viewed through the lens of impact on service users and communities rather than finance alone.

4 March 2025 – Special Meeting (Call-in)

Call-in of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Decision

The call-in meeting demonstrated the Committee's constitutional role in holding executive decision-making to account. Members examined concerns about transparency, accountability, consultation and the assessment of impact in relation to funding allocations. Although the Committee ultimately accepted the decision, the scrutiny process added clear value by airing concerns in public, clarifying governance arrangements, highlighting the limits of local control, and strengthening the case for more timely and meaningful scrutiny of major funding decisions in future.

This meeting showed that scrutiny's value is not limited to changing decisions; it also lies in improving openness, exposing weaknesses in process, and ensuring that decisions affecting communities are tested in a public and democratic forum.

30 April 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Y Prentis – Shared Construction Apprenticeship Scheme

The Committee scrutinised the proposed closure and transfer of the Y Prentis shared apprenticeship scheme with a particular focus on outcomes for young people, the local relevance of the replacement model, workforce implications and the long-term sustainability of construction skills provision. Members tested the strength of the evidence, including performance, completion rates, local participation and the risks associated with transition to a provider based in West Wales. This scrutiny added value by ensuring that a significant service change was subject to robust challenge before a decision was progressed.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Whilst the Committee supported the preferred option, the scrutiny process secured a clear expectation of continued oversight of the transition and reinforced the need for future skills provision to deliver tangible benefit for Monmouthshire's young people, employers and communities.

17 June 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Audit Wales Report on Hospital Discharge

The Committee reviewed the Audit Wales findings on hospital discharge through the lens of residents' experience, delayed discharge, readmission risk, workforce pressures and the quality of information available to support scrutiny. Members pressed for more timely and comprehensive data, challenged how risk is managed in discharge decisions and highlighted the importance of stronger system integration across health and social care. The scrutiny added value by maintaining focus on practical improvement in discharge pathways and on achieving better outcomes for residents moving from hospital back into the community.

Pre-decision Scrutiny of the Play Sufficiency Assessment

This was a strong example of pre-decision scrutiny in action. Members tested whether the Play Sufficiency Assessment accurately reflected the experiences of children and young people across the county, especially in rural areas and in relation to girls, older children and communities with limited facilities. By challenging gaps between assessment findings and action planning, and by emphasising the importance of listening directly to children, the Committee strengthened the policy before endorsement and helped ensure it was more responsive to local need.

16 July 2025 – Special Meeting

Review of the Housing Support Grant Programme

The Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of proposals to recommission housing support services funded through the Housing Support Grant. Members examined demand, unmet need, value for money, market resilience, the balance between in-house and commissioned provision, and the importance of service user voice. This scrutiny was particularly valuable because it took place in advance of procurement, enabling the Committee to influence the approach at an early stage and to emphasise transparency, monitoring and better outcomes for vulnerable residents.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

22 July 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Petitions on Home to School Transport Policy

The Committee received petitions and public representations on home to school transport, providing a formal and visible route for parents, residents and community representatives to raise concerns about safety, equity and the practical impact of policy decisions on families. By focusing on route safety and securing officer review within ongoing work, the Committee ensured that the public voice directly informed the Council's response. This was a clear example of scrutiny acting as a democratic channel between community concern and service review.

County of Sanctuary and Strategic Equality Plan Monitoring

The Committee scrutinised the County of Sanctuary report and the Strategic Equality Plan annual monitoring report, testing how inclusion and equality commitments are communicated, funded and translated into frontline practice. Members brought forward a range of perspectives, including issues raised through the public forum, and secured further information and follow-up actions. The added value of scrutiny in this area lay in ensuring that equality and inclusion are examined not only as policy commitments, but also in terms of implementation, community impact, accountability and public confidence.

30 September 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Community Meals Review

The Committee scrutinised the Community Meals Review with a clear emphasis on the wider social and preventative value of the service, not simply its cost. Members explored user experience, nutritional value, safeguarding, routes into the service, local sourcing and future delivery options. This scrutiny added value by ensuring that modernisation proposals remained rooted in dignity, wellbeing and practical support for residents, especially older and vulnerable people who benefit not only from the meal itself but from the contact and reassurance that accompany the service.

Whole Authority Approach to Wellbeing and Prevention

The Committee also reviewed the Whole Authority Approach to Wellbeing and Prevention. Members challenged the strategy to ensure it reflected the role of communities, town and community councils, lived experience, and the need to start

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

from the perspective of residents rather than services alone. This policy scrutiny strengthened the strategic focus on prevention and highlighted the importance of designing services and partnerships around what matters to people in their everyday lives.

21 January 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Policy

The Committee scrutinised the performance report on Elective Home Education and undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the Children Missing Education Policy. Members explored safeguarding, capacity, pupil voice, family engagement, trends in home education, links to unmet need in mainstream education and arrangements for multi-agency escalation where children may be at risk. This represented a significant example of scrutiny strengthening policy and accountability by testing whether the Council's approach was sufficiently robust, evidence-based and child-centered before adoption.

24 February 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Corporate Parenting and Disability Inclusion

At its February 2026 meeting, the Committee reviewed the Corporate Parenting Strategy and the Disability Confident Pledge. In both areas, members focused on how policy is experienced in practice by care experienced children and young people, foster carers, staff and disabled applicants and employees. The scrutiny added value by drawing out issues of reporting, workforce stability, inclusion, accountability and continuous improvement, thereby reinforcing the Council's responsibility to translate corporate commitments into meaningful outcomes.

31 March 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Assistive Technology

In March 2026 the Committee scrutinised the Assistive Technology service, focusing on prevention, sustainability, user confidence, partnership working and opportunities to support independence and reduce demand on higher-cost services. The discussion demonstrated how scrutiny can add value by looking beyond service activity to wider benefits for residents, carers and partner agencies, while also identifying the next practical steps to strengthen regional working and future service development.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

29 April 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Public Libraries Strategy

In April 2026 the Committee scrutinised the Public Libraries Strategy following consultation. Members explored equity of access, outreach, social value, prevention, Welsh language provision, support for older residents, and the role of libraries and community hubs as trusted and inclusive spaces. By endorsing the strategy following detailed examination, the Committee strengthened the case for libraries as preventative services that support learning, digital inclusion, social connection and community resilience.

Conclusion

Over the course of the reporting period, the People Scrutiny Committee made a clear and positive contribution to the Council's governance and improvement arrangements. Its added value is most evident in the way it strengthened pre-decision scrutiny and policy review, improved the quality of challenge applied to reports and proposals, and ensured that decision-making remained grounded in the likely impact on Monmouthshire residents. The Committee also played an important role in bringing forward the public voice, testing whether services and strategies were fair, accessible and outcome-focused, and securing actions, assurances and further reporting where required. Taken together, this demonstrates an effective scrutiny function that supports better policy, better services and more accountable decision-making.

This page is intentionally left blank

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee: The Effectiveness and Added Value of the Scrutiny undertaken during January 2025 to April 2026

Introduction

This report sets out the work undertaken by the Council's Place Scrutiny Committee during the 2025 municipal year, together with the meetings held on 29 January 2026 and 19 March 2026. It shows the effectiveness and added value of scrutiny in informing policy development, improving decision-making, strengthening accountability, and ensuring that the views of residents, stakeholders and communities are reflected in the Committee's work.

The report is based on the formal minutes of the Committee's meetings across the reporting period, including ordinary, special and call-in meetings, and provides a summary of the principal scrutiny topics considered and the outcomes achieved. In doing so, it highlights the challenge provided by members, the assurances obtained, the recommendations made, the actions secured, and the continuing contribution of scrutiny to policy development and decision-making.

Overview of Scrutiny Activity

Across the reporting period, the Place Scrutiny Committee considered a broad range of strategic and service issues, including the Replacement Local Development Plan, flood risk management, destination management, placemaking, markets, transport, culture, biodiversity, highway safety and animal welfare. It also scrutinised significant executive decisions through petitions and a formal call-in process, enabled public participation, and secured commitments, written responses, recommendations and follow-up actions from Cabinet Members and senior officers.

Scrutiny by Meeting and Topic

6 February 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Petition: Safety of Zebra Crossing, Sandy Lane, Caldicot

The Committee scrutinised concerns about visibility, design and enforcement. The Cabinet Member acknowledged delays, committed to updated safety audits and a

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

task-and-finish approach, and the matter was referred back for continued oversight.

Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2025/26

Members undertook detailed scrutiny of the budget implications across Place services. Written follow-up responses were secured, improving transparency and highlighting the cumulative impact on communities.

27 March 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Nedern Maintenance and Flooding

Scrutiny added value by bringing together NRW and Council officers in a public forum to clarify responsibilities for river maintenance, flood prevention and asset management. Members used local evidence from residents and businesses to probe the adequacy of maintenance arrangements, the relationship between flooding and wider river health issues, and the coordination needed between NRW, MCC and National Highways. This resulted in clearer public understanding of who was responsible for what, confirmation of improvements already made to annual maintenance and culvert inspections, and a commitment to further written responses and ongoing engagement, thereby strengthening accountability and follow-up.

Bats and Habitats Regulations Appraisal (RLDP)

In scrutinising the bats and habitats issues linked to the RLDP, members tested the strength of the ecological evidence, the wording of policy protections and the balance between development need and environmental safeguards. The discussion drew in external expertise and public concerns, particularly around survey requirements, core sustenance zones and the implications of proposed development near sensitive habitats. The added value of scrutiny was in requiring officers to explain and defend the approach in detail, place assurances on the record about further surveys and mitigation, and demonstrate how ecological considerations would continue to influence later planning stages, thereby improving transparency and confidence in the decision-making process.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

22 May 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Active Travel

The Committee's scrutiny of Active Travel demonstrated added value by moving beyond support for the policy aims to test deliverability, fairness and responsiveness to local need. Members challenged officers on funding uncertainty, the prioritisation of smaller accessibility improvements such as dropped kerbs, the balance between urban and rural provision, traffic displacement, enforcement capacity and school safety. This produced a series of practical follow-up actions, including written updates, further information on schools and enforcement, and commitments to look again at prioritisation and accessibility concerns. Scrutiny therefore helped ensure that the programme was examined not only as a strategic ambition but also in terms of how it would work for residents in practice.

Public Open Forum – Disabled Access

The Public Open Forum on disabled access illustrated the added value of scrutiny as a route for lived experience to shape the Committee's work. Evidence presented directly to members highlighted everyday barriers affecting disabled residents in town centres and public spaces. The Committee responded constructively by agreeing that members should witness these issues first hand, ensuring that future scrutiny of transport, access and placemaking would be informed by practical experience as well as officer reporting.

11 June 2025 – Special Meeting (Call-in)

Letting of Former Abergavenny Library

The call-in meeting provided a clear example of the constitutional value of scrutiny in testing executive decisions after they have been made but before they take effect. The Committee enabled substantial public participation, examined concerns about transparency, market exposure, community consultation, historic significance and best value, and required Cabinet and officers to respond in detail in public session. The added value of scrutiny was not simply debate, but a formal outcome: the decision was referred back for reconsideration with clear reasons, including independent valuation, a fuller tender period, a building survey and community consultation. This demonstrated scrutiny's role as an important safeguard for accountability, due process and public confidence.

10 July 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Local Flood Strategy

Pre-decision scrutiny of the Local Flood Strategy added value by improving the quality of the strategy before adoption. Members challenged the adequacy of the consultation period, the accessibility of public information, the treatment of specific local flood risks, support for businesses, and the need for clearer emergency communication and community flood planning. Officers responded positively, indicating changes and follow-up actions including consideration of an extended consultation period, further work on public-facing information, and review of matters such as sandbag policy and localised flood actions. This demonstrated scrutiny's practical contribution in strengthening both the strategy itself and the arrangements for community engagement around it.

Car Parking Review

The Car Parking Review showed the added value of scrutiny in identifying where proposals were not yet sufficiently evidenced. Members challenged the underlying data, the lack of local consultation in some areas, the implications for enforcement capacity, accessibility, payment methods, town centre vitality and the practical consequences of charging structures. As a result, scrutiny secured commitments to correct errors, provide additional information and undertake further consultation before changes are implemented. In this way, the Committee improved the robustness of the review and helped guard against premature policy decisions.

25 September 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan Consultation Report

The Committee's scrutiny of the Deposit RLDP Consultation Report demonstrated significant added value in relation to process, transparency and democratic accountability. Members tested whether consultation had been meaningful, challenged the extent to which representations had influenced the report, and raised detailed questions on viability, infrastructure, flooding, ecology, accessibility of documentation and the balance of the plan across the county. The Committee also ensured that its own scrutiny minutes were appended to the report going forward to Council, so that the challenge, concerns and observations raised in

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

scrutiny formed part of the formal record available at the next stage of decision-making and independent examination.

9 October 2025 – Special Meeting

Destination Management Plan

Scrutiny of the Destination Management Plan added value by testing how the strategy would work in practice for residents, businesses and visitors rather than simply endorsing its overall ambition. Members questioned regional partnership working, the accessibility of the visitor offer, environmental pressures on sensitive locations, policy impacts on accommodation providers, the visibility of the Welsh language and the presentation of Monmouthshire's tourism identity. This challenge prompted officers to acknowledge areas for improvement, including stronger reference to the Welsh language and follow-up on visitor feedback and accessibility information. The scrutiny process therefore helped refine the plan and ensure a more balanced approach between economic opportunity, inclusion and place protection.

