

**A Monmouthshire
that works for everyone**
Corporate Business Plan
2017 // 2022



ANNUAL REPORT
2020/21



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Title	Corporate Plan Annual Report – 2020/21
Purpose	<p>To assess our progress and performance in 2020/21 against the goals, also the council’s well-being objectives, set in the Corporate Plan 2017-2022.</p> <p>A mid-term refresh of the Corporate Plan was completed in March 2020 to ensure that the aspirations remain relevant, are deliverable with the resources available, and reflect the things that are important to our communities.</p> <p>To provide clarity and ensure accountability through the council’s response to the coronavirus pandemic, a revised purpose and set of strategic aims was established that are continuing to be reviewed. This report also looks at progress made against these.</p> <p>To evaluate how well we have done to help citizens hold us to account on our performance.</p> <p>This plan meets the council’s responsibility under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to report on the progress it has made in meeting its well-being objectives for the preceding financial year (2020/21)</p> <p>This plan also meets the council’s responsibility to review its Improvement Objectives and assess its performance in the previous financial year in line with the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 and shows how the council is delivering the seven aspects of improvement.</p>
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Introduction

Our Corporate Plan sets an ambitious five-year programme aligned to a clear purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities. This report identifies our progress from April 2020 to March 2021. The world has faced considerable changes during this time, and some of the things we initially set out to do have been paused while we focused on keeping people safe, stopping the spread of Coronavirus and reaching out to those who need help the most.

When we prepared our Corporate Plan, we examined evidence from a variety of sources and used this to guide our areas of focus. The plan, available at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/improvement, identifies the things we said we would work on up to 2022. It restates our long-standing purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities and sets five priority goals, which also serve as our well-being objectives. These things remain important and we have continued to deliver most of them. However, the pandemic has posed an unprecedented challenge to our well-being and way of life.

Some planned activity has been paused as we have redirected staff and spending towards our Coronavirus response. This does not mean we have stopped being accountable. Our purpose has evolved to reflect the new challenges, we established strategic aims to address them, and we tasked the organisation with delivering these. We wanted to ensure that every person or family in crises that we were aware of could access support. This included providing hub schools for the children of key workers and vulnerable children during lockdown, phoning all 3000 of the shielded households in our county, paying millions of pounds in grants to support local jobs and businesses, and co-ordinating community volunteering. We also re-deployed hundreds of staff so that we could continue to safely deliver core services, like home care and waste collection.

The first section of this document describes progress against our five goals; these are shown in diagram 1. Each of these goals includes a number of commitments that the organisation will aim to deliver between 2017 and 2022. These were refreshed at the mid-point of the Corporate Plan in autumn 2019 to ensure our activities remain relevant, are deliverable with the resources available, and reflect the things that are important to our communities. The remainder of the document focusses on our response to the pandemic, and identifies some of the other activity that has taken place in our organisation to support the services we provide to our communities.

Our activity continues to reflect the ways of working and national goals established by the Well-being of Future Generations Act. As always, your feedback is important to us and there is a short survey and contact details at the back of this report for you to provide your views.

WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It makes public bodies think more about the long-term, work better with people, communities and each other, look to prevent problems, and take a more joined-up approach. This will help us to create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future.

Our Priority Goals

Our purpose is to build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.

This purpose is at the heart of everything we do to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Monmouthshire. We share this with our partners in the Public Service Board (PSB), and the priorities set for our organisation in the Corporate Plan 2017-2022 also reflect our contribution to the well-being objectives set for the county by the PSB (diagram 1).

The Corporate Plan is an ambitious five year programme; it contains 22 commitments, some of which focus on the longer-term future of the county and aim to address complex challenges, in line with the Future Generations Act. The long-term nature of some objectives means the impact of some activity may not be clearly demonstrable over short timescales, and some activity will be in the early stages or not yet started.

GLOSSARY

Well-being Objectives, as referred to in the Well-being of Future Generations Act = the five priority goals identified in the Corporate Plan

Steps, as identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act = the commitments to action identified in the Corporate Plan.



We have also considered the extent to which:

- Our goals contribute to the achievement of the seven well-being goals identified in the Well-being of Future Generations Act
- We are taking all reasonable steps to meet them
- They remain consistent with the sustainable development principle, in particular, the five ways of working. More detail on the how the five ways of working are applied is provided in the progress on each goal later in this report.

It is important that the 22 commitments to action are not considered in isolation, since they can impact on each other and need to be considered in an integrated way (diagram 2 below).

Diagram 2 illustrating how each of the commitments integrate with other commitments

	1.FUTURE SCHOOLS	2.RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS	3.STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW	4.CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	5.LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN	6.ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY	7. CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL	8.INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY	9.LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE	10. PROCUREMENT	11.PLAN FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	12. REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS	13.KEEPING ROADS AND AREAS SAFE	14.HERITAGE, ARTS AND CULTURE	15.INDEPENDENT LIVING	16.SOCIAL JUSTICE, PROSPERITY AND INEQUALITY	17. VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION	18.LEISURE, RECREATION AND WELL-BEING	19.LOCAL SERVICES AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE	20.DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT	21.SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION	22. WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES	
1.FUTURE SCHOOLS	Black	Green	Green	Green																			
2.RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS	Green	Black	Green	Green																			
3.STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW	Green	Green	Black	Green																			
4. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	Green	Green	Green	Black	Green																		
5.LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN				Green	Black											Green							
6.ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY						Black	Green	Green		Green		Green											
7. CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL						Green	Black	Green	Green	Green		Green											
8.INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY						Green	Green	Black	Green			Green							Green		Green		
9.LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE							Green	Green	Black			Green		Green	Green			Green					
10. PROCUREMENT						Green	Green			Black													
11.PLAN FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENT											Black	Green	Green				Green						
12. REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS						Green	Green	Green	Green		Green	Black	Green				Green				Green		
13.KEEPING ROADS AND AREAS SAFE											Green	Green	Black				Green	Green					
14.HERITAGE, ARTS AND CULTURE									Green					Black			Green						
15.INDEPENDENT LIVING									Green						Black	Green	Green						
16.SOCIAL JUSTICE, PROSPERITY AND INEQUALITY					Green										Green	Black							Green
17. VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION											Green	Green	Green	Green	Green		Black						
18.LEISURE, RECREATION AND WELL-BEING									Green				Green					Black					
19.LOCAL SERVICES AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE								Green											Black	Green	Green		
20.DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT																			Green	Black			
21.SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION							Green					Green							Green	Black	Black	Green	
22. WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES																Green					Green	Black	Green

Our progress against each goal has been assessed on a scale of 1 to 6 based on the following principles:

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

A further evaluation of activity and progress has been carried out on each of the 22 commitments to action that sit under each goal. A progress rating has been provided for each commitment, using the following criteria:

Definition	Description
Progressing well	most actions are underway and making good progress; improvements are becoming evident; most activity has been on schedule
Taking steps	actions have been started and are making progress, whilst some are not progressing or are yet to begin; some improvement is evident; activity has been on schedule but some are behind schedule
Attention needed	most actions are not making progress; few improvements are evident; most activity has been behind schedule.
No activity	no actions, improvement or activities are evident

It is important to point out that these ratings relate to activity and progress against the commitments themselves, and do not illustrate the significant activities undertaken during 2020/21 to support the pandemic response.

We have included the following icons in each commitment to action to illustrate their contribution to the Well-being of Future Generations Act goals:

-  Prosperous Wales
-  Healthier Wales
-  Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language
-  Resilient Wales
-  More equal wales
-  Wales of cohesive communities
-  Globally responsible Wales

Corporate Goal template explained

Goal: this identifies what we want to achieve over the medium term. The information below relates to our progress towards achieving this.				
Why we are focusing on this		Summary of progress in 2020/21		
This provides an explanation of why we thought this was an important area of focus.		This will provide a progress evaluation level and rating, for example, Level 3: Adequate, and a summary of our activities, successes and outstanding actions.		
Detailed Progress update				
Commitment to action	Progress	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21	
<p>These are the steps that will help us achieve our overall goal.</p> <p>The images show their contribution to the Well-being of Future Generation Act goals</p>	<p>This is summarised into the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressing well • Taking steps • Attention needed • No activity 	This breaks down the activities we intend to do	This identifies what we have achieved so far, and where our focus will be going forward.	
Well-being of Future Generations Act impact				
This provides an explanation of how our actions contribute to the Well-being of Future Generations Act well-being goals and ways of working				
Measures of progress				
Measure	Previous	Current	Target	Comment
This section provides an understanding of key performance information for some of our activity that can be quantified now. The long-term nature of the goals means that performance can sometimes be hard to measure in the short-term, with potential benefits not being seen for many years				

Goal A: Best possible start in life

Monmouthshire County Council Goal: A. Best possible start in life	
Why we are focusing on this	Summary – Progress 2020/21
<p>Research shows that improving outcomes for children and young people relies upon a ‘life course’ approach; each stage of life builds to the next. We will work with children, their families and communities recognising everyone has strengths as well as needs. We will work across professions and agencies and will be led by data and evidence from emerging good practice.</p> <p>As an organisation, we recognise the importance of well-being and people’s safety and security as a part of that. We will promote safeguarding and ensure that it is everyone’s business and encourage active lifestyles for children and young people through a broad range of activities.</p> <p>We will commit to beginning the work necessary to ensure that children and young people choose to attend school in the county.</p> <p>We will invest in all our children’s learning and development, ensuring they have the environments, skills and support to flourish and be prepared for the work of the future. We want our children and young people to be industry ready, able to contribute locally and globally, and meet the demands of a rapidly changing world environment.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation: 3 - Adequate</p> <p>The Coronavirus pandemic has caused unprecedented disruption to education throughout 2020/21, resulting in the closure of schools and the transition to remote learning. At the first lock down in March 2020, hubs were established to provide childcare for vulnerable learners and the children of critical workers, with an average of 255 young people attending each day. Where required, mobile broadband units and laptops have been provided for learners to access online resources, and the Education team has worked closely with Social Services colleagues to safeguard vulnerable children and young people.</p> <p>Following the announcement that there would be no GCSE, AS and A Level examinations in Summer 2021, schools were provided with a range of support to prepare them for the new process for determining students’ grade.</p> <p>Throughout the pandemic, safeguarding has remained an essential part of our delivery, and the process for receiving and responding to referrals has not changed. Arrangements have been adjusted and where required, different solutions have been identified. Early help teams in Social Services have worked closely with Education Welfare Officers and the Education Psychology team to prepare specific well-being support for vulnerable children.</p> <p>As lockdown restrictions have limited direct contact in some areas, many services have become virtual to ensure continued support and assistance is available. Family support has continued with some creative adjustments, such as seeing people outside their homes in gardens. A parent advice line was established, receiving over 400 calls, and social work teams have worked closely with Education Welfare Officers and the Education Psychology team to provide well-being support for vulnerable children.</p>

Detailed Progress Update			
Commitment to Action	Progress rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
<p>THE COUNCIL INVESTS IN FUTURE SCHOOLS</p> 	Taking steps	<p>Conclude comprehensive redevelopment of new secondary school with community leisure facilities in Monmouth (<i>Completed</i>)</p>	<p>The new school in Monmouth was opened in September 2018, quickly followed by the newly built, state-of-the-art leisure centre.</p> <p>External project managers have been appointed to assist in developing the new Abergavenny School, which will accommodate pupils aged 4 – 19. Engagement with staff and pupils at Deri View Primary School and King Henry VIII School has been done, and concept design work has begun. A tender process is underway, and contractors will shortly be appointed to take the project forward.</p> <p>Work is continuing on reviewing the capacity and pupil projections within the Chepstow area in readiness for Band C and looking at options for developing learning within the Chepstow area.</p>
		<p>Commence Abergavenny school redevelopment</p>	
		<p>Develop 'Band C' proposals for the re-provision of secondary learning in the Chepstow area</p>	
<p>THE COUNCIL HAS A PLAN FOR RAISING STANDARDS IN SCHOOLS</p> 	Taking steps	<p>Continue to raise standards in education and ensure an ongoing focus on vulnerable learners</p>	<p>During school closures, in-school provision continued for vulnerable learners and children of key workers, firstly via childcare hubs, then via face-to-face teaching after the first lock down. At their peak, the hubs provided childcare for over 400 pupils in a day. Special Needs Resources Bases have remained open, and multi-agency meetings have ensured vulnerable pupils are monitored and their needs met.</p> <p>During the winter closures, schools adopted a remote learning approach for the majority of pupils, which was developed into a blended learning approach when restrictions allowed. The Education Team worked closely with schools to deliver professional learning to improve their digital and pedagogical approaches.</p> <p>An Estyn Inspection in February 2020 recognised the clear vision and strong focus on ensuring 'the best possible start in life' in schools, and also identified the commitment to partnership working that resulted in a good</p>

			<p>track record of improvement. There were areas for development clearly identified and Monmouthshire's strategic priorities for 2020/21 aligned well with these. Whilst the current uncertainty remains, work continues to address these recommendations.</p> <p>For learners with limited IT equipment or internet connectivity, mobile broadband units and laptops were provided, and thousands of new devices were given to schools to support blended learning requirements.</p> <p>To support the well-being of children and young people, schools have developed a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, with additional support available for those who need it. The Education Psychology Service and Healthy Schools team have provided guidance to support pupils and families during lockdown, and an Educational Psychologist is available for children with particular needs.</p> <p>There were no end of key stage assessments for Foundation Phase, KS2 and KS3 in 2020, and there were a series of process and policy changes for those students at the end of KS4 and sitting AS and A Levels. Following the announcement that there will be no GCSE, AS and A Level exams in Summer 2021, schools have been provided with a range of support to prepare them for the new process for determining students' grade.</p> <p>At the beginning of the pandemic, there were 1355 Free School Meal (FSM) pupils, which had risen to 1662 pupils by March 2021. To support these children and young people, and their families, 55,000 payments have been made to parents, with a total value of £1.2m.</p> <p>2020 saw the launch of The Compass for Life, which is aimed at helping learners in years five and six to identify their aspirations and the strengths and resilience needed to achieve them. The work is promoted by the Compass for Life Foundation, and sessions have been completed in four</p>
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			<p>primary schools. The response has been exceptional and further schools will receive sessions in the summer term.</p>
		<p>Prepare for the new curriculum in Wales including a focus on the broader skills required by employers.</p>	<p>MCC and EAS continue to work with schools to ensure that they are preparing for the new curriculum and meeting the needs of students. Schools are receiving bespoke support packages that complement the priorities identified within their own School Development plans.</p>
		<p>Strengthen the links between schools, their communities and local businesses to improve the well-being of children and young people <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>A youth service offer is being provided in Chepstow, supporting young people aged 11+, funded by the Town Council, Monmouthshire Housing Association and Chepstow Action for Youth. Funding was also secured from the WLGA Food Security Grant and Monmouthshire Housing Association 'Pitch Your Project' scheme to run virtual family cookery classes, provided by a local volunteer, and are free to primary school pupils. This activity supports schools to access community opportunities, which has a positive impact on the well-being of children and their families.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL CARRIES OUT A STRATEGIC EDUCATION REVIEW</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Implement the findings and recommendations of the independent Additional Learning Needs Review</p>	<p>The new ALN Strategy identifies four distinct and ambitious work streams, all of which aim to build sustainable and resilient provision, and are now embedded in the business plans of the ALN and Educational Psychology Services. Whilst lockdowns have had an impact on some actions, progress has been made in other areas. The Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) cross-directorate initiative has been developed as part a whole school, whole authority approach to promoting attendance and well-being in Monmouthshire schools. The Education Psychology Service's training platform has continued to be developed, which provides information on support for well-being, as well as other key issues.</p> <p>The ALN team have been a key part of the regional preparations and developments for the new ALN and Tribunal Act legislation, which was implemented on 1st September 2021. In preparation for the implementation of the Act, all Monmouthshire ALN Coordinators have been provided with an extensive range of training through the regional ALN transformation initiative, and Headteachers have been kept up to date with</p>

			<p>developments associated with ALN implementation through head teacher meetings and targeted communications.</p> <p>Over the last academic year, all Specialist Resource Bases (SRB) have upgraded their sensory resources and provision, and outdoor play equipment, and one SRB has been significantly remodelled to provide an improved learning and play environment. In addition, SRB staff have participated in Attention Autism training, which will form the core intervention for children with ASD, and an SRB Outreach Service pilot was rolled out in the Spring term 2021, which will be evaluated and further developed over the autumn and spring terms.</p>
		Review of Catchment and Nearest School Policy	<p>Reviews and consultations have been carried out on the admissions criteria for school place allocations and secondary school catchment areas. Recommendations from the consultations were implemented with effect from September 2020. The proposed sizing of the new school in Abergavenny has been considered in light of rising numbers of students at King Henry VIII, and housing developments in the area, so there will be further consultation to considering the catchment area.</p>
		Review of Home to School Transport	<p>A review of policies regarding the management of external Home to School transport operators has been carried out and changes implemented. Welsh Government have embarked on a consultation exercise to extend the requirements of the Learner Travel Measure, so the review of wider policies has been delayed.</p>
		Review and develop leadership structures across schools	<p>Leadership structures have been reviewed in two schools to ensure they have the capacity and sustainability to grow and thrive. As a result, a second federation has been successfully established in the county between Kymin View Primary School and Llandogo Primary School, in partnership with the Governing Body in each school. The federation will become fully operational from September 2021.</p>

<p>THE COUNCIL IMPLEMENTS A MODEL OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Integrate preventative children and family services within each locality into one prevention focused function</p>	<p>Children’s Services have focused on implementing a co-ordinated approach to early intervention and prevention. Early help services assist families to address difficulties as soon as possible, via a well-developed partnership approach, and the range of preventative services has been developed to provide the right help at the right level of intensity, according to the needs of the family. The Achieving Change Together Team is currently working with 50 plus children on the ‘edge of care’ to enable them to remain living safely with their parents.</p> <p>As lock down protocol limited direct contact in some areas, many early help and family support services became virtual to ensure continued support and assistance was available throughout. All family support continued with some creative adjustments where appropriate, such as seeing people outside, such as in gardens. However, where it was required for the safety and well-being of children, a direct service was provided to families using a risk assessment.</p> <p>To help alleviate some of the additional pressure caused by the pandemic, a parent advice line was established within two days of the first lock down, and has received over 400 calls in the last 12 months. Social work teams worked closely with Education Welfare Officers and the Education Psychology team to prepare specific well-being support for vulnerable children out of the school hubs.</p>
		<p>Provide services that meet mental health and emotional well-being</p>	<p>Extensive support was provided to children with disabilities, in partnership with Action For Children, for families at risk of breakdown. Salaried carers were asked to provide day respite to those families in most need, and a summer play-scheme was provided at three sites across the county for additional support.</p> <p>The 2020 School Health Research Network survey identified that students’ health behaviours have worsened since the last survey in 2018, including student levels of life satisfaction, alcohol misuse, and sex and relationships.</p>

