

Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir
Y Rhadyr
Brynbuga
NP15 1GA

Dydd Mawrth, 19 Mai 2026

Hysbysiad a Gyfarfod :

Pwyllgor Craffu Pobl

**Dydd Iau, 28ain Mai, 2026, 10.00 am,
Neuadd y Sir, Y Rhadyr, Brynbuga. NP15 1GA**

Nodwch y cynhelir rhag gyfarfod 30 munud cyn dechrau'r cyfarfod ar gyfer aelodau'r pwyllgor

AGENDA

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1.	Ethol Cadeirydd.	
2.	Penodi Is-gadeirydd.	
3.	Ymddiheuriadau am Absenoldeb.	
4.	Datganiadau o Fuddiant	
5.	Fforwm Agored i'r Cyhoedd.	
6.	Pecyn Buddsoddi ar gyfer Canolfan Hamdden Cil-y-coed: Ystyriaeth o fuddsoddiad arfaethedig i wella cyfleusterau yng Nghanolfan Hamdden Cil-y-coed.	1 - 22
7.	Blaengynllun Gwaith y Pwyllgor Craffu Pobl.	23 - 28
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9.	I gymeradwyo'r cofnodion canlynol:	
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10.

Cyfarfod Nesaf: Dydd Iau 18fed Mehefin 2026 am 10.00am.

Paul Matthews

Prif Weithredwr

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

MAE CYFANSODDIAD Y PWYLLGOR FEL A GANLYN:

County Councillor Jan Butler, Goetre Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Simon Howarth, Llanelly Hill;, Independent Group
County Councillor Penny Jones, Raglan;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Maureen Powell, Pen Y Fal;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Sue Riley, Bulwark and Thornwell;, Independent Group
County Councillor Maria Stevens, Severn;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Lansdown;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Gwybodaeth I'r Cyhoedd

Gofynnir i chi nodi y bydd Cyngor Sir Fynwy yn ffilmio'r cyfarfod hwn ac y bydd ar gael i'w weld ar-lein ar ffurf fyw ac archif. Mae'n bosibl y gellid ffilmio ardaloedd lle mae'r cyhoedd yn eistedd a drwy fynd i mewn i'r Siambr rydych yn cydsynio i gael eich ffilmio a defnydd posibl y delweddau hynny a recordiad sain ar gyfer dibenion gwe-ddarlledu. Os ydych yn gwneud sylw i'r cyfarfod bernir eich bod wedi cydsynio i gael eich ffilmio.

Caiff recordiadau o'r cyfarfod eu cadw yn unol â pholisi'r Cyngor ar gadw data. Dim ond os yw'r Swyddog Monitro yn ystyried bod angen hynny oherwydd bod y cyfan neu ran o gynnwys y gwe-ddarllediad yn neu'n debygol o fod yn groes i unrhyw ddarpariaeth statudol neu athrawiaeth cyfraith gyffredin, er enghraifft deddfwriaeth Diogelu Data a Hawliau Dynol neu ddarpariaethau yn ymwneud â gwybodaeth gyfrinachol neu eithriedig, y caiff gwe-darllediadau neu rannau o we-ddarllediadau a archifwyd eu tynnu o wefan y Cyngor.

Mynediad i gopïau papur o agendâu ac adroddiadau

Gellir darparu copi o'r agenda hwn ac adroddiadau perthnasol i aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n mynychu cyfarfod drwy ofyn am gopi gan Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 01633 644219. Dylid nodi fod yn rhaid i ni dderbyn 24 awr o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod er mwyn darparu copi caled o'r agenda hwn i chi.

Edrych ar y cyfarfod ar-lein

Gellir gweld y cyfarfod ar-lein yn fyw neu'n dilyn y cyfarfod drwy fynd i www.monmouthshire.gov.uk neu drwy ymweld â'n tudalen Youtube drwy chwilio am MonmouthshireCC. Drwy fynd i mewn i'r ystafell gyfarfod, fel aelod o'r cyhoedd neu i gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod, rydych yn caniatáu i gael eich ffilmio ac i ddefnydd posibl y delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gan y Cyngor.

Y Gymraeg Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn gyda dyledus barch i chi roi 5 diwrnod o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod os dymunwch siarad yn Gymraeg fel y gallwn ddarparu ar gyfer eich anghenion.

Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

i ddod yn sir ddi-garbon, gan gefnogi lles, iechyd ac urddas i bawb ar bob cam o'u bywydau.

Amcanion rydym yn gweithio tuag atynt

- Lle teg i fyw lle mae effeithiau anghydraddoldeb a thlodi wedi'u lleihau;
- Lle gwyrdd i fyw a gweithio gyda llai o allyriadau carbon a gwneud cyfraniad cadarnhaol at fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng yn yr hinsawdd a natur;
- Lle ffyniannus ac uchelgeisiol, lle mae canol trefi bywiog a lle gall busnesau dyfu a datblygu;
- Lle diogel i fyw lle mae gan bobl gartref maen nhw'n teimlo'n ddiogel ynddo;
- Lle cysylltiedig lle mae pobl yn teimlo'n rhan o gymuned ac yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi;
- Lle dysgu lle mae pawb yn cael cyfle i gyrraedd eu potensial.

Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.
- **Caredigrwydd** – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

Canllaw Cwestiynau Craffu Sir Fynwy

Rôl y Cyn-gyfarfod

1. Pam mae'r Pwyllgor yn craffu ar hyn? (cefndir, materion allweddol)
2. Beth yw rôl y Pwyllgor a pha ganlyniad mae'r Aelodau am ei gyflawni?
3. A oes digon o wybodaeth i gyflawni hyn? Os nad oes, pwy allai ddarparu hyn?
 - Cytuno ar y drefn holi a pha Aelodau fydd yn arwain
 - Cytuno ar gwestiynau i swyddogion a chwestiynau i Aelod y Cabinet

Cwestiynau'r Cyfarfod

Craffu ar Berfformiad

1. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â'r blynyddoedd blaenorol? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
2. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â chynghorau eraill/darparwyr gwasanaethau eraill? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
3. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â thargedau gosodedig? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
4. Sut cafodd targedau perfformiad eu gosod? Ydyn nhw'n ddigon heriol/realistig?
5. Sut mae defnyddwyr gwasanaethau/y cyhoedd/partneriaid yn gweld perfformiad y gwasanaeth?
6. A fu unrhyw awdid ac archwiliadau diweddar? Beth oedd y canfyddiadau?
7. Sut mae'r gwasanaeth yn cyfrannu at wireddu amcanion corfforaethol?
8. A yw gwelliant/dirywiad mewn perfformiad yn gysylltiedig i gynnydd/ostyngiad mewn adnodd?
Pa gapasiti sydd yna i wella?

Craffu ar Bolisi

1. Ar bwy mae'r polisi yn effeithio ~ yn uniongyrchol ac yn anuniongyrchol? Pwy fydd yn elwa fwyaf/leiaf?
2. Beth yw barn defnyddwyr gwasanaeth /rhanddeiliaid? Pa ymgynghoriad gafodd ei gyflawni? A wnaeth y broses ymgynghori gydymffurfio ag Egwyddorion Gunning? A yw rhanddeiliaid yn credu y bydd yn sicrhau'r canlyniad a ddymunir?
3. Beth yw barn y gymuned gyfan – safbwynt y 'trethdalwr'?
4. Pa ddulliau a ddefnyddiwyd i ymgynghori â'r rhanddeiliaid? A oedd y broses yn galluogi pawb â chyfran i ddweud eu dweud?
5. Pa ymarfer ac opsiynau sydd wedi eu hystyried wrth ddatblygu/adolygu'r polisi hwn? Pa dystiolaeth sydd i hysbysu beth sy'n gweithio? A yw'r polisi yn ymwneud â maes lle mae diffyg ymchwil cyhoeddedig neu dystiolaeth arall?
6. A yw'r polisi'n ymwneud â maes lle ceir anhydraddoldebau hysbys?
7. A yw'r polisi hwn yn cyd-fynd â'n hamcanion corfforaethol, fel y'u diffinnir yn ein cynllun corfforaethol? A yw'n cadw at ein Safonau Iaith Gymraeg?
8. A gafodd yr holl ddatblygu cynaliadwy, y goblygiadau cydraddoldeb a diogelu perthnasol eu hystyried?

Er enghraifft, beth yw'r gweithdrefnau sydd angen bod ar waith i amddiffyn plant?

9. Faint fydd y gost hon i'w gweithredu a pha ffynhonnell ariannu sydd wedi'i nodi?

10. Sut fydd perfformiad y polisi yn cael ei weithredu a'r effaith yn cael ei gwerthuso?

Cwestiynau Cyffredinol:

Grymuso Cymunedau

- Sut ydym ni'n cynnwys cymunedau lleol a'u grymuso i ddylunio a darparu gwasanaethau i gyd-fynd ag angen lleol?
- A ydym ni'n cael trafodaethau rheolaidd gyda chymunedau am flaenoriaethau'r gwasanaeth a pha lefel o wasanaeth y gall y cyngor fforddio ei ddarparu yn y dyfodol?
- A yw'r gwasanaeth yn gweithio gyda dinasyddion i egluro rôl gwahanol bartneriaid wrth ddarparu gwasanaeth a rheoli disgwyliadau?
- A oes fframwaith a phroses gymesur ar waith ar gyfer asesu perfformiad ar y cyd, gan gynnwys o safbwynt dinesydd, ac a oes gennych chi drefniadau atebolrwydd i gefnogi hyn?
- A oes Asesiad Effaith Cydraddoldeb wedi'i gynnal? Os felly a all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet /Uwch Swyddogion roi copïau i'r Aelodau ac eglurhad manwl o'r Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb (EQIA) a gynhaliwyd mewn perthynas â'r cynigion hyn?
- A all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet/Uwch Swyddogion sicrhau aelodau bod y cynigion hyn yn cydymffurfio â deddfwriaeth Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol? A yw'r cynigion yn cydymffurfio â Chynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol yr Awdurdod Lleol?

Galwadau'r Gwasanaeth

- Sut fydd newid polisi a deddfwriaeth yn effeithio ar y ffordd mae'r cyngor yn gweithredu?
- A ydym ni wedi ystyried demograffeg ein cyngor a sut bydd hyn yn effeithio ar ddarparu gwasanaethau a chyllid yn y dyfodol?
- A ydych chi wedi adnabod ac ystyried y tueddiadau tymor hir a allai effeithio ar eich maes gwasanaeth, pa effaith allai'r tueddiadau hyn ei chael ar eich gwasanaeth/allai eich gwasanaeth ei gael ar y tueddiadau hyn, a beth sy'n cael ei wneud mewn ymateb?

Cynllunio Ariannol

- A oes gennym ni gynlluniau ariannol canolig a hirdymor cadarn yn eu lle?
- A ydym ni'n cysylltu cyllidebau â chynlluniau a chanlyniadau ac adrodd yn effeithiol ar y rhain?

Gwneud arbedion a chynhyrchu incwm

- A oes gennym ni'r strwythurau cywir ar waith i sicrhau bod ein dulliau effeithlonrwydd, gwelliant a thrawsnewid yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i sicrhau'r arbedion mwyaf posibl?

