

SUBJECT: Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment

MEETING: Cabinet

DATE: 13th December 2023

DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That Cabinet members review the strategic risk assessment, provided in appendix 1, and assess whether the assessment provided is a realistic and evidenced appraisal of the strategic risks facing the authority over the next three years.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The strategic risk assessment ensures that:

- Strategic risks are identified and monitored by the authority
- Risk controls are appropriate and proportionate
- Senior managers and elected members systematically review the strategic risks facing the authority.

3.2 The Strategic Risk Assessment, in appendix 1, is continually updated based on the latest evidence. This is in line with the council's strategic risk management policy; a summary of this is provided in Appendix 2.

3.3 Strategic risks covered by the assessment are those which affect the council as a whole. The assessments focus is typically on key risks which could significantly jeopardise the council's ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned. The risk assessment also only covers high and medium level strategic risks. Lower level or operational risks are not registered unless they are projected to escalate within the three years covered. The strategic risk assessment should continue to focus on medium term risks to service delivery.

3.4 The strategic risk assessment is a detailed document. Any significant changes or updates made to each risk can be found in the 'key changes' column in the summary table at the start of the full Strategic Risk Register. Some of the more significant recent changes are:

- An adjustment to risk 1 identifying that following the approval of the Community and Corporate Plan providing clarity of the Council's priorities, there remains a risk to the council's ability to deliver all the commitments in the plan as a result of the current financial position and wider economic climate and a further risk (1b) to timely and appropriate decision making.
- An update to risk 2 on the Council's financial sustainability reflecting the risk of the initial modelled budget shortfall of £14.4 million in the Council's budget for financial year 2024/25.

- An adjustment to the nature of the risk and mitigation actions to risk 9 related to educational attainment. The change reflects the progress made in mitigating the risk of implementing the new national curriculum on learning and the continued risk of delayed impacts of the pandemic on learning through reduced attendance levels and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools;
- A re-definition of risk 10 related to the Replacement Local Development Plan into four parts (10 a, b, c and d), to ensure the risks of the council not progressing with the Replacement Local Development Plan are clearly captured and mitigating actions identified;
- A reduction in the risk level for risk 13 related to homelessness following the progress made in delivering the mitigating action on the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan;
- The addition of risk 14 to identify the risk of a material reduction in public bus services which may occur as a result of diminished funding for bus operators from Welsh Government.
- The addition of risk 15 to identify the risk of increased legal challenge to council decisions and service delivery through legislative routes.

3.5 The council continues to operate in a dynamic environment and has controls in place to assess, manage and mitigate, as far as possible, a variety of risks to service delivery. The strategic risk register will regularly evolve and adapt in line with this. The up-to-date register is accessible on the council's intranet so that cabinet are able to utilise it at any point in the year.

3.6 The strategic risk assessment was presented to Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee on the 22nd November. The Committee scrutinised the risk assessment and responsibility holders to ensure that strategic risks have been appropriately identified and risk is being appropriately managed. An overview of the strategic risk register was also presented to Governance and Audit Committee on the 4th December to fulfil the committee's role of assessing the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements.

3.7 The Risk Management Policy and Guidance is currently under review and will be informed by the findings of an internal audit review into the council's risk management arrangements which is currently being undertaken. Ahead of this, following feedback from committees, 'numerical' scores have been added to the risk matrix, as shown in appendix 2. This aims to demonstrate changes more clearly in risk levels following an assessment of risk likelihood and impact.

3.8 The assessment is one part of the Council's risk management arrangements. Risk is managed through a variety of processes, for example, through teams' service plans, through Emergency Management Plans and business continuity arrangements, specific project and programme management arrangements, health and safety procedures and insurance arrangements.

3.9 In line with the Well-being of Future Generations Act, identification and mitigation of longer-term risks that will impact on well-being at a community level but will have a lesser impact on the medium-term delivery of council services, is an area for continued

development. Through working with the Public Service Board, we are developing our understanding of future risks and opportunities and how we respond to them in Monmouthshire. The Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment identifies a number of issues that pose a challenge or opportunity for well-being in the county.

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

- 4.1 The purpose of the whole authority strategic risk assessment is to identify and assess risks robustly and ensure risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate. Any specific mitigating actions that have policy implications would need to be subject to a separate decision and a full impact assessment completed at that time.
- 4.2 The risk assessment specifically references risks around safeguarding and corporate parenting and how they are being mitigated. It also includes activity to mitigate risks relevant to the socio-economic duty and Future Generations.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 5.1 The Strategic Risk Assessment is updated based on the latest evidence available in line with the Council's strategic risk management policy. Risks that are identified as needing to be managed through the strategic risk register are included. The structure of the risk register has been developed based on information specified in the policy as being required. Updates to the strategic risk management policy and guidance consider feedback received and take account of the Council's current governance arrangements.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 The strategic risk management policy sets the criteria that needs to be considered when identifying and mitigating strategic risks. Actions in the risk register set timescales and responsibility holders for delivery. The risk assessment will be subject to continuous review as part of the authority's performance management framework. An up-to-date risk register will be accessible to members on the Council's intranet – The Hub.
- 6.2 The risk management policy and guidance sets the reporting requirements of the risk assessment to Governance and Audit Committee, Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. The risk assessment will also be available for members and scrutiny committees to use at any point in the year to inform their work plan as appropriate.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 To provide timely, relevant information on strategic risks as part of the performance management framework for ensuring the authority is well run and able to contribute to achieving the Council's purpose.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Resource implications are associated with some risks and in implementing actions to manage them. There are no additional resource implications as a result of implementing the strategic risk management process.

9. CONSULTEES:

Cabinet
Strategic Leadership Team

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire County Council Risk Policy and Guidance

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Appendix 1: Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment – December 2023

Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment

Ref	Potential Risk	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Key changes
Risks to resources				
1	It will not be possible to deliver all of the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan leading to slower than desired progress towards our purpose as a result of a tightening financial position	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – Medium (8) 2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	The Community and Corporate Plan was endorsed by Council in April 2023. The enabling strategies, which facilitate the delivery of the commitments set out in the plan, are currently under development and are due to be completed this Winter. Following agreement on the council’s future objectives, the focus of this risk has been amended to the risk of not being able to deliver all priorities set out in the Community and Corporate Plan as a result of the current financial position.
1b	A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – Medium (9) 2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9)	This is a new risk added to the strategic risk register, to ensure that that the risk to the speed at which the council is able to make decisions and implement change as a result of the slim majority is assessed and managed.
2	Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	The risk and associated mitigating action has been updated to capture the current in year 2023/24 budget forecast and recovery plan developed and the 2024/25 budget setting process and timetable, with initial budget modelling highlighting a shortfall of £14.4m. Given the current economic climate and financial situation the council faces, this risk score has increased from 12 to 16 pre-mitigation.
3	The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	The risk has been updated with the 2022/23 capital expenditure outturn position. This showed a net underspend of £94,000 against budget, primarily due to overspends of £621k in enabling service transformation and £180k in the refurbishment of borough theatre being offset by underspends in various schemes which were instead funded by grants or the release of budgets.
4	Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16)	2023/24 – Medium (8) 2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	The development of a revised people strategy aligned to the Community and Corporate Plan is a significant mitigating action for this risk. The progress in developing the strategy has been updated.
5	Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – Medium (8) 2034/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	A range of mitigation actions continue to be undertaken to mitigate this risk.
Risks to service delivery				
6	Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements	2023/24 – Medium (8) 2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	2023/24 – Medium (8) 2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	The nature of the risk has been updated reflecting the increased complexity in safeguarding presentations and increased vulnerability within communities. The 2023/24 annual Safeguarding Evaluation report is currently being completed and will be reported to Council in December 2023. The strategic risk will be updated further in line with the findings of this evaluation.
7	Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/25 – High (12)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	The risk and progress with mitigating actions has been updated reflecting risks related to increased complexity of demand in children’s services, the insufficiency of placements for children who are looked after and associated ongoing financial pressures.
8	Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	The risk has been updated reflecting the on-going pressure across the social care and health system, together with workforce shortages in some areas. Progress with mitigating actions has been updated