Litter and Fly-tipping

In considering litter and fly-tipping, the Committee added value by challenging how enforcement, prevention and community action could best be combined. Members explored behaviour change, signage, smart technology, support for volunteers, the practical reach of new funding streams and the need for visible deterrence. The discussion helped reinforce a proportionate approach in which education and communication sit alongside enforcement, while also recognising and encouraging the contribution of community volunteers to keeping the county clean.

6 November 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Placemaking Plans

The scrutiny of the Placemaking Plans showed added value in moving the discussion from vision to delivery. Members probed how delivery groups would operate, how resource and capacity issues would be addressed, how local involvement would be maintained over time and how success would eventually be measured. This ensured that the committee's role was not limited to endorsing the plans' aspirations, but extended to testing governance, accountability and the

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

realism of implementation arrangements, thereby strengthening confidence in the next stage of the work.

Markets and Stalls

Scrutiny of Markets and Stalls highlighted the Committee's contribution to local regeneration by focusing on the practical barriers affecting market vitality. Members explored infrastructure needs, trader support, advertising, market locations, storage, weather protection and collaboration with local partners. This challenge helped draw attention to specific actions and follow-up responses, while reinforcing the role of markets as part of wider town centre regeneration rather than as an isolated operational issue.

29 January 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Cultural Strategy

The Committee undertook pre-decision scrutiny of the Cultural Strategy, considering inclusivity, representation, Welsh language visibility, volunteering, and the relationship between culture, tourism, placemaking and heritage policy. Through this scrutiny, members strengthened assurance on the strategic direction of the document and highlighted areas where fuller recognition of local identity, community participation and cross-policy alignment would be beneficial.

Biodiversity and Resilience

The Committee scrutinised the Biodiversity and Resilience report, examining enforcement capacity, ecological monitoring, community engagement, regenerative farming and public understanding of the Nature Isn't Neat approach. This enabled members to obtain assurance on delivery challenges, identify the need for continued follow-up, and reinforce the importance of coordinated action across environmental services and partner organisations.

19 March 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Prohibition of Driving Except for Access, Goldwire Lane, Monmouth

The Committee scrutinised the proposal relating to Goldwire Lane, Monmouth, considering consultation evidence, road safety, active travel duties, signage constraints, accessibility and alternative route options. Members agreed a formal

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

recommendation to Cabinet that the permanent order should not yet be endorsed and that the available options should be reviewed further, demonstrating the Committee's role in testing the robustness of the evidence and the balance of competing considerations.

Animal Welfare

The Committee also received a detailed report on Animal Welfare, which clarified the Council's statutory powers, resource pressures, partnership constraints and enforcement challenges. Scrutiny secured follow-up action on member learning and the circulation of presentation materials, while also strengthening understanding of the service's responsibilities and the wider pressures affecting delivery.

Conclusion

Across the reporting period, the Place Scrutiny Committee added clear value by improving the quality of decision-making, strengthening accountability, reflecting public and stakeholder perspectives, and influencing executive action across a broad range of Place-based services and policy areas. The evidence set out in this report shows that scrutiny continued to provide constructive challenge, secure follow-up action, and support more informed and transparent decision-making.

The Committee's added value lay in its ability to bring public concerns, local knowledge and member challenge into the formal decision-making process; to test the strength of evidence, policy assumptions and delivery arrangements; and to secure tangible outcomes such as recommendations, written responses, reconsideration of decisions and further action by officers and Cabinet Members. In this respect, scrutiny has not only supported accountability, but has also made a practical contribution to better policy, better governance and better-informed decisions.

This page is intentionally left blank

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Report of the Public Services Scrutiny Committee: The Effectiveness and Added Value of the Scrutiny undertaken during January 2025 to April 2026

Introduction

This report provides an account of the work undertaken by the Public Services Scrutiny Committee during the 2025 municipal year and at meetings held up to April 2026. It assesses the effectiveness of the Committee's scrutiny activity and the value added through challenge, evidence gathering, accountability and follow-up, with particular regard to the extent to which scrutiny informed public service oversight and reflected the concerns of residents, service users, stakeholders and communities.

Drawing on the formal minutes of meetings across the reporting period, the report sets out the principal matters scrutinised, the challenge provided by members, the assurances and evidence secured, the recommendations and actions arising, and the extent to which scrutiny influenced transparency, accountability and future oversight.

Overview of Scrutiny Activity

During the reporting period, the Committee considered a broad range of strategic public service issues affecting residents' quality of life and wellbeing. These included dentistry, highways responsibilities and road repairs, the Severn Bridge restrictions, adult mental health, suicide prevention, dementia care, hospital reconfiguration, violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence, community safety and police resourcing, and drug-related deaths. Across these meetings, the Committee identified evidence gaps, tested the adequacy of current arrangements, sought further information, recommended follow-up activity and secured actions from service providers and partners. Collectively, this demonstrates a consistent scrutiny role in strengthening transparency, accountability and the evidence base for future decision-making.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Scrutiny by Meeting and Topic

10 February 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Dentistry: Scrutiny of Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

The Committee undertook detailed scrutiny of NHS dentistry in Monmouthshire, challenging the Health Board on access, waiting times, workforce sustainability, service equity, preventative provision and the implications of future housing growth. The questioning exposed a number of structural pressures, including uncertainty over future workforce capacity, limits on local provision and the difficulty of aligning service planning with population growth. The Committee's added value lay in testing the robustness of the Health Board's assumptions and ensuring that strategic issues were examined through the lived experience of residents, particularly vulnerable groups and rural communities. Recommendations and follow-up arising from the meeting included the sharing of further population needs information, the continued consideration of service implications arising from housing growth and the use of the Committee's forward work programme to maintain oversight of broader Health Board issues.

7 April 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Highways Responsibilities and Funding

The Committee scrutinised the complexity of highways responsibilities across the Council, the South Wales Trunk Road Agent and other agencies, pressing officers on accountability, communication, maintenance prioritisation, litter responsibilities, bridge management and the local impact of strategic transport routes. The Committee's questioning was effective in identifying areas where accountability was unclear and where residents would benefit from greater transparency. As a result, a series of clear follow-up actions were identified, including clarification of why particular roads fall within SWTRA responsibility, a response on the schedule for replacement of safety barriers on the M48, further discussion with SWTRA on traffic management at Thornwell, continued promotion of the M48 link road through the regional transport planning process, a workshop for members on highways funding and prioritisation, and correspondence with Welsh Government and SWTRA regarding legislation on littering from vehicles. This demonstrated scrutiny's practical value in moving discussion beyond explanation to specific actions and requests for further evidence.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

Potholes and Road Repairs

Members also scrutinised how additional funding for pothole repairs would be deployed in Monmouthshire, focusing on prioritisation, scheduling, the balance between temporary and permanent repairs, workforce capacity and communication with residents. The Committee's contribution was evaluative as well as probing: members tested not only whether additional funding existed, but whether there was a sufficiently transparent and evidence-based framework for allocating it. This led to a clear expectation that members would receive a schedule of works once funding was confirmed and that a future workshop would set out the prioritisation matrix, funding mechanisms and repair methodology in greater detail. The added value of scrutiny was therefore in strengthening accountability for how investment decisions would be made in practice and how they would be communicated to residents.

12 May 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

National Highways – M48 and Severn Bridge 7.5t Weight Limit

The Committee provided extensive challenge on the implications of the Severn Bridge heavy goods vehicle restrictions for local residents, businesses, freight movements, air quality and the resilience of the wider transport network. Members tested the adequacy of modelling, contingency planning, enforcement proposals, economic impact considerations and mitigation at key junctions. The scrutiny was evaluative, in that it examined whether the response was proportionate to local risk and whether sufficient evidence and communication had been provided to affected communities. It was agreed that National Highways would return to the Committee in approximately six months with an update. The meeting also reinforced the need for continued lobbying on issues such as junction improvements, signalisation and wider transport mitigation, ensuring that local concerns remained visible within regional and national transport discussions.

7 July 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Adult Mental Health Services with a Specific Focus on Adult Suicide

The Committee undertook in-depth scrutiny of adult mental health services and suicide prevention, testing the quality of local data, the strength of partnership working, the support available to those at risk and those bereaved by suicide, and the extent to which rurality, co-occurring needs and barriers to access were being

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

addressed. Members explored difficult but important issues with sensitivity and rigour, drawing on both professional evidence and community perspectives. The scrutiny added value by bringing together fragmented concerns about data quality, prevention, access and partnership effectiveness into a single evidence-based discussion. Importantly, the Committee did not treat the item as concluded at first consideration: members agreed that the matter should return in six months to gauge progress and requested that MIND also return when the topic was revisited. This gave the scrutiny process a stronger evaluative basis by building follow-up and comparative evidence into the Committee's work programme.

Care for People in the Community with Dementia, Including Support Available to Families

The Committee also scrutinised dementia care and family support, focusing on access to community-based services, future demand, prevention, coordination of support and the pressures arising from an ageing population. Members sought practical clarity on dementia champions, connectors, hubs, performance monitoring and the adequacy of local provision. The scrutiny was evaluative in highlighting the gap between strategic ambition and the practical challenges of local access, awareness and capacity. Recommendations and follow-up from the session included a request for a paper setting out Monmouthshire-specific information on dementia champions and related provision, a request for key performance indicators and progress data to be provided in a future presentation, and a proposal for members to visit staff and services to better understand delivery in practice. This demonstrated scrutiny's added value in combining strategic challenge with practical follow-up designed to improve oversight.

28 July 2025 – Joint Meeting of Public Services and People Scrutiny

Nevill Hall Hospital Proposals

In this joint session, the Committee scrutinised the emerging proposals for Nevill Hall Hospital, challenging the Health Board on public expectations, local access to services, cancer treatment, estate constraints and the relationship between local hospitals and the wider health system. Members tested whether engagement was meaningful and whether the proposed model would meet the needs of Monmouthshire residents, particularly those affected by travel distances and service changes. The value of the scrutiny lay in ensuring that strategic proposals

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

were assessed against practical concerns about accessibility, equity and public confidence at a formative stage. A specific follow-up request arising from the meeting was for a future members' seminar on Royal Gwent, Chepstow and local hospitals, to provide broader system context and enable continued scrutiny of local hospital provision.

13 October 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Regional Strategy

The Committee scrutinised how regional arrangements under the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence framework were supporting Monmouthshire, with a strong focus on accountability, data quality, resource capacity, service accessibility and the tangible benefits of regional working. Members challenged the limited evidence base and tested whether the regional model was delivering measurable local impact. This was a particularly evaluative piece of scrutiny because it moved beyond descriptive reporting and explicitly assessed the adequacy of available evidence. The Committee agreed that when the matter returned, subsequent updates should provide clearer evidence of impact, including a consistent regional and local data dashboard covering demand, outcomes, equality of access and rural reach, clearer lines of accountability between the Partnership Board, Community Safety Partnerships and the Council, regular reporting on training compliance and Spectrum programme coverage, and clearer information on resource requirements, progress against agreed actions and the use of survivor and community feedback. These recommendations significantly strengthened the expectations placed on future reporting.

28 October 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Community Safety and Police Resources

The Committee scrutinised community safety and police resources in Monmouthshire through detailed questioning of the Police and Crime Commissioner on neighbourhood visibility, confidence in policing, school engagement, county lines, data integrity, prevention work and fairness in resource distribution. The scrutiny was evaluative in testing whether regional policing plans and performance claims were adequately evidenced at county level. Members secured a number of follow-up actions, including requests for data on officer

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

allocation, county lines work in schools, Monmouthshire-specific survey responses, school visits and safeguarding sessions. The Committee also agreed that the minutes and list of outstanding questions should be forwarded to the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable, and that the Chief Constable should be invited to a future meeting to discuss the responses. This demonstrated scrutiny's value in converting broad questioning into an accountable process of evidence gathering and follow-up.

15 December 2025 – Ordinary Meeting

Drug-Related Deaths and the Impact of Synthetic Drugs

The Committee scrutinised the causes, patterns and responses associated with drug-related deaths, including the growing risks posed by synthetic drugs such as nitazenes. Members explored the links between trauma, homelessness, mental health, prescribing, prevention, policing and treatment pathways, while also testing how effectively intelligence is shared across public services. This was a strong example of evaluative scrutiny because it examined whether current partnership arrangements were sufficient to respond to a changing and increasingly complex pattern of harm. The discussion also identified issues that members considered should be pursued further with policing leadership, including prevention activity, resource pressures and school-based engagement. In this respect, scrutiny added value by surfacing cross-cutting issues that warranted continued attention beyond the meeting itself.