- Sut ydym ni'n gwneud y mwyaf o incwm? A ydym ni wedi cymharu polisiau eraill y cyngor i sicrhau'r incwm mwyaf posibl ac wedi ystyried yn llawn y goblygiadau ar ddefnyddwyr gwasanaeth?

- A oes gennym ni gynllun gweithlu sy'n ystyried capasiti, costau, a sgiliau'r gweithlu gwirioneddol yn erbyn y gweithlu a ddymunir?

Cwestiynau i'w gofyn o fewn blwyddyn i'r penderfyniad:

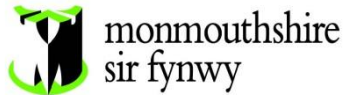
- A gafodd canlyniadau arfaethedig y cynnig eu cyflawni neu a oedd canlyniadau eraill?
- A oedd yr effeithiau wedi'u cyfyngu i'r grŵp yr oeddech chi ar y dechrau yn meddwl fyddai wedi cael ei effeithio h.y. pobl hŷn, neu a gafodd eraill eu heffeithio e.e. pobl ag anableddau, rhieni â phlant ifanc?
- A yw'r penderfyniad yn dal i fod y penderfyniad cywir neu a oes angen gwneud addasiadau?

Cwestiynau i'r Pwyllgor ar ddiwedd y cyfarfod ...

A oes gennym ni'r wybodaeth angenrheidiol i ffurfio casgliadau/i wneud argymhellion i'r pwyllgor gwaith, cyngor, partneriaid eraill? Os nad oes, a oes angen i ni:

- (i) Ymchwilio i'r mater yn fwy manwl?
- (ii) Gael rhagor o wybodaeth gan dystion eraill - Aelod o'r Bwrdd Gweithredol, arbenigwr annibynnol, aelodau o'r gymuned, defnyddwyr gwasanaeth, cyrff rheoleiddio...

Cytuno ar gamau pellach sydd i'w cymryd o fewn amserlen/adroddiad monitro yn y dyfodol.



SUBJECT: CALDICOT LEISURE CENTRE - FIRST FLOOR FITNESS SUITE INVESTMENT

MEETING: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 28TH MAY 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

To update the Committee on the proposed refurbishment and reconfiguration of the Fitness Suite and associated first floor areas at Caldicot Leisure Centre, and to invite the Committee to consider and comment on the proposal to progress the scheme through the UK Leisure Framework. The purpose of the investment is to modernise facilities, improve customer experience, increase capacity, and protect and grow fitness memberships.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To consider the report and comment on the proposed refurbishment and reconfiguration of the Fitness Suite and associated first floor areas at Caldicot Leisure Centre.
- 2.2 To undertake pre-decision scrutiny of the funding proposals set out in this report, and to make any recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the proposed allocation of £300,000 of capital match funding and £301,429 of borrowing, to be supported through additional income generated within leisure services.
- 2.3 To note that, subject to the outcome of scrutiny, Cabinet will be asked to consider and approve
 - the progress of the RIBA Stage 4 development work and the proposals set out in this report, including the delivery of the refurbishment scheme and the associated funding arrangements, subject to final affordability and cost certainty.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The proposed investment aligns with the Corporate and Community Plan, which highlights the need for improvements at Caldicot Leisure Centre, this facility has received comparatively less investment compared to the other fitness offer across Monmouthshire. Caldicot Leisure Centre is a key leisure asset within the MonLife Active portfolio, which supports a healthy and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded.
- 3.2 The existing gym and first floor fitness areas are dated and no longer reflect modern customer expectations, limiting the centre's ability to compete with private sector providers and leisure trusts. The fitness equipment at Caldicot Leisure Centre is over 18 years old and no longer fit for purpose. There is a clear need for investment in the facility, which remains necessary to address the condition of the site and to support its longer-term sustainability and service offer.
- 3.3 The Council has previously submitted two Levelling Up Fund bids to support the comprehensive refurbishment of the site, reflecting the longstanding recognition of the importance of investment at Caldicot Leisure Centre. Failure to invest in the fitness suite presents a risk to service sustainability. Outdated facilities impact on member retention, limit growth in fitness memberships, and increase the likelihood of customers choosing alternative private or trust run facilities. Given that fitness memberships represent a significant proportion of leisure income, this presents a direct financial risk to the service.
- 3.4 Alliance Leisure Services Ltd has undertaken a feasibility assessment for the refurbishment and reconfiguration of the main gym and first floor fitness areas. The proposed scheme includes the creation of a modern 40-station fitness suite, reconfiguration of specialist fitness areas, refurbishment of studios, circulation spaces and toilets, and improvements to mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.
- 3.5 The scope of works includes: (*Appendix 1*)
- Refurbishment and reconfiguration of the main gym to deliver a 40-station fitness suite.
 - Refurbishment of a smaller gym area (Bio Circuit Strength/Easyline).
 - Refurbishment of first floor studios, multipurpose areas and circulation spaces.
 - Full refurbishment of male, female and accessible toilets.
 - Upgraded flooring, lighting, power, data and decoration throughout.
- 3.6 A high-level indicative capital cost of £601,429 has been identified. This figure will be refined through pre-construction design, surveys and cost planning to provide cost certainty prior to entering into a construction contract. Identified risks include the presence of asbestos and ageing electrical infrastructure, which have been reflected through specific contingencies.

- 3.7 From a financial perspective, the proposal is intended to protect existing leisure income and generate additional recurring income to support the borrowing required. However, the current estimate remains indicative, and the financial case is dependent on the achievement of projected membership growth following completion of the works.
- 3.8 The affordability case should therefore be read on the basis that the income assumption will continue to be tested through the next stage of the project. Prior to any final commitment to construction, updated costs, borrowing implications and the latest assessment of membership growth, retention and wider income performance will need to be reviewed. If the projected income uplift is expected to be delayed or lower than forecast, mitigating actions would need to be identified and managed within the Leisure and Wellbeing service or brought back for further consideration as part of the final decision-making process.
- 3.9 The proposal aligns with the Council's strategic objectives around promoting healthier communities, protecting income streams, and ensuring leisure facilities remain fit for purpose, attractive and financially sustainable.
- 3.10 This investment would complement the site's existing outdoor facility improvements, including the replacement Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA), a new 3G facility, sports pitch LED lighting, the spin studio, alternative chemical dosing systems and swimming pool covers, and upgrades to the entrance and reception area, £500,000 of which was funded through an external grant.
- 3.11 The investment would also support a wider package of works proposed for Caldicot, including a replacement skate park, a replacement water recovery system, and completion of the multi-user route through the country park, alongside work with Caldicot Town Council as part of the development of the new placemaking plan, including proposals for quick-win public realm improvements in the town centre to test ideas and address issues identified by local stakeholders and communities.
- 3.12 The proposed investment plan would improve the facilities at Caldicot Leisure Centre and promotes healthy and active lifestyles for residents and visitors in accordance with the objectives and actions in the Community and Corporate Plan.
- 4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING): INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT, (includes equality, future generations, social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting).**
- 4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been considered as part of the development of this proposal. The project supports a Healthier Wales by improving access to modern

fitness facilities, a More Equal Wales through inclusive design including accessible toilet provision, and a Prosperous Wales by protecting and growing income that supports service sustainability.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefit	Risks	Comments
Do Nothing	None	Retaining the existing facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> would increase the risk of declining memberships loss of income, reputational damage and would not address the ageing condition of the fitness areas. 	Does not progress the ambitions set out in the corporate and community plan
Limited Refurbishment – Equipment only	Provides some improvement through replacement equipment and may extend the life of the existing gym offer in the short term.	Would not address the wider condition, layout and customer experience issues and therefore: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> may limit the impact on membership growth and retention could require further investment in the short to medium term would leave ageing infrastructure and associated maintenance risks largely unchanged. 	May offer a lower initial cost, but it would not deliver the full service, income and customer experience benefits required.
Preferred Option –Full Refurbishment and Reconfiguration	Delivers a modern, competitive and accessible fitness offer, improves customer experience, supports membership growth and retention, and protects future income.	Key risks include cost pressures identified through detailed design and surveys, temporary service disruption during the works, and the need to achieve projected income growth to support borrowing costs.	Preferred option as it delivers the greatest alignment with the corporate and community plan and service ambitions, subject to final affordability, cost certainty, prudent management of delivery risks, and a clear plan to manage any income underperformance should membership growth fall below forecast.

- **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

6.1 The success of the investment will be monitored through:

- Fitness membership growth and retention to increase income performance sufficient to support the financing costs, with mitigating actions identified where performance is below forecast
- Usage levels of the gym and studios
- Customer satisfaction
- Delivery of the project within the approved capital budget

- **REASONS:**

7.1 To modernise Caldicot Leisure Centre's fitness facilities to attract and encourage, protect and grow income, improve customer experience, and ensure the long-term sustainability of leisure services in the south of the county.

- **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 The indicative capital cost of the project is £601,429, subject to refinement through pre-construction work, surveys, design development and finalisation of RIBA Stage 4 cost certainty. The current estimate includes allowance for identified risks and contingencies, including asbestos and ageing electrical infrastructure, but this will need to be validated through the next stage of the project before any construction commitment is made.

8.2 The current funding proposal is to allocate £300,000 of capital match funding in 2026/27, together with £301,429 of borrowing. The expectation is that the borrowing costs would be supported through increased income generated within the Leisure and Wellbeing division. From a finance perspective, this requires a prudent assessment not only of the scale of the projected income increase, but also of the timing of delivery, the extent to which it represents net additional income, and the service's ability to manage any shortfall should performance not materialise as forecast.

8.3 The £301,429 borrowing would be repaid over a 10-year period, with estimated annual repayment costs of £40,000. The current modelling assumes that an additional 100 memberships across all facilities would generate approximately £41,400 of income per annum. Whilst review of previous membership trends following facility investment indicates that this level of growth may be achievable within 12 months of project completion, this remains a planning assumption rather than a guaranteed outcome. The final decision-making stage should therefore

include an updated assessment of affordability, including sensitivity to lower or slower membership growth, clarification of whether the estimated income represents a gross or net contribution, and confirmation of the mitigating actions available if the forecast income uplift is not achieved in full. (Appendix 2)

8.4 Funding arrangements will be confirmed as part of the next stage of the project once RIBA Stage 4 cost certainty has been completed. No decision to proceed to construction should be taken until affordability, funding, projected revenue implications and the approach to managing any downside income risk are fully confirmed. Should final costs increase materially, or the income case weaken, the proposal should be brought back for further consideration before any contractual commitment is entered into.

- **CONSULTEES:**

- Chief Officer for Place and Community Wellbeing
- Head of Service Leisure and Wellbeing
- Performance, Finance and Resources Manager
- Health, Fitness and GP Referral Manager
- HR Business Partner
- S151 Officer
- Head of Finance
- Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	Caldicot LC Fee Proposal and outline designs Appendix 1 - Caldicot Project Fee Proposal .docx
Appendix 2	Membership and Fitness Numbers across all facilities Appendix 2 Leisure Memberships.xlsx

- **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

- **AUTHOR:**

Stacey Jones (Performance, Finance and Resources Manager)

- **CONTACT DETAILS:**
Email: staceyjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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Fee Proposal

CALDICOT LEISURE CENTRE

Gym & Fitness Refurbishment

Monmouthshire County Council

Cost Certainty (RIBA 3-4)

1. Concept Design

Concept Design.

