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County Hall
Rhadyr
Usk
NP15 1GA

Wednesday, 30 September 2026

Notice of Meeting:

Special Meeting - People Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 8th October, 2026 at 10.00 am,
The Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, NP15 1GA

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

AGENDA

Item No	Item	Pages
1.	Apologies for Absence.	1 - 22
2.	Declarations of Interest.	
3.	Call-In of the decision of Cabinet of 16th September 2026 regarding establishing a Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service.	

Paul Matthews

Chief Executive

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMITTEE IS AS FOLLOWS:

County Councillor Jackie Strong, Caldicot Cross;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor John Crook, Magor East with Undy;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
County Councillor Jan Butler, Goetre Fawr;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Christopher Edwards, St. Kingsmark;, Welsh Conservative Party
County Councillor Martyn Groucutt, Lansdown;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru
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 Maria Stevens, Severn;, Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

Public Information

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

Access to paper copies of agendas and reports

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

Welsh Language

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

Public Open Forum

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

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

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

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

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

Our purpose

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

Objectives we are working towards

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

Our Values

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

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

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

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

Monmouthshire Scrutiny Question Guide

Role of the Pre-meeting	
1. Why is the Committee scrutinising this? (background, key issues) 2. What is the Committee's role and what outcome do Members want to achieve? 3. Is there sufficient information to achieve this? If not, who could provide this? - Agree the order of questioning and which Members will lead - Agree questions for officers and questions for the Cabinet Member	
Questions for the Meeting	
<u>Scrutinising Performance</u> 1. How does performance compare with previous years? Is it better/worse? Why? 2. How does performance compare with other councils/other service providers? Is it better/worse? Why? 3. How does performance compare with set targets? Is it better/worse? Why? 4. How were performance targets set? Are they challenging enough/realistic? 5. How do service users/the public/partners view the performance of the service? 6. Have there been any recent audit and inspections? What were the findings? 7. How does the service contribute to the achievement of corporate objectives? 8. Is improvement/decline in performance linked to an increase/reduction in resource? What capacity is there to improve?	<u>Scrutinising Policy</u> 1. Who does the policy affect ~ directly and indirectly? Who will benefit most/least? 2. What is the view of service users/stakeholders? What consultation has been undertaken? Did the consultation process comply with the Gunning Principles? Do stakeholders believe it will achieve the desired outcome? 3. What is the view of the community as a whole - the 'taxpayer' perspective? 4. What methods were used to consult with stakeholders? Did the process enable all those with a stake to have their say? 5. What practice and options have been considered in developing/reviewing this policy? What evidence is there to inform what works? Does the policy relate to an area where there is a lack of published research or other evidence? 6. Does the policy relate to an area where there are known inequalities? 7. Does this policy align to our corporate objectives, as defined in our corporate plan? Does it adhere to our Welsh Language Standards? 8. Have all relevant sustainable development, equalities and safeguarding implications

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

Empowering Communities

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

Service Demands

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

Financial Planning

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

Making savings and generating income

- Do we have the right structures in place to ensure that our efficiency, improvement and transformational approaches are working together to maximise savings?
- How are we maximising income?
- Have we compared other council's policies to maximise income and fully considered the implications on service users?
- Do we have a workforce plan that takes into account capacity, costs, and skills of the

actual versus desired workforce?

Questions to ask within a year of the decision:

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

Questions for the Committee to conclude...

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

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

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

SUBJECT: CALL-IN RELATING TO ESTABLISHING A GWENT WIDE SOCIAL CARE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE

MEETING: PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 8th October 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To provide the People Scrutiny Committee with the Call-in Request to scrutinise the decision taken by Cabinet on 16th September 2026 concerning the 'Establishing a Gwent-wide Social Care Workforce Development Service'.
- 1.2 The decision was called in on 23rd September 2026 by five councillors who have requested that People Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the decision in line with the Call-in procedure outlined in the Council's constitution.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That People Scrutiny Committee scrutinises the decision and agrees one of the following options outlined in paragraph 3.2:
 - i) To accept the Cabinet Decision made on 16th September 2026
 - ii) To refer the matter back to the Cabinet with reasons; or
 - iii) To refer the decision to full Council for consideration with reasons.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Council's Constitution gives scrutiny committees the right to call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Cabinet. This is one of the ways in which the executive can be held to account.
- 3.2 The Constitution requires that a Scrutiny meeting is held within 15 working days of the receipt of a call-in of an Executive decision to consider the call-in request. Following debate of the issue, the Committee can either:
 - Accept the Cabinet decision; or
 - Refer the matter back to the Cabinet with reasons; or
 - Refer the matter to full Council for consideration with reasons.
- 3.3 On 16th September 2026, Cabinet considered a report relating to 'Establishing a Gwent-wide Social Care Workforce Development Service' hosted by Caerphilly County Borough Council. The decision resolved by Cabinet was to accept the recommendations as set out below:
 - (i) That Cabinet approve the proposal for Monmouthshire to be part of a Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service, a shared service, that includes five Local Authorities hosted and managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

