

SUBJECT	Audit Wales Work Programme: Council Progress Update
MEETING:	Governance and Audit Committee
DATE:	28th February 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the committee with an update on the progress against the Audit Wales Work Programme up to February 2022 so that the committee can assure itself of the effectiveness of the council's response.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That members scrutinise the council's response to the Audit Wales work programme, seeking assurance that adequate progress is being made.
- 2.2 That members refer on any issues contained within Audit Wales national studies to other committees for consideration where they identify there are findings of particular relevance to the council.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Each year, Audit Wales produces an Audit Plan, which sets out the work they intend to undertake to discharge their duties, and this is presented to Governance and Audit committee upon publication. Since the implementation of the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021, Audit Wales is responsible for:
- Auditing of accounts
 - Examining how public bodies manage and spend public money, including but not limited to their arrangements for securing value for money in the use of resources and making recommendations to improve the value for money of local government
 - Assessing the extent to which councils are acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
 - Carrying out 'Special Inspections' as provided for in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021
 - Making appropriate recommendations to councils and to the Welsh Ministers.
- 3.2 The council has received no statutory recommendations or proposals for improvement since the last iteration of this report. The only new local study published since the last update to the committee, looking at waste procurement, concluded that procurement process worked well, and the small team worked hard to successfully issue the contract on time.
- 3.3 This report provides an update on the progress being made by the council implementing the findings of Audit Wales reviews. This includes an update on progress against existing proposals for improvement, followed by the latest local audit work carried out since the last review, with an accompanying management response. Both of these are contained within appendix 1.
- 3.4 As well as local work at each council, Audit Wales also carries out national studies across the local government sector to make recommendations for improving value for money, and all of these reports are published on www.audit.wales/publications. Whilst the findings of these studies are not necessarily specific to Monmouthshire County Council, those of greatest relevance are shared with the most appropriate department to consider their findings and recommendations. Appendix 2 identifies the studies most applicable to the

council since the last iteration of this report, along with a management response outlining their intentions in response to the study. Governance and Audit Committee has a role in ensuring the council considers the findings of the reports and can refer them to another scrutiny committee if they feel the reports require further consideration. The committee may also refer issues to Democratic Services Committee who are able to perform a coordinating function.

- 3.5 This report builds on the most recent update provided in July 2021. In appendix 1, proposals for improvement that require further attention are marked as 'open'. Where a proposal is considered to be adequately addressed, it is 'closed' and removed from the report; an overview of these is provided in appendix 3. Some of the forward-looking actions committed to by the authority are likely to be reflected within other council strategic documents such as the council's Corporate Plan, enabling strategies, the Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment and the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
- 3.6 The Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2021, published in December 2021, shows the work completed by Audit Wales since the last summary report issued in December 2020. Areas covered within the report include the audit of accounts and examinations into whether the council has put in place arrangements to secure value for money. In addition to this, under the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009, the Auditor General also has to assess whether the council has put in place arrangements to make continuous improvements. The report concluded:
- "The Auditor General certified that the Council had met its remaining Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 duties for the financial year 2020-21, as saved by an order made under the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021."*
- 3.7 Some of the requirements of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 will cease during 2021-22 due to changes in legislation arising from the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. As such, this will be the final year that the Auditor General is required to audit the council's published assessment of its performance that covers the 2020-21 year. The Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2021 is on this Governance and Audit Committee agenda for presentation by Audit Wales.
- 3.8 The specific Audit Wales reports identified in this report, and accompanying management responses, are also presented to Governance and Audit Committee as they are produced. More recent reports produced will have limited progress to report at this stage. All of the recent reports issued by Audit Wales, as part of their performance audit work programme, including the council's initial management response, are available on the Performance Management section of the Hub (the council's intranet site) for members to view.
- 3.9 Audit Wales, as part of their ongoing annual audit work programme, may follow up progress in any of the open or recently closed proposal areas.

4. REASONS

To ensure the authority responds appropriately to Audit Wales proposals and recommendations to secure the improvements required.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Finance and any other resource implications of activity related to responses to the proposals will need to be considered by the relevant responsibility holders.

