

# Public Document Pack



County Hall  
Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Tuesday, 25 November 2025

## Notice of meeting

### Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee

**Wednesday, 3rd December, 2025 at 10.00 am,  
Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK**

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

## AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	<b>Apologies for Absence</b>	
2.	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
3.	<b>Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan update</b>  To update the committee on the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy action plan.	1 - 24
4.	<b>Potholes and Road Conditions</b>  To scrutinise the assessment of requirements, how these are prioritised, MCC's approach, etc.	
5.	<b>ADDITIONAL BUSINESS: Planning Annual Performance Report</b>  Scrutiny of the annual performance report prior to submission to Welsh Government.	25 - 80
6.	<b>ADDITIONAL BUSINESS: Community &amp; Corporate Plan progress update</b>  To inform Members of the Plan's Progress.	81 - 116
7.	<b>Next Meeting : 27th January 2026 (Special) at 2pm and 10th February 2026 at 10am</b>	

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**Paul Matthews**

**Chief Executive**

# MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

## THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

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

## Public Information

### Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

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

### Welsh Language

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

### Public Open Forum

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

If you would like to speak under the Public Open Forum at an upcoming meeting you will need to give three working days' notice in advance of the meeting by contacting [Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

The amount of time afforded to each member of the public to speak is at the Chair's discretion, but to enable us to accommodate multiple speakers we ask that contributions be no longer than 3 minutes.

Alternatively, if you would like to submit a written, audio or video representation, please contact the team via the same email address to arrange this. The deadline for submitting representations to the Council is 5pm three clear working days in advance of the meeting. If combined representations received exceed 30 minutes, a selection of these based on theme will be shared at the meeting. All representations received will be made available to councillors prior to the meeting.

If you would like to suggest future topics for scrutiny by one of our Scrutiny Committees, please do so by emailing [Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

# Aims and Values of Monmouthshire County Council

## Our purpose

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

## **Objectives we are working towards**

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

## Our Values

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

**Fairness.** We provide fair chances, to help people and communities thrive. If something does not seem fair, we will listen and help explain why. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently. We cannot always make everyone happy, but will commit to listening and explaining why we did what we did.

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

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

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

### Role of the Pre-meeting

1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues)
  2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve?
  3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this?
- Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead
  - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member

### Questions for the Meeting

#### Scrutinising Performance

1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why?
2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why?
3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why?
4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic?
5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service?
6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings?
7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives?
8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?

#### Scrutinising Policy

1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least?
2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome?
3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective?
4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say?
5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence?
6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities?
7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards?

	<p>8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications</p> <p>9. been taken into consideration? For example, what are the procedures that need to be in place to protect children?</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11. How much will this cost to implement and what funding source has been identified?</p> <p>12.</p> <p>13. How will performance of the policy be measured and the impact evaluated</p>
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## General Questions:

### Empowering Communities

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

### Service Demands

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

### Financial Planning

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

### Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?

- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

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

**Questions for the Committee to conclude...**

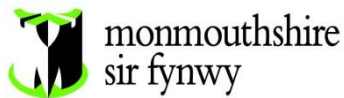
Do we have the necessary information to form conclusions/make recommendations to the executive, council, other partners? If not, do we need to:

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

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







**SUBJECT:** Economy, Employment & Skills Strategy action plan progress update  
**MEETING:** Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee  
**DATE:** 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025  
**DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:** All

## **1 PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the Council's Economy, Employment and Skills (EES) Strategy Action Plan Progress Update, enabling scrutiny of progress against the objectives set out in the strategy approved by Cabinet on 7 February 2024 (Appendix One).

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee scrutinises the delivery of the objectives set out in the EES Strategy (Appendix One) and the areas for development for 25/26.
- 2.2 That the committee acknowledge that a range of approved and developing strategies now cover key objectives within the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy (EES), adopted in February 2024, and that progress will continue to be monitored through these with key updates reflected in the EES Strategy Action Plan where relevant.
- Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy
  - Asset Management Strategy
  - Local Area Energy Plan
  - NEET Prevention Strategy
  - Local Food Strategy
  - Local Transport Strategy
  - Destination Management Plan (currently in development)

## **3. KEY ISSUES:**

### **Background information**

- 3.1.1 Monmouthshire has a high value, highly skilled, diverse, and resilient economy, working to its full capacity, attracting investment to support its strong entrepreneurial culture.
- 3.1.2 In the UK Competitiveness Index 2023, Monmouthshire retained its position as the second most competitive economy in Wales after the capital city of Cardiff and has improved its UK ranking since 2019. This reflects the comparatively high earnings achieved in the Monmouthshire economy.
- 3.1.3 Our economy has clear potential to be a key contributor to future economic growth of the Cardiff Capital Region and Wales as a whole. Its relative economic strength will be critical in boosting the wider and adjoining areas and border regions, contributing to the strategic policy ambitions described earlier

- 3.1.4 Monmouthshire is a border county in a strategic location, a “Gateway to Wales”. Our county benefits from its involvement in regional economic partnerships including the Cardiff Capital Region/Corporate Joint Committee and Marches Forward. Participation in these partnerships enable us to exploit areas of mutual benefit and added value, increase investment prospects, showcase best practice by building strong networks and identify opportunities to share services where it is cost effective.

### **Progress to date**

- 3.2.1 The Economy, Employment and Skills (EESS) Strategy and Action Plan was [approved by Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024](#). It addresses the challenges and opportunities for sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Monmouthshire. The responsibility of this strategy is a shared one, involving a range of directorates within Monmouthshire County Council.
- 3.2.2 Our Corporate and Community Plan recognises that Monmouthshire has a strong diverse economy and is well placed for growth, employment rates are high as are qualification levels but there is more that can be done. Monmouthshire can be more vibrant and the conditions exist to achieve this. The EES Strategy vision is *‘To foster a diverse, fairer, greener and circular economy, generating sustainable employment growth and creating conditions for shared prosperity.’* This is set out through four key priority themes: -Place, People, Enterprise, and Infrastructure and a number of objectives which, have informed the action plan. These are detailed in the tables below:

#### **Place: A Vibrant, greener Monmouthshire**

- Promote the distinctive diversity of Monmouthshire as a county of opportunity
- Support the vitality of our town centres
- Support the transition towards net zero and protect our environment
- Support rural diversification
- Enhance the experience for visitors and deliver sustainable growth in our tourism economy

#### **People: A fairer, more successful Monmouthshire**

- Support a balanced change in the demographic profile of our county.
- Support the creation of up to 6,240 sustainable job opportunities.
- Equip people with skills and qualifications to enter employment, enable employment progression, and explore a Skills Centre in Monmouthshire
- Collaborate with comprehensive schools, further and higher education partners to enhance access and networks.

#### **Enterprise: A thriving, ambitious, Monmouthshire**

- Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses including our larger businesses
- Finding our place in relation to regional growth opportunities
- Increase uptake of support for people wishing to start or grow a business.
- Continue to foster a strong entrepreneurial culture.
- Encourage innovation and clustering in sectors.
- Make public procurement spend more accessible
- Foster a thriving local food economy

#### **Infrastructure: A well- connected Monmouthshire attracting business investment**

- Inform the use and distribution of employment land and premises.
- Explore the Council’s role in the delivery of employment floor space.
- Support improvements in digital connectivity

- Support a sustainable transport system that contributes to our economic ambition and the vision of the Local Transport Plan
- Attract investment from larger high value enterprise

3.2.3 The report evaluates the action plan under the four themes and objectives listed above in 3.2.2, considering progress to date, milestones and areas for development in 25/26. Appendix One provides a summary of the EES Strategy actions and measures achieved.

### 3.3 **EES Strategy Action Plan progress update**

3.3.1 The EES Strategy Action Plan progress update is included as Appendix One of this report and the following achievements are highlighted:

- Continued engagement with major employers throughout Monmouthshire considering how investment plans can be supported by land availability, communication links, training opportunities, links to regional clusters and University research programmes, and labour supply.
- Launched the MCC STEM Programme, embedding hands-on STEM learning in schools and strengthening links with major employers. A dedicated webpage and Hwb Network are supporting collaboration.
- Continued engagement with providers of skills training in locations adjacent to Monmouthshire with an aim of improving access and promoting Monmouthshire as a future location for training centres.
- Continuous review of employment land locations in Monmouthshire with a view to matching availability with investment opportunities.
- Review of opportunities for small scale flexible business spaces in the county. All nine council-managed MonSpace flexi-suites at CastleGate Business Park are now fully occupied.
- RLDP agreed by council October 2025 and submitted to the Welsh Government Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW).
- Adoption of Placemaking Plans in Usk and Chepstow, with draft plans in development for Monmouth, Abergavenny and Magor with Undy, subject to Cabinet approval December 2025. A consultant will be appointed in the coming months to commence the development of the Caldicot Placemaking Plan. This will contribute to our ambition to create vibrant and sustainable futures for our town and village centres.
- Economic impact of tourism increased to £352.41m in 2024, 1.9% increase on the previous year. This demonstrates the importance of the tourism sector to Monmouthshire's economy.
- Addressed barriers to employment and supported 82 people to gain employment in 24/25 above our annual target of 60. This has enabled people of all ages and backgrounds to have the skills to do well in work.
- Data held in our Evolutive CRM shows we received 478 business support enquiries from businesses and potential entrepreneurs in the period 01/04/23 – 30/09/25.
- Numerous events including Venture Graduate Business Breakfast, RLDP Business Engagement, Women in Business and Marches Real Food and Farming Convergence.
- Welsh Vegetables in Schools pilot working with local growers has enabled them to diversify whilst also supplying pupils with nutritious, local food. We have also supported the development of new safety standards and logistics, enabling growers to expand and new farmers to diversify into organic horticulture as part of this scheme.

3.3.2 The Action Plan Update (Appendix One) also identifies several areas for further development over the next 12 months. These include:

- Continue to promote Monmouthshire as a competitive and diverse location for business
- Establish a local skills task group linked to the Regional Skills Partnership
- Skills centre moves from exploratory to discovery stage considering local demand, workforce trends, and financial viability, continuing the dialogue with potential providers.
- Develop solutions to tackle the rise in young people not in education, employment, or training.
- Ensuring Monmouthshire can drive maximum benefit from regional growth opportunities.
- Developing town-based forums which bring together local businesses with local councils to shape placemaking and business opportunities in each town.

3.3.3 The Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee has an important role in scrutinising the delivery of the council's EES Strategy. The committee may use the findings to identify any further areas for development to be included in the action plan measures for 2025/26.

3.3.4 The new Local Growth Fund in Wales is currently out for consultation, which may impact future funding streams for local economic growth.

#### **4. Integrated Impact Assessment (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding & corporate parenting)**

4.1 An integrated impact assessment was completed for the strategy and action plan in 2024. As there have been no significant changes since that assessment, an update has not been required.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. However, there may be implications in undertaking further actions identified in the EES Strategy Action Plan that would be subject to the usual council decision-making processes.

#### **6. Consultees**

- Paul Griffiths – Deputy Leader & Cabinet member for Economic Development & Planning
- Will McLean – Strategic Director Children, Learning, Economy & Skills
- Children, Learning Economy & Skills DMT
- Senior Leadership Team
- Andrew Jones – Head of Planning
- Nicholas Keyse – Head of Landlord Services
- Colette Bosley – Countryside, Destination, and Environment Manager
- Daniel Fordham – Regeneration and Placemaking Manager
- Nick Tulp – Head of Transport
- Ian Hoccom – Decarbonisation Manager
- Cath Fallon – Head of Strategic Change, Partnerships and Procurement
- Rhys James – Strategic Procurement Lead
- Christian Schmidt – Passenger Transport Planning and Projects Manager
- Elaine Blanchard – Sustainable Food Engagement Officer

#### **7. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Economy, Employment & Skills Strategy Action Plan progress update – Appendix One

#### **8. AUTHORS:**

Hannah Jones, Head of Economy, Employment and Skills  
James Woodcock, Business Insights Manager  
Jackie Godfrey, Business Data and Communications Officer

**7. CONTACT DETAILS:**

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Monmouthshire has a high value, highly skilled, diverse, and resilient economy, working to its full capacity, attracting investment to support its strong entrepreneurial culture. In the UK Competitiveness Index 2023, Monmouthshire retained its position as the second most competitive economy in Wales after the capital city of Cardiff and has improved its UK ranking since 2019.

Monmouthshire County Council's Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028 notes that the county has one of the strongest economies in Wales and is best placed for growth of any Welsh county, with circa 4,000 active businesses ranging from international companies to small family enterprises. Skill and qualification levels here are comparatively high, as are employment rates. Our schools are good and highly regarded. People take advantage of road and rail links to commute into and out of the area for employment opportunities. But there is more that can be done. Monmouthshire can be more vibrant. The conditions exist to achieve this.

We have continued to work with national, regional and local partners to increase investment, improve connectivity and continue the development of an economy which is thriving, ambitious and enterprising. In February 2024 we adopted a new [Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy](#), which sets out how we will deliver our aspiration 'To foster a diverse, fairer, greener and circular economy, generating sustainable employment growth and creating conditions for shared prosperity', focusing on four key themes.

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Responsibility for delivery of this strategy is a shared one, involving a range of directorates within Monmouthshire County Council.

## Strategic Alignment and Reporting Approach

Since the adoption of the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy (EES Strategy) in February 2024, the Council has approved or progressed several other strategies and plans that align with EES Strategy objectives. Existing documents such as the **Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy** and **Asset Management Strategy** have been joined by new or developing plans including the **Local Area Energy Plan**, **NEET Prevention Strategy**, **Local Food Strategy**, **Local Transport Strategy**, and the **Destination Management Plan**.

**The Deposit Plan – Replacement Local Development Plan** was submitted to Welsh Government for examination following Council approval on 23 October 2025.

These documents address specific objectives also within the EES Strategy. We are therefore seeking the committee's agreement that these areas are sufficiently covered through their respective plans. Going forward, we propose that progress is monitored and reported through each strategy's own mechanisms, with key updates noted within the EES Strategy action plan where relevant.

## Approved and Developing Strategies and Plans

- **Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy** [Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy](#)  
*Cabinet approval: 7 June 2023*  
**EES Objective:** Make public procurement spend more accessible.
- **Socially Responsible Procurement Policy** [Socially Responsible Procurement Policy - Ardal-Monmouth .pdf](#)
- *Draft – Approval expected in Cabinet December 2025*
- **Asset Management Strategy** [Asset Management Strategy](#)  
*Council approval: 18 January 2024*  
**EES Objective:** Explore the Council's role in the delivery of employment floorspace.
- **Monmouthshire Local Area Energy Plan** [Local Area Energy Plan](#)  
*Cabinet noted: 17 September 2025*  
**EES Objective:** Support transition towards net zero and protect our environment.
- **Local Transport Strategy 2024–2025** [Local Transport Strategy 24-25](#)  
*Cabinet approval: 15 May 2024*  
**EES Objective:** A sustainable transport system that contributes to our economic ambitions and vision of the Local Transport Strategy.
- **Local Food Strategy** [Local Food Strategy](#)  
*Cabinet approval: 22 May 2024*  
**EES Objectives:** Support rural diversification and foster a thriving local food economy.
- **NEET Prevention Strategy** [Neet Prevention Strategy](#)  
*Cabinet approval: 5 December 2024*  
**EES Objectives:** Equip people with skills and qualifications to enter employment, enable employment progression, and explore a Skills Centre in Monmouthshire.
- **Destination Management Plan 2025–2030** [Monmouthshire Destination Management Plan](#)  
*Cabinet approval: 19 November 2025*  
**EES Objective:** Promote Monmouthshire as a destination to support the visitor economy.
- **Deposit Plan – Replacement Local Development Plan** [Replacement Local Development Plan \(RLDP\) - 2018-2033 - Monmouthshire](#)  
*The plan was submitted to Welsh Government for examination following Council approval on 23 October 2025.*  
**EES Objective:** The plan underpins several objectives within the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy



The following summary provides a snapshot of Monmouthshire's current position and, where applicable, progress made since 2022. All data is sourced from NOMIS.

The ONS 2023 Annual Population Survey reveals that 65% of residents who are employed work within the County. There is substantial movement of people in and out of the County: 17,100 commuting out of the area and 14,100 commuting into the area (2021). Of those commuting out for employment nearly 27% were commuting to the City of Bristol and a further 21% to other areas in England.

### **Economic Activity**

Levels of economic activity stood at 79.8% in June 2025 (Wales – 75.9%, GB – 78.8%) compared to 79.7% in March 2022 (Wales – 76.5%, GB – 78.5%). This is the highest rate in the Cardiff City Region. 2.8% of those who are economically active are unemployed. This is the equal lowest rate in Wales (alongside Powys).

### **Self-employment**

Self-employment in Monmouthshire accounts for 11.6% of those who are economically active.

### **Enterprises**

The total number of enterprises in Monmouthshire declined from 4,575 in 2022 to 4,445 in 2024. However, the number of active enterprises per 10,000 population in 2023 was 773 (latest available data) - the highest in Wales and above the average for Great Britain (see Appendix 2).

### **3 Year Survival Rate**

The latest available data indicates that 60.3% of businesses in Monmouthshire were still active three years after their start date. This exceeds the UK rate of 52.9% and the Wales rate of 50% (see Appendix 2).


### **Earnings by Place of Residence (Based on a 1% sample of employees)**

Gross weekly pay (median) for full time resident workers (male and female) in Monmouthshire increased from £731.7 in 2022 (Wales - £604.3, GB - £644.7) to £811.8 in 2025 (Wales - £719.3, GB - £766.6). This means Monmouthshire ranks highest by county in Wales and above the GB average, the median in 2025 was £915.6 for male workers and £744.2 for female workers (see Appendix 2). This data indicates that the gross weekly pay (median) of full-time male resident workers is £171.4 higher than for full time female resident workers. This is the most significant difference identified within the 2025 NOMIS earnings data.

### **Earnings by Workplace (Based on 1% sample of employees)**

Gross weekly pay (median) for full time workers (male and female) in Monmouthshire workplaces increased from £642.0 in 2022 (Wales - £599.7, GB - £644.2) to £773.5 in 2025 (Wales - £704.3, GB - £766.6). Monmouthshire therefore ranks highest in Wales in 2025. The median in 2025 was £805.9 for male workers and £765.7 for female workers. This data indicates that the gross weekly pay (median) of full-time male workers in Monmouthshire workplaces is £40.2 higher than for full time female workers (see Appendix 2).


It is important to note that this earnings data is derived from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE). This is based on a 1 per cent sample of employees. The data supports the perception that Monmouthshire is, on average, a prosperous and affluent county, with none of our communities in the most deprived 10% in Wales. However, we have high levels of income inequality and headline figures can mask pockets of need. The percentage of people living in households in material deprivation in Monmouthshire stood at 8.0% for 2022/23 (latest available data) (Wales – 16%) (Wales only indicator). The cost-of-living crisis coupled with high property prices makes it difficult for young people and future generations to live and work locally.

PLACE	THEME OBJECTIVES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the competitiveness and diversity of our economy.</li> <li>• Support the vitality of our town centres.</li> <li>• Support transition towards net zero and protect our environment.</li> <li>• Support rural diversification.</li> <li>• Enhance the experience of visitors and deliver sustainable growth in our tourism economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>The Place theme focuses on shaping Monmouthshire’s economic identity through competitiveness, town centre vitality, environmental transition, rural diversification, and tourism. Business Monmouthshire leads on promoting the competitiveness and diversity of the economy, while other objectives are delivered by partner teams, with our support where appropriate.</p> <p><b>Promoting the Competitiveness and Diversity of Our Economy</b></p> <p>We have initiated a pilot marketing campaign for MonSpace, Monmouthshire County Council’s flexible workspace offer, and CastleGate in Caldicot, to test promotional approaches for Council-owned commercial assets. While the scope for deeper insights was limited due to the current availability of space, the campaign marks a proactive step in showcasing local commercial opportunities. An important aspect of the campaign was also to raise awareness of Business Monmouthshire among MonSpace and CastleGate tenants, which led to a direct enquiry and subsequent support being provided by the Business Monmouthshire team. Alongside this, we are strengthening internal communications and focusing on more strategic coordination of economic and commercial development opportunities across the county.</p> <p><b>Town Centres, Environment, Rural Economy, and Tourism</b></p> <p>We recognise the importance of these areas in shaping the county’s economic landscape. Placemaking plans are progressing across key towns, with footfall monitoring and vacancy tracking underway. The Local Area Energy Plan 2025 showcases the continued delivery of an accredited Carbon Literacy programme for businesses, residents and community leaders to empower change and promoting and supporting the delivery of Surple scheme to provide Net Zero training, tools and support to businesses in the county. Rural diversification efforts have supported farms through training and technology adoption, and tourism continues to grow, with strong digital engagement and increased economic impact. Retail vacancy rates across Monmouthshire’s town centres provide a useful indicator of local vitality. As of the latest survey (Dec 2024-January 2025), the overall Monmouthshire town centre vacancy rate is 10.39% against a UK average of 13.7% (Savills). Monmouth has the highest vacancy rate at <b>15.5%</b> (↓2.7% YOY), followed by Magor at <b>12.0%</b> (no YOY data), Abergavenny at <b>9.4%</b> (↑3.4% YOY), Caldicot at <b>9.0%</b> (↓0.5% YOY), Chepstow at <b>8.0%</b> (↓5.6% YOY), and Usk at <b>7.4%</b> (↓2.6% YOY). We are looking to develop town-based forums which bring together local businesses with local councils to shape placemaking and business opportunities in each town, including addressing vacancy rates.</p>	
<p><b>MILESTONES/HIGHLIGHTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have worked with partners and stakeholders to adopt Placemaking Plans in Usk and Chepstow. We have developed draft Placemaking Plans for Monmouth, Abergavenny and Magor with Undy, subject to Cabinet approval December 2025. A consultant will be appointed in the coming months to commence the development of the Caldicot Placemaking Plans.</li> <li>• We have continued to assist the tourism sector and promote event and attractions in the county. The number of jobs supported by tourism stayed stable at 3,422 in 2024. The economic impact of tourism increased to £352.41m in 2024, a 1.9% increase on the previous year, demonstrating the resilience of the sector in Monmouthshire.</li> <li>• The Destination Management Plan subject to Cabinet approval 19th November Monmouthshire Destination Management Plan, sets out a clear direction for the future, as well as an ambition and roadmap for developing the visitor economy within the county to 2030.</li> <li>• Monmouthshire proudly hosted Armed Forces Day 2025 attracting thousands of visitors to Caldicot, boosting footfall and supporting local businesses. It showcased Monmouthshire’s heritage assets (Caldicot Castle) and delivered a high-profile national event, strengthening the county’s tourism profile.</li> </ul>	

- The Tour of Britain 2025 attracted thousands of spectators to Monmouthshire's towns and countryside, showcasing iconic locations such as The Tumble and Monnow Bridge, boosting visitor spend and promoting the county as a destination for major events.