Update on the M48 Severn Bridge Heavy Goods Vehicle Restrictions

When the matter returned, the Committee continued to test the adequacy of mitigation proposals, communications, modelling assumptions, stakeholder engagement and long-term strategic planning. The follow-up session enabled members to assess whether the response had developed sufficiently since the earlier meeting and whether local concerns were being reflected in the evolving plans. Recommendations and actions arising included a request to see the current Traffic Regulation Orders and clarify responsibility for them, and **a formal recommendation, approved by the Committee, that the Council should have a democratically elected member on the stakeholder steering group to improve communication and representation. This recommendation has not been enacted to the disappointment of the committee.** The Committee also requested that

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Committee Report: 2025-2026

National Highways return again in six months' time. This demonstrated the added value of scrutiny not only in initial challenge, but in sustained review, evidence testing and democratic follow-up over time.

20 April 2026 – Ordinary Meeting

Adult Suicide – Follow-Up Scrutiny with Mind Monmouthshire and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board

The Committee returned to the issue of adult suicide and mental health to test progress, bringing together evidence from both the third sector and the Health Board. This enabled members to compare service-user experience with the statutory response, challenge barriers to access, examine referral pathways, data limitations, digital exclusion and the role of community-based support. The session illustrated scrutiny at its strongest: evidence-led, comparative and focused on outcomes as well as process. It added value by promoting openness about what had improved, what pressures remained and where further action was still required. Specific actions arising included exploring whether the Council's communications channels and website could better signpost residents to support services and arranging for information leaflets to be placed in members' mail trays. These were modest but practical examples of scrutiny translating discussion into immediate local action.

Conclusion

Across the reporting period, the Public Services Scrutiny Committee added demonstrable value through structured challenge, evidence-led questioning and follow-up. Its effectiveness is evidenced not only by the breadth of issues considered, but by the recommendations, actions and requests for further assurance arising from its work, including additional data, progress reports, seminars, visits, workshops, formal correspondence and the return of partner organisations to future meetings. Taken together, these outcomes indicate that the Committee's scrutiny was active, evaluative and capable of strengthening the quality, transparency and responsiveness of public service oversight on behalf of Monmouthshire residents.

This page is intentionally left blank

SUBJECT:	2026/27 REVENUE BUDGET – FINANCIAL UPDATE
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	14th October 2026
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with an update of the progress against the Council's revenue budget for the 2026/27 financial year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the forecast revenue budget overspend of £464,000 at Update 1, representing a forecast 0.2% variance against the approved budget for the year.
- 3.2 That Cabinet note that, while the Update 1 forecast is reporting a small net overspend, the overall position remains broadly manageable at this stage of the year. This reflects the impact of recent service reform, demand management, income maximisation and budget discipline, while recognising the specific budget risks that will continue to be managed through future monitoring updates, including:
- demand volatility in high-cost services, particularly adults' and children's social care;
 - inflationary and contractual cost pressures where these affect commissioned services, supplies, utilities or income targets;
 - delivery of the approved £4.291m savings programme, with services currently forecasting 85.7% delivery and a £614,000 shortfall;
 - the impact of one-off or annually allocated grant funding streams where these support core service activity; and
 - the cumulative schools reserves deficit and the impact this has on the Council's overall financial resilience.
- 3.3 That Cabinet note the forecast movement in cumulative schools reserves as outlined in Appendix 4. Schools are currently forecasting a further draw on reserves of £2,457,000 during 2026/27, resulting in a projected cumulative deficit balance of £9,337,000 by year-end, with eighteen schools forecast to be in deficit.

- 3.4 That Cabinet note the forecast movement in school reserve balances and request that the Strategic Director for Learning, Skills and Economy undertake a review of all schools categorised as high risk (Appendix 4) and report, in the first instance, to the Cabinet Members for Education and Resources on the adequacy of budget recovery plans, progress against agreed actions and whether any further support, challenge or intervention is required to secure financial recovery.

4 KEY ISSUES:

4.1 Context

- 4.2 The 2026/27 budget was developed within a continuing period of financial constraint and uncertainty for local government. The approved budget provided additional investment in services experiencing the greatest demand and cost pressures, particularly social care, education and infrastructure. This included a further £1 million recurrent investment in school budgets for the second consecutive year, alongside increased provision for preventative children's services, adults and children with complex needs, additional learning needs and social, emotional and mental health provision.

- 4.3 The budget set by Council in March addressed an estimated £16.8 million increase in the annual cost of delivering services, equivalent to around 8% of the Council's budget. This was funded through a 4.4% increase in Welsh Government support, generating approximately £6.15 million of additional funding; a 5.95% increase in Council Tax; increased fees and charges; and £3.5 million of service efficiencies and reforms. The final budget was balanced without using the Council Fund reserve to support recurrent expenditure and included a £1 million budget risk contingency.

- 4.4 Since the budget was approved, the wider operating environment has continued to present both cost and demand risks. Although inflation remains significantly below the peaks experienced in recent years, the latest ONS release shows CPI inflation rising to 2.9% in the 12 months to July 2026, from 2.6% in June, and remaining above the Bank of England's 2% target. This underlines the need for continued caution, particularly where commissioned services, contractual uplifts, utilities, supplies and construction-related costs are exposed to in-year price movements. Inflationary pressure, alongside subdued growth expectations and the prospect of borrowing costs remaining higher for longer, will continue to require close monitoring through future budget updates.

- 4.5 There is now greater certainty over national pay developments. The 2026/27 NJC pay award has been agreed at 3.3%, backdated to 1 April 2026. The Welsh Government has also announced consultation on a 3.5% pay award for teachers and school leaders from

September 2026, together with a 5% increase for unqualified teachers, and has indicated that additional funding will be provided to local authorities and schools. The financial implications of these settlements, including the timing and adequacy of any associated funding, will need to be reflected through in-year monitoring.

- 4.6 Alongside these national developments, the Council continues to face uncertainty around service demand, annually allocated specific grants, income collection and debt recovery, the delivery of planned service reforms, recruitment and retention in specialist areas, and the financial position of schools. These risks are most acute within social care, education and housing and will require close monitoring and continued financial discipline throughout 2026/27.

4.7 Revenue budget forecast

- 4.8 Full Council approved a total revenue expenditure budget of £253,702,000 for the 2026/27 financial year. This is inclusive of £30,551,000 of precepts for Police and Community Council, and levies for Fire, Drainage and National parks which are paid directly to these organisations. The Council's net revenue budget that is spent on delivering Council services is therefore £223,151,000.

Table 1: Revenue budget forecast by directorate

Service Area	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1	% Variance
	£000's	£000's	£000's	%
Social Care & Health	81,936	81,967	31	0.0%
Learning, Skills & Economy	76,172	76,451	279	0.4%
Infrastructure	26,273	26,238	(35)	-0.1%
Place & Community Wellbeing	5,788	5,712	(76)	-1.3%
People, Performance & Partnership	7,104	7,207	102	1.4%
Law & Governance	3,247	3,313	66	2.0%
Resources	9,794	10,073	278	2.8%
Corporate Costs and insurances	4,264	4,399	135	3.2%
Borrowing & Reserves	8,572	8,236	(336)	-3.9%
Service budgets	223,151	223,596	444	0.2%
Precepts & Levies	30,551	30,551	0	0.0%

Financing	(253,702)	(253,682)	20	0.0%
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	464	464	0.2%

- 4.9 The Update 1 forecast is a net revenue budget overspend of £464,000, representing 0.2% of the approved revenue budget. The position is made up of a £444,000 net overspend across service budgets, inclusive of Borrowing and Reserves, and a £20,000 overspend within Financing.
- 4.10 Within Social Care, Health and Safeguarding, the overall forecast is close to budget, with a £31,000 overspend against a revised budget of £81.936m. Adult Services is forecasting a £665,000 underspend, supported by demand management, grant funding and vacancies, but this continues to mask underlying care at home and complexity pressures. Children's Services is forecasting a £594,000 overspend, reflecting pressures in fostering, respite care, legal costs and family time, alongside an increase in looked after children and delayed opening of new in-house facilities. Housing and Homelessness is forecasting a £257,000 overspend, reflecting property hand-back costs and Careline 2G to 4G migration costs.
- 4.11 Learning, Skills and Economy is forecasting a £279,000 overspend, mainly due to the £116,000 increase in rates for the new King Henry VIII 3-19 School building, £19,000 of schools-related legal costs and pressures within Standards. These include a £150,000 overspend against the Expansion of Early Years Grant, where strong take-up and more families using non-maintained settings mean the Welsh Government grant allocation is insufficient to meet the Council's statutory duty to provide early education. Breakfast Clubs are also forecasting a £40,000 overspend, with broadly stable pupil numbers but higher staffing and food costs from inflation, pay awards, long-term sickness cover and additional support for pupils with additional learning needs. Before-school care income has increased slightly but not enough to offset the budget pressure. These pressures are partly mitigated by grant income used to offset staff costs.
- 4.12 Infrastructure is forecasting a net underspend of £35,000. Infrastructure Management is forecast to underspend by £56,000, mainly from managed staffing savings and increased Universal Free School Meals income within Schools Catering. Within Transport Services, Passenger Transport is forecasting a £268,000 underspend, primarily due to reduced external contract costs, lower pupil numbers and contract rationalisation. This is partly offset by a £255,000 overspend in Fleet Maintenance, driven by additional vehicle hire, fuel, maintenance and repair costs, alongside smaller pressures within the Corporate Pool Car Scheme.
- 4.13 Place and Community Wellbeing is forecasting a £76,000 underspend, mainly due to underspends within Performance, Finance and Resources, Countryside, Destination and Environment and Culture and Community Learning. These are partly offset by a £34,000

overspend within Placemaking, Regeneration and Car Parks, while Leisure and Wellbeing is currently forecasting a balanced position but remains exposed to income target risk across the leisure centre portfolio.

- 4.14 People, Performance and Partnerships is forecasting a £102,000 overspend. This is mainly due to pressures within the Chief Executive's Office, including staffing pressures across Community Hubs and Communications, the inability to meet vacancy factor savings and shortfalls against income targets. These pressures are partly offset by a forecast underspend within People, most notably from vacant posts in Payroll and System Support.
- 4.15 Law and Governance is forecasting a £66,000 overspend. This reflects the inability to achieve budgeted staff vacancy savings within Democratic Services and Legal and Land Charges. Other areas of the directorate are currently forecast to remain on budget, with mitigating actions continuing to be explored ahead of the next monitoring update.
- 4.16 Resources is forecasting a £278,000 overspend. The principal pressure relates to Commercial, Corporate and Landlord Services, particularly Castlegate Business Park, where anticipated changes in occupancy and increased rates, electricity and service charge costs are creating a significant pressure. Further pressures are forecast within Finance, ICT and Corporate Health and Safety, linked to system and licence costs, income shortfalls and vacancy factor savings. Management action will focus on vacancy management, limiting non-essential spend, maximising income and improving the financial performance of investment assets.
- 4.17 The NJC pay award for 2026/27 was agreed in August at 3.3% which is marginally above the budgeted assumption of 3.0%. The resultant additional cost pressure of £0.3m will need to be met from within existing service budgets, with an increase in base budget pressure considered for 2027/28.
- 4.18 **Appendix 1** to this report outlines the summary reasons for the service budget variances, with a more detailed explanation outlined in **Appendix 2**. The headline position is supported by a £336,000 favourable variance within Borrowing and Reserves, mainly through reduced net borrowing costs payable.

4.19 Budgeted service savings

- 4.20 As part of the approved revenue budget, services were required to bring forward and deliver savings totalling £4,291,000. The current forecast indicates that £3,677,000 of savings will be delivered, leaving a projected shortfall of £614,000, with 85.7% of savings forecast to be met.