6. CONSULTEES

Individual Audit Report Responsible Officers

Deputy Chief Executive/Chief Officer, Resources

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Audit Wales Audit Plan 2021
Audit Wales Annual Audit Summary 2021

8. AUTHORS

Emma Davies, Performance Officer
E-mail: emmadavies@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 07989 692782

Richard Jones, Performance Manager
E-mail: richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk
Telephone: 01633 740733

Appendix 1

Open Wales Audit Office Proposals for Improvement

Finance Proposals

Report	Financial Sustainability Assessment – June 2021		
Audit Wales Proposal	To ensure its Medium-Term Financial Plan predicts future funding requirements as accurately as possible, the Council should regularly review its future cost pressure estimates to ensure they are reasonable and reflect recent levels of cost pressures.	Status	Open
	To bridge its estimated future funding gap and contribute to strengthening its financial sustainability, the Council should develop and deliver a programme of sustainable planned savings over the medium-term.		
What progress have we made	<p>Despite the impact and consequences of the pandemic, the budget proposals for 2022/23 see a continuation of our preparedness to challenge all services to sustain themselves rather than to see the closure of services that matter to citizens. Despite the positive and above average provisional settlement from Welsh Government, and the further significant late in-year grant awards from Welsh Government, it is not sufficient to offset the full extent of the pressures accommodated into the budget proposals. The budget proposals also highlight a number of potentially significant financial risks and uncertainties not factored into the budget pressures and, if they materialise and are not mitigated through further budget savings, there will be a need for further one-off reserve funding to be considered.</p>		
	<p>The Council is grateful to Welsh Government for the significant level of funding it has provided through its COVID Hardship Fund but the fund is due to cease on 31st March 2022, despite significant impacts continuing to be felt into 2022/23. The pandemic aside, the challenges facing the authority now and into the future should not be underestimated. The latest 2021/22 in-year forecast exhibits significant pressures within and across services. Budget recovery efforts and late significant grant awards from Welsh Government have seen a £1.94m forecast non-COVID overspend at month 6 move to a forecast under spend of £1.18m at month 9, ensuring that one-off reserves can be bolstered further to meet as necessary the aforementioned risks, to the extent that they both materialise and are unable to be mitigated through resultant and further budget recovery action. For 2022/23, and in overall terms, there are some £10.41 million of new unavoidable service pressures that need to be accommodated as part of the 2022/23 draft budget. We have thoughtfully reviewed our income budgets and, although it is never popular to increase charges for services, the reality is that we need to do so, particularly where inflation is causing the cost of services to rise. Similarly, national funding is not keeping pace with demands on local authorities so local taxation is, by default, having to shoulder a greater proportion of our overall funding and the 2022/23 draft budget proposals assume a council tax rise of 3.95% for 2022/23 for modelling purposes.</p>		
	<p>The draft budget proposals are supported by a one-off contribution of £863k from the Council's limited general reserve (Council Fund balance). This reserve headroom and cover being put in place in the last two financial years through late Welsh Government grant received in 2020/21 and a significant one-off recovery of VAT in 2019/20. Efforts are to continue to mitigate as much as possible the level of reserve contribution supporting the budget proposals for 2022/23 as the reserve headroom is needed to also support the Council finances being put back on a</p>		

sustainable footing over the medium term. The Council Fund balance provides limited cover for unforeseen future eventualities and where mitigating budgetary recovery action is unable to manage such pressures on the Council's budget.

The Council is also having to make a continued use of Welsh Government guidance that allows local authorities in Wales to fund one-off revenue costs associated with service reform from useable capital receipts held. This in turn will impact on useable capital receipts available to fund future capital programmes. However, and similar to the need to draw on one-off reserve balances, it is a necessary measure to allow the 2022/23 budget proposals to be funded and without recourse to reductions needing to be made to frontline services. The planning assumption is to work towards significantly reducing or removing reliance on this mechanism to support the revenue budget from 2023/24 onwards.