		<p>Promote active lifestyles for children and young people through a broad range of activities including sport, exercise and the natural environment</p>	<p>Monmouthshire’s Youth Council, Engage 2 Change, (E2C) is a group of young people aged 11-18 from across Monmouthshire who meet to represent the views of their peers, with a view to inform decisions that affect the county’s young people. E2C has developed a Monmouthshire-specific ballot, which highlights local issues raised by young people, and the 2020 top priority was Sex Education eXplained. E2C is working with the Youth Service and schools to address the issue of relationships and sexuality, and is helping to develop a programme for KS3 and 4 pupils.</p> <p>Friday Friendlies are a series of online webinars designed and directed by E2C to give young people the opportunity to talk, gain new knowledge and influence change with decision makers. To date, six remote Friday Friendlies have been held, and discussions include the budget, bullying, votes at 16, mental health, LGBT history and gender equality.</p> <p>The Shift project, funded through the WG Youth Support Grant, supported 100 young people who had poor mental health and emotional well-being through a mix of face to face and digital work. During their time on the project, over 80% of young people felt an improvement in their well-being. A specific offer for young people aged 18+ has also been developed.</p> <p>There has been a focus on improving and expanding the active travel offer within the county, and part of this work has concentrated on providing a safer network for children and young people to actively travel to school. Initial funding of £49k was allocated to identify new routes and routes for improvement in Chepstow and Abergavenny, which has been increased to £71k to expand the project to all four secondary schools. This work has provided valuable information to support future funding bids in terms of the physical infrastructure changes that can be made as part of our overall network.</p> <p>During the Easter holidays, outdoor open access play sessions were delivered on four sites in the county, attracting 1,100 attendances over a</p>
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			<p>seven day period. Summer provisions for children consisted of MonLife activity hubs at each of the four leisure centres in the county, which received a total of 4,170 attendances, an average of 166 children per day, and supported 124 vulnerable pupils and 76 pupils eligible for free school meals. In addition to this, teams created 1,500 play packs to children of primary school age. In addition the Sports Development team responded to the pandemic by delivering a number of virtual programs. This included a cross country event, involving 271 primary school pupils from years 3 – 6 who submitted a running time over a distance of either 1200 and 1600 metres.</p>
		<p>Roll out the ‘Children’s Voices in Play’ toolkit across the county to support the creation of play-friendly communities <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>The Young People’s Voices in Play Toolkit has been developed and was originally due to be introduced to schools during 2020/21. This has been delayed due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting disruption to schools. Roll out of the toolkit will be considered later in the year, depending on the ongoing pandemic disruptions and immediate pressures.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL ENSURES PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT FOR LOOKED-AFTER CHILDREN</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Increase the number of Monmouthshire foster carers</p>	<p>The number of looked after children has been increasing significantly, rising from 173 at the end of 2018/19 to 219 at the end of 2019/2020. At the end of 2020/21, 213 children were looked after, which is still significantly higher than in recent years. All parts of the system are aligned to ensure that only children who need to become looked after do so. Similarly, services are in place to support children being looked after, where this is safe and in their best interests.</p> <p>Active campaigns are being run to increase the rates of in house foster carers, including the 20 for 20 reasons to foster. Seven new foster carers have joined Monmouthshire during 2020/21 as a result of these campaigns, taking the total to 95. The high number of children who are looked after means that demand remains high and therefore, recruitment and retention remains a high priority.</p>

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓		✓	✓		✓	

The **long-term** nature of this goal is intrinsic to its success. Working with and **involving** children and young people, as early as possible, to identify their needs will give them the best chance of achieving their maximum potential. **Preventing** problems before they start will provide our young people with the best chance to develop. By focusing on prevention we will aim to reduce the number of children who rely on statutory services and should support them in a way that provides them with a better outcome. Using a **collaborative** approach and aligning services provides a rounded resource, with the right people in the right place at the right time. It also reduces duplication, avoids the need for multiple referrals and provides a complimentary methodology of care that works in harmony for the young person. Overall, this approach **integrates** the needs of our young people, ensuring they have the best opportunity to achieve their goals.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Percentage of children and young people at the end of KS2 in Monmouthshire primary schools who move to a secondary school in the county	78.5%	82.3%	Increase	Latest is summer 2020 data
Percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational learning need who are educated in mainstream setting within the county	62.4%	65.3%	Increase	
Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET) ¹	1.3%	1.4%	1.0%	Latest is 2020 data; data produced annually by Careers Wales
Percentage of looked after children who experience non-transitional school moves	12.7%	10.9%	<10%	
Percentage of families supported by early help services who report being helped with what matters to them: i) Pre statutory Services	i) 71%	i) 84%	Increase	Pre statutory is early intervention prior to receiving statutory children's social services.

ii) Statutory services	ii) 86%	ii) 87%	Increase	Statutory services is early intervention through prevention into care.
Percentage of children placed with generic/kinship foster carers	36.1%	41.3%	Increase	
Percentage of pupils who take part in sport on three or more occasions per week ²	45%	Next survey 2022	Next survey 2022	Previous data - 2018 survey, Sports Wales. Next survey postponed to Spring/Summer 2022
Number of young people trained in the playmaker award	923	950	900	Due to pandemic, approach changed to a combination of face to face & digital delivery

Goal B: Thriving and well-connected county

Monmouthshire County Council Goal: B. Thriving and well-connected county	
Why we are focusing on this	Summary – Progress 2020/21
<p>Monmouthshire is the most competitive economy in Wales after the capital city of Cardiff, is best placed for growth per head of population and has the highest rate of business births. Whilst productivity is comparatively high, more needs to be done to increase Gross Value Added in existing and new industries. As the closest point for business relocation, post cessation of the Severn Bridge Tolls – this means seizing the opportunity to boost Research & Development capacity. We will develop a clear strategy that articulates our distinct strengths and goals for enhancing competitiveness, innovation and productivity.</p> <p>We want Monmouthshire to be a place to be – not just a place to be from - and so we will review our Local Development Plan to ensure it is meeting our needs. The delivery of quality, sustainable and affordable housing will help enable the retention of young people, helping combat ‘brain drain’ and managing the social and economic challenges associated with a rapidly ageing population.</p> <p>We will tackle the barriers to productivity, and focus sustainable infrastructure and connectivity. Externally, developing such foundations will enable businesses and community enterprises to deliver employment, growth and prosperity. This will enable businesses to look beyond our shores for customers. Internally, we will unlock the value of our own procurement spend; developing data-driven, enterprise and commercial mindsets and more innovative approaches to local market creation.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation: 3: Adequate</p> <p>Support has been provided to businesses throughout the year to help them through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, issuing over 6,500 payments of grants amounting to almost £40 million. There has been an ongoing communications campaign, regular meetings of the Monmouthshire Business Resilience Forum, and livestreamed events to share support and guidance to local businesses.</p> <p>The council has continued to work with Welsh Government to support access to Superfast Cymru, and promotion of the Access Broadband Cymru scheme for areas outside the Superfast Cymru roll out continues. In addition, Broadway Partners have connected a further 500 white premises with full fibre as of February 2021.</p> <p>Work on the RLDP has continued, but has faced delays as a result of the pandemic. A review of the evidence base and strategy to determine the consequences of the pandemic has identified a number of key messages that require ongoing consideration. A revised RLDP timetable has subsequently been agreed.</p> <p>The pandemic has had a considerable impact on tourism as lock down protocols have been introduced and reduced based on infection rates. As restrictions have begun to ease, communication has continued in order to promote Monmouthshire as a key tourist destination, including Visit Monmouthshire, and has incorporated the Welsh Government-aligned Visit Safely messaging.</p> <p>Following a review of the Strategic Procurement Service, a proposal to collaborate with Cardiff Council in the discharge and provision of the procurement services has been agreed.</p>

Detailed Progress Update			
Commitment to Action	Progress rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
<p>THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS AND DELIVERS A NEW ECONOMY AND ENTERPRISE STRATEGY</p> 	Taking steps	<p>Work with business to create and deliver a new strategy focused on increasing competitiveness productivity and innovation</p>	<p>In November 2019, The Vision Monmouthshire 2040: Economic Growth and Ambition Statement was approved by Cabinet which set the economic ambition for the County, this was closely followed by the approval of the Inward Investment Prospectus 'Growing Your Business in Monmouthshire' in March 2020. The purpose of the documents is to work alongside the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) in identifying, encouraging, and promoting the development of suitable employment sites and premises, setting the scene for Monmouthshire's growing 'inclusive economy' and an environment that nurtures new start-ups, attracts investment and enables local businesses to expand.</p>
		<p>Develop incentives and support to encourage indigenous business growth and inward investment</p>	<p>Coronavirus has had a significant impact on businesses and their investment plans. However, as Monmouthshire emerges from restrictions showing signs of economic recovery, the team will be consulting with business during Summer/Autumn 2021 in the revision of the Economic Growth and Ambition Statement, reasserting the ambition to create an environment that enables increasing competitiveness, productivity and innovation. The consultation will also serve to inform the successor Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy.</p>
		<p>Develop more employment opportunities, such as apprenticeships and the youth enterprise scheme, increasing the retention of a younger economically active demographic</p>	<p>In early 2020, the council implemented an 'Apprentice in Care Scheme', funded through the Foundational Economy Challenge Fund, which successfully introduced six apprentices within Health and Social Care. Although the programme met with challenges due to the impact of Covid-19, each of the apprentices worked throughout, providing valuable contributions to the Health and Social Care Team, and have successfully progressed with careers or further studies within the health and social care sector. The Greater Gwent Partnership are looking at the council's model, with the potential for further rollout in other areas.</p>

			<p>Since the implementation of the Apprenticeship, Graduate and Internship Strategy, the council has successfully recruited 20 apprentices, seven of which have completed their studies and moved into new posts. In addition to this, there are roughly 168 existing staff members who have signed up to undertake apprenticeships.</p> <p>The council has recently secured Grant funding to act as a gateway to deliver the Department for Work and Pensions ‘Kickstart’ Scheme, which will provide 89 six-month work placements. The scheme is open to individuals aged 16 – 24 who are currently in receipt of Universal Credit, and provides opportunities to try new tasks and build new skills in a real work environment that will make a difference to the prospect of these young people finding work in the future.</p>
		<p>Ensure planning policies and land allocations for employment uses enable appropriate growth sectors.</p>	<p>The take up rate of land allocation for employment use equated to 0.38ha during 2020/21. This is below the take-up rate for the previous year, although it has fluctuated since the plan adoption. There is currently 40.16ha of employment land available across the county, which demonstrates that sufficient land has been maintained to meet the identified take-up rate of 1.9ha per annum. This is important in ensuring the planning policy framework supports and enables sustainable economic growth in the County.</p>
		<p>Raise the profile of Monmouthshire, support and grow the foundational economy including developing proposals for shorter supply chains to benefit consumers and growers. <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>A Food Development Action Plan has been developed, which looks at options for developing the supply chain for smaller local food growers. Monmouthshire has become a member of the Sustainable Food Places Network, and has received funding to develop a Coordinator role. A Food Resilience Data Development Programme has been established to create a picture of the county’s farming landscape, including information such as the number of farms, existing crops and potential crop opportunities, which will be used to inform the council’s future procurement from the local supply chain.</p>
		<p>Develop support for rural businesses including improvements in rural broadband: acting as a</p>	<p>Monmouthshire was one of three locations benefitting from the £2m Department of Media, Culture and Sport fund programme to trial the use of 5G technology, acting as a testbed to bring world-class digital infrastructure to</p>

		testbed for rural applications of 5G and facilitating agricultural technology <i>(New)</i>	<p>Monmouthshire. The project provided Llanddewi Rhydderch with gigabit speeds.</p> <p>In February 2020, CoCoRE was approved. This is a 5G testbed in South East Wales, to connect rural communities across Monmouthshire and semi-urban communities in Blaenau Gwent. As a partner, the council will be involved in developing test cases for the use of 5G in tourism and in the diverse Rural Economy, such as farm security and safety, and farmer mental well-being.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL MAXIMISES ECONOMIC POTENTIAL THROUGH DELIVERING THE CARDIFF CAPITAL REGION CITY DEAL</p> 	Taking steps	Lead 'Innovation theme' and play a key governance role in the Cardiff Capital Region <i>(Completed)</i>	<p>The first UK Government Gateway Review of the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal has now reached a successful conclusion which has unlocked the next five-year tranche of UK government investment funding.</p> <p>The Cardiff Capital Region is now starting to transition from a pure 'City Deal' programme offer to a more strategic regional approach, journeying towards the transition to a Corporate Joint Committee structure. Going forward the focus will be on delivering the 'Five for Five' strategic imperatives - Building Back Better, Becoming a City Region, Levelling-Up, Scaling-Up and Developing Economic Clusters – all of which present an opportunity to build and support inclusive growth across the region.</p>
		Work as part of the Cardiff Capital Region to attract high skill, high wage jobs to ensure that people have the opportunity to raise their household income <i>(New)</i>	
		Develop and deliver projects of regional significance including capitalizing on new Compound Semi-conductor Foundry	
<p>THE COUNCIL DELIVERS BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE CONNECTIVITY & OPPORTUNITY</p>	Taking steps	Develop and deliver solutions to improve rural broadband	<p>Due to the pandemic, digital infrastructure works have been slower to move forward in the county, and the digital deprivation rate still stands at 12.5%. 8,000 premises in the county have poor broadband; of these, 5,600 are under review with the possibility of Altnets supplying services, and 2400 premises are still considered with 'no potential suppliers available'.</p>

		<p>Develop a range of options to improve rural transport and better public transport linked to opportunities throughout the Cardiff Capital Region, including improvements at Severn Tunnel Junction</p>	<p>The council has continued to work with Welsh Government to support access to Superfast Cymru, and is one of the rural local authorities represented on the newly formed Wales Digital Infrastructure Group. Welsh Government have targeted 2163 premises under Superfast Cymru 2 for Monmouthshire, all to receive fibre to the premises.</p> <p>A number of schemes have been established for those outside of the Superfast Cymru roll out area, including the Access Broadband Cymru scheme and the BDUK operated gigabit voucher scheme. Broadway Partners have connected 500 premises with full fibre, and the programme is due to complete in June 2022 with all 6,000 white premises having access. A grant has also been awarded to upgrade this network to 'Carrier Grade', which will allow Mobile Network Operators to connect to it, and a second grant was awarded enabling Llanthony Valley to receive high quality broadband services.</p> <p>A digital transport platform has been developed with funding from the UK Government GovTech Catalyst programme; the Thrive transport module has been developed by Box Clever Digital. The platform includes a journey planner, provides access to demand responsive transport and community car schemes, and a secure lift-share scheme called Tag-Along. The difficulties of identifying exact locations in rural areas has been overcome by incorporating the What3Words tool, which pinpoints precise locations.</p> <p>As a result of social distancing and stay at home guidance, real-world testing has been delayed, which has given the developers more time to refine the solution, with beta testing planned for the second half of 2021, subject to Covid restrictions.</p> <p>At Severn Tunnel Junction, a park & ride extension, and improvements to walk access are currently out to tender, and a first design has been developed for an extension to the footbridge, which is being reviewed by Network Rail. Both projects are being funded by the CCR Metro Plus programme. In Abergavenny, the council have appointed consultants to review options for improving bus-rail integration, park & ride, active travel access and improvements to passenger</p>
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			<p>facilities, also via funding from the CCR Metro Plus programme. Finally, funding has been sourced to improve bus infrastructure in the county, and officers are in the process of developing detailed plans.</p>
		<p>Make use of new technology to improve how we maintain highways services</p>	<p>A survey of the county's road network was completed in July 2020, with roads classified by their need for repairs. A three-year programme is being drafted to inform budget setting and programming during 2022/23. The council has invested £375,000 to improve proactive gully emptying in the county, and the MyMon app is being trialled as a means of communicating with customers.</p>
		<p>Complete the second phase of the Chepstow Transport study in conjunction with the appointed contractors and neighbouring local authorities; and take action based on the findings (<i>New</i>)</p>	<p>The next stage of the Chepstow Study is due to be published imminently. The council has commissioned Capita to produce an updated Local Transport Plan to sit alongside the Replacement Local Development Plan.</p>
		<p>Identify ways to reduce the difference in pay between men and women in the county</p>	<p>The latest information from 2020 on the average (median) weekly earnings for employees working in Monmouthshire shows there was an £11.00 difference in pay between men and women. This shows a slightly higher difference in pay than last year, but is considerably lower than previous years. The longer term trend will need to be monitored and considered to determine if the difference in pay between men and women is being reduced.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL PROVIDES MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL LIVING, WORKING & LEISURE</p>	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Review the current Local Development Plan to ensure an appropriate supply of land for homes and businesses</p>	<p>Progress on the Replacement Local Development Plan was paused in March 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as the Preferred Strategy public engagement events had to be postponed. These unavoidable delays have necessitated a further revision to the RLDP Delivery Agreement timetable and community involvement scheme, which was approved by Welsh Government in October 2020, and work on the RLDP is progressing in accordance with the revised timetable. The current LDP runs until 31st December 2021, but the risks associated with expiry date legislation for the Adopted LDP have dissipated following confirmation from the Minister in September. This means that our current LDP remains an extant development plan for decision-making purposes until the RLDP is adopted.</p>
		<p>Participate in and shape opportunities for regional strategic land-use development plans</p>	

		<p>Natural Resources Wales have announced issues of water quality in Riverine Special Areas of Conservation, including the River Wye and River Usk, which could have potential implications for the progression and implementation of the RLDP. The council is working alongside other key organisations to seek viable and timely solutions in the affected settlements.</p>
	<p>Increase the volume, quality, variety and affordability of housing</p>	<p>In 2020/21, 419 new dwellings were completed, 71 of which were affordable homes. This is an increase from 356 completions (78 affordable homes) in 2019/20, but is still below the LDP target of 488 per year.</p>
	<p>Provide flexible support for tourism development in the county</p>	<p>Destination marketing activity has continued throughout the pandemic via Visit Monmouthshire, and collaborative campaigns with Visit Southern Wales and Over the Bridge to Wales recommenced in July, incorporating the Welsh Government's 'Visit Safely' messaging. A Monmouthshire Foodscapes campaign, aimed at food and drink journalists and influencers, and key Monmouthshire food and drink producers, was delivered in March to raise the profile of Monmouthshire as the food capital of Wales. More recently, marketing communications focused on promoting safe experiences with the 'We're Good to Go' industry kite mark.</p> <p>The STEAM (Scarborough Tourism Economic Activity Monitor) figures for Monmouthshire show that the economic impact of tourism reduced by 67.7% on 2019 figures, to £81.16 million, as a result of the pandemic. The planned review of the Destination Management Plan was postponed until 2021 as staff were seconded to the Business Support Grants team during the pandemic.</p>
	<p>Engage with communities to create plans for the redevelopment of Usk and Caldicot town centres and begin discussions on plans for Monmouth and Chepstow <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>Temporary measures to support our town centres and allow them to function effectively and safely in light of the Coronavirus pandemic have been implemented across the county, and refined through engagement with councillors, businesses, residents, and other stakeholders. Discussions about the broader regeneration vision for Monmouth and Chepstow are ongoing, including the extent to which those temporary Covid-driven changes should be retained in the long term. In Caldicot, following the completion of the new public space at The Cross, engagement with the community around</p>

			<p>regeneration has focused on the development of plans for the pedestrianised town centre in Newport Road, as well as for Church Road where implementation is now underway. In Usk, engagement has continued in the context of the draft Usk town improvement masterplan, which proposes a strategic framework for change in the town over the next five years and beyond, and is itself based on extensive engagement with key stakeholders and the wider community.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL UNLOCKS ECONOMIC VALUE OF ITS SPENDING POWER</p> 	<p>Progressing well</p>	<p>Review our procurement spend, improve analysis of expenditure and build local supply chains where possible</p>	<p>An updated Procurement strategy was approved in July 2018 and, in order to deliver the aspirations set out within the strategy, an external review of the Strategic Procurement Service has been undertaken. The review confirmed the council's own recognition that it had limited capacity to influence behaviours relating to its £100m third party annual spend. A proposal to collaborate with Cardiff Council, for mutual benefit, in the discharge and provision of the council's Strategic Procurement services was agreed in April 2021.</p>
<p>Minimise the long-term impact of our activities by using resources where they are needed, reducing waste, recycling materials, increasing local value-creation and focusing on whole life costs</p>	<p>A successful Circular Economy bid for £626,000 was announced in January 2021. From this, a new re-use shop at Five Lanes, and four Benthylg Libraries of Things in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, are about to open, with associated Repair Cafes and other repair and reuse projects.</p>		
<p>Ensure we play an active part in national-led commissioning consortia</p>	<p>Given the impact of Covid-19, the Strategic Procurement Unit has refocused its purpose to keep the council's pound within the county boundaries and its neighbouring authorities, whilst ensuring compliance with the procurement rules and regulations. Some examples of this work in practice includes a four year bus maintenance and servicing contract that has been awarded to Bulwark Bus and Coach Engineering Ltd based in Chepstow to the value of £1,500,000; and the appointment of Estuary Oils, based in Caldicot, to supply all of the council's bulk fuels with an estimated value of £1,400,000.</p>		
<p>Well-being of Future Generations Act impact</p>			
<p>Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals</p>			