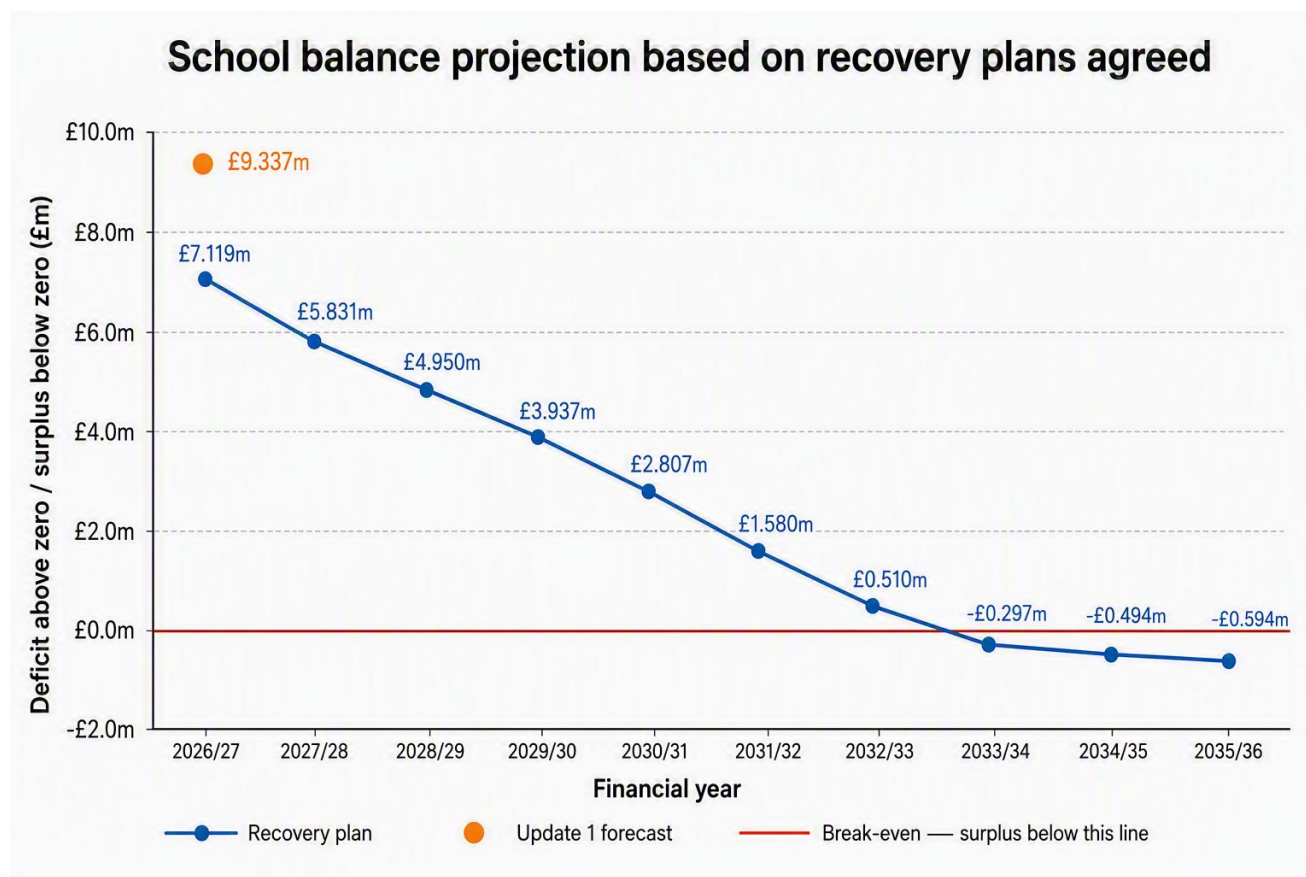
4.21 Full details of progress against individual savings targets can be found at **Appendix 3** to this report. The main shortfalls relate to the delayed opening of children’s facilities, fleet savings not yet implemented, delayed implementation of the Place and Community Wellbeing area management restructure, and the corporate energy saving which is no longer forecast to be achieved in year.

4.22 Schools’ budgets and reserves

4.23 The overall level of school reserves is currently forecast to move further into deficit by £2,457,000 by the end of the 2026/27 financial year, to a collective deficit balance of £9,337,000. This forecast draw is £17,000 above the budgeted draw on reserves that schools have set of £2,440,000.

Cluster	Opening Deficit / (Surplus)	Draw / (Contribution) Update 1	Forecast closing Deficit / (Surplus)
	£000	£000	£000
Abergavenny	2,393	299	2,692
Caldicot	647	653	1,300
Chepstow	758	(124)	634
Monmouth	270	134	404
Special	2,813	1,494	4,307
Total	6,880	2,457	9,337

4.24 The chart below compares the Update 1 forecast with the agreed recovery plan trajectory, illustrating both the scale of the current adverse movement and the period over which recovery is expected to be delivered.



- 4.25 The forecast movement in school balances represents a material deterioration in an already challenging position. The cumulative deficit is forecast to increase from £6.880m at the start of the year to £9.337m by 31 March 2027, with eighteen schools forecast to be in deficit. This is £2.218m worse than the recovery plan trajectory for 2026/27, which currently shows an expected deficit of £7.119m before gradually reducing to £0.510m by 2032/33 and moving into a modest surplus from 2033/34. This means that, while recovery plans provide an agreed forward trajectory, the latest forecast indicates a materially weaker starting point and reinforces the need for renewed review, support and challenge.
- 4.26 The principal drivers continue to be the sustained impact of attendance, behaviour and additional learning needs, together with the staffing and specialist resource required to maintain appropriate provision. While these pressures are not unique to Monmouthshire, the scale and pace of the projected movement mean that the position cannot be viewed as a short-term timing issue and will require

sustained corrective action over more than one financial year. Financial recovery should therefore be regarded as a core leadership and governance responsibility alongside educational standards and pupil outcomes.

- 4.27 The focus must now move beyond the existence of recovery plans to the credibility, delivery and impact of those plans. Plans will need to be tested against the latest forecast position, including whether assumptions around staffing structures, pupil numbers, grant funding, expenditure control and planned actions remain realistic. Where schools are not progressing agreed actions, or where the forecast position has moved materially away from the recovery trajectory, further challenge will be required to identify what additional corrective action is needed.
- 4.28 During 2026/27, the Authority will focus its review activity on those schools presenting the highest financial risk, with particular emphasis on the delivery and impact of agreed recovery actions. This will include direct challenge where actions have slipped, where planned savings or staffing changes are not being implemented, or where updated forecasts indicate that existing plans will not secure recovery within the agreed timescale. Where necessary, the Authority will consider proportionate escalation through established school finance, governance and accountability arrangements. This will ensure that Cabinet Members are sighted on the highest-risk schools, the adequacy of recovery actions and any further support, challenge or intervention required.

4.29 **Financial implications and future focus**

- 4.30 The budget planning framework for 2026/27 reaffirmed the need to move the Council towards a more financially sustainable position, while maintaining an appropriate and prudent level of financial resilience. The approved budget was set without using the Council Fund reserve to support recurrent revenue expenditure, reflecting the continued discipline applied through recent budget rounds.
- 4.31 At Update 1 the Council is forecasting a £464,000 overspend, equivalent to 0.2% of the approved revenue budget. This is a relatively small variance in the context of the overall budget and indicates that the budget remains broadly on track at this early stage of the year, notwithstanding the range of demand, inflationary and delivery risks that continue to be managed.
- 4.32 The position also reflects the benefit of service reform and changes in delivery that have been progressed over recent years. These include stronger demand management, greater use of grant funding where conditions allow, continued vacancy and non-pay control, income maximisation and service-specific redesign. This work is helping to stabilise both budget and service delivery, even where services continue to experience significant operational pressures.
- 4.33 There remain, however, areas that will need close management through the remainder of the year. One-off and annually allocated grant funding streams continue to present a risk where they are supporting core activity, particularly if grant conditions, allocations or

continuation arrangements change. School balances also remain a material issue, with further recovery planning needed to reduce the cumulative deficit over time.

- 4.34 The focus for the remainder of the financial year will therefore be to maintain close financial discipline, continue to deliver approved savings and reforms, and take timely management action where pressures are recurrent or could affect the 2027/28 budget. This approach is intended to contain the current forecast position while ensuring that the underlying medium-term financial challenge remains visible and is addressed through future budget planning.
- 4.35 Management action will continue to be targeted and proportionate, with emphasis on maximising eligible grant and income opportunities, careful vacancy management, limiting non-essential expenditure and supporting services to embed the changes already underway. This will be balanced against the need to protect service resilience and avoid short-term actions that simply defer costs or create pressures in future years.

4.36 Remaining budgetary risks

- 4.37 Whilst the overall forecast remains broadly on track, there remain specific budgetary risks that could affect the revenue position during 2026/27 and will continue to be monitored through future budget updates:
- **Demand volatility in high-cost services**, particularly adults' and children's social care, homelessness and additional learning needs, where relatively small changes in client numbers, complexity or placement requirements can have a material impact on the forecast outturn during the remainder of the financial year.
 - **Further non-delivery of budget savings targets**, especially where these involve income generation, changes to structures, alternative delivery models, reliance on one-off or annually allocated grant funding, or those involving community or other partners.
 - The trend of **reducing debt recovery**, particularly within Council tax and Social Care where there has been a slowing down in collection rates, and where there are increasing numbers of discounts and exemptions being awarded;
 - **The recruitment market** remains challenging, with some services encountering difficulty hiring and retaining suitably qualified and skilled staff. Whilst this will result in a reduction in immediate expenditure, it will impact the ability to deliver services in line with the Council's objectives.
 - **CPI inflation** remains above the Bank of England's 2% target. The latest ONS release shows CPI inflation at 2.9% in the 12 months to July 2026, up from 2.6% in June 2026. While this is significantly lower than the levels experienced during the recent inflationary peak, it remains relevant for budgets where contracts, supplies, utilities or commissioned services are exposed to in-year price movements.

- **Schools reserve balances** – the further forecast draw on balances for 2026/27 of £2.457m would significantly increase the cumulative schools reserve deficit being carried on the Council's balance sheet to £9.337m. This consequently impacts upon the Council's overall financial resilience and increases its risk exposure by reducing available balance sheet resources.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

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

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

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

CONSULTEES:

Senior Leadership Team
Cabinet
Performance and overview committee

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Summary service variances
Appendix 2 – Detailed service variances and commentary
Appendix 3 – Progress against budgeted savings
Appendix 4 – Individual school balance forecasts

AUTHORS:

Jonathan Davies, Head of Finance (Deputy Section 151 officer)

CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: (01633) 644114

E-mail: jonathandavies2@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1 – Summary explanation of service variances forecast

Directorate	Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) (£000s)	% Variance to budget	Overspend	Underspend
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	31	0.0%	Children's Services £594k – pressures in fostering, legal, respite care and family time, with looked after children increasing and delayed opening of new facilities reducing planned placement savings.	Adult Services £665k – underspend from managed demand, grant support and vacancies, partly offset by care at home and complexity pressures.
			Housing & Homelessness £257k – insufficient budget provision, property hand-back costs and Careline 2G to 4G migration costs.	Public Protection £49k – vacant posts and additional income ahead of service review outcomes.
				SCH Support £106k – finance team vacancies.
Learning, Skills & Economy	279	0.4%	Individual Schools Budget £135k – legal costs met centrally, and new King Henry VIII 3-19 School business rates higher than budgeted.	Resources £39k – grant income used to offset staffing costs.
			Standards £182k – Early Years programme grant shortfall, and Breakfast Club cost pressures.	
Infrastructure	(35)	-0.1%	Fleet maintenance £255k – vehicle hire, fuel and maintenance cost pressures, partly offset by vacancy, borrowing cost and vehicle sale income savings.	Infrastructure Management £56k – schools catering staffing savings and UFSM income.
			Corporate Pool Car Scheme £34k – lower than anticipated early usage limiting planned savings, with increased	Passenger Transport £268k – reduced external contract costs, lower pupil numbers

Directorate	Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) (£000s)	% Variance to budget	Overspend	Underspend
			promotion and vehicle location review expected to improve utilisation.	and contract rationalisation, partly offset by in-house PTU income pressures.
Place & Community Wellbeing	(76)	-1.3%	Placemaking, Regeneration & Car Parks £34k – car parking costs and employee efficiency savings pressures, partly offset by income.	Performance, Finance & Resources £68k – delayed business support structure implementation.
				Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery £31k – additional grant-funding
People, Performance & Partnerships	102	1.4%	Chief Executive's Office £157k – staffing, vacancy factor and income target pressures across Community Hubs, Communications and Strategic change programme.	Payroll and System Support £153k - vacant posts being held while staffing requirements are reviewed following the implementation of new software.
			People Management £46k - unachievable staff savings, unbudgeted staffing changes, photography costs and reduced schools SLA income.	Community Education £64k – long-term sickness and additional funding.
Law & Governance	66	2.0%	Democratic services, Legal & Land charges - Inability to achieve staff vacancy savings	
Resources	278	2.8%	Commercial, Corporate & Landlord Services £207k – Castlegate occupancy, rates, electricity and service charge pressures.	
			Finance £27k – Civica system implementation and licence costs, reduced Council Tax summons income and vacancy	

Directorate	Forecast Overspend / (Underspend) (£000s)	% Variance to budget	Overspend	Underspend
			factor pressures, partly offset by grant funding, vacancy savings and lower software inflation.	
			ICT £40k - increases in software and licence costs.	
Corporate Costs & Insurances	135	3.2%	Corporate energy saving £135k – late unit price and standing charge increases following budget set.	
Borrowing & Reserves	(336)	-3.9%		Net borrowing costs – capital programme slippage in prior year, alongside reduced cash requirement in early part of the year.
Financing	20	0.0%	Council Tax £250k - increasing discounts and exemptions, alongside the continuing impact of flood-related relief extending into 2026/27.	Council Tax Reduction Scheme £230k – based on current level of awards.
Total	464	0.2%		

Section 1	Revenue budget summary forecast
Section 2	Detailed service commentary
Section 3	School balances update

Section 1 - Overall Revenue Position

Table 1: 2026/27 Revenue budget forecast by directorate

Service Area	Original Budget 2026/27	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Social Care & Health	81,670	266	81,936	81,967	31
Learning, Skills & Economy	76,200	(28)	76,172	76,451	279
Infrastructure & Place	25,781	492	26,273	26,238	(35)
Place & Community Wellbeing	5,801	(13)	5,788	5,712	(76)
People, Performance & Partnership	6,893	211	7,104	7,207	102
Law & Governance	3,248	(1)	3,247	3,313	66
Resources	9,004	791	9,794	10,073	278
Corporate Costs and Insurances	5,264	(1,000)	4,264	4,399	135
Borrowing & Reserves	9,289	(717)	8,572	8,236	(336)
Service budgets	223,151	0	223,152	223,596	444
Precepts & Levies	30,551	0	30,551	30,551	0
Financing	(253,702)	0	(253,702)	(253,682)	20
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	464	464