#### **AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- We will continue to promote Monmouthshire as a competitive and diverse location for business and develop the county's economic identity and visibility at regional and national levels.
- Developing town-based forums which bring together local businesses with local councils to shape placemaking and business opportunities in each town, including addressing vacancy rates.

PEOPLE	THEME OBJECTIVES
 <div data-bbox="309 188 519 331"> <p>People</p> <p>A fairer, more successful Monmouthshire</p> </div>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support a balanced change in the demographic profile of our county.</li> <li>• Support the creation of up to 6,240 sustainable job opportunities.</li> <li>• Equip people with skills and qualifications to enter employment, enable employment progression and explore a Skills Centre in Monmouthshire.</li> <li>• Collaborate with comprehensive schools, further and higher education partners to enhance access, and networks.</li> </ul>
<p><b>STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p>The People theme focuses on ensuring Monmouthshire’s residents are equipped to thrive in a changing economy. We, alongside the wider Economy, Employment and Skills team, lead on skills development and education partnerships, support job creation and contribute to wider efforts to shape the county’s demographic profile.</p> <p><b>Skills and Employment Progression</b></p> <p>We continue to deliver targeted support to help residents gain qualifications, improve skills, and access employment. In 2024–25, 236 qualifications were achieved across Inspire, CELT+, CfW+, and Multiply programmes, with 448 people improving their skills and 57 long-term unemployed (economically inactive for 18 months+) residents supported into employment or education.</p> <p>We have piloted the Future Focus employability programme for 18 –24 years in partnership with Job Centre. Evidence in the county and across the UK of a significant increase in 18 –24-year-olds claiming universal credit from 441 in 2020 to 729 in 2025 due to a number of concerns including mental health, lack of social skills and confidence. This 12-week programme offers employability skills, CV writing, inspirational speakers and work experience opportunities. First cohort 16 young people participated in the programme of which 5 have secured employment and second cohort 19 young people are currently participating in the programme of which 4 have secured employment to date.</p> <p>A skills gap analysis is underway, and two training providers have been engaged to explore the feasibility of a Monmouthshire Skills Centre. Engagement with six major employers has helped identify priority areas for future workforce development.</p> <p><b>Education and Employer Collaboration</b></p> <p>Our work with schools and education partners is progressing well. The E-sgol network now offers 17 Level 3 courses, and a new Level 2 Pathway to Employment in Child Care will launch in September 2025. STEM project coordination is underway with a STEM coordinator joining the team in February 2025. Engagement with headteachers and cluster meetings has helped align education with employer needs and six major businesses have contributed to discussions on skills shortages and future workforce planning. number of Y11, 12 and 13 leavers who entered apprenticeships upon leaving school in 2024</p> <p>strategic coordination of Post 16 provision is imperative to ensure more equitable access to academic and vocational pathways across Monmouthshire. We support this by working with schools, further and higher education institutions, and training providers to develop well-defined training opportunities in skills shortage areas. This work complements the council’s NEET Prevention Strategy by helping to create clearer progression routes for young people, including the most vulnerable.</p> <p><b>STEM Programme: Strengthening Skills and Employer Collaboration</b></p> <p>The MCC STEM Programme, launched in summer 2025 with Welsh Government support, is a key milestone in our education and skills work. It aims to inspire learners, strengthen school-business links, and grow STEM pathways across Monmouthshire. Schools have received robotics, coding, and 3D printing kits, supported by cluster coordinators and a comprehensive teacher training programme. Greenpower electric cars were distributed to 13 primary and all secondary schools, embedding hands-on engineering into the curriculum. Major STEM employers including Creo Medical, Microchip, and Siltbuster are actively engaging with schools, and a dedicated webpage and Hwb Network are supporting collaboration. This initiative strengthens our strategic coordination with education and employer partners, supports the development of skills and qualifications for future employment, and contributes to longer-term ambitions around employment progression and the feasibility of a Monmouthshire Skills Centre.</p>	

### Job Creation and Demographic Change

We drive sustainable job creation by allocating employment land and promoting available sites, underpinned by the Deposit RLDP. In 2024–25, 108 affordable and 74 market homes were approved, helping younger residents live and work locally. The RLDP will deliver 1,000 affordable homes at pace and scale over the next plan period.

The RLDP is central to addressing the core issues: accelerating affordable housing, responding to the climate and nature emergency, and ensuring socially and economically sustainable communities by attracting a younger demographic and supporting Monmouthshire's economic prosperity.

### MILESTONES/HIGHLIGHTS

- **RLDP- [Replacement Local Development Plan \(RLDP\) - 2018-2033 - Monmouthshire](#)**


In October 2025, the Council agreed to submit the RLDP to the Welsh Government and Planning and Environment Decisions Wales for independent examination.

The RLDP is tackling Monmouthshire's biggest challenges by scaling up affordable housing delivery, driving sustainable employment growth through employment land allocation, and embedding climate resilience. In 2024–25, 108 affordable and 74 market homes were approved, with 1,000 more planned—helping rebalance demographics and strengthen the local economy.

- Launched the MCC STEM Programme, embedding hands-on STEM learning in schools and strengthening links with major employers. A dedicated webpage and Hwb Network are supporting collaboration. This programme is a standout achievement in our skills and education work. [STEM Programme - Monmouthshire](#)
- We have addressed barriers to employment and supported a total 82 people to gain employment this year (including 57 long-term economically inactive individuals), above our annual target of 60.

### AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Establishing a local skills task group, linked to the Regional Skills Partnership, would help coordinate delivery, reduce duplication and ensure employer needs are consistently reflected in future programme design.
- We will commence delivery of the Connect to Work programme funded through the Department of Work and Pensions and administered on a regional basis through Cardiff City Council. The programme is aimed at supporting individuals with health barriers and disabilities into meaningful paid employment.
- We are currently in the exploratory stage of a Skills centre in Monmouthshire through conversations with training providers and our significant businesses. This needs to move into a discovery stage looking at the need and financial viability, continuing the dialogue with potential providers.
- There has been a significant increase in the number of Year 11 and Year 13 leavers not in education, employment or training; 25 young people of Year 11 leavers were NEET, higher than the 14 young people in the recent years. We are analysing the reasons for this, including tracking individual journeys, and will use this information to target support with partners as part our NEET prevention strategy.

ENTERPRISE	THEME OBJECTIVES
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the sustainable growth of existing businesses including our larger businesses.</li> <li>• Find our place in relation to regional growth sectors.</li> <li>• Increase uptake of support for people wishing to start or grow a business.</li> <li>• Continue to foster a strong entrepreneurial culture.</li> <li>• Encourage innovation and clustering.</li> <li>• Make public procurement spend more accessible.</li> <li>• Foster a thriving local food economy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Strategic Assessment:</b></p> <p>We continue to lead the county’s enterprise agenda with a focus on inclusive, sustainable growth and a resilient local economy. Our team is directly responsible for driving progress across five core objectives of supporting existing businesses, aligning with regional growth sectors, increasing uptake of business support, nurturing entrepreneurship and encouraging innovation and clustering. We also contribute strategically to wider objectives around procurement and the local food economy.</p> <p><b>Supporting Sustainable Growth of Existing Businesses and Enabling People to Start Their Own Businesses</b></p> <p>In 2024–25, Business Monmouthshire supported 59 pre-start and existing businesses and in just the first half of 2025-26 has supported a further 58 businesses. This reflects a steady increase in engagement which has been enabled by investment from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and ongoing efforts to raise awareness of our services. Implementation of our new Evolutive CRM system has meant we are able to better track support enquiries and develop meaningful engagement with businesses through email communication and newsletters. Our monthly newsletter is sent to over 340 subscribers and includes vital information for business owners in Monmouthshire such as grants and funding projects, business events and operational updates. Evolutive provides us with a central hub to run all our email engagement and business support from, using it to manage client data, track support stages, manage grant applications and events. We are working to embed Business Monmouthshire as a trusted and accessible resource for businesses across the county.</p> <p><b>Positioning Within Regional Growth Sectors</b></p> <p>We continue to play a strategic role in regional partnerships, including Cardiff Capital Region, and the Marches Forward Partnership. As a member of the Corporate Joint Committee, we contribute to the preparation of a Strategic Development Plan, a Regional Transport Plan and promoting the economic wellbeing of the area. Our involvement ensures Monmouthshire is well-positioned to benefit from emerging sectoral opportunities.</p> <p><b>Increasing Uptake of Business Support</b></p> <p>Support for business growth and start-up activity continues to build momentum, with engagement levels showing strong improvement. While the number of new and existing businesses we have supported is slightly below target, it reflects a significant uplift from previous years and demonstrates the growing reach and impact of Business Monmouthshire’s support offer. Business Monmouthshire is developing a communications framework to improve outreach and engagement, while Shared Prosperity Fund investment has significantly boosted our capacity since 2023.</p> <p><b>Fostering an Entrepreneurial Culture</b></p> <p>Entrepreneurial activity is thriving in Monmouthshire. Business Monmouthshire has (supported the launch of three new businesses) and helped 49 residents progress toward self-employment. Our tailored interventions are helping to build a dynamic and self-sustaining local economy.</p>	

### Encouraging Innovation and Clustering

Business Monmouthshire is facilitating innovation and clustering. Our quarterly Monmouthshire Enterprise Partners meetings now include key stakeholders such as Mentera and USW (University of South Wales) Exchange, creating new opportunities for collaboration. The Food Partnership team has successfully developed two farming clusters through Mentera/Cywain.

### Make public procurement spend more accessible

We continue to support strategic objectives around procurement. Procurement systems have been updated to improve local access, with £11.17M in local spend and a new Socially Responsible Procurement Policy in development. The Ardal Partnership is enhancing cross-council collaboration and training.

### Foster a thriving food economy

In the food economy, 46 enterprises have been supported by the Monmouthshire Sustainable Food Partnership, and local sourcing is being embedded in public sector supply chains, including schools and care settings.


### MILESTONES/HIGHLIGHTS

- Data held in our Evolutive CRM shows we received 478 business support enquiries from businesses and potential entrepreneurs in the period 01/04/23 – 30/09/25.
- **Venture Graduates Breakfast (Jan 2024)**  
This business breakfast event was open to local employers and raised awareness of the Venture Graduates programme. It acted as a catalyst for broader conversations around business support, enabling us to engage directly with employers on their workforce needs, growth ambitions, and access to support. The event created valuable inroads into some of the county's larger businesses, and those relationships continue to deepen through ongoing dialogue and collaboration.
- **RLDP Business Engagement Event (Dec 2024)**  
[Replacement Local Development Plan \(RLDP\) - 2018-2033 - Monmouthshire](#)  
We created space for businesses to engage with planning policy and land-use strategy, helping shape the future of employment land availability in Monmouthshire and the Replacement Local Development Plan.
- **Women in Business Event (Apr 2025)**  
[Success at Business Monmouthshire's 'Women In Business Taking the Leap' event - Monmouthshire](#)  
A flagship celebration of female entrepreneurship in Monmouthshire. The event featured inspiring speakers, peer networking, and practical workshops, helping build confidence and visibility for women-led businesses.
- **Welsh Veg in Schools Pilot Scheme**  
[Monmouthshire pupils get hands-on experience at Langtons Farm - Monmouthshire](#)  
We have worked with local farmers as part of the Welsh Veg in Schools pilot scheme to bring more local produce into schools. This has provided pupils in ten participating schools with nutritious, local food no matter their socio-economic background. The project has also supported the development of new safety standards and new logistics. Growers are expanding their enterprises, and new farmers are diversifying into organic horticulture to participate.
- **The Marches Real Food and Farming Convergence (October 2025)**  
[The Marches Real Food and Farming Convergence 2025 celebrates success - Monmouthshire](#)  
Hosted by Monmouthshire, the Convergence welcomed attendees from the Marches and beyond to explore the future of local food systems and to foster collaboration for a resilient, sustainable food future. A key feature of the event was its focus on legacy, aiming to develop farming clusters in Monmouthshire to foster collaborative spaces for learning and mutual support.
- Hosted by Monmouthshire at Caldicot Castle, Armed Forces Day 2025 created opportunities for local food and drink businesses and suppliers to participate, promoting local enterprise.

**AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- Through our networks we will ensure that Monmouthshire can derive maximum benefit from regional growth opportunities.



INFRASTRUCTURE	THEME OBJECTIVES
 <p data-bbox="331 188 533 331">Infrastructure An investable, connected Monmouthshire</p>	<ul data-bbox="651 188 1973 352" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the use and distribution of employment land and premises.</li> <li>• Explore the Council's role in the delivery of employment floorspace.</li> <li>• Support improvements in digital connectivity.</li> <li>• A sustainable transport system that contributes to our economic ambitions and vision of the Local Transport Strategy.</li> <li>• Attract investment from larger high-value enterprises.</li> </ul>
<p data-bbox="107 392 369 416"><b>STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT</b></p> <p data-bbox="107 424 2085 483">Infrastructure is a key foundation for Monmouthshire's economic growth. Business Monmouthshire leads on attracting high-value investment and supports work around employment land and premises. While digital connectivity and transport are led by other teams, they remain vital components of the wider economic landscape.</p> <p data-bbox="107 523 320 547"><b>Inward Investment</b></p> <p data-bbox="107 555 2011 647">We are continuing to develop our approach to attracting larger, high-value enterprises and supporting internal strategic dialogue and coordination. We work closely with Welsh Government and Cardiff Capital Region to identify and pursue opportunities aligned with Monmouthshire's growth ambitions. We are actively refining Monmouthshire's value proposition to attract high-value investors, building on sector strengths and aligning with regional opportunities.</p> <p data-bbox="107 687 461 711"><b>Employment Land and Premises</b></p> <p data-bbox="107 719 2101 812">The Deposit RLDLP allocates land for job growth and monitoring of supply and take-up is ongoing. Our role includes ensuring business needs are reflected in land-use planning and promoting available space to support job creation. This includes working closely with MCC's Estates team to promote sites and premises within the Council's ownership and support the Asset Management Strategy.</p> <p data-bbox="107 852 324 876"><b>Digital Connectivity</b></p> <p data-bbox="107 884 2101 1007">Improvements in broadband access are helping to create a more connected and accessible Monmouthshire. However, there are still premises that do not have access to superfast broadband speeds of 30Mbps or more and are not included in any delivery plans for the next three years. In June 2025, the Welsh Government announced a new £70 million "Extending High Speed Broadband" project, funded through clawback from the original Superfast Cymru programme. This initiative aims to provide fast and reliable broadband to around 25,000–30,000 premises, with hopes that it will help address the remaining connectivity gaps in Monmouthshire's rural areas.</p> <p data-bbox="107 1046 376 1070"><b>Local Transport Strategy</b></p> <p data-bbox="107 1078 2101 1171">Monmouthshire's Local Transport Strategy sets out a sustainable and inclusive vision for improving transport across the county. It feeds into the Regional Transport Plan and its delivery and aligns with national and local priorities, recognising the county's rural context, the importance of strategic connectivity, and the need to enhance public transport, walking, and cycling options. The strategy also emphasises reducing environmental impact and supporting access for all, helping to create the wider conditions for business success and investment.</p>	

## MILESTONES

- Monmouthshire County Council continues to benefit from a strong and diverse land and property portfolio, delivering consistent commercial returns and supporting local business growth through flexible workspace and industrial units.
  - All nine council-managed MonSpace flexi-suites at CastleGate Business Park are now fully occupied, marking a key achievement in supporting flexible workspace provision and business growth in Monmouthshire.
  - Industrial units
    - New letting of Unit 8D Old Pill Farm
    - All but 1 tenant at Castle Way Industrial Estate (7 tenants) have committed to new 5-year lease agreements, retaining well performing small businesses within Severn Bridge Industrial Estate.
  - One farm letting in 25/26 - Llanfair Farm, Caerwent.
- A new Local Transport Strategy was adopted in May 2024 setting out a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire over the next five years. This will feed into the Regional Transport Plan and its delivery. Microsoft Word - Local Transport Strategy 24-25 Final.docx
- We have secured funding to implement transport projects to enhance access, safety and infrastructure. The largest portion of this funding will be used to enhance our Active Travel network. Funding of £10.4 million has been secured from Welsh Government to develop the Llanfoist to Castle Meadows Active Travel Bridge and £5.2m has been secured from Uk Government for the Chepstow Levelling Up Fund scheme of which the Chepstow Transport hub is a significant part.

## APPENDIX 2

<i>Active enterprises per 10,000 of the population aged 16 to 64</i>		
2023		
	Great Britain	673
	Wales	529
<b>1</b>	Monmouthshire	773
<b>2</b>	Powys	766
<b>3</b>	Pembrokeshire	684
<b>4</b>	Ceredigion	671
<b>5</b>	Conwy	651
<b>6</b>	Gwynedd	615
<b>7</b>	Vale of Glamorgan	599
<b>8</b>	Denbighshire	594
<b>9</b>	Flintshire	589
<b>10</b>	Carmarthenshire	572
<b>11</b>	Isle of Anglesey	566
<b>12</b>	Cardiff	513
<b>13</b>	Torfaen	486
<b>14</b>	Wrexham	479
<b>15</b>	Bridgend	473
<b>16</b>	Swansea	471
<b>17</b>	Newport	454
<b>18</b>	Rhondda Cynon Taf	434
<b>19</b>	Caerphilly	411
<b>20</b>	Neath Port Talbot	390
<b>21</b>	Merthyr Tydfil	386
<b>22</b>	Blaenau Gwent	348

<b>3 Year Business Survival Rate (Provisional)</b>		<b>%</b>
2020 (Stats Wales)		
	Great Britain	52.9
	Wales	50.0
<b>1</b>	Ceredigion	73.7
<b>2</b>	Powys	64.6
<b>3</b>	Gwynedd	62.5
<b>4</b>	Isle of Anglesey	62.2
<b>5</b>	Monmouthshire	60.3
<b>6</b>	Conwy	58.8
<b>7</b>	Cardiff	54.7
<b>8</b>	Vale of Glamorgan	54.3
<b>9</b>	Denbighshire	52.2
<b>10</b>	Neath Port Talbot	51.2
<b>11</b>	Carmarthenshire	50.4
<b>12</b>	Merthyr Tydfil	50.0
<b>13</b>	Torfaen	48.1
<b>14</b>	Swansea	47.7
<b>15</b>	Blaenau Gwent	46.3
<b>16</b>	Flintshire	46.3
<b>17</b>	Caerphilly	44.7
<b>18</b>	Rhondda Cynon Taf	43.9
<b>19</b>	Pembrokeshire	43.4
<b>20</b>	Wrexham	43.0
<b>21</b>	Bridgend	43.0
<b>22</b>	Newport	38.8

Earnings by place of residence		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Full time workers		
2025		£
	Great Britain	766.6
	Wales	719.3
	1 Monmouthshire	811.8
	2 Vale of Glamorgan	791.0
	3 Flintshire	770.5
	4 Torfaen	757.0
	5 Bridgend	737.7
	6 Pembrokeshire	736.3
	7 Carmarthenshire	732.6
	8 Newport	727.8
	9 Conwy	726.4
	10 Swansea	718.8
	11 Cardiff	712.0
	12 Blaenau Gwent	711.2
	13 Caerphilly	709.8
	14 Powys	705.4
	15 Wrexham	694.1
	16 Neath Port Talbot	693.0
	17 Isle of Anglesey	692.7
	18 Merthyr Tydfil	685.3
	19 Ceredigion	682.0
	20 Gwynedd	669.2
	21 Rhondda Cynon Taf	665.5
	22 Denbighshire	660.0

Earnings by place of residence		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Full time workers		
Monmouthshire		
Year		£
2022		731.7
2023		713.1
2024		787.8
2025		811.8

Earnings by workplace		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Full-time workers		
2025		
	Great Britain	766.6
	Wales	704.3
1	Monmouthshire	773.5
2	Newport	740.1
3	Flintshire	740.0
4	Cardiff	736.1
5	Bridgend	719.1
6	Wrexham	714.2
7	Neath Port Talbot	711.7
8	Pembrokeshire	711.3
9	Swansea	709.7
10	Isle of Anglesey	704.4
11	Torfaen	693.9
12	Vale of Glamorgan	675.8
13	Ceredigion	675.7
14	Rhondda Cynon Taf	675.5
15	Denbighshire	672.0
16	Blaenau Gwent	670.3
17	Gwynedd	665.2
18	Caerphilly	659.4
19	Carmarthenshire	657.7
20	Powys	645.3
21	Conwy	624.5
22	Merthyr Tydfil	619.2

Earnings by workplace	
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Full time workers	
Monmouthshire	
Year	£
2022	642.0
2023	709.8
2024	717.8
2025	773.5

Earnings by place of residence		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Male full-time workers		
Monmouthshire		
Year		£
2022		771.2
2023		721.5
2024		807.4
2025		915.6

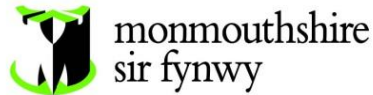
Earnings by workplace		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Male full-time workers		
Monmouthshire		
Year		£
2022		657.4
2023		689.9
2024		719.0
2025		805.9

Earnings by place of residence		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Female full-time workers		
Monmouthshire		
Year		£
2022		621.0
2023		663.0
2024		727.5
2025		744.2

Earnings by workplace		
Gross weekly pay (Median) - Female full-time workers		
Monmouthshire		
Year		£
2022		567.9
2023		709.9
2024		691.0
2025		765.7

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>MONMOUTHSHIRE PLANNING SERVICE ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR)</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>PERFORMANCE &amp; OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3 DECEMBER 2025</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>

## **1.0 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the committee with a report on the performance of the Council's Planning Service for the financial year period **2024/25**.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

- 2.1 To scrutinise the contents of the Planning Service's Annual Performance Report 2024/25 prior to its endorsement by the Cabinet Member for Planning & Economic Development on 17 December 2025 for submission to the Welsh Government.

