

# Community and Corporate Plan 2022 – 23



## Introduction

This Community and Corporate Plan sets out our ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire. It has been written against a backdrop of national and global uncertainty, but we remain hopeful for the future of our place. We are confident in the compassion, creativity and commitment of the people who make this county so special.

This is the first plan produced by the council following the elections in May 2022. It has been developed with councillors from all political parties alongside experts and people from different organisations who came together in the months preceding its publication. Together we identified the challenges and opportunities facing the county and sought to reach consensus on the things we will do to address these.

Our ambition will look to the long-term and be focused on the well-being of current and future generations. The actions in this plan cover the first steps of the journey. We will continue to review our thinking as we develop a new medium-term financial plan to make sure that our spending follows our priorities. We will publish a full community and corporate plan, containing measures and targets, in early 2023 alongside our first budget.

## Our Purpose, Principles and Priorities

**Purpose:** We want to be a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.

**Principles:** Our ambition is backed by the principles which will always drive us. Tackling inequality, protecting our environment and adapting to a world being reshaped by climate change will be specific programmes of work and also principles that anchor everything we do.

**Priorities:** With these principles as our starting point the goals we set ourselves are for Monmouthshire to be a:

- **Fair place to live** where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- **Green place to live** and work with reduced carbon emissions, making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- **Thriving and ambitious place**, full of hope and enterprise;
- **Safe place to live** where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- **Connected place** where people feel part of a community, are valued and connected to others;
- **Learning place** where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.

## Values

Values matter to us. They set out our expectations of ourselves, each other, as well as the people and the organisations that we work with on your behalf.

- **Teamwork – Collaboration** is at the heart of everything we do. We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved. We will make the best of the ideas,

and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.

- Openness - We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.
- 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.
- Fairness - We provide opportunities for all people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently recognising that we will sometimes need to take positive action to overcome some of the innate challenges faced by people with different protected characteristics.
- Kindness – We will show kindness to all those we work with, putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

**A Fair Place to live**

Nobody should be left behind in Monmouthshire or feel their voice does not count. We will work with our partners and you to improve the ways we tackle poverty and inequality, always seeking to include people with lived experience.

What we want to achieve	Some of the actions we will take
Improved life chances for people regardless of income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement universal free school meals to all primary school children with support in the school holidays for those who need it</li> <li>• Increase the outreach work we do to ensure people are getting the maximum benefit support they are entitled to</li> </ul>
All residents have access to the services and support they need to live a healthy life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide mental health support and well-being services</li> <li>• Improved access to advice and benefits for people on low incomes</li> </ul>
A diverse and inclusive workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become an accredited Disability Confident Employer</li> <li>• Work with local employers across the county to encourage take up of the Disability Confident pledge</li> <li>• Ensure that we play our part of delivering the Race Equality Action Plan for Wales</li> </ul>
Citizens should be able to participate in all aspects of life including culture, sport and democracy and have the ability to determine their own futures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a participatory budgeting programme to enable all citizens to have greater influence on how we spend money</li> <li>• Launch and establish a citizens panel</li> <li>• Be a county of sanctuary for those fleeing war and persecution</li> <li>• Provide more opportunities for people to speak and learn Welsh</li> </ul>

**A green place to live and work**

We will work with others in Monmouthshire and beyond to protect nature and the environment, reduce our carbon emissions, promote recycling and waste reduction and maximise the opportunities of a more circular economy.