Ref	Potential Risk	Risk Level (score) – Pre mitigation	Risk Level (score) – Post mitigation	Key changes
				including recruitment campaigns, care at home and the micro- carers project.
9	High absence rates, particularly among vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic will result in a worsening of educational attainment	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	The nature of the risk and mitigation actions have been updated. The change reflects the progress made in mitigating the risk of implementing the new national curriculum on learning and the continued risk of delayed impacts of the pandemic on learning through reduced attendance levels and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools
Risks to policy priorities				
10	a) The council is unable to proceed with the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) due to a failure to identify and agree suitable Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites b) The council does not support the Deposit RLDP c) Delays to the adoption of a RLDP inhibits our ability to take forward key policy objectives such as job creation and affordable housing development d) High phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye limit development opportunities within a significant proportion of the county	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	The risk has been updated reflecting the latest evidence and progress with the Replacement Local Development Plan preferred strategy. The risk has been amended to include further risks related to being unable to proceed with the Deposit Plan due to a failure to identify and agree suitable Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites and the council not supporting the deposit plan.
11	a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16)	2023/24 – High (16) 2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16)	The post-mitigation risk level has been increased from 12 to 16 to reflect the increasing likelihood that the Council will struggle to become net-zero by 2030 because its resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge. Updates on the process for development of the council's plan to become net zero have been provided.
12	The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	The risk has been updated to assess continuing financial pressures that is resulting in an increasing number of families requiring additional public service support. The risk level has been increased from medium to high post-mitigation for 2024/25 and from medium to high for 2025/26 pre-mitigation and from low to medium post-mitigation.
13	Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – Medium (8) 2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8)	The progress with mitigating actions has been updated. The Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan is contributing towards falls in people needing to make a homeless application and has also increased the availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households, both contributing to the decreased use of B&B accommodation.
14	A reduction in public bus services as a result of a reduction in funding makes it harder for people to access key services across the county	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	2023/24 – High (12) 2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12)	A new risk of the possible reduction in public bus services has been identified. The scheme currently in place to support bus operators, the Bus Transition Fund, will likely be spent by December as a result of operators claiming substantially more than envisaged. This would leave a shortfall of £150k to be addressed in Q4 of 23/24, with the authority having to step in to support services.
15	An increase in the number of legal challenges to decisions resulting in delays and increased costs	2023/24 – Medium (9) 2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9)	2023/24 – Medium (6) 2024/25 – Medium (6) 2025/26 – Medium (6)	A new risk has been identified on the risk of delays to council decision making as a result of legal challenges.

Risks to resources

Ref & Status	1	Risk	Potential Risk that: It will not be possible to deliver all of the commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan leading to slower than desired progress towards our purpose as a result of a tightening financial position						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) & Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)		Scrutiny Committee	All		Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified									
<p>The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires us to plan on a decadal and generational basis. We updated our medium-term Community and Corporate Plan following the election of a new Council in May 2022 to align to the aspirations of the new administration. This will inform the development of a medium-term financial plan. The publication of three-year indicative budget settlements will aide this process but higher levels of inflation and pay awards above present assumptions make planning for the longer term difficult. A replacement Local Development Plan is currently being developed and other medium-term strategies such as the Climate Emergency Strategy will be updated. The global outlook has changed the world considerably since 2020, and we must consider the longer-term impact on future generations, and plan for these accordingly. The council’s key enabling strategies that facilitate the delivery of our Community and Corporate Plan are currently being updated to reflect new and emerging priorities.</p> <p>The authority is likely to face significant budget pressures as the UK Government begins to repay the debt accrued to meet the costs of the pandemic. Alongside this, it is expected that the NHS will continue to consume an increasing proportion of public sector expenditure. Both adult and children’s social care are facing acute pressures with escalating demand, increasing complexity and workforce shortages all contributing. While there is pressure to free-up hospital beds, the care system does not have the capacity to accommodate this, meaning that more resources will be drawn into these acute settings.</p> <p>These issues are compounded by workforce shortages and low levels of pay compared to other sectors. In Monmouthshire, high property prices make it difficult for staff to remain in or relocate to the area.</p> <p>Housing shortages are contributing to increasing levels of homelessness with limited affordable accommodation to meet the 2,400 applicants registered as in need on the Housing Register. This is compounded by the National Development Framework, which will limit the development of housing that is affordable for the key workers of the future. Limited housing growth will also have an impact on future council tax receipts, which the county is dependent on as it receives the lowest settlement of any local authority in Wales meaning that more must come from council tax or commercial income streams. The funding formula does not take adequate account of the relative higher costs of providing services in rural areas where public services cannot be easily centralised to generate economies of scale.</p> <p>An additional challenge that poses a threat to the long-term viability is climate change with increasing frequency of adverse weather events. The county of Monmouthshire has one of the highest carbon footprints in Wales with an older housing stock, which will be costly to decarbonise. The geography also means that decarbonising council operations will be more challenging than in urban areas.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder		Timescale		Mitigation action progress			
Ensure affordability and deliverability of the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan in the context of the wider economic climate		Strategic Leadership Team		Ongoing		The Community and Corporate Plan was endorsed by Council in April 2023. It is recognised that our resources are affected by external financial pressures such as rising inflation and borrowing costs. Cabinet will ensure that the commitments in the community and corporate plan are kept under review and, if necessary, reprioritised in response to changing financial circumstances to ensure that the commitments remain affordable. Cabinet have set ‘A balanced budget reflecting objectives, priorities and commitments set out in the Council’s Community and Corporate Plan’ as strategic principle for the 24/25 budget.			
Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users		Strategic Leadership Team		Ongoing		<p>The Council has undertaken a range of assessment and research to understand well-being in the county including the well-being assessment, population needs assessment, and research for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). These were used to inform the new Community and Corporate Plan, alongside information generated by cross-party working groups held in July and August 2022.</p> <p>A month-long consultation period on the 23/24 budget proposals took place at the beginning of 2023, where residents and local businesses were encouraged to engage and share their views. A range of events were held, both face to face and virtually, to ensure all residents had the ability to participate. Feedback from the events was carefully considered and resulted in a number of changes being made to the draft budget proposals and some savings being reversed.</p>			