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Welsh Government (WG) normally requires all Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in Wales to submit an Annual Performance Report for their planning service by the end of November each year (albeit that this requirement was relaxed during the reporting periods affected by the Covid pandemic). This requirement links with the Planning (Wales) Act 2015, and the Welsh Government's objective of creating a positive and enabling planning service.
- 3.2 This is the tenth Annual Performance Report (APR). The report to a scrutiny committee provides the opportunity to review and discuss performance and was welcomed by previous Committees, which requested that it become an annual item.
- 3.3 The APR looks at the performance of the Planning Service against nationally set performance indicators, Welsh Government (WG) targets, the Wales average performance, and Monmouthshire's performance over the previous year. The results are considered in the context of the challenges, opportunities, priorities and resources (staffing and financial) available. The objective of the APR is to reflect on and celebrate good performance, identify areas for improvement, and look across Wales to identify potential areas of best practice that Monmouthshire could learn from or share with others. Recently there was no requirement from WG to submit an APR and since the pandemic no all-Wales comparative data has been provided as it had been previously. Again, this year WG has not provided national benchmarking figures to enable the council to review its current status against the Wales average. This is unfortunate as the comparison being made is no longer accurate or reflective

of the status of planning services across Wales during 2024/25. Issues such as resources limitations and environmental considerations such as water quality in rivers would have an impact on local planning authorities across Wales and therefore the comparison is flawed. Despite that, Monmouthshire's Planning Service decided to continue to commit to submitting an APR but had to base the assessment of our performance over those two years against the Welsh average in 2018/19 (the last year the national data was published).

3.4 The APR is divided into sections, with the format and appearance being consistent throughout Wales, and all LPAs reporting on the same performance indicators. The report looks at where the Planning Service sits corporately, local pressures, customer feedback and performance. Performance is analysed across the five key aspects of planning service delivery as set out in the Planning Performance Framework:

- Plan making (omitted from the APR in recent years as no performance data was provided by WG and given the work now being concentrated on replacing the current LDP);
- Efficiency;
- Quality;
- Engagement; and
- Enforcement.

This Framework was established by the Welsh Government in partnership with local planning authority representatives. Performance is ranked as 'good', 'fair' or 'needs improvement'.

3.5 The Annual Performance Report is provided at Appendix 1 and the related Performance Framework at Appendix 2.

#### **4.0 KEY ISSUES**

4.1 The purpose of the Planning Service is 'To plan for, advise on, give permission for and ensure the best possible development', that links directly to all six of the Council's Corporate objectives. The service is directly involved with wider corporate projects such as 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools and forms an enabling tool to help address some of the challenges and issues identified corporately.

4.2 Key areas of work for the Planning Service include:

- Carrying out a replacement of the Monmouthshire LDP.
- Preparing and co-ordinating thematic supplementary planning guidance to help to foster the interpretation and implementation of LDP policy.
- Implementing the Council's LDP through engaging and working with communities, and partnership working with both internal and external partners.
- Monitoring and evaluating development plan policies, including preparing the statutory LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

- Maintaining the LDP evidence base and ensuring fitness for purpose for future LDP revision.
- Providing pre-application advice to customers;
- Determining planning applications in accordance with adopted policy and material planning considerations, taking into account stakeholder comments and corporate objectives;
- Securing financial contributions from developers to offset the infrastructure demands of new development;
- Safeguarding the County's 2400 Listed Buildings and 31 Conservation Areas, areas of archaeological sensitivity, the Wye Valley AONB and the Brecon Beacons National Park;
- Providing a heritage service for our neighbouring colleagues in Blaenau County Borough that works in a manner that is consistent and as well-resourced as the one provided for Monmouthshire.
- Taking robust enforcement action against unauthorised development that is unacceptable in the public interest.

## **5.0 MAJOR PROJECTS FROM 2024/25**

### **5.1 During the reporting period these included:**

- In October 2024 Council endorsed the Deposit RLDP for public consultation and agreed the revised Delivery Agreement. Consultation and engagement on the Deposit RLDP and supporting documents took place between 4th November – 16th December 2024. Notification of the consultation, inviting comments, was sent to approx. 1,000 consultees, agents, and individuals on the RLDP consultation data base. Nine in-person engagement events were held across the County, together with three virtual events (one for town and community councils and two open to all). Officers also engaged with the Business Forum and representatives of school councils and attended a Business Resilience Forum and Climate Change Champions meeting. Approx. 750 people responded to the consultation, resulting in approx. 4,500 individual representations which were subsequently processed by the Planning Policy Team.
- We have started shifting back to a more hybrid working arrangement with officers returning to work in the office more frequently, using collaboration spaces in County Hall to meet as a group on regular days and Support Team colleagues normally using the original space in the office to meet, scan and train colleagues. The return of staff to the office has helped junior officers to benefit from face to face learning in the collaboration spaces and this office presence also helps induct new colleagues. Planning Committee has reverted to a hybrid arrangement with some Members preferring to attend in County Hall (others opting to attend virtually).
- We have continued providing a joint heritage service for Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent Councils. This commenced in January 2019 and has provided our neighbouring authority with expert heritage advice without the need to employ its own officer or commission a consultant. MCC manages the service for BGBCB via a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and provides the staff to deliver a resilient heritage service assisted by BGBCB funding. Owing to the effective merger of the BGBCB and Torfaen CBC Planning Services this arrangement ended during March 2025.

- Towards the end of the 2021, as a planning authority we were faced with a new constraint of riverine phosphate pollution. Within Monmouthshire it was identified that within the River Usk 88% of the river's water bodies failed to meet the required water quality target and within the River Wye 67% failed to meet the target. As a result of this failure NRW issued detailed planning guidance (updated July 2023) to ensure that the environmental capacity of the rivers (which are designated special areas of conservation) do not deteriorate any further. Any proposed development within the catchment areas of the rivers that might increase phosphate levels need to clearly evidence within a planning application that the development can demonstrate phosphate neutrality or betterment in its design and/or its contribution to the water body. In most cases there will be limited capacity to connect to the public sewerage system and an alternative solution will have to be found. This requirement on drainage considerations has impacted on all development that increases the volume or concentration of wastewater. We apply the guidance to all new applications in those Wye and Usk catchment areas. This has sometimes delayed applications and many were on hold until the Council had developed a clear strategy for dealing with such issues. We continue to work with a wide range of agencies including WG, NRW, Welsh Water and other authorities (including new nutrient management boards) to find sustainable solutions to this significant environmental problem. Recent work has seen DC-WW commit to providing phosphate stripping technology at Monmouth and Llanfoist waste water treatments works by April 2025. This, allied to NRW's recent review of environmental permits for the main settlements' waste water treatment works, has led to the identification of solutions that will help bring forward much needed development (including affordable housing) in the main towns of Monmouth and Abergavenny as well as smaller settlements in the County.
- Delivering our bespoke pre-application advice service for potential applicants, as well as offering pre-purchase certificates and completion certificates.
- Successfully recruiting new staff and training them to adapt to their new roles in DM and Policy Teams.
- Implementing prioritised elements of the Team's Digital Plan to improve our processes and customer experience – including upgrades to the Idox Document Management System (DMS) and Public Access (PA).
- Securing detailed planning permissions for a 46-home affordable housing scheme at Mabey Bridge, Chepstow, a 50-home affordable housing scheme at Tudor Road, Monmouth, a significant employment development (motorway-related services, plus B2 and B8 uses) at New House Farm, Chepstow and a bio-fuel vehicle fuelling station at the Wales One business park, Magor.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF OUR 2024/25 APR**

- 6.1 Based on the performance information in Section 6 and Appendix A of the APR, we can be pleased with the service we deliver. During this period:
- The proportion of major applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed timescales improved from 67% to 89%, and was well above the 'Good' target of 60% (8 out of 9 applications);

- The end-to-end period for determining major planning applications fell from 436 days in 2023/24 to 267 days; this related to just a small number of applications (nine) – these featured three applications involving complex drainage issues (including phosphates/ SAB compliance issues), plus legal and ecological inputs - Tudor Road, Wyesham; Maby Bridge Affordable Housing and the Magor Bio-fuel station application;
- The proportion of all applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed timescales remained high at 92%, demonstrating the effective recruitment and training up of new officers in the Applications team ('Good' target 80%);
- The proportion of applications we approved remained high at 95% (service target is 94%);
- Of those applications that had gone through our pre-application advice service, and followed our advice 100% were approved;
- In eight out of eleven appeals (73%) against our decisions to refuse planning permission, MCC's decision was confirmed, well above the 'Good' standard of 66% or more;
- We dealt with a large number of applications for listed building consent (58 applications) and 78% of these were determined within agreed timescales (target 80%);
- Enforcement performance remained strong for the measure relating to the percentage of enforcement cases investigated in 84 days (82% compared to the 2023/24 figure of 83%) which is rated 'Good', although the performance did decline in respect of the average time to take positive action which increased from 91 days to 134 days, rated 'Fair'. This was primarily because we closed a small number of long-standing cases which inflated the average figure. We investigated around 300 enforcement cases and served 15 notices.
- Significant s106 monies (approx. £1M) were received towards important community infrastructure schemes including the Abergavenny velo park, proposal as a result of granting permission for major developments allocated in the LDP such as those at Rockfield Farm/ Vinegar Hill - Undy, and Grove Farm - Llanfoist.

6.2 A summary table of our performance can be found in Appendix A of the APR. Of the 12 ranked indicators, 8 are ranked 'Good', while 4 are 'Fair' and none 'need improvement'.

This shows that the team is working effectively and has overcome the longer-term effects of vacancies and significant constraints such as phosphate pollution. Our performance has been very good and our pre-application advice service is effective.

The Previous APR's actions involving securing political agreement for the Heritage Buildings at Risk Strategy, upgrading our back office software systems to process applications more efficiently and undertaking planning training (with a focus on enforcement) with our community / town councils as well as County councillors, were all completed. In addition, our Senior Heritage Officer received Cadw accreditation to determine listed building applications relating to Grade II\* buildings and one of our DM Officers graduated with Cardiff University, after completing the

part time Planning course. The digitising of historic (and sometimes inaccurate) tree preservation order records is a longer term project and is carried forward (see below).

	Number of indicators
Welsh Government target has been set and our performance is 'good'	8
Welsh Government target has been set and our performance is 'fair'	4
Welsh Government target has been set and our performance 'needs improvement'	0

### 6.3 Four actions are identified going forwards:

Action 1 – a) Digitise information in relation to older planning applications that are held on microfiche to enable the public to self-serve, reducing the demand on staff time and to reduce the need for travel.

b) Digitise re-surveyed data relating to trees covered by Tree preservation Orders so that the information is accurate and available online and the public can research their enquiries themselves rather than seek this from our Tree Officer, Support Team or Duty Officer.

Action 2 – To implement the approved Buildings at Risk (BAR) strategy to manage and prioritise any interventions to enable key heritage assets to realise a sustainable use for future generations.

Action 3 – To continue to invest in our staff to ensure professional qualifications are achieved and professional development takes place – this includes the accreditation of two of our heritage officers so that they can determine applications for listed building consent without reference to Cadw. The more we develop our own staff, the less reliant we are on a very competitive labour market.

Action 4 – To carry out a re-structure of DM management to ensure there is sufficient capacity to manage the team effectively, having regard to recent staff changes.

### 6.4 Value of Planning

RTPI Cymru has published a toolkit which measures the value generated by a local authority planning service. The tool has been developed to capture the economic, social and environmental value at a local planning authority level across Wales. The tool and its 'Value Dashboard' have been designed to provide RTPI Cymru and the Welsh Government with a platform to demonstrate to local authorities, national policy makers, the private sector, researchers and other broader policy and media audiences, the value planning contributes and how planning is positively contributing to Wales' seven well-being goals. The data has been updated to reflect planning permissions and completions in the current reporting period, 2023/24. The toolkit

has been a very useful means of promoting the good work undertaken by the department that is often taken for granted. Over this period, the toolkit concludes that the service has contributed £104M to the local economy by the allocation of sites in the LDP, the safeguarding of land, the granting and implementation of planning permissions, the operation of its enforcement function and the securing of planning obligations.

We aim to update this for the ensuing reporting periods, although it is fair to say that the parameters behind the model are now several years out of date and may undervalue the socio-economic contribution of the local planning authority. We will enquire with the RTPI and Welsh Government as to whether the data assumptions behind the toolkit are proposed to be updated. The 'Dashboard' data summarises the Planning Service's contribution below:

## Planning service key data



28 FTE jobs in planning service



908 applications handled



£0.5m collected in fees

### LDP Land Safeguarded



20  
369 ha Green Wedge  
3,174 ha Local Nature Reserve  
434 ha open space  
7,942 ha minerals

### LDP Land Allocated



Residential  
111 ha



Retail & leisure  
0 ha



Commercial  
244 ha



Waste  
0 ha

### LDP Value

£2.1m uplift value

(based on land allocated for whole plan period)

Value adding policies ✓ 89%

### Applications

7 major  
901 minor  
0 other

0 DCOs dealt with  
1 DNS dealt with  
58 LBC applications granted  
11 refusals appealed  
0 judicial reviews

■ Statutory ■ Discretionary

### Decisions

✓ 718 approvals (79%)  
x 41 refusals (5%)  
292 subject to pre app

Refusals

■ Delegated ■ Committee

Approvals

■ Delegated ■ Committee

### Permissions

**Residential**  
958 units  
£40.4m uplift value  
18% affordable

**Retail & leisure**  
240 m²  
£0.0m uplift value

**Tourism**  
250 bedspaces  
220 self catering

### Permissions

■ Consistent with local plan  
■ Departures from local plan

**Commercial**  
10,350 m²  
£0.2m uplift value

**Renewables & other**

#REF!  
0 tonnes waste  
0 tonnes minerals  
4 ha remediation  
4ha

### Contributions

#### Section 106 income

£0.2m

#### Breakdown

■ Training and employment  
■ Sports and leisure  
■ Environmental  
■ Community/cultural  
■ Formal open space  
■ Primary health  
■ Education  
■ Infrastructure  
■ Active travel  
■ Highways  
■ Affordable housing

#### CIL income



£0 total value

### Completions

**Residential**  
319 units  
22% affordable  
£56.8m uplift value  
£0.4m council tax p.a

**Retail & leisure**  
135 m²  
£0.1m uplift value  
4 gross FTE jobs  
#N/A

#### Commercial

9,950 m²  
£5.5m uplift value  
144 gross FTE jobs  
#N/A

#### Renewables

1 MW  
£5,000 community benefit

#### Tourism

150  
50 FTE jobs  
200 self catering

### Enforcement

352 enforcement complaints  
4 planning contraventions  
7 enforcement notices  
1 breach of condition notices  
1 stop notices  
2 section 125 notices



### Wider indicators

£186,100 spend on consultancy fees

9 internal consultees

0 Energy statements

0 EdAs

3 Environmental statements



£20,000 health benefits of affordable housing provision p.a



£100,000 recreational benefits from open space created p.a

3 Travel plans

0 HIAs

8 Transport assessments

In 2024/25 the total value of planning was £103.9m

SOURCES: Planning function outputs (LPA survey), Land and property value data (JLL estimates), business rates valuations (Valuation Office Agency), employment densities (English Homes & Communities Agency), Council tax rates (Stats Wales), Health benefits from Affordable Housing (Department for Communities and Local Government Appraisal Guide, based on various studies outlined in appraised databooks), Community benefit from renewables (Renewables UK Cymru). Some of the calculations require high level assumptions to convert between units/m²/ha. Where possible, benchmarks have been employed otherwise reasonable assumptions have been used. Business rate council tax and gross FTE job estimates based on assumption of 100% occupancy and do not factor in any displacement. Numbers of applications and decisions are unlikely to match up as these can take place in different financial years for any given application. 'Value adding policies' refers to the proportion of policies the team has identified as adding 'intangible value' that are included in local plans. Approvals and refusals do not sum to 100% due to applications carry across years. The total value of planning only incorporates some of the metrics presented in the dashboards.



ARUP





## **7.0 OPPORTUNITIES GOING FORWARD**

### **Opportunities and Risks going forward:**

The following opportunities for the coming year have been identified as a result of this Annual Performance Report, and our Service Business Plans:

- Continue to roll out the project management of major planning applications, where appropriate, via planning performance agreements to seek, by best endeavours, timely and well-managed processing of such applications, providing a good customer experience for the customer;
- To digitise the information held by the Council in microfiche or paper form to improve the web site experience for customers and improve customers' pathways to information (Action 1 a and b);
- To implement the Buildings At Risk Strategy to safeguard some of our most precious but vulnerable heritage assets (Action 2);
- Continue with the replacement Monmouthshire LDP because of the need to facilitate the identification/ allocation of additional housing land as well as addressing the demographic and employment challenges of the County;
- To identify, implement and/or disseminate best practice via the Planning Officers' Society for Wales or other working groups, including the Welsh Government, the WLGA and the RTPi
- To support our colleagues via training opportunities, regular reviews and one-to-ones to invest in their careers, ensure their well-being and mental health are resilient and their productivity remains high, helping to meet the challenge of retaining our officers in a currently highly dynamic job market in the built environment professions (Action 3).
- To restructure the DM management team to ensure it is fit for purpose and provides firstly, capacity to manage our staff effectively and secondly, resilience in meeting the environmental and socio-economic challenges facing the Council and our communities (Action 4).
- To respond to the challenges raised by the economic squeeze on households and enterprises to ensure our County's communities and local economy can be resilient and can thrive.
- To manage the threat of phosphate pollution in our two main rivers to reduce environmental damage, while finding new ways of managing this issue that will still allow sustainable development to take place in those catchment areas.

## **8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 Officer time and costs associated with the preparation of this APR are met from the Development Management budget and work is carried out by existing staff.

## **9.0 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 9.1 Sustainability, equality and well-being considerations are central to the planning service's activities. This report is a review of the previous year's performance against targets and benchmarking information, however the proposed five actions for future

improvements seek to improve service delivery to the benefit of our customers and communities.

9.2 An Equality and Future Generations Evaluation is attached as an appendix.

## **10.0 OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

10.1 There is normally a requirement on Local Planning Authorities to undertake an Annual Performance Report and to submit it to the Welsh Government each Autumn. Unfortunately, this year WG have been unable to provide the benchmarking figures to enable the council to review its current status against the Wales average. Issues such as the challenging economic conditions, resource limitations and environmental considerations, such as water quality in rivers, would have an impact on Local Planning Authorities across Wales and therefore it is unfortunate that this data is not available to enable a fair comparison of our performance. We could decide not to conduct the APR for this reason however we do consider it useful to carry on with this work to help us continue to improve our service. Consequently, the following options were considered:

- 1) Recommend the APR for submission without any changes;
- 2) Recommend the APR for submission but with changes to the proposed actions for the coming year.

10.2 The APR provides a useful reflection on last year's performance against targets and benchmarking information. The proposed actions seek to continue that journey of improvement, given the resources available to us. Consequently, option 1 is the preferred option.

## **11.0 HOW WILL SUCCESS BE MEASURED?**

11.1 The Planning Service is measured against a number of clear and consistent (across Wales, and over time) performance indicators allowing aspects of a successful service to be measured. These indicators need to be viewed in the context of other factors, including customer and stakeholder feedback, outcomes (which are not always captured by performance indicators), and whole Council priorities.

11.2 We strive to deliver the best service possible, and our mission is to plan for, advise on, give permission for, and ensure the best development possible.

## **12.0 CONSULTEES**

- Planning Committee and the Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee
- Cabinet Member for Sustainable Economy
- SLT
- Communities and Place DMT

## **13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

**14.0 AUTHOR & CONTACT DETAILS:**

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## **Monmouthshire Local Planning Authority**

### **PLANNING ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT (APR) – 2024 –25**

#### **PREFACE**

I am very pleased to introduce the eleventh Annual Performance Report for Monmouthshire County Council's Planning Service.

This report shows that Monmouthshire's Planning Service continues to perform effectively, with none of the thirteen indicators in need of improvement against the Welsh Government's targets. We are performing well in dealing with all types of planning applications and I am pleased to note that the committee process is working effectively showing a very good relationship between Members and officers in this authority. The whole team has worked with great commitment and the positive impact of several members of staff recruited over recent reporting periods is evident. The good performance is also encouraging given the backdrop of the significant resource issues in organisations who respond to consultations on our planning applications.

Where we think there are areas that could be improved, we have clear actions to address those elements of the service.

Good planning is central to the Council's purpose of achieving a zero carbon County and supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life, while also generating growth in the economy and protecting the heritage and landscapes that make our County the beautiful place it is. Good planning is key to achieving our well-being objectives for everyone who lives, works and spends time in our beautiful County. As part of this, Planning has a major role in tackling climate change, placemaking, delivering affordable homes for those in housing need and assisting the local economy to overcome current economic pressures.

Councillor Paul Griffiths, Cabinet Member

## 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This is Monmouthshire's eleventh Annual Performance Report, which looks at the performance of the Planning Service against nationally set performance indicators, Welsh Government (WG) targets, the Wales average performance, and Monmouthshire's performance last year. The results are considered in the context of the challenges, opportunities, priorities and resources (staffing and financial) available to us. The objective of the APR is to reflect on and celebrate good performance, identify areas for improvement, and look across Wales to identify potential areas of best practice that we could learn from or share with others.
- 1.2 The nature of the performance indicators means their focus is on decision speed and customer service rather than measuring whether better outcomes have been achieved. It has not yet been possible to identify an objective way of measuring outcomes, however we seek to prioritise securing the best scheme possible rather than traditional indicators relating to speed of decision-making. Research has identified that our customers' priority is securing planning permission: customers generally understand the benefits of good design and, within reason, do not see the time taken as a priority.
- 1.3 For the purposes of this report, performance is analysed across the four key aspects of planning service delivery as set out in WG's Planning Performance Framework:
- Efficiency;
  - Quality;
  - Engagement; and
  - Enforcement.

For the other areas in the Planning Performance Framework, performance data has been obtained by Monmouthshire officers from the Development Management Quarterly Returns and our own back-office system. Comparisons have been made with the Welsh average performance for each measure over 2018/19 (the latest reporting period for this national data) as well as our own performance against the measures over 2024/25 (N.B. WG intends to reintroduce the all-Wales comparison data and Performance Framework for the 2025/26 reporting period). Performance is ranked as 'good', 'fair' or 'needs improvement'.

- 1.4 Based on the performance information in Section 6 and Annex A, we can be very pleased with the service we deliver given the challenges we have faced. During this period:
- The proportion of all applications determined within 8 weeks, or an agreed timescale, remained high at 92% (compared to 93% over 2023/24) and was well above the WG target of 80%;
- The average time to determine all applications rose slightly to 102 days (from 100 days in 2023/24) as the team continued to work through solutions (including the NRW review of environmental permits) that addressed the phosphate pollution issue that had contributed to lengthy delays in determining many applications in the central and northern parts of the County;

- The proportion of major applications determined within agreed timescales was 89% compared to 67% over the previous year, well above the pre-pandemic Welsh average in 2018/19 (68%);
- 78% of listed building applications were determined within agreed timescales, just below the 80% 'Good' target set by WG, and we provided a valued Heritage service for Blaenau Gwent Council;
- The percentage of applications that were approved was 95%, an indicator that our pre-application advice service is working well;
- During this reporting period, we closed 274 applications seeking pre-application advice. 289 submissions for pre-application advice were received in 2024/25. Of these 45 led to planning applications, with 43 being approved and 2 being refused. The two refused applications were a householder application and an associated application for listed building consent, both relating to pre-application advice where the officers had set out that the proposal was unacceptable at the pre-application stage.  
Consequently, we have a 100% success rate of applications that went to decision stage and followed our pre-application advice.