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓

This goal is aimed at the **long-term** viability of Monmouthshire as a thriving place to live, work and visit. The City Deal is one example where we work **collaboratively** with neighbouring authorities to maximise opportunity. Keeping Monmouthshire thriving and well-connected promotes **integration** and impacts on the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of the county. This requires collaboration with local businesses and other organisations, and **involvement** from the local community to maximise opportunities. Considering the global well-being of Wales is also important and this goal focuses on ensuring decisions are made with future generations in mind and takes a **preventative** approach to enable the retention of young people.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Current	Target	Comment
Gross Value Added (£ per head) ³	£20,985	£22,307	Increase	Gross value added estimates the total output of an economy. Current data is from 2018
Difference in average pay between men and women ⁴ :	£1.60	£11.00	Reduce pay difference	The 2020 average (median) weekly earnings for employees working in Monmouthshire. Difference for last two years is significantly lower than recent years' trends.
Men	£563.60	£579.70		
Women	£562.00	£568.70		
Average weekly earnings of people who work in Monmouthshire ⁵	£570.00	£574.90	Increase	Data is recorded on a calendar year basis; current is 2020 data.
Number of active business enterprises in the county ⁶	4165	4240	Increase	Data is recorded on a calendar year basis; current is 2019 data
Number of businesses assisted by Monmouthshire Business and Enterprise Team and referrals to partners	75	6,478*	75	*Not comparable with previous data. Figure relates to total number of support payments made to businesses, incl. support during Covid-19.
Total income generated from tourism ⁷	£244.99 million	£81.16 million	10% increase by 2020	Data is recorded on a calendar year basis; current is 2020 data.
Number of market and affordable housing units built	356 (of which 82 affordable)	419 (of which 71 affordable)	488	

Number of premises with access to high speed broadband through the Superfast Cymru 2 scheme	New Measure	549	2113 (over 3 years)	Targeted intervention decreased from 2163 this year
Number of white premises gaining access to high speed broadband	480	970	0 white premises	

Goal C: Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment

Monmouthshire County Council Goal: C. Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment	
Why we are focusing on this	Summary – Progress 2020/21
<p>Monmouthshire has a spectacular natural environment, a unique heritage value and a culturally rich identity. We believe that necessary growth, development, and expansion of our place, need not compromise our distinctive offer – indeed it should complement and enhance it. As an agricultural and food producing county, we recognise the moral and economic impetus around reducing food waste and the impact on greenhouse gases. We support the principles of the ‘circular economy’ and the recycling & restoration of goods and want to work with businesses and organizations that subscribe to these too.</p> <p>We have declared a Climate Emergency and are committed to delivering the strategy and action plan to reduce the council’s carbon emissions. We will maintain the internal corporate systems, policies and asset management plans that emphasis carbon reduction, energy resilience and a green council culture. Connected to this, we will safeguard the wider environmental interests of our rural communities through developing multi-agency approaches to road safety.</p> <p>We will continue to recognise the value of our culture and heritage in enhancing the livability of our county. We will work with partners and communities to enhance our high quality recreational and cultural facilities to provide opportunities for people to learn develop and enjoy themselves and help attract the talent so key to driving a strong economy.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation – 3: Adequate</p> <p>Household Waste Recycling Centres were closed at the start of the first lockdown to ensure resident safety, but waste and recycling collection services continued throughout. The recycling rate for 2020/21 was 68.88%, an increase from 65.57% in 2019/20. A new re-use shop has opened at Five Lanes Household Waste Recycling Centre, and four Benthylg Libraries of Things have been established in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, with associated Repair Cafes and other repair and reuse projects.</p> <p>Considerable grant funding has been obtained for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Active Travel improvements, and 24 sites of nature conservation importance were designated, contributing to a total of more than 700 sites. Numerous projects have been supported in Monmouth and Caldicot to improve the active travel offer, and a total investment of £1.4m has been achieved this financial year, the biggest investment into Active Travel in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>Progress against the Climate Emergency strategy and action plan has faced delays as a result of the pandemic, but good progress has been made against almost half of the actions in the plan. Electric vehicle charging points have been installed at two primary schools, and more are currently being installed for operational vehicles across the county.</p> <p>The Museum Service has successfully completed a feasibility study for the creation of a new cultural offer at Shire Hall, incorporating the current Monmouth museum, and a review of future museum storage requirements has also been completed.</p>

Detailed Progress Update

Commitment to action	Progress rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
<p>THE COUNCIL DEVELOPS & DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE PLAN FOR ENHANCING THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Work with community groups to reduce litter and fly tipping while using technology to improve our own processes.</p>	<p>Fly tipping can now be reported using the My Monmouthshire App, which has seen a significant improvement in accuracy following some technical issues last year. There has been an increase in the number of incidences this year but this is reflected nationally. The average clearance time of incidents of fly tipping for which the council is responsible was 5.55 days, and monitoring will continue based on the improved accuracy of recording.</p>
		<p>Ensure that we reduce the amount of waste, achieving recycling targets and not exceeding national limits for the amount we can send to landfill</p>	<p>Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) closed at the start of the first lockdown to ensure resident safety, and green waste collections were stopped for a period of time to divert resources to the pandemic response. However, the Waste and Recycling Team worked hard to maintain waste and recycling collection services and weekly/fortnightly routes continued throughout. The recycling rate for 2020/21 was 68.88%, an increase from 65.57% in 2019/20. Data is being analysed to determine if any learning can be taken from recent months to improve recycling figures going forward.</p> <p>There have been a number of changes to the HWRC services, aimed at continuing the upward trend in residents' recycling activity. These include the continuation of the booking system at all sites, first introduced to ensure social distancing, the closure of Usk HWRC, and revised opening hours at the remaining sites. In addition, the green waste collection service has been updated, including changes to the container for garden waste, the frequency of collection, and an increase in the annual charge for customers. Again, these changes are aimed at continuing the positive change in behaviour towards recycling activities.</p>
		<p>Work towards becoming a plastic free county, reducing single use and unnecessary plastics to an absolute minimum.</p>	<p>A successful Circular Economy bid for £626,000 was announced in January 2021. From this, a new re-use shop at Five Lanes has been opened, along with four Bentyg Libraries of Things in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth, with associated Repair Cafes and other repair and reuse projects.</p>

			<p>A period dignity grant has been used to purchase eco-friendly and reusable products, and work is underway with Sustainable You, Sustainable Me and the Working Families project to run workshops for residents, promoting sustainable period products. A trial of re-usable recycling bags began last year with around 3,500 properties, but further roll out was restricted at the start of the pandemic. The roll out of reusable bags will restart in the autumn, when provision of single use plastic bags will cease.</p>
		<p>Deliver Green Infrastructure Policy to ensure people have access to green spaces</p>	<p>£580,000 of grant funded projects were delivered across Monmouthshire during the year for Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Active Travel improvements and opportunities. A further £2,912,000 worth of funding was also secured to deliver biodiversity, G.I. and Active Travel projects for 2021 and beyond, with further funding bids for £445k in the pipeline.</p> <p>Biodiversity advice was provided for over 500 planning applications, and 24 sites of nature conservation importance were designated, contributing to a total of more than 700 sites for targeted conservation action, i.e. woodland, orchards, grasslands & brown-fields. Lockdown offered the opportunity to extend sustainable management practices and as a result, over three million square metres of grassland have seen a reduction in mowing. Since then, reduced mowing to public open spaces has continued, and where it is taking place, engagement is underway with allotment associations to take cut grass for use as compost. Work is ongoing to understand the learning from the changes to grounds maintenance services to inform how biodiversity can be enhanced, whilst still maintaining the standards of green spaces expected by residents.</p>
		<p>Secure and deliver funds for projects including Living Levels, Agri-urban and Air Quality</p>	<p>Partnerships, projects and community grants schemes have maintained protected landscapes, Wye Valley AONB and Blaenavon Industrial World Heritage Site during 2020/21. The Living Levels Partnership projects have been delivered, including six new information hubs promoting the area, and the installation of 21 new route signs improving access across the Levels. Other programmes include a sustainable communities project, community nature spaces and educational delivery, and a</p>

			<p>further £88k has been secured for 2021/22 from the Local Places for Nature fund to continue this activity.</p>
		<p>Install real time air quality monitoring equipment in four schools</p>	<p>Air quality monitoring sensors have been installed in St Mary's Primary School, Usk Primary School, and Monmouth and Chepstow Comprehensive Schools. They were also incorporated as part of the Church Road scheme, funded through the Transforming Towns and Active Travel Welsh Government Grants.</p>
		<p>Deliver more opportunities for active travel and improved connectivity <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>Lockdown saw a considerable reduction in driving and increased walking within areas local to home. Numerous projects have been supported in Monmouth and Caldicot to improve the active travel offer in the county. Two of these have moved to construction, with significant development work undertaken on the others. A total investment of £1.4m has been achieved this financial year, the biggest investment into Active Travel in Monmouthshire. In addition to this, increased cycling capacity has been provided in town centres for 163 bikes, 12 public bike pumps have been installed, e-bikes are being piloted with community groups, and a contraflow cycle lane was introduced in Abergavenny through COVID-19 response funding. A clear strategic focus is now set, primary routes identified and a vision established to develop future routes in order to encourage modal shift.</p> <p>Over 2,700 responses were received to the Active Travel Network Map engagement phase in the summer of 2020, and the consultation has been praised for the level of detail and reach, with some of the subsequent work being used on a national level in the new Active Travel Guidance. The consultation is ongoing, with clear input from children, young people and adults across Monmouthshire.</p>
		<p>Maintain the diversity of plants and wildlife in the county while taking measures to make them more resilient to external threats like flooding and rising temperatures. <i>(New)</i></p>	<p>A tree planting programme has begun throughout the county, and despite the pandemic, 7790 trees have been planted this year. Schools have been provided with raised beds to plant seeds, which will then be regrown on sites when more mature. The GI action plans, funded via Natural Resources Wales PSB grant, are also identifying tree planting opportunities in settlements as part of the identification of GI corridors. Other projects include the WG funded 'Neglected Grassland' and 'Resilient Grassland' projects, whereby overgrown and unsuitable areas are cleared</p>

			<p>to encourage more indigenous species to develop, and to become more sustainable and resilient areas.</p> <p>A Behaviour Change for Well-being Officer has been appointed through the Resilient Greater Gwent project to engage with communities and schools. They have been delivering social media features and videos, building bug hotels, installing wildlife cameras, and have delivered 150 pollinator packs to schools for wildflower planting.</p> <p>As Joint Coordinator for the Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership, considerable work has been undertaken to develop and grow the partnership. It has carried out 12 nature learning events and activities, and via grants to community groups, five nature projects have been delivered, including barn owl nest boxes, help for hedgehogs, bat activity monitoring and orchard biodiversity enhancement. 'Nature Isn't Neat' workshops across the county have supported habitat restoration programmes and positive management for pollinators, and guidance has been provided on the management of grasslands, verges and public open spaces.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL WILL DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT CLEAR PLANS TO REDUCE ITS CARBON EMISSIONS TO NET ZERO BY 2030 AND WORK WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS TO REDUCE EMISSIONS ACROSS THE COUNTY AS A WHOLE</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Develop and enable more local renewable energy schemes</p> <hr/> <p>Develop an investment programme to help our services transition to a low carbon future</p>	<p>A climate emergency was declared by Council in May 2019, followed by a strategy and action plan in October 2019, and a member-led Climate Emergency working group has been established to take responsibility for ensuring the action plan continues to progress. Of the 66 actions in the plan, there is good progress being made on almost half of them, but delays have occurred as a result of the pandemic, caused by competing pressures, closure of venues or services, postponed consultation or engagement, or delayed external funding.</p> <p>Although good progress is being made, not enough detailed information is available on the council's baseline carbon emissions. A proposal has been made to source additional expertise and capacity to help establish emissions data, and gain a better understanding of the carbon savings included in the plan. This will assist in identifying the most effective use of resources to generate the maximum carbon savings.</p> <p>Work to reduce carbon emissions at a regional level continues through the work of Climate Ready Gwent, on areas such as electric vehicle charging, hydrogen feasibility and training. A successful bid to Natural Resources Wales funded the delivery of</p>

			<p>Carbon Literacy training during February and March 2021 to 56 officers and members, in addition to 57 members of public and third sector colleagues, including South Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Gwent Police and Aneurin Bevan University Health Board. This work will be strengthened through the proposed development of a Gwent PSB, a Well-being Assessment and Well-being Plan. Further regional collaboration on decarbonisation is also taking place with Cardiff Capital Region partners.</p>
		Trial and test hydrogen vehicles through partnerships with organisations such as River Simple	<p>With the support of the council, Riversimple are preparing to run a 12 month trial of 20 Riversimple Rasa hydrogen fuel cell cars in Monmouthshire, initially with the Registrars Team. The aim is to then trial the vehicle in other sections of the organisation.</p>
		Install battery charge points for electric vehicles in all towns using funding opportunities such as grants from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles	<p>Electric vehicle charging points are currently being installed for operational vehicles in the One Planet Centre Llanfoist, Troy Depot, Caldicot Waste Depot and Raglan Depot. They have already been installed in Kymin View and Deri View School for the two new school catering vehicles, but they are also available for use by anyone visiting the school. Grant funding has been awarded to develop an EV charging strategy, and work started on this in April 2021. Seven fully electric vehicles have been delivered and three more are on order. Six Hybrid cars are also in operation, currently being used by Social services, Planning and Property Services.</p> <p>Work is underway with the Regional Transport Authority on charging points for taxis and, utilising Cardiff Capital Region funding, two electric taxis will be piloted, with a charging point being installed at Abergavenny Bus Station. Conversion of the council's bus fleet is not currently feasible due to the lack of energy capacity at the depots, but a project has begun to identify alternative premises in the south of the county, which would enable the installation of charging points. A fully electric 17 seater, low floor wheelchair accessible minibus has been ordered, which will be used on the Grass Routes Service, but will also be trialled on several school runs, which will help to understand the vehicle's range and inform decision making in the future.</p>
THE COUNCIL KEEPS ROADS AND AREAS SAFE	Taking steps	Work with town and community councils and	<p>20mph schemes have been implemented in Raglan, Caldicot, and Tintern as part of the COVID-19 response to make town centres safer; it is anticipated that these will</p>

		<p>local people to identify where speed reduction measures are needed including 20 mph zones where appropriate</p>	<p>be maintained on a permanent basis, and further 20mph zones will be implemented during 2021/22. Monmouthshire has been selected to pilot Welsh Government's settlement-wide 20mph zones during 2021/22, which will help inform WG's proposals to make the urban speed limit 20mph in 2023. These 20mph zones will significantly improve community safety, as well as support active travel.</p>
		<p>Support for Community Speed Watch and community-led speed safety initiatives</p>	<p>Other road safety initiatives include pilot school street closures, during drop off and pick up times, and the Green Cone Scheme, which is a Welsh Government initiative to help keep school children safe as they arrive and leave the school grounds at the beginning and end of each school day. A range of educational programmes are being offered, built around safer routes to school and active travel, and where possible, these have been delivered virtually during the pandemic.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL ENHANCES LOCAL HERITAGE AND DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND CULTURAL SERVICES</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Support a resilient and sustainable cross-county museum offer whilst identifying opportunities for arts and cultural development-(New)</p>	<p>A feasibility study for the creation of a new cultural offer at Shire Hall, incorporating the current Monmouth museum, and a review of future museum storage requirements has been completed. The collection review process, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has continued throughout the year.</p>
		<p>Protect and enhance our built heritage including the submission of bids to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, where appropriate</p>	<p>The MonLife Heritage Strategy, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, is progressing well, with baseline assessments of sites carried out and consultation completed with staff, stakeholders and customers. Following the analysis stage, action plans will be developed and shared with members this autumn. Alongside this, the council has engaged an experienced trainer to work with staff to develop a Monmouthshire Storybook, which will be a resource that staff can use to tell the key Monmouthshire Heritage stories.</p>
		<p>Pursue opportunities to improve the facilities at the Borough Theatre (New)</p>	<p>Detailed and comprehensive plans have been developed for the refurbishment of the Borough Theatre, and a principal contractor has been identified. The improvements will make the theatre fit for purpose, more accessible, and will allow a more robust and sustainable programme. In the meantime, the theatre is acting as a driver and promoter for performing arts activities including developing events in spaces beyond the theatre, a drama project for young people with experience of the care system, and development of a 'folk arts' festival in Abergavenny.</p>

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals

Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓

Monmouthshire is a beautiful place, with a stunning natural and built environment. We have a collective responsibility to ensure this is available for future generations to enjoy so our plans must be focused on the **long-term** and look to **prevent** problems from occurring in years to come. **Involvement** is required with partners and communities to maximise the potential of the environment within the county. Working in **collaboration** with organisations who can enhance our environment will provide expertise in all aspects of our work, for example this will allow us to trial the latest technologies in renewable energies and hydrogen. Creating a prosperous, healthy and resilient area for people to enjoy demands the **integration** of this objective as the environment within Monmouthshire forms such an important part of achieving a range of goals.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Current	Target	Comment
Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	65.57%	68.88%	64.0%	
Average number of days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	Not available	5.55	<5	Accuracy cannot be guaranteed for 2019/20 data
Percentage of streets that are clean	98.2%	Not available	97.5%	No surveys completed due to COVID-19 restrictions and capacity. No data has been provided by Keep Wales Tidy for the year.
Percentage reduction of council carbon dioxide emissions	Not available	Not available	3%	
Capacity of renewable energy in the county driven by the council	Not available	Not available	Increase	
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO ₂) pollution in the air (µg/m ³) ⁸	8	8	Decrease	Current is data from 2018

Number of trees planted	356	7790	10,000 (by 2022)	
Number of new active travel routes	0	13	New:2 Improved:4	
Number of rural communities in which speed safety initiatives are supported	4	6	Increase	
Percentage of roads in poor condition:				
A roads	3.3%	2.7%	<3%	
B roads	5.1%	5.2%	<5%	
C roads	7.6%	7.7%	<8%	
Total amount of Rural Development Plan funds committed to projects in Monmouthshire	£197,170	£98,256	£1,674,000 (Dec 2021)	