			The contemporary policy challenges that we need to meet, working with our communities, are complex and evolving. These include transitioning to net zero, tackling the determinants of health inequality, making sure our children do well, and social care reform. We need to ensure that our understanding of these in the county remains up-to-date and current to inform our priorities. There is a need to develop our thinking and ideas as we plan for the longer term. The involvement and participation of and engagement with Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents will be strengthened to help further understand experiences in the County, and to ensure programmes are bold and ambitious.
Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan and adapt to reflect the global uncertainty on public finances.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	December 2023	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be presented to Council in February. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) will follow which will outline a more specific delivery plan. It is important that both the MTFS and MTFP have regard to the cause and impact on meeting the well-being objectives and wider ambition of the Council set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.
Review and update enabling strategies following the adoption of a new Community and Corporate Plan and learning from the pandemic to ensure alignment of resources with the organisations policy priorities.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Winter 2023/24	The enabling strategies will be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose and support the new policy aims and objectives set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.

Ref & Status	1b	Risk	Potential Risk that: A small working political majority makes it harder to ensure timely and appropriate decision making which results in delays and uncertainty in some projects						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) & Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Scrutiny Committee	All	Strategic objective	All			
Reason why Identified									
The local elections of May 2022 resulted in no political party having overall control of the Council. The Labour party was the largest party and formed a new cabinet without an overall majority. The lack of a majority Council has resulted in a politically unstable council, which has had a significant effect on the speed of the organisation's decision making and the ability to implement policy change. A coalition agreement has subsequently been reached between the Labour party and the Green party which provides a slim political majority of one councillor. The democratic process has seen some decisions recently be subject to call-in which can cause uncertainty in some projects.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2023/24	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress					
Undertake pre-decision scrutiny on relevant decisions		Chief Officer Law & Governance and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	Each scrutiny committee has an established forward plan. This is shared regularly with department management teams to seek their input on items that will require scrutiny. A number of special meetings have been held to ensure decisions are scrutinised in advance of decisions. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the forward plan to ensure appropriate time can be allocated by scrutiny committees to forthcoming decisions.					
Utilise members seminars and scrutiny workshops to engage and involve all councillors in the development of policy		Chief Officer Law & Governance and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	Members seminars are being used to share developments and involve councillors on significant forthcoming decisions. Recent seminars include on the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) and Culture Strategy. Scrutiny workshops are being held to seek councillors involvement in the development of proposals, these include the review of primary school catchments and Gypsy and Traveller needs assessment.					
Maintain a fully populated forward work planner of Cabinet and Council business		Chief Officer Law & Governance	Ongoing	An established forward work planner for cabinet and Council business is available to all councillors and is a standing item on the agenda of scrutiny committees to inform their own work programme. There is a need to improve the timeliness of completion of the forward plan to ensure all interested parties are sighted as early as possible on planned decisions being brought forward.					

Ref & Status	2	Risk	Potential Risk that: Some services will become financially unsustainable in the short to medium term in their current form due to increasing demand and continuing financial pressures						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Peter Davies (Deputy Chief Executive), Cllr Rachel Garrick & Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Members for Resources)		Scrutiny Committee	All			Strategic objective	All	
Reason why Identified									
<p>After several years of taking significant resource out of the budget, the means of achieving further savings is increasingly more challenging. Pressures on the budget have remained and continue to increase in terms of demographic growth, demand on services and expectations, and pay and pension increases. Specific areas with pressures include children with additional learning needs, children’s services and specifically looked after children, adult social care, homelessness and passenger transport.</p> <p>Councils are facing financial challenges on an unprecedented scale. Costs and demand have increased significantly in recent years and local authority budgets have not kept pace. The 2022/23 budget culminated in an overspend of £3.5m following acute pressures experienced within Adult’s and Children’s services, Homelessness and Education. The 2023/24 budget set in March 2023 accommodated additional costs of delivering services of £26m or 14%. Whilst income and funding increased by 9% (£16m) to meet some of these costs, the Council needed to find savings of 5% (£10m) from services. The first few months of 2023/24 has seen continuing financial pressures which are having a severe impact upon service operation, including a slow decline in inflation, sharp rises in interest rates, the cost-of-living crisis which is having a significant impact on our communities and supply chain issues which requires more costly alternatives. All of these factors puts pressure on the Council to deliver in a high-demand, high-cost environment.</p> <p>The pandemic has significantly affected the council’s medium-term financial planning. This needs to be developed, reflecting realistic and accurate funding requirements, to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term, in line with corporate priorities. Current modelling predicts a continuously increasing budget deficit, despite a higher than expected increase in Welsh Government funding, with a shortfall of £35million predicted in 2027/28. The Council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and therefore any budget shortfalls will need to be met through a combination of pressures being mitigated, additional savings and income or reserve contributions. This will be particularly challenging set against the backdrop of an ambitious Corporate and Community Plan being implemented.</p> <p>There is not a consistent picture of schools’ balances. There has been a fluctuating trend with some schools showing a continuing reduction in schools balances, which is of concern, and others a more stable trend. However, grants awarded to schools at 2020/21- and 2021/22-year ends have resulted in a large increase in overall school balances. At 2022/23 year end, five schools were in deficit, compared to nine forecast to be in deficit at Month 9. Several schools continue to carry structural budget deficits which will need close monitoring as we move into a difficult budget year for schools in 2023/24.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Ensure that services deliver within budget, deliver savings targets and continue to identify, review and challenge pressures.		Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources		Ongoing	<p>Councils are facing financial challenges on an unprecedented scale. It is widely acknowledged that local government funding over recent years has not kept pace with increased service demand, the additional responsibilities being transferred to Councils, and inflationary pressures. The 2022/23 revenue budget culminated in an overspend of £3.5m which required funding from earmarked reserves to cover the additional expenditure incurred following acute pressures experienced within Adult’s and Children’s services, Homelessness, and Education. The 2023/24 budget set in March 2023 accommodated additional costs of delivering services of £26m or 14%. Whilst income and funding increased by 9% (£16m) to meet some of these costs, the Council needed to find savings of 5% (£10m) from services.</p> <p>A 2023/24 early revenue budget update indicates £4.221m of service pressures, the largest coming from care provider service fees within Adult’s and Children’s services, ALN transport & recoupment, pay inflation and homelessness. This is coupled with a shortfall of £1.896m against savings targets set as part of the 2023/24 budget. Whilst it isn’t unusual to see an over spend being forecast early in the financial year and for an improving position to develop as the year progresses, continuing financial headwinds, increasing demand for services, and the need for service savings of £10m to be delivered within this operating environment present tangible ongoing risks.</p> <p>In light of developing financial pressure, Cabinet recently approved the budgeted use of £2.5m of useable reserves to increase the Council’s overall level of inflation contingency budget for 2023/24 to a total of £3m.</p>				