Table 2: 2026/27 Revenue budget forecast by service

Service Area	Original Budget 2026/27	Budget Adjustments	Revised Annual Budget	Forecast Outturn	Forecast (Under) / Over Spend @ Update 1
	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's	'000's
Adult Services	49,417	(148)	49,269	48,604	(665)
Children Services	25,698	220	25,918	26,512	594
Housing & Homelessness	2,846	200	3,046	3,304	257
Public Protection	1,949	18	1,967	1,918	(49)
SCH Support	1,760	(24)	1,735	1,630	(106)
Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	81,670	266	81,936	81,967	31
Economy, Employment & Skills	943	0	943	943	0
Emergency Planning	223	0	223	223	0
Individual Schools Budget	62,453	(28)	62,426	62,561	135
Resources	1,307	0	1,307	1,268	(39)
Standards	11,274	0	11,274	11,456	182
Learning, Skills & Economy	76,200	(28)	76,172	76,451	279
Infrastructure Management	1,304	(2)	1,302	1,245	(56)
Neighbourhood Services	3,152	(104)	3,049	3,049	0
Transport Services	12,618	234	12,852	12,872	20
Waste & Decarbonisation	8,707	364	9,071	9,072	1
Infrastructure	25,781	492	26,273	26,238	(35)
Culture and Community Learning	954	0	954	941	(13)
Countryside, Destination and Environment	1,300	0	1,300	1,271	(29)
Leisure and Wellbeing	1,536	0	1,536	1,536	0
Performance, Finance and Resources	1,760	(13)	1,747	1,679	(68)
Planning, Regeneration & Car parks	250	0	250	285	34
Place & Community Wellbeing	5,801	(13)	5,788	5,712	(76)
Chief Executives Office	3,236	29	3,265	3,422	157
People	2,076	141	2,217	2,148	(69)
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service	1,581	41	1,622	1,636	14
People, Performance & Partnerships	6,893	211	7,104	7,207	102
Democratic Services	2,097	0	2,097	2,140	43

Legal and Land Charges	1,151	(1)	1,150	1,173	23
Law & Governance	3,248	(1)	3,247	3,313	66
Commercial, Corporate & Landlord Services	2,242	(3)	2,239	2,445	207
Corporate Health & Safety	165	0	165	169	5
Finance	3,536	77	3,613	3,640	27
Information Communication Technology	3,061	717	3,778	3,818	40
Resources	9,004	791	9,794	10,073	278
Coroners	343	0	343	343	0
Archives	238	0	238	238	0
Corporate Management	462	0	462	462	0
Non Distributed Costs (NDC)	338	0	338	338	0
Strategic Initiatives	1,865	(1,000)	865	1,000	135
Insurance	2,018	0	2,018	2,018	0
Corporate Costs & Insurances	5,264	(1,000)	4,264	4,399	135
Interest and Investment Income	(804)	0	(804)	(779)	25
Interest Payable & Similar Charges	7,853	0	7,853	7,820	(33)
Charges Required under Regulation	6,273	0	6,273	6,129	(144)
Other Investment Income	0	0	0	(1)	(1)
Borrowing Cost Recoupment	(3,821)	0	(3,821)	(4,004)	(183)
Contributions to Reserves	735	0	735	735	0
Contributions from Reserves	(947)	(717)	(1,664)	(1,664)	0
Contribution from Council Fund	0	0	0	0	0
Borrowing & Reserves	9,289	(717)	8,572	8,236	(336)
Service budgets	223,151	0	223,152	223,596	444
Precepts & Levies	30,551	0	30,551	30,551	0
General Government Grants	(111,348)	0	(111,348)	(111,348)	0
Non Domestic Rates	(33,374)	0	(33,374)	(33,374)	0
Council tax	(118,335)	0	(118,335)	(118,085)	250
Council Tax Benefit Support	9,356	0	9,356	9,126	(230)
Financing	(253,702)	0	(253,702)	(253,682)	20
Net General Fund (Surplus) / Deficit	0	0	0	464	464

Section 2 - Directorate – Service Variance Comments

SOCIAL CARE, HEALTH & SAFEGUARDING	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	31	0	0	0

With the first forecast of this new financial year, the overspend of £31k against the backdrop of a total budget allocation of £82m is a manageable position moving forward.

Even though Adults is showing an underspend of £665k, demand pressures remain mainly within care at home provision. Pressures are being continually masked year on year by various grant and external funding streams, such as £2.1m from both the Social Care Workforce Sustainability and Pathways for Care grants, which continue to support core costs. An additional ongoing concern is the RIF funding, for which we have £2.5m allocated this year, being the final year of current agreement. Of this RIF allocation, £2.2m funds staff that support core services and should the funding not materialise next year, this will result in the need to review and determine requirements to mitigate the possible financial pressure and calls on redundancies, while trying to maintain service provision.

Children's is predicting a £594k overspend mainly due to pressures within fostering, legal, respite care and the family time service, with looked after numbers increasing from 192 at the start of the year to 211 at the end of July. A delay in opening the new Children's facilities has reduced the projected savings in external placement costs. However, the delayed opening of facilities has helped to mitigate the extent of the overspend in this division.

From a budget perspective, Housing remains a relatively new addition to the directorate, and work is ongoing to better understand the underlying cost base. Pressures are arising from a combination of insufficient budget provision; costs associated with property hand-backs and Careline moving from 2G to 4G.

Adult Services				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(665)	0	0	0

The current underspend position demonstrates that demand is being proactively managed, with increased oversight of eligibility and investment in assessment and reablement capacity. Whilst this is delivering greater efficiency and responsiveness, service demand and greater complexity of need present an ongoing budgetary risk with unpredictable impact. This can be seen across the three integrated teams and the community learning disability team.

This reporting period has seen pressure arising within care at home, with both the number of weekly hours being provided and the cost of care increasing. Residential placements have remained stable during this period, but the overall trend remains upward. Key drivers include care and support requirements associated with hospital discharge, as well as the underlying ageing demographic and corresponding increase in the complexity of care needs people are experiencing.

Additional funding, with a combined total of £2.1m from the Delayed Pathways of Care and Social Care Workforce grants, and £2.5m of RIF funding, supports the 2026/27 adult services budget. Despite the risks associated with grant funding, it is being used to greatest effect across the workforce to support service priorities.

Some of the service pressures are being offset by vacancies within the operational teams, particularly social work posts within the integrated teams and in direct care. The service is currently managing to maintain service levels and is not currently showing significant increases in waiting lists. However, there is ongoing recruitment activity, and the impact of vacancies is being closely monitored to ensure that emerging longer-term service needs are met and to ensure a sustainable workforce.

Children's Services

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	594	0	0	0

Within Children's Services, pressures are being felt within our in-house fostering service. On a positive note, this correlates with our efforts to ensure that in-house foster placements are fully utilised through increased support and with our drive to recruit more carers. Increasing fostering activity, however, does come at an increased cost to the service, with in-house fortnightly fostering payments increasing by £12.5k. Using in-house foster care secures better outcomes for children and avoids using more costly external providers.

The family time service is showing cost pressures; however, a recently approved report considers recruiting permanent staff on suitable contracts to alleviate the need to use agencies and pay additional enhancements. As recruitment will not take place until the second half of the year, any cost benefits will not materialise until the latter part of the year, or not fully until next financial year.

The children with disability budget is overspending by £200k, which relates to a small number of children with very high needs being supported to remain at home.

In general, increased pressure is being experienced within family support services which is indicative of the increased numbers of children who are being supported to remain with their families, rather than enter into children's placements.

The commitment to bolster the in-house legal team by two additional staff members has added to the overspend position, as budget must be released to the legal team to fund the posts. It is expected that once the posts have been appointed, there will be compensating savings through reduced need to send legal work to external solicitors, but this has yet to be quantified.

The service is currently developing two new residential facilities to increase the in-house provision of children's placements. These are predicated on a full-year annual budget. However, a delay in opening dates has led to slippage and the resultant underspend is being used to help mitigate service pressures. Once these facilities are operational, with target dates of October and November 2026, there will be increased opportunity to provide children with in-county placements and to offset current high-cost external placement costs.

After holding stable for a significant period, the number of children being looked after is currently showing an increase. Since this reporting period, numbers have increased to 218, from 211 at the end of July and from 192 at year-end March 2026. This is indicative of the current level of need within families and communities and represents some additional risk for the next period.

HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

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

Housing remains a relatively new addition to the directorate, and work is ongoing to better understand the underlying budget pressures. There are a few cost centres where, historically, budget provision has been insufficient, leading to overspends. This is coupled with a strategic move to hand back properties, leading to repairs and void rent costs, which are contributing to the overall deficit position.

There is also an unexpected pressure in Careline from the move from 2G to 4G, which is a total pressure of £168k over two years, with £74k falling into this year as year one.

Public Protection				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(49)	0	0	0

Vacant posts and additional income have led to the projected underspend within this section.

However, a service-wide review is in progress to evaluate current structures, workloads and future service requirements. Early indications have identified that targeted restructuring within key areas of Public Protection will be necessary to address recruitment, retention and workload challenges. Once this work develops, additional spend will look to utilise the allocated budget in future.

SCH Support				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(106)	0	0	0

Vacant posts within the finance team have been the main issue leading to the underspend.

Learning, Skills & Economy Directorate	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	279	0	0	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

The directorate's current position is an overspend of £279k. This is largely due to an increase in the rates for the new King Henry VIII 3-19 School building, which exceeded the budget by £116k, and a pressure of £185k in Early Years.

Despite increasing the Early Years budget by £55k for 2026/27, the take-up of places is still exceeding the grant funding, resulting in a forecast overspend of £150k against the Expansion of Early Years Grant. Breakfast Club also continues to be a pressure, due to increasing staff and food costs and a decrease in income, resulting in an overspend of £40k.

We have been able to mitigate the overspends by using a grant to offset staff costs.

Economy, Employment & Skills				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0

EES is currently reporting that it will meet budget at Update 1.

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

Emergency Planning is currently reporting that it will meet budget at Update 1.

Individual Schools Budget

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

The ISB is overspent by £135k at Update 1 due to the following:

- £116k increase in rates regarding the new King Henry VIII 3-19 School build
- £19k of legal costs relating to schools

Resources

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

Resources is underspent by £39k, as a grant has been received and used to offset staff costs.

Standards

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	182	0	0	0

Standards is overspent by £182k at Update 1 due to the following:

- **£150k overspend re Expansion of Early Years Grant** – the Council continues to see excellent take-up rates for early education, with an increasing number of families choosing non-maintained childcare settings rather than local authority-maintained nursery provision. The Council has a statutory duty to secure a minimum of 10 hours of early education per week for eligible three- and four-year-olds. The funding rate payable to non-maintained settings is set nationally by Welsh Government; however, the grant allocation received is insufficient to meet the full cost of current take-up. The Council does not set the rate and does not top up providers where their normal fee-paying rate is higher, meaning settings absorb any difference. Given the statutory nature of the entitlement, parental choice of setting and the nationally set funding arrangements, the Council has limited ability to reduce this expenditure locally.
- **£40k overspend re Breakfast Club** – the number of children accessing Breakfast Clubs has remained fairly consistent over the last few years. However, staff and food costs have increased due to inflation and pay awards. Additional staff have also been required to cover long-term sickness and to support pupils with additional learning needs. In addition to the rise in costs, there has been a decrease in income. Although the number of pupils accessing the before-school care element of Breakfast Clubs has increased slightly since the previous financial year, the increase is not sufficient to cover the shortfall between actual expenditure and budget.

We have been able to reduce the overspend slightly by utilising grant income to offset staff costs.

INFRASTRUCTURE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(35)	0	0	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

At Update 1, the directorate is forecasting a net underspend of £35k, reflecting a generally stable financial position across services.

Infrastructure Management is forecasting a £56k underspend, driven by managed staffing savings and increased Universal Free School Meals income within Schools Catering.

Neighbourhood Services is reporting a balanced position across all service areas.

Transport Services is forecasting a £20k overspend. Significant pressures within Fleet Maintenance, arising from increased vehicle hire, fuel and maintenance costs, are being substantially offset by savings and additional income. The overspend is further mitigated by a significant underspend within Passenger Transport, reflecting lower external contract costs following service changes, reduced pupil numbers and contract rationalisation. The position remains subject to change following the start of the new academic year.

Waste & Decarbonisation is forecasting a marginal £1k overspend. Waste Services and Grounds Maintenance are currently reporting balanced positions, although Grounds Maintenance continues to face longer-term pressure from declining commuted sums income as historic developer agreements reach expiry. Increased Solar Farm income and staffing savings have helped offset pressures within Decarbonisation.

Overall, the directorate's financial position remains positive at this early stage of the year, although key risks relating to fleet costs, transport contract demand, waste contract costs and the reduction in commuted sums income will continue to be closely monitored and reported through future budget updates.