3.1 Areas & Proposed Works

Main Gym:

- Flooring for main gym to supply and fit wood affect sheet vinyl. Gym office and storeroom.
- Weights area 40mm rubber flooring .
- Mirrors 1500mm x 2000mm supply and fit x 8. Checker plate to weights area.
- Painting and decorating
- Ceiling tiles 220m2 white washable. AHU Face plate to be powered coated white.
- All electric works including power and data, upgrading lighting, to part M regulations

Area 1:

Painting and decorating including new skirting boards. All electrical work.

Area 2:

Flooring, Lighting, Power & Data (as per new gym layout TG), Ceiling Tiles, Painting & Decoration

Area 3:

- Flooring to be sanded and revarnished. Replace all ceiling tiles and new ceiling grid Painting and decorating including new skirting boards.
- All old wall covering to be removed and replaced with plasterboard taped and jointed.
- 20 new LED lighting panels and five emergency packs .



Concept Design.

3.1 Areas & Proposed Works (cont.)

Area 4:

- Flooring to be sanded and resealed, replace flooring tiles in front of counter for wood affect vinyl sheet. Ceiling tiles and grid to be replaced for new .
- Painting and decorating, including new skirting boards.
- 15 new LED lighting panels and four emergency packs to be fitted

Area 5:

- First floor landing flooring to be replaced for wood effect sheet vinyl
- Walls to be dotted and dabbed, taped and joined and then painted and decorated with new skirting boards.
- Ceiling tiles to be replaced.
- 20 new LED light panels to be fitted and five emergency packs

Areas 6 & 7

- Male and female toilets to be fully refurbished, including flooring, new tiles, cubicles,
- toilets, vanity unit sinks
- New ceiling tiles and lighting, hand dryers

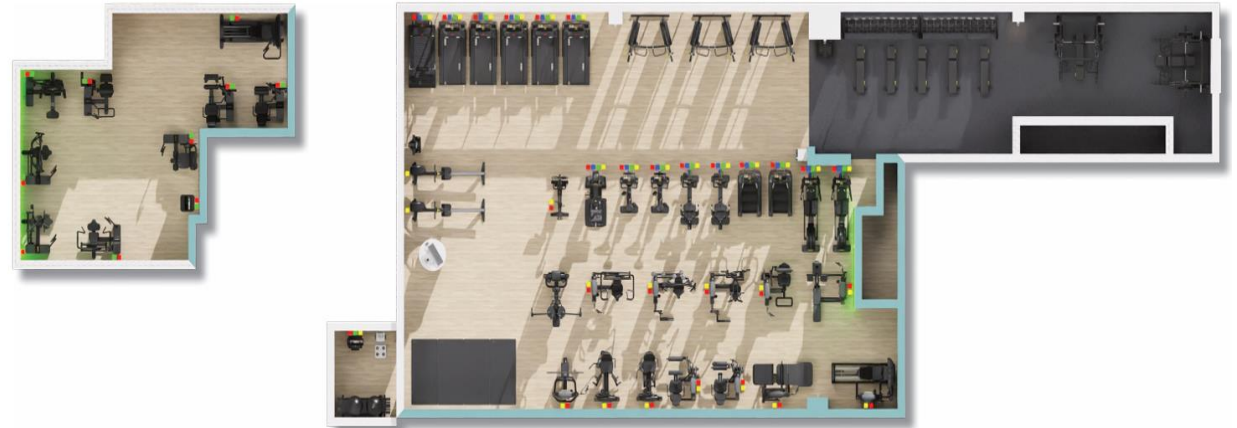
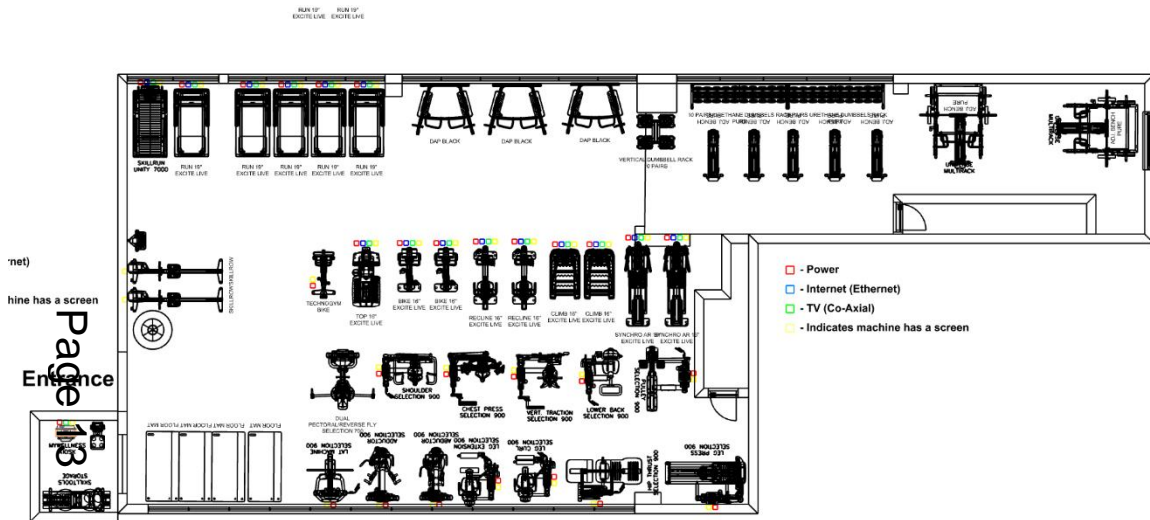
Area 8:

- Accessible Toilet to be fully refurbished, including new Doc M pack, Flooring,
- Wall tiles, ceiling, mirror, lighting, hand dryer and emergency cord.



Concept Design.

3.2 Proposed Gym Layouts (Technogym)



2. Project Budget Costs & Fee Proposal

Project Budget Costs.

3.2 Estimated Budget

Enclosed is an early-stage indicative budget cost that Alliance Leisure working with the wider team have provided to allow an assessment of the viability of the Main Gym and First Floor Refurbishment project.

The enclosed figures are based on a contract being awarded to a single main contractor to undertake a design and build approach to completing the gym extensions.

The early-stage indicative budget costs detailed show the breakdown with construction costs at **£219,640** . Management fees for Alliance, Project Management and CDM of **£26,964** and a client contingency of **£20,000**. UK Leisure Framework Fee of 0.95% at **£5,560**.

If the client contingency is not utilised in the project this would not be invoiced.

Asbestos: Please note that there is a history of chrysotile asbestos throughout the centre (unless this has recently been removed), in the vinyl tiles and adhesive; ACM boards in the ceiling voids etc, so a specific £10k contingency is highlighted

Electrical: Please note there is a history that much of the electrical infrastructure and cabling is old and not to current regulations so there is a further £20k contingency highlighted for this

All costs excluding VAT.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT SUMMARY - Caldicot LC Refurb

High Level RIBA 0 Indicative Costs

CONSTRUCTION COST PLAN

Gym Refurb	£	51,024
Smaller Fitness Studio (Area 1)	£	9,880
Easyline Gym (area 2)	£	14,027
Large Fitness Studio (area 3)	£	23,296
Multipurpose/ Café/ lounge (area 4)	£	11,089
First Floor Circulation Area (Area 5)	£	19,175
Male Changing (Area 6)	£	30,000
Female Changing (Area 7)	£	30,000
Disabled Toilet (Area 8)	£	14,000
Prelims (6%)	£	12,149
Contractor Design (Including MEP)	£	5,000

CONSTRUCTION SUB-TOTAL £ **219,640**

FIXTURES and FITTINGS (FFE not in Contractor Proposals)

TG Gym Equip Main Gym - Client Direct Quote	£	210,943
TG Equipment (Small Gym) - Client Direct Quote	£	73,222
Signage Allowance (Prov Sum)	£	15,000

EQUIPMENT TOTAL £ **299,165**

PROJECT MANAGEMENT and DELIVERY FEES

Project Management Fees (inc. Contract Administrator and QS)	£	11,982
Principal Designer Fee - CDM	£	3,000
Alliance Delivery Fee	£	11,982

PROJECT DELIVERY FEES TOTAL £ **26,964**

CLIENT CONTINGENCY - Client Held	£	20,000
RISK CONTINGENCY - Asbestos (Provisional Sum)	£	10,000
RISK CONTINGENCY - Electrical (Provisional Sum)	£	20,000

RISK TOTAL £ **50,000**

UK LEISURE FRAMEWORK (UKLF) - Access Fee £ 5,660

TOTAL PROJECT COSTS £ **601,429**

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Detail

	Monmouth LC	Abergavenny LC	Chepstow LC	Caldicot LC	
Annual Adult	172	145	200	64	
Annual Junior	19	14	29	22	
Annual Senior	140	133	102	61	
Toning Annual (Monmouth Only)	41	-	-	-	
Committed Adult DD	546	388	489	261	
Committed Senior DD	207	174	123	100	
Corporate DD	125	185	146	95	
Fit4Life DD	186	267	492	331	
Flexible Adult DD	118	69	85	37	
Flexible Junior DD	240	138	190	200	
Flexible Senior DD	22	13	13	6	
Passport to Leisure (PTL) DD	71	76	67	50	
Staff DD	88	89	42	44	
Student	37	14	9	11	
Toning DD (Monmouth Only)	209	-	-	4	
Foster Carer		7	7	10	
Total Fitness Memberships	2,221	1,712	1,994	1,296	7,223
Aqua Adult DD	92	48	60	60	
Aqua Junior DD	804	746	607	710	
Aqua Senior DD	57	34	12	16	
Total Aqua Membership	953	828	679	786	3,246

Summary

	Monmouth LC	Abergavenny LC	Chepstow LC	Caldicot LC	Total Memberships
Total Fitness	2,221	1,712	1,994	1,296	7,223
Total Fitness %	31%	24%	28%	18%	100%
Total Aqua	953	828	679	786	3,246
Total Aqua %	29%	26%	21%	24%	100%
			Total Memberships		10,469

Membership Summary			
	22-23	Current	Increase
Abergavenny Leisure Centre	1282	2540	1258
Monmouth Leisure Centre	1513	3174	1661
Chepstow Leisure Centre	1215	2673	1458
Caldicot Leisure Centre	872	2082	1210
Total	4882	10469	5587

- Since 2022–23, we have increased membership retention from 19 months to 23 months, resulting in a 52% increase in members joining Chepstow leisure centre since the investment and opening of the centre.

Chepstow Leisure Centre Investment

	No
Number of Active Members prior to investment	1,762
Current Number of Active Members	2,673
% Increase in Members	52%

presenting a 21% improvement and outperforming the industry standard of 14 months.

ening of the outside gym.