			<p>The use of a further £2.5m equates to the amount of reserves that were originally anticipated to be required to support the 2022/23 budget outturn position, but were not ultimately called upon.</p> <p>Work continues to implement a structured approach to tackle in year 2023/24 budget pressures which look to explore all available options open to the Council. This includes a review of vacancies being held, the potential for further or alternative savings, mitigation of pressures, and a more targeted review of unbudgeted grant funding and income.</p>
Develop a set of budget proposals for 2024/25	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	March 2024	<p>A budget setting process and timetable paper taken to Cabinet highlights a modelled budget shortfall of £14.4 million for the 24/25 financial year, taking into account the current economic climate, service demand pressure and latest intelligence on likely funding levels. This report notes that the budget will reflect the priorities set in the approved Community and Corporate Plan. Central themes of reducing the impact of inequality on citizens and climate change on communities will hold primacy. Some things may need to be reprofiled into later years of the council term to ensure the organisation remains financially sustainable.</p> <p>The budget setting timetable, contained within the report, indicates work that has already been done, including budget workshops with SLT/Cabinet/Groups/Officers and producing high level pressure & savings mandates for Cabinet Scrutiny. Draft revenue & capital budget proposals are due to be complete by January 2024, ahead of scrutiny by various committees and public consultation in January and February. Final proposals will be presented to Council on the 29th February.</p>
Strengthen medium to long term strategic financial planning as part of the Medium-term financial plan, that is based on realistic evidence and planned scenarios, to guide our budget setting in line with agreed strategic objectives and responsiveness to challenges, such as the cost-of-living.	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	December 2023	<p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be presented to Council in February. The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MFTP) will follow which will outline a more specific delivery plan. It is important that both the MTFS and MFTP have regard to the cause and impact on meeting the well-being objectives and wider ambition of the Council set out in the Community and Corporate Plan.</p>
Develop and implement a commercial strategy aligned to the Community and Corporate Plan	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Timescales as per strategy	<p>The Council has developed and is implementing a Commercial Strategy, which has generated income to support services and developed an approach to commercialising assets and creating a commercial culture and ethos. The strategy needs to be reviewed to align with the new Corporate and Community Plan, to assess progress and set the strategic focus.</p> <p>In 2022/23 investment properties overspent by £290k due to bad debt provision for a tenant in Newport Leisure Park who has gone into administration and higher than anticipated energy costs on vacant units at Castlegate Business Park. These three vacant units were filled during this year, however the rent-free period which forms part of any new rental agreement means that the section has fallen short of its income targets. The rent-free period is now complete and in 23-24 will see a full year of rental income increasing the income generated next year by £134k.</p>
Progress the Delegation Agreement with Cardiff Council, for the discharge and provision of council strategic and operational procurement services	Head of Enterprise and Community Animation	Timescales as per strategy	<p>The authority has entered into a collaboration with Cardiff Council, for mutual benefit, in the discharge and provision of the council's procurement services. The arrangements provide increased capacity and expertise to strengthen the council's procurement arrangements, such as in the use of data, to lead to better informed business decisions and business alignment. The effectiveness and impact of the arrangements will need to be assessed on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>The council's Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-28 and delivery plan were approved by Cabinet in June 2023. This strategy ensures that our procurement processes are aligned with our objectives outlined in the Community and Corporate Plan, and sets out our key procurement objectives, which include contributing to reducing the Council's carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2030 and making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and the third sector.</p>
Continue to work closely with schools to ensure their financial plans are as robust as possible to minimise any impact, whilst continuing to improve standards for our young people.	Finance Manager – Children & Young People	Ongoing	<p>Collective School Balances at the beginning of the 2022/23 financial year amounted to £6.956m surplus. The majority of the surplus balance brought forward into 2022/23 was due to several grants being awarded to schools at 2021-22 year-end, including Revenue Maintenance, Winter of Wellbeing, ALN New System, Recruit Recover & Raise Standards, Attendance Support & Community Schools, RISG and LA Education Grant.</p>

			<p>The Month 9 forecast anticipated a draw on reserves of £4.652m. Between then and year-end, additional income including EAS income and Ukraine funding not included in school forecasts were received by schools, as well as some schools not investing as planned. This resulted in the draw on reserves being reduced to just under £2.7m.</p> <p>Five schools were in a deficit by the end of 2022/23, which points to structural budget deficits remaining in some cases, or a lack of planning for budgetary risks in the current economic environment. Whilst the current climate is severely challenging, school balances are designed to provide a level of financial resilience to mitigate and smooth such risks and are not expected to fund ongoing day-to-day expenditure. Officers will continue to work closely with those schools of concern and look to aid the return to a more sustainable budget plan over the medium term.</p>
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Ref & Status	3	Risk	Potential Risk that: The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Peter Davies (Deputy Chief Executive), Cllr Rachel Garrick & Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Members for Resources)		Scrutiny Committee	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	All			
Reason why Identified									
<p>Underlying the Capital Strategy is the recognition that the financial resources available to meet council priorities are constrained by the level of one-off reserves and capital receipts that the Council holds and the level of capital grant funding from Welsh Government and other funding bodies, and the extent to which the Council is able to entertain further prudential borrowing. The core capital programme has been impacted in recent years in order to enable the Band A new schools programme to be funded, which has now successfully concluded. Subsequent to a Council decision having been secured the 3-19 school in Abergavenny has progressed into contract and is in its construction phase, supported under the Welsh Government Band B programme.</p> <p>There remain a considerable number of pressures that sit outside any potential to fund them within the Capital MTFP, and this has significant risk associated with it. These include property and highways infrastructure, DDA work, and public rights of way. In addition to this, there are various schemes/proposals (e.g. Monlife, tranche C Future schools, climate emergency response, any enhanced DFG spending etc.) that could also have a capital consequence, but in advance of quantifying those or having Member consideration of these items, they are also excluded from current capital MTFP. In the event of emergency pressures, resources will have to be diverted. Projects, such as the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, also require significant capital investment to realise the outcomes.</p> <p>The timing of capital receipts always remains uncertain due to market conditions. Future investment in capital schemes is in part dependent on future success of achieving capital receipts and there are risks attached to some receipts materialising. There is a risk associated with relying on the use of capital receipts in the same year that they come into the council and the potential for this to have significant revenue pressures should receipts be delayed and temporary borrowing be required. Significant further capital receipts are now not forecast and until such time as the outcome of the Replacement Local Development Plan is known and for which the Council has put forward a number of strategic sites in its ownership.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Regularly review assumptions as part of the capital MTFP taking account of any new information that is relevant and the consequential impact on the revenue MTFP.			Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Ongoing	<p>The MTFP model was reviewed and updated as part of the budget process for 2023/24 to reflect the impact of the current economic situation, the revised demands and assumptions that this brings, together with aligning with the policy objectives of the new Cabinet.</p> <p>The value of Capital receipts forecast after 2022/23 drops off quite considerably which is reflective of the replacement local development plan (RDLP) not proceeding as quickly as envisaged in the original delivery agreement. This will have a substantial impact on the balance of receipts available to fund future capital investment demands. It is therefore important that reliance on capital receipts used to support capitalisation direction (to fund one-off revenue costs eligible to be met from capital resources) is seen as a short-term measure only.</p>				