Infrastructure Management

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(56)	0	0	0

Infrastructure Management is forecasting a £56k underspend, due to:

- **Schools Catering** – £56k underspend – Schools Catering is reporting a £56k underspend, primarily driven by managed staffing savings and increased Universal Free School Meals income.
- **Infrastructure Management** – on budget.

Neighbourhood Services

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

Neighbourhood Services is forecasting a break-even budget at Update 1:

- **Highways Operations & External Clients** – on budget.
- **Streetlighting** – on budget.
- **Highways Design, Flooding & Road Safety** – on budget.

Transport Services				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	20	0	0	0

Transport Services is forecasting a £20k overspend due to:

- Fleet Maintenance** – £255k overspend – the main drivers are vehicle hire costs, which are forecast to be £230k above budget due to increased service demand and accident damage cover, and fuel costs, which are expected to exceed budget by £110k due to increases in fuel prices over recent months. Maintenance, repairs and spare parts are forecast to overspend by £97k due to increased vehicle parts prices and higher levels of accident damage. In addition, there are unbudgeted costs of £33k relating to CENEX consultancy support to produce a fleet transition plan and £26k for the JAAMA Fleet Management System. These additional costs are partially offset by a number of underspends, including a £42k saving from a vacant post, a £50k underspend on borrowing costs, £104k income from the sale of vehicles and a £46k increase in rechargeable income. Officers will continue to review fleet utilisation to mitigate the overspend and will provide an update at Update 2.
- Corporate Pool Car Scheme** – £34k overspend – The scheme commenced in mid-April and initial uptake during the first quarter was lower than anticipated, resulting in expected savings not being achieved. Since July, usage has increased, and officers are undertaking a further promotional campaign to encourage additional users, alongside a review of vehicle locations to ensure they are sited in the most accessible and appropriate areas. It is anticipated that these actions will increase utilisation and help reduce the projected overspend by the end of the financial year.
- Passenger Transport** – £268k underspend – This is primarily due to a forecast underspend of £409k on external transport contracts. External contract costs have reduced significantly over recent years, and the service is now seeing the full-year impact of the changes to eligibility distances that were implemented in September 2025. The number of contracts has reduced from 168 in September 2023 to 131 in September 2026, reflecting the successful transfer of some pupils onto public service bus routes and the consolidation of contracts where appropriate. In addition, pupil numbers have reduced by 116 over the same period.
The underspend on external contracts is partially offset by forecast overspends within the in-house PTU team of £140k. These include a £55k shortfall in private hire income and a £205k reduction in contract income resulting from the lower number of contracts from September 2026, offset by £120k of BNG administration grant income. There remains potential for the forecast position to change over the coming weeks as a result of contract amendments or hand-backs following the commencement of new contracts in September. Officers will continue to review staffing levels and vehicle requirements to ensure sufficient resources are available to accommodate any changes and will provide an update at Update 2.

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

Waste & Decarbonisation is forecasting a £1k overspend at Update 1:

- **Waste Services** – on budget – Early-year projections indicate that waste will be within budget, although recycling rates and contract charges can fluctuate during the year, which could impact outturn. Officers will provide an update at Update 2.
- **Grounds Maintenance** – on budget – Grounds Maintenance is currently forecasting a balanced budget position. The service is experiencing a reduction in income as annual payments from commuted sums, or developer contributions, continue to decline, with a number of agreements reaching the end of their typical 25-year term. This creates a budget pressure, as the service remains responsible for maintaining sites that have been adopted. Officers are currently identifying and implementing mitigating actions to offset this pressure and are therefore reporting a break-even position at this stage. However, the forecast remains subject to change as the year progresses, and a further update will be provided at Update 2.
- **Decarbonisation** – £1k overspend – Underspends arising from increased income generated by the Solar Farm and part-year staffing savings within the Decarbonisation Team have helped offset pressures relating to the non-achievement of corporate mileage savings.

PLACE & COMMUNITY WELLBEING	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(76)	0	0	0

CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY

Place and Community Wellbeing is forecasting a **net underspend of £76k** at Update 1.

The forecast position is primarily driven by underspends within Performance, Finance and Resources, Countryside, Destination and Environment, and Culture and Community Learning, partly offset by a forecast overspend within Placemaking, Regeneration and Car Parks. Leisure and Wellbeing is currently forecasting a balanced position. However, the service continues to carry substantial income targets across the leisure centre portfolio and, as this is an early monitoring update, income trends will continue to be reviewed closely throughout the year.

The directorate will continue to improve facilities and identify opportunities to increase participation, usage and footfall, supporting delivery of the current forecast position. There remains, however, a level of financial risk across the portfolio, particularly within front-line services where sickness absence must be covered to maintain service availability, alongside the requirement to deliver significant income targets.

In addition, the directorate is managing a significant programme of project delivery, including the refurbishment of the first-floor fitness suite at Caldicot Leisure Centre, the replacement skate park, the new accessible and visitor-focused Shire Hall development, regeneration projects including Transforming Towns and Pride in Place, and work associated with the adoption of the RLDP. These projects are central to improving facilities, supporting place-based regeneration and delivering wider community benefits, but they require continued oversight to ensure delivery remains on track alongside existing operational and financial pressures.

Culture and Community Learning				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(13)	0	0	0

Culture and Community Learning is forecasting a **£13k underspend** at Update 1. This is driven by a number of offsetting variances across the Culture service, with underspends in Markets and Tourist Information Centres partly offset by pressures within museums, attractions and Shire Hall.

- **Borough Theatre General** is forecasting a **balanced position**. This represents an improved position compared with the previous year's outturn, supported by changes to the staffing structure, increased marketing and sales support, and stronger income generation from a more diverse events programme.
- **Markets** are forecasting a **£30k underspend**. This is mainly due to staffing vacancies and the delayed implementation of the restructure, which are reducing forecast employee costs in-year. The position will need to be kept under review as the restructure progresses and staffing arrangements are confirmed.
- **Museums** are forecasting a **£29k overspend**, with service-level pressures largely offset by underspends elsewhere within the museums budget. The position reflects a small number of operational and staffing pressures, which will continue to be monitored as the year progresses, alongside the inability to deliver income expectations during the closure of Shire Hall.
- **Attractions** are broadly close to budget overall, with Old Station Tintern forecasting a **£2k pressure** and Caldicot Castle and Country Park forecasting a **£3k underspend**. The Old Station position reflects staffing being slightly above budget despite the 50% site lead arrangement. At Caldicot Castle, additional tree surveys and works are required due to the impact of weather over the last 18 months, but these costs are currently more than offset by the 50% site lead saving.
- **Tourist Information Centres** are forecasting a **£20k underspend**, with income currently ahead of budget. This is a positive contribution to the overall Culture position and helps offset pressures elsewhere in the service.
- **Learning and Volunteering** is forecasting a **£7k overspend**. This is due to staffing costs being slightly above budget, partly offset by income and other minor underspends within the service.

Countryside, Destination and Environment

Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(29)	0	0	0

Countryside, Destination and Environment is forecasting a **£29k underspend** at Update 1.

- **Countryside Access** is forecasting a **balanced position** overall.
- **Green Infrastructure and Nature Recovery** is forecasting a **£31k underspend**. This reflects additional grant-funded activity, including Nature Networks and the Local Nature Partnership, partly offset by a pressure within Green Infrastructure from higher than anticipated supplies and services, vehicle-related costs and staffing where ERS income is not expected.

Tourism is forecasting a small **£2k overspend**.

Leisure and Wellbeing

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

Leisure and Wellbeing is forecasting a **balanced position** at Update 1.

The service continues to monitor income across the leisure centre portfolio closely, as delivery of income targets remains a key area of financial risk. The refurbishment of Caldicot Leisure Centre is expected to create additional in-year costs, while the delayed opening of outdoor facilities at Abergavenny is placing pressure on income targets. These areas will continue to be reviewed as the year progresses.

Performance, Finance and Resources				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(68)	0	0	0
Performance, Finance and Resources is forecasting a £68k underspend at Update 1.				
This is mainly related to the delayed implementation of the Business Support central support structure to the area management teams, which has created partial-year savings.				
Planning, Regeneration & Car Parks				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	34	0	0	0
Placemaking, Regeneration and Car Parks is forecasting a £34k overspend at Update 1.				
Development Management and Building Control is forecasting a £9k overspend. Building Control and Regulations is currently forecasting a balanced position, with income performing better than expected, although this may reduce over the winter months. Development Management is forecasting a small pressure, with income currently forecast in line with budget setting assumptions until the outcome of the RLDP hearing sessions is known. Planning Policy is forecasting a balanced position. Reserve funding has not been included in the current forecast but is expected to cover additional LDP-related costs arising during the year. Car Parks is forecasting a £26k overspend. This reflects increased costs, including higher fees, software costs, machine maintenance, car park maintenance and the inability to achieve employee efficiency savings. These pressures are partly offset by increased Penalty Charge Notice and pay and display income and most of which are outside of the sections control.				
Regeneration is forecasting a balanced position . There is a potential pressure linked to employee-related savings, but this may be covered by additional income streams.				
PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE & PARTNERSHIPS	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	102	0	0	0
CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY People, Performance & Partnerships is forecasting a net overspend of £102k at Update 1. The position is mainly driven by pressures within the Chief Executives Office and Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service, partly offset by an underspend within People. The key issues driving the position within the Chief Executives Office are higher than budgeted staffing costs across both the Community Hubs and Communications teams, the overall inability to meet staff vacancy factors across all services, and the inability to achieve budgeted income targets.				
Chief Executives Office				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4

Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	157	0	0	0
The Chief Executives Office is forecasting a £157k overspend at Update 1. The main pressures are:				
• Community Hubs – £117k overspend, mainly linked to the service's inability to achieve staff vacancy factors, higher than budgeted staffing levels, increased premises costs and failure to achieve income targets. • Communications – £58k overspend, due to higher than budgeted staffing costs, the inability to achieve employee-related savings and failure to achieve income targets. • Strategic Change and Programme Assurance – £44k overspend, including a potential £27k Marches Forward contribution, subject to confirmation, alongside staffing cost pressures. • Procurement – £6k overspend, due to increased corporate procurement agreement costs. • Community Education – £64k underspend, reflecting long-term sickness and available engagement funding, with the position to be reviewed further as funding assumptions are confirmed.				
People				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(69)	0	0	0
People is forecasting a £69k underspend at Update 1. The main areas contributing to the position are:				
• Payroll and System Support – £153k underspend, due to vacant posts being held while staffing requirements are reviewed following the implementation of new software. • People Management – £46k overspend, linked to unachievable staff savings, unbudgeted staffing changes, photography costs and reduced schools SLA income. • Occupational Health – £24k overspend, due to increased service demand. • Organisational Development – £13k overspend, reflecting unachievable employee-related savings and non-pay efficiency savings. • Corporate Training – £2k overspend.				
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	14	0	0	0
Policy, Scrutiny & Customer Service is forecasting a £14k overspend at Update 1. The main pressures and offsets are:				
• Corporate Costs – £39k overspend, due to insufficient budget to support previous management structure changes and copyright licence costs. • Equalities and Welsh Language – £41k overspend, reflecting maternity leave cover and the delayed start of the planned Torfaen SLA arrangement. • CCTV – £30k overspend, due to the required wireless infrastructure upgrade in Monmouth Town Centre, with potential for capitalisation if capital budget becomes available. • Levies and Subscriptions – £13k overspend, due to the renewal of the New Local subscription. • Performance and Data – £35k underspend, due to an unfilled vacancy. • ASBO Co-ordinator – £31k underspend, due to vacant and part-time posts. • Partnerships Management – £28k underspend, due to savings from reduced hours for phased retirement. • Complaints – £16k underspend, due to an increased staffing budget being partly offset by professional and specialist fee commitments.				

LAW & GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	66	0	0	0
CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY				
Law & Governance is forecasting a £66k overspend at Update 1. This is primarily due to the inability to achieve the budgeted staff vacancy savings within Legal and Member Services. All other service areas are currently forecasting a break-even position. Officers will continue to explore mitigating actions to reduce the projected overspend and will provide a further update at Update 2.				
Democratic Services				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	43	0	0	0
Democratic services is forecasting a £43k overspend against budget, this is due to: • Members - £43k overspent – due to the inability to achieve staff vacancy factor savings. • Committee & Election services – On budget.				
Legal and Land Charges				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'s	23	0	0	0
Legal & Land Charges is forecasting a £23k overspend, due to: • Legal - £23k overspend – mainly due to the inability to achieve staff vacancy factor savings. • Land Charges – On Budget.				
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	278	0	0	0
CHIEF OFFICER COMMENTARY				
The Resources Directorate is forecasting an overspend of £278k at Update 1. Whilst this represents an early-year pressure, the position remains manageable and is not unexpected given a number of known cost and income risks across the directorate. The principal pressure relates to the Council's commercial property portfolio, particularly Castlegate Business Park, alongside a small number of service-specific budget pressures within ICT, Finance and Corporate Health & Safety. As highlighted in the final outturn reporting for 2025/26, the directorate continues to face a challenging operating environment characterised by inflationary pressures, increasing technology costs and the need to maximise income from commercial assets whilst maintaining essential corporate services. Early intervention will therefore be critical. During the remainder of the year, management action will be targeted at recovery planning within services reporting adverse variances, with particular focus on vacancy management, restriction on non-essential spending, maximising income opportunities, and mitigating risks within the commercial property portfolio. Particular attention will be given to improving the financial performance of investment assets and ensuring that any emerging pressures are addressed at the earliest opportunity. Whilst risks remain, it is expected that proactive management action throughout the year will improve the forecast position and support delivery of a balanced outturn.				