- (ii) That Cabinet delegates authority to the director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care, to progress implementation arrangements including the TUPE transfer (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) of staff and the transfer of the SCWWDP (Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme) grant funding and associated local authority match funding to support the new regional service.

3.4 The decision was subsequently called in for the following reasons:

- Fundamental concerns raised within the document (staff implications TUPE).
- Was excluded from scrutiny.
- Was not placed on the forward planner.
- Decision at partner Councils have been taken to full Council for debate.
- Significant decision (Members have a duty to understand the opportunity, also the risks associated with this decision.
- The decision is well over the threshold of the amount set in the constitution.
- There are no discussions with service users

3.5 The Special People Scrutiny Committee is being held to consider the call-in of this decision and the Members who have called in the decision will outline their reasons for doing so. The Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health has been invited to attend and provide responses.

3.6 The Cabinet decision report provides full context of the key issues relating to the decision taken on 16th September 2026, outlined in section 3 together with an options appraisal provided under section 5, accessed via [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 16th September, 2026, 5.00 pm - Modern Council](#) . A full impact assessment accompanies the original cabinet paper.

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

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

5. EVALUATION CRITERIA

5.1 Not applicable.

6. REASONS:

6.1 To table the Cabinet's decision taken on 16th September 2026 on 'Establishing a Gwent-wide Social Care Workforce Development Service' to the People Scrutiny Committee for scrutiny in line with Council's Call-in procedure outlined in its Constitution.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

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

8. CONSULTEES:

Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships
Deputy Chief Executive
Monitoring Officer

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Cabinet Decision report for 'Establishing a Gwent-wide Social Care Workforce Development Service' dated 16th September 2026 [Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday, 16th September, 2026, 5.00 pm - Modern Council](#) .

10. AUTHOR:

Hazel Ilett, Scrutiny Manager

11. CONTACT DETAILS:

Tel: 01633 644233
E-mail: hazelilett@monmouthshire.gov.uk

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A call in request has been submitted.

Submitted by:

SimonHowarth@monmouthshire.gov.uk

9/23/2026 5:43:25 PM

Decision Title and Date:

Establishing a Gwent wide social care workforce development service

2026-09-16

Decision made:

progress to enter into the agreement within the report

Reason for call in:

Fundamental concerns raised within the document (staff implications TUPE) Was excluded from scrutiny . Was not placed on the forward planner . Decision at partner councils have been taken to full council for debate Significant decision (members have a duty to understand the opportunity also the risks associated with this decision . The decision is well over the thresh-hold of the amount set in the constitution. There are no discussions with service users

Supported by:

Sue Riley jan Butler

Rachel butler Gill Bond

Which scrutiny committee should hear the decision?

People Scrutiny

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CALL-IN MECHANISM

Call-in

(a) When a decision is made by the executive, an individual member of the executive or a committee of the executive or an area committee or under joint arrangements, the decision shall be published, including where possible by electronic means, and shall be available at the main offices of the Council normally within two days of being made. All members will be sent copies of the records of all such decisions within the same timescale, by the person responsible for publishing the decision.

(b) That notice will bear the date on which it is published and will specify that the decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of five clear working days after the publication of the decision, unless a select committee objects to it and calls it in.

(c) During that period, the proper officer shall call-in a decision for scrutiny by the committee if so requested by the chairman or any three non-executive members and shall then notify the decision-taker of the call-in. He/she shall call a meeting of the committee on such date as he/she may determine, where possible after consultation with the chairman of the committee, and in any case within fifteen working days of the publication of the decision.