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

People Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
28 th May 2026	Investment Package for Caldicot Leisure Centre	Consideration of proposed investment to improve facilities at Caldicot Leisure Centre.	Stacey Jones Craig O'Connor Councillor Sandles	Pre-decision Scrutiny
Special Meeting 18 th June 2026	Youth Service	To receive a service update.	Josh Klein	Service Review
	Strategic Equality Plan 2025-26	To scrutinise the council's progress in delivering the Strategic Equality Objectives for the year 2025-2026.	Pennie Walker	Performance Monitoring
	WESP (Welsh in Education Strategic Plan) – Invite P&O Members	To scrutinise performance against the plans.	Sharon Randall Smith Will McLean Cllr Wright	Performance Monitoring
	Welsh Language	To scrutinise the Council's progress in delivery of the Welsh Language objectives 2025-2026.	Pennie Walker	Performance Monitoring
14 th July 2026	New Homelessness Legislation	To provide an understanding of the new legislation.	Ian Bakewell Rebecca Cresswell	Policy Development
	Homelessness Update	To scrutinise a progress update.	Ian Bakewell Rebecca Cresswell	Policy Development
22 nd September 2026	Youth Service	To conduct pre-decision scrutiny on the 5-year for strategic plan for Youth Work the service.	Josh Klein	Service Review

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

People Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
17th November 2026	Welsh Language Strategy	To scrutinise the draft Welsh Language Strategy 2027 - 2032 in line with the Welsh Language Standards.	Nia Roberts Pennie Walker	Pre-decision Scrutiny
To be confirmed	WHO Age Friendly Communities update	To be confirmed	Councillor Angela Sandles Councillor Ian Chandler	Update Requested
To be confirmed	Poverty and Inequality	To be confirmed	Lucinda Boyland	
9th February 2027	Homelessness and Housing Support Strategy	To conduct Pre-decision Scrutiny.	Rebecca Cresswell Ian Bakewell	Pre-decision Scrutiny
Corporate and Community Plan Items for the Committee's consideration for inclusion into the People Scrutiny Forward Plan:				

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

People Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
	Participatory Budgeting Programme			
	Race equality action plan for Wales			
	LGBTQ+ action plan			
	Disability Action Plan			
	Gender Equality Action Plan			
	Homes for Social Rent and work to bring empty properties back into use			
	Review and update shared housing allocations policy			
	Rapid Rehousing approach/rapid rehousing action plan delivery			

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

People Scrutiny Committee				
Meeting Date	Subject	Purpose of Scrutiny	Responsibility	Type of Scrutiny
	Care without profit – increase in-county placement options			
	Support effective discharge from hospital – integration between health and social care			
	Provide a high-quality residential care facility for people with dementia			
	Chief Officer for Social Care and Health Annual Report			
	Safeguarding Performance Report			
	Develop a broader 14-19 education offer through collaboration with partners			

Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2025-26

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Committee / Decision Maker	Meeting date / Decision due	Report Title	Cabinet member	Purpose	Author	Date item added to the planner
Cabinet	Deferred	Pavement Café Policy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To adopt the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences	Carl Touhig	4-Oct-22
Cabinet	07-Mar-28	Strategic Equality Plan	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To To seek Council approval of the Strategic Equality Plan 2028-2033 in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty	Pennie Walker	
Council	31-Mar-27	Welsh Language Strategy	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To approve the publication of the Welsh Language Strategy 2027 - 2032 in line with the Welsh Language Standards.	Pennie Walker	19-Feb-26
Council	04-Mar-27	Adoption of Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)2018-2033	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To consider adoption of RLDP following the public examination by PEDW	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	20-Jan-27	Caldicot Placemaking Plan	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To consider adoption of the Caldicot Place making Plan	Craig O Connor	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	19-Feb-26
Cabinet	09-Dec-26	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW) Annual letter	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To fulfil the expectation of the PSOW that their report is brought to the attention of Cabinet.	Annette Evans	2-Mar-26
Council	12-Nov-26	Annual Director's Report for Social Care	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Present the annual report to Council	Jane Rodgers	3-Mar-26
Council	12-Nov-26	Safeguarding Annual Evaluation Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Present the annual evaluation of safeguarding across Council services	Jane Rodgers	3-Mar-26
Council	24-Sep-26	Self-Assessment Report 2025/26	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2025/26 to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the authority's performance during the year ending 31 March 2026 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Hannah Carter	10-Feb-26
Cabinet	08-Jul-26	Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023: Monmouthshire County Council's Annual Report	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval of the Social Partnership Duty Report 2026, setting out how the authority will build on existing practice and work collaboratively with trade unions to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.	Philippa Green	9-Feb-26
Cabinet	08-Jul-26	Statutory consultation regarding Durand Nursery	Laura Wright - Education	Following the Statutory Objection Period, this report seeks to provide Cabinet with final feedback on the Statutory consultation process concerning the nursery at Durand Primary School, and asks Cabinet Members for a decision on whether proposals should proceed to implementation	Matthew Jones	5-May-26
Council	25-Jun-26	Code of Corporate Governance	Ben Callard - Resources	For Full Council to approve the revised Code of Corporate Governance and it's inclusion into the Councils Constitution following it's endorsement by the Governance & Audit Committee on 16/04/26.	Jan Furtek	7-May-26
Council	25-Jun-26	Re:fit Phase 2	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek approval to submit a Salix loan application to enable MCC to progress with the next programme of energy efficiency works.	Deb Hill Howells	9-Apr-26

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

ICMD	08-Apr-26	Goldwire Lane ICMD - Prohibition of Driving Except for Access, Goldwire Lane, Monmouth	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek Cabinet Member approval to proceed to make permanent the MCC Goldwire Lane prohibition of driving (except for access) traffic order	Graham Kinsella	26-Mar-26
ICMD	08-Apr-26	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 4 held on Thursday 05th March 2026.	Dave Jarrett	6-Mar-26
Cabinet	30-Mar-26	Proposed acquisition of land to construct a road diversion at Llanthony Valley	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To seek Cabinet approval to the acquisition of land to enable the Highway Authority to construct a road realignment away from the land slip at Llanthony Valley.	Deb Hill Howells	19-Feb-26
Council	05-Mar-26	Corporate Parenting Strategy 2025 - 2028	Ian Chandler - Social Care &	Reason is to endorse a new Corporate Parenting	Jane Rodgers	24-Oct-25
Council	05-Mar-26	2026/27 Capital Strategy and 2026/27 Treasury Management Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the Council's 2026/27 Capital and Treasury Management Strategies, including the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy.	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION and REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS FOR 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Council	05-Mar-26	PUBLICATION OF PAY POLICY STATEMENT AS REQUIRED BY THE LOCALISM ACT	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.	Philippa Green	14-Jan-26
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	2026-27 WCF/Mon Farm treasury strategy	Ben Callard - Resources	To present to Cabinet for approval the 2026/27 Investment and Fund strategy for Trust Funds for which the Authority acts as sole or custodian trustee. To approve the 2026/27 grant allocation to Local Authority beneficiaries of the Welsh Church Fund.	Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Revenue and Capital Budget 2026-27 – Final proposals following scrutiny and public consultation	Ben Callard - Resources	To update Cabinet with the consultation responses to the draft budget proposals issued in respect of the Capital and Revenue budgets for 2026/27. To make recommendations to Council on the Capital and Revenue budgets including the level of Council Tax for 2026/27. To receive the statutory report of the Responsible Financial Officer on the budget process and the adequacy of reserves. To receive the Responsible Financial Officer's Prudential Indicator calculations for capital financing.	Jon Davies	3-Dec-25
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Property Acquisition for use as Temporary Accommodation - withdrawn 11/02/26	Sara Burch	To seek authorisation to proceed with the purchase of a residential 3 bed property and continue to use it as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) to support pressures linked to the availability of temporary accommodation.	Louise Corbett	2-Feb-26
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	To consider the purchase of a Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) property Castlewood	Sara Burch	To consider the purchase of a Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) property Castlewood, Usk following receipt of the owner's intent to sell	Louise Corbett	2-Feb-26
Cabinet	04-Mar-26	Monmouthshire Draft Local Growth Fund Investment Plan	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To present to elected members UK Government's new Local Growth Fund and Monmouthshire Draft Fund Investment Plan.	Hannah Jones	12-Feb-26

Cabinet	04-Mar-26	To agree funding options for additional work at the former Deri View Primary School Site	Ben Callard - Resources	To review and agree funding options for additional work at the former Deri View Primary school site, this needs to be completed prior to the relocation of Ysgol Y Fenni to the site.	Nikki Wellington	16-Feb-26
ICMD	25-Feb-26	Submission of Section 6 Biodiversity duty report to WG	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	To submit report outlining how the Council maintains and enhances biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems	Craig O Connor	7-Jan-26
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Cultural Strategy	Sara Burch		Tracey Thomas	20-May-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	2025/26 Budget - Financial update 3	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide the third update of the financial year of the Councils progress against the 2025/26 revenue and capita budget	Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	26/27 Placemaking Delivery	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	To agree funding allocations for Welsh Government Transforming Towns and Pride in Place. Impact Fund.	Craig O Connor	19-Dec-25
Cabinet	11-Feb-26	Development of a Supported Accommodation Provision for Care Experienced Young People	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	To provide details and seek approval for the acquisition and refurbishing of a residential property in Monmouth for the purpose of developing a supported accommodation provision for care experienced children.	Jane Rodgers	16-Jan-26
ICMD	28-Jan-26	Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 The Local Authorities (PRECEPTS)(WALES) Regulations 1995 - Determination of Payment Schedule	Ben Callard - Resources	To determine the schedule of precept payments to precepting authorities for 2026/27 as required by statute and following the results of the consultation process.	Ruth Donovan	28-Jan-26
Council	22-Jan-26	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2026/27	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to: • present arrangements for the implementation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to approve it for 2026/27. • agree to adopt the amendments to the Regulations, proposed by Welsh Government, • affirm that annual uprating amendments will be carried out each year without a requirement to adopt the whole Council Tax Reduction Scheme.	Ruth Donovan	28-Nov-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	2026/27 Draft Revenue & Capital budget proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Agree S106 Funding for Caldicot Multi-User Route that connects the newly constructed Caldicot Links/Greenway Active Travel route with the Country Park	Sara Burch	To agree additional funding for the Caldicot Multi-User Route	Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Disposal of two farm cottages at Leechpool Holdings	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval for the disposal of two vacant farm cottages located in Leechpool Holdings, Portskewett, identified as surplus to requirements following internal review with services that no longer have an identified need.	Nick Keyse	26-Nov-25
Cabinet	21-Jan-26	Review of Nursery provision at Durand Primary School	Laura Wright - Education	To seek permission to enter into statutory consultation processes regarding proposals to replace the Local Authority Nursery at Durand Primary School with a non maintained setting.	Matthew Jones	23/12/25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Museum Service - Collections Rationalisation	Sara Burch - Rural Affairs, Housing and Tourism	To agree the removal of 2 collections - one of newspapers and one of books from the museum collections, to offer to more appropriate homes. (This is part of a series of similar decisions)	Rachael Rogers	2-Dec-25