After several years of taking significant resource out of the budget, the means of achieving further savings becomes increasingly more challenging. This has been exacerbated by the pandemic and where officer time has had to be diverted to the emergency response and ensuring vital services are delivered, and more recently to respond to the resultant increased demand on services. The in-year over spend, whilst being managed via a recovery plan and ameliorated by late significant WG grants, again sees significant underlying and recurrent service pressures carried through into 2022/23 and with this already challenging backdrop, has made the budget challenge even more acute, though the extent of that challenge was aided by the positive above average settlement. The draft 2022/23 budget proposals in total bring forward savings of £1.55m. Work continues in parallel to develop ideas and proposals such that they can be brought into the budget once they are sufficiently progressed. All proposals have been considered and tested through an initial process of independent challenge by officers and Cabinet Members.

	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale
Further action planned	A medium-term financial plan which reflects realistic and accurate funding requirements as to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term in line with corporate priorities.	Ensure the Medium-Term Financial Plan reflects realistic future cost pressures as accurately as possible based on known information and informed by up to date and accurate service-based data.	Chief Officer Resources	December 2022
	In parallel with the above, to develop and deliver a programme of sustainable planned savings over the medium-term to allow a balanced budget to be set that delivers on agreed Corporate priorities.	A robust and detailed review of planned savings brought forward that ensure that the impact on service delivery is mitigated where possible and that contributes to an overall sustainable budget position in the medium term.	Chief Officer Resources	December 2022

Asset Management proposals

Report	Audit Wales review of Asset Management – November 2017				
Audit Wales Proposal	<p>The Council's asset management arrangements could be strengthened by: Developing and delivering a long-term sustainable strategy for its assets based on a thorough assessment of needs, costs and benefits supported by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ short, medium and long-term performance indicators; ○ embedded governance arrangements to support the strategic management of assets; ○ IT asset management systems which integrate more effectively with other systems to facilitate better information capture and use; and ○ Utilising information arising from stakeholder consultation and engagement including what the Council has learnt about its experience of its community asset transfers to better inform its decision-making. 			Status	Open
What progress have we made	<p>Work had begun on new replacement IT asset management software, with specific functionality to improve the effectiveness of communication between the council's property and asset management teams. This has been put on hold during the pandemic as resources have been diverted to assist in the pandemic response. It has however been prioritised as a project by the Digital Design & Innovation Team so it is anticipated that work will recommence on this shortly.</p> <p>A five-year Asset Management Strategy has been developed, to run concurrently with the council's five-year Corporate Plan. This will undergo a review later this year when the new administration has been elected. The associated Asset Management Plan is reviewed annually, and supported by the service business plan, both of which contain relevant performance indicators. Both of these plans are updated on a quarterly basis, in line with the council's service business planning principles.</p>				
Further action planned	Desired Result	Action	Responsible Officer	Timescale	
	Clarity over the Council's approach to the use of its assets to support robust decision making.	Replace the IT system with a system that incorporates the Financial Asset Register as well as providing a comprehensive solution for the effective management of property data	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	March 2023	

Audit Wales Performance Audit Work

Report	Waste Procurement Review – October 2021
Outline of the review	The purpose of the review is to seek assurance that the council has a sustainable plan to improve its waste service; one that offers value for money, secures improved performance and is sustainable over the long term. As part of this, Audit Wales will consider whether the council is building in all relevant and reasonable considerations into its procurement arrangements to ensure that its waste and recycling contracts contribute to a sustainable service.
Audit Wales Summary	Audit Wales found that the procurement process went well overall, and the small team involved worked hard to successfully issue the contract on time. Audit Wales also felt the Council would benefit from a local waste management strategy setting out its long-term vision and priorities for waste and recycling services in Monmouthshire.
Management Response	<p>Waste management would like to thank Audit Wales for working with us over the last year on “live” projects. This is a new way for us working with Audit Wales and allowed us to review and hopefully improve outcomes as part of the process rather than in a purely reflective way at post-project stage.</p> <p>We also welcome the Audit Wales report and appreciate the observations and feedback within. We recognise that reflective reviews are equally important and will build on this feedback to make further improvements going forward.</p> <p>With regard to an overarching strategy, Wales has set itself ambitious and challenging targets and Welsh Government have set out how these targets can be achieved. These strategic aims are captured in Towards Zero Waste and supported by detailed service delivery methodology through The Collections Blueprint. As part of the Welsh Government funding for recycling services there is a commitment by all local authorities to work towards improving recycling and move towards zero waste. Our aims and objectives are mirrored in the Welsh Government Strategies, and we have always felt that this is sufficient in detail to provide MCC with an overarching strategic direction. When delivered in conjunction with Members and line with the Corporate Plan, Climate Change and Nature Emergency Plan and Service Plans it provides a localised solution, but we will review the need for a MCC Waste Strategy in light of Audit Wales findings.</p>