(d) If, having considered the decision, the select committee is still concerned about it, then it may refer it back to the decision-making person or body for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns or refer the matter to full Council. If referred to the decision maker they shall then reconsider, amending the decision or not, before adopting a final decision.

(e) If following an objection to the decision, the select committee does not meet in the period set out above, or does meet but does not refer the matter back to the decision making person or body, the decision shall take effect on the date of the select meeting, or the expiry of fifteen working days, from the publication of the decision, whichever is the earlier.

(f) If the matter was referred to full Council and the Council does not object to a decision which has been made, then no further action is necessary, and the decision will be effective in accordance with the provision below. However, if the Council does object, the Council will refer any decision to which it objects back to the decision-making person or body, together with the Council's views on the decision. That decision making body or person shall choose whether to amend the decision or not before reaching a final decision and implementing it. Where the decision was taken by the executive as a whole or a committee of it, a meeting will be convened to reconsider within ten clear working days of the Council request. Where the decision was made by an individual, the individual will reconsider within ten clear working days of the Council request.

(g) If the Council does not meet, or if it does but does not refer the decision back to the decision-making body or person, the decision will become effective on the date of the Council meeting or expiry of the period in which the Council meeting should have been held, whichever is the earlier.

EXCEPTIONS

(h) In order to ensure that call-in is not abused, nor causes unreasonable delay, certain limitations are to be placed on its use. These are:

- i) three members of the council are needed for a decision to be called in;

CALL-IN AND URGENCY

(i) The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken by the executive is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call in process would seriously prejudice the Council's or the public's interests. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public shall state whether in the opinion of the decision-making person or body, the decision is an urgent one, and therefore not subject to call-in. The Head of Paid Service or his/her nominee must agree both that the decision proposed is reasonable in all the circumstances and to it being treated as a matter of urgency. Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the Council, together with the reasons for urgency.

(j) The operation of the provisions relating to call-in and urgency shall be monitored annually, and a report submitted to Council with proposals for review if necessary.

SUBJECT: Establishing a Gwent Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 16th September 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to establish a Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service hosted by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

The report outlines the strategic rationale, options considered, proposed service and governance model, financial and workforce implications and seeks endorsement to proceed with planning the implementation of a regional service.

As this refers to the creation of a shared service, it requires a Cabinet decision under Regulations 4 and 7 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Discharge of Functions) (Wales) Regulations 2002.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet approve the proposal for Monmouthshire to be part of a Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service, **a shared service**, that includes five Local Authorities hosted and managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council.

That Cabinet delegates authority to the director of Social Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care, to progress implementation arrangements including the TUPE transfer (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006) of staff and the transfer of the SCWWDP (Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme) grant funding and associated local authority match funding to support the new regional service.

3. KEY ISSUES:

Context

The Monmouthshire Workforce Development Team deliver a comprehensive programme of workforce learning, development and professional support for social care across Monmouthshire. The team is responsible for workforce planning, the all Wales induction framework, mandatory and specialist training, social care professional qualifications, social

work career pathways, practice education and registration support. In addition, the service manages workforce development grant funding, works with commissioned providers and partners across the care sector, works closely with Universities and Colleges, and provides business functions such as workforce data reporting, training quality assurance and training administration. Through these activities, the team helps ensure that Monmouthshire has a skilled, compliant and sustainable social care workforce capable of meeting current and future service demands.

Monmouthshire continues to face a number of significant workforce development challenges including difficulties recruiting, developing and retaining a skilled social care workforce, increasing statutory and regulatory requirements, ongoing financial pressures and growing demand for services. As a relatively small authority operating within a shared labour market, there are also challenges around service resilience, capacity and maintaining a consistent workforce development offer.

The authority must also respond to sector-wide workforce shortages and increasing service complexity, while ensuring staff have access to high-quality learning and development opportunities. In addition, Monmouthshire's rurality presents unique workforce challenges, including attracting and retaining staff in hard-to-reach areas, supporting a geographically dispersed workforce and ensuring equitable access to training and professional development opportunities across the county. These factors reinforce the need for workforce development arrangements that are both resilient and regionally collaborative, whilst remaining responsive to local service needs and priorities.