1.5 A summary table of our performance can be found in Annex A.

The two enforcement measures which had been in need of improvement over previous reporting periods are now 'Good' (green) or 'Fair' (amber). There has been sustained improvement in this element of the service for over three years.

## 2.0 CONTEXT

2.1 This section sets out the planning context within which the Local Planning Authority operates, both corporately and in terms of Monmouthshire as a county, for the 2024/25 period.

### Corporate Context

2.2 The Council adopted its Local Development Plan in February 2014 and submitted its ninth Annual Monitoring Report to Welsh Government in October 2023.

2.3 We contribute to delivering the Council's high-level objectives, set out in the Council's Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28. The objectives we contribute to are:

MCC Purpose	To become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life
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CC Objectives	<p>A Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;</p> <p>A Green place to live and work, with reduced carbon emissions, and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;</p> <p>A Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres, where businesses can grow and develop;</p> <p>A Safe place to live where people have a home and community where they feel secure;</p> <p>A Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued;</p> <p>A Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.</p>
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- 2.4 The Planning Service's purpose, 'To plan for, advise on, give permission for and ensure the best possible development', links directly to all six of these objectives. The Planning Service sits within Communities and Place Directorate (N.B. now the Place & Community Well Being Directorate, October 2025).
- 2.5 The Planning Service is made up of i) the Planning Policy and ii) the Development Management (DM) teams. The primary purpose of the Planning Policy team is to prepare and monitor the statutory Local Development Plan (LDP) and assist in its effective implementation through the Development Management (planning application) process. This ensures that the land use and sustainable development objectives of the Council are met ensuring the provision of an adequate supply of land in sustainable locations for housing, retail, education, recreation, tourism, transport, business, waste and other needs, whilst protecting the county's valued environmental, heritage and cultural assets. This work aligns directly with achieving the Council's objectives.
- 2.6 Key areas of work for the Service include:
- Carrying out a replacement of the Monmouthshire LDP.
  - Preparing and co-ordinating thematic supplementary planning guidance to help to foster the interpretation and implementation of LDP policy.
  - Implementing the Council's LDP through engaging and working with communities, and partnership working with both internal and external partners.
  - Monitoring and evaluating development plan policies, including preparing the statutory LDP Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).
  - Maintaining the LDP evidence base and ensuring fitness for purpose for future LDP revision.
  - Providing pre-application advice to customers;
  - Determining planning applications in accordance with adopted policy and material planning considerations, taking into account stakeholder comments and corporate objectives;
  - Securing financial contributions from developers to offset the infrastructure demands of new development;
  - Safeguarding the County's 2400 Listed Buildings and 31 Conservation Areas, areas of archaeological sensitivity, the Wye Valley AONB and the Brecon Beacons National Park;



- Providing a heritage service for our neighbouring colleagues in Blaenau County Borough that works in a manner that is consistent and as well-resourced as the one provided for Monmouthshire.
  - Taking robust enforcement action against unauthorised development that is unacceptable in the public interest.
- 2.7 The main customer of the Planning Service is the applicant of any planning application, however there are numerous stakeholders including individuals, communities, businesses, third sector organisations, other Council Services and elected Members.

### **Local Context**

- 2.8 Located in South-East Wales, Monmouthshire occupies a strategic position between the major centres in South Wales, the South-West of England and the Midlands. The County shares a border with the neighbouring Local Planning Authorities of Newport, Torfaen and Brecon Beacons National Park (BBNP) in Wales and Gloucestershire, the Forest of Dean and Herefordshire in England, with Severn crossing links to South Gloucestershire. The County forms the gateway to South Wales and is part of the Cardiff Capital City Region. This location gives the County a distinctive identity.

### **Our people**

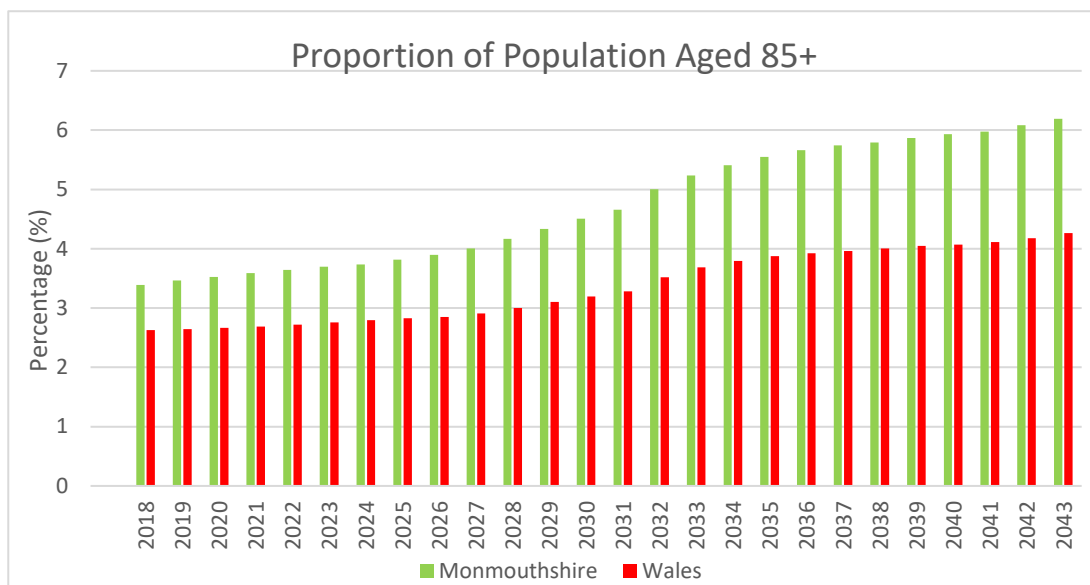
- 2.8.1 Monmouthshire covers an area of approximately 88,000 hectares with a population of 93,000 in 2021<sup>1</sup>. Almost 8% of residents reside within the BBNP area of the County. The County has a low population density of 1.1 persons per hectare – significantly lower than the South-East Wales average of 5.3 persons per hectare – reflecting the area's rural nature. Only 53% of the population lived in wards defined as being urban areas (i.e. with a population of more than 10,000).
- 2.8.2 Our population increased steadily, up 7.6% between 2001 and 2011 compared with the Wales average of 5.5%. The increase from 2011 to 2021<sup>2</sup> represents a lower increase at 1.8%, however, this is marginally higher than the growth for Wales over the same period of 1.4%. This increase is wholly attributable to inward migration, with natural change showing negative growth. The County has a relatively high and increasing proportion of older age groups, and a lower and decreasing proportion of younger adults compared with the UK and Wales averages. The graph below illustrates the proportion of those aged 85+ in Monmouthshire in comparison to Wales, based upon the 2018-based local authority population projections for Wales, 2018 to 2043. It shows that the trend in the ageing demographic is likely to continue. The 2021 Census suggests the proportion of those aged 85+ is 3.4% in Monmouthshire compared to 2.7% in Wales.

Source: Office for National Statistics, Stats Wales

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Census 2021

<sup>2</sup> Source: Census 2021



Demographic change has significant implications for economic activity and demand for services to enable our citizens to continue to live independent lives.

- 2.8.3 The following diagram encapsulates the issues that the Council are seeking to address during the development of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) over the next few years (Please see revised delivery agreement):



## 2.9 Housing and quality of life

### 2.9.1 The County has three broad categories of settlement:

- The historic market towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth have developed over many years to have a wide range of opportunities for employment, shopping, community facilities and public transport;
- The newer settlements in Severnside of Caldicot/Portskewett, Magor/Undy, Rogiet and Sudbrook where recent high levels of residential growth have taken place without the local jobs and community facilities to match. The area benefits, however, from a strategic location at the 'Gateway' to Wales with good access to the employment markets of Newport, Cardiff and Bristol;
- The rural area, containing the small town of Usk, the larger villages of Raglan and Penperlleni, and a large number of smaller villages, widely dispersed around the County.

- 2.9.2 Over the last decade, housing completions in the Monmouthshire LPA area have averaged over 300 dwellings per annum, although there have been significant annual variations with 205 completions in 2014/15 and 443 in 2018/19. To deliver the LDP housing requirement, 488 completions per annum were required (2013-2021). During 2024/25 there were 319 housing completions (compared to 291 in 2023/24).
- 2.9.3 Data indicates that house prices in Monmouthshire are very high, averaging around £400k based on sales and valuations between October 2023 and March 2024. HM Land Registry data provides that the average house price in Wales as a whole was £208,112 in March 2025 (compared to £200,795 in March 2024). Between 2006 (the time the Monmouthshire Unitary Development Plan was adopted) and March 2025, there have been 5,493 completions of which 1,094 were affordable, equating to 20% of all dwellings built. Since LDP adoption (2014) to March 2025 there have been 3,495 completions of which 719 were affordable, equating to 20% of all dwellings constructed. This affordable housing provision only relates to those units derived from planning consents but additional affordable housing provision can result if open market houses are purchased by a registered social landlord.
- 2.9.4 Monmouthshire is generally a prosperous County offering a high quality of life for its residents. However, poor access to community facilities and declining local service provision is an issue for rural and ageing communities. The health of Monmouthshire's population is generally better than the Wales average, with greater life expectancies and a higher proportion of residents classing themselves as being in good health (2021 Census). Fewer residents in the County suffer with a limiting long-term illness compared with Wales as a whole. The rate of reported crime in Monmouthshire tends to be lower than for Wales as a whole.

## 2.10 **Our economy**

- 2.10.1 The ONS Annual Population Survey suggests that the County has a high proportion of working age people in employment (78.7%, 2024/2025) compared to neighbouring Authorities including Newport (73.9%), Cardiff (73.9%), Blaenau Gwent (64.6%) and Torfaen (74.4%). The equivalent figure for Wales is (72.7%). Our economy is reliant on the public sector and services for employment:
- In 2024, the Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) records that the public administration, education and health sector accounts for 35.8% of jobs;
  - The distribution, retail, hotels and restaurants sector accounts for 24.9% of jobs;
  - Tourism, as part of the services sector, is also important in the County (see 2.10.3 below).
- 2.10.2 The County had 4,445 active enterprises in 2024, 11% of which were in the property and business services sector. The three sectors with the most businesses were Professional, scientific and technical services (16%); Agriculture, forestry and fishing (16%) and Construction (11%). Accommodation and food services accounted for 7%. The UK Business count dataset accessed via Nomis also suggests that 98.7% of the County's businesses are classified as small (i.e. up to 49 employees).

- 2.10.3 Tourism is vital to Monmouthshire's economy and generates income to support a wide range of businesses and services. According to figures supplied by tourism economic indicator 2024 STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor), 2.28 million visitors came to Monmouthshire in 2024, spending 3.53m visitor days in the county, generating more than £352 million benefit for the local economy, and supporting 3,422 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs. (Approximately 15% of Monmouthshire jobs are supported by tourism spend). Each visitor contributing to the county's economy by shopping on our high streets, purchasing food and drink, fuel, services and accommodation spent an average of £99.83 per day.
- 2.10.4 Management of the destination for visitors and residents is guided by [Monmouthshire's strategic Destination Management Plan](#). The previous Plan, which ran to 2020, has been reviewed and a new Plan developed based on in-depth research and collaboration with a wide range of local, regional and national partners. Monmouthshire's new Destination Management Plan sets out a clear direction for the future, as well as an ambition and roadmap for developing the visitor economy within the county to 2030. While the Plan has been commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council, it is designed to provide a common direction for all public, private and third-sector organisations with an interest in nurturing tourism to bring positive benefits to our communities. The Plan has been developed to support the Council's vision of ensuring that our 'communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic.' This has driven the Destination Management Plan's focus on revitalising our towns and landscapes; on developing more dynamic experiences for new generations; and on gradually evolving the destination or place brand so that it firmly positions Monmouthshire as an inspiring and relevant place to stay, invest and live.
- 2.10.5 The 2021 Welsh Government Commuting Statistics indicate that 61.2% of the County's working residents work in the area. This is an increase on previous years and suggests that there has been some progress in meeting the aspiration to increase the proportion of resident workforce working within Monmouthshire over the Plan period. However, the same data source suggests that Monmouthshire has a net outflow of 2,800 commuters – with 14,300 commuting into the Authority to work and 17,100 commuting out. There was significant in-commuting from Newport (3,000), Torfaen (1,900) and Blaenau Gwent (1,400), and from England (2,900). The main areas for out-commuting were Newport (2,600), Torfaen (2,400), Cardiff (1,600) with a further 4,600 going to Bristol. A relatively high proportion of Monmouthshire's residents travel long distances to work, with a high usage of the private car. Heavy reliance on the private car and limited opportunities for public transport is a particular issue in rural areas.
- 2.10.6 Other key challenges facing the Planning Service include areas at risk of flooding (including most of the Gwent Levels and the flood plains of the Rivers Usk and Wye and their tributaries). There are, however, flood defences within the towns of Chepstow, Monmouth and Usk.

## 2.11 Our built heritage

2.11.1 The Monmouthshire LPA area has a rich built heritage and historic environment which includes:

- Approximately 2,400 Listed Buildings, of which 2% are Grade I, 10% are Grade II\* and 88% are Grade II. Of note, around 176 Listed Buildings have been identified as being at risk.
- 31 Conservation Areas – designated for their special historic or architectural interest, covering some 1,648 hectares in total;
- 45 Historic Parks and Gardens – identified as having a Special Historic Interest, covering 1,910 hectares;
- 3 Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest identified by Cadw (parts of Blaenavon, the Gwent Levels and the Lower Wye Valley);
- 164 Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

### **3.0 PLANNING SERVICE**

#### **Organisational setting**

3.1 During the previous reporting three periods the Planning Service underwent significant changes, primarily in the Applications, Heritage and Enforcement Teams. As a response, several posts were replaced. Over 2025/26 there were very few changes to staffing arrangements, although in January 2025 a new Head of Planning was appointed following the promotion of the incumbent to a senior management post within the Council. The Head of Planning was appointed internally being the former Applications & Heritage Manager. This left a vacancy in the Heritage Team that was addressed early in the 2025/26 reporting period by the appointment of a new Principal Heritage Officer.

In the Policy Team, a Senior Officer was promoted to the role of Principal Policy Officer to assist the complex and challenging work regarding the adoption of the Replacement LDP.

Performance has been strong across all elements of the service since the vacant posts were filled. There has been a much-reduced turnover in the last two reporting periods leading to more stability and higher morale. The risk from losing existing staff to the highly competitive job market for planning and specialist professional staff in both the public and private sectors is noted as a threat that we will need to consider and address.

### 3.2 Department structure and reporting lines for the 2024-25 reporting period



### Planning Service staffing structure for the vast majority of the 2024-25 reporting period



## Budgets

- 3.3 The two main costs for the service are staff costs and the LDP budget (money is transferred from the above budget to sit in an LDP reserve, built up to fund the next LDP). Income is generated by planning application fees and charges for our discretionary services including our pre-application advice service (the latter amounted to approximately £68,000 over 2024/25, slightly higher than the previous year) as well as the Planning Service's more recently introduced discretionary services that are discussed below.
- 3.4 Planning application fee income (£367k) was the lowest received since 2011/12. The prime cause was the reduction in the number of major planning applications which provide much higher fees compared to minor applications. This has partly been the result of the impact of the riverine phosphate constraint in settlements like Abergavenny and Monmouth (this is discussed in later sections of this Report) but more significantly, the late stage of the lifecycle of the LDP. Fee projection work means there is likely to be slightly more activity on housing sites towards the later part of the 2025/26 reporting in respect of the strategic sites that may come forward in the emerging RLDP. We are likely to see outline applications submitted for some of the strategic candidate sites prior to the Examination stage, probably in the last quarter of 2025/ 2026. Application fees are set periodically by Welsh Government but they do not rise by inflation each year (the last increase was in 2020) and fee income is dependent on economic activity which is also out of the Council's hands. WG has confirmed that fees will increase to move towards 'Full cost recovery' in December 2025, beyond this reporting period.
- 3.5 Research by the Welsh Government identifies that application fees recover approximately 50% of the cost of dealing with planning applications. Additional costs are incurred through the work involved in the statutory Development Plan, and via other services such as enforcement and heritage management. Increased planning application fee income is used to reduce the net cost of the service to the Council. In-year windfall extra income is used to balance the Council's budgets and offset overspend in other services. Conversely as has been the case during recent years, underspend in other services was used to offset DM's under-recovery of income, when economic and other circumstances resulted in a drop in fee income. Application fee income has fluctuated significantly over recent years, and this poses a challenge for budget management going forward. Fee income is heavily influenced by the wider economy, for example house-building (which itself is affected by interest rates, mortgage lending and development viability) and other funding streams.

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
<b>Budgeted fee income</b>	£668k	£684k	£681k	£693k	£589k	£480k	£480k	£567k	£620k	£717
<b>Actual income</b>	£560k	£430k	£653k	£666k	£494k*	£651k	£554k	£475k	£508k	

N.B. Fee income includes planning application fees, pre-application advice income and the discretionary fees for fast track applications as well as other services. The 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22 figure also includes payment from Torfaen Council towards funding the joint Heritage Service, that has now ended.

\*This reduced level of income was then offset by a grant from WG due to the pandemic



### **Staff resources**

- 3.6 Staffing levels for the reporting period are shown in the chart at paragraph 3.2 above. Key changes over 2021-2023 saw a significant turnover of staff within Planning with new recruitment ensuing to backfill the vacant posts. The position stabilised over the last reporting period as discussed in section 3.1 above.
- 3.7 For the reporting period, sickness levels were low. It is fair to say that the recruitment of a new cohort of planners has revitalised the team in recent years and has enabled the more established staff to get back on top of workloads. To tackle issues of performance and morale, managers put in place regular meetings, welfare chats, counselling and a more structured approach to performance management. In addition, we have invested in young planners who are seeking to enter the profession by providing a trainee post (a one year placement) in both the Policy and DM teams – the latter assisting the workload of the planning application case officers by having their own caseload of householder and minor applications.
- 3.8 Training and development opportunities for colleagues were primarily events organised by the Council itself or occasionally by the RTPI, including the Wales Planning Conference. There was also a law update by FTB Chambers and the annual Welsh Enforcement Conference. In-house opportunities were provided via quarterly Development Management and Planning Policy Liaison Meetings. There is also an opportunity for DM officers to discuss individual cases with colleagues at casework management meetings held twice a week. Two junior officers in the team are enrolled on the RTPI-accredited master's course studying Planning, part time in Cardiff University, with one graduating towards the end of the reporting period. A Heritage officer has been studying the M.Sc. in Sustainable Building Conservation, part-time, also in Cardiff University .

Three staff within DM have undertaken Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) qualifications over recent years.

## **4.0 OUR LOCAL STORY**

### **Workload**

4.1 Key projects during the reporting period included:

- In October 2024 Council endorsed the Deposit RLDP for public consultation and agreed the revised Delivery Agreement. Consultation and engagement on the Deposit RLDP and supporting documents took place between 4th November – 16th December 2024. Notification of the consultation, inviting comments, was sent to approx. 1,000 consultees, agents, and individuals on the RLDP consultation data base. Nine in-person engagement events were held across the County, together with three virtual events (one for town and community councils and two open to all). Officers also engaged with the Business Forum and representatives of school councils and attended a Business Resilience Forum and Climate Change Champions meeting. Approx. 750 people responded to the consultation, resulting in approx. 4,500 individual representations which were subsequently processed by the Planning Policy Team.

- We have started shifting back to a more hybrid working arrangement with officers returning to work in the office more frequently, using collaboration spaces in County Hall to meet as a group on regular days and Support Team colleagues normally using the original space in the office to meet, scan and train colleagues. The return of staff to the office has helped junior officers to benefit from face to face learning in the collaboration spaces and this office presence also helps induct new colleagues. Planning Committee has reverted to a hybrid arrangement with some Members preferring to attend in County Hall (others opting to attend virtually).
- We have continued providing a joint heritage service for Monmouthshire and Blaenau Gwent Councils. This commenced in January 2019 and has provided our neighbouring authority with expert heritage advice without the need to employ its own officer or commission a consultant. MCC manages the service for BGCBC via a memorandum of understanding (MOU) and provides the staff to deliver a resilient heritage service assisted by BGBC funding. Owing to the effective merger of BGCBC and Torfaen CBC Planning Services this arrangement ended during March 2025.
- Towards the end of the 2021, as a planning authority we were faced with a new constraint of riverine phosphate pollution. Within Monmouthshire it was identified that within the River Usk 88% of the river's water bodies failed to meet the required water quality target and within the River Wye 67% failed to meet the target. As a result of this failure NRW issued detailed planning guidance (updated July 2023) to ensure that the environmental capacity of the rivers (which are designated special areas of conservation) do not deteriorate any further. Any proposed development within the catchment areas of the rivers that might increase phosphate levels need to clearly evidence within a planning application that the development can demonstrate phosphate neutrality or betterment in its design and/or its contribution to the water body. In most cases there will be limited capacity to connect to the public sewerage system and an alternative solution will have to be found. This requirement on drainage considerations has impacted on all development that increases the volume or concentration of wastewater. We apply the guidance to all new applications in those Wye and Usk catchment areas. This has sometimes delayed applications and many were on hold until the Council had developed a clear strategy for dealing with such issues. We continue to work with a wide range of agencies including WG, NRW, Welsh Water and other authorities (including new nutrient management boards) to find sustainable solutions to this significant environmental problem. Recent work has seen DC-WW commit to providing phosphate stripping technology at Monmouth and Llanfoist waste water treatments works by April 2025. This, allied to NRW's recent review of environmental permits for the main settlements' waste water treatment works, has led to the identification of solutions that will help bring forward much needed development (including affordable housing) in the main towns of Monmouth and Abergavenny as well as smaller settlements in the County.
- Delivering our bespoke pre-application advice service for potential applicants, as well as offering pre-purchase certificates and completion certificates.
- Successfully recruiting new staff and training them to adapt to their new roles in DM and Policy Teams.
- Implementing prioritised elements of the Team's Digital Plan to improve our processes and customer experience – including upgrades to the Idox Document Management System (DMS) and Public Access (PA).