Appendix 2

Audit Wales national studies published since last update

Report	Regenerating Welsh Towns – September 2021			
Outline of the review	<p>This review will assess how public bodies are using their powers and resources to create thriving and sustainable towns, as well as reflecting on the value for money achieved when using resources to encourage town and community regeneration. This work will provide a commentary on the benefit of a new approach to regeneration as local authorities and their communities respond to COVID-19, and will help support the Welsh Government, local authorities and their partners to plan regeneration programmes to tackle these complex problems. Most importantly, this review will be an opportunity to provide a positive and inspirational view of the future of towns to help support recovery and normalisation following the pandemic and to give people, communities and local authorities a sense of a brighter future. The report can be found here.</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="1720 373 1868 667">Status</td> <td data-bbox="1868 373 2085 667">N/A</td> </tr> </table>	Status	N/A
Status	N/A			
Audit Wales Summary	<p>Many of the challenges facing today's high street are rooted in planning policy decisions of the Post World War II period. Between 1950 and 1980, local authorities prioritised regeneration of town centres creating new and greater retail space. However, since then, the growth in out-of-town retail, the progressive loss of 'essential services' from town centres – banks, post offices and public services – and the growth in online shopping have contributed to a steady decline in many town centres.</p> <p>The pandemic has added to these problems and overall, Welsh and local government have responded well to support town-centre businesses during COVID-19. The Welsh Government has also directly invested or levered in almost £900 million in the last seven years to help regenerate town centres. Despite this funding, town centres often struggle. Local authorities are the key public bodies to help regenerate town centres, but they often lack capacity and skills to deliver the sustainable regeneration needed. Powers that can help stimulate town-centre regeneration are not utilised effectively nor consistently.</p> <p>Town centre regeneration remains a national priority, but the Welsh Government's 'town-centre-first' policy is not yet fully embedded. This raises some questions about the strategies that are needed today to help create sustainable town centres. Often the starting point for discussions has been for government – national and local – to define the policies and instruments they propose to use to address the problems facing town centres. This has been the approach taken in Wales, but it has mostly fallen short of addressing the many problems in our town centres.</p> <p>National and local government need to deliver integrated solutions and make brave decisions going forward, providing honest, strong and dynamic leadership. Local authorities are well-placed to prioritise and lead on place planning but need to be clear on the purpose of their town centres and involve public sector partners, the third sector, town and community councils, communities and businesses in decisions. Valuing</p>			

	and using information to fully understand problems and identify the best solutions have to be improved. Local authorities will also have to become increasingly more interventionist to address the challenges facing town centres.
Management Response	This is a considerable report and time is being taken to review the findings and explore how the recommendations can be implemented within the context of Monmouthshire County Council's frameworks and practices. Our town centres have seen significant changes since the start of the pandemic to allow them to function effectively and safely, and these have been guided and refined through engagement with councillors, businesses, residents, and other stakeholders. Discussions about the broader regeneration vision for some of our towns are ongoing, including the extent to which those temporary Covid-driven changes should be retained in the long term. These discussions will include the findings of this report going forward to establish the best mechanism for their integration.