The proposed regional service is intended to strengthen the capacity, capability and sustainability of the social care workforce through an integrated approach built around three core elements:

- **Social Work Careers**
- **Social Care Skills Development**
- **Business Strategy**

It will incorporate business partnership, facilitation and performance management functions. At the heart of the model is a strong customer focus, ensuring that workforce development activity is shaped by the needs of people who use services as well as meeting the requirements of the workforce across the sector.

Regional Development

As a region, there already exists a number of well-established regional joint working arrangements across social care. Examples include the Gwent-wide Safeguarding Board, the Emergency Duty Team, Shared Lives Services, Regional MyST and the South East Wales Adoption Service as well as shared sub-regional arrangements for Youth Offending Services. There is a strong commitment through Directors of Social Services to collaborate in bringing services together where this has the potential to produce benefits of scale and increased resilience.

Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent already have a joint Workforce Development Team hosted by Blaenau Gwent, which has been in place for 12 years. This long-standing collaboration has demonstrated the benefits of shared workforce development activity.

In July 2024, the Gwent Directors of Social Services Group requested the exploration of the potential to develop a regional workforce development service in response to increasing workforce and financial pressures across the local authorities. In addition, some local authorities were reviewing their workforce development arrangements and were keen to progress with a regional approach. Blaenau Gwent led this scoping work and two options were presented back to Gwent Directors to either maintain the current local authority based service delivery or to establish a new Gwent-wide service.

It was agreed by the five Gwent Local Authorities that a regional approach would deliver business efficiency and value for money, enabling shared resources, reduced duplication, improved consistency and increased resilience. It provides opportunity to leverage collective capacity and capability, support continuous improvement, and deliver a more consistent and effective workforce development offer to the social care sector. Ultimately the regional service will aim to improve workforce outcomes, support high-quality social care delivery, and contribute to better outcomes for individuals, families and communities across Gwent.

In June 2026, Caerphilly County Borough Council Cabinet approved the establishment of a Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service, to be hosted and managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council, and delegated authority to progress implementation arrangements subject to agreement across the five local authorities that appropriate workforce, financial, legal and IT resources are in place.

Monmouthshire's decision therefore forms part of the wider regional governance process and seeks approval for Monmouthshire County Council to join the rest of Gwent and participate in the proposed regional service that will be hosted and managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council and to progress the local implementation arrangements necessary to support its establishment.

HR Implications

Monmouthshire and all other existing local authority employed social care workforce development staff will be ring-fenced into the new regional structure with no expected job losses or redundancies envisaged. Initial consultation on the potential proposal has already taken place with workforce development staff across the local authorities and, subject to receiving approval to proceed, this consultation will be formalised including engaging with Trade Unions.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) arrangements will apply and will be progressed incrementally through a phased implementation plan. Appropriate HR advice and support will be critical to achieving successful delivery of the new service.

Digital and Data

The transfer of staff to Caerphilly will require IT and digital support in relation to creating accounts and supporting the creation of the new service. The positive is that all local authorities are already using Thingi to record training, therefore the reporting and data requirements should have little or no customer impact [although Thingi re-configuration will be required].

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

The establishment of the regional service is expected to have a positive impact by improving access to workforce development opportunities and supporting a more stable and skilled workforce. There are no adverse impacts anticipated.

5. **OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

Option	Benefit	Dis-benefit
Do nothing – Maintain current local WDT team in Monmouthshire - Not Recommended	Retains full local control over Monmouthshire's workforce development priorities, planning and delivery. Maintains existing local knowledge and relationships, including established links with Monmouthshire social care teams, providers and partners. Preserves local responsiveness, allowing training and support to be tailored quickly to Monmouthshire-specific needs. Avoids the complexity of structural change, including TUPE transfer, staff consultation, new governance arrangements and changes to reporting lines. Reduces immediate disruption for staff, as existing employment arrangements, roles, working relationships and local management structures would remain in place.	Continued variation across Gwent, with each local authority planning and delivering workforce development separately, leading to differences in capacity, capability, training offer and consistency. Weaker alignment with the regional direction of travel, as national and regional strategic drivers are increasingly promoting collaborative and regional approaches to social care workforce development. Ongoing duplication of effort, with each authority continuing to plan, commission, deliver and evaluate training independently where a shared approach could be more efficient. Limited economies of scale, reducing opportunities to make best use of resources,