What we want to achieve	Some of the actions we will take
Improved environmental and river health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem resilience is embedded within decision making at all levels</li> <li>• Work with other local councils, partners and landowners to achieve catchment wide improvements to river quality</li> <li>• Work with partners to promote natural flood alleviation</li> </ul>
Sustainable local agriculture and farming practices with public services and residents consuming more local and seasonal produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote community access to land</li> <li>• Work with farmers to increase carbon sequestration,</li> <li>• Increase the percentage of local produce that is used in council services such as school meals and social care</li> </ul>
Council operations are net zero by 2030 and local communities are supported to reduce their own carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the carbon emissions generated from the Council's activities</li> <li>• Increase renewable energy generation.</li> <li>• Improve walking and cycle routes and car charging so that people choose to walk, cycle or use public transport, and switch to low emissions vehicles</li> <li>• Support residents and businesses to reduce waste and maximise use of low carbon energy sources</li> </ul>

## A thriving and ambitious place

We will work with national, regional and local partners to bring investment, improve connectivity and enable an economy which is thriving, ambitious, enterprising.

What we want to achieve	Some of the actions we will take
Attractive town centres that people are proud of where businesses want to invest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reshape and redevelop town centres so that they balance appropriate retail use with opportunities for business start-up and diversification</li> <li>• Facilitate investment in the amenities, events and experiences that attract people to our towns</li> <li>• Work proactively with property owners and landlords to minimise town centre vacancies</li> </ul>
People of all ages and backgrounds have the skills to do well in work or start their own business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop better links with further and higher education.</li> <li>• Provide more support for people who wish to start their own businesses in the county</li> <li>• Have a specific focus on innovation in sectors which include food, care and construction</li> </ul>
A modern sustainable infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to ensure that all homes have good connectivity digitally, and to the surrounding services and amenities</li> <li>• Continue our investment in active travel</li> <li>• Use digital applications to match those who need transport with those who can provide it to reduce the number of car journeys</li> <li>• Promote the circular economy by growing our network of re-use shops, repair cafes and libraries of things</li> </ul>

## A safe place to live

We will work with partners to prevent homelessness, increase the availability of good quality affordable housing and promote approaches to help homeowners to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions

What we want to achieve	Some of the actions we will take
Increased supply of good quality affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce a new Local Development Plan with affordable housing at its heart</li> <li>• Work with partners to develop homes for social rent on public sector land and bring empty properties back into use</li> <li>• Produce an approach to property acquisition enabling the council to buy accommodation to rent out</li> <li>• Explore new ways of constructing homes, such as modular builds</li> </ul>
Reduce the number of people who become homeless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce a rapid rehousing approach to prevent homelessness recurrence and the need for temporary accommodation</li> <li>• Reduce the use of B&amp;B accommodation by acquiring more properties through private leasing, purchase or other methods</li> </ul>
A more energy efficient housing stock with a lower carbon footprint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure access to sources of advice and support for homeowners and landlords to retrofit homes to alleviate fuel poverty, increase energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions</li> </ul>

**A connected place where people care**

We want Monmouthshire to be a place where people feel safe, their contributions are valued, they feel part of a community and are connected to others.

What we want to achieve	Some of the actions we will take
High quality social care which enables people to live their lives on their terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with partners to enable people to stay in their own homes and communities wherever possible</li> <li>• Ensure that social care services are able to prevent crisis</li> <li>• Reduce avoidable hospital admissions</li> <li>• Continue to support effective discharge from hospital</li> <li>• Review all existing placements of children looked after to assess effectiveness and value for money working with partners to ensure that care will be provided without profit</li> <li>• Continue to ensure that information, advice and assistance is available to provide timely access to social care</li> </ul>
A healthy and active Monmouthshire where loneliness and isolation are reduced, well-being is promoted, and people are safeguarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with public sector partners across Gwent to improve the social determinants of health inequality such as; income; health and access to green space</li> <li>• Provide direct care which is flexible and supports people to achieve their personal outcomes</li> <li>• Maintain and develop early help and preventative services for children and families</li> <li>• Promote whole school approaches to support the mental well-being of children and young people</li> </ul>
A professional and passionate social care workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote social care as a career of choice and find innovative ways of growing recruitment of the best people</li> <li>• Encourage diversity and inclusion within the workforce</li> </ul>
Communities in which everyone feels safe and respects each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with police, partners and communities to tackle anti-social behaviour</li> <li>• Continue to develop our CCTV network and maintain street lighting</li> <li>• Ensure that schools, police, youth and social services work together and focus on prevention</li> </ul>
A council that is responsive to your needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review our customer service channels (online, phone and in person) to ensure that all enquiries get a prompt response and are dealt with by the most appropriate person</li> </ul>

## A learning place

Monmouthshire will be a place where everybody experiences the best possible start in life and has the opportunity to learn; developing the skills and knowledge they will need throughout life to reach their potential.