Report	Financial Sustainability of Local Government – COVID Impact, Recovery and Future Challenges – September 2021		
Outline of the review	<p>Before the pandemic, councils were facing tight budgets and in the last decade, council spending has fallen by 8%. Public borrowing has increased overall due to the pandemic and Welsh Government has allocated £660 million additional funding as well as other additional funding for support, including funding for teachers to cover the cost of catch-up support from education and cleaning materials.</p> <p>Although councils have received this extra short-term funding from Welsh Government to cover loss in income and extra expenditure over 2020-21, and their financial positions have improved due to this funding, they still face longer-term challenges. Our review looks at local government financial sustainability during 2020-21 and explores some of the funding pressures councils face. The report can be found here.</p>	Status	N/A
Audit Wales Summary	Funding from Welsh Government to help with the pandemic has meant that councils are financially stable for now but face some challenges in the future. In order to ensure they are able to continue to deliver important local services, they need to develop and implement strategies to strengthen their financial sustainability. The review recommends 4 key steps which councils can take to improve their financial sustainability. These 4 steps are centred around financial strategies, reserves, performance against budget and savings delivery.		
Management Response	The Council is getting to the end of its administrative term. As a consequence of a new administration and a new set of policy objectives, priorities and strategic aims to be confirmed in an updated Corporate Plan later in 2022, the Council's financial strategy and plan will undergo a full update. The 2022/23 budget has been developed on the basis of a thorough examination of the significant budget pressures and risks facing the Council in 2022/23. The positive WG settlement and further significant late grant awards from Welsh Government have avoided the need for significant savings to be made that would have had direct consequences on the sustainability of services that communities rely on. Furthermore, it has enabled the Council to steer a path through the pandemic where it has been able to undertake some modest replenishment of reserves that will be needed to meet the challenges that present over the medium term and beyond. A review and rationalisation of reserves		

will be undertaken as part of the fuller update of the financial strategy and plan. This will ensure that reserves are held for one-off purposes, are aligned with the Council's strategic risks, and to enable its priorities and strategic aims to be met, notwithstanding the need for reserves to be maintained and to support the Council in putting itself on a sustainable financial footing. The Council is grateful to UK Government, and in turn Welsh Government, for providing indicative settlement increases for 2023/24 and 2024/25 that, whilst subject to change, better allows the Council to develop a more robust medium term financial plan.

Appendix 3

Closed Wales Audit Office Proposal for Improvement

Well-being of Future Generations examination of reducing child poverty and social isolation and improving economic inclusion

Report	Wellbeing of Future Generations: An examination of Reducing child poverty and social isolation and improve economic inclusion – November 2019		
Outline of the review	Examination of the extent to which the Council is acting in accordance with the sustainable development principle in reducing child poverty and social isolation and improving economic inclusion. This work looked at the well-being of future generations act through the lens of our approach to this topic and was not a full-scale review of the council's approach to dealing with child poverty and social isolation.	Status	Closed
Audit Wales Summary	<p>The Council is starting to apply the sustainable development principle in relation to its social justice agenda, but does not yet have a long-term plan</p> <p>The Council has a good understanding of the issues and challenges but does not yet have a long-term plan to deliver this step</p> <p>The Council has designed this step with a clear focus on prevention but does not have a means of measuring preventative outcomes over the long term</p> <p>The Council has designed this step to contribute to the seven national well-being goals and delivery is well-integrated in some partner plans</p> <p>Collaboration is a key means of delivering the Council's social justice agenda and there are well established collaborative arrangements which the Council facilitates</p> <p>The Council has identified some groups and individuals it needs to reach to deliver this step and has involved key stakeholders, but is aware that more needs to be done</p>		
What progress have we made	As a result of the findings of this review, the Council developed the following actions:		
	Action	Progress	
	Review the current vision and ambition to ensure it looks beyond the medium term and make this explicit in the next update of the strategy.	An updated Social Justice Strategy was approved by Cabinet in March 2021, which takes a more targeted approach via the insertion of individual targeted action plans namely Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan; Food Development Action Plan; and Homeless Transition Plan.	
	Ensure that authors embed reference to social justice in all strategies within the council's policy framework.	The Integrated Impact Assessment that accompanies all policy decisions taken by Council, Cabinet and single member has been updated to incorporate social justice so all strategies will be evaluated against this when they are approved or updated.	
	Work with partners to ensure that the conditions and systems are in place to	A restructure of the Community and Partnership Development Team has been carried out. The nature of community involvement and complex challenges means this will always be ongoing,	

	involve the community in addressing challenges facing the county.	however the groundwork done through A County That Serves Programme and Be.Community has enhanced community involvement. Recent examples include the development of Together Works and the Community Climate Champions working on the transition to net zero.
	Increase capacity and capability in data-modelling and use of spatial data and apply this to issues.	Additional investment has been made in the council's digital and data capacity and recruitment is ongoing. The GIS (mapping) function now forms part of the Performance and Data Insight Team, and data modelling is being undertaken to understand these issues as the hyper-local level.