Goal D: Lifelong well-being

Monmouthshire County Council Goal: D. Lifelong well-being	
Why we are focusing on this	Summary - Progress 2020/21
<p>Developing well-being and adopting community focused approaches is about changing practice and lives. We will continue to commit to the personalisation of care and true collaboration with people who have care and support needs and carers. Making deep relationships the norm is challenging – but it is the right thing to do and developing really effective partnerships and supporting individual family and community resilience is key to this.</p> <p>Creating good social support systems relies on more than just the economic and wealth creation aspects of our work. We will work to create prosperity for all and this means taking into account economic and social well-being.</p> <p>We are committed to social justice; addressing inequalities and improving outcomes for the county's people and communities. We will cultivate social capital and promote access to opportunity and in so doing, will work towards better physical and mental health and social care outcomes. Our approach will take a strengths based approach to encouraging independence, self-care, support, learning, and engagement.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation: 3: Adequate</p> <p>Where people have needed to contact social care, multi-disciplinary professionals have been available at the first access point. The front-door of Adult Services received 5,787 contacts from people who were not already in receipt of care and support during 2020-21. Of the contacts received, 3,961 were provided with advice or assistance and survey responses tell us that 83% of adults receiving care and support felt they had the right information or advice when they needed it.</p> <p>The Care at Home Service has developed a new ethos of being relationship based, which moves away from the focus being on a time and task approach, and wherever possible, the goal is to support people to remain living at home for as long as possible. During 2020-21, 80 people began a service in a residential care home, and 1,324 adults started a domiciliary care service. When considering their support, 91% of survey respondents felt their care and support still met their needs.</p> <p>The third iteration of the Social Justice Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2021 and demonstrates the council's continued commitment to work in partnership at national, regional and local community level. The revised strategy has particular focus on Tackling Poverty and Inequality, Food Development and Homeless Transition.</p> <p>Volunteers have been at the forefront of the effort to keep our communities safe throughout the pandemic and we have provided direct specialist support to volunteer groups, aimed at linking community members, groups and organisations to maximise collaboration and to pool resources.</p> <p>Whilst the leisure centres were closed, MonLife continued to deliver a suite of virtual programmes to maintain well-being and health at home. Virtual fitness classes and 1:1 sessions have been delivered, along with 'virtual coffee mornings' following some of the more gentle online exercise classes.</p>

Detailed Progress update			
Commitment to action	Progress Rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
THE COUNCIL ENABLES CONNECTED AND CARING COMMUNITIES SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY 	Taking steps	Maximise the opportunities for all people to live the lives they want to live and the positive outcomes they identify	<p>Monmouthshire continues to develop its place-based approach to delivering advice and assistance in people’s communities through a range of providers, not just within social care and health, but also across other sectors. It is a way of working that builds a network of community support by bringing a range of agencies together with a shared purpose of supporting people’s well-being.</p> <p>Care Inspectorate Wales carried out an assurance check in February 2021 to review how well social services continue to help and support adults and children, with a focus on safety and well-being. They observed that, <i>‘the local authority is committed to fully embedding a strengths and outcome focused approach. In adult services, there is a focus on transforming practice through a relationships and place-based working approach. Work is underway to maximise the place-based opportunities of working across social services, third sector, and primary and community health services etc., with the aim of achieving a fully integrated approach based on working with communities and for the people in those communities.’</i></p>
		Co-produce our approaches to well-being, care and support	<p>Where people need to contact social care, multi-disciplinary professionals are available at the first access point. The front door of Adult Services is a priority and remained fully operational throughout the pandemic – the process for receiving and responding to referrals did not change. 5,787 contacts were received from people who were not already in receipt of care and support during 2020-21. The majority of contacts received were from Health colleagues, where integration continues to be key to our way of working. Of the contacts received, 3,961 were provided with advice or assistance. Survey responses tell us that 83% of adults receiving care and support feel they have had the right information or advice when they needed it.</p> <p>Reablement provides intensive short-term interventions aiming to restore people to independence following a crisis or hospital stay. At the end of the six-week reablement period, the goal is for people to be independent and not necessarily need long-term services in the immediate future. During 2020-21, 291 reablement packages were completed in the year; of those, 171 people (59%) had no ongoing need for support.</p>

		<p>Complete the move from task and time approach in social care to relationship-based care at home</p>	<p>The Care at Home Service has developed a new ethos of being relationship based, which moves away from the focus being on a time and task approach, and places more importance on social and emotional needs. Greater autonomy for care workers, being salaried, and working in small teams in a locality patch is increasing the value and appeal of this work, which has improved the ability to recruit. Wherever possible, the goal is to support people to remain living at home for as long as possible. During 2020-21, 80 people began a service in a residential care home, and 1,324 adults started a domiciliary care service (which may include new additional care hours to existing provision). When considering their support, 91% of survey respondents felt their care and support still met their needs. The domiciliary care sector remains under considerable pressure, and Monmouthshire has specific challenges due to rurality and demographics. The response to recruitment has improved since the pandemic started; with many more people seeking employment, and thanks to the positive portrayal of social care, we are now in a position of being able to recruit again.</p> <p>Work is ongoing with providers across Monmouthshire to implement the 'Turning the world upside down' approach, which aims to achieve a more sustainable sector where ongoing demand is met, whilst achieving people's personal outcomes. Progress has been paused during the current year, as a consequence of the impact and response to the pandemic, and to also assist in the in-year budget recovery plan. The intention is that this will be picked back up as soon as possible during 2021/22.</p>
		<p>Develop opportunities for people to be involved in their local communities reducing isolation and loneliness</p>	<p>Work has continued to build upon the progress of the My Day My Life programme to support people to live a full and meaningful life, and to implement staffing arrangements within the service to support this. People receive support that is strengths-based and supports them to achieve their personal outcomes, and to be active and contributory members of their communities. All MDML buildings were closed in March 2020 due to Covid restrictions, but the programme continued to provide support on an individual basis, and support plans were developed and expanded within the community whilst buildings remained closed.</p> <p>The My Mates service provides people with learning disabilities across Gwent the opportunity to develop social and personal relationships, enables choice, gives access to information and advice, and provides a space for friends to problem solve with each other, without having to rely on paid support. During the last 16 months, My Mates has actively prevented many crisis</p>

		<p>Improve opportunities for people with care and support to actively contribute through employment and volunteering</p>	<p>situations, further strengthening the relationships across Gwent authorities. When lockdown began, My Mates social events moved on line, and good progress has been made in keeping people connected to help combat isolation. Over 18,000 contacts have been made through social media, phone calls and texting, and 695 video calls have allowed members to catch up with friends, share stories and information, and check in on each other. 200 live online events have been held, including concerts, milestone birthdays, party nights and a New Year’s Eve celebration, with over 4800 attendees. Engagement levels with members remains high and feedback is that people are finding My Mates an invaluable route of friendship and support during these uncertain times.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL WORKS COLLECTIVELY TO DELIVER ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, ENABLING PROSPERITY AND REDUCING INEQUALITY BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND WITHIN COMMUNITIES</p> 	<p>Progressing well</p>	<p>Continue to develop programmes to tackle poverty addressing worklessness and in-work poverty through schemes such as the Skills at Work programme.</p>	<p>The third iteration of the Social Justice Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2021 and has been developed in consideration of the impact, changes and learning as a result of the pandemic. The strategy demonstrates the continued commitment to work in partnership at national, regional and local community level, and includes action plans on Tackling Poverty and Inequality, Food Development and Homeless Transition.</p> <p>The Skills at Work Programme engaged with 68 adults during 2020/21, and achieved 33 job outcomes, taking the total engagements to 228, with 98 positive job outcomes since its inception in 2018. An increase in demand for support has resulted in an increase in the volume of those requiring assistance in seeking employment. We have provided support in areas such as transport costs for interviews, PPE and interview clothing, and interview equipment, as well as “in work” clothing to support clients in work, prior to receiving their first wages/salary.</p> <p>The Employment & Skills Team has registered as an accredited centre, giving the Careers For Work+ Project a wider offering of vocational and employability qualifications to clients, thereby recognising the increased need/demand in on line learning, due to covid-19 regulations and lockdown restrictions.</p> <p>The Council has a long-standing commitment to equality and diversity, and published the third Strategic Equality Plan on the 30th April 2020, which sets its strategic equality objectives. These objectives identify the commitment that the Council is making to deliver better outcomes for people with protected characteristics over the next four years. The Council has introduced poverty as an additional characteristic in the equality and future generations impact</p>
		<p>Ensure that all council policies services are focused on ensuring equity of access</p>	

		<p>Promote equality and diversity and ensure opportunities are genuinely available to all</p>	<p>assessments carried out on key policy decisions. This ensures that all decisions considered by Council and Cabinet must show how they are focused on the need to reduce the inequalities of outcomes that result from socio-economic disadvantage.</p>
		<p>Support and enable the development of community-led plans and placed-based working to improve well-being and increase prosperity.</p>	<p>Volunteers have been at the forefront of the effort to keep our communities safe throughout the pandemic and the Our Monmouthshire community networking platform was implemented to provide the digital tools for active citizens to support each other in their communities. We are providing direct specialist support to volunteer groups, advising on the support available to the volunteers and community members, and to date, 738 requests for support have been made. Meetings are now taking place across the county, aimed at linking community members, groups and organisations to maximise collaboration and to pool resources. The meetings enable community groups to gain access to resources available through the Public Service Board and other partners, and are an opportunity for community driven action. The council is also working with Bridges Community Centre on the Volunteering for Well-being project to recruit and support more volunteers in the county who want to help others.</p> <p>Place based working is being developed across Monmouthshire, to build a network of community support to help people remain connected to things that matter to them, supporting their health and well-being. By bringing a range of agencies together with a shared purpose of supporting people's well-being, there is the opportunity to share skills, expertise and time, and increase the opportunities for people to access support in the community without needing formal services. Work is underway to maximize the place based opportunities of working across social services, primary and community health services and third sector so that there is a fully integrated approach based on working with communities and for the people in those communities. During COVID, the place based approach has meant council teams have been able to link up quickly to connect with communities and volunteers who stepped into supporting a far wider range of people.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL ENABLES BETTER LOCAL SERVICES THROUGH SUPPORTING</p>	<p>Progressing well</p>	<p>Ensure meaningful community engagement to understand the assets and priorities in each locality</p>	<p>The COVID-19 Volunteer Action Group has been established, with 60 volunteer groups and colleagues across many service areas focussed on resident's needs. Current volunteer numbers are transient but an estimated 700 volunteers support their local groups. The Volunteer Safe Recruitment Team were equipping volunteers for community action, and this has now been passed onto experts in a third sector partnership. The Be.Community programme provides training for volunteer leaders to equip them to coordinate wider community volunteering</p>

<p>VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ACTION</p> 		<p>Approve volunteering policy, develop volunteering opportunities and continue to support the Be.Community Leadership Programme increasing the skills and knowledge of community volunteers</p>	<p>programmes. The programme has been providing safeguarding training to volunteers to ensure they are safe and appropriate during their interactions with the community.</p> <p>Monmouthshire, A County That Serves (ACTS) volunteering programme is helping to highlight and support volunteering opportunities available within the county. A volunteering toolkit and network are in place and Leading Volunteering training is delivered to staff that support volunteers. A Volunteer Kinetic digital management system is in place, containing live volunteer safe recruitment information and activity, which is reported on a quarterly basis. Service area champions have also been introduced to ensure that all current and new volunteers are recruited through the appropriate channels.</p>
		<p>Re-launch the Monmouthshire Made Open Platform to promote opportunities to engage with communities and improve well-being</p>	<p>Our Monmouthshire, originally known as the Monmouthshire Made Open platform, provides the digital tools for active citizens to support each other in their communities, creating connections around purpose with the provision of a safe person-to-person time banking function. There are currently 86 Monmouthshire citizens actively engaging on this site, which has a total of 559 members. In order to develop and grow this platform, and offer the active members more opportunity to actively exchange skills, it is being relaunched as Connect Monmouthshire. Since being created for Monmouthshire County Council, this has been adopted by authorities throughout Wales and elsewhere in the UK, creating far more opportunity for collaboration, promotion and sharing of resources, and improved cost effectiveness.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL BOOSTS LEISURE, RECREATION AND WELL-BEING</p>	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Deliver a new pool and leisure facilities in Monmouth (Completed)</p> <p>Complete a business case on transfer of services to an Alternative Delivery Model (Completed)</p> <p>Refurbish the leisure facilities in Caldicot (New)</p>	<p>Monmouth Leisure Centre was fully reopened in February 2019. The £7.4m project includes a range of facilities to support well-being and physical activity.</p> <p>Following extensive investigative work and thorough consideration of the business case, Council decided not to progress with externalising Tourism, Culture, Leisure and Youth Services, but to retain services in-house with a commitment to a fundamental programme of renewal and transformation.</p> <p>An upgrade for Caldicot Leisure Centre was considered in 2019/20 but the disruption to leisure services caused by the pandemic placed the project on hold. Caldicot Leisure Centre is currently at the heart of a Levelling Up Fund grant bid and is awaiting the outcome. In the interim, the leisure team will continue to ensure that the existing equipment and fitness offer, and the swimming class offer is supported.</p>

	<p>Develop a business case for improved leisure facilities in Abergavenny and Chepstow (New)</p>	<p>A full refurbishment of Abergavenny Leisure Centre has been delayed due to the development of the new Abergavenny School. In the interim, a proposed £1.7m re-development of the fitness offer will seek to convert the first floor to a health and fitness hub, to include a fitness suite, spin studio, fitness studio, viewing area to the ground floor pool, and two new changing rooms.</p> <p>Work continues to identify the best solution and outcomes for customers of Chepstow Leisure Centre. A proposed refurbishment will see upgrades to fitness equipment with an outdoor rig, improvements to lighting, boiler upgrades, combined heat and power system, and showers upgrade.</p>
	<p>Use section 106 funding strategically to develop local projects that maximise well-being</p>	<p>In partnership with Monmouth Tennis Club, three tennis courts have been resurfaced at the Monmouth Sportsground and a smart key system has been installed that allows club members and the public to book their court times on line in advance. This has helped to boost club membership and increase the coaching programme on site for adults and young people. A new 100 seat covered spectator stand has been installed at Monmouth Town Football Club so that the club can continue to compete in the top three tiers of the football pyramid in Wales.</p> <p>Chepstow Boxing Club has undergone a complete refurbishment at its premises in Lower Chepstow, which has improved participation numbers for both junior boys and girls. The Cornfield Project is a community field in Portskewett run entirely by local volunteers and during the pandemic, assistance was provided to install a circular 1km path around the field to make sure that the site can be used all year round. Local people of all ages use the field on a regular basis, and the path is popular with people undertaking exercise to aid post-operative recovery and other health related issues.</p> <p>In Cas Troggy Park in Caldicot, a major landscape and wild play improvement has been undertaken, and the next step is to refurbish the children’s fixed play provision utilising Section 106 funding from a local housing development. Finally, funding is being utilised in Abergavenny to upgrade an old disused tractor shed at Linda Vista Gardens into a small community café to serve the many people that use this local park for exercise and recreation.</p>
	<p>Improve well-being and support healthy</p>	<p>Monmouthshire’s National Exercise Referral Scheme works with people aged 17 years and over who have, or are at risk of developing, a chronic disease, and takes place in our four leisure</p>

		<p>lifestyles through initiatives such as the Exercise Referral Scheme</p>	<p>centres. The leisure centres were closed due to Government restrictions in March 2020 and as a result, the NERS was suspended by Public Health Wales shortly after. The team have still been completing 16 and 52 week reviews by telephone and online.</p> <p>Whilst the leisure centres were closed, MonLife continued to deliver virtual fitness classes, and fitness class videos were uploaded to the MonLife YouTube channel. Other offerings included 'virtual coffee mornings' following some of the online gentle exercise classes, and in some cases, virtual 1:1 sessions. Additionally, the 60+ virtual home exercise social prescribing scheme was launched, which saw more than 80 residents sign up and continue to exercise.</p>
		<p>To develop a more sustainable delivery model for the Outdoor Education Service.</p>	<p>Prior to the pandemic, the service had been working with other MCC departments to extend provision at outdoor education sites beyond the traditional residential provision. This was starting to open up new possibilities for service redesign but further action was paused due to the pandemic.</p> <p>In July 2020, members were informed of a significant overspend on the Outdoor Adventure Service, and a continuing reduction in residential occupancy at both Hiltson Park and the Gilwern site over the past two years. In November 2020, Cabinet agreed to the closure of Hiltson Park and the consolidation of the service at the Gilwern site. The Gilwern site requires improvements in areas such as security and accommodation, and investment in on-site facilities such as high and low rope courses. Consultants have been commissioned to undertake an appraisal of potential investment opportunities and the service is developing a three-phase recovery plan, along with funding and staffing structures.</p>

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Adopting community-focused approaches promotes **collaboration** which in turn will support well-being. By working with communities, we hope to **prevent** problems from occurring. Opportunities are plentiful in our county so it is vital that everyone is able to be **involved** to maximise benefits to well-being. This should have a **long-term** benefit to individuals and communities. Our actions will have an **integrated** benefit for many aspects of the act, promoting a

prosperous Wales, a more resilient and a healthier Wales. They will promote a Wales of cohesive communities and overall, help to create a more equal Wales. There is also strong integration with our responsibilities under the Social Services & Well-being Act.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Percentage of people living independently at home 6 months after reablement	69.9%	Old measure	75%	New measure: percentage of packages of reablement completed during the year which mitigated the need for support – 58.8%
Percentage of adult services users who are happy with the care and support they have had	89.4%	89%	90%	
Percentage of adult services users who feel they are part of their community	56%	52%	Increase	
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation ⁹	10%	Not available	Decrease	National survey for Wales indicator; data not published
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need ¹⁰	Not available	Not available	Increase	National survey for Wales indicator; data not published
Number of volunteers directly supporting Monmouthshire County Council	1319	1072	Increase	Relates to volunteers working directly with MCC; not including independent community groups supported by the council
Percentage of people participating in sport 3 or more times a week ¹¹	36%	Not available	Increase	National survey for Wales indicator; data not published
Percentage of people participating in the exercise referral scheme still active after 16 weeks	65%	Not available	>50%	Suspended due to the pandemic

Goal E: Future-focused Council

Monmouthshire County Council Goal: E. Future-focused Council	
<p>Why we are focusing on this</p>	<p>Summary – Progress 2020/21</p>
<p>Our operating environment is a changing and challenging one. Demographic shifts, increasing demand, our exit from the EU and fiscal uncertainty – all require an understanding that ‘business as usual’ is no more. We will continue to rapidly adapt, develop foresight capability and enable the service changes and countywide transformations that best meet the aspirations of our communities. This outward facing approach will mean reducing the reliance on traditional public services and having more genuinely collaborative local relationships. Digital will feature strongly in this, allowing ‘fit for future’ service models and enabling the sharing of approaches and resources to addressing crosscutting problems.</p>	<p>Progress evaluation – 3: Adequate</p> <p>The customer service offer has been enhanced this year through the refurbishment of Abergavenny Town Hall, which has increased accessibility for members of the public. The digital offer has also been developed, through rapid improvements in digital capabilities, both internally and externally. Business events have been hosted online, and social media presence has proven successful in promoting campaigns and sharing up-to-date information with the public.</p> <p>The council’s decision-making processes were disrupted for a short time at the start of the first lockdown, but were quickly reinstated through digital meetings. These have proven successful, and the technology is being explored to develop the changes that have worked particularly well.</p>
<p>Our goal is to continue to build an engaged, responsive and adaptive council, able to provide effective leadership, in collaboration with other local partners. We will develop and sustain a dynamic, healthy and rewarding work environment that attracts and retains top talent and enables them to perform at their best.</p>	<p>The council achieved a balanced net revenue budget position at outturn for 2020/21, primarily as a result of Welsh Government COVID-19 hardship funding. There have also been significant underspends across many service areas as a result of the pandemic, where services have been reduced or stopped, travel requirements have reduced, office and buildings have remained closed and substantial staff vacancies have remained unfilled.</p>
<p>Good governance will be at the heart of what we do and we will ensure the right information gets to the right people to inform decision-making. We will integrate a service focus into all dealings with customers and ensure they are well informed and engaged in decision-making. We understand the best public servants see themselves as not working for the council – but for the county.</p>	<p>The council’s medium term financial planning has been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the Council’s finances. The Authority presented a balanced budget for 2021/22 but the medium term prognosis is still of concern.</p> <p>Staff have adopted new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe and have been provided with a range of support to ensure their well-being is maintained during a difficult time. Despite early concerns around supply availability, approximately 5.3 million items of PPE have been distributed for the safe provision of social care in the county.</p>