What we want to achieve	Some of the actions we will take
Improved school attendance and reduced levels of exclusion which remove barriers to learning for vulnerable pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an approach to inclusion that recognises the challenges brought about by the pandemic</li> <li>• Develop holistic approaches to attendance management focusing on early identification of need to address all barriers to school attendance'</li> </ul>
The benefits of the new curriculum in Wales are maximised through excellent teaching and learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a consistent and uniform approach to ensure that excellent teaching and learning is the bedrock of all classroom interactions</li> <li>• Develop a broader 14-19 offer including more collaboration between comprehensive schools and tertiary partners</li> <li>• Maximise opportunities to hear the voice of the learner</li> </ul>
A truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners starting points, strengths and education needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that our provision meets the needs of a wide range of learners including vulnerable groups and those with additional learning needs.</li> <li>• Universal and mainstream provision effectively supports all learners to achieve their potential</li> <li>• Develop a broader educational offer to include both academic and vocational pathways and engage partners from public and private sectors</li> <li>• Develop more support, such as coaching and mentoring</li> <li>• Ensure those at financial disadvantage have access to IT equipment</li> </ul>
A county where people can develop their well-being; be it emotional, mental or physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the affordability and accessibility of adult education courses</li> <li>• Continue to provide a wide range of outdoor experiences and cultural attractions for residents and visitors</li> <li>• Promote healthier lives and increased physical activity through the provision of sports and leisure facilities and open spaces under the MonLife brand</li> </ul>
Continue our programme of school modernisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build a new, carbon neutral, 3 – 19 school in Abergavenny</li> <li>• Increase Welsh medium primary school provision including a newly refurbished school on the site of Deri View and the opening of a seedling provision in Monmouth.</li> <li>• Develop a strategic review of all schools and their catchments.</li> </ul>

## A council that works effectively for you and gives the best value for money

Monmouthshire County Council receives the lowest level of central government grant funding of any local authority in Wales. We have always delivered services within budget while maintaining a

prudent level of financial reserves. We've done this by being as efficient as possible, pursuing innovative approaches and acting with a commercial mindset.

This plan has been produced against the backdrop of economic uncertainty. We face rising energy costs, inflation and escalating borrowing costs alongside increased demand pressures in areas such as children's services, adult social care, homelessness, additional learning needs and home to school transport.

Demands on us have grown which means we will need to adjust our practice and do things differently. We will enact our plan with a financially responsible approach so that we deliver the best services within our means as a county.

We have a good track record of innovation but these challenges are on a scale we have not seen before. We are fortunate to have a passionate and dedicated workforce who deliver a wide range of services and are always open to new ways of working. The things we want to do also require collaboration. Alongside partners, such as the Welsh Government, Cardiff Capital Region, Gwent Public Services Board and community and town councils we will continue to lean into the expertise and enthusiasm of the many volunteers and community groups that make this county so special.

We will strive to maintain quality and promote equality across our services and will begin to use gender responsive budgeting to ensure an equitable use of our resources. Our new procurement strategy will be vital in making sure our budgets are used effectively to deliver our priorities, reduce our carbon while delivering community benefits and social value.


Our approach will continue to be people focused and in line with our purpose, principles and priorities to ensure that Monmouthshire continues to be a place that you are proud to call home.

#### **Feedback**

If you want to comment on the council's objectives give your thoughts on issues that you feel should be considered as part of the council's approach to well-being, please get in touch. We welcome all views however you wish to supply them.

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