Commercial, Corporate & landlord Services				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	207	0	0	0

Commercial, Corporate & Landlord services is forecasting to overspend by £207k, this is due to:

Investment Properties - £227k overspend, due to:

- **Newport Leisure Park** – On Budget – Newport Leisure Park is currently forecast to remain on budget, with no significant issues identified at this early stage. Performance will continue to be closely monitored.
- **Castlegate Business Park** - £227k overspend – Castlegate is forecast to overspend by £227k due to anticipated changes in occupancy and increases in business rates, electricity costs and service charges. Negotiations also continue with a significant tenant to address rent and service charges, with an anticipated reduction in the tenant's occupation being seen as a necessary step to ensure payment obligations are met and the recovery of arrears. Further update will be provided at the next reporting period.

Landlord Services – £5k net overspend – Landlord Services is forecasting a net overspend of £5k across the department. Due to vacant units, we are projecting a rental income shortfall, together with associated unbudgeted void costs, across both the County Farms and Industrial Units portfolios, totalling £52k. These primarily relate to an isolated legal case and eviction at one MCC farm holding, and the re-letting of a vacant industrial unit. Both are projected to be reoccupied in late 26/27. This pressure has been largely offset by managed staffing savings as the service continues to implement its staffing restructure, with Phase 1 now underway. There remains potential for the projected outturn to change should vacant units be re-let during the remainder of the financial year, which would improve rental income performance and reduce ongoing void-related costs.

Building Cleaning & Public Conveniences - £25k under spend – Income is projected to increase as more sites have come back in-house.

Property Services – On Budget – a shortfall in external fee income has been offset by a managed underspend on employee costs.

Corporate Health & Safety				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	5	0	0	0

Corporate Health & Safety is forecasting a £5k overspend due to the inability to make staff vacancy savings.

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

The Finance Division is forecasting £27k overspend, this is due to:

- **Revenues, Systems & Exchequer** - £34k net overspend:

- **Benefits** – £19k underspend - The under spend is a mix of additional subsidy costs, offset by a reduction in penalty cell costs for Homeless B&B placements and additional one off grant income. As it is still early in the financial year, forecasting with certainty remains challenging, as Housing Benefit placements can fluctuate and may impact the reported outturn position. Officers will provide a further update at Update 2.
- **Council Tax** - £37k overspend – This is largely attributable to an anticipated £70k reduction in summons income, following changes Welsh Government have made to council tax recovery legislation. Offset by £33k one off Welsh Government grant funding.
- **Debtors** - £10k underspend – Due to part year staff vacancy savings (post has now been filled) and an underspend in supplies & services.
- **Cashiers** - £58k overspend - over spend is attributable to one off implementation and licence costs for the Civica system, resulting from a new contract.
- **Revenues System Administration** - £19k underspend - The annual inflationary uplift in system software costs is lower than the percentage anticipated when setting the budget releasing an in-year underspend.
- **Financial Systems Support & VAT** - £12k underspend – primarily as a result of part-year staff vacancies.
- **Finance & Audit** - £7k underspend – mainly due to part year staff savings in Finance regarding two vacant posts, that are currently in the recruitment phase.

Information, Communication & Technology

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

The ICT division is forecasting a £40k overspend, due to:-

- **SRS & Digital Programme Office** – £34k overspend – Currently forecasting a net overspend due to increases in software and licence costs.
- **Digital, Design & Innovation** – On budget.
- **Cyber Security Partnership** - £6k overspend – due to the unbudgeted cost of cyber security training software not included as part of partnership contribution.
- **Telephony** – On Budget.

CORPORATE COSTS & INSURANCES DIRECTORATE	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	135	0	0	0

Coroners

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

No variance forecast

Archives

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

No variance forecast				
Corporate Management				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast				
Non-Distributed Costs				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast				
Strategic Initiatives				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	135	0	0	0
Current projections indicate that, because of late increases in unit prices and standing charges, the £135k corporate energy saving is not forecast to be achieved in 2026/27. Price and usage forecasts will continue to be reviewed and an updated position reported at Update 2.				
Insurance				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance forecast				
BORROWING & RESERVES	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(336)	0	0	0
Interest & Investment Income				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	24	0	0	0
The weaker performance of liquid investments due to lower than budgeted rates has been partially offset by the stronger returns on pooled investment funds due to improvements in equities markets.				
Interest Payable & Similar Charges				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(32)	0	0	0
Lower than anticipated expenditure in the early part of the year has reduced short-term borrowing requirements, reducing interest spend. This underspend is reduced by the increased cost of taking borrowing due to higher than anticipated rates.				
Charges Required Under Regulation (Minimum Revenue Provision)				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(144)	0	0	0
Largely due to slippage of capital expenditure budget from 2025/26 to 2026/27 reducing the requirement to make as much MRP as previously anticipated.				

Borrowing Cost Recoupment				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(183)	0	0	0
The underspend is due to additional borrowing recoupment from services following finalisation of the purchasing financing mechanism for vehicles procured during 2025/26, that was not known about at the time of budget setting.				
Contributions to / from Reserves				
Outturn Forecast	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No variance				
FINANCING				
Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	20	0	0	0
Council Tax Reduction Scheme				
Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	(230)	0	0	0
The current level of awards remain steady indicating that there will likely be an underspend in this area.				
Council Tax				
Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	250	0	0	0
The number of discounts and exemptions continues to increase. Also, seeing the continued impact of last year's floods, as the 12 month relief awarded runs into 2026/27.				
General Government Grants				
Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4	
Deficit / (Surplus) £'000s	0	0	0	0
No Variance forecast				

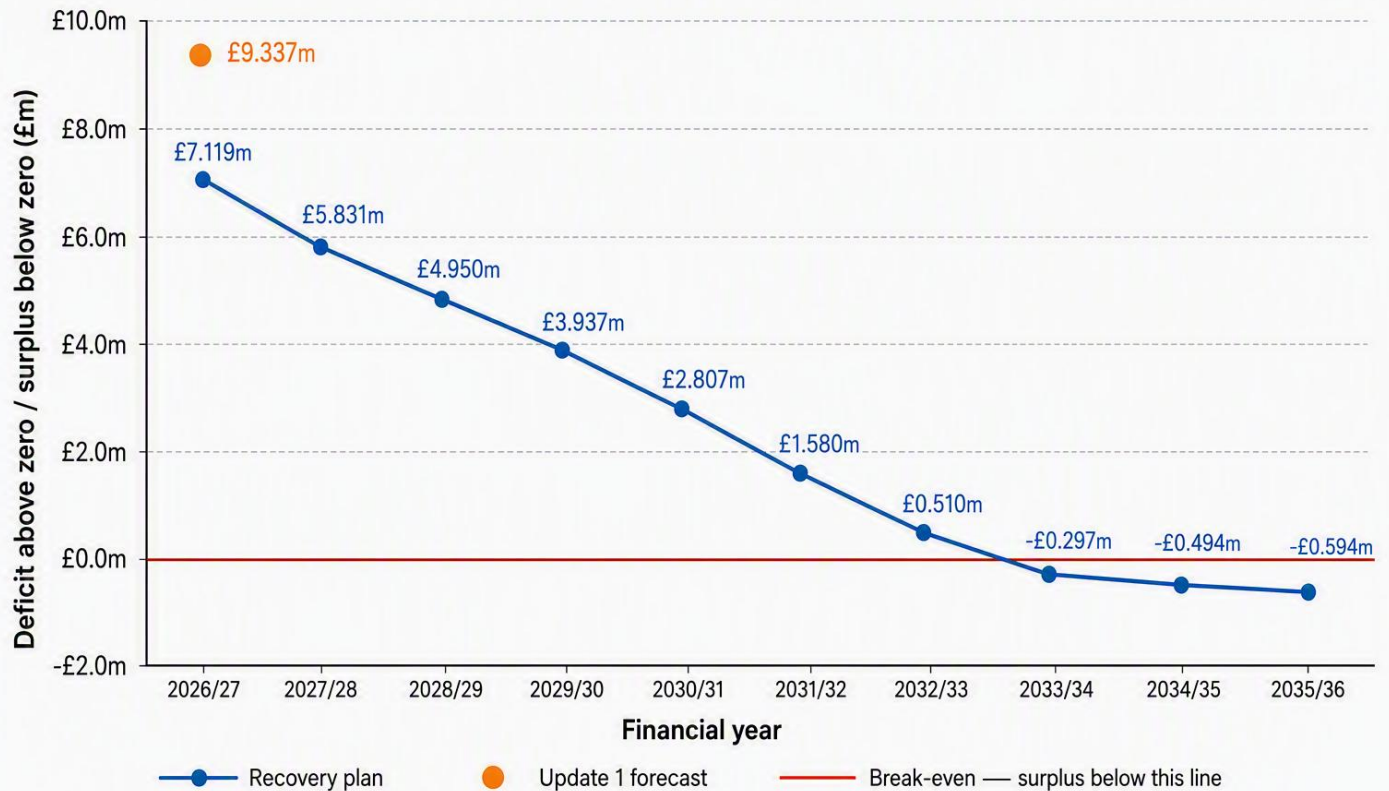
3. Section 3 – School Balances

- 3.1. A Board of Governors is responsible for managing each school's finances. The Authority also has a key responsibility for monitoring the collective financial position of schools and ensuring that schools in financial difficulty have credible and deliverable recovery plans. The table below shows the forecast schools' balances position by educational cluster at Update 1.

School Reserves	(A) Opening Balances (Surplus) / Deficit Position 2026/27	(B) Draw / (Contribution) on School Balances @ Update 1	(C) Draw / (Contribution) on School Balances @ Update 2	(D) Draw / (Contribution) on School Balances @ Update 3	(E) Draw/ (Contribution) on School Balances @ Update 4	(A+B) Forecast 2026/27 Balances
Cluster	£000's	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Abergavenny	2,393	299				2,692
Caldicot	647	653				1,300
Chepstow	758	(124)				634
Monmouth	270	134				404
Special	2,813	1,494				4,307
Total	6,880	2,457				9,337

- 3.2. Collective school balances at the beginning of the financial year amounted to a deficit of £6,880,227. Schools are forecasting a further draw on reserves of £2,456,946 during 2026/27, compared with a budgeted draw on reserves of £2,439,914. This results in a forecast cumulative deficit balance of £9,337,173 by year-end, with eighteen schools forecast to be in deficit.
- 3.3. This represents a material deterioration in an already challenging position. The principal drivers continue to be the sustained impact of attendance, behaviour and additional learning needs, together with the staffing and specialist resource required to maintain appropriate provision. While these pressures are not unique to Monmouthshire, the scale and pace of the projected movement mean that the position cannot be viewed as a short-term timing issue and will require sustained corrective action over more than one financial year.
- 3.4. Recovery plans are now in place for schools forecasting a deficit balance. These plans show a gradual improvement in the collective position over the medium term, with the recovery-plan trajectory reducing the cumulative deficit from £7.119m in 2026/27 to £0.510m by 2032/33, before moving into a modest surplus position from 2033/34 onwards. However, the Update 1 forecast deficit of £9.337m is £2.218m worse than the recovery-plan starting point for 2026/27. This means that, while the recovery plans provide an agreed forward trajectory, the latest forecast indicates a materially weaker starting position and reinforces the need for renewed review, support and challenge.