Detailed Progress Update			
Commitment to action	Progress rating	What we said we would do	Progress in 2020/21
<p>COUNCIL ENABLES AND PROVIDES GOOD SUSTAINABLE LOCAL SERVICES WHILST DELIVERING AN EXCELLENT CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ACROSS ALL CHANNELS</p> 	Taking steps	<p>Develop new business model for Community Hubs and Customer Care to increase access and provide a greater choice of channels for customers to engage with us (online, via the My Monmouthshire app, over the phone or face-to-face)</p>	<p>The refurbishment of Abergavenny Town Hall was completed in September 2020, and now houses the One Stop Shop and library together in a Hub. The Hub has a new lift installed, so is accessible from all floors, and has an accessible toilet and baby changing facility. The library area offers more space, making it an easy access space, and Shopmobility have provided a mobility aid for any member of the public who requires it. The Hub is being used for a variety of community-focused provisions, such as literacy courses and a weekly job club that supports people back into work. Hubs and libraries were required to close during lockdown so a Request and Collect service was introduced to allow members of the public to loan books. Almost 1200 appointments have been booked for people to access reading materials.</p>
		<p>Increase the publication and use of open data to increase accountability and enable others to develop apps that have a civic benefit</p>	<p>Ways of communicating with the public have been adjusted to ensure people are informed of changes to services and of the help available to them. Monty the ChatBot and the My Monmouthshire app have been updated to reflect these changes, and public Teams livestreams have engaged with local people in a socially distanced world, including online events that attracted 176 local businesses. Targeted Facebook and Instagram campaigns proved effective in delivering key messages throughout the year, such as Fostering and Home Care recruitment campaigns. The council's Twitter followers increased from 17,000 in March 2020 to 18,300 by July 2021, and Facebook followers have increased by 30% over the same period.</p>
		<p>Introduce Digital Service Standard</p>	<p>Cabinet recently announced investment into a new data capacity and capability roadmap to strengthen how the council uses data to guide its activity. This includes further developing the open data offer to build on existing information that is already published on the council website, such as spend data and existing data dashboards.</p> <p>Work is underway to sign up to the digital standard, and a new Digital Design and Innovation team has been established to review the five principles of the Local Digital Declaration. This will ensure that when Monmouthshire does sign up, it is with a true</p>

<p>COUNCIL OPENS UP DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT & COLLECTIVE DECISION-MAKING</p> 	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Re-shape our governance arrangements including more detailed options appraisals</p>	<p>commitment, and evidences the projects being undertaken to align council ambitions with the standard.</p> <p>Lockdown had a considerable impact on the workings of the council and as such, democratic and decision making arrangements were quickly adapted. All decision-making and committee meetings are being held remotely via the Microsoft Teams app, which is proving successful.</p> <p>A self-evaluation of the scrutiny function was undertaken during 2019, which highlighted areas for improvement and suggested a review of select committees' working arrangements be undertaken. Duties to increase public participation in local democracy need to be accommodated within any arrangements proposed and a new Policy and Scrutiny Officer was appointed to assist in creating capacity to implement new working arrangements. These are currently being consulted upon and will be implemented in the new administration.</p>
		<p>Identify ways to get more people involved in local democracy and scrutiny to enhance local decision-making</p>	<p>Considerable engagement has been carried out over the past twelve months to seek the views of local people. Subjects such as town centre reopening, financial arrangements and active travel routes have been subject to engagement and consultation, and work will continue to increase the interactions and decision making input from local residents and businesses. A new Public Open Forum process has been established, to enable more effective public engagement in the scrutiny of decisions and the formulation of policy, via video, audio or written submissions in advance of meetings. It is intended to embed this process within new scrutiny working arrangements to improve accessibility for the public.</p>
		<p>Develop remote access and attendance at meetings to maximize participation</p>	<p>In order to ensure timely decision making during the pandemic, arrangements were adapted to allow all council meetings to operate remotely, and support has been provided to members to assist in utilising digital meeting technology. The system is proving successful and work continues to review the learning from the new arrangements; some changes will remain or be built on where they are working well. Work is currently underway to develop the technical ability to deliver hybrid meetings from September 2021, which will accommodate both remote and physical attendance at meetings, in line with any ongoing restrictions. The potential financial cost of changes to the council chamber to reflect the</p>

			<p>impact of boundary changes and updates to equipment to sustain live streaming have been recognised in the capital budget.</p>
		<p>Revise all enabling strategies and plans – People, Digital and Customers, Assets and Economy and Enterprise <i>(Completed)</i></p>	<p>The council’s key delivery strategies to enable the delivery of the Corporate Plan have been revised. The revised strategies continue to be implemented and activity has been embedded in the relevant service business plans. Some activity will be impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and strategies will need to be reconsidered in light of the pandemic response.</p>
		<p>Review and consolidate working groups and arrangements</p>	<p>A review of working groups and their arrangements have been undertaken and these have been consolidated.</p>
		<p>Revise performance and improvement plans and replace with ‘real-time’ data dashboards</p>	<p>To provide clarity and ensure accountability during the Coronavirus pandemic, a set of strategic aims were set by Cabinet in May 2020, and were updated throughout the year in line with the changing situation. The focus was lessened on some of the priorities in the Corporate Plan to re-direct capacity towards dealing with the pandemic response.</p> <p>The council’s service business plans have adopted a ‘plan on a page’ approach to provide clarity, to develop greater self-assessment, and to allow more regular updates to service planning. There has been an increased focus in 2020/21 on the council’s use of data in its response to the Coronavirus pandemic, which has included the production of Monmouthshire-specific COVID-19 case maps, and regular Coronavirus data analysis using a range of data sources relevant to Monmouthshire.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL DELIVERS A SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT ORGANISATION AND RELEVANT, VIABLE AND VALUED PUBLIC SERVICES</p>	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Explore and embed new ways of working – Artificial Intelligence, automation and collaborative technology</p>	<p>Monty the Chatbot has been developed to use data analytics within leisure services to improve the automation of customer access. Work is progressing to understand how to analyse customer responses and prioritise work to improve the customer experience. Work is also underway to explore the use of automation technology to replace manual processes, making systems more efficient and providing the customer with a faster service.</p>
		<p>Develop a commercial strategy and approach</p>	<p>As part of the delivery of the Corporate Plan, a Commercial Strategy has been developed, which seeks to enhance income generation, develop an approach to commercialising assets and create a commercial culture and ethos. The strategy has a short-, medium- and long-</p>

			<p>term view and aims to provide a framework, with defined objectives, for new commercial projects and for the delivery of future commercial activity.</p> <p>In 2020/21, the investment properties at Newport Leisure Park and Castlegate Business Park generated a combined profit of £159,018, which has been transferred to reserves, as detailed in the Council’s Investment Strategy. In common with the leisure and retail sector, commercial investments have been badly affected by the impacts of COVID-19 but continue to be supported by the Welsh Government’s COVID Hardship fund. Whilst the position may improve in light of changes to the legal requirements on social distancing, this is as yet unproven as it will depend on consumers’ behaviour and their appetite to return to leisure venues without restrictions in place. As with all investments, this is being actively monitored with discussions are ongoing with tenants.</p> <p>The council has continually assessed its commercial risk appetite and exposure, and the updates are issued to the Investment Committee on investment performance and mitigating action being taken. The commercial risk appetite has been adjusted in light of the current pandemic and uncertainties in the investment and property markets at this time.</p>
		<p>Establish and deliver a sustainable and viable Medium Term Financial Plan to meet the significant financial challenges faced by the council.</p>	<p>The council achieved a balanced net revenue budget position at outturn for 2020/21, after accounting for transfers to earmarked reserves, which represented a significant improvement of £5.15m from the overall deficit reported at month 9. This was primarily as a result of £5.29m of Welsh Government COVID-19 Hardship Funding since month 9 to support the increased costs of service delivery and loss of income as a direct result of the pandemic. There have also been significant underspends across many service areas, where services have been reduced or stopped, travel requirements have reduced, office and buildings have remained closed and substantial staff vacancies have remained unfilled.</p> <p>The council’s medium term financial planning has been severely disrupted by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on council finances. The authority presented a balanced budget for 2021/22 to Cabinet and Council in March 2021, which incorporated service pressures of some £10.3m alongside savings proposals of £4.73m. Welsh Government has provided a</p>

			<p>significant level of funding through its COVID-19 Hardship Fund to meet additional costs and income losses as a result of the pandemic.</p> <p>The medium term prognosis is still of concern; there are no indicative settlement figures published, which significantly impedes and impacts on forward planning of budgets over the medium term. At this stage, and with uncertainties remaining as to future levels of local government funding, the MTFP for 2022/23 onwards factors in no cash increase in funding (0.0%), so that planning can be undertaken on a prudent basis.</p> <p>There is still a need to think differently about the even greater challenges of the medium term, and this work and engagement will continue in the coming months, particularly with other local authorities, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association, where funding distribution and projections are concerned. Internally, closer alignment between services' business planning arrangements and financial planning arrangements continues to be developed to improve the quality of service planning and financial planning, which also aligns to the delivery of the Corporate Plan to ensure its aspirations are sustainable.</p> <p>An updated Capital Budget strategy was approved by Council, alongside the treasury strategy, in March 2021. The Capital MTFP and Capital Strategy seek to work towards a financially sustainable core capital programme, whilst balancing the need to deliver capital investment plans in line with policy commitment and need.</p>
<p>THE COUNCIL PUTS PEOPLE AT HEART OF ALL IT DOES AND INSPIRES EXCELLENCE IN WORKPLACE AND EMPLOYEES</p>	<p>Taking steps</p>	<p>Strengthen decision making and accountability through revisions to the constitution</p> <p>Prioritise Health, Safety and workplace Well-being</p>	<p>A thorough review of the constitution has been undertaken to ensure it reflects the latest legislation and council's governance structures. This was presented to Council in March 2021 for debate, and received full Council approval. The changes to select committee working arrangements will be taken through the decision-making process and embedded within the constitution prior to the new administration.</p> <p>Staff have embraced new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe while delivering the many services our communities rely on. Staff have had a range of support on well-being, can receive a test if they display symptoms and have access to the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Approximately 5.3 million items of PPE have been distributed for the provision of social care in the county. The number of days per full-</p>

		time equivalent employee lost due to sickness during the year averaged 11.0, which is lower than the figure seen last year.
		The Health and Well-being Group was established to address issues across the workforce, and a weekly online 'CWTCH' meeting was set up to allow all colleagues to ask questions and receive updates from senior managers. The SUPPORTALL Hub portal was launched, which allows colleagues and schools to access information from any device, including mobiles, on a range of subjects, such as health and well-being tips, testing, and support whilst remote working.
	Promote diversity and inclusion including a focus on socio-economic factors	A Recruitment and Selection policy has been developed, which prompts managers to think about apprenticeships, forward thinking and future planning, three to five years ahead. The People Service HUB holds workforce planning guidance, and workforce planning support, and challenge is provided at Directorate Management Teams (DMT). The Leaders Induction includes information for managers on knowing their people, understanding performance and identifying future plans.
	Engage employees through personal development training and learning	The Check In-Check Out process has been in place for a number of years, and it is clear that the process does not apply to all teams and structures. The focus has therefore moved away from ensuring all staff adhere to one process, to adopting a mechanism for recording professional discussions between managers and their staff. This will be reviewed in line with the review of the business planning process for 2021/22.

Well-being of Future Generations Act impact

Contribution of Council goal to Future Generations Act Well-being Goals						
Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
✓	✓			✓		✓

The **long-term** nature of our goal is evident – shaping our services to meet the needs of our communities now, and into the future, is essential if we are to remain relevant and viable. Utilising data more effectively to plan **preventative** approaches and enhancing our digital capabilities are just some of the ways we intend to do this. **Involving** people in decision-making and scrutiny will ensure our direction of travel is **collaborative** and fit for the generations to come. **Integrating** our approach will make sure that our resources are used in the places they are needed the most, and as efficiently as possible. Making our reducing financial resources stretch as far as possible is vital for future sustainability.

Measures of progress

Measure	Previous	Latest	Target	Comment
Over/underspend of council revenue budget (£)	£1.8 million under-spend	£0	£0	A sizeable underspend at outturn against services as a result of late and significant WG grants were utilised to replenish earmarked reserves.
Percentage of targeted budget reductions achieved	84%	85%	95%	2020/21 outturn data on mandated saving performance. This increases to 93% when taking into account savings attributable to increasing financing streams.
Income generation from commercial investments (£)	£620,184	£159,018	£609,355	
Percentage of people who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area ¹²	Not available	Not available	Increase	National Survey for Wales and National well-being indicator under the well-being of Future generations Act. Latest data not published.
Number of open data sets published	9	9	10	
Number of apprentices on formal recognised apprenticeship schemes per 1,000 employees	Baseline to be established	Not available	Baseline	
Average days lost to sickness absence per FTE employee	12.2	11.0	10.5	
Percentage of staff turnover	9.43%	10.02	Track	Any significant variation in turnover will indicate a need to further review potential reasons

Our Response to the Covid-19 Pandemic

When the Coronavirus pandemic began, and the first lockdown was implemented in March 2020, swift action was needed to address the significant and unprecedented challenges being presented to our way of life and to the way we provided services. The need to preserve life and stop the spread of the virus, while continuing to support communities, was a priority and as such, we paused or re-purposed a lot of our usual work.

For the past 18 months, we have continued to rise to the challenge by establishing new ways of delivering services to support residents and businesses, assist community activity and maintain staff well-being. To provide clarity and ensure accountability through the initial period of the pandemic, a revised purpose and set of strategic aims were established. To date, four iterations of the strategic aims have been developed in accordance with the changing pandemic situation, and emerging priorities. The most recent version, the Re-emergence Strategy, is shown below in figure 1.

At the start of the pandemic, the pace of change was unrelenting, with hundreds of staff re-deployed, new services created almost overnight, and tens of millions of pounds re-directed to support those who needed help and to ensure local businesses remained viable. The impact this had on the workings of the council was considerable, and we had to reconsider our entire methodology. As such, the initial plan on a page focussed on protecting life and supporting communities to be sustainable and resilient.

As the incidents of infection started to decline during the summer of 2020, Cabinet developed a new purpose. This focused on making everyone feel safe in their communities, to continue to support each other and to reach out to those who needed help, and agreed an update of the strategic aims in the Coronavirus 'Transition' strategy.

As winter started, the number of cases in some parts of Wales began to increase. Initially, during this time, the incidents in Monmouthshire remained below the important threshold of 50 cases per 100,000 population and 5% infection rate, and as a result, the county was not subject to the local lockdowns seen in other areas of Wales. However, as the numbers increased across the whole of the country, another national lockdown was announced in December, and our main purpose, and associated aims, identified in the Winter Strategy, returned to protecting health, employment, the community and our public services.

Finally, the latest plan starts to look at re-emergence, and promoting Monmouthshire as an ambitious place, full of hope and enterprise, which is fair and sustainable, where people can feel safe. COVID-19 rates initially fell as the spring months progressed, with Monmouthshire having some of the lowest infection rates in the United Kingdom. The vaccine roll-out continues and we are working with ABUHB to support this. The virus has not gone away and as cases have risen once again, the occurrence of COVID-19 mutations, variants of concern, and the impact these could have on vaccination efficacy and case rates emphasises the ongoing risk to residents and communities, which needs to be managed.

Further information and updates on our revised purpose and accompanying Plan on a Page can be found on <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/services/planning-for-emergencies/coronavirus/>

Figure 1

RE-EMERGENCE SUMMER 2021

It's been a tough 18 months for everyone. We have lived apart for too long. We change that now. This strategy is centred on bringing people safely back together by supporting friendship circles, neighbourhoods and communities to feel safe, confident and happy together.

OUR PURPOSE

We want Monmouthshire to once again be an ambitious place full of hope and enterprise. We want your county to be a fair and sustainable place where people care about each other and you feel safe. We want Monmouthshire to be a place you are proud to call home.

OUR VALUES

OPENNESS

We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.

FAIRNESS

We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.

FLEXIBILITY

We are flexible, enabling 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. We'll make the best of the ideas and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

OUR DESIGN PRINCIPLES

- Working with and alongside local communities
- Being innovative and creative
- Learning and adjusting in real time
- Keeping our communities and people safe
- Being kind

OUR STRATEGIC AIMS

- Provide clear and purposeful civic leadership
- Promote Monmouthshire as a beautiful destination for visits and staycations
- Champion the interests of local businesses
- Market our town centres as wonderful places to shop or spend time with friends
- Encourage people to be active and improve their health, fitness and general wellbeing
- Provide direct support to those suffering from loneliness, hardship and loss
- Ensure all vulnerable young people and adults are safeguarded
- Ensure quality teaching and learning is available for all learners
- Decarbonise our own operations and help communities take positive action on climate change
- Maintain a competent, motivated organisation with the capability and capacity to deliver

WHAT WE ARE DOING

- Taking care of our workforce so they can support you
- Ensuring our democratic process is fully operational
- Communicating clearly with you and always representing your interests to others
- Improving infrastructure by fixing roads, investing in active travel, 20mph zones and high-speed broadband
- Having a summer full of outdoor activities for children and young people
- Promoting and protecting our natural environment to encourage walking and outdoor sports
- Improving our leisure centres in Abergavenny, Caldicot and Chepstow
- Helping local businesses trade successfully and safely
- Creating employment/apprenticeships for local people
- Protecting / promoting our environment and ecology through investment and carbon reduction activity
- Introducing Repair Cafes and Library of Things to increase sharing and re-use of everyday items
- Prioritising our excellent Test, Trace & Protect System
- Providing support and creating opportunities for volunteers making a difference in their community
- Maintaining social care services including child protection, support at home and residential care
- Ensuring learners are prepared for the assessment processes that replace GCSE, AS level or A level examinations in 2021
- Preparing schools for the new curriculum that will be launched in 2022

The strategies focus on core aims and below is an overview of activity against each one.

Decision making and civic leadership

As council buildings were closed in the first lockdown, a vast digital overhaul allowed the first virtual meeting of Cabinet to be held after just six weeks, making Monmouthshire County Council one of the first in the Wales to do so. Council meetings followed, and by July, all committees were meeting remotely to ensure robust scrutiny and decision-making was taking place. The system is proving successful work continues to capture the learning from the new arrangements. Some changes will remain or will be built on where they are working well.

An Emergency Response Team was established very early in the pandemic to ensure our overall response to the emergency was coordinated and managed. This involved linking into wider formal Gwent response structures and directly into Welsh and UK Government.

We focused on communicating timely and relevant service updates and information to residents across our communication platforms, and quickly became a trusted source of information. Public events were livestreamed to share business advice, financial engagement events were hosted online, and digital videos and illustrations have been used to convey local and national messages. Since the start of lockdown, Monty the ChatBot and Contact Centre staff have dealt with over 115,000 wide-ranging customer service enquiries, the council's Twitter followers increased from 17,000 in March 2020 to 18,300 by July 2021, and Facebook followers have increased by 30% over the same period.

Lockdown meant that many services were closed so digital technology has been developed to safely open up access. This includes a booking system for appointments at household waste recycling sites when they were permitted to reopen, which has been implemented as a permanent change. A Request and Collect service was introduced at our libraries to allow members of the public to loan books and almost 1200 appointments have been booked for people to access reading materials.

Childcare and education

During the first lockdown, childcare was provided for vulnerable learners and the children of key workers via childcare hubs. At their peak, the hubs provided childcare for over 400 pupils in a day. Special Needs Resources Bases remained open, and a weekly multi-agency Stable Lives and Brighter Futures meeting was established to discuss and review support and provision for vulnerable pupils. MonLife provided 'Summer Hub' provision for children with a total of 4,170 attendances, an average of 166 children per day.