			The Council has strengthened its scrutiny and challenge of the Capital Programme through the established Capital and asset management working group (CAMWG). The process in place looks to ensure that projects are prudent, affordable and will deliver tangible benefits to core policy objectives over the long term. The Capital Programme will be reviewed and reconsidered during the budgetary process to ensure that the revenue implications of capital expenditure are accurately reflected in the revenue MTFP and that the capital expenditure plans of the Council remain affordable, prudent and sustainable.
Continue to monitor the Capital budget	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources	Ongoing	<p>The 2022/23 capital expenditure outturns showed a net underspend of £94,000 against budget, primarily due to overspends of £621k in enabling service transformation and £180k in the refurbishment of borough theatre being offset by underspends in various schemes which were instead funded by grants or the release of budgets.</p> <p>102 capital schemes have required slippage into 2023/24 totalling £33,098,000, representing 42% of the total budget for the year. Whilst delays in progressing capital schemes can be expected due to varying external influencing factors, the large number of schemes requiring slippage, along with the explanations given by budget holders, point to more underlying issues such as unrealistic profiling of budgets and a lack of resourcing to manage the volume of schemes being planned.</p> <p>£3.415m more capital receipts are forecast to be available over the medium term than forecast at Month 9, following under spends within the capital programme; additional grant being secured for existing schemes, or; where capital receipts forecast over the medium have increased. Whilst positive, there remains a need for caution over committing any further receipts to either capital investment or increasing the level of capitalisation direction given the level of unbanked receipts contained within the forward projections.</p>
Further refinement of priority assessments in the property and infrastructure budgets to ensure all pressures have been considered and ranked.	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services & Head of Placemaking, Housing, Highways and Flood	Ongoing	<p>A programme of property condition surveys are currently being undertaken by external consultants; these will be used to inform prioritisation of capital maintenance spend. A programme of Health and safety surveys is currently being commissioned. Independent condition assessments of key highways infrastructure are completed as required depending on condition. These inform prioritisation of available capital budget.</p> <p>A review of the pressures and associated risks is being undertaken to inform the capital budget process. A previous review in 20/21 had concluded that further feasibility studies and technical assessments needed to be undertaken on specific infrastructure assets, funded from existing highways infrastructure capital budgets. The results of these studies and assessments will inform the capital MTFP and pressures that will need to be accommodated and funded therein in future financial years. The Capital and Asset Management Working Group will review this feed into the budget process for next year and across the MTFP. In tandem with this, the Capital and Asset Management working group will investigate the impact of significant construction price inflation on materials such as steel, wood, plaster, etc.</p>
Deliver the Asset Management Plan to manage the Council's land and property portfolio	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	Timescales as per plan	The Asset Management strategy is being implemented and actions from the plan have been integrated into the relevant business plans for ongoing monitoring and progress reporting. The strategy is currently being updated to align with the commitments set out in the Community and Corporate Plan, and will also consider the findings from the Audit Wales Springing forward review on asset management.
Help sustain Council Services and enhance the asset base by investing in commercial property assets in order to increase the net rental income stream for the Council in line with the asset investment policy	Head of Commercial and Integrated Landlord Services	Ongoing – see Asset Management strategy	<p>The Commercial Strategy 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-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>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 was adjusted in light of the pandemic and uncertainties in the investment and property market at this time. Going forward, there will need to be a focus on a commercial approach being taken to enable the policy aims and ambitions of the council to be delivered.</p>

Ref & Status	4	Risk	Potential Risk that: Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retainment and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Matthew Gatehouse (Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships), Cllr Rachel Garrick & Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Members for Resources)			Scrutiny Committee	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	All		
Reason why Identified									
There is a global skills shortage, and the impact is being felt in several sectors that Monmouthshire County Council is either a part of or competes with for talent. Some services have identified challenges with recruitment; Social Care, Operations and Facilities are all facing difficulties, which is affecting service provision.									
There is a continuing risk that staff well-being could be impacted by a range of factors from work related pressures such as staff in some areas are facing considerably increased workloads to meet increasing demand, to personal home-based factors such as financial strains due to the rising of cost of living.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Recruit and retain staff more effectively			Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	<p>Recruitment issues are being reflected nationally within some sectors, and the council is not exempt from this. Positions within Social Care, Operations and Facilities, for example, are seeing a dramatic reduction in applicants, and this is impacting on service provision. Solutions for the national recruitment issues do not sit solely with local authorities. However, HR and managers within the council are working together to try to reduce the recruitment problem and determine ways of lessening its impact on services.</p> <p>The People team have put arrangements in place to strengthen recruitment procedures, such as adapting the recruitment process, whilst still maintaining safeguarding and safety requirements, promotion of opportunities and recruitment of graduates, apprentices and work experience. This has led to successful recruitment campaigns in some service areas. The Communications Team are promoting positions in a variety of ways to reach a broader audience, using drives such as 'Job of the Week'. The Leaders Q&A sessions are encouraging discussion between service areas to promote networking and sharing ideas.</p> <p>Recruitment arrangements need development to meet remaining challenges. An e-recruitment system is being implemented to support the development of recruitment as a genuine talent acquisition process. This will benefit recruiting managers who want speed, simplicity and agility.</p> <p>HR staff sit on various local government groups and are collaborating with partner organisations to identify commonalities and information sharing. This is being fed into Welsh Government to inform their decision-making and to influence their response to the issue.</p>				
Develop the support mechanisms to support staff wellbeing			Head of HR	Ongoing	<p>The Digital 'Cwtch' continues, although less frequently, along with a People Leaders Q&A session. The people services team has developed a People Leaders Support Site which enables 'live' discussion/news feed, enabling direct support and a shared learning platform for managers and head-teachers.</p> <p>Staff well-being is affected by a range of factors, including additional work pressure and demand, personal factors and societal factors. Learning from, and building on, arrangements from the pandemic, staff well-being needs continual support. The use of networks and communication digitally, surveys and feedback loops to senior managers, has extended the reach of contact with the workforce. This has also created the conditions for a wider system of self-supportive networks sharing practice, ideas and support.</p>				

Embed workforce planning into team management processes to ensure the right skills, expertise and knowledge are available for future changes	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	<p>The ability of the organisation to plan the workforce it needs to meet current and future demands, and to implement this, requires development, especially given recruitment and national skill challenges. A team with a specific focus on workforce planning and development in the Council has been established, incorporating recruitment, retention, Apprenticeship, Graduate and Internship and training. We have introduced the Apprentice Graduate and Intern Strategy (AGI) to support and increase the number of opportunities across the council. Work continues on this as an integral part of strategic workforce planning. The team is working with service areas to strengthen workforce planning arrangements. A revised people strategy is being developed to align to the community and corporate plan and take account of latest evidence. This will also consider the findings from the Audit Wales Springing forward review on workforce.</p> <p>The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning. A learning management system was procured in the Summer of 2022 and is being implemented in a phased roll-out which commenced in April 2023.</p>
Adopt a qualitative approach to ensuring professional development, wellbeing and information flow is taking place for those that want or need it	HR Manager	Ongoing	<p>The staff appraisal process, Check In-Check Out, needs to evolve to meet the varying needs of the organisation based on learning that a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective for the varying services the council delivers.</p> <p>Arrangements are being developed to ensure there is meaningful staff/line manager engagement and communication by right. Colleagues need to be given the 'right' to seek meaningful 1-1s on a regular basis, and there needs to be a focus on improving the skills of line managers to enable a variety of different approaches to the process so that performance development is realistically achieved. There is also a need to ensure feedback loops are in place to evaluate whether this is happening effectively, and to determine if they are informed by other enabling arrangements such as Service Business Plans, and staff training and development needs.</p>