Environmental Health

Report	Environmental Health follow-up review – December 2019		
Audit Wales Proposals	The Council should undertake a fresh analysis of statutory and non-statutory service obligations to support and inform any future service changes.	Status	Closed
	<p>In order to develop a prosperous and future-proof environmental health service the Council should consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balancing statutory duties with non-statutory services and discretionary income generation. • Aligning its income generation activities with the Council's overall Commercial Strategy and considering how the service might benefit. • Working in more formal partnerships with other authorities to deliver services. • Exploring how transformation and technology could improve efficiency and effectiveness. 		
What progress have we made	<p>We strive to balance our statutory duties with important non-statutory work streams that we consider provide valuable services to our residents. We will continue to analyse our statutory and non-statutory obligations as part of our service planning and provide clarity on statutory/non-statutory services in our annual report to members.</p> <p>Environmental Health continues to be innovative in income generation and has a commercial culture that aligns to the focus of the commercial strategy. The Environmental Health focus, since March 2020, has been on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, and EHO's have provided the Track & Trace service in Monmouthshire. As such, most income generation has paused over last 22 months, but pursuing discretionary income sources will return as soon as possible, noting sensitivities around business closures during national lockdowns.</p> <p>The Environmental Health team are already involved in numerous working groups with other organisations and work in partnership where required, for example responding to various consultations and participating in Professional Working Groups, food safety, communicable disease, etc. The pandemic has demonstrated the EH team's strength in working with a range of partners on a daily basis, including Public Health Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, schools, care homes and various others. Indeed, the Track and Trace Covid response is delivered by the five local authorities within Gwent, but each supports each other through an agreed 'mutual aid' support model. In this way, peaks and troughs of</p>		

dealing with Covid cases and clusters can be managed more effectively across the region, with the expertise provided where needed most. The feedback from partners and the general public, regarding our Covid response, has been exceptionally positive.

Public Protection, the division within which Environmental Health sits, procured a new software system in April 2021, which offers a range of benefits. Efficiency will be improved via the use of a mobile app facility, better on-line forms, etc., and will ultimately allow officers to spend more time on-site, for the benefit of the public, local business owners and visitors to Monmouthshire.

Leisure Services

Report	Leisure Services follow-up review – December 2019		
Outline of the review	<p>Follow up of the 2015 national review <i>Delivering with Less – Leisure Services</i> recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve strategic planning in leisure services; • Undertake an options appraisal to identify the most appropriate delivery model based on the council’s agreed vision and priorities for leisure services; • Ensure effective management of the performance of leisure services by establishing a suite of measures to allow officers, members and citizens to judge inputs, outputs and impact; • Improve governance, accountability and corporate leadership on leisure services 	Status	Closed
Audit Wales Summary	<p>This review sought to answer the question: Can the council assure itself that the delivery of its leisure services offers value for money? Overall, Audit Wales found that the council is making progress in addressing the 2015 national recommendations and has considered whether the delivery of its leisure service offers value for money. The review confirmed that the council has a long-standing vision for its leisure services but is still developing a strategic plan to deliver its vision. The review also identified that the council considered alternative delivery models for its leisure service, however, this process did not always provide members with sufficient and timely financial information to aid decision-making. Finally, the review confirmed that the council proactively involved members in appraising different delivery options of its leisure service and is further strengthening its performance framework.</p>		
What progress have we made	<p>There were no proposals for improvement identified, although the need for a Leisure Sport and Physical Activity Strategy was noted. Considerable work has been undertaken to improve the performance monitoring framework, in particular, the strategic plan. A thorough Performance and Evaluation Framework has been developed, with an impact driven, outcome-based Service Business Plan and service specific delivery plans. This plan is being adapted as the services move forward with priorities and changing demands such as covid recovery, climate change, mental health and social isolation. To support this, a comprehensive KPI set has been established and work is underway to develop a suite of success stories and achievements to celebrate the outcomes and impact of work on the citizens of Monmouthshire. An external company has been appointed to develop a strategy, and stakeholder engagement will be completed shortly to inform the requirements and direction that the strategy will take.</p>		