During the winter closures, schools adopted a remote learning approach for the majority of pupils, which was developed into a blended learning approach when restrictions allowed. The Education team worked closely with schools and the Digital Programme Office to understand the requirement for IT equipment amongst learners, and we provided laptops and MiFi units for those without access so they could continue to learn.

Schools prioritised the well-being of all their pupils and this included the adoption of a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, and the availability of additional support to raise standards for priority groups. The Educational Psychology Service and Healthy Schools Team provided advice and support to schools to support the well-being of children and young people impacted by COVID-19.

Following the announcement that there would be no GCSE, AS and A Level examinations in summer 2021, schools were provided with a range of support to prepare them for the new process for determining students' grade.

Support for businesses and town centre re-opening

Support has been provided to businesses throughout the year to help them through the challenges and uncertainty of the pandemic, and we have issued over 6,500 payments of grants amounting to almost £40 million. There has been an ongoing communications campaign, aligned to the changing legislation and requirements for businesses through the year, and livestream events were used to share support and guidance to local businesses. Following the announcement of a national lockdown in December, 176 small businesses signed up to ask questions about grant availability and eligibility.

We ran various tourism campaigns throughout the year, initially promoting the message to 'stay at home' and 'Visit Monmouthshire – later'. This developed into 'Visit Monmouthshire. Safely.' to make it as easy and safe as possible for visitors to the county. As restrictions began easing in March 2021, and Wales moved from alert level 4 to alert level 2, we promoted our Visit Monmouthshire campaign to highlight the services and attractions available for visitors.

The 're-opening towns' projects sought to make our high streets safer during the pandemic, via mechanisms such as one way streets, widened pedestrianised areas and changing traffic flows. Considerable consultation took place to seek the opinions of our residents and to gather ideas about how Monmouthshire's town and village centres could look in the future to inform this. Work continues in this area, in close consultation with residents and businesses.

Support for vulnerable people

Very early in the pandemic, we set a goal of ensuring that every person or family in crisis that we were aware of received support. To achieve this, Social Care moved to a seven day working week initially to support our frontline delivery in Adults Services, and we adapted our delivery of Children's Services. We also developed a redeployment strategy to ensure staff were available to provide support, where needed.

Front-door services are a priority and have remained fully operational. We have received an average of 112 contacts per week relating to supporting children and young people between May 2020 and May 2021, an average of 26 requests per week in Adults social, and 445 families accessed the therapeutic services advice line for support, advice and guidance between April 2020 and March 2021. As pressure on care at home services and reablement services increases, referrals have been triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention.

To safeguard residents in care homes, a testing programme was established for all staff members, administered by the council. Staff have worked with Public Health Wales and ABUHB to establish clear parameters for residents in care homes being discharged from hospital to minimise the risk of further cases. Residents and staff in care homes for older adults, along with front line health and social care workers, were in the top priority groups for the vaccine roll out and have all been offered vaccinations.

We have experienced unprecedented housing demand from some of the most vulnerable citizens in our county, at a time when identifying suitable and safe premises has been challenging. In May 2020, Cabinet agreed to the temporary use of Gilwern Outdoor Education Centre as a venue for COVID-related emergency homeless accommodation until August 2020. We are currently supporting 146 households in temporary accommodation. New guidance seeks to extend our homelessness offer to

provide suitable long term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing and plans are being explored to meet this requirement.

To help those facing financial uncertainty, an online resource has been compiled in conjunction with partners, which gathers information on the support available into a single place. Information covers areas such as financial support available, and advice on council tax and the option to spread payments over longer periods. We continued to provide direct free school meal payments until schools reopened following the Easter break, which had increased to 1655 pupils being supported.

Safe and clean neighbourhoods

We reconfigured our services early on in the pandemic to ensure domestic waste and recycling collections could continue by increasing vehicles and facilitating social distancing for staff. To assist our communities, recycling bags were distributed to supermarkets and to residents shielding, where possible. Garden waste collections were stopped for a period, but work was quickly undertaken to restart collections.

Following the closure of Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC), provisions were introduced that initially allowed for the reopening of two sites; Llanfoist and Five Lanes, which was then extended to Mitchel Troy. A booking system for slots meant that numbers attending sites could be managed at a safe level to maintain social distancing, and this continues to operate effectively today. The recycling rate increased during 2020/21 and data is being reviewed to determine if any learning can be taken from this period to improve recycling figures going forward.

We were forced to reduce many of our grounds maintenance services in order to redeploy staff into waste and recycling roles. Despite this, we kept our roads and cemeteries safe by retaining an essential grounds maintenance team operation. We prioritised activities based on public safety and road visibility requirements, ensuring areas such as grass verges, road junctions and roundabouts were kept clear and safe for road users and pedestrians. When grass mowing resumed, almost a third of areas within our parks and open spaces were left uncut, which saw a positive impact on the flora and fauna of our county. We are considering the learning from the changes to our grounds maintenance services to inform how we can enhance the biodiversity and ecology of our open spaces, whilst maintaining the standards expected by our residents.

Trusted partners and collaborative working

As the first lockdown was implemented, we worked with our public sector partners to provide a joined up response across our area. We also developed closer working relationships with other agencies who supported the social care system to ensure an efficient approach to care provision for some of our most vulnerable residents.

Alongside our Gwent partners, we contributed to the COVID-19 Test, Trace and Protect scheme, redeploying staff to ensure it was well supported and able to respond to the peaks in case numbers. The vaccination strategy, being delivered by Aneurin Bevan UHB, has successfully administered over 862,000 vaccinations in our health board area, and we continue to support and add value where required. By 29 August 2021, 91.9% (72,733) of residents aged 18 years and older had received one dose and 89.0% (70,405) two doses.

Volunteers have been at the forefront of the effort to keep our communities safe. We established the Community Action Volunteer Team to assist requests for help being coordinated with the offers of support. We also provided access to emergency food parcels for shielded people who could not leave

home, and created a contact centre who proactively called over 3,000 shielded vulnerable people in our communities to check on their well-being. The Connect Monmouthshire community networking platform has since been implemented to provide the digital tools for active citizens to support each other in their communities. We are providing direct specialist support to volunteer groups, advising on the support available to the volunteers and community members, and to date, 738 requests for support have been made. Meetings are now taking place across the county, aimed at linking community members, groups and organisations to maximise collaboration and to pool resources.

Safe, healthy and Productive workforce/Council Finances

Activity related to aims on a Safe, healthy and productive workforce and Council Finances can be found in the [Additional Actions to Support the Goals](#) section of this report.

Re-emergence

The Re-Emergence strategy, published in June, focuses on both the ongoing response and the tentative re-emergence of a focus beyond COVID-19. Safeguarding our most vulnerable, and protecting businesses are still some of the key aims, but tourism and promoting our county as a tourist destination has also become a focus, along with decarbonisation and promoting an active and healthy lifestyle for our residents and visitors.

Some progress to date includes the launch of a new re-use shop at Five Lanes Recycling Centre, and four Bentyg Libraries of Things in Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth. Almost 8,000 trees have been planted this year, and numerous projects have been supported in Monmouth and Caldicot to improve the active travel offer in the county. Cycling capacity has been increased in town centres, and 20mph schemes have been implemented in Raglan, Caldicot, and Tintern as part of the COVID-19 response to make town centres safer.

A summer full of outdoor activities for our children and young people is ongoing, starting with the Monmouthshire Games, providing outdoor play schemes for children throughout the summer holidays. The School Holiday Enrichment Programme is also being delivered during summer holidays, which helps disadvantaged children with specific needs. Other events include activity packs at Caldicot Castle and Old Station Tintern, and outdoor theatre events at Abergavenny Castle grounds for children through August.

We will continue to deliver against the direction set in the strategic aims, to help our communities and businesses through the summer months, and into autumn. There is still considerable uncertainty around the pandemic and the potential for increasing numbers of cases, but we are in a strong position to face the possible challenges that lie ahead.

Performance Measures

The local authority performance benchmarking exercise, through the Public Accountability Measures set by Data Cymru, was not undertaken for 2020/21 performance due to the impact of the pandemic on the capacity of local authorities. We have continued to collate our performance data as a council for most of the measures in 2020/21, and this is detailed in table 1 below. These national measures do not always reflect our local goals, or focus on the outcomes of our services; nonetheless, they are an important tool in allowing people to hold the council to account. The most recent information, for 2018/19, is available to view on www.mylocalcouncil.info

National indicators have been set as part of the Future Generations Act for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the well-being goals in Wales as a whole. While the national indicators will not measure the performance of individual public bodies or public services boards, it is important they are considered to track the progress being made to improve well-being in Monmouthshire. Some of the national indicators that are relevant to the priority goals we have set in Monmouthshire, where an update is available at a county level, are in table 2 below.

The use of mechanisms such as the Thriving Places Index and the Office of National Statistics' Measuring National Well-being programme (diagram 7 in What Citizens Said section below) are ways in which we are trying to broaden our understanding of well-being in Monmouthshire, in addition to service specific performance measurement.

The Thriving Places Index in Wales is a framework of local authority indicators, which build a picture of an area summarised under the broad headings of local conditions, sustainability and equality, to assess local well-being. The most recent release was published in April 2020, and a full breakdown is available on, www.thrivingplaces.wales.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on our way of life and our well-being. Initial information already shows some of the impacts of the pandemic; the What Citizens Said section below shows some examples of evidence of the impact so far on personal well-being in Wales. Further work is needed to understand the impact on well-being in the county in more detail, in both the short and long term, and to assess changes over time. The council will be working with its partners on the Public Service Board to utilise the latest evidence to understand the impact of the pandemic on the well-being of people in Monmouthshire.

Table 1 – National Performance Indicators 2020/21

* Trend information highlights if performance in 2020/21 compared to the previous year is: Improved or at maximum, Unchanged, Declined or Not applicable

Ref	Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21 Target	Progress against target	Trend*
PAM/001	Number of working days lost to sickness absence per employee	11.5	12.2	11.0	10.5	Missed	Improved
PAM/032	Average Capped 9 score for pupils in year 11 (interim measure version)	n/a	367.4 (18/19 academic year)	Not available	n/a	Not available	Not available
PAM/007	Percentage of pupil attendance in primary schools	95.2	95.4 (18/19 academic year)	Not available	95.9	Not available	Not available
PAM/008	Percentage of pupil attendance in secondary schools	95.0	95.1 (18/19 academic year)	Not available	95.3	Not available	Not available
PAM/046	Percentage of Year 11 leavers not in education, training or employment (NEET)	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.0	Missed	Declined
PAM/010	Percentage of streets that are clean	97.2	98.2	Not available	Not set	Not available	Not available
PAM/035	Average number of working days taken to clear fly-tipping incidents	4.8	5.96	5.51	5	Missed	Improved
PAM/012	Percentage of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless	67.1	60.4	65.35	69	Missed	Improved
PAM/013	Percentage of empty private properties brought back into use	1.4	Not available	Not available	5	Not available	Not available
PAM/014	Number of new homes created as a result of bringing empty properties back into use	0	Not available	Not available	Not set	Not available	Not available
PAM/015	Average number of calendar days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	191	180	222.5	180	Missed	Declined

Ref	Measure	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2020/21 Target	Progress against target	Trend*
PAM/040	Percentage of Quality Indicators (with targets) achieved by the library service	58	33 (provisional)	Not available	75	Not available	Not available
PAM/017	Number of visits to leisure centres per 1,000 population	8,184	9,088	2,503	8,750	Missed	Declined
PAM/018	Percentage of all planning applications determined in time	88	91	91	80	Met	Unchanged
PAM/036	Number of additional affordable housing units delivered per 10,000 households	31	Not available	21	Not set	Not available	Not available
PAM/019	Percentage of planning appeals dismissed	46	86	100	70	Met	Improved
PAM/020	Percentage of A roads in poor condition	2.7	3.3	2.7	3	Met	Improved
PAM/021	Percentage of B roads in poor condition	4.7	5.1	5.2	5	Missed	Declined
PAM/022	Percentage of C roads in poor condition	7.3	7.6	7.7	8	Met	Declined
PAM/023	Percentage of food establishments that meet food hygiene standards	96.9	97.07	Not available	96	Not available	Not available
PAM/041	Percentage of National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) clients who continued to participate in the exercise programme at 16-weeks	54.5	65	Not available	50	Not available	Not available
PAM/042	Percentage of NERS clients whose health had improved on completion of the exercise programme	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not set	Not available	Not available
PAM/030	Percentage of waste reused, recycled or composted	63.37	65.57	68.88	64	Met	Improved
PAM/043	Kilograms of residual household waste generated per person	187	150	130	Not set	Not applicable	Improved

Table 2 – Selected national indicator set under the well-being of Future Generations Act

Well-being of Future Generations Act national indicators	Source	Link to Goal	Wales	Monmouthshire Previous	Monmouthshire Current
Average capped 9 points score of pupils (interim) <i>(This interim measure was introduced in 2019, and supersedes the old measure of capped 8 points score)</i>	Welsh Examination Database	Goal A	354.4 (2019)	367.4 (2019)	Not available
Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (relative to the UK average)	ONS Regional Economic Analysis: Sub-regional productivity indicators	Goal B	83.3 (2018)	87.1 (2017 - Monmouthshire and Newport)	86.2 (2018 - Monmouthshire and Newport)
Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked (£) <i>(Not a national indicator, included as further context to the “relative to the UK average” national indicator)</i>	ONS Regional Economic Analysis: Sub-regional productivity indicators	Goal B	£29.2 (2018)	£29.9 (2017 – Monmouthshire and Newport)	£30.2 (2018 – Monmouthshire and Newport)
Gross Disposable Household Income per head	ONS, gross disposable household income per head	Goal B & D	£17,100 (2018)	£20,761 (2017)	£21,707 (2018)
Percentage of people in employment.	ONS, Annual Population Survey	Goal B & D	73.6% (year ending 31 March 2020)	77.7% (year ending 31 March 2019)	79.6% (year ending 31 March 2020)
Percentage of people living in households in material deprivation.	National Survey for Wales	Goal B & D	13% (2019/20)	9% (2018/19)	10% (2019/20)
Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO2) pollution in the air.	Department for Environment, food and rural affairs	Goal C	9 (2018)	8 (2017)	8 (2018)

Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed	Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy	Goal C	3,515.5 (2019)	85.3 (2018)	85.4 (2019)
Percentage of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need.	National Survey for Wales	Goal B, D & E	80% (2018/19)	Not available	79% (2018/19)
Percentage of people satisfied with the local area as a place to live.	National Survey for Wales	All goals	85% (2018/19)	91% (2016/17)	92% (2018/19)
Percentage of people who Volunteer.	National Survey for Wales	Goal D	26% (2019/20)	36% (2016/17)	32% (2019/20)
Percentage of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week.	Adult – National Survey for Wales	Goal D	32% (2019/20)	38% (2018/19)	36% (2019/20)
	Children – Sport Wales, school sport survey	Goal A	47.6% (2018)	48.8% (2015)	45.0% (2018)

Additional Actions to support the goals

To support the delivery of our priority goals, we have to make sure that all aspects of the council are working in line with the sustainable development principle set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act. We need to remain relevant and viable for the next generation, while continuing to meet the needs of residents, visitors and businesses in the here-and-now. The Act specifies seven core areas of change in an organisation that need to adapt in order to meet the changing demands on our services and ensure their longevity and sustainability. The ways in which we are incorporating these changes are detailed here.

Workforce Planning

The past year has presented considerable challenge, and staff have embraced new ways of working to keep themselves, colleagues and residents safe while delivering the many services our communities rely on. Staff have been provided with a range of support mechanisms to maintain their well-being; they have access to the right Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), with approximately 5.3 million items of PPE distributed for the provision of social care in the county, and everyone can have a test if they display symptoms.

At the onset of the pandemic, staff and resources were allocated to priority services, and staff being re-deployed were given the necessary training, equipment and guidance for them to undertake their new roles in a safe manner. Business continuity was assisted with the use of digital tools and remote working facilities. Technology was implemented to improve our 1875 office-based staff working from home, and 700 licences were secured for staff who did not have access to digital communications so they could be kept up to date and have access to the well-being support available.

During this difficult time, the Health, Welfare & Information group has provided a range of support services to all colleagues, and communication with staff has continued throughout. The SupportAll portal was developed, which allows staff to access information on a range of subjects, such as testing, protecting homeworkers and bereavement, and a weekly digital 'Cwtch' continues, averaging over a hundred viewers each week. A weekly Managers Q&A also continues to answer any questions or discuss general workplace issues.

To improve the sustainability of the workforce, and create succession planning opportunities, numerous apprentice schemes have been introduced. This includes the 'Apprentice in Care Scheme', which successfully appointed six apprentices within Health and Social Care, and the 'Kickstart' Scheme, which will provide 89 six-month work placements. In addition to this, there are roughly 168 existing staff members who have signed up to undertake apprenticeships for professional development.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLE

The **Future Generations Act** defines Sustainable Development in Wales as: "The process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural **well-being** of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the **well-being** goals."

Assets

Since the Coronavirus pandemic, an extensive amount of work has been undertaken to make sure our buildings and accommodation are safe and legally compliant. In a short time, the pandemic meant hundreds of our staff were using established digital capabilities to work from home, where possible in their roles, and digital capabilities were enhanced to support them to fulfil their role, maintain contact with colleagues and support services. A desk booking system was introduced in County Hall to manage occupancy, and this has recently been improved so that colleagues can book desks on a half-day basis.

The Changing Spaces project is looking at the future operating model of the workforce and how this will affect the nature of the accommodation that is provided. The project is considering how to use the space in our buildings in a creative, collaborative and cost-effective way, how we can be even more agile and flexible, and how digital technology can help even more. The project will work with different teams on how to best deliver services into the future.

In June 2020, Council approved a report to secure financial approval for Re:fit programme Phase 1, installing energy conservation measures across a portfolio of the council's buildings. The programme experienced some initial delays due to site availability, but work is now progressing at pace. We are also identifying additional opportunities to implement energy efficiency measures that do not meet the Salix payback periods but could be viable with a blended funding model, which utilises planned maintenance funding to maximise carbon savings.

In April 2019, Council agreed an initial feasibility study be carried out into the potential benefits of establishing a development company to intervene in the housing and commercial market place and facilitate the construction of affordable housing. The current pandemic has resulted in a delay to the progression of our replacement Local Development Plan (RLPD), which has caused a postponement in progressing the development company. Instead, Cabinet has agreed to commence a project to undertake the construction of low cost homes on the site adjacent to Caldicot Comprehensive School. This site is intended to test and challenge our development aspirations, build capacity and learning, and provide affordable housing units within the county. Cabinet has also agreed to the continuation of planning for the development company so that it can be implemented when the RLPD delays are alleviated.

We have used supporting data from the Carbon Trust and other surveys to support the submission of eight sites to the LDP candidate sites process. The sites, if approved, would provide affordable housing, self-build plots, market homes, employment and tourism uses and three solar farms with a generation capacity in excess of 20MW. We have also been engaged with the CCRW to develop a challenge around the creation a new depot facility that would enable a ULEV fleet and generate carbon neutral fuel.

We continue to work alongside our Social Services department to develop a dementia friendly care home on Crick Road. Planning approval and funding is in place and work is expected to commence on site by the end of the calendar year. Finally, we have been working with the MUCH group to secure funding to enable the development of a new community hall for the Magor and Undy communities.