- Securing detailed planning permissions for a 46-home affordable housing scheme at Mabey Bridge, Chepstow, a 50-home affordable housing scheme at Tudor Road, Monmouth, a significant employment development (motorway-related services, plus B2 and B8 uses) at New House Farm, Chepstow and a bio-fuel vehicle fuelling station at the Wales One business park, Magor.



Image of the approved housing scheme at Tudor Road, Wyesham; this is an allocated site in the current Local Development Plan and will deliver 100% affordable housing comprising a mix of houses, apartments and bungalows

4.2 Last year there was a decline in the number of applications received (8%), influenced by the UK’s current economic challenges, the impact of phosphate pollution in the riverine SAC catchment areas and the lifecycle of the LDP which is in the process of being replaced. The percentage of applications determined within agreed timescales fell by one percentage point but remained high at 92% and is rated ‘green’ (good). The proportion of approvals remained high at 95%. During 2024/25, 97% of applications were determined under delegated powers while 20 planning applications were decided by Planning Committee (Wales’s average in 2018/19 was 93%).

	2015 -16	2016 -17	2017 -18	2018 -19	2019 -20	2020 -21	2021- 22	2022- 23	2023- 24	2024- 25
Applications received	1284	1117	1188	1126	1134	1126	1154	1014	956	879
Applications determined	1085	1087	1071	1101	1106	947	1152	1026	956	908

<b>% within 8 weeks or agreed timescale</b>	79%	90%	91%	88%	91%	91%	81%	89%	93%	92%
<b>% applications approved</b>	95%	96%	95%	95%	97%	97%	97%	94%	97%	95%

4.3 A key area of work over the last five years has been the development of new, bespoke services. The most popular of these has been the Fast Track services for householder applications, lawful development certificates (LDCs) (existing and proposed) and listed building consent. Unfortunately due to the Covid pandemic followed by subsequent staffing challenges we had to suspend our Fast Track services. We reintroduced the Fast Track services during the previous reporting period following a successful recruitment drive. A summary of the current system as well as other bespoke services we offer is set out below.

4.4.1 The Fast Track service accelerates the administration and processing of the application for a relatively small additional charge (currently set at £230 – the standard householder application fee, plus the premium of £130 = £360, and £460 plus £255 = £715 for other applications). The offer is that Fast track applications are determined within 28 days following the submission of a valid application. This decision period varies for fast track applications for a certificate of lawfulness (10 days) and applications for listed building consent (35 days). In the unlikely event of not being able to achieve this target or agreement of a short extension of time (no more than 5 working days) we will refund the fast track element of the fee.

4.4.2 We also provide a *pre-purchase certificate* service aimed at people looking to buy a property in Monmouthshire. The application would provide the applicant with i) a planning history search; ii) details of planning permissions and listed building consents and iii) enforcement history relating to identified breaches of planning control. This service would include a site visit and identify whether there are any breaches of planning control and whether or not any breaches would be enforceable. The certificate confirms that any approved development at the site, up to the point of the request, has been carried out in accordance with approved plans and that there is no breach of planning control at the site. We aim to provide a written response within 28 days. This service looks at compliance with all types of planning permissions including listed building consent: it does not provide a substitute to lawful development certificates.

4.4.3 The other discretionary service we offer is a *certificate of completion*. The certificate will indicate whether or not the planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent applied for has been carried out in accordance with the approved plans, and also it would confirm the status of all planning conditions and any approved amendments if applicable. The purpose of this service is to offer support to applicants, agents or any other interested party that the works are appropriate and acceptable once they have been built. If there is an issue of noncompliance this will be brought to the applicant's attention and an opportunity provided for the breach of planning control to be rectified. The service includes a site inspection and desk based research and investigation. We will aim to provide a written response within 28 days.

4.5 These discretionary services were commenced seven years ago (they were rolled out slowly and then gathered pace until the pandemic when lockdowns, restrictions and home-working meant the pressure on staff time needed a response; priorities were put on applications and pre-application advice so the fast track service was suspended). Following them being recommenced, we have reviewed the effectiveness of these services and they appear to be working well. The average time for a householder fast track service over 2025/26 was a 29 day turnaround.

4.6 In more recent years, we have introduced planning performance agreements (PPAs) with applicants to provide a systematic framework of project management for more complex planning applications with milestones agreed such as submission of the application, set meeting dates and a projected committee date. The first was pioneered at Fairfield Mabey strategic, mixed use site in Chepstow and was well-received by those involved including the applicant. At the outset (2022/23), two PPAs were used for major proposals at Wales One, Magor (a large employment proposal) and the Wye Bridge active travel scheme. The fees for these two PPAs totalled approximately £40,000 which helped the Planning Team and internal consultees manage their resources to meet the target dates in the PPA. Two PPAs were negotiated during 2024/25, at Mill Lane, Abergavenny for a mixed use retail and food and drink proposal, and for BAE Glascoed for redevelopment proposals – as yet not submitted.

4.7 In relation to enforcement workload, the team were better resourced than in previous reporting periods due to successful recruitment to fill vacant posts over 2022/23. There are two measures for enforcement and for 2024/25 the first measure was rated 'good' where 214 out of 260 cases were investigated within 84 days (82%) which compared to an average Welsh figure of 72% for 2018/19. There was, however, a decline in the performance of the second enforcement measure which rose to 134 days to take positive enforcement action (up from 91 days in 2023/24). This was attributed to the closing of three long-standing cases which skewed the overall figure. If these were omitted the figure was 115 days. The 134 day measure is nevertheless a 'fair' performance rating and is significantly lower than the Welsh average from 2018/19 of 199 days.

#### **4.8 Value of Planning**

4.8.1 RTPI Cymru has published a toolkit which measures the value generated by a local authority planning service. The tool has been developed to capture the economic, social and environmental value at a local planning authority level across Wales. The tool and its 'Value Dashboard' have been designed to provide RTPI Cymru and the Welsh Government with a platform to demonstrate to local authorities, national policy makers, the private sector, researchers and other broader policy and media audiences, the value planning contributes and how planning is positively contributing to Wales' seven well-being goals. The data has been updated to reflect planning permissions and completions in the current reporting period, 2024/25. The toolkit has been a very useful means of promoting the good work undertaken by the department that is often taken for granted. Over this period, the toolkit concludes that the service has contributed almost £104M to the local economy by the allocation of sites in the LDP, the safeguarding of land, the granting and implementation of planning permissions, the operation of its enforcement function and the securing of planning obligations. In the previous reporting period this equated to approximately £70M. We aim to update this for the ensuing reporting periods, although it is fair to say that the parameters behind the model are now several years out of date and may undervalue the socio-economic contribution of the local planning authority. We will enquire with the RTPI and Welsh

Government as to whether the data assumptions behind the toolkit are proposed to be updated. The 'Dashboard' data summarises the Planning Service's contribution below:

## Planning service key data



28 FTE jobs in  
planning service



908 applications handled



£0.5m collected in fees

### LDP Land Safeguarded



20  
369 ha Green Wedge  
3,174 ha Local Nature Reserve  
434 ha open space  
7,942 ha minerals



**Residential**  
111 ha



**Retail & leisure**  
0 ha



**Commercial**  
244 ha



**Waste**  
0 ha

**£2.1m uplift value**  
(based on land allocated  
for whole plan period)  
**Value adding policies ✓ 89%**

### Applications

7 major  
901 minor  
0 other

■ Statutory ■ Discretionary

0 DCOs dealt with  
1 DNS dealt with  
58 LBC applications granted  
11 refusals appealed  
0 judicial reviews

### Decisions

✓ 718 approvals (79%)  
x 41 refusals (5%)  
292 subject to pre app

#### Refusals

■ Delegated ■ Committee

#### Approvals

■ Delegated ■ Committee

### Permissions



**Residential**  
958 units  
£40.4m uplift value  
18% affordable



**Retail & leisure**  
240 m²  
£0.0m uplift value



**Tourism**  
250 bedspaces  
220 self catering

### Permissions

■ Consistent with local plan  
■ Departures from local plan



**Commercial**  
10,350 m²  
£0.2m uplift value



**Renewables & other**  
#REF!  
0 tonnes waste  
0 tonnes minerals  
4 ha remediation  
4ha

### Contributions

#### Section 106 income

£0.2m

#### Breakdown

■ Training and employment  
■ Sports and leisure  
■ Environmental  
■ Community/cultural  
■ Formal open space  
■ Primary health  
■ Education  
■ Infrastructure  
■ Active travel  
■ Highways  
■ Affordable housing

#### CIL income



£0 total value

### Completions



**Residential**  
319 units  
22% affordable  
£56.8m uplift value  
£0.4m council tax p.a



**Retail & leisure**  
135 m²  
£0.1m uplift value  
4 gross FTE jobs  
#N/A



**Tourism**  
150 50 FTE jobs  
200 self catering



**Commercial**  
9,950 m²  
£5.5m uplift value  
144 gross FTE jobs  
#N/A



**Renewables**  
1 MW  
£5,000 community benefit  
**Tourism**  
150 50 FTE jobs  
200 self catering

### Enforcement

352 enforcement complaints  
4 planning contraventions  
7 enforcement notices  
1 breach of condition notices  
1 stop notices  
2 section 125 notices



### Wider indicators



£186,100 spend on  
consultancy fees



9 internal consultees

0 Energy statements

0 EoAs

3 Environmental statements



£20,000 health benefits of  
affordable housing provision p.a



£100,000 recreational benefits  
from open space created p.a

3 Travel plans

0 HIAs

8 Transport assessments

**In 2024/25 the total value of planning was £103.9m**

SOURCES: Planning function outputs (LPA survey), Land and property value data (JLL estimates), business rates valuations (Valuation Office Agency), employment densities (English Homes & Communities Agency), Council tax rates (Stats Wales), Health benefits from Affordable Housing (Department for Communities and Local Government Appraisal Guide, based on various studies outlined in appraisal database), Community benefit from renewables (Renewables UK Cymru). Some of the calculations require high level assumptions to convert between units/m2/ha. Where possible, benchmarks have been employed otherwise reasonable assumptions have been used. Business rate, council tax and gross FTE job estimates based on assumption of 100% occupancy and do not factor in any displacement. Numbers of applications and decisions are unlikely to match up as these can take place in different financial years for any given application. Value adding policies refers to the proportion of policies the team has identified as adding 'triangle value' that are included in local plans. Approvals and refusals do not sum to 100% due to applications carry across years. The total value of planning only incorporates some of the metrics presented in the dashboard.



ARUP JLL







Development recently completed or near completion – top: aerial image of the ongoing Brunel Quarter strategic housing site on brownfield land at Chepstow; bottom: town houses on the Brunel Quarter development with associated urban placemaking / public space.

## Local pressures

### 4.9 Key local pressures include:

- Enabling delivery of the County's housing needs: bringing forward allocated LDP sites; site viability; achieving good planning decisions, creating sustainable and balanced communities and seeking to achieve a good level of housing growth having regard to strong demand;

- Managing the development plan and development management process having regard to the impact of riverine phosphate pollution that has affected development proposals in the central and northern parts of the County significantly;
- Ensuring full capacity of our staffing levels, promoting retention of staff via training and other opportunities, and to recruit promptly where vacancies arise;
- Securing timely consultation responses from consultees, both internal and external;
- The work associated with the replacement of the adopted LDP having regard to the challenging timetable for delivery;
- The need to help resource and deliver the Strategic Development Plan for SE Wales;
- The lack of income from major planning applications due to the gap between the implementation of the current LDP and the adoption of its successor with associated impacts on budgets to resource the service;
- Career development and training support for staff in the light of limitations on budgets.

4.10 One of our key challenges is balancing our aim of creating quality places in a timely manner while ensuring schemes are viable and help deliver housing numbers. We are, however, clear that quality is more important than quantity. The introduction of a place-making emphasis in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) is welcomed, as is the form of the revised PPW that embraces the Well-Being of Future Generations Act.

## **5.0 Customer Feedback**

5.1 The number of formal complaints and letters offering compliments are recorded. There were 18 complaints received over 2024/25, compared to 4 during 2023/24. The theme of these complaints stemmed from concerns about lack of communication from case officers during the processing of planning applications and were resolved following intervention by line managers and subsequently improved dialogue with the applicant. There was also a willingness for applicants to become more tolerant once they understood the team's situation in respect of delays caused in waiting for consultation responses from key consultees. Another complaint related to a concern about lack of enforcement relating to construction management at a large housing site where enforcement action was not taken as quickly as the community had wanted or because it would not have been expedient to do so. The case where a Stage 2 Investigation led to a complaint being partially upheld, stemmed from a case involving pre-application advice where the advice was given verbally but never followed up in writing. This was fully acknowledged as being unacceptable. Planning is a contentious area dealing with access to land and changes to property values. It will always be the subject of complaint from third parties who are dissatisfied with a decision. This measure needs to be taken in context and the number of justified complaints is arguably a more pertinent measure. We do however aim to treat all customers with care and respect and to communicate clearly with the public so that they understand what the relevant planning issues are when we make decisions. There is always a degree of subjectivity so there will inevitably be disagreement about the weight given to the respective issues in the planning decision.

Of the 18 complaints investigated under the Council's formal Complaints Procedure, four were escalated to Stage 2 (investigated by a senior council officer unconnected with the Planning Department). The one case identified above involving pre-application advice, was

the only one where a complaint was partially upheld (out of 18 cases). In addition, none were considered appropriate to be investigated by the Public Service Ombudsman. As far as enforcement of planning control is concerned, there is often a misunderstanding within the community about the scope for enforcement action by a planning authority or an appreciation of the length of time it takes to remedy a breach of planning control. The team will continue to engage with our communities to ensure there is improved dialogue and clearer understanding of both the justification for action and the speed it takes. Linked to this, and as an action from last years' APR, a useful training session took place with Community and Town councillors focussing on planning enforcement in April 2025. A session with County councillors followed that in May 2025 with a focus on how to comment effectively on planning applications, engaging in the application process and also the planning enforcement process. These events were well-attended and also well-received by all attendees with positive feedback given.

We received twenty-one recorded compliments over 2024-25.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Number of Stage 1 formal complaints received	4	14	13	21	18	14	4	14
Number of Stage 2 formal complaints investigations received	1	4	2	2	6	5	1	4
No of Stage 2 complaints upheld or partially upheld	0	3 partially upheld	2 elements of the complaint partially upheld	2 partially upheld	0	0	0	1 partially upheld
No of Ombudsman complaints upheld or partially upheld	1 upheld	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No of compliments received	2	6	6	4	4	17	24	21

5.2 Quality customer service continues to be a service and organisation priority so the momentum and desire to improve remain. We are introducing a new feedback form (online) for customers to engage with us in respect of the quality of our planning application service which is due to go live in Q3 of 2025/26.



Photograph (May 2025) of the new King Henry VIII School, Abergavenny, taken from Pen-y-Pound, shortly after its official opening

## **6.0 OUR PERFORMANCE 2024/25**

- 6.1 This section details our performance in 2024-25. It considers both the Planning Performance Framework indicators and other available data to help paint a comprehensive picture of performance. Where appropriate we make comparisons between our performance and the all-Wales picture, although the lengthy absence of data for 2019/20 – 2024/25 from WG means we have to compare performance to the Welsh average over 2018/19. The all-Wales comparison data will be re-introduced by WG ready for the 2025/26 reporting period which will be helpful.
- 6.2 Performance is analysed across the five key aspects of planning service delivery as set out in the Planning Performance Framework:
- Plan making (this aspect is not covered in this APR given the very mature stage of the current LDP);
  - Efficiency;
  - Quality;
  - Engagement; and
  - Enforcement.

6.3 Based on the performance information we can be very pleased with the service we deliver. During this period:

- The proportion of major applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed timescales improved from 67% to 89%, and was well above the 'Good' target of 60% (8 out of 9 applications);
- The end-to-end period for determining major planning applications fell from 436 days in 2023/24 to 267 days; this related to just a small number of applications (nine) – these featured three applications involving complex drainage issues (including phosphates/ SAB compliance issues), plus legal and ecological inputs - Tudor Road, Wyesham; Maby Bridge Affordable Housing and the Magor Bio-fuel station application;
- The proportion of all applications determined within 8 weeks or agreed timescales remained high at 92%, demonstrating the effective recruitment and training up of new officers in the Applications team ('Good' target 80%);
- The proportion of applications we approved remained high at 95% (service target is 94%);
- Of those applications that had gone through our pre-application advice service, and followed our advice 100% were approved;
- In eight out of eleven appeals (73%) against our decisions to refuse planning permission, MCC's decision was confirmed, well above the 'Good' standard of 66% or more;
- We dealt with a large number of applications for listed building consent (58 applications) and 78% of these were determined within agreed timescales (target 80%);
- Enforcement performance remained strong for the measure relating to the percentage of enforcement cases investigated in 84 days (82% compared to the 2023/24 figure of 83%) which is rated 'Good', although the performance did decline in respect of the average time to take positive action which increased from 91 days to 134 days, rated 'Fair'. This was primarily because we closed a small number of long-standing cases which inflated the average figure. We investigated around 300 enforcement cases and served 15 notices.
- Significant s106 monies (approx. £1M) were received towards important community infrastructure schemes including the Abergavenny velo park, proposal as a result of granting permission for major developments allocated in the LDP such as those at Rockfield Farm/ Vinegar Hill - Undy, and Crick Road, Portskewett.

This shows that the team is working effectively and has overcome the longer-term effects of vacancies and major constraints such as the phosphate pollution phenomenon. Our performance has been very good and our pre-application advice service is effective.

The Previous APR's actions involving securing political agreement for the Heritage Buildings at Risk Strategy, upgrading our back office software systems to process applications more efficiently and undertaking planning training (with a focus on enforcement) with our community / town councils as well as County councillors, were all completed. In addition, our Senior Heritage Officer received Cadw accreditation to determine listed building applications relating to Grade II\* buildings and one of our DM Officers graduated with

Cardiff University, after completing the part time Planning course. The digitising of historic (and sometimes inaccurate) tree preservation order records is a longer term project and is carried forward (see below).

- 6.4 A summary table of our performance can be found in Appendix A of the APR. Of the 12 ranked indicators, 8 are ranked 'Good', while 4 are 'Fair' and none are in 'need of improvement'.

	Number of indicators
Welsh Government target has been set and our performance is 'good'	8
Welsh Government target has been set and our performance is 'fair'	4
Welsh Government target has been set and our performance 'needs improvement'	0

- 6.5 Four actions are identified going forwards:

Action 1 – a) Digitise information in relation to older planning applications that are held on microfiche to enable the public to self-serve, reducing the demand on staff time and to reduce the need for travel.

b) Digitise re-surveyed data relating to trees covered by Tree preservation Orders so that the information is accurate and available online and the public can research their enquiries themselves rather than seek this from our Tree Officer, Support Team or Duty Officer.

Action 2 – To implement the approved Buildings at Risk (BAR) strategy to manage and prioritise any interventions to enable key heritage assets to realise a sustainable use for future generations.

Action 3 – To continue to invest in our staff to ensure professional qualifications are achieved and professional development takes place – this includes the accreditation of two of our heritage officers so that they can determine applications for listed building consent without reference to Cadw. The more we develop our own staff, the less reliant we are on a very competitive labour market.

Action 4 – To carry out a re-structure of DM management to ensure there is sufficient capacity to manage the team effectively, having regard to recent staff changes.

**Action 1 – a) Digitise information in relation to older planning applications that are held on microfiche to enable the public to self-serve, reducing the demand on staff time and to reduce the need for travel.**

6.6 We still hold substantial information on older planning applications in microfiche form (pre-2000). Retrieving such information is time-consuming and inefficient and the lack of accessible information for the public leads to a high volume of calls and enquiries to the Council's Support Team and daily Duty Officer. Digitising this information will reduce phone calls and emails to all those officers and will free up time to carry out work of greater value

to the service and customers, such as processing submissions for pre-application advice and the applications themselves. This necessary but relatively costly action is to be funded externally as part of the migration of local authority data resulting from the HM Land Registry assuming management of local searches but will benefit the Planning Service and its customers so is very much welcomed. N.B. This work has commenced in the 2025/26 reporting period.

***b) Digitise re-surveyed data relating to trees covered by Tree preservation Orders so that the information is accurate and available online and the public can research their enquiries themselves rather than seek this from our Tree Officer, Support Team or Duty Officer.***

- 6.7 This is a time-consuming project and will no doubt be an action for successive APRs to come. There is a need to re-survey older and often out of date tree preservation records held by the Council from the 1950s to the 1990s and then digitise this accurate information on the Council's GIS layers so that it can be made available to the public to self-serve. The re-survey work will require additional resource. We may need to explore external funding sources promoting digitisation of services to achieve this action.

**Action 2 – To implement the approved Buildings at Risk (BAR) strategy to manage and prioritise any interventions to enable key heritage assets to realise a sustainable use for future generations.**

- 6.8 There are competing demands on the Heritage Team and many requests from the community are received to intervene to stop the decay of several prominent listed buildings throughout the County. Officer time and financial resources are limited in this regard, but an action plan agreed by Members has now helped to prioritise the cases that warrant priority working and action. To this end a Buildings at Risk Strategy and action plan was proposed to be developed in the previous APR to manage this process more effectively and to help the communities understand the choices we make when opting to take appropriate action to save and protect such assets. The strategy provides a methodology for drawing out the worst buildings and then set out appropriate actions as to how these will be tackled; actions are identified to address the worst 5-10 buildings at risk so it is a more manageable and transparent process. This Strategy was approved by Members in early 2025 and work is now proposed in 2025/26 to address key buildings referred to in the document.

**Action 3 – To continue to invest in our staff to ensure professional qualifications are achieved and professional development takes place – this includes the accreditation of two of our heritage officers so that they can determine applications for listed building consent without reference to Cadw. The more we develop our own staff, the less reliant we are on a very competitive labour market.**

- 6.9 In previous reporting periods, particularly after the Covid pandemic, there had been a relatively high turnover of staff within the team. To ensure that our colleagues feel valued and supported, we have committed to helping more junior staff to study to achieve professionally-accredited qualifications. Two of our staff are now enrolled on undergraduate courses. More established members of staff will be supported by training opportunities,



many of which are organised internally to reduce costs and have included county councillors and community councillors. These have covered issues like planning enforcement, one planet developments / rural enterprise dwellings, S106 agreements, affordable housing, biodiversity and active travel. Over 2024/25, two of our heritage officers achieved accreditation from Cadw so that they can determine applications for listed building consent under Cadw's delegation scheme (the Senior Heritage Officer at Grade II\* level). Following the departure of two members of the Heritage team in 2025/26, their replacements will need to undergo this training with Cadw.