Ref & Status	5	Risk	Potential Risk that: Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Sian Hayward (Head of Information, Technology & Security), Cllr Rachel Garrick & Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Members for Resources)		Scrutiny Committee	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	All			
Reason why Identified									
There have been a number of high-profile cases across both public and private organisations where cyber-attacks and data breaches have compromised service delivery and financial loss. These attacks occur due to insecure infrastructure or staff who are not cyber literate and may inadvertently introduce attacks through their personal actions. Cyber security can also be compromised through a lack of structured governance arrangements, risk assessments and planning.									
Digital working has increased in the last two years bringing an increase in the potential for loss of data through cyber incidents.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress					
Ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard the organisation's data and systems from cyber-attack		Cyber security service	Ongoing	<p>The Council recognises that total elimination of cyber-attack is not possible, but we will ensure robust arrangements are in place to safeguard data and systems from cyber-attack via: Physical barriers to the network, staff awareness, training and culture and structured governance, risk analysis and business continuity planning.</p> <p>Significant investments in ICT infrastructure and software have been undertaken, which will mitigate against the likelihood of a cyber-attack.</p> <p>An operational risk register, which is exempt from publication under the Data Protection Act, is maintained by the Information Security Team, the SRS Security Team and MCC.</p>					

A cyber security report was taken to Governance and Audit Committee in January 2023 to provide assurance to the committee that the arrangements in place are robust.

Risks to service delivery

Ref & Status	6	Risk	Potential Risk that: Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young people), Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) & Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)			Scrutiny Committee	People Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	A Connected Place Where People Care		
Reason why Identified									
The Council and its partners must maintain a consistent focus on safeguarding vulnerable people in order to both prevent and reduce the likelihood of harm, and to respond effectively to reduce risks if harm occurs.									
The consequences of the pandemic and the current economic and social pressures on families generates pressure within the social care and health system with more complex presentations and increased vulnerability within communities. This demand pressure, alongside ongoing social care workforce recruitment and retention challenges, impacts on the council's ability to protect children and adults who are at risk.									
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) conducted an assurance check in February 2021 and reported broadly positive findings under the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: People – Voice and Control, Prevention, Well-being, Partnerships and Integration. A further CIW Performance Evaluation Inspection of Adults social services was undertaken in July 2022, which includes performance of Adults Safeguarding. This found that <i>"The local authority responds to immediate safeguarding concerns. Through reading social care records, we saw evidence of professionals in the safeguarding team working effectively with colleagues from the local health board and the police, as well as wider local authority teams, to protect adults at risk"</i> . Areas for improvement included further work to embed the threshold for safeguarding concerns and to ensure that statutory timescales for undertaken enquiries are met.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Continually monitor and evaluate safeguarding processes and practice and ensure good accountability for safeguarding. Ensure that where actions are identified from self-evaluation processes that these are implemented.			Safeguarding & quality assurance service manager	Ongoing	Progress against the council's safeguarding priorities is evaluated annually and the priorities reflect the cornerstones for keeping people safe in Monmouthshire, as set out in the Corporate Safeguarding Policy. The last Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2022. The report evaluates the progress of Monmouthshire County Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2021/2022, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2022 - 2023. This evaluation report forms an integral part of the improvement of safeguarding practice across the Council and drives the work of the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group. The updated 22/23 report will be presented to Council in December 2023. A safeguarding 'self-assessment' is undertaken on a two-year rolling programme, on a directorate basis via the Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation (SAFE). The key development has seen directorates sharing the outcomes of their SAFEs through a work-shop approach, using real case studies from their service areas to demonstrate safeguarding in action.				
Drive the strategic agenda and the associated programme of activities for safeguarding through the Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG).			Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding	Ongoing	The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group (WASG) meets bi-monthly, chaired by the Statutory Director (Chief Officer). Every directorate has a representative on the group, and minutes are retained for each meeting. The WASG continues to provide leadership, direction, oversight, support and challenge to strengthen safeguarding activity in the Council.				

<p>Ensure that robust systems are in place within the authority to respond to any concerns regarding child protection and protection of adults at risk.</p>	<p>Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The continued upward trend in demand within both children’s and adult’s services puts services under immense pressure. Children’s services remain committed to promoting good practice around child protection and safeguarding through an on-going programme of service and practice development. There is a joint safeguarding hub in place to manage children and adults safeguarding referrals which assures a high level of multi-agency engagement and timely decision making. Children’s services promotes good practice in child protection and safeguarding through strengths based practice and risk assessments, and staff members receive appropriate training and support to carry out their duties. Family support services across all tiers of need and vulnerability are in place.</p> <p>Adult safeguarding referrals remain in an upward trend, although have recently stabilised. CIW carried out an assurance check in February 2021, and the report specifically identified positive working practices within the safeguarding arena. They did, however, identify some areas for improvement, specifically in relation to the number of adult safeguarding enquiries completed within seven days, and improved management oversight in the adult safeguarding records viewed. The CIW Performance Evaluation undertaken in July 2022 found that there has been an increase in the proportion of adults safeguarding enquiries completed in seven days during 2021/22, but that further improvement in timeliness is needed.</p> <p>The outcomes from the inspection report related to Adult safeguarding arrangements will be addressed and monitored via an action plan. CIW will monitor progress through its ongoing performance review activity with the local authority.</p> <p>Safeguarding reports for children and adults are produced on a 6-monthly basis. This has shown room for improvement in meeting our timescales within the statutory framework. The number of children on the child protection register fluctuates, and at year-end 22/23 was 113. The number of Looked After Children has risen substantially in recent years but has recently stabilised, although it remains higher than the average rate of children who are looked after across Wales last year. As a result, significant demand on Children’s Services remains.</p>
<p>As a statutory partner of the regional safeguarding boards, continue to work with other statutory partners to ensure that there are effective multi-agency safeguarding arrangements and that they are working well.</p> <p>Share learning and development in safeguarding.</p> <p>Implement the recommendations and learning from any Domestic Homicide review, adult practice review or child practice review that is undertaken under the safeguarding board.</p>	<p>Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>There continues to be full representation at all levels of the work of the regional safeguarding board. There is strong engagement in regional approaches to addressing the risks of sexual and criminal exploitation of children; Modern Day Slavery; Violence Against Women Domestic Abuse; Sexual Violence (VAWDASV); and Contest (PREVENT anti radicalisation).</p> <p>The Monmouthshire Exploitation Group (MEG) has been implemented, with representation from the Safeguarding Unit, Public Protection, Partnerships, Police, Gwent Missing Children’s Team, Education and community-based teams. This group has overseen the development of a Monmouthshire Protocol for responding to Modern Day Slavery and Exploitation.</p> <p>The Council’s safeguarding unit supports quarterly safeguarding learning networks to share learning and developments in safeguarding across agencies.</p>

Ref & Status	7	Risk	Potential: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable children due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) & Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)		Scrutiny Committee	People Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	A Connected Place Where People Care
Reason why Identified						

The council is supporting 204 children who are looked after (September 2023). The number has stabilised in recent years, although it remains higher than the average of children who are looked after across Wales. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) being looked after by the local authority is increasing and is currently 17.