ICMD	14-Jan-26	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources	The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 3 held on Thursday 04th December 2025	Dave Jarrett	10-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Revoking the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To inform the Cabinet Member (Cllr Angela Sandles) of the need to revoke the Usk Air Quality Management Area Order 2005 and agree the principal steps for doing so.	Huw Owen	17-Dec-25
ICMD	14-Jan-26	Annual Health and Safety Report 2024/25	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek the cabinet members approval of the 2024/25 Annual Health and Safety Report including priorities for 2025/26	Kate Thompson	19-Dec-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Annual Performance Report - Planning	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Report the Annual Performance Report to Welsh Government	Andrew Jones	15-Oct-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Section 6 Report to Welsh Government on Biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Report of Councils' actions taken to help maintain and enhance biodiversity	Kate Stinchcombe/Colette Bosley	15-Oct-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Various Traffic Regulation Orders - Amendment Order No 18	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	The report seeks Cabinet Member approval to proceed with the making and implementation of the MCC Traffic Regulation, speed limit and parking regulations Consolidation Order 2019 (Amendment Order No.18) 2025	Gareth Freeman	26-Nov-25
ICMD	17-Dec-25	Council TaxBase 2026/27 and associated matters	Ben Callard - Resources	To agree the Council Tax base figure for submission to Welsh Government, together with the collection rate to be applied for 2026/27 and to make other necessary related statutory decisions.	Ruth Donovan	28-Nov-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Socially Responsible Procurement Policy	Ben Callard - Resources	1. To approve the adoption of the Socially Responsible Procurement Policy. 2. To delegate authority to approve any subsequent updates to reflect national Guidance and/ or meet new legislative requirements, to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Officer for Resources, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Resources.	Cath Fallon	20-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Joint Committee of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding	Joint Committee of the National Adoption Service and Foster Wales - to consider a Deed of Variation to the current Joint Committee	Jane Rogers	24-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Strategic Risk Assessment	Ben Callard - Resources	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	Hannah Carter	29-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Community and Corporate Plan - Q2 Progress Update	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress that has been made to deliver the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28.	Hannah Carter	29-Oct-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	Approval of Placemaking Plans - Monmouth, Abergavenny, Magor and Undy	Craig O Connor	17-Nov-25
Cabinet	10-Dec-25	Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2024-25	Angela Sandles - Engagement	1) To consider the data in this letter, to understand MCC's performance on complaints, including any patterns or trends and our compliance with recommendations made by the PSOW's office. 2) To inform the PSOW of the outcome of MCC's considerations and any proposed actions on the above matters.	Annette Evans	

Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Safeguarding Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Diane Corrister	18-Jul-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Director's Annual Report	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	18-Jul-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Regional Partnership Board Annual Report 2024/2025	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Natasha Harris (Torfaen)	24-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Appointment of Paul Matthews to the board of CCR Energy Ltd			James Williams	27-Oct-25
Council	04-Dec-25	Annual Report of the Standards Committee 2024/25	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	27-Oct-25
ICMD	26-Nov-25	LOCAL GOVERNMENT (WALES) ACT 1994 THE LOCAL AUTHO	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek Member approval of the proposals for consultation purposes regarding payments to precepting authorities during the 2026/27 financial year as required by statute	Peter Davies	7-Nov-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Destination Management Plan	Sara Burch & Paul Griffiths		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	2025/26 Revenue & Capital Monitoring Update 2	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Panel Performance Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide an update on the proposed approach for the Council's Panel Performance Assessment which is a requirement under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	Matt Gatehouse	28-Aug-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Car Parking Review	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy	That Cabinet endorses the following recommendations 1.That Cabinet agrees the strategic objectives for the Council's parking strategy 2.That Cabinet agrees the proposed MCC actions in response to the recommendations made in the Monmouthshire car parking review	Craig O Connor	9-Oct-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Inclusion Strategy and Additional Learning Needs Policy	Laura Wright - Education	The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with an opportunity to consider the Inclusion Strategy and the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Policy to ensure that they are fit for purpose and meet the local priorities as outlined in the Learning Place section of the Community and Corporate Plan.	Morganna Wagstaff	13-Oct-25
Cabinet	19-Nov-25	Medium Term Financial Plan update - November 2025	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Nov-25
Council	23-Oct-25	RLDP for Adoption	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Rachel Lewis	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	A strategy to take forward a whole authority approach to wellbeing and prevention	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Jane Rogers	19-Jun-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	Connect to Work and Future Focus programmes	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones / Rory Clifford	21-Jul-25
Cabinet	15-Oct-25	2025/26 Revenue Monitoring Update 1	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12/76/25
ICMD	08-Oct-25	WELSH CHURCH FUND WORKING GROUP	Ben Callard - Resources	1.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations to Cabinet on the Schedule of Applications for the Welsh Church Fund Working Group Meeting 2 held on Thursday 18th September 2025.	Dave Jarrett	
ICMD	24-Sep-25	Health & Safety Annual Report	ben Callard - Resources		Kate Thompson	5-Aug-25
Council	18-Sep-25	Self-assessment 2024/25		To seek Council approval of the self-assessment report 2024/25 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021.	richard Jones	10-Jun-25

Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Review of Housing Support Grant Programme. County of Sanctuary Strategy	Sara Burch Angela Sandles - Engagement	To approve a county of sanctuary strategy which establishes clear principles which will run through all council services and which promotes inclusion and welcome across the wider community.	Ian Bakewell	23-May-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25				Sharran Lloyd and Jane Harvey	27-May-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Real Living Wage Employer Accreditation	ben Callard - Resources	Further to Cabinet's decision on Wednesday 6th November 2024, and an evaluation of the authority's supply chain, to bring forward a further report detailing the plan to pay the real living wage rate to employees of third parties contracted to work at the authority's sites, and to seek approval to pursue accreditation as a Real Living Wage employer.	Philippa Green	13-Jun-25
Cabinet	17-Sep-25	Proposed endorsement of the Monmouthshire Local Area Energy Plan	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment	Welsh Government commissioned the production of Local Area Energy Plans for Local Authority areas which will be used to develop a regional and national Energy Plan. The Local Area Energy Plan for Monmouthshire provides data on the energy requirements of the county and the transition that will be required to support carbon neutrality of the energy demands. The report seeks Cabinets endorsement of the Local Area Energy Plan to enable the development of the regional Area Energy Plan and a supporting Investment Prospectus.	Deb Hill Howells	28-Jul-25
ICMD	20-Aug-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 17	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Gareth Freeman	4-Aug-25
ICMD	23-Jul-25	Lloyds tour of Britain Stage 5 Pontypool to Tumble	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Nick John	2-Jul-25
ICMD	23-Jul-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	2-Jul-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Strategic Director's Report, Children, Learning, Skills and the Economy'	Laura Wright - Education		Will Mclean	18-Jun-25
Council	17-Jul-25	Chepstow Integrated Transport LUF project			Deb Hill Howells	24-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Shire Hall Delivery Stage - Financial Approval	Ben Callard - Resources		Tracey Thomas	25-Mar-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	Play Sufficiency Update	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Play sufficiency assessment update.	Nick John	28-Mar-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25	ADD AS FIRST ITEM Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023: Monmouthshire County Council's Annual Report 2024/25 Revenue & Capital monitoring Outturn (incl early update on 2025/26) 2026/27 Revenue & Capital MTFP update and process	Ben Callard - Resources	To seek approval of the Social Partnership Duty Report 2025, setting out how the Council will build on existing practice, and work collaboratively with trade unions, to ensure compliance with the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Act 2023.	Philippa Green	6-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25		Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Cabinet	16-Jul-25		Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	12-Jun-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Licensing Act Policy 2025	Angela Sandles - Engagement	Policy has to be approved by Full Council and it needs to be in place by 1 st July 2025	Linda O Gorman	10-Jan-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Appointments to Outside Bodies	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	23-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Separation of Licensing Functions	Angela Sandles - Engagement		Linda O Gorman	28-May-25
Council	26-Jun-25	Strategic Officer Leadership and Organisation Structure changes	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Paul Matthews	5-Jun-25

Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Nature Recovery Action Plan & Green Infrastructure Strategy	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Collette Bosley	17-Apr-25
Cabinet	25-Jun-25	Strategic Risk Assessment	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.	richard Jones	10-Jun-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Y Prentis Update	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	26-Feb-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Digital, Data and Technology Collaboration	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy	To develop proposals to build on existing collaborative arrangements in place for the provision of technology services through the Shared Resource Service. Expanding on these to include digital and data services will generate economies of scale enabling the authority to access expertise to accelerate progress against delivery of priorities set in the Community and Corporate Plan.	Peter Davies & Matt Gatehouse & Sian Hayward	14-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Active Gwent Sports Partnership	Angela Sandles - Engagement	For Monmouthshire County Council to formally enter into the Active Gwent sport partnership.	Nick John	28-Mar-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies / Cath Fallon	1-Apr-25
Cabinet	21-May-25	Placemaking Grant 25/26 & 26/27	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Craig O Connor	29-Apr-25
Council	15-May-25	SAC Membership Report	Martyn Groucutt - Education	To inform Council of SAC recommendations to appoint members of SAC	Sharon Randall-Smith	16-Apr-25
Council	10-Apr-25	Senior Pay Review	Ben Callard - Resources		Julie Anthony	3-Mar-25
Council	10-Apr-25	Constitution Review	Angela Sandles - Engagement		James Williams	25-Mar-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	PSPO Lane Closure to prevent fly tipping & off roading	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Mark Cleaver	13-Mar-25
ICMD	09-Apr-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 4	Ben Callard - Resources			
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Reponse to Boundary Commission Electoral Review Consultation	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	12-Feb-25
Cabinet	02-Apr-25	Marches Forward Partnership	Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy		Peter Davies - Lead (Cath Fallon)	3-Mar-25
ICMD	26-Mar-25	Proposal to increase the fee payments to Monmouthshire Foster Carers	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Charlotte Drury	4-Feb-25
ICMD	12-Mar-25	Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 16	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment			
Council	06-Mar-25	2025/26 Final Budget sign off including CT resolution	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Council	06-Mar-25	2025/26 Capital Strategy & Treasury Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Council	06-Mar-25	Contract Procedure Rules	Ben Callard - Resources		Scott James	9-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	Publication of the Councils Pay Policy	Ben Callard - Resources	To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act.	Matt Gatehouse / Pip Green	17-Jan-25
Council	06-Mar-25	Appointment of Chief Officer - Head of Transport - Exempt info	Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment		Deb Hill Howells	21-Jan-25
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	2025/26 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	2025/26 WCF/Mon Farm Strategy	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	05-Mar-25	Approval of a Discretionary Policy for Council Tax Premiums	Ben Callard - Resources		Ruth Donovan	27-Jan-25

ICMD	26-Feb-25	County of Sanctuary: Homes for Ukraine	Angela Sandles - Engagement	To confirm future support arrangements for Ukrainian's living in Monmouthshire as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme following changes to the national arrangement for both funding & visas	Richard Drinkwater/Matt Gatehouse	7-Feb-25
ICMD	26-Feb-25	Housing Allocations Policy				
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	2024/25 Revenue and Capital Monitoring Month 9	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	19-Feb-25	UK Shared Prosperity Fund post March 2025 – financial implications and impact	Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy		Hannah Jones	10-Jul-24
ICMD	29-Jan-25	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts final	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	17-Dec-24
Council	23-Jan-25	Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24
Council	23-Jan-25	Council Diary 2025/26	Angela Sandles - Engagement		John Pearson	
Council	23-Jan-25	GWENT REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP BOARD (RPB) AREA PLAN AND RPB ANNUAL REPORT 23/24	Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding		Natasha Harris (Torfaen)	
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	2025/26 Draft Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	4-Jun-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Education Middle Tier	Martyn Groucutt - Education		Will McLean	20-Nov-24
Cabinet	22-Jan-25	Business case for the purchase of a property in Abergavenny to develop supported accommodation for care experienced young people	Ben Callard - Resources		Jane Rogers	7-Jan-25
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 3	Ben Callard - Resources		Dave Jarrett	13-Jun-24
ICMD	15-Jan-25	Decision to transfer Dixton Archive from Monmouth Museum to Herefordshire Record Office			Rachael Rogers	9-Dec-24
ICMD	18-Dec-24	2025/26 Community Council and Police Precepts draft	Ben Callard - Resources		Jon Davies	13-Jun-24

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Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Tuesday, 24th February, 2026 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Jackie Strong (Chair)
County Councillors: Jan Butler, Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth, Penny Jones, Maureen Powell, Martyn Groucutt and Peter Strong

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Diane Corrister, Head of Childrens Services
Pennie Walker
Rory Clifford, Adult Employment & Skills Lead
Lisa Knight-Davies, Head of Organisation Workforce Development
Lucy Cunningham, HR Advisor

APOLOGIES: Councillors Sue Riley and Maria Stevens

1. Apologies for Absence

Sue Riley, Maria Stevens, Peter Strong as substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest

None.