***Action 4 - To carry out a re-structure of DM management to ensure there is sufficient capacity to manage the team effectively, having regard to recent staff changes.***

- 6.10 The current temporary structure in DM has been in place since January 2025. This change was a result of an internal promotion and sought to trial an alternative structure to provide resilience and additional leadership capacity for the service. A review of the temporary restructure was to occur after 18 months to consider whether it was fit for purpose and met service needs. Recent changes in the Planning Service have seen the appointment of a new Head of Planning and it is considered necessary to review the structure and set out a clear and fit for purpose structure of the DM function within the wider Planning Service.
- 6.11 The proposed structure will be designed around service need rather than the unique skills of people who have historically been within the service. This will provide clear lines of reporting across the disciplines within the DM service – including Heritage, Enforcement and planning applications. Previous structures have been less resilient and required reorganisation following retirements or staff leaving (internal or external). This restructure is anticipated to take place towards the end of 2025, subject to political approval.





The new Severn View Park Care home, an innovative design approach to dementia care using more intimate and personal spaces; part of the strategic mixed-use development at Crick Road, Portskewett, allocated in the LDP.

### **Opportunities and Risks going forward:**

6.10 The following opportunities for the coming year have been identified as a result of this Annual Performance Report, and our Service Business Plans:

- Continue to roll out the project management of major planning applications, where appropriate, via planning performance agreements to seek, by best endeavours, timely and well-managed processing of such applications, providing a good customer experience for the customer;
- To digitise the information held by the Council in microfiche or paper form to improve the web site experience for customers and improve customers' pathways to information (Action 1 a and b);
- To implement the Buildings At Risk Strategy to safeguard some of our most precious but vulnerable heritage assets (Action 2);
- Continue with the replacement Monmouthshire LDP because of the need to facilitate the identification/ allocation of additional housing land as well as addressing the demographic and employment challenges of the County;
- To identify, implement and/or disseminate best practice via the Planning Officers' Society for Wales or other working groups, including the Welsh Government, the WLGA and the RTPi
- To support our colleagues via training opportunities, regular reviews and one-to-ones to invest in their careers, ensure their well-being and mental health are resilient and their productivity remains high, helping to meet the challenge of retaining our officers in a currently highly dynamic job market in the built environment professions (Action 3).

- To restructure the DM management team to ensure it is fit for purpose and provides firstly, capacity to manage our staff effectively and secondly, resilience in meeting the environmental and socio-economic challenges facing the Council and our communities (Action 4).
- To respond to the challenges raised by the economic squeeze on households and enterprises to ensure our County's communities and local economy can be resilient and can thrive.
- To manage the threat of phosphate pollution in our two main rivers to reduce environmental damage, while finding new ways of managing this issue that will still allow sustainable development to take place in those catchment areas.

6.11 Progress will be measured via our 2025/26 Annual Performance Report and our 2025 - 2028 Service Business Plan.



See text on next page



Images of Veddww Farm in the Wye Valley, a remodelled cottage integrating new, well-mannered extensions to the older Victorian cottage with a more contemporary detached garage and home office (the latter on the first floor) in the substantial, landscaped garden (images courtesy of Hall & Bednarczyk Architects)

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# ANNEX A - PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

MEASURE for 2023/24 APR	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
<b>Efficiency</b>			
Percentage of "major" applications determined within time periods required	>60	50.1-59.9	<50
Average time taken to determine "major" applications in days	Not set	Not set	Not set
Percentage of all applications determined within time periods required	>80	70.1-79.9	<70
Average time taken to determine all applications in days	<67	67-111	112+
Percentage of Listed Building Consent applications determined within time periods required	80+	70.1-79.9	<70
<b>Quality</b>			
Percentage of Member made decisions against officer advice	<5	5-9	9+
Percentage of appeals dismissed	>66	55.1-65.9	<55
Applications for costs at Section 78 appeal upheld in the reporting period	0	1	2+
<b>Engagement</b>			
Does the local planning authority allow members of the public to address the Planning Committee?	Yes		No
Does the local planning authority have an officer on duty to provide advice to members of the public?	Yes		No
Does the local planning authority's web site have an online register of planning applications, which members of the public can access, track their progress (and view their content)?	Yes	Partial	No

WALES AVERAGE 2018/19	Monmouths hire LPA 2023/24	Monmouths hire LPA 2024/25
68%	2 out of 3 applications = 67%	8 out of 9 applications = 89%
232	436 days	267 days
88%	887/956 = 93%	837 / 908 = 92%
77	100 days	102 days
75	43 out of 51 = 84%	45 / 58 = 78%
9%	2 out of 32 = 6%	1 out of 20 = 5%
68%	8 out of 10 = 80%	8/ 11 = 73%
1	0	0
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes



MEASURE for 2023/24 APR	GOOD	FAIR	IMPROVE
<b>Enforcement</b>			
Percentage of enforcement cases investigated (determined whether a breach of planning control has occurred and, if so, resolved whether or not enforcement action is expedient) within 84 days	>80	70.1-79.9	<70
Average time taken to take positive enforcement action	<100	101-200	200+

WALES AVERAGE 2018/19	Monmouths hire LPA 2023/24	Monmouths hire LPA 2024/25
72%	237 out of 286 cases = 83%	214 out of 260 cases = 82%
199 days	91 days	134 days



## Equality and Future Generations Evaluation

<b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation Philip Thomas  <b>Phone no:</b> 01633 644809 <b>E-mail:</b> philipthomas@monmouthshire.gov.uk	<b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b>  Submit the Monmouthshire Planning Service's ninth Annual Performance Report (APR) to the Welsh Government in accordance with statutory requirements and publish the Report on the Council's website.
<b>Name of Service</b>  Planning Services (Planning Policy and Development Management)	<b>Date Future Generations Evaluation</b> form completed  21/11/2025

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6. **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.

The APR identifies areas for improvement within the Development Management Team of the Council. Actions outlined to achieve this should bring positive benefits to all members of Monmouthshire's population. A more efficient and effective Development Management service will secure the aims of the Welsh Spatial Plan, namely Promoting a Sustainable Economy, Valuing our Environment and Respecting Our Environment, be it through timely approval of planning proposals for sustainable forms of development or by preventing harm to acknowledged interests, such as amenity, public safety, health or biodiversity by either refusing permission for inappropriate development or by taking timely and reasonable enforcement action.

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	See statement above	None at this stage	See above

Protected Characteristics	Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic	What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
Disability	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Gender reassignment	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Marriage or civil partnership	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Pregnancy or maternity	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Race	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Religion or Belief	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Sex	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Sexual Orientation	See statement above	None at this stage	See above
Welsh Language	<p><i>.Under the Welsh Language measure of 2011, we need to be considering Welsh Language in signage, documentation, posters, language skills etc.and also the requirement to promote the language.</i></p> <p>Welsh is treated on equal terms as English in the planning process</p>	None at this stage	See above



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?
Poverty	See statement above	None at this stage	See above

**2. 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?
<p><b>A prosperous Wales</b> Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b> The APR seeks to shape an efficient and engaging development management process providing support and guidance for customers to ensure the best development possible for the benefit of local communities and to protect the character and appearance of Monmouthshire. Planning can provide economic investment and growth, and can protect acknowledged interests such as local amenity and townscape. Identifying areas for improvement and learning what works well elsewhere can ensure that customers are getting effective advice early in the process which is critical in securing positive outcomes and appropriate forms of development.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> Some areas for improvement may necessitate customers having to pay for elements of</p>	<p><b>Better contribute to positive impacts:</b> The APR identifies areas for improvement to make the development management process more responsive and efficient for our customers' applications for developments that are of a high standard.</p> <p><b>Mitigate any negative impacts:</b> Care will be taken to improve the planning process via interventions set out in the associated report. The team will focus on positive outcomes rather than being process driven. We will continue to monitor performance through the actions we take, relevant performance measures and 1:1s with case officers.</p>




Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	the service which can be considered to be costly by some customers.	
<b>A resilient Wales</b> Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)	<p><b>Positive:</b> An effective and efficient DM service allows case officers to consider the implications of any development on biodiversity and ecosystems at an early stage in the application process. Officers who are the decision-makers are able to consider the impacts of decisions on ecological interests. This system would not deteriorate as a result of the proposed revisions to the DM process and indeed may provide a more effective system.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified.</p>	<p><b>Better contribute to positive impacts:</b> The actions identified should speed up the delivery of sustainable development.</p> <p><b>Mitigate any negative impacts:</b> None</p>
<b>A healthier Wales</b> People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood	<p><b>Positive:</b> Actions to improve the DM process would enhance support and guidance for customers when submitting a planning application and provide the opportunity for officers to add value to development proposals and provide acceptable forms of the development, which should improve Monmouthshire citizens' access to local services, such as shops, health and recreational/ play facilities, or prevent inappropriate development from harming the amenity of an area, or indeed the health of local people. Development should promote active travel to ensure it is sustainable.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified.</p>	<p><b>Better contribute to positive impacts:</b> The approval and delivery of development proposals can have a positive impact on health and well-being and foster social and community pride in their communities.</p> <p><b>Mitigate any negative impacts:</b> None</p>
<b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b> Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected	<p><b>Positive:</b> The area of work undertaken by the Planning Team directly and indirectly influences the</p>	<p><b>Better contribute to positive impacts:</b> The timely approval and delivery of sustainable development</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>appearance, viability, safety and connectivity of communities via planning policy and land use planning decisions. Providing clear and effective guidance and support to customers at an early stage in the planning process is more likely to lead to positive outcomes that enable the best forms of development possible. This is critical in providing sustainable communities. Taking timely and reasonable enforcement action against inappropriate development can reduce impact on local amenity and health.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified.</p>	<p>proposals can have a positive impact on the character and appearance of an area, promote well-being and foster social and community pride.</p> <p><b>Mitigate any negative impacts:</b> None</p>
<p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b> Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b> The area of work undertaken by the planning section directly and indirectly influences local social, economic and environmental well-being via planning policy and land use planning decisions. The approval of renewable energy proposals will allow Wales to play its part in tackling the effects of climate change.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> none.</p>	<p><b>Better contribute to positive impacts:</b> None</p> <p><b>Mitigate any negative impacts:</b> None</p>
<p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b> Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b> Planning decisions promote the value and significance of the historic built environment by ensuring that it is a direct consideration in planning policy and land use planning decisions. Planning decisions generally facilitate the provision of tourist and recreation development, including playing fields</p>	<p><b>Better contribute to positive impacts:</b> Timely planning decisions will ensure that proposals foster civic pride through well-designed development in historic areas or through the removal of development that has a negative impact on a heritage designation via enforcement action.</p> <p><b>Mitigate any negative impacts:</b> None</p>

Well Being Goal	Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.	What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
	<p>and built development. The Welsh language is now a material planning consideration.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> none.</p>	
<p><b>A more equal Wales</b> People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>	<p><b>Positive:</b> Appropriate and timely development management decisions should bring positive benefits to all members of Monmouthshire's population through policies that seek to achieve the five main aims of the Wales Spatial Plan, namely Building Sustainable Communities, Promoting a Sustainable Economy, Valuing our Environment, Achieving Sustainable Accessibility and Respecting Our Environment</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> none.</p>	None.

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

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> <p>Long Term</p>	<p><i>We are required to look beyond the usual short term timescales for financial planning and political cycles and instead plan with the longer term in mind (i.e. 20+ years)</i></p> <p>The LDP covers the period 2011-21. The Council's Development Management function which makes planning decisions seeks to implement the policies of the LDP which promotes sustainable development. By its nature, therefore, it cannot look beyond the next five-year period but the SA/SEA of the LDP would have ensured consideration of the impact on future generations. The revision to the LDP will seek to adopt land use planning policies up until 2033 taking into account the county's socio-economic challenges.</p>	<p>Ensure that the LDP and its policies have been subject to an appropriate level of scrutiny. This also applies to the current revision of the LDP.</p>
 <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	<p>Monmouthshire's Planning Service believes in working with its customers (which include not just applicants but the public, other Council departments, other local authorities, third sector agencies and businesses) to improve its offer to its customers to meet their needs. This APR identifies areas for improvement to achieve this aim. It is subject to scrutiny and endorsement by Members of both the Council's Performance &amp; Overview Select Committee and Planning Committee. Members and officers of the Council have a specific interest in the subject to ensure that sustainable forms of development are carried out in Monmouthshire.</p>	<p>Any observations offered by Committee will be taken into account as part of the submission process to Welsh Government.</p>

Sustainable Development Principle	Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.	Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?
 <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> <p><b>Involvement</b></p>	<p><i>Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by your proposal? Have they been involved?</i></p> <p>The APR is subject to consultation with Members of the Performance and Overview Select Committee and Planning Committee whose Members have a specific interest in the subject, as well as senior officers of the Council.</p>	<p>As above.</p>
 <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> <p><b>Prevention</b></p>	<p>The APR's aim is to identify areas for improvement in the Planning Service and to initiate actions for meaningful improvement. This would provide the basis for timelier decisions to secure much needed sustainable development. Taking timely and reasonable enforcement action against inappropriate development can reduce impact on local amenity and health.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
 <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> <p><b>Integration</b></p>	<p><i>There is space to describe impacts on people, economy and environment under the Wellbeing Goals above, so instead focus here on how you will better integrate them and balance any competing impacts</i></p> <p>The work undertaken by the Planning Service directly relates to promoting and ensuring sustainable development and its three areas: environment, economy and society.</p>	<p>Improvements to the DM process would facilitate the implementation of the LDP which has been subject to a Sustainability Assessment that balances the impacts on Social, Economic and Environmental factors.</p>

4. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Social Justice, 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?
Social Justice	None.	None at this stage	n/a
Safeguarding	None.	None at this stage	n/a
Corporate Parenting	None.	None at this stage	n/a

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

The APR has been written having regard to data and evidence provided by the following:  
The Development Management Quarterly Survey 2024/25; the Planning Service's Business Plan 2024-27 and the MCC/ Public Service Board Well-being Plan.

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

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

The work undertaken by the Council's Planning Service, and in particular the Development Management function, directly relates to promoting and ensuring sustainable development. The APR 2024/25 would enable the service to identify areas of improvement in the processing of applications and in the enforcing of planning matters, and to engage with customers at an early stage of the planning process to ensure the most appropriate forms of development are approved within Monmouthshire. The planning process promotes sustainable forms of development, helping to create jobs and investment, while protecting material interests such as amenity, public safety and biodiversity.

## 7. 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
See actions in the APR	See APR	See APR

8. **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	Performance & Overview Select Committee (with Planning Committee Members invited)	03/12/2025	TBC



<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Community and Corporate Plan Performance Update</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025</b>
<b>DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the progress that has been made to deliver the objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee use this report to scrutinise the council's performance during the first six months of 2025/26, agrees any areas they would like to examine in greater depth as part of their forward work programme and identifies any feedback for Cabinet to consider when they receive the report at their December meeting.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 In April 2023, Council approved the Community & Corporate Plan which runs through to 2028. The plan establishes a clear purpose to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. The plan sets six objectives, also the Council's well-being objectives, for Monmouthshire to be a:
- 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 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.
- 3.2 These objectives are underpinned by a series of commitments and more detailed actions. Appendix 1 provides an update on progress made during the first six months of 2025/26.
- 3.3 The Community and Corporate Plan was produced at a point in time. The world is now in a very different place, with advances in AI being just one example amongst many. Over this time we have learnt a lot and our thinking has evolved. If we were producing a plan now there are a number of things we would be including that are not featured the original. Similarly, there are many things that we have delivered which did not feature in our plans back in 2022-23. These include: our continued active participation in the Marches Forward Partnership – an ambitious, mission-oriented, cross-border programme; becoming the world's first Deforestation Free Champion Council and a successful bid to join the World Health Organisation's global network of Age-Friendly Communities. These wider achievements are not part of this analysis and councillors will be provided with updates on these via other mechanisms.

- 3.4 We are focused on delivering things that will make a difference to communities. This mid-year progress update predominantly uses milestones and output measures. The evidence of impact that will demonstrate whether we are achieving the outcomes we aspire to for our communities is not always available at regular intervals that align with our reporting timescales. This is because these are complex issues. We can often see progress in the form of stories and case studies but the data we depend on to prove things are making a difference is often available only annually or bi-annually. We are committed to making this data available wherever we have it. We also ensure it features in, and underpins, the more detailed self-assessment which is presented to Council annually in September or October.
- 3.5 Appendix 2 includes the latest available data for the performance measures identified in the measurement framework agreed by Cabinet. The 'latest period' column in the data tables includes figures for quarter 2 of 2025/26. The 'previous' column includes data for 2024/25. Not all data is produced quarterly and where figures refer to different periods this is highlighted in the comments section of the table. This also provides the latest data for the measures that are being used to track the longer-term progress of the plan.
- 3.6 Each objective has been scored based on the council's self-evaluation framework using a scale of 1-6, where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 excellent. This framework is shown in Appendix 1. This provides an in-year assessment based on the progress made so far in 2025/26. It also identifies learning from this interim evaluation that has highlighted where action may be needed to achieve or maintain a positive trajectory of improvement and deliver the impact and outcomes we have committed to. A more detailed evaluation of outcomes and impact will be undertaken at the end of the year.
- 3.7 The scores for each of the objectives are unchanged from those reported for 2024/25:
- A fair place to live: Level 4 (Good).
  - A green place to live: Level 3 (Adequate).
  - A thriving and ambitious place: Level 4 (Good).
  - A safe place to live: Level 4 (Good).
  - A connected place where people care: Level 4 (Good).
  - A learning place: Level 4 (Good).
- 3.8 This mid-year report highlights progress against the objectives up to October 2025. Key areas to highlight include:
- We have increased the number of children and young people benefiting from free or subsidised play opportunities during school holidays, while also ensuring that nutritious meals are provided to those in need. This has positive effects on physical and mental health, which enhances the ability of young people to learn and grow.
  - We have maintained a high rate of recycling, exceeding the statutory target of 70%. We have achieved this through the continued participation of our residents in household recycling schemes.
  - We have worked in partnership with town councils and other key stakeholders to develop placemaking plans. We have attracted new funding to enable town centre improvements. This will contribute to our ambition to create vibrant and sustainable futures for our town and village centres.
  - We have developed a deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) that was approved by Council in October. This has been submitted to the Welsh Government for

public examination. The plan addresses key issues such as allocating 50% affordable housing in each new development. This will make it easier for families to live and work locally. It will also ensure future developments are carbon neutral in line with our commitment to take local action on climate change.

- We have strengthened our social care provision for children and adults by increasing placement options and increased availability of care at home, which has contributed to greater stability for children in care and improved independent living for adults.
- We have reduced permanent exclusions working with our schools through an effective Inclusion Panel and offered risk-managed alternatives, ensuring more children remain in education.

3.9 Of course there are also challenges and areas for development:

- We have invested in improving our use of data to improve our understanding of local needs and geographies. This will enable us to improve how we target our work to the areas of greatest need, particularly in relation to our commitment to tackle poverty and inequality and poverty.
- We have taken proactive steps to decarbonise our operations. We are finalising a costed decarbonisation plan which sets out areas of focus to meet our ambitions to decarbonise our estate. The emissions from our estate have decreased slightly. Our overall carbon emissions have risen recently, mainly due to procurement and construction projects like Severn View Park care home and the carbon-neutral Abergavenny 3-19 school. These have generated carbon emissions in the short term, however, both buildings are designed to minimise long-term environmental impact. We recognise that this rate of reduction is not sufficient to reach net zero by 2030 and that substantial investment is required to decarbonise our buildings.
- Monmouthshire is not alone in experiencing increased numbers of young people who are not engaged in employment, education, or training (often known as NEET). This is a wider societal challenge. Early indications suggest this figure has now stabilised. We will continue to enhance post-16 opportunities, with particular attention to those at risk of becoming NEET.
- We have provided targeted support for vulnerable children and young people. This includes embedding trauma-informed practices to address barriers to attendance. Attendance of pupils eligible for free school meals remains lower than overall attendance and below our target.

3.10 A dashboard providing further detail on the quantitative measures in the Community and Corporate Plan is updated quarterly on the council's intranet site, the hub. Further information on the activity being undertaken is contained in relevant service business plans. These are updated quarterly and are also available for members to view on the hub.

3.11 As referenced in paragraph 3.4 an annual self-assessment of performance in 2025/26 will be produced at the end of the year in line with the performance requirements under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. This will also meet the requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations Act to produce an annual report showing progress against the Council's well-being objectives.

#### **4. REASONS:**

4.1 To provide the committee with an update on progress being made so far in 2025/26 to deliver the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.

**5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

[Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28](#)

[Community & Corporate Plan Measurement Framework  
Self-Assessment Report 2024/25](#)

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## Appendix 1 Six-month 2025/26 Community & Corporate Plan progress report

The Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 contains six objectives which focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act.



The long-term nature of some objectives means that the effects of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will have an impact over the longer term. The targets included in this progress report are reflective of where the council aspires to be in 2025/26. Informed by the evidence gathered, each objective has been assessed on a scale of 1-6 based on performance so far in 2025/26 by applying the following principles:

Level	Definition	Description
6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding – all performance measures have achieved the target set and all actions have been delivered
5	Very Good	Major strengths – a significant majority of actions and measures are on track. No more than one or two falling short
4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – the majority of measures and actions have not been achieved
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weakness – in most areas, performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction and the vast majority of actions have not been delivered

## Objective: A Fair Place to Live

Fair place



**Interim  
Evaluation  
Score: 4**

Level 4 – Good. Important strengths with some areas for improvement. The weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not yet been achieved.

**Why This Matters:** Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire or feel their voice does not count. Many of our residents are prosperous and very capable of looking after themselves and their loved ones. However, this is not the case for all and in a rural county inequality is often more hidden than in urban places. We will increase the intensity of our work to help those who need support to live the lives they want.

### What we want to achieve:

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- Improved life chances for people regardless of income or background
- Residents have better access to council services and support needed to live a healthy life
- Citizens are able to participate in council and community decision-making and take actions which enable them to shape their own futures

### Summary of progress:

- We are implementing universal free school meals for all primary pupils. This ensures that all pupils have access to a freshly cooked meal at lunchtime, irrespective of their background. This is known to have a positive effect on health and educational attainment. We are targeting schools in more deprived areas to increase uptake.
- We are providing targeted free or subsidised play to children and young people during school holidays.
- We have increased the number of families accessing high quality early years education. This is shown to have a positive effect on long term outcomes.
- We need to ensure our efforts on tackling poverty and inequality are joined up. Improving our use of data will ensure our resources can be targeted to those with the greatest need to maximise impact.

## A Fair Place: What progress have we made?

We have collaborated with providers across the county to broaden our **childcare provision** for families. We have increased the number of childcare settings from 94 to 97 during the year. 96% of eligible children now access Early Education, an improvement from 82% in 22/23. There has been a slight reduction in the number of Flying Start settings, from 45 to 42. This is because some settings currently having no eligible children and are choosing not to offer the service. We have established a new childcare setting at Trellech Primary School and will launch a consultation during the autumn term regarding a new setting at Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary School.