Procurement

An updated Procurement strategy was approved in July 2018 and, in order to deliver the aspirations set out within the strategy, an external review of the Strategic Procurement Service has been undertaken. The primary purpose was to establish whether there were any opportunities to reduce our external costs, as well as to examine our current level of capacity to deliver against stretching targets identified within the procurement strategy. The review confirmed the council's own recognition that it had limited capacity to influence behaviours relating to its £100m third party annual spend. A proposal to collaborate with Cardiff Council, for mutual benefit, in the discharge and provision of the council's Strategic Procurement services was agreed in April 2021.

This has been complemented with a refresh of the council's Contract Procedure Rules that became operational in April 2021. One of the updates to the rules includes an increase in the threshold for 'Request for Quotes', resulting in the opportunity for more local businesses to secure work. There is now a requirement for all new procurement opportunities up to the value of £75,000 to identify at least two local businesses who may wish to provide a quote. The Contract Procedure Rules also reference the importance of our procurement operations adopting a truly sustainable procurement path, building proportionate social, environmental, economic and cultural considerations into all of the council's procurement activities. In this way, we can promote social inclusion and boost the resilience of our local economy, whilst reducing our carbon footprint and prevent human trafficking within our supply chains.

In addition to this, the council's procurement function, in partnership with Cardiff Council, has developed a draft Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2022-26, which identifies the council's procurement priorities for the new political term. The new strategy will mirror the requirements of the Well-Being of Future Generations Act, the Wales Procurement Policy Statement and the pending Social Partnership and Public Procurement Bill, along with our own Corporate Plan.

The Strategic Procurement Unit has also prioritised a closer examination of our £100 million third party spend data to better understand what contracts we have in place and importantly, those that are due for renewal. It is our intention to improve communication with supply chains over the coming 12 months so that they may better prepare and ultimately, be able to bring more effective, efficient, cleaner solutions to our attention.

Collaborative procurement, both across Gwent and the Cardiff Capital Region, as well as the Welsh Local Government Association remain at the heart of what we do. Work is ongoing to develop our approach to promoting social value, developing regional and national procurement solutions that drive economies of scale, reduce carbon emissions, enhance community benefits and ethical supply chains, as well as promote opportunities for Welsh and local based supply chains.

Corporate Planning, Performance Management and Risk Management

These three areas of work form part of the council's performance management framework, shown in diagram 4, which ensures our planning is integrated and everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes. The application of the Well-being of Future Generations Act throughout the framework is essential to ensure we are applying the ethos of the sustainable development principle and the ways of working within it.

The pandemic had a considerable impact on our work streams, as some aspects were reduced or stopped altogether to focus resources on our emergency response. To provide clarity and ensure accountability at this time, a revised purpose and set of coronavirus strategic aims were set by Cabinet in May 2020. These were updated in July, December and more recently, in June 2021, in response to the changing nature of the pandemic and our associated response. To support this work, we put structures and mechanisms in place to track progress and ensure we remain focussed on our purpose. As well as supporting our response to many challenges, these arrangements will also support us to evaluate our response, which has resulted in many new ways of doing things, some of which can form part of a lasting, longer term transformation with needs being met in new ways.

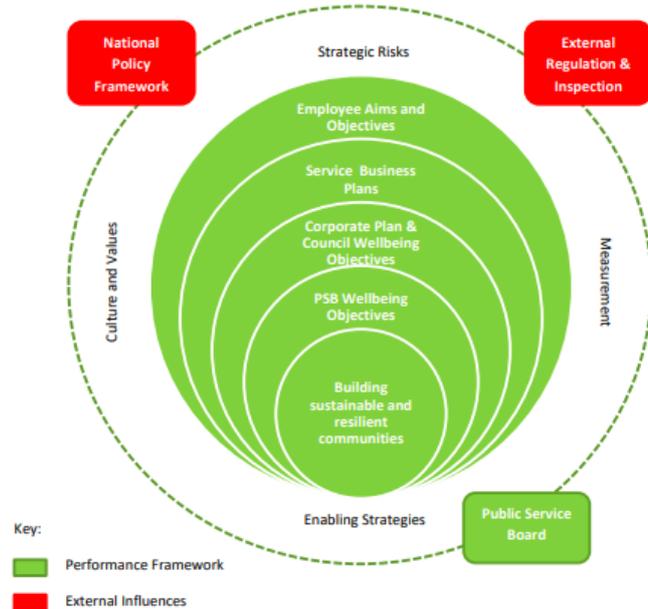


Diagram 4

Work has been ongoing to improve Service Business Plans, based on learning from the past twelve months. A new process has been introduced to develop a more reflective approach to business planning, focussed on self-assessment and identifying areas where improvements can be made to provide an enhanced service to users. This will be monitored throughout the year and will be built into our performance arrangements to align with the new Local Government and Elections Act requirements.

The council's Strategic Risk Management Policy and Strategic Risk Register ensures strategic risks are identified and monitored, and is regularly reviewed and updated based on the latest information. This has continued throughout our response to the Coronavirus pandemic, ensuring emerging issues are considered, and mitigating actions introduced, where necessary. In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, identification and mitigation of longer-term risks that will impact on future generations at community level, but will have a lesser impact on the medium term delivery of council services, is an area for continued development. We are working with the Public Service Board and partners across Gwent to develop our understanding of longer term risks and opportunities and how we respond to them.

Financial Planning

Over recent years, we have delivered millions of pounds of savings from our service budgets. At the same time, pressures on the budget have been increasing in terms of demographic growth, demand and expectations. Over the past year, the council has faced significant and unprecedented challenges, notably the flood response and recovery in February 2020, and the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown restrictions, which began in March 2020.

We have always sought to preserve local service delivery in the face of budget pressures by changing, improving and adapting our services. We know how important many of the things we do are to the people who live in our communities, and we have worked hard to maintain the things that matter.

CUMULATIVE FINANCIAL IMPACT

We recognise that increases in charges and Council Tax can have an impact on those who can least afford it, despite the support available to assist. This not only affects those who are unemployed; in-work poverty, and those impacted by disability or another protected characteristic that affects their opportunities, may find financial increases difficult to manage. Whenever we introduce changes to policy or charges, we evaluate the impact of these upon different groups, and identify any mitigations, where required. As part of the 2021/2022 budget planning process, as well as completing a Future Generations Evaluation for each proposal, we also completed an overall evaluation of the budget, assessing the collective impact of proposals. This included a cumulative financial impact on households with different income levels, and groups with protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

The council was already facing significant financial challenges heading into the 2020/21 financial year, prior to the start of the pandemic. The onset of the pandemic presented its own additional financial challenges and uncertainty, both in terms of additional costs and significant losses of income across services. A detailed financial sustainability assessment was undertaken, and a budget recovery plan was created, which re-evaluated financial commitments and funding forecasts.

A balanced net revenue budget position was achieved for 2020/21, after accounting for transfers to earmarked reserves, which was primarily as a result of £5.29m of Welsh Government COVID-19 hardship funding since month 9 to support the increased costs of service delivery and loss of income as a direct result of COVID-19 impact. There were also significant underspends across many service areas as a result of the pandemic, where services were reduced or stopped, travel requirements were reduced, office and buildings remained closed and substantial staff vacancies remained unfilled.

The medium term prognosis is still of concern; there are no indicative settlement figures published,

which significantly impacts on the forward planning of budgets over the medium term. There is a need to think differently about the challenges of the medium term, and this work and engagement will continue in the coming months, particularly with other local authorities, Welsh Government and the Welsh Local Government Association, where funding distribution and projections are concerned. Internally, closer alignment between service's business planning arrangements and financial planning arrangements continues to be developed to improve the quality of service planning and financial planning, which also aligns to the delivery of the Corporate Plan to ensure its aspirations are sustainable.

Applying the Future Generations Act was an important part of the budget process. A future Generations Evaluation of budget proposals was completed, explaining the impact the proposal has on the well-being goals and five ways of working, along with an equality impact assessment. The use of the evaluation provides councillors making the decisions with the information required on the impact of these decisions.

What we spent in 2020/21

In 2020/21, the council spent £160.4 million providing services for Monmouthshire residents.

The proportion of our spending on different services in 2020/21 is shown in diagram 5. These services are paid for by a combination of central government grants, council tax, non-domestic rates and a contribution from the Council Fund.

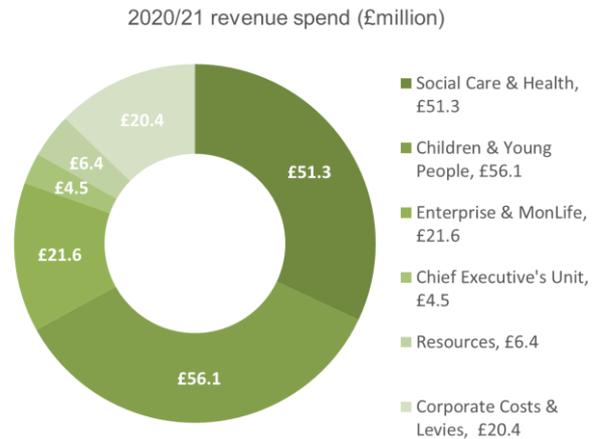
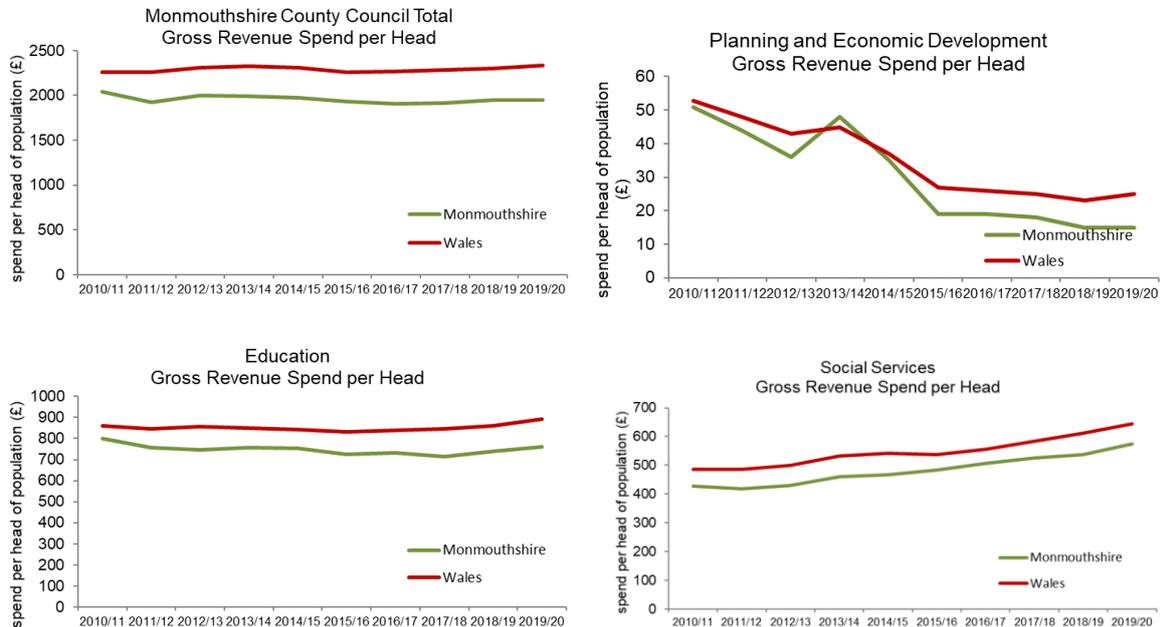


Diagram 5

How our revenue spend compares with other areas

The diagrams below, diagram 6, show how much we spend per head of population in some of our priority areas. Our budget settlement from Welsh Government was the lowest per capita of councils in Wales. We are spending less on services per head of population than the average for local authorities in Wales and had the lowest gross revenue spend per head of all councils in Wales. However, we also work hard to make sure this money goes where it matters. Comparable data is only available up to 2019/20 at the time of publication.

Diagram 6



Financial Support as a result of the pandemic

We are grateful to Welsh Government for the emergency hardship funding that has been provided to Welsh councils to cover the costs and income losses to date and alongside this, the COVID-19 specific grant funding notified in the latter stages of the financial year. The extent of this support is outlined in the table below.

	£000s
Welsh Government COVID-19 Hardship Fund – Additional Costs Incurred	11,254
Welsh Government COVID-19 Hardship Fund – Compensation for loss of service income	8,382
Council Tax Income Collection Shortfalls	1,059
Council Tax Reduction Scheme – to assist with increased demand	348
Digital Transformation funding	658
Savings Unachieved funding	658
Business Grants – administration costs	347
Total	22,706

Digital

Although this is not one of the seven core areas of change, our digital offer is an important enabler of service delivery. The core business of our digital service is to organise, simplify and join up services so that our communities can find what they need, in whatever way suits them best. We are also improving the digital skills of our staff, creating solid foundations for workforce digital competence and turning it into excellent digital customer service delivery.

The pandemic disrupted many of our services, and also forced all of our office-based staff to work remotely. There was a rapid pace of change and the implementation of new digital ways of working was essential in maintaining service delivery. Staff were immediately able to work remotely as laptops had already been provided to staff to enable home working. Alongside this, the decision-making process was quickly established as all meetings were being held remotely by July 2020.

We needed to engage with our organisation quickly so established Teams Livestreams to connect staff at virtual well-being sessions, to share key information and to provide support as the pandemic placed more pressure on people in their work and personal lives. Since their inception, over 1,000 colleagues have attended these virtual meetings, and they are proving to be as popular now as they were when they were first introduced in March 2020.

Other areas of focus over the past twelve months include:

- Establishing a click and collect service for library books and a booking system for appointment-based services, e.g. HWRC visits. Simple online forms were created for people to make arrangements, such as parents booking Hub slots at school for their child, or to enable businesses to apply for grants. During the first lockdown, we received over 6,000 applications for childcare Hub spaces over the 16 weeks that the forms were in operation.
- Provision of Livestream Q&A events for businesses and residents so that we could engage with them on particular topics and continue having important conversations, despite not being able to meet face to face. In January alone, 12 public livestreams were held, with over a thousand people joining to share ideas and ask questions.
- Monty the Chatbot has been developed to broaden the answers available to many new questions, and proved to be a considerable help during the pandemic when we were dealing with a huge increase in queries

- We engaged with Digital Wales to source training for our staff to become volunteer Digital Ambassadors within the community, raising awareness of the power of digital to improve digital inclusion and passing on digital skills
- Development of a prototype waste and recycling service that operates over smart speakers, like Alexa, to help digitally excluded customers self-serve without having to log into a computer

To ensure our digital abilities continue to grow and develop in line with the needs of staff and residents, we have established two separate work flows, summarised in these diagrams.

Information Security and Technology

-  Cyber resilience
-  I.T. Infrastructure
-  Structured & managed information
-  Education digital strategy
-  Mobility – Information on the go

Digital Design & Innovation

-  Build upon our existing resident services so that all services are offered online by default, with support on other channels for those where it is needed
-  Get better with data, identifying systems that have a 'golden' record
-  Make our systems modern, secure and interoperable
-  Build digital capacity

Governance & Scrutiny of Council Business

Good governance is about how we ensure we are doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner. This is essential for the effective use of public money and the continued delivery of efficient and effective public services. The scrutiny process is an integral part of this and ensures openness, transparency and accountability in the council's decision-making.

The Annual Governance Statement sets out how we demonstrate that we have appropriate governance arrangements in place, and how we are strengthening them moving forward. The statement brings together the principles of good governance with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, and assesses the effectiveness of our arrangements taking account of responsibilities under the Act. The Statement itself demonstrates that we have appropriate governance arrangements in place to meet the challenges of the governance principles, and that a review has been undertaken to assess the effectiveness of those arrangements. We have demonstrated that, in the majority of areas, we have effective arrangements in place, which are continually improving, but also recognises that there is always further work to do.

Despite the pandemic, we have managed to maintain the majority of our governance arrangements this year, and have demonstrated we have sound and effective arrangements in place. The majority of improvements noted in the 2019/20 action plan have been addressed, such that there is no need for a formal action plan for 2020/21.

The council's scrutiny committees undertake a wide range of scrutiny of council business, from programmed items such as Revenue and Capital Financial monitoring, to specific policy development/review, including ensuring that future generations are considered through their scrutiny of decision-making.

In order to ensure timely decision making during the pandemic, arrangements were adapted to allow council meetings to operate remotely, and support has been provided to members to assist in utilising digital meeting technology. The system is proving successful and work continues to review the learning from the new arrangements; some changes will remain or be built on where they are working well. Work is currently underway to develop the technical ability to deliver hybrid meetings, which will accommodate both remote and physical attendance, in line with any ongoing restrictions. The details of all scrutiny meetings held are available on www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/your-council and are streamed on the council's YouTube channel.

DEMOCRACY DURING LOCKDOWN

Legislation requires local authorities to meet in person and to make meetings open to the public, but restrictions during the Coronavirus pandemic made this impossible. The Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020 were introduced to provide flexibility for local authorities to operate safely, effectively and lawfully, while retaining the principles of openness and accountability. This included enabling meetings to be conducted via remote attendance and by making provision for the electronic publishing of documents. We rapidly adapted to this new legislation and implemented digital systems so that councillors could continue to meet and take decisions ensuring openness and accountability.

Partnership & Collaboration

Monmouthshire is committed to working in partnership and has a good track record of delivering jointly with health, the police and voluntary sector amongst others. Under the leadership of the Public Service Board (PSB), the partnership landscape in Monmouthshire fully embraces multi-agency working, with representation from a wide range of partner organisations who work collaboratively to improve outcomes for residents.

The PSB has approved four well-being objectives that underpin a clear purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities; these were based on the well-being assessment for Monmouthshire. The 'steps' within the well-being plan aim to address some of the most significant challenges and opportunities for well-being in Monmouthshire. You can read more about the progress in 2020/21 in the PSB Annual Report www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire. This report provides an update on the activity delivered by the PSB on the steps in its well-being plan, including activity partners have delivered to address the challenges posed by the Coronavirus pandemic to support residents' well-being in Monmouthshire through these unprecedented times.

One example of this work in 2020/21 is the establishment of Community Support Networks in each of the five areas of Monmouthshire. In July 2020, the PSB agreed to formally adopt this place-based partnership working model across the county as a mechanism to deliver the aspirations of the well-being plan. It places communities and active citizens across the county at the heart of what 'we do'

through leading a relational place-based, multi-agency support structure.

CARBON LITERACY

The Council used funding from Natural Resources Wales to offer Carbon Literacy training to members of Monmouthshire PSB partners. The training programme promotes climate change understanding, and empowers organisations to make positive change to reduce emissions. A total of 113 attendees from a range of PSB partner organisations registered to take part. As a result of the training, Monmouthshire County Council has been awarded Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation status and is now obtaining funding to roll Carbon Literacy training out to the wider community.

The Community Support Networks model has encouraged direct engagement with communities, centred around 'place', promoting open and meaningful conversations about what matters to them, bringing a rich and 'real time' understanding of issues, challenges and opportunities across the county. The networks are centred on action, asset based community development and working with our communities as equal partners to bring about change.

Some of the key service partnership collaborations we are involved in include the Education Achievement Service (EAS) and the Shared Resource Service (SRS) on IT. Supporting social services and wellbeing requires effective partnership working outside of the council as well as within it. Social care needs to be integrated with partners and the community. At a regional level, the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) has developed its area plan for health and social care services in the Gwent region. The RPB has, through its investment of Integrated Care Fund, in line with those plan priorities, developed some innovative and creative services and approaches.

What Citizens Said

Engagement

Involvement in our budget setting process is essential to capture and consider the views of our community members and businesses. Engagement in setting the 2021/22 budget came with a different challenge as lockdown restrictions were implemented throughout the year. Face to face events were not possible so in January 2021, we held a Budget Livestream event, as a forum, to ask questions and to facilitate feedback in a live online setting.



Various other channels were also used to encourage engagement, including an online form and social media promotions through Facebook and Twitter. Following feedback from residents on initial proposals published in January 2021, gathered over the full consultation period, we amended these proposals to reflect the views received.