School balance projection based on recovery plans agreed



3.5. The following table shows the movement in the number of schools forecast to be in deficit during the year:

Start of year	Update 1	Update 2	Update 3	Update 4
Total: 19	Total: 18	Total:	Total:	Total: 0
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	King Henry VIII 3-19 School			
Gilwern Primary	Gilwern Primary			
Llantilio Pertholey CiW Primary				
Our Lady & St Michael's RC Primary	Our Lady & St Michael's RC Primary			
Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni	Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni			
Caldicot School	Caldicot School			
Castle Park Primary	Castle Park Primary			
Rogiet Primary	Rogiet Primary			

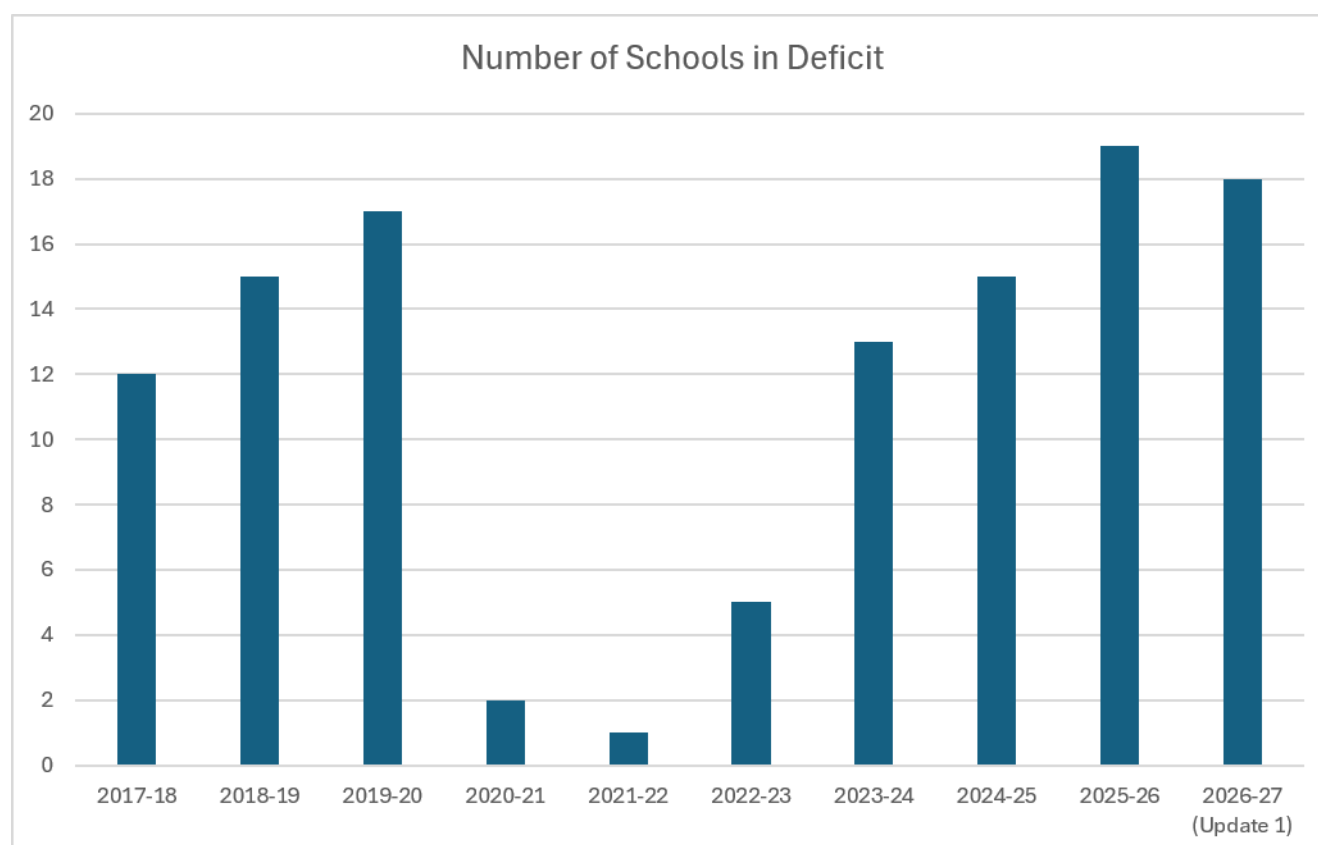
Ysgol Gymraeg y Ffin	Ysgol Gymraeg y Ffin			
Chepstow School	Chepstow School			
The Dell Primary	The Dell Primary			
Thornwell Primary	Thornwell Primary			
Monmouth Comprehensive	Monmouth Comprehensive			
Cross Ash Primary	Cross Ash Primary			
Kymin View Primary				
Osbaston CiW Primary	Osbaston Primary			
Overmonnow Primary	Overmonnow			
Ysgol Gymraeg y Trefynwy	Ysgol Gymraeg y Trefynwy			
Pupil Referral Service	Pupil Referral Service			
	Goytre Primary			

- 3.6. Attendance, behaviour and increased additional learning needs continue to impact schools. These pressures have required increased staffing and specialist resources to maintain appropriate provision, increasing the overall cost base. The Authority will therefore need to be satisfied not only that recovery plans are technically robust, but that they are being actively implemented and are capable of delivering the planned reduction in cumulative deficit over time.
- 3.7. The Authority will now undertake a targeted review of schools assessed as presenting the highest financial risk. This will test whether agreed recovery plans remain credible in light of the Update 1 position, whether planned actions are being implemented at pace, and whether assumptions around staffing, pupil numbers, grant funding and expenditure control remain robust. Where plans are not considered deliverable, or where financial performance continues to deteriorate, the Authority will consider proportionate support, challenge or intervention through its established school finance, governance and accountability arrangements.

Financial Year-end	Net level of School Balances (Surplus) / Deficit in £000's
2015-16	(1,156)
2016-17	(269)

2017-18	(175)
2018-19	232
2019-20	435
2020-21	(3,418)
2021-22	(6,956)
2022-23	(4,257)
2023-24	904
2024-25	4,092
2025-26	6,880
2026-27 (Forecast)	9,337

- 3.8. The recent movement in overall schools in deficit is shown below. The position should be viewed in the context of one-off additional funding provided to schools during the pandemic and its immediate aftermath, which temporarily strengthened school balances and alleviated underlying budget pressures. As that temporary funding has fallen away, those underlying pressures have re-emerged. This underlines the importance of credible recovery plans being delivered over the medium term.



Appendix 3 - Performance against budgeted service savings 2026/27

	Savings proposals by Directorate 2026/27	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance	% Met	
		£000	£000	£000		
	Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	(2,117)	(1,675)	442	79.1%	
	Learning, Skills and Economy	(893)	(893)	0	100.0%	
	Infrastructure	(485)	(468)	17	96.5%	
	Place & Community Wellbeing	(220)	(200)	20	90.9%	
	People, Performance and Partnerships	(17)	(17)	0	100.0%	
	Law & Governance	(16)	(16)	0	100.0%	
	Resources	(409)	(409)	0	100.0%	
	Corporate Costs & Insurances	(135)	0	135	0.0%	
	Totals	(4,291)	(3,677)	614	85.7%	
Page 139						
Ref	Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
SCH1	Fees & Charges	(365)	(365)	0		
SCH2	Children's care planning & placement strategy	(1,002)	(560)	442		Delayed savings due to delayed opening of Children's facilities and need to revisit original placements identified
SCH3	Consolidation of vacancies within in-house domiciliary care	(250)	(250)	0		
SCH4	Maximising the ability to charge core budget to external grant streams	(500)	(500)	0		
Total	Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	(2,117)	(1,675)	442		
Ref	Learning, Skills and Economy	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment

		£000	£000	£000		
CLSE1	Fees & Charges	(6)	(6)	0		
CLSE2	Maximising the ability to charge core budget to external grant streams	(644)	(644)	0		
CLSE4	One-off interest release from grant funding	(243)	(243)	0		
Total	Learning, Skills and Economy	(893)	(893)	0		
Ref	Infrastructure	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
INF1	Highways Ops - increase Fee Income	(30)	(30)	0		Prices increased to cover inflationary uplift, achieved.
INF2	Highways Fees & Charges Increase	(20)	(20)	0		Prices uplifted as per F&C report, assume achieved.
INF3	Fees & Charges Increase	(213)	(213)	0		Prices uplifted as per F&C report, assume achieved.
INF4	Fleet savings	(17)	0	17		Schemes not yet implemented so savings will not be achieved.
INF5	Maximising the ability to charge core budget to external grant streams	(205)	(205)	0		Achieved
Total	Infrastructure	(485)	(468)	17		
Ref	Place & Community Wellbeing	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
PCW1	Utilising the New Area Management Structure	(40)	(20)	20		Delayed implementation of restructure 27-28 will achieve full amount.
PCW2	Leisure centre demand growth	(44)	(44)	0		

PCW3	Implementing New Welsh Government Fee Charges for Planning	(65)	(65)	0		
PCW4	Fees and Charges - Leisure	(40)	(40)	0		
PCW5	Fees and Charges - Building Control	(15)	(15)	0		
PCW6	Fees and Charges - Culture, Heritage and Arts	(16)	(16)	0		
Total	Place & Community Wellbeing	(220)	(200)	20		
Ref	People, Performance and Partnerships	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
PPP1	Reduction in software costs within the contact centre	(17)	(17)	0		
Total	People, Performance and Partnerships	(17)	(17)	0		
Ref	Law & Governance	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
LG1	Part time vacancy freeze in Land Charges	(16)	(16)	0		Post frozen - Achieved
Total	Law & Governance	(16)	(16)	0		
Ref	Resources	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
RES1	Fees and charges	(64)	(64)	0		Fees have been increased, assume achieved
RES2	Efficiencies captured across non-pay budgets	(27)	(27)	0		Achieved

RES3	Release of non-pay inflation or headroom in capitalisation from under utilisation of redundancy allocation	(118)	(118)	0		Achieved
RES4	Housing benefit penalty reduction from reduced B&B usage	(200)	(200)	0		B&B numbers are below 10 so assume saving will be achieved.
Total	Resources	(409)	(409)	0		
Ref	Corporate Costs & Insurances	Budgeted Saving	Forecast Savings	Variance		Comment
		£000	£000	£000		
CORP1	Corporate Energy Saving (Non-Schools)	(135)	0	135		Current projections indicate due to late unit price and standing charge increases that this saving will now not be made this year.
Total	Corporate Costs & Insurances	(135)	0	135		

Appendix 4 - Individual School balance forecasts

FINANCIAL RISK CATEGORY KEY	
GREEN	Existing or projected surplus. Planned and explained use of surplus reserves for one-off investment does not, by itself, increase the risk category.
AMBER	Small projected deficit or emerging financial pressure; also used where an agreed recovery plan is reducing a deficit through a budgeted in-year surplus.
RED	Existing or projected deficit of £100,000 or more, or an unexplained in-year deficit that increases an existing deficit and creates material exposure for the Council.

School	Opening Reserves 2026-27 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Update 1 (Surplus)/Deficit	Projected carry forward at year end 2026-27 (Surplus)/Deficit	Financial Risk Category
Abergavenny cluster				
King Henry VIII 3-19 School	2,241,434	348,054	2,589,488	RED
Cantref Primary School	(152,388)	24,258	(128,130)	GREEN
Gilwern Primary School	68,985	(11,760)	57,225	AMBER
Goytre Fawr Primary School	(5,207)	9,853	4,646	AMBER
Llanfoist Fawr Primary School	(20,463)	(39,207)	(59,670)	GREEN
Llantillio Pertholey CiW Primary School (VC)	9,716	(16,535)	(6,819)	GREEN

School	Opening Reserves 2026-27 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Update 1 (Surplus)/Deficit	Projected carry forward at year end 2026-27 (Surplus)/Deficit	Financial Risk Category
Llanvihangel Crucorney Primary School	(61,257)	47,445	(13,812)	GREEN
Our Lady and St Michael ´s RC Primary School (VA)	72,904	(68,271)	4,633	AMBER
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni	239,620	5,076	244,696	RED
Caldicot cluster				
Caldicot School	745,401	413,587	1,158,988	RED
Archbishop Rowan Williams CiW Primary School (VA)	(92,812)	20,211	(72,601)	GREEN
Castle Park Primary School	17,914	56,164	74,078	RED
Dewstow Primary School	(103,796)	(17,143)	(120,939)	GREEN
Durand Primary School	(109,367)	(8,528)	(117,895)	GREEN
Magor CiW Primary School (VA)	(190,603)	166,238	(24,365)	GREEN
Rogiet Primary School	243,759	(14,996)	228,763	RED
Undy Primary School	(55,315)	(33,864)	(89,179)	GREEN
Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin	191,779	71,600	263,379	RED
Chepstow cluster				
Chepstow School	888,453	10,294	898,747	RED
Pembroke Primary School	(298,774)	42,263	(256,511)	GREEN
Shirenewton Primary School	(162,675)	36,371	(126,304)	GREEN
St Mary ´s Chepstow RC Primary School (VA)	(44,094)	5,052	(39,042)	GREEN
The Dell Primary School	177,299	(159,783)	17,516	AMBER
Thornwell Primary School	197,386	(58,155)	139,231	RED
Monmouth cluster				

School	Opening Reserves 2026-27 (Surplus)/Deficit	In Year position at Update 1 (Surplus)/Deficit	Projected carry forward at year end 2026-27 (Surplus)/Deficit	Financial Risk Category
Monmouth Comprehensive	37,291	122,323	159,614	RED
Cross Ash Primary School	44,891	0	44,891	RED
Kymin View Primary School	22,461	(70,005)	(47,544)	GREEN
Llandogo Primary School	(23,201)	(35,374)	(58,575)	GREEN
Osbaston CiW Primary School (VC)	49,530	(8,087)	41,443	AMBER
Overmonnow Primary School	352,910	(23,600)	329,310	RED
Raglan CiW Primary School (VC)	(108,666)	62,060	(46,606)	GREEN
Trellech Primary School	(112,538)	39,112	(73,426)	GREEN
Usk CiW Primary School (VC)	(8,327)	(3,781)	(12,108)	GREEN
Ysgol Gymraeg y Trefynwy	15,300	51,704	67,004	RED
	4,067,550	962,576	5,030,126	
Special School				
Pupil Referral Unit	2,812,677	1,494,370	4,307,047	RED
Total	6,880,227	2,456,946	9,337,173	

This page is intentionally left blank