	Maintains continuity of current service delivery, avoiding transition risks while the Gwent-wide model is established. Protects bespoke local training arrangements, including areas currently supported by the Workforce Development Team that may not sit fully within the core regional programme. Supports local accessibility, particularly important given Monmouthshire's rurality and the need for suitable local training venues. Keeps decision-making closer to local operational pressures, enabling quicker responses to emerging service needs. Avoids reliance on regional governance arrangements, reducing the risk that Monmouthshire priorities could be diluted within a wider Gwent model. Provides more certainty in the short term, as current arrangements are already understood by staff, managers and stakeholders.	specialist expertise, training provision and SCWWDP grant funding. Reduced resilience and sustainability, particularly as our small team has limited capacity to respond to increasing demand, regulatory requirements and workforce development priorities. Less opportunity for innovation, with 4 separate team and limited resource to develop new regional programmes, shared career pathways and wider learning opportunities. Limited training access for Monmouthshire staff, as staff may not benefit from the broader range of learning and development opportunities that could be available through a Gwent-wide service. Less consistency for the workforce and providers, with staff and partner organisations potentially experiencing different training standards, systems and support depending on their local authority area. Reduced strategic influence as a region, as Gwent may be less able to present a coordinated position to Social Care Wales, Welsh Government and other national partners. Risk of weaker value for money, as separately
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		managed services may continue to duplicate planning, administration, procurement and performance activity. Missed opportunity to strengthen specialist capacity, including areas such as social work careers, social care skills development, data, evaluation, quality assurance and business support. Risk that Monmouthshire becomes isolated from wider regional workforce development, particularly [as is likely] if other authorities progress towards closer collaboration or shared delivery arrangements.
Monmouthshire joins the rest of Gwent and participates in the proposed regional service – Recommended	More strategic regional leadership across the Gwent footprint, with shared priorities and clearer governance through Directors and Heads of Service. Greater consistency and equity in workforce development provision across all partner authorities. Improved access to training opportunities, as staff would benefit from a wider regional training offer across Gwent rather than being limited primarily to local provision. Stronger workforce resilience, with shared capacity to respond to workforce pressures, recruitment challenges, skills gaps and regulatory requirements.	Reduced direct local control for Monmouthshire over day-to-day workforce development priorities, as decisions would be shaped through a regional management board. Risk that Monmouthshire-specific needs may be diluted within a wider Gwent model, particularly given the rurality of Monmouthshire and the need for accessible local training. Uncertainty about local training venues, as the current Magor base is uncertain and suitable accommodation within

	Reduced duplication of effort, as planning, commissioning, delivery, evaluation and performance activity can be coordinated regionally. Economies of scale, enabling training, development programmes and specialist support to be delivered more efficiently. Improved professional development pathways, particularly through the proposed focus on Social Work Careers and Social Care Skills Development. Enhanced business support and performance oversight, including stronger planning, data, quality assurance, evaluation and continuous improvement. A more sustainable service model, allowing the structure to be tested and refined against demand and customer need. Retention of local responsiveness, through the proposed hub and spoke model, ensuring Monmouthshire-specific needs can still be recognised. Better regional collaboration and shared learning, supporting innovation and stronger practice across adult and children's social care. Improved ability to meet national policy expectations, including alignment with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Social Care Workforce Strategy for Wales.	Monmouthshire would still need to be secured. Potential loss of local flexibility, especially where Monmouthshire currently provides bespoke or additional training beyond the core social care workforce programme. Transition complexity, including TUPE arrangements, staff consultation, changes to management arrangements and the need to maintain service continuity during implementation. Possible disruption to staff and teams, particularly while roles, reporting lines and the longer-term staffing model are reviewed during the first 6–12 months. Risk of increased travel or access issues, especially if the regional hub is based at Foxes Lane, Oakdale, and local delivery arrangements are not sufficiently robust. Dependence on effective regional governance, meaning the success of the model will rely on clear accountability, escalation routes and strong partnership working between authorities. Potential gaps in corporate support arrangements, as functions currently supported by Monmouthshire's Workforce Development
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	Greater training availability across the Gwent footprint, giving Monmouthshire staff access to a broader range of learning, development and career progression opportunities. Maintained statutory accountability, while enabling more effective collaboration across authorities. Continuity and protection for staff during transition, with TUPE arrangements, no compulsory redundancies proposed as a direct result, and a phased implementation approach.	Team may need to move to corporate HR, performance, data or training teams (e.g. safeguarding / social care leadership training) Uncertainty around digital learning and systems administration, including responsibility for Mosaic-related digital training and Thingi system administration. Risk to responsiveness during the early implementation period, as the new service establishes its operating model, leadership structure and customer offer. Potential concern from staff or stakeholders about the move away from a local authority-based service model to a hosted regional service.
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6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The success of the Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service will be evaluated through an agreed performance framework aligned to the objectives of the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP), regional workforce priorities and local authority requirements.