Considerable engagement was also carried out during the year to seek the views of local people on various matters of importance. Widespread consultation took place to seek the opinions of our residents on how Monmouthshire's towns and village centres could re-open safely, when restrictions allowed, and how they should look in the future. As the county started to look towards a gradual reopening of businesses and facilities in summer 2020, we took the opportunity to re-evaluate many aspects of town and village centres to boost local businesses and make staying local more rewarding than ever before. We conducted a survey to seek opinions and ideas, and received over 1500 responses.

Monmouthshire's Youth Council, Engage 2 Change (E2C), continued their work to represent the views of their peers via a digital Monmouthshire-specific ballot, which highlights local issues raised by young people. They developed Friday Friendlies, a series of online webinars designed and directed by E2C, to give young people the opportunity to talk, gain new knowledge and influence change with decision makers.

Abigail Barton @abigail_barton · Jan 29
 Great end a Teams Livestream themed month, all of us in @MonmouthshireCC have loved hearing from local people, businesses and colleagues

12 livestreams
 1,032 people
 so many great ideas

@Mon_Connect @visit_mon @monbizent @MCCMyMates #engagement #MicrosoftTeams #listen

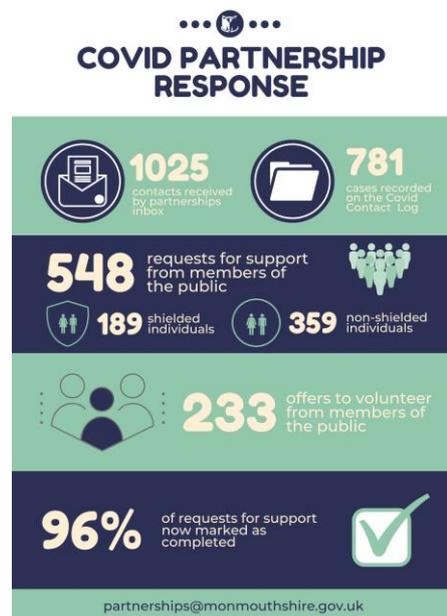


A Business Advice Livestream was held in January 2021 providing an opportunity for businesses to find out about the latest business grants schemes, how to apply for them, and to ask questions of representatives of both Welsh Government and Monmouthshire County Council. 176 businesses signed up to the event to ask questions and seek advice and guidance.

Involvement has been key to our pandemic response in Monmouthshire. Engaging with and bringing together community volunteering responses has been vital throughout the

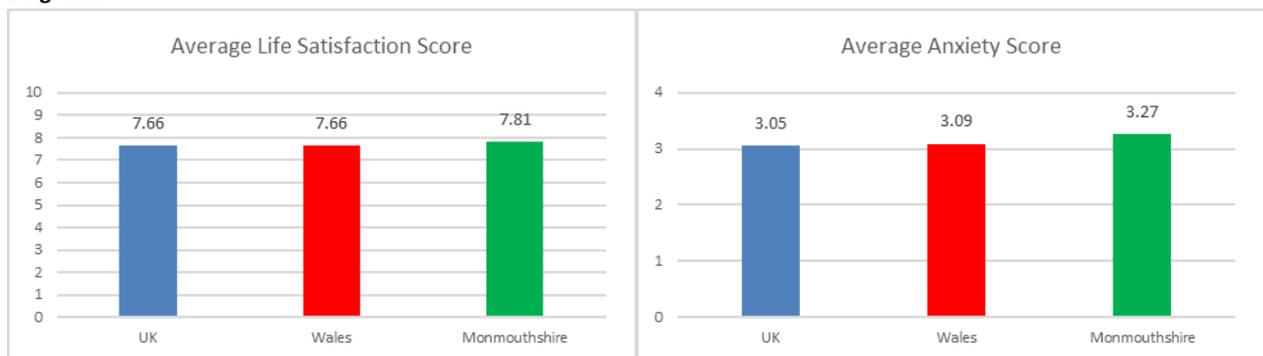
pandemic, and a great deal of work has been done to coordinate numerous voluntary groups formed to help their communities. We have noticed a significant change in the age profile of volunteers with far more younger, working age volunteers offering to help. The discussions that have taken place at a local and national level with Voluntary Sector representatives suggest an appetite to work collectively on ways to keep these ‘younger’ volunteers engaged. Suggestions for doing this include working to make volunteering opportunities easy to access and flexible, and also asking better questions to engage more people in the things they care about.

Measuring Individual well-being



The Office of National Statistic’s Measuring National Well-being programme assesses personal well-being as part of the Annual Population Survey. The latest full annual results for Monmouthshire (from 2019/20) are shown in the graphs below, diagram 7, alongside the UK and Wales averages. This shows that Monmouthshire residents’ responses score slightly higher than both the UK and Wales for all measures. This largely covers the period prior to the pandemic.

Diagram 7

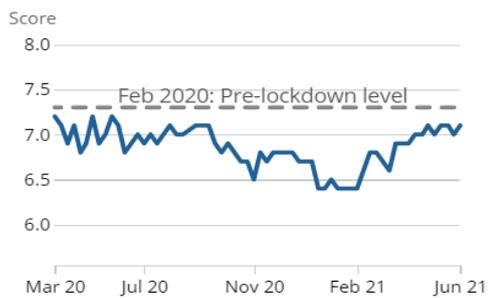




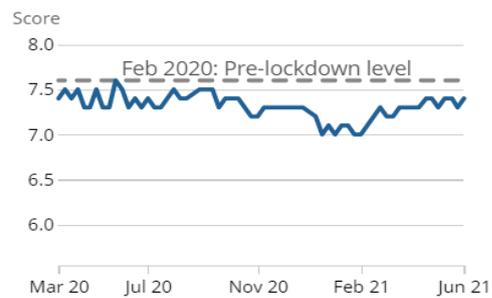
The graphs below, in diagram 8, show an example of the results of a weekly ONS survey identifying the impact of the Coronavirus on day-to-day life in Great Britain. It shows the impact of the pandemic on well-being; the data for Great Britain from March 2020 to June 2021 shows that most recent happiness levels are similar to pre-pandemic levels.

Diagram 8

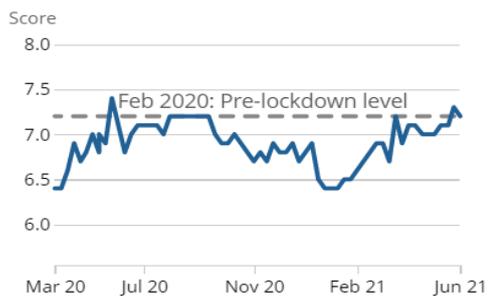
Overall, how **satisfied** are you with your life nowadays?



Overall, to what extent do you feel that the things you do in your life are **worthwhile**?



Overall, how **happy** did you feel yesterday?



Overall, how **anxious** did you feel yesterday?



Climate Emergency

Having responded to the views of citizens by declaring a climate emergency in May 2019, work has been progressing to implement the actions within the plan. Significant progress has been made against many of the actions. Examples include:

- Purchase of 7 electric vehicles for use by different council teams, with an electric minibus and two electric road-sweepers on order.

- Establishing Libraries of Things, Repair Cafes and a second Re-use Shop using Welsh Government Circular Economy funding.
- Developing further active travel routes, trial changes to traffic flows in town centres to allow active travel with social distancing and the purchase of E-bikes to pilot
- Delivery of Carbon Literacy training to 113 representatives of Monmouthshire PSB partners
- Nearly 10,000 streetlights converted to LED bulbs which use less energy.
- 150,000 kg of carbon dioxide saved by reducing business mileage in 2020/21. Although this has been due to lockdown, we are likely to continue to work agilely more often and continue to hold online meetings.
- Changes to grassland management, including reduced mowing and the purchase of new equipment to cut and collect mowings, all of which has benefited pollinators by allowing wildflowers to thrive.



Hazel Clatworthy @HazelClatworthy · Feb 27
Brilliant effort for #biodiversity and tackling the #ClimateEmergency. Well done all! 🌱🌱🌱 @MonmouthshireCC



Although good progress is being made against the actions in the plan, not enough detailed information is available about our baseline carbon emissions and what the carbon savings of our actions are likely to be. In order to accurately establish if we are on track to meet the net zero carbon target by 2030, it is proposed that additional expertise is sourced to help establish our emissions and gain a better understanding of the carbon savings included in the plan. This will enable us to establish where we should best be focusing our resources to generate the maximum carbon savings. Once this information is available, the action plan will be refreshed in order to ensure activity is focused on the most important areas for reducing carbon, and also to fully reflect the influence that the council has over wider emissions across the county.

What Regulators Said

We work closely with our regulators and inspectors to quality assure our activities as this is vital to ensuring improvement. Their feedback is valued and we use their assessments to help us focus on the things we need to improve across the council.

Each year, Audit Wales reports on how well councils are planning improvements in the delivery of their services. This is published as part of an Annual Improvement Report (AIR), which summarises the work undertaken in the council during that year and concludes on the council's prospects for improvement. This report was superseded this year by the Annual Audit Summary 2020, which shows the work completed since the last Annual Improvement Report issued in June 2019. The audit summary, published in December 2020, concluded:

“The Auditor General certified that the Council has met its legal duties for improvement planning and reporting, and believes that it is likely to meet the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 during 2020-21.”

The Coronavirus pandemic has had a considerable impact on services and in April 2020, the Auditor General for Wales wrote to Monmouthshire County Council to outline changes to the way auditors would be conducting their duties over the following months. Our Auditors have been working closely with us to support improvements to our evolving response to COVID-19, and to provide real-time capture and sharing of learning and experience from all audited bodies. One project undertaken by Audit Wales over the past twelve months has been a COVID-19 Learning project, which aims to capture opportunities to improve our response to the pandemic situation, in as close to real time as possible. It has also been identifying emerging risks, that can then be mitigated before they develop further, and recording and consolidating novel practice to be shared more widely in real time, and also incorporated as good practice into 'business as usual' once COVID-19 has subsided.

Further reports produced by Audit Wales are available to download on the Audit Wales website (www.audit.wales/publications). This includes local government national reports produced by Audit Wales.

Monmouthshire County Council underwent an Estyn Inspection into Local Government Education Services in February 2020. The inspection recognised the clear vision and strong focus on ensuring 'the best possible start in life' and also identified the commitment to partnership working that has resulted in a good track record of improvement. It also identified areas for development, such as the performance of children eligible for free school meals, and a lack of clarity in how services for learners with special educational needs will be strengthened, and plans are underway to address the recommendations. The report can be found on www.estyn.gov.wales/

Care Inspectorate Wales carried out an assurance check in February 2021 to review how well local authority social services continue to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being. They found that we have made our strategic intent clear in relation to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, and leaders have maintained a line of sight on the changing COVID-19 landscape resulting in clear plans to address the issues presented. Inspection reports about social services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) can be found on www.careinspectorate.wales.

Equality and Diversity

We can only achieve our purpose by valuing and making the most of the abilities and contributions of everyone in our communities, irrespective of age, sex, race, sexual orientation and any of the other characteristics that make us who we are.

The council has a long-standing commitment to equality and diversity, with our Social Justice Strategy demonstrating our commitment to address inequalities and improve outcomes for the county's people and communities. This dovetails neatly with our third Strategic Equality Plan, produced under the Equality Act 2010. This latest plan was approved in March 2020 and sets the council's objectives to ensure we deliver better outcomes for people with protected characteristics. This is clearly aligned with the evidence provided by the Well-being Assessment, and also evidence provided by the Equality and Human Rights Commission's report "Is Wales Fairer 2018".

As well as this, it is important to us as it is the right thing to do. Annual monitoring reports provide updates on progress on the action plans in the Strategic Equality Plan and evidence good practice being carried out across the council departments.

The Welsh Language

The Welsh language is central to the goals introduced as part of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, particularly for our contribution to a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. It also makes an important contribution to the Welsh Government goal of having a million Welsh speakers by 2050.

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011, and accompanying Welsh Language standards, place a legal duty on councils to treat Welsh and English equally, to promote the Welsh Language and provide services to the public through the medium of Welsh. The council has been allocated 175 standards that we are required to comply with. This is a significant challenge but systems have been put in place to ensure compliance. One of the standards set was to write a Welsh Language Strategy for 2017 – 2022, which identifies a vision of how the language will look in Monmouthshire in five years, and is accompanied by targets to help achieve that vision. The annual monitoring reports reflect our progress against our Welsh language commitments under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the Welsh Language Standards.

The Welsh Language Commissioner annually monitors user experience by testing specific services, including correspondence, telephone, reception and websites through mystery shopper exercises, site visits and online inspections. This process has identified a number of areas that require improvement, including Welsh language responses to telephone calls and callers at reception areas. To complement this, we have decided to carry out our own audits through the commissioning of a consultant who has concentrated on other areas of service delivery. It is important that we, as a council, demonstrate our commitment towards this unique language.

In 2012, Welsh Government produced a new strategy known as "More Than Words". This requires us, as a social care provider, to ask people whether they want services provided through the medium of Welsh. Known as the "Active Offer", it is recognised that people in times of concern feel comforted when they can use their chosen or mother tongue.

Future Generations Commissioner for Wales

We continue to work closely with the Future Generations Commissioner and her office to further our understanding on how to best apply the 'five ways of working' in everything we do, and to work towards the seven national goals.

The general duty of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales is to promote the sustainable development principle (the five ways of working), and to act as a guardian of the ability of future generations to meet their needs, and encourage public bodies to take greater account of the long-term impact of the things that they do. To do this, the Commissioner can monitor and assess the extent to which well-being objectives set by public bodies are being met.

The Commissioner can:

- Provide advice to Public Bodies and Public Services Boards
- Carry out reviews into how public bodies are taking account of the long-term impact of their decisions
- Make recommendations following a review

In May 2020, the Commissioner published the Future Generations Report 2020. As this is a once in five year report and has to cover all policy areas covered by the well-being goals, the report has a significant number of findings and over 100 recommendations, covering both policy and process directed at Government and other bodies covered by the Act.

The Commissioner makes specific mention of our contribution to a number of areas of work within her report, such as our impact on the goals, A Globally Responsible Wales, a Resilient Wales, A Prosperous Wales and A Healthier Wales by setting an objective to 'Maximise the benefits of the natural and built environment for the well-being of current and future generations'. Another area of work specifically mentioned in the report is our recognition of the long-term action needed to reduce and reuse, rather than just recycle waste via the step to 'Reduce waste by committing to the principles of a circular economy'.

The report also includes areas where progress is being hindered. These include a lack of understanding of some national well-being goals and a lack of clarity in how public bodies are meeting them; the need to move from considering the long-term and prevention ways of working to acting and investing in them; and the need to make better use of the corporate areas of change (i.e. corporate planning, financial planning, workforce planning, procurement, assets, risk management and performance management) as potential levers to drive change.

We are studying the recommendations closely to better understand where our policy or practice needs to change and to ensure that we are taking any necessary steps. Some of the feedback may take longer to embed and the impact may not be recognised immediately; we continue to work to strengthen the application of the Act in our work. Further information on the role and work of the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales is available on www.futuregenerations.wales/

Appendix 1 –Additional Evidence that informed the Priority Goals

The table demonstrates how each of the Monmouthshire County Council five priority goals contribute to the national well-being goals. Every well-being goal is directly contributed to by at least two of our priority goals.

Monmouthshire Council priority goal (Well-being Objectives)	Contribution of Well-being Objectives to Well-being Goals						
	Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
The best possible start in life	✓		✓	✓		✓	
Lifelong well-being	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Maximise the Potential of the natural and built environment	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Thriving and well-connected county	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Future-focused Council	✓	✓			✓		✓

Improvement Objectives

The council is still required under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set annual Improvement Objectives and to produce an improvement plan. In order to deliver sustainable development, the council recognised that the setting of well-being objectives needed to be at the heart of the council's improvement framework. Therefore, the two requirements were combined when setting the five priority goals in the Corporate Plan 2017-2022, which also serve as the Council's well-being objectives.

Social Services and Well-being Act and Safeguarding

The Act came into force in April 2016 and will transform the way care and support is delivered, making it a responsibility for more than just the social services department. It is about promoting people's independence to give them a stronger voice and more control, and supporting people of all ages as part of families and communities so they are less dependent on institutional services. The Act will:

- Engage with and empower citizens
- Promote independence and well-being
- Give people who receive support and their carers control over their lives and the support they receive to maximise independence.

We have aligned our approach to this legislation with the Future Generations Act as they are strongly related and have a number of common features, such as a strong emphasis on prevention and integrated approaches. A Population Needs Assessment was carried out and provided an assessment of needs and priorities for health and social care within the Greater Gwent Region over a 3 - 5 year period. Regional priorities were subsequently identified and developed into a regional area plan in 2018.

In Monmouthshire, responsibility for well-being and safeguarding is everyone's business. Services have a clear responsibility for ensuring the safeguarding and well-being of adults, children and young people.

Other important requirements

The Future Generations Act sets out a number of further areas to consider when setting the well-being objectives; these included:

- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, which sets out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children.
- Poverty – the well-being assessment identifies there is inequality between communities and within communities in Monmouthshire.
- Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty - Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity where it is within the proper exercise of their functions.

Appendix 2 – Glossary

We try to avoid the use of jargon, however we recognise that we sometimes use these when they are commonly used in the media or are likely to be understood by informed readers. Some of those that crop up in this plan are listed below:

CIW	Care Inspectorate Wales who register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales
Estyn	Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales who inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales.
PSB	Public Service Board is a group of the main public sector service providers in Monmouthshire
AW	Audit Wales are responsible for overseeing how public money is spent and are the council's regulators

Feedback

Please let us know what you think of this plan and whether it is clearly written. We are always interested to know what you think about our services and our priority goals. You can complete this form and return it to us via e-mail or post, or get in touch using the details below.

1. Do you agree that the priority goals identified were the right areas for us to focus on?

	Yes	No	Not sure	Comments
Priority Goal A				
Priority Goal B				
Priority Goal C				
Priority Goal D				
Priority Goal E				

2. Is there anything else that you think should be a Priority Goal in the future? Please tell us here.

3. We're interested to know what you thought of our plan. Please let us know:

	Yes	No	Not sure	Comments
Was it easy to understand?				
Was the content informative?				
Would you like to see additional information in future plans?				

 improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk

 Matthew Gatehouse, Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, Usk, NP15 1GA

 @MonmouthshireCC

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- ¹ Careers Wales, Annual Survey of School Leavers <http://destinations.careerswales.com/>
- ² Sport Wales, School Sport Survey data <http://sport.wales/research--policy/surveys-and-statistics/statistics.aspx>
- ³ Stats Wales, Gross Value Added <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Regional-Accounts/Gross-Value-Added-GDP>
- ⁴ Stats Wales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings>
- ⁵ Stats Wales, Average (median) gross weekly earnings <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/People-and-Work/Earnings>
- ⁶ Stats Wales, Active Business Enterprises <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Business-Economy-and-Labour-Market/Businesses/Business-Demography>
- ⁷ The total economic impact of tourism, STEAM data. The economic impact of Tourism is indexed each year.
- ⁸ Stats Wales, Air quality <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Environment-and-Countryside/Air-Quality>
- ⁹ Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Well-being-and-Finances/percentageofpeoplelivinginhouseholdsinmaterialdeprivation-by-localauthority-year>
- ¹⁰ Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Local-Area-and-Environment/percentageofpeoplesatisfiedwithaccesstofacilitiesandservices>
- ¹¹ Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales/Sport-and-Recreation/percentageofpeoplewhoparticipateinsport3ormoretimesaweek-by-localauthority-year>
- ¹² Stats Wales, National Survey for Wales, <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/National-Survey-for-Wales>