The 2022/23 budget for Children’s services was £17.8m. Despite receiving an additional £1m in grant funding to support the development of services to support the eliminate agenda, there was an overspend at outturn of £4.147m. This was mainly as a result of increased demand very high-cost placements for children who are looked after. The workforce position within children’s services also remains challenging, with increasing reliance on employing agency workers which has a significant impact on the budget.

There is an insufficiency of placements for children who are looked after at a local, regional and national level, particularly those with complex needs or disabilities. Because of this, there is a risk that we may need to place children in unregistered provision in emergency situations. This is likely to be exacerbated by the Welsh Government’s policy commitment to eliminate profit from the care of looked after children which could lead to instability within the market. This creates an on-going risk for the council that is difficult to fully mitigate at present.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Continue to implement the fostering strategy on the recruitment, retention and skills development of in house fostering.	Head of Children’s Services	Ongoing	<p>Where Monmouthshire children are not able to remain with their families, providing in-house fostering services is always our first choice. However, there is an insufficiency of in-house carers in Monmouthshire, particularly carers who are able to provide more specialist care or look after sibling groups; in 22/23, there was 1 generic foster carer approved at panel, and so far in 23/24, a further 1 generic foster carers has been approved. This creates an over-reliance on private and independent providers where the right placement for a child cannot be assured.</p> <p>The council is working with Foster Wales to run active campaigns to increase the rates of in-house foster carers to provide accommodation and support to children requiring it. The team is focused on ensuring that prospective foster carers are responded to and supported from the point of enquiry, through the rigorous assessment process and onto approval and first placement. To encourage our fosters carers to continue in their valuable roles, we are working at a local and regional level to ensure that our on-going offer to foster carers – both financial and practical – is as good as it can be.</p>
The service continues to strengthen its preventative offer to support children living safely at home, with their families and communities, and continues to review and monitor the Children Looked after population in line with Welsh Government expectations around reduction	Head of Children’s services	Ongoing	<p>The council is supporting 204 children who are looked after (September 2023). The number has risen substantially in recent years but has recently stabilised, although it remains higher than the average of children who are looked after across Wales.</p> <p>There is a coherent approach to early help and prevention to support families. This allows families to receive support at the right level of intensity to enable parents to provide their children with the safety, nurture and care then need. Services are in place to support the rehabilitation of children following periods of being looked after e.g. Building Stronger Families; to provide medium-term holistic support to families making sustainable change e.g. Achieving Change Together Team; and to provide a therapeutic response to parents and carers in supporting children with trauma presentations e.g. MyST.</p> <p>Over the next year, family support will be further strengthened to provide intensive community supervision and support to children. The focus remains on practice development and the importance of relationships - how we work with families to support their strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes, reducing the need for children to be looked. An additional focus over next period will be to increase resilience within Child Protection services as we continue to work with increased levels of risk and vulnerability within the community.</p>
Develop and expand the Children’s Services Commissioning Strategy in response to the intention to eliminate profit from children’s social care	Head of Children’s services	Five years	We have a commissioning strategy in place to help us understand our placement requirements moving forward. This is aligned with Welsh Government’s ambition to eliminate profit from children’s care. Two children’s homes have been commissioned this year through partnership models, one of which was a

			<p>specialised provision for children with very complex needs. Further opportunities to develop residential and supported accommodation placements are in place.</p> <p>Work is underway to develop further residential placement opportunities for children who are looked after. The commissioning strategy includes increasing the numbers of in-house carers and the expansion of residential and supported accommodation options within the county. There are huge challenges with this work particularly around workforce, resources and the time it takes to develop provision. Whilst we continue to take steps to prevent children coming into care and reduce the numbers of children in care, the demand for appropriate placements remains high in a low supply environment.</p>
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Ref & Status	8	Risk	Potential: Risk of harm if we are unable to meet the care and support needs of some vulnerable adults due to an increase in demand and complexity of cases						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) & Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)		Scrutiny Committee	People Scrutiny Committee		Strategic objective	A Connected Place Where People Care		
Reason why Identified									
Referrals to Adult's Services have increased over recent years, and services are facing unprecedented pressure as a result. There are waiting lists in place for social care assessments and some people are having to wait for services to meet their assessed needs, particularly care at home/domiciliary care. Monmouthshire has specific challenges in providing sufficient home care due to rurality and demographics. Demand following the pandemic and the increase in acute respiratory illnesses, together with the aging demographic has increased the complexity of presenting need, and services are under immense pressure as a result, which is causing delays in service provision.									
The fragility of the social care sector and the availability of care staff remains a key risk. Difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in care posts has exacerbated the pressure, and this is being impacted by, and impacting upon, hospital discharge protocols. The current financial context for both health and social care places restrictions on the ways in which services can respond to need.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Work with Welsh Government to recruit and retain care staff			Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	Recruitment and retention of care staff has been a considerable concern for some time. In terms of ensuring that we have the sufficient workforce, particularly in key posts around direct care, mental health, team leader posts and occupational therapy, this is an on-going endeavour. The perceptions of working in social care tend to be negative; however, we are to trying to counteract these negative perceptions and demonstrate the opportunities, career progression, work life balance and job satisfaction that people experience who work within the sector. Attraction and recruitment of people into the social care sector continues to be a challenge. We were successful in securing a grant from social Care Wales to film a video to challenge these perceptions and support the recruitment of people into the sector. The impact of this video saw a 700% increase of applications within a 1 month period. We have developed a recruitment and retention strategy for our social care workforce, with a particular focus on addressing areas where there is high demand. At March 2023 the number of vacancies across the social care sector was 56; this has decreased to 20 in October 2023.				
Work to address the difficulties in the health and social care system through the Regional Partnership Board and its sub-groups.			Chief Officer, Social Care & Health Head of Adult Services	Ongoing	There are on- going regional partnership meetings to identify and address difficulties across health and social care. These include Gwent Adult Service Partnership, and at a local level the Integrated Services Partnership Board. At a local and regional level, grant money received via the Regional Partnership Board is used to best effect to meet population needs and respond to demand pressure in areas such as hospital discharge and winter planning.				
Monitor requests for Domiciliary Care to ensure demand is being met and delays are minimised			Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	On-going pressure across the social care and health system, together with workforce shortages in some areas, has meant that we continue to face a number of challenges in being able to respond to people's care and				