Evaluation will focus on three key areas:

Workforce Outcomes

- Recruitment and retention of the social care workforce.
- Participation in learning, development and qualification programmes.
- Progression and career development opportunities for social care and social work staff.
- Improved workforce skills, capability and resilience across the region.

Service Performance

- Delivery of agreed workforce development programmes and activities.
- Achievement of SCWWDP priorities and grant outcomes.
- Consistency and equity of workforce development provision across the five local authorities.
- Training quality, accessibility and customer satisfaction.
- Effectiveness of regional partnership working and governance arrangements.

Financial Performance

- Effective utilisation of SCWWDP grant funding and local authority match funding.
- Achievement of planned financial outcomes and budget management.
- Demonstration of efficiencies and reduced duplication through regional working.
- Delivery of value for money and sustainable workforce development arrangements.

Performance information will be reported regularly through the agreed regional governance arrangements via a Regional Management Board, including the Gwent Directors of Social Services, to enable oversight of progress, risks, financial performance and achievement of outcomes. Annual review arrangements will be established to assess the effectiveness of the service and inform continuous improvement and future workforce development priorities.

Success measures will include:

- Delivery of agreed SCWWDP grant outcomes.
- Increased participation in learning and development activity.
- Improved recruitment and retention indicators.
- Positive stakeholder and participant feedback.
- Consistent service delivery across the region.
- Delivery within approved budgets and achievement of identified efficiencies.

7. REASONS:

The proposed regional service will increase resilience, capacity and sustainability by creating a larger workforce development function serving all five Gwent local authorities. Monmouthshire staff will benefit from access to a significantly wider range of training, qualifications, professional development programmes and career pathways available across the Gwent footprint, increasing both the availability and accessibility of learning opportunities. The larger service will enable the sharing of specialist expertise, reduce reliance on individual posts, strengthen workforce planning, and support recruitment and retention. The model will also improve consistency of workforce development provision, strengthen the management and delivery of SCWWDP funding, reduce duplication of effort and deliver improved value for money through collaborative working, whilst maintaining a clear focus on Monmouthshire's local workforce priorities.

It aims to strengthen workforce capacity, improve consistency in practice, and deliver efficiencies through shared resources, supporting better outcomes for service users.

Caerphilly and Blaenau Gwent already operate a joint Social Care Workforce Development Team which has, for several years, assumed a regional leadership role in relation to joint

working across the other Gwent local authorities and in managing the Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme (SCWWDP) Grant funding that amounts to £2.1 million per annum across the region.

As outlined above, the Gwent Directors of Social Services have agreed in-principle to create a Gwent-wide Social Care Workforce Development Service which will be hosted and managed by Caerphilly County Borough Council. (Please refer to the two options considered by Gwent Directors of Social Services attached at Appendix 1). The proposal is seen as an expansion of the current service.

The model strengthens Directors' ability to meet their statutory responsibilities to ensure a skilled and sustainable workforce and to promote collaborative, partnership-based approaches to workforce planning and development. It is aligned with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, supporting regional working, integration and improved outcomes for people.

Overall, the Directors consider that a single Gwent-wide Workforce Development Team will enhance capacity, capability and sustainability across the social care workforce, enabling improved service quality and better outcomes for individuals, families and communities. It represents a strategic, collaborative and future-focused response to the challenges facing social care and to the statutory leadership responsibilities of Directors.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

The development of the new regional service will be funded from within the existing local authority budget allocations. The funding commitments will need to be confirmed and approved by each local authority in order for the development to proceed; however, the proposal assumes that the regional service will be funded through existing workforce development resources, with no additional budget growth required at this stage.

The SCWWDP (Social Care Wales Workforce Development Programme) is funded through a combination of Social Care Wales grant funding and local authority match funding contributions. Current arrangements provide 70% grant funding, with local authorities contributing the remaining proportion to support the workforce development programme.