We have faced challenges in developing additional Cylch Meithrin settings due to limited site space and uncertainty around the permanent location for the Welsh school in Monmouth. This has meant that families in Monmouth and Chepstow cannot yet access Welsh-medium childcare, including Flying Start. In the interim, we have approved the existing Cylch Meithrin to offer Flying Start places, increasing uptake from 25 to 28 children.


We are continuing to provide targeted work to support communities and **those in need of support**. We have worked with partners to host drop-in cost of living support sessions. We have re-established the Monmouthshire Tackling Poverty Action Network. This will ensure we tackle inequalities and support the most vulnerable in society with the rising cost of living.

We are improving our use of data to ensure individuals in need of support can be easily identified. This will enable more responsive, targeted interventions. We are also participating in the Local Authority Benefit Take-up Pilot which aims to identify residents who may be missing out on means-tested devolved and reserved benefits. We will use data to undertake targeted outreach campaigns to improve benefit take-up. This project is in the early stages. Our Shared Benefits Team have begun the foundational work to integrate this tool into our systems.

We continue to promote the uptake of **Universal Free School Meals**. We are still seeing variances in uptake between areas. Presently 75% of pupils are having meals, up from 64% in 22/23. We have gathered a targeted list of schools using data on deprivation, eligibility for free school meals and additional learning needs to try and increase take-up where it will make the biggest difference. We have delivered our Food and Fun programme. This provides healthy meals and activities during school holidays as well as vital work experience for the young people employed to deliver the scheme. We achieved 6,377 attendances and served 12,849 meals. We know that nutritious food benefits children and young people by improving their physical and mental health, which enhances their ability to learn and grow. We have increased the number of children benefitting from MonLife free or subsidised play provision from 2,039 in 22/23 to 2,436 in 24/25.

We have continued to develop our relationship with the creative sector in Monmouthshire. We have facilitated workshops with local and national organisations, and the creative and economic sectors. We have held our second annual celebration of the arts day at County Hall in April 2025 which showcased arts activity from across the county. The event brought together a range of artists and practitioners enabling us to understand their priorities and inform the development of our **Cultural Strategy**. This aims to make culture more inclusive, accessible and visible for everyone in Monmouthshire. We have developed a draft strategy which is currently out for public consultation.

## Objective: A Green Place to Live

<div>Green place</div> 	<div>Interim Evaluation Score: 3</div>	Level 3 – Strengths just outweigh weaknesses. The evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets.
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**Why This Matters:** We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this place, we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. We will work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding and promote the circular economy. We also recognise that these are complex issues and it will take decades rather than years to see the full impact of the changes we are making.

### What we want to achieve:

- Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint
- Nature recovery, improved environmental and river health
- Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce

### Summary of progress:

- We have finalised a costed decarbonisation plan which sets out areas of focus to meet our ambitions to decarbonise our estate in line with our commitment to become net zero.
- Our carbon emissions have increased in the short term due to construction projects. These projects have been designed to ensure minimal environmental impact and will contribute to an overall reduction in emissions in the long term.
- We have adopted a Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy setting out our response and how we will work with others to protect and enhance the environment.
- We have published our Food Strategy which will guide how we increase community access to land for growing and increase the amount of local produce used in our schools. These will have positive effects on nutrition and bring benefits to growers.
- Progress on delivering our decarbonisation plan will be key if we are to approach net zero at a suitable pace.



## A Green Place: What progress have we made?

We have taken proactive steps to **decarbonise our operations** by finalising a costed decarbonisation plan for our estate. We will use the findings of these surveys to inform a Decarbonisation Strategy. We have invested in low carbon technologies such as the use of renewable energy. Emissions from our estate have decreased slightly since 2022/23, with a 17.8% reduction from our 2019/20 baseline. We recognise that this rate of reduction is not sufficient to reach net zero by 2030 and that substantial investment is required to further decarbonise our buildings. We have established an informal stakeholder working group to co-ordinate opportunities, work programmes and budgets and to evaluate alternative delivery models and capabilities across the organisation.

Overall **carbon emissions** increased between 2022/23 and 2024/25. This was largely due to rises in emissions from procurement and our supply chains. This included the development of Severn View Park care home and the carbon-neutral Abergavenny 3-19 school. We have ensured that, while these construction activities have temporarily raised emissions, both buildings have been designed to ensure minimal environmental impact and reduce carbon emissions in the long-term. We have identified that 87% of our total emissions are *caused emissions*—those linked to procurement, staff commuting and similar activities. This mirrors the picture across Wales where caused emissions make up 83% of total local authority emissions.

We have adopted the **Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy** and are working with partners to protect and enhance our environment. We are actively collaborating on the Wye Nutrient Management Board and Usk Catchment Partnership to improve river health on the Usk and Wye Rivers. We are leading on regional partnerships such as Gwent Green Grid and local partnerships such as Local Nature Partnership to deliver nature-based solutions and improve green spaces.

We have invested in the **transition of our fleet** to ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV). The percentage of ULEV vehicles in our fleet rose from 8% in 2022/23 to 17.36% so far in 2025/26. We have not seen tangible changes to the emissions from travel since 22/23 and since the baseline year of 2019/20. We are facing similar challenges in our ability to transition our fleet as in other work streams of decarbonisation. Due to the complexity of the challenge and the high costs involved, we are unable to transition at the desired pace without significant further investment. We are developing a fleet transition plan to support the acceleration of this work.

We have updated and expanded our **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI)** at multiple sites across the county. We have commissioned a technical report to forecast demand to ensure we are targeting suitable locations. We will use the findings of this report to inform our EVCI strategy for the county. This will increase the availability and accessibility for all residents.

We have maintained a high rate of **recycling**. By the end of quarter 2, 71.9% of municipal waste was sent for recycling, reuse or composting. This exceeded the statutory target of 70% and is already approaching our annual target of 72%. We have achieved this through the continued participation of residents in household recycling schemes. We have, however, identified that the overall amount of waste generated per person has risen from 198kg in 2022/23 to 202kg in 2023/24 and remains above the Wales average. We have achieved the highest UK score for Waste Reduction & Food in the independently run Climate Emergency UK assessment, at 93%.

We have created a **Local Food Strategy** to facilitate access to council land for growing food and have allocated land for community use. We have supported the Welsh Government's Allotment Support Grant. This has improved, created or revived over 130 allotment plots across six sites in Monmouthshire. Community growing can provide a good source of environmentally sound, healthy, locally sourced food and make this more readily available to local people. We have worked with local farmers through the Welsh Veg in Schools pilot. This has enabled us to supply pupils in ten schools with nutritious, local food regardless of socio-economic background. We have also supported the development of new safety standards and logistics, enabling growers to expand and new farmers to diversify into organic horticulture as part of this scheme.

## Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place

Thriving and  
ambitious place



Interim  
Evaluation  
Score: 4

Level 4 – Good. Important strengths with some areas for improvement. The weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not yet been achieved.

**Why This Matters:** We want to foster a diverse, fairer, greener and circular economy, generating sustainable employment growth and creating conditions for shared prosperity. This will ensure that town centres remain vibrant and welcoming places that meet the needs of the local communities, businesses and visitors. Alongside this, good connectivity and infrastructure will enable people to access the services, attractions, education and training opportunities that are central to a thriving and ambitious place.

### What we want to achieve:

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- Vibrant town centres which bring people together and attract investment
- People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business
- Sustainable transport and infrastructure

### Summary of progress:

- We are delivering important strategies, such as the NEET Strategy and Local Transport Plan, to support our people and communities.
- We are working in partnership with town councils and other key stakeholders to develop placemaking plans and have attracted new funding to enable town centre improvements. This will ensure vibrant and sustainable futures for our town and village centres
- We have a well-qualified population and have focused on addressing skills shortages in key industries and supporting residents into employment.
- We know that the number of young people not participating in the labour market has risen. We must continue to develop post-16 opportunities for young people, particularly those who are at risk of becoming NEET. This will improve the prospects for individuals and the prosperity of the county as a whole.

### Thriving Place: What progress have we made?

We have formed placemaking partnerships across all six towns in the county. This ensures that developments reflect and address local needs. We have worked closely with partners and stakeholders to adopt **Placemaking Plans** in Usk and Chepstow. We have developed plans for Monmouth, Abergavenny, and Magor with Undy and are commencing development on one in Caldicot. We have designed these plans to create vibrant and sustainable futures for our town and village centres, drawing on the views of residents, businesses, and voluntary organisations. The establishment of delivery groups to drive and oversee the implementation of these plans will be key to their success. We have secured almost £3m in new funding from both Welsh and UK Governments to support delivery. We have developed a **Destination Management Plan** to ensure that the county becomes the most inspiring, connected and liveable place to stay, invest and work so that by 2030 Monmouthshire is Wales's stand-out rural destination.

We have continued to support our residents and local economy through the delivery of our **Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy**. We have assisted people who are economically inactive and those ready for employment through the Ready for Work and CELT programmes. So far, we have supported 58 people into employment. We have provided opportunities for people to develop and enhance their skills, whether they are looking to upskill within their current roles or gain additional qualifications. We have enabled 111 individuals to gain new skills or upskill. We have maintained our focus on addressing skills shortages. We have delivered weekly Construction Skills Certification Scheme drop-in sessions. 70% of participants have successfully obtained the green labourer's card. We have supported aspiring entrepreneurs and existing businesses, with 25 potential entrepreneurs supported to be business ready and 23 established businesses receiving non-financial support through Business Monmouthshire. We are seeing continued progress in the Monmouthshire economy. This includes sustained levels of people in employment, 78.7%, which is above the rates for Wales and Great Britain.

We have remained committed to supporting young people to stay in education, training, or employment through our **NEET Strategy**. We have engaged with pupils whose attendance is 50% or below, offering them one-to-one support to help them re-engage with education. There have been challenges delivering one-to-one support in post-16 provision due to funding limitations, and we have relied on partners to provide advice and guidance. We are ensuring that NEET young people in Monmouthshire have access to opportunities. We have collaborated with partners to increase post-16 options, including the development of a STEM skills centre, new level 2 pathways in sixth forms, and more apprenticeship opportunities within the council. Getting young people into work or training leads to significant positive outcomes for individuals, the economy, and society as a whole.

We adopted a new **Local Transport Strategy** in May 2024. This sets out a clear ambition for transport infrastructure in Monmouthshire over the next five years. It has also enabled us to contribute to the development of a regional transport plan. We have established an infrastructure project team to ensure all transport and highways programmes of work are aligned to maximise additional benefits and ensure all funding is used effectively. We have been awarded up to £8.4m to implement transport projects to enhance access, safety and infrastructure. We have used this on community road safety training, bus infrastructure projects and road resilience projects to mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. We have created or enhanced two active travel routes so far this year. This is below our target. We will continue to implement improvements to routes, utilising transport project funding. This is part of our plans for a future facing integrated transport network that meets the transport needs of our communities in a sustainable way.

We carried out a pavement and highways survey to gain a detailed understanding of their condition. We will use the findings to identify priority work and align our efforts. We have ensured that work needed on active travel and safe routes in communities are prioritised to ensure safe and sustainable travel routes for our residents. We recognise that funding the level of repairs needed on our highway network is challenging. Welsh Government's Local Government Borrowing Initiative will allow us to borrow money to fund an increased number of improvements projects. This will still not meet the identified funding gap required.

## Objective: A Safe Place to Live

### Safe place



**Interim  
Evaluation  
Score: 4**

Level 4 – Good. Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not yet been achieved.

**Why This Matters:** For most people, Monmouthshire is a really good place to live but this is not the case for everyone. It's important that people have a place to call home, feel safe and have a sense of belonging.

### What we want to achieve:

- Increased supply of good quality affordable housing
- Reduce the number of people who become homeless
- A more energy efficient housing stock with a lower carbon footprint
- Communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other

### Summary of progress:

- Council has approved a deposit version of the Replacement Local Development Plan. This sets out how land will be developed for employment and will address key issues such as affordable housing.
- We are continuing to implement our Rapid Rehousing model, and this is preventing more people from becoming homeless.
- We have started to acquire accommodation to increase the availability of temporary housing in the county which is reducing the number of homeless households placed into costly and inadequate bed and breakfast accommodation.
- The continued high demand for temporary accommodation puts pressure on services. We are developing alternative provision to increase the availability of temporary accommodation.

## Safe Place: What progress have we made?

We have developed a deposit **Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)**. The deposit plan was approved by Council in October. It will now be sent to Welsh Government for public examination. This plan will address a number of key issues and align with the priorities of the organisation. It has allocated 50% affordable housing on each new development and is introducing enabling policies which will allow for further affordable housing developments to come forward. This includes facilitating more single person accommodation in the county which is currently extremely limited and is a factor contributing to homelessness. It will also help us tackle climate change and reduce bills by ensuring new developments to be of the highest energy efficiency standards.

We have increased the number of **affordable homes**. The number granted planning permission increased from 50 in 22/23 to 108 in 24/25. This is mainly attributed to improvements in river health permitting further developments in Monmouth and Abergavenny. These were areas previously restricted by high phosphate levels. The number of affordable homes delivered has also increased from 48 in 22/23 to 71 in 24/25. We recognise that more affordable homes are needed to meet demand in the county. Our deposit Replacement Local Development Plan aims to increase delivery.

We have applied a Rapid Rehousing approach and increased the resources targeted at **homeless prevention**. This includes increased staffing, procedural changes and closer partnership working to support more people at risk. We also provide grants from the Homeless Prevention Fund to help tackle arrears/debt and enable households to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives. We have seen positive results, with the proportion of applicants successfully prevented from becoming homeless increasing from 50% at 2022/23 to 76% by quarter 2 of 2025/26. We are reviewing the Housing Support Grant programme to increase effectiveness.

We have reduced the number of households in B&B accommodation by 89%. This has fallen from 92 in 2022/23 to 10 in Q2 of 2025/26. We have also ensured that there are no 16 and 17-year-olds or families living in B&B accommodation. However, we continue to respond to high levels of demand for temporary accommodation. The number of homeless households in temporary accommodation has remained high, increasing from 117 in 22/23 to 158 at Q2 25/26. We have started to acquire accommodation for use as temporary accommodation and are repurposing council owned properties to meet demand in a cost-effective way. We have worked with housing associations to make more social housing available for homeless households. 58% of general needs social housing was allocated to homeless households in Q2 25/26. We need to ensure that allocating further social housing to homeless applicants will not be detrimental to other housing need groups.

We have championed everyone's right to feel **safe** and belong in their community. We have worked closely with young people across the county to tackle knife crime and anti-social behaviour. We have secured funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to support this work. We have partnered with the charity Fearless to deliver workshops on critical topics such as county lines and knife crime at our youth centres, supporting young people to deal with these challenges. We have targeted young people involved in anti-social behaviour in Caldicot and other town centres and have seen a reduction in the number of ASB incidents. We are strengthening the relationship between young people and local police by regularly inviting officers to our youth centres to engage directly and listen to their concerns.

## Objective: A Connected Place where People Care

### Connected place



**Interim  
Evaluation  
Score: 4**

Level 4 – Good. Important strengths with some areas for improvement. The weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not yet been achieved.

**Why This Matters:** We want Monmouthshire to be a place where people's contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others. The need and complexity of demand for care and support is high. We need to maintain a range of services that support people in periods of vulnerability, from childhood to old age, allowing them to live their lives on their terms. We know that well-being is about far more than treating people when they get sick. We need to deliver approaches that promote, physical and mental health and well-being and reduce health inequalities.

### What we want to achieve:

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- High quality social care which enables people to live their lives on their terms
- A healthy and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded
- A professional and passionate social care workforce

### Summary of progress:

- We have developed strategies that will provide the provision to meet social care needs for children requiring placements and adults who require care at home. These have delivered increased placements for children within the county and increased availability of care at home.
- We have implemented preventative and reablement approaches to providing care that supports long term well-being.
- We have developed a whole authority approach to wellness and well-being (Living Well Strategy) and addressing inequality by promoting healthier lifestyles and building resilience. The delivery of the approach will be key to achieving our outcomes.

## What progress have we made?

We have established a coordinated approach to **early intervention and prevention** in Children's Social Services. We are focussed on preventative family support throughout children's social care. We have achieved stability in the number of children looked after, with a gradual reduction from 208 in March 2022 to 196 in September 2025.

We have invested in **foster care** recruitment and have increased foster carer fees. We continue to face challenges recruiting and retaining foster carers, a challenge seen across Wales and the rest of the UK. However, our work has led to a slight increase in our number of in-house foster carers. This is reducing our reliance on independent fostering agencies for placements (IFAs). At the end of September, for all children in foster placements, 36% were placed with IFAs compared with 64% placed with in-house or kinship carers.

We are developing new residential and supported accommodation projects to increase **placements for children and young people**. We have completed two projects providing aged 16+ supported accommodation for five placements and a four-bed residential children's home. We are developing a further two projects, one children's residential home and a further aged 16+ supported accommodation. This is improving the availability of placements and helping to ensure children and young people can remain close to their communities. In September 2025 51.5% of children looked after were supported to remain in Monmouthshire, which is a higher proportion than over the previous eighteen months.

We are responding to an ageing population by focussing on reviewing and assessing care requirements, expanding reablement services, and rolling out assistive technology. This enables us to support adults to live independently for longer. Following a package of reablement, 62% of people were assessed as not requiring further support. This is a higher proportion than in the in the last couple of years. We have developed a **Living Well Strategy** to promote a whole authority approach to wellness and well-being and address inequality by promoting healthier lifestyles and building resilience, particularly among deprived communities.

We are implementing a **long-term strategy for commissioned domiciliary care**. Due to a combination of our activities and external factors the market for home care has stabilised. We have reduced the number of unmet care hours from 804 in March 2023 to 412 in September 2025. We are now able to provide 94.6% of domiciliary care hours. This is improving access to vital support to enable people to remain living in their own home. Adults social care service user satisfaction with care and support is 79% in September 2025 which is lower than the 83.5% in March 2023.

We are enabling **healthier, more active lives** by increasing outdoor access. Fifty-six schools, volunteers, and partners participated in nature-based wellbeing projects county-wide. Through the Shift project and the Emotional Logic grant programme, we are supporting young people's mental health, with 100% of young people engaged in the project reporting improved wellbeing.

## Objective: A Learning Place

### Learning place



**Interim  
Evaluation  
Score: 4**

Level 4 – Good Important strengths with some areas for improvement. The weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not yet been achieved.

**Why This Matters:** We want Monmouthshire to be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn, developing the skills and knowledge they will need to reach their potential. The pandemic had a substantial effect on schools and pupils. The two years of uncertainty and significant disruption to learning inevitably left a legacy. Before the pandemic we knew that our disadvantaged learners did not achieve the outcomes we would wish. The pandemic has worsened the learning experiences of many vulnerable students such as those eligible for free school meals. The emotional and mental well-being of pupils was often affected, with many experiencing increased uncertainty, anxiety and loneliness.

### What we want to achieve:

- Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusions which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils.
- The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning.
- A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting points, strengths and educational needs.
- Continue our programme of school modernisation.

### Summary of progress:

- We are implementing a range of approaches and support to improve attendance, reduce exclusions and support pupils' well-being to keep our young people in school.
- Attendance in primary schools has improved to near pre-pandemic levels, secondary school attendance remains below pre-pandemic levels. Attendance of eFSM pupils remains lower, particularly in secondary school. The number of fixed-term exclusions from schools is high and there is significant demand for support to pupils.
- We have developed an Inclusion Strategy that will help us to ensure consistent, high-quality delivery of inclusion services across Monmouthshire.
- We are developing the school estate, including the opening of the carbon neutral King Henry VIII all-through school in Abergavenny.
- We need to target our support for children and young people, particularly vulnerable pupils, using the approaches we have now developed, to support attendance in school.



### How well are we achieving our desired outcomes?

We have worked closely with schools to improve **attendance**, recognising that lower attendance remains a challenge nationally since the pandemic. We have dedicated education welfare officers to support vulnerable pupils and bring them back into education wherever possible. We have held regular attendance consultations with schools to promote attendance and provide tailored support to families.

We have strengthened systems and processes by updating attendance policies in line with Welsh Government guidance. We have increased primary school attendance to 93.9%, nearing pre-pandemic levels and close to our 94% target. We have not achieved the same improvement in secondary schools, where attendance reached 90.1% during the 2024/25 academic year, compared with 88.2% for the year before.

We have continued to support **vulnerable learners** by improving our understanding of the drivers of non-attendance and low attendance. We have embedded trauma-informed practice as part of a universal, whole-school preventative approach and developed a learning programme to help schools address emotionally based school avoidance. We have implemented the whole-school approach to emotional and mental well-being. This is enabling schools to promote pupil well-being effectively. Despite these actions, we have faced challenges in improving attendance for learners eligible for free school meals, particularly in secondary schools. Attendance of our eFSM cohort in primary schools was 89.1% at the end of the 24/25 academic year, 4.8 percentage points lower than the overall figure. Attendance of eFSM pupils in secondary schools was 79.8%, 10.3 percentage points lower than the overall attendance figure. Narrowing the gap between those eFSM and those not will be essential to ensure better outcomes for our pupils.

We have decreased the number of permanent **exclusions** upheld in schools by improving the operation and effectiveness of the Inclusion Panel to consider alternatives. We have worked with schools and other agencies to offer viable, risk-managed alternatives. We have faced continued pressure from high levels of fixed-term exclusions, which have increased demand on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS). We have invested in new accommodation and enhanced leadership to improve PRS capacity and ensure pupils are able to achieve better outcomes.

We have developed a new **Inclusion Strategy** and an updated Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to shape our work with children and young people in schools and settings in Monmouthshire. We have ensured a focus on improving outcomes for children and young people in vulnerable groups and their families through our Inclusion Strategy. We have set out our commitment to supporting children and young people with barriers to learning and additional learning needs, ensuring they receive the necessary support, resources, and opportunities to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally through our ALN Policy.

We have continued our development and modernisation of the **school estate**. We have completed the construction of the new King Henry all-through school in Abergavenny and we are expanding the capacity of our Welsh medium schools.

We have an agreed **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan** that sets our strategic direction for the planning, delivery, and growth of Welsh medium education in Monmouthshire over the next ten years. We are mainly on target with delivering the plan. We have established immersion classes to support transitions into Welsh medium education and ensure demand for new sites.