3. Public Open Forum

None.

4. Corporate Parenting Strategy

Cabinet Member Ian Chandler and Diane Corrister introduced the report and answered the members questions:

Councillor Ian Chandler:

- Presented the updated corporate parenting strategy, emphasizing shared responsibilities for children and young people in care across all council members, officers, and partner organizations.
- Stressed that corporate parenting is a council-wide commitment, not limited to children's services.
- Explained the strategy updates reflect progress since 2022, including placement strategies, enhanced foster carer recruitment, and treating care experience as a protected characteristic.

- Highlighted changes in external context, such as eliminating profit from children's care, and clarified priorities and actions.
- Invited feedback before presenting to full council, underscoring the importance of corporate parenting responsibilities.

Diane Corrister:

- Noted the strategy sets out vision, priorities, and roles for corporate parents, with little change in core priorities.
- Detailed recent changes, including demographic shifts and reduced numbers of looked-after children due to investment in prevention services.
- Explained active planning for children in care, leading to a significant drop in numbers and improved outcomes.
- Addressed the inclusion and support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and the impact of the national transfer scheme.
- Discussed development of local residential care units to align with council vision and Welsh Government policy, supporting local placement and family relationships.

Questions:

How are care experienced children and young people involved in writing the strategy, and how does their input shape the final document? How often does Cabinet hear directly from young people?

Care experienced young people are involved through a range of formal and informal mechanisms, including twice-yearly meetings with the corporate parenting panel, participation in recruitment panels for staff and foster carers, and visits to residential homes to provide feedback. Their priorities – education, employment, accommodation, and mental wellbeing – directly inform service development, particularly in relation to accommodation for those aged 18 and over. The strategy is shaped by continuous engagement rather than a single consultation exercise. Cabinet members attend engagement sessions to hear directly from young people, rather than young people attending Cabinet meetings.

How is staff instability in the long-term support team being addressed, and what is being done about significant staff turnover in the looked after nursing service, which has led to delays in health reviews?

The backlog in health reviews was raised at senior level with the Health Board, leading to a regional approach that has reduced the backlog from 76 to 35 children. Recruitment challenges remain due to the complexity of cases, but the situation is improving and closely monitored through safeguarding and partnership meetings.

Why were foster carer recruitment targets not met in previous years, and what is being done to achieve the target of 10 new foster carers this year?

Monmouthshire faces demographic challenges in recruiting foster carers, as many residents are retirees or less likely to take on challenging placements. The strategy now focuses on consistent community engagement and making fostering appear as a real option. Currently, 14 people are in assessment, so the target is expected to be met. Competition from independent fostering agencies has been a challenge, but the council has improved its financial and support offer to make in-house fostering more attractive.

Has COVID affected the complexity of presenting children?

The pandemic has led to a significant rise in mental health and emotional well-being issues, compounded by social media pressures and family dysfunction. This has resulted in more complex needs and challenging behaviour among children. The council has increased the number of children residing with parents under shared parental responsibility, allowing for rehabilitation and safer family placements.

The support offered to foster carers is more than just "soft" support, emphasizing the importance of reassurance, experience, and knowledge available to foster carers, which helps retain them. This level of support is comparable to what independent fostering agencies provide, including access to experienced staff and financial incentives.

"Soft" refers to non-tangible support, such as building a fostering community, regular coffee catch-ups with senior managers, and partnership working groups. These initiatives allow foster carers to directly share issues and actively shape processes and documents used by children's services.

A member noted that some foster carers have transferred from private agencies to the council because they value the comprehensive support available, rather than financial incentives alone. Membership of the corporate parenting panel is a powerful reminder of the responsibility to support children who have experienced significant disadvantage.

Appreciation was expressed for the commitment of staff, particularly personal advisers supporting care leavers and care-experienced young people through advocacy, ongoing support, and preparation for independent living. It was emphasized that young people continue to receive support throughout their transition to adulthood.

How are placements with friends or other connected persons safeguarded and monitored?

Placements with connected persons are subject to clear regulatory requirements. These include both kinship carers (family members) and connected carers (friends or individuals with an existing relationship with the child). All connected carers undergo the same safeguarding checks, training, and assessments as foster carers. Placements are overseen by independent reviewing officers and fostering panels, and carers are encouraged to join the wider fostering community for support. The local authority retains shared parental responsibility.

How many children are currently placed in private sector provision, and what is the impact of the Eliminate agenda from April 2026?

Two young people are currently placed in private sector provision and will remain there until their placements end. Welsh Government policy aims to eliminate profit from children's care by 2029-2030. From April 2026, no new for-profit children's homes will be registered, and the regulator ceased accepting new applications after December 2025. Existing homes will continue to operate pending further guidance. The council remains in contact with providers regarding the future use of their properties.

Why does the private sector appear to recruit staff more easily than the council?

Recent recruitment to council run children's homes has attracted experienced staff from the private sector, largely due to instability created by forthcoming policy changes. The council has benefited from this shift and has strengthened its workforce as a result.

Will private children's homes be able to accept children from England following implementation of the Eliminate agenda?

The Welsh Government is still working through this issue. There may be a small number of homes allowed to take children from England, but the details are not yet clear. The government is aware this could be a loophole and is considering how to regulate it.

How robust is the foster carer recruitment and retention process, and is the terminology used in the strategy appropriate (e.g. "resignation")?

The recruitment process is lengthy (six to eight months), with extensive training and checks. Some candidates drop out during the process, and some resign after experiencing the reality of fostering. "Resignation" is the formal term used for any foster carer leaving, whether due to retirement or other reasons. Most resignations are due to life changes, not dissatisfaction. The process is designed to be open and honest to ensure suitable matches.

How does the strategy reflect Welsh identity while remaining inclusive, given Monmouthshire's context as a border county?

References to Welsh identity could be retained with additional context. While promoting Welsh language and culture remains important, the council works to meet the cultural needs of all children, including those from diverse backgrounds.

Is the council improving its approach to preventing unplanned placement disruptions?

Placement stability is closely monitored, recognising its importance for positive outcomes. While emergency moves are sometimes unavoidable due to market pressures, teams work quickly to stabilise placements. All placement moves are tracked and reported, enabling targeted support. The size of the authority supports detailed oversight and close understanding of individual circumstances.

Councillor Peter Strong emphasized the importance of maintaining Welsh identity for young people in Monmouthshire, noting that even if they do not identify as Welsh, knowledge of the Welsh language and political context is valuable for full citizenship and

future opportunities. He advocated keeping Welsh identity in the strategy, while recognizing the diverse backgrounds of care-experienced children.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair recapped the thorough scrutiny of the strategy, highlighting discussions on care-experienced children's involvement, input into new homes, recruitment challenges, the eliminate agenda, support for foster carers, the role of the corporate parenting panel, clarification of placement types, and technical aspects like acronyms and private sector challenges. She acknowledged positive steps and staff contributions.

The Chair asked for clarification on how progress would be reported back to the committee or cabinet.

Councillor Chandler explained the strategy would go to full council for adoption, with mid-term reporting planned (every 18 months), and regular monitoring via the corporate parenting panel. Annual reports from the Chief Officer of Social Care would also come to the committee, and specific topics could be revisited if requested.

Councillor Howarth suggested updates on government legislation affecting the private sector, noting potential risks and the need for committee updates as regulations evolve. Councillor Chandler confirmed the legislative timetable is fixed, with unresolved issues mainly affecting England, and reassured the committee about oversight and reporting mechanisms.

5. Disability Confident Pledge

Cabinet Member Angela Sandles and Pennie Walker introduced the report and answered the members questions with Lisa Knight-Davies and Rory Clifford:

The Cabinet Member stated the Council is a Disability Confident Level 2 employer, committed to inclusive recruitment and supporting disabled people, guaranteeing interviews for qualified disabled applicants, offering reasonable adjustments, and providing mandatory equality and disability training, occupational health, and colleague support networks. She highlighted regular review and continuous improvement, with Pennie Walker as the scheme lead.

Pennie Walker outlined progress in embedding inclusive practices, strengthening manager and workforce awareness, developing colleague support, and partnership working to widen employment access. She noted updates to work experience and well-being policies, collaboration with Job Centre Plus, expanded disability data collection, and improved accessibility at County Hall. She emphasized ongoing improvement, challenges in workforce data and employment pathways, and actions for regular review and accountability.

Questions:

Is there a time limit for completing actions described as "looking into" or "exploring" within the employer evidence template?

All actions are expected to be completed by the end of the council's three-year Disability Confident membership period, with the ambition to achieve Disability Confident Leader status. The council has committed to a broader range of actions than the minimum required and aims to have all actions in place by the deadline.

Do pay commitments apply to those involved in the Disability Confident scheme?

All council employees, disabled or not, are paid according to their role and pay grade, with no difference in rates.

How does the council support employees who develop long-term conditions or disabilities later in their working lives?

The Council is aware of the changing and aging workforce, has updated internal systems to capture when employees become disabled during their employment, and is actively gathering information to offer appropriate support as circumstances change. The Council is working with workforce data and new tools to track age and health changes over time, aiming to adapt and flex support throughout employees' life cycles, not just at a single point in time.

How does the council support employees who wish to work beyond retirement age?

The Council aims to enable all colleagues to maintain a good work-life balance for as long as they wish to work, uses data to understand workforce demographics, and offers options like internal work experience to help employees transition to different roles if needed, ensuring continued purpose and wellbeing.

Is Access to Work support still available for employees who develop long-term conditions and need to change roles?

Access to Work support remains available through the Department for Work and Pensions. However, there are significant delays for individuals applying after starting employment. Internal work experience opportunities provide an additional layer of support and do not replace existing HR policies on reasonable adjustments or redeployment.

Do outside organisations in Monmouthshire contact the council for guidance on the Disability Confident scheme, and what is gained from this relationship?

The Council is working with other organisations and the DWP to involve more local employers in the scheme, aiming to be a leader and example of good practice. 33 Disability Confident employers have been identified in Monmouthshire; a survey has been conducted to understand their needs, and found requests for more support and resources. There are ongoing efforts to liaise with businesses and support individuals with disabilities into employment through government-funded programs.