Funding	Annual Amount
SCWWDP Grant (70%)-	£204,953.00
Monmouthshire grant contribution (30%)	£ 87,836.00
Total	£292,789

As part of the proposed regional arrangements, Monmouthshire's SCWWDP budget and associated match funding contribution will transfer into the Gwent-Wide Social Care Workforce Development Service hosted by Caerphilly County Borough Council. This will enable the continued delivery of workforce development activity while benefiting from shared resources, strengthened grant management and increased access to learning and development opportunities across the region.

9. CONSULTEES:

The report has been circulated to the consultees listed below:-

Social Care DMT
Cllr Ian Chandler, Cabinet Member
Catherine Trett, Workforce Development Manager
Matt Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships
Property Services

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Proposed Operating Principals and Next Steps

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Gwent-wide Workforce Development Team

Proposed Operating Principles and Next Steps

The three elements of the model work together as follows:

- **Social Work Careers** focuses on attraction, qualification, development, leadership, practice improvement and statutory responsibilities of registered social workers, supporting high-quality, strengths-based practice across the region.
- **Social Care Skills Development** supports the wider social care sector workforce, including induction, qualifications, training pathways, registration, compliance, and career progression across regulated and unregulated roles.
- **Business Strategy** will provide the enabling infrastructure, including business partnership arrangements with each local authority, budgeting, planning, data and performance intelligence, event management, quality assurance, evaluation, and continuous improvement to ensure impact and value for money.

A Service Manager will need to be appointed.

It is proposed that the Service Manager will report to the Director of Children's Services. It is further proposed that the Service Manager will be supported by Lead Managers for the three elements of the model outlined above.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (TUPE) arrangements will apply to the current workforce development staff employed by Monmouthshire and the other 2 local authorities, through consultation, all staff will be aligned to appropriate roles within the service based on skills and experience.

While the service will operate as a regional model, it will remain responsive to local priorities and delivery needs. This balance ensures consistency and equity of an essential core offer across the region, while retaining the flexibility to respond to local workforce needs, service models, and any additional local authority investment over and above the grant allocations.

The proposed main base for the new regional service is Foxes Lane in Oakdale where the existing Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Team is already based. There is room to expand to accommodate the needs of a regional service. This will effectively be the hub for the region, but the model relies on local connections and local delivery across the region as required. The funding for the accommodation will need to be met through local authority contributions.

The regional service will:

- Respond to the ongoing workforce development requirements for children's and adult social care
- Support both the registered and unregistered workforces
- Work across statutory services and commissioned providers
- Support local authority workforce planning where appropriate
- Engage with national bodies ie ADSS Cymru and Social Care Wales

- Support regional marketing initiatives to improve social care recruitment
- Develop consistent social care workforce induction, training and continuous professional development across the region – which is in addition to existing corporate provision
- Support sector wide leadership and management development eg the National Team Manager Development Programme (TMDP) and Middle Manager Development Programme (MMDP)
- Support consistent practice education and career pathways to meet Social Care Wales registration requirements
- Supporting local authorities to promote social care workforce wellbeing and resilience

Whilst hosted by Caerphilly, the new service will be established on a formal partnership agreement and in line with other regional partnership arrangements, it is proposed that a Management Board will be established consisting of strategic leads for each local authority in order to:

- Set regional priorities and direction
- Approve annual plans and budgets
- Monitor performance, risk and impact
- Ensure equitable benefit for all participating authorities

Subject to approval, the next steps will be to:

- Establish an internal working group including key officers from HR, Legal, IT and Finance to develop an implementation plan
- Engage with the other Local Authorities to ensure the necessary approval processes are followed to support the development
- Establish the Gwent Social Care Workforce Management Board
- Progress recruitment to the regional leadership structure ie the Service Manager and 3 Lead Managers
- Develop a detailed implementation and communications plan

As stated above, a formal legal partnership agreement will need to be developed to underpin the hosted regional service and subject to approval to proceed, appropriate advice will be sought. This may be through a Section 113 agreement or formal Memorandum of Understanding across the five Gwent local authorities. Caerphilly are currently looking at the legal/partnership agreement that is in place for the existing Blaenau Gwent and Caerphilly Service because it may be possible to expand that agreement to include the other three local authorities.