			<p>support needs as timely as we would want. All referrals are triaged at point of referral to ensure that those in most need are prioritised for assessment and intervention. Access to care and support is not always timely; the number of hours of unmet care needs reached nearly 1,200 hours per week earlier in the year; this has subsequently been reduced to 804 hours at the end of March 2023.</p> <p>We are undertaking case reviews and applying the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act to ensure a strengths-based approach looking at individual, family and community based support where appropriate. We are working to ensure that for both in-house and providers services, home care runs are coordinated as efficiently as possible.</p>
Implement a 'place-based' approach to create sustainability in care at home services	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health	Ongoing	<p>The Council remains committed to developing a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. A place-based approach is being progressed that encompasses all aspects of the community, including third sector, housing, education, residential settings and the community itself. This also needs to allow those wishing to live independently the opportunity to shape their own support to meet their own goals and desires.</p> <p>A micro-carer pilot was launched in April 2022. A micro carer is a self-employed care worker that provides flexible, personalised support and care to citizens who live in their local area. The micro-carer project supports the self-employed carers to develop their businesses as well as providing the opportunity for greater oversight and governance of self-employed care workers operating within Monmouthshire. In the first year 9 micro carers have been entered on to the micro care directory and are now delivering care and support. There are currently 21 people being supported by micro-carers in their local community, delivering 161 hours of care and support in total each week.</p>
Ensure the long-term sustainability of social care providers	Chief Officer, Social Care & Health & Head of Public Protection	Ongoing	<p>It is vital that social care providers are able to provide care and support after the period of the pandemic and as such the council has a role in ensuring their financial sustainability through fair fee negotiations and supporting with recruitment and training. We build positive relationships with our local providers and intervene and provide support where difficulties emerge. We have effective contract monitoring in place, based on partnership approaches.</p>

Ref & Status	9	Risk	<p>Potential Risk that: High absence rates, particularly among vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and the increase in episodes of behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic will result in a worsening of educational attainment</p>			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young People) & Cllr Martyn Groucutt (Cabinet member for Education)		Scrutiny Committee	People Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	A Learning Place
Reason why Identified						
<p>The pandemic caused widespread disruption to learning, with a significant effect on both teachers and learners. Vulnerable learners have been particularly affected, with the gap in attainment between vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for free school meals, and those without vulnerabilities widening. longer-term effects of the pandemic on pupil well-being and attendance have emerged. There is a risk that our schooling system struggles to adjust to the new patterns of need amongst our children and young people in the post-pandemic period.</p> <p>Meeting the needs of vulnerable learners remains a priority and the gap in attainment between those not eligible and those eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) remains a concern. There is variation in FSM learner progress and outcomes across schools. Leadership, management, capacity and performance has been identified as in need of improvement in some schools.</p> <p>The new curriculum was rolled out from 2022. The disruption resulting from the covid-19 pandemic may impact on the ability of some schools to fully and effectively implement the curriculum and this will need to be monitored throughout the remainder of the academic year. Given the external pressures of the new curriculum and the wider aspects of the reform agenda, such as the introduction of the ALN Act, some schools may not return to levels of teaching and learning that were seen prior to the pandemic as quickly as necessary. This also recognises that there will be significant pressures on schools to support accelerated learning and wellbeing provision.</p> <p>There is an increasing demand for support for children with additional learning needs. There are also challenges in meeting the demand for Welsh Medium education provision in the future.</p> <p>Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services in Monmouthshire County Council was published in April 2020. The report concluded that the authority's education service does not give cause for significant concern. There are four recommendations for development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals; • Further strengthen the focus on increasing the number of pupils achieving excellent standards; • Articulate a clear strategy for SEN provision; 						

- Strengthen the use of information gathered through self-evaluation to better inform improvement planning

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Continue to support schools through the ongoing and evolving demands of the pandemic		EAS & MCC		Ongoing	<p>September 2022 saw the return to school without COVID management requirements. This enabled schools to focus on the delivery of the new curriculum and excellent teaching and learning.</p> <p>Estyn has returned to a full inspection cycle and three Monmouthshire schools were inspected in the summer term of the academic year 2021/22. Two of those schools was placed into a statutory category, one requiring Special Measures, and the other Significant Improvement. These schools will now be subject to an extensive monitoring process to ensure that its recovery is robust and sustainable.</p>				
Work with Education Welfare Services to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are able to access excellent teaching and learning.		Head of Achievement and Attainment		Ongoing	<p>Attendance is still a legacy of the pandemic and an issue in schools. Education Welfare Officers are working with vulnerable pupils to bring them back into the educational setting, where possible. There are varying reasons for pupil absence, so a different approach is being adopted for different cohorts, and the Education team are working with multiple agencies to ensure these children and young people return to school.</p> <p>The teams are focused on the appropriate interventions for learners but there has also been work undertaken to provide additional depth and breadth to our understanding of the full range of reason for absence such as those reasons that are emotionally based.</p>				
Support learners' wellbeing through excellent teaching and learning and through wider school-based activity		Head of Achievement and Attainment Head of Inclusion		Ongoing	<p>It is vital that all Monmouthshire settings understand that the principal means of supporting wellbeing in school is through excellent and engaging teaching and learning for all learners. There will be times and areas where this has to be supported and developed by other interventions.</p> <p>The Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing is a structured approach for schools which helps them to understand how they are best placed to promote wellbeing. This has a hugely significant effect on children's attendance and achievement in school. The phased engagement of our schools has been positive: we currently have 43% of schools working with the team.</p>				
Ensure the agreed arrangements with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) continue to challenge and support schools		EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People		Ongoing	<p>Working with the local authority, EAS continue to provide ongoing challenge, monitoring and evaluation work in schools with a continued particular focus on vulnerable learners. All schools will continue to be provided with a bespoke support package that compliments the priorities identified within their own School Development Plans (SDPs) in line with the levels of support they require. There is a degree of flexibility within the deployment model to allow for in-year changes in circumstances and to allow for changes in light of the pandemic.</p> <p>Schools have prioritised the wellbeing of all pupils as a pre-requisite for effective learning. This includes the development of a flexible approach to curriculum delivery, suitable for use in a range of contexts, and additional support to close the gap, to recover and to raise standards for priority groups.</p>				
Develop and implement plans to address the recommendations in Estyn's report into Local Government Education Services		EAS & MCC		Ongoing	<p>Monmouthshire County Council underwent an Estyn inspection in February 2020 and ordinarily, would focus on meeting the report's recommendations. The themes from the inspection included pursuing excellence, creating an holistic vision and strategy for learners with additional learning needs, securing better outcomes for our learners eligible for free school meals (FSM) and improving the way we use data in our evaluations. Draft ALN and FSM strategies have been scrutinised by Children and Young People Select Committee and continue to be developed in response to the impact of COVID-19. We also continue to develop leadership across our schools and create better learning environments for all our learners.</p> <p>The action plan to address the recommendations from the Estyn inspection is