How do staff without computer access receive training and information about development opportunities?

The Council is introducing Page Tiger, an app allowing staff to access training via mobile phones, and that face-to-face training will be offered for frontline staff. Training

completion is monitored, and support for both physical and mental health, including initiatives for neurodivergent staff, is being strengthened. Mandated training is delivered face-to-face for frontline colleagues, with about 80% completion, and these sessions also help improve digital skills.

How accessible is the council's training platform, Thinqi, to members and staff? There are concerns Members are unaware of the platform.

Concerns regarding awareness and use of the training platform are noted. Further promotion and support are recommended to ensure wider engagement and understanding of available learning opportunities, while any issues should be flagged to John Pearson (Local Democracy Manager).

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked committee members and acknowledged the importance of tracking progress over the next few years. She noted the value of receiving evaluation and feedback from a range of colleagues within the Council. She expressed appreciation for the team's attendance and contributions, emphasizing the significance of ongoing improvement and monitoring.

6. People Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Plan and Action List

The committee agreed to add the Caldicot Leisure Centre investment item to the March meeting, if possible, noting its recent addition to the planner and the importance of timely scrutiny.

7. Council and Cabinet Forward Work Programme

Councillor Howarth raised concerns about items being added to the planner after meetings, potentially missing scrutiny opportunities, and highlighted past issues with items like Tudor Street and County of Sanctuary not being properly tracked or included.

Hazel Ilett clarified that the planner is updated live and accessible via the Council hub, and that scrutiny chairs and the team receive email notifications when new items are added. She encouraged members to check the planner regularly and noted the safeguard for scrutiny involvement.

The committee discussed the need for more advance notice and transparency, with Councillor Howarth emphasizing that last-minute additions undermine effective scrutiny and requesting improvements in planner management.

Hazel explained the planner's new features, including date stamps for item additions and the requirement for officers to indicate scrutiny relevance, aiming for earlier and clearer planning.

Members agreed to keep monitoring the planner, ensure items are not redacted, and maintain oversight of upcoming topics, including the Youth Service and Public Library Strategy.

Hazel agreed to clarify the decision-making arrangements for the Tudor Street item and advise the Committee accordingly.

8. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting

Councillor Bond had noted there was no Impact Assessment on the report and asked for it to be provided in future.

The minutes were agreed.

9. Next Meeting: 31st March 2026

The meeting ended at 12.19 pm.

Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Wednesday, 29th April, 2026 at 10.00 am

Councillors Present

County Councillor Jackie Strong (Chair)
County Councillors: Jan Butler, Christopher Edwards, Simon Howarth, Penny Jones, Maureen Powell, John Crook, Jill Bond and Angela Sandles

Officers in Attendance

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager
Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Richard Drinkwater, Community Hub Manager (South)
Paul Sullivan, Head of Customer, Communication and Engagement

1. Apologies for Absence

Councillor Riley, substituted by Councillor Bond and Councillor Maria Stevens, who was substituted by Councillor Crook.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Chair declared a personal but non-prejudicial interest as a member of Caldicot Friends of the Library.

3. Public Open Forum

George Millman asked the following questions:

When will the public officially know what will happen to Tudor Street? Please can the Council confirm their plans?

Angela Trett, also raised questions about the accessibility and location of community hubs and libraries in Monmouthshire, with a particular focus on Abergavenny. She referred to the 2024–25 health and social care report and asked whether community hubs were intended to be accessible for disabled and vulnerable people, and whether libraries were due to be relocated into community hubs. She specifically asked which community hubs in Abergavenny would host library services and whether those facilities would be accessible.

In response, officers explained that the community hub in Abergavenny operates from the Market Hall. It was described as a slightly unusual model compared with other hubs, as it is a split-level facility, with the library located on the first floor and council services provided at ground floor level. It was confirmed that this is the current arrangement.

Angela then asked a supplementary question about whether the Tudor Street building could be considered as a potential location for a library or community hub in the future,

noting its good disabled access, parking, toilets, and overall capacity. The Chair advised that this was a matter for the relevant Cabinet Member and that her question and comments would be noted and passed on for a response.

Angela expanded on her reasoning, explaining that while she recognised the existing provision, she felt Tudor Street had the physical space and facilities to support a wider range of activities and could attract more people if developed as a community hub or library. The Chair then closed the public open forum, thanked Angela for her contribution, and confirmed that her comments would be forwarded to the appropriate Cabinet Member for consideration and response.

- ACTIONS: to request a response from the Cabinet Member

4. To scrutinise the Monmouthshire County Council Public Libraries Strategy 2025-2030 following public consultation

Cabinet Member Angela Sandles introduced the report by emphasising the fundamental importance of public libraries as one of the few genuinely universal services provided by the Council: free at the point of use, open to everyone, non-judgemental, and trusted by communities. She highlighted that libraries support a wide range of needs, including children learning to read, adults developing skills, people who are digitally excluded, and those who need a safe and welcoming place.

She stressed that although libraries are a statutory service, the strategy goes beyond meeting legal requirements. It is framed around fairness, prevention, and enabling people to thrive through access to information, digital support, learning opportunities, and social connection. She noted that libraries have evolved over the last decade into vibrant community hubs that sit at the heart of local service delivery, contributing to wellbeing, lifelong learning, and community resilience.

She explained that the refreshed strategy provides a clear and practical framework for the next five years. She argued that, at a time when digital access is essential and inequalities persist, reducing library provision would disproportionately affect those facing the greatest barriers. In contrast, investing in libraries is preventative, supporting independence and confidence while relieving pressure on other parts of the system.

She highlighted that the strategy has been shaped by meaningful consultation, with strong input from friends' groups, volunteers and communities, whose feedback reinforced the focus on access, local identity and partnership working. She also made clear that the strategy is deliverable and responsible, building on existing provision, fitting within current budgets, aligning with wider wellbeing and equality priorities, and including clear measures of success against national standards and community outcomes.

Richard Drinkwater delivered a presentation. Paul Sullivan added introductory remarks:

Paul Sullivan, Head of Customer Communication and Engagement, spoke in support of the Public Library Strategy following Richard Drinkwater's presentation. He reflected on his experience of working with the library service since recent portfolio changes and reinforced the point that each community hub and library feels different. He described

this variation as a positive strength, as the buildings and services are shaped to meet the specific needs of their local communities.

He placed particular emphasis on the importance of implementation, noting the progress made over the previous 12 months. He highlighted the passion and commitment shown by staff across community hubs and libraries, stressing that the level of support provided to residents on a daily basis should not be underestimated. He described community hubs as a significant asset, providing a single, accessible location within towns where residents can use library services, access council services, and receive support.

Paul also drew attention to the increasing synergy between services now brought together within his portfolio, including central communications, community development, the contact centre and community hubs. He explained that these services collectively form the Council's main point of contact with residents. He referenced recent staff training and reported a noticeable improvement in staff morale, indicating that the service is moving in a positive direction. While acknowledging that further work remains, he concluded that progress is being made and the overall direction of travel is strong.

Richard Drinkwater answered the members' questions with Paul Sullivan and the Cabinet Member:

- *What lessons have been learned from integrating libraries into community hubs over the past ten years, and how have these informed the strategy?*

The integration of libraries into community hubs has been an ongoing, iterative process that continues to evolve. Changes have been made over time in response to how services are used, ranging from building layouts to opening arrangements. The service has adapted continuously to residents' needs and is expected to keep changing as those needs evolve. The strategy reflects this learning by recognising community hubs as dynamic spaces rather than fixed service models.

- *What role do volunteers play in libraries and community hubs, and is there any risk of volunteers replacing paid staff?*

Volunteers are involved in the service, but there is no intention or aspiration to replace paid staff with unpaid roles. Volunteering is seen as a way to enhance services and provide individuals with opportunities to contribute or gain experience. A specific example was given of a volunteer with significant learning difficulties who contributes a small number of hours each week and is treated as a valued member of the team. Volunteering is about adding value, not substituting professional roles.

- *How are community and voluntary groups supported to enhance library services rather than undermine core provision?*

Friends of the Library groups operate in nearly all community hubs and play a key role in supporting services. These groups are constituted organisations that can undertake activities the Council cannot, such as fundraising and applying for external grants. Examples were given of friends groups securing funding for resources like newspapers and magazines that could not otherwise be provided within existing budgets. Their role is to complement and enhance core services through partnership working.

- *Why does the offer of community learning courses vary significantly between different community hubs?*

The variation in course provision is driven primarily by local demand rather than resources alone. Some hubs have strong demand for accredited courses such as literacy, numeracy, digital skills or ESOL, while others see greater demand for leisure and wellbeing activities. The learning offer in each hub reflects the interests and needs of the local community, with services adapting accordingly rather than applying a uniform model across the county.

- *Councillor Bond expressed strong support for the Public Library Strategy and thanked officers for their passion and commitment. Drawing on her experience representing residents in West End and Caldicot, she spoke positively about the quality of service provided through the library and community hub, emphasising the professionalism, helpfulness and welcoming nature of staff.*

She highlighted specific aspects of the service that she believed were particularly valuable to residents, including the home delivery of audiobooks and books for older residents who are unable to visit the library in person. She also praised the range of activities delivered for children and young people, such as rhyme time and other events, describing them as excellent and well received.

Councillor Bond noted the importance of the library and hub as a central place for information and support in the community, referencing the presence of partner organisations and services operating from the space. She also pointed to additional benefits such as the availability of rooms for small businesses or individuals working independently, which she saw as a valuable extension of the service offer.

She concluded by noting that her questions about implementation and measurement had already been addressed through the presentation and discussion, particularly in relation to monitoring through footfall, surveys and engagement with users. She reiterated her view that the service she had experienced locally was of a very high standard and thanked officers for their work.

- *Councillor Penny Jones expressed strong support for the Public Library Strategy and described it as a positive and non-contentious area of work that the committee could support unanimously. She thanked Richard Drinkwater and Paul Sullivan for their leadership and contributions, noting Richard's long-standing role in transforming libraries into community hubs across Monmouthshire.*

She highlighted specific successes, including the introduction of a Post Office into Usk library, which she described as highly successful and of significant benefit to the local community. She praised the innovation and creativity of library and hub staff, emphasising the wide range of courses and activities available for all age groups and the constant sense of vibrancy within the buildings.

Councillor Jones stressed the importance of libraries and hubs in preventing social isolation, describing their presence as reassuring and valuable for residents. She concluded by thanking officers and staff for their work and emphasised the need to continue to protect and support public libraries in the future.

Residents in secondary settlements, such as Goytre and Raglan, have limited access to leisure and wellbeing classes. Provision is largely based in town hubs, as delivering classes locally in village halls often makes sessions more expensive due to venue hire costs, leading to insufficient take-up and classes not running. How can the council address the cost and viability barriers that prevent leisure and wellbeing classes being delivered in smaller communities? Are there alternative models or funding approaches that could enable provision to be offered more locally in secondary settlements where demand exists?

Officers acknowledged the issue and described it as a difficult problem within community education. It was explained that community learning is grant-funded and does not have core funding, meaning there is a fixed and limited budget. Historically, very low levels of funding required all courses to be run on a full cost-recovery basis, which resulted in different prices depending on venue. Although funding has since increased significantly, allowing course fees to be reduced and standardised across hubs, this assumes delivery from Council-owned buildings where no additional venue costs apply.