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## Appendix 2 – Latest update on the performance measurement framework in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028

The table below provides the latest progress and data on the milestone, measures and associated targets that have been set in the measurement framework for each Objective in the Community and Corporate Plan. The 'latest period' column in the data tables includes figures for quarter 2 of 2025/26. The 'previous' column includes data for 2024/25. Not all data is produced quarterly and where figures refer to different periods this is highlighted in the comments section of the table.

Objective: A Fair Place to Live		
Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
All four library of things are fully operational	March 2025	Benthyg Chepstow was officially relaunched in September, meaning that all four library of things are now fully operational.
Establish two additional cylch meithrin	First established September 2025, second established January 2027	Limited progress has been made to develop additional cylch meithrins due to a lack of suitable sites.
Establish childcare settings on the sites of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary school and Trellech Primary schools	To establish the site at Trellech by March 2025 and Archbishop Rowan Williams by January 2027	The additional childcare setting on the site of Trellech Primary School has been established. A consultation on establishing a childcare setting on the site of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary school will take place in the Autumn term.
Opening of the Magor and Undy Community Hub	August 2023	This has now been completed.
Disability Confident Employer (Level 2) Status attained	June 2024	This has now been completed.

County of Sanctuary Status attained	December 2024	We have been putting in place the actions required to secure county of sanctuary status. The final action is the creation of the Sanctuary Seekers Practitioner Network. This is a forum designed to ensure that the voices and experiences of sanctuary seekers inform service delivery and policy development. With this in place, the final application for accreditation will be submitted in December.			
A new poverty and inequality action plan is approved by Cabinet	December 2024	It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option. We are reviewing our current activity to ensure our efforts to address poverty and inequality are considered consistently across our services and in collaboration with partners.			
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment	
Percentage of pupils choosing to receive universal free school meals	75	75	77		
i) The financial saving to communities (£) ii) Carbon saving (Kg Co2) from items borrowed through Benthylg Library of Things	i)28,028 ii)12,402	i)11,100 ii)6,072	i) £20,000 ii) 10,000	This figure is cumulative throughout the year.	
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week	42	43	45	Latest is 2022/23, previous is 2021/22.	
Number of children benefitting from MonLife-run free or subsidised play provisions	2,463	1,445	3,708	This figure is cumulative throughout the year.	
Number of local employers who make the disability confident employer pledge	35	46	70	Latest is March 2025, previous is November 2024.	
Percentage of people who volunteer	32	39	40	Latest is 2022/23, previous is 2019/20.	
Percentage of the population who can speak Welsh	19.7	21.3	18	Latest is 2024/25, previous is 2023/24.	

Objective: A Green Place to Live					
Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress			
New climate and nature emergency strategy approved by Cabinet	May 2024	This has now been completed			
Food strategy developed and approved	May 2024	This has now been completed			
Increased use of seasonal and/or local produce in schools, care homes and domiciliary care	May 2026	Work with partners is ongoing to increase the use of seasonal, local produce in schools and play activities across the county.			
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment	
Carbon emissions (kgCO <sub>2</sub> e) from the council's assets and operations	54,859	56,911	36,000	Latest is 2024/25, previous is 2023/24.	
Percentage of our local authority fleet which is ultra-low emission	16.5	17.4	18		
Capacity (MW) of renewable energy equipment installed on the council's estate	6.722	6.815	6.75	Latest is 2024/25, previous is 2023/24.	
Amount (kwh) of renewable energy generated from Council installations	5,271,000	5,536,808	4,893,750	Latest is 2024/25, previous is 2023/24.	
Percentage of municipal waste sent for recycling, reuse or composting	72.2	71.9	72	This is provisional data which may be subject to change.	
Number of active travel routes created or enhanced	19	2	18	This figure is cumulative throughout the year. These figures are linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.	

**Objective: A Thriving and Ambitious Place**

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Target for Completion</b>	<b>Progress</b>			
Development of draft Placemaking Plans for Abergavenny, Magor with Undy and Monmouth	March 2025	Plans have now been developed and will be subject to approval by Cabinet.			
Develop Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy	February 2024	This has now been completed.			
Develop and approve NEET strategy	November 2024	This has now been completed.			
Local Transport Plan supporting modal shift is produced	May 2024	This has now been completed.			
<b>Measure</b>	<b>Previous Period</b>	<b>Latest Period</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Comment</b>	
Total number of visitors to our heritage & culture sites	189,541	99,303	194,500	Latest figure is for the period April to September 2025. Target is for full year April 25- March 26. We are forecast to exceed the target.	
Number of NEET young people supported into employment	New measure	10	25	This is an annual figure that was introduced in 2024/25. Latest is 2024/25.	
Number of working age people supported into employment during the year through action by the local authority	82	58	82	Latest period total is cumulative throughout the year. Performance is linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.	
Percentage of school leavers not in education, employment or training	1.8	3.1	1.5	This is an annual measure. Previous is 2023, latest is 2024.	

Percentage of care experienced young people who have completed at least three months in education, training or employment by the age of 19	52.5	65	60	Previous is 2023/24, latest is 2024/25.
Number of pre-starts and existing businesses assisted during the year by the local authority and its partners	89	48	100	Latest period total is cumulative throughout the year. Performance is linked to the funding available each year and the size and scale of projects delivered.

Objective: A Safe Place to Live					
Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress			
Replacement Local Development Plan approved by Council	July 2025	The Deposit RLDP was approved by Council in October 2025. This will now be sent to Welsh Government for public examination.			
The use of B&B accommodation is eliminated for households with children and young people	March 2027	There are currently 0 families in B&B accommodation.			
Rapid Rehousing Approach introduced	April 2023	This has now been completed. The Rapid Rehousing Approach was implemented in April 2023 and has contributed to increased focus on homeless prevention.			
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment	
Number of affordable homes granted planning permission in year	46	108	75	This is an annual measure. Previous is 23/24, latest is 24/25.	
Number of additional affordable homes delivered	61	71	80	This is an annual measure. Previous is 23/24, latest is 24/25.	

Percentage of homeless households who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless	71	76	70	
Number of 16- and 17-year-olds in bed and breakfast accommodation	0	0	0	
Number of families in bed and breakfast accommodation	0	0	0	The corresponding milestone is the use of B&B accommodation is eliminated for households with children and young people by March 2027.
Number of homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation	20	10	25	
Number of homeless households in temporary accommodation	140	158	150	

**Objective: A Connected Place Where People Care**

<b>Milestones</b>	<b>Target for Completion</b>	<b>Progress</b>
Development of a young person's Placement Development Strategy	April 2024	This has now been completed.
Approval of a commissioning strategy to support a sustainable domiciliary care sector	May 2024	This has now been completed.



Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
The percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year that reduced or mitigated the need for support / positive outcome from reablement	55.7	62.4	60	
Percentage of adult service users who are happy with the care and support they have had	84.7	79.0	85	
Percentage of hours of long-term domiciliary care fulfilled	98.2	94.6	96	
Percentage of families reporting a positive outcome following a building stronger families team intervention	100	100	90	
Percentage of adult service users who have had the right information or advice when they needed it	78	74.4	80	
Percentage of children who are looked after by the local authority who are placed with in-house foster carers	35.8	36	43	This measure shows the percentage of children looked after by the local authority who are placed with in house foster carers. At the end of September, for all children in foster placements, 36% were placed with IFAs compared with 64% placed with in-house or kinship carers.
Percentage of young people engaged in the youth service Shift project who perceive an improvement in their mental health / emotional well-being	90	100	85	
Number of schools, volunteers, local interest groups and partners involved in nature-based health and wellbeing projects and initiatives across the county	41	56	30	

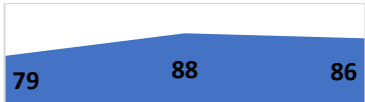
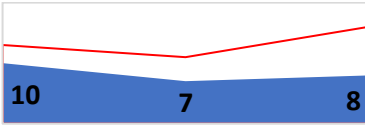
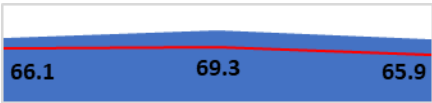
Objective: A Learning Place		
Milestones	Target for Completion	Progress
Attendance and Engagement Strategy updated to strengthen systems and processes to improve and sustain high levels of attendance in line with new Welsh Government Guidance	September 2024	A range of policies have been updated to support increased attendance levels. These include the Council attendance policy, primary and secondary school attendance model policies and fixed penalty notice policy.
Inclusion Strategy approved by Cabinet	November 2024	This has now been completed. The Inclusion Strategy and ALN Policy were approved by Cabinet in November 2025.
Quality Assurance of Additional Learning Provision across the county via school's finance forms and provision pyramids is completed.	Regular Assessment	Almost all schools have submitted their finance forms and provision pyramids for quality assurance.
Additional Learning Provision (ALP) meets the needs of vulnerable learners in the county and is of good quality		
Additional Learning Need Coordinators and Specialist Resource Base Leads are engaged in quality assurance processes around the consistency and impact of Additional Learning Need provision through Additional Learning Provision forum and cluster / Specialist Provision and Outreach Team	Regular Assessment	Individual Development Plans moderation has taken place at both a cluster and Local Authority level. Secondary supported self-evaluation for ALN / ALP outcomes have been shared with ALN coordinators and Headteachers; where relevant action plans have been developed with schools or existing plans added to.
A new carbon neutral, 3- 19 school is opened in Abergavenny	Phase 1 April 2025, Phase 2 April 2026	Phase 1 was completed in April 2025 with completion of the new school building.
A strategic review of school catchments is completed, and recommendations are made to Cabinet	Annual review of policy	The School Admissions Policy 2025/26, including a review of school catchment areas, was approved by Cabinet in April 2024, in which it was agreed to accommodate the villages of Tredunnock, Llanhennock and Llandegveth into the catchment area for Usk Church in Wales Primary School.

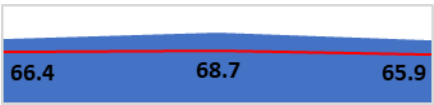
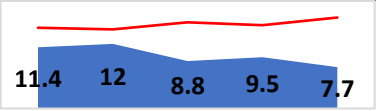
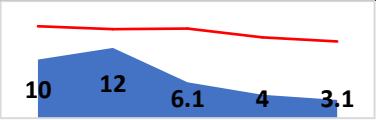
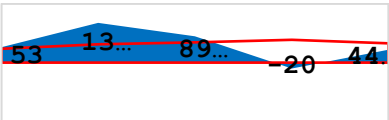
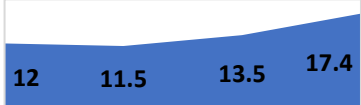
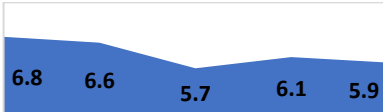
Deliver a new non-maintained nursery in Trellech, invest S106 funding to improve the infrastructure at Castle Park and Archbishop Rowan Williams schools and improve and develop the buildings used to accommodate the Pupil Referral Service	Trellech March 2025, Archbishop Rowan Williams January 2027	Trellech Nursery building was completed and opened in February 2025. A consultation on establishing a childcare setting on the site of Archbishop Rowan Williams Primary school will take place in the Autumn term.		
A new Welsh-medium seedling provision is opened in Monmouth	September 2025	We opened Ysgol Gymraeg Trefynwy on the site of Overmonnow Primary school in September 2024.		
A newly refurbished Welsh-medium primary school is opened	Opened and refurbished September 2025	We have secured a new site for Ysgol Y Fenni which will increase the capacity of the school from 210 to 420 pupils. The refurbishment of the new site has been delayed due to issues arising in the construction process. Work is underway and is planned to be completed by September 2026.		
Measure	Previous Period	Latest Period	Target	Comment
Pupil attendance (brackets show efsm figure) i) primary ii) secondary	i) 93.6 (89.0) ii) 88.2 (75.8)	i) 93.9 (89.1) ii) 90.1 (79.8)	i) 94 (92) ii) 94 (92)	Previous is 2023/24 academic year data. Latest is 2024/25 academic year.
Percentage of schools engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism	79	94	100	
Number of Reception learners in Welsh medium schools	56	57	85	Previous is 2023/24, latest is 2024/25.
Number of children transitioning from a Welsh language primary school to a Welsh language secondary school	27	22	46	Previous is 2023/24, latest is 2024/25.
Number of young people supported by Inspire (in school support/outreach support/post 16 support) to achieve an additional qualification and / or achieve a life skill	186	73	133	

Total number of enrolments by adult learners on community education courses including Coleg Gwent franchise courses	937	909	950	Previous is 2023/24, latest is 2024/25.
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Latest update on the longer-term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028

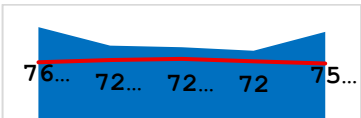
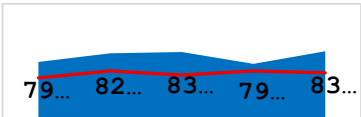
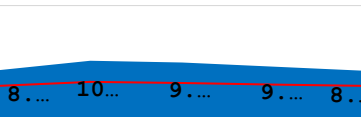
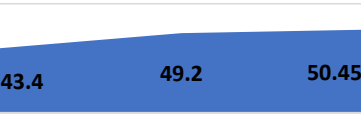
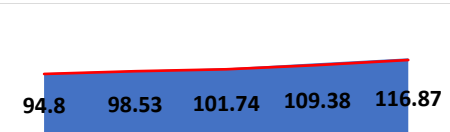
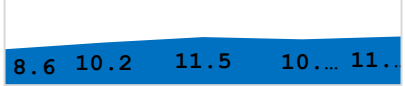
The table below provides the latest data on measures that are being tracked to inform the work in the plan. We want to see positive movement in these measures but they are things where our input is only part of a much bigger picture and so we are not able to set targets against them. Wales data is included in red, where available.

Longer term measures in Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028	Trend	Latest
A Fair place to live		
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need		86
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation		8
Healthy life expectancy - female (years)		65.9

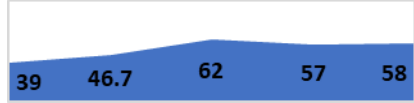



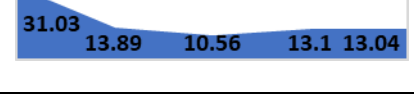
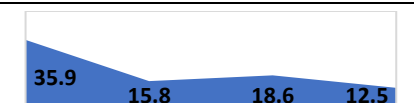
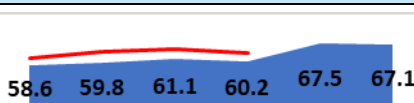
Healthy life expectancy – male (years)		65.9
Gap in healthy life expectancy between most and least deprived areas - female (years)		7.7
Gap in healthy life expectancy between most and least deprived areas – male (years)		3.1
Difference in average pay between men and women working in the county (£)		44.3
Percentage of children living in relative low-income families		17.4
Percentage of residents who feel ‘People in my local area get on well and help each other’	New measure - Trend data not available	78.1
Percentage of residents who feel ‘People in my local area pull together to improve the local area’	New measure - Trend data not available	63.8
<b>A Green place to live</b>		
Average carbon emissions per capita in Monmouthshire (tonnes)		5.9

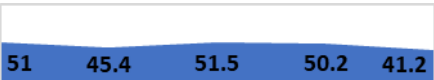
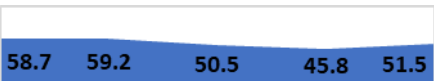
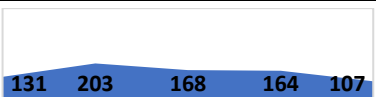

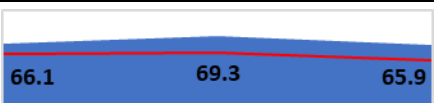
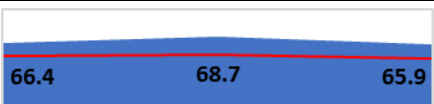
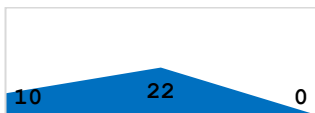
Number of rail passenger journeys	<table><tr><th>Year</th><th>2013</th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th><th>2016</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th><th>2019</th></tr><tr><td>Number of rail passenger journeys</td><td>258,633</td><td>242,537</td><td></td><td></td><td>39,918</td><td>150,551</td><td>194,306</td></tr></table>	Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Number of rail passenger journeys	258,633	242,537			39,918	150,551	194,306	194,306
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019											
Number of rail passenger journeys	258,633	242,537			39,918	150,551	194,306											
Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the air (µg/m3), measured at Air Quality Management Areas in Monmouthshire	<table><tr><th>Year</th><th>2013</th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th><th>2016</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th></tr><tr><td>Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution</td><td>8</td><td>8</td><td></td><td></td><td>6</td><td>6</td></tr></table>	Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution	8	8			6	6	6		
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018												
Average level of nitrogen dioxide pollution	8	8			6	6												
Average annual residual household waste produced per person (kilograms)	<table><tr><th>Year</th><th>2013</th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th><th>2016</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th></tr><tr><td>Average annual residual household waste produced per person</td><td>183</td><td>211</td><td>207</td><td></td><td>198</td><td>202</td></tr></table>	Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average annual residual household waste produced per person	183	211	207		198	202	202		
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018												
Average annual residual household waste produced per person	183	211	207		198	202												
Percentage of the Special Area of Conservation river catchment waterbodies that fail the phosphorus targets	Trend data not available	88 for Usk 67 for Wye																
Percentage of people who agree that their local area has a clean environment	New measure - Trend data not yet available	58.8																
A Thriving and Ambitious place																		
Percentage of people satisfied with their local area as a place to live	<table><tr><th>Year</th><th>2013</th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th><th>2016</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th></tr><tr><td>Percentage of people satisfied</td><td>92</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>84</td><td>95</td></tr></table>	Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Percentage of people satisfied	92				84	95	95		
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018												
Percentage of people satisfied	92				84	95												
Average hourly town centre footfall	<table><tr><th>Year</th><th>2013</th><th>2014</th><th>2015</th><th>2016</th><th>2017</th><th>2018</th></tr><tr><td>Average hourly town centre footfall</td><td>292</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>257</td><td>288</td></tr></table>	Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Average hourly town centre footfall	292				257	288	288		
Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018												
Average hourly town centre footfall	292				257	288												







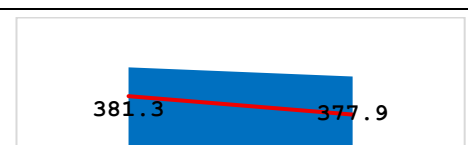
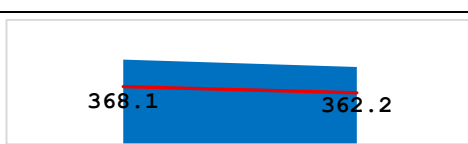
Percentage of vacant town centre premises	<p>10.2 11.6 8.8 10.9</p>	10.9
Annual economic impact of tourism (£)	<p>238.67 244.99 81.16 182.79 258.08 329.8</p>	329.8
Number of tourists visiting the county (million)	<p>3.26 0.536 1.5 2.34 2.29</p>	2.29
Percentage of people who attend or participate in arts, culture or heritage activities three or more times a year	<p>85 76 79</p>	79
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework i) no qualifications, ii) qualified to level 2 or above, iii) qualified to level 3 or above iv) qualified to level 4 or above	Update in learning place below	Update in learning place below
Gross disposable household income per head (£)	<p>22,151 21,609 22,720 24,081</p>	24,081
Percentage unemployed i) females ii) males	Data not available	Data not available


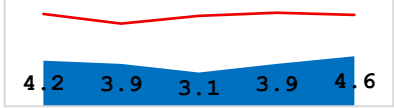
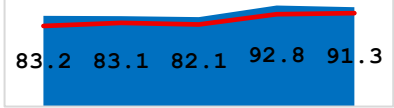
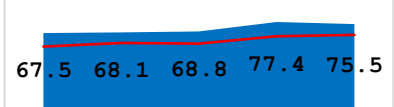
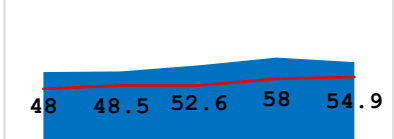
Percentage employed – female		75.3
Percentage employed – male		83.6
Percentage of council expenditure spent in local supply chain through public sector contracts	Data not yet available	Data not yet available
Percentage increase in active travel route usage	Trend data not yet available	4.1
<b>A Safe Place to Live</b>		
Median house prices compared to median workplace-based earnings		8.51
Percentage of all homes in the county with an energy efficiency rating of 'C' or above		50.45
Average weekly rent for social housing in Monmouthshire		116.87
Average time (months) homeless households spend in Band 1 with a homeless duty before moving on to settled/permanent accommodation		11.67



Percentage of social housing allocated to homeless households		58
Number of overall crimes recorded		6,152
Number of recorded crimes - sexual offences		200
Number of recorded crimes - public order offences		722
Rate of anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population		13.04
Percentage of residents who feel safe when outside in their local area during the i) day ii) night	New measure - Trend data not yet available	i) 90.29 ii) 66.19
Percentage of those referred to the youth offending service who subsequently re-offend		12.5
<b>A Connected Place Where People Care</b>		
Percentage of children supported to remain living with their family (not including children looked after)		67.1

Percentage of adult service users who feel part of their community	 51 45.4 51.5 50.2 41.2	41.2
Percentage of children looked after supported to remain in Monmouthshire	 58.7 59.2 50.5 45.8 51.5	51.5
Number of carers and young carers supported by the carers team	 131 203 168 164 107	76
Percentage of people who are lonely	 17 11 13 12	12
Percentage of adults with two or more healthy lifestyle behaviours	Trend data not available	93
Healthy life expectancy at birth (female)	 66.1 69.3 65.9	65.9
Healthy life expectancy at birth (male)	 66.4 68.7 65.9	65.9
Percentage of people who agree 'People in my local area get on well and help each other'	New measure – Trend data not yet available	78.1
<b>A Learning place</b>		
Number of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools	 10 22 0	0

Rate of permanent exclusions across primary and secondary schools		0
Rate of fixed term exclusions - primary (all)		46
Rate of fixed term exclusions - primary (eFSM)		178.7
Rate of fixed term exclusions - secondary (all)		478.8
Rate of fixed term exclusions - secondary (eFSM)		1,444.4
Capped 9 Point Score – All pupils		369.8
Capped 9 Point Score - Females		377.9
Capped 9 Point Score - Males		362.2

Capped 9 Point Score - eFSM		304.7
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework i) no qualifications		4.6
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework ii) qualified to level 2 or above		91.3
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework iii) qualified to level 3 or above		75.5
Percentage of adults with qualifications at different levels of the national qualification framework iv) qualified to level 4 or above		54.9
Percentage of learners studying for an assessed qualification in Welsh as a subject	Data not yet available	93.3