Officers explained that delivering outreach classes in village halls or community centres creates additional venue costs that the current budget cannot absorb. While this makes outreach provision more challenging, officers were clear that they did not see the issue as insurmountable. They indicated that resolving it would require creative thinking, innovation, and further discussion with members and senior colleagues, and committed to giving the matter further consideration.

Paul Sullivan added that the Council is seeking to strengthen community-based support through the community development function and the “Be Community” offer, which is designed to support and enable volunteering and locally-led activity. He emphasised the importance of understanding local need and working with members to identify where demand exists. He reinforced the view that these activities are about more than classes, highlighting their role in building social connections, reducing isolation, and supporting wider wellbeing and prevention agendas.

- *The Chair emphasised the wider importance of libraries and community hubs within Monmouthshire’s commitment to being an age-friendly authority, in line with World Health Organization principles. She highlighted the role these services play in reducing social isolation, supporting independence and keeping people well through social connection, participation, and mutual support.*

She reflected on libraries as inclusive, life-course facilities, describing how they support residents from early years through to older age. Examples included baby and toddler sessions, activities that encourage learning and interaction at all stages of life, and support for people with dementia or those who rely on library computers because they lack access at home. She specifically referenced initiatives such as memory boxes, which help stimulate conversations and cognitive engagement.

- *The Chair noted that many residents may not fully appreciate the breadth of activity taking place within libraries and hubs, observing that their value becomes clear when people see services in operation first-hand. She concluded by*

underlining the libraries' central role in learning, wellbeing and community connection before moving the discussion on to the next speaker.

- *Has there been a marked increase in library membership in recent months?*

Officers reported a steady increase in library membership based on the most recent quarterly data available (up to quarter three). Growth has been seen particularly among younger readers attending with parents and among adults aged 35 and over. However, there remains a notable drop-off in engagement during the later primary and secondary school years. Work is underway with local schools, particularly in the Monmouth area, to re-engage this age group through targeted initiatives such as reading groups and grant-funded activities.

- *How is the service meeting the needs of older people in Monmouthshire?*

A range of activities and support is provided for older residents, including social activities within libraries that reduce isolation. Particular emphasis was placed on the "Reaching Out" service, which supports people who are unable to visit libraries due to health or mobility reasons. Through this service, staff deliver books, audiobooks or digital resources directly to people's homes on a regular basis and provide social contact. The service currently supports around 100 readers and plays an important role in tackling isolation, though capacity is limited due to staffing levels. 2

- *Is Welsh language provision within libraries and hubs keeping pace with need?*

Welsh language provision has been strengthened through closer working with Coleg Gwent. From September, Welsh for Adults courses will operate from all community hubs, with the level of provision shaped by local demand. Libraries and hubs were described as ideal, non-judgemental spaces for residents to engage with Welsh language learning alongside other services.

- *How is the additional funding recently awarded to libraries being used, and what difference will it make?*

Officers explained that they are still finalising spending plans for the additional funding. Historically, acquisition budgets were very limited, resulting in long waiting times for popular titles. The increased funding allows for greater flexibility in purchasing stock, reducing waiting times, and better meeting demand across physical and digital lending. Decisions are being informed by borrowing patterns to ensure the funding delivers the greatest benefit, particularly by improving access to high-demand titles and sustaining strong engagement levels across the county.

- *Is access to library and hub services equitable across Monmouthshire, particularly for residents in rural and smaller communities? Rural residents often perceive services as town-centred despite contributing to their funding. There are practical barriers for rural communities, including the need to travel into towns, associated costs, and limited access to local leisure and community activities.*

Library and hub provision is currently focused on the four main towns, alongside the Usk Community Hub and a standalone community library at Gilwern. While town hubs

have higher footfall, officers recognised that access issues differ between urban and rural areas and that different approaches may be required to meet local need.

- *Is there greater potential to make better use of existing village-based facilities, such as community centres and partially Council-funded community libraries, to expand local provision? How could the Council more actively support these facilities to improve access to services in rural communities?*

Officers are open to exploring additional community library or “micro-hub” opportunities where there is clear local demand and a sustainable operating model, including consideration of staffing and stock costs. However, they cautioned that larger, integrated hubs have generally proved more financially sustainable and allow services to be better integrated, enabling residents to access multiple services in one location.

- *How many libraries currently operate across Monmouthshire, including those outside the four main towns?*

Monmouthshire operates libraries within the four main towns, the Usk Community Hub, and one standalone community library at Gilwern. The Gilwern library operates as a “micro-hub” in partnership with the local Community Council, is staffed and funded by the Council, operates from a community building on a peppercorn lease, and provides 25 hours of library access per week. Although footfall and borrowing levels are lower than in town hubs, it is considered a success as it meets a genuine local need and works closely with the primary school and wider community.

- *Over the next five years, is there an aspiration to develop additional hubs or similar provision, particularly in growing settlements, or is the intention broadly to maintain the existing network?*

Future development should be driven by local need rather than a predetermined model. Improved outreach, better use of courier services, and alternative methods of providing access to resources may offer more realistic solutions than establishing new physical buildings, particularly in the context of financial constraints.

Paul Sullivan emphasised that understanding local need is critical and that improvements to access do not necessarily require new buildings. He highlighted recent reinvestment in the courier service as an example of how access to resources can be widened without physical expansion. He stressed that ongoing engagement with members and communities will be essential to shaping future developments and ensuring services respond to what communities want and need.

- *Councillor Powell spoke in strong praise of the library service, noting that she has been a library member since 1980 and has long regarded libraries as essential community assets. She highlighted the success of the Abergavenny library following its relocation, describing it as an excellent facility that brings multiple services together in one place and creates a welcoming, shared environment for people of all ages.*

She reflected positively on the range of activity observed within the library, from children’s sessions and storytelling to quiet study spaces for students, emphasising how

effectively the space accommodates very different uses simultaneously. She described this as evidence of the library's value as a vibrant, inclusive social and learning space.

Councillor Powell also addressed earlier comments about accessibility, pointing out that the Abergavenny facility includes lift access suitable for large mobility buggies, including an additional lift located at the rear of the Market Hall, which she felt was not widely known. She concluded by thanking officers and staff for the quality of the service provided and stated that she had learned a great deal from the discussion, reiterating her appreciation for the role libraries play in supporting the community.

- *What scope is there to link primary school visits to libraries with children joining the library automatically?*

Library staff explained that primary school engagement already includes a strong focus on supporting membership. Library membership forms are sent to schools in advance of visits so that parental or guardian consent can be obtained. Where forms are completed beforehand, children can be registered as library members during their first visit and leave with a library card. This approach balances safeguarding requirements with the aim of making joining the library as seamless as possible.

Officers also highlighted additional targeted initiatives to make libraries more accessible to children and families, including a pilot supporting neurodiverse young people. This includes dedicated periods of additional library access in Abergavenny and Caldicot, allowing children to use the space without behavioural expectations associated with traditional library environments. Early outcomes were reported as positive, with new adult and junior memberships resulting directly from these sessions.

- *How do libraries support older residents facing loneliness and digital exclusion, and how is the social value of libraries captured beyond usage figures?*

There is a range of activity aimed at tackling loneliness and exclusion among older residents. Central to this is the "Reaching Out" service, through which staff deliver books and other materials directly to people who cannot visit libraries due to health or mobility issues. The service also provides regular social contact and plays a meaningful role in reducing isolation, although capacity is limited by staffing.

More broadly, libraries were described as non-judgemental, welcoming spaces that support social connection through informal activities such as reading sessions and social groups. Officers emphasised that much of this value is relational rather than transactional, and therefore not fully captured by footfall or membership data alone. Examples were given of practical problem-solving and personal support provided through libraries that help residents maintain independence and wellbeing. While numerical data remains important, officers stressed that the true social value of libraries lies in these outcomes, which are not always reflected in headline statistics.

- *Goytre previously had a thriving Welsh language group which did not restart after COVID – can this be revisited?*

Officers explained that Welsh for Adults provision is being delivered in partnership with Coleg Gwent, with community hubs providing free space for teaching and the college

funding the tutor. This allows courses to be offered free to residents. Officers indicated that the model is deliberately low-cost and demand-led, and they were open to further conversations about local opportunities such as Goetre within that framework.

- *Can residents donate recently purchased books to libraries after reading them, acknowledging possible issues around condition or suitability?*

Officers confirmed that book donations are welcomed in most cases. If donated books are in good condition and meet required standards, they can be processed, catalogued and added to library stock. Where books are not suitable for lending, they may be sold at library book sales, with small proceeds used to fund activities and materials such as craft supplies or children's sessions. Donations are therefore seen as valuable even when books do not enter the lending collection.

- *Many people use informal book exchanges but are not library members – how can libraries reach this “two-thirds” of residents who do not formally use library services?*

Officers expressed strong support for community book exchanges, describing them as complementary to libraries rather than a threat in principle. However, they explained that because library performance is measured through formal book issues, informal exchanges are not captured in statutory data, which creates some tension. Officers outlined emerging thinking about whether withdrawn or surplus library stock could be formally issued and then placed into community settings to give books a second life while still recording usage. They indicated that this is an area under active consideration as a way of supporting rural communities and maximising the use of stock.

- *Councillor Howarth commented on his experience with a community library at Llanelly Hill, noting that despite having a large number of good-quality, up-to-date donated books, usage had declined significantly. He questioned whether this model still meets community needs and reflected on the difficulty of ensuring books are read rather than simply stored.*
- *Councillor Butler responded by contrasting this with Goytre, where the book exchange is popular but constrained by access, as it is located in a village hall that is often closed or privately booked. She observed that while books are plentiful in some communities, the challenge is ensuring they are accessible and reach the right readers.*

Richard Drinkwater explained that the library service operates a book sponsorship scheme, which allows individuals to donate money towards the purchase of a specific book for the library. The scheme originated in Caldicot and has since been taken up, to a smaller extent, across other libraries in Monmouthshire.

He described the scheme as similar in principle to sponsoring or dedicating a park bench. Donors suggest a book title and provide a reason or dedication, and the donation is made via the relevant Library Friends group. The Friends group purchases the book, which is then added to the library catalogue and becomes part of the circulating stock rather than remaining in a single branch.

A bookplate is placed inside the book acknowledging the donor and the reason for the donation. Richard stressed that donors are made aware that sponsored books will travel

across the county rather than staying permanently in one location. He noted that the scheme has been particularly successful in Caldicot and provides a useful additional way of increasing stock and offering more titles for library members to borrow and enjoy.

Chair's Summary:

The Chair thanked members, officers and contributors for a wide-ranging and constructive discussion. She noted that the debate had clearly demonstrated that libraries and community hubs are about far more than books, drawing parallels with earlier scrutiny of services such as community meals, where the real value lies in relationships, social contact, and support rather than the service transaction alone.

She reflected that the discussion had highlighted the libraries' role in building community connection, supporting wellbeing, reducing isolation and providing trusted points of contact for residents of all ages. She emphasised that this people-centred role was a consistent theme throughout members' contributions.

The Chair confirmed that there was clear support from the committee for the Public Library Strategy. She therefore recorded that the committee formally endorsed and approved the strategy going forward.

The meeting ended at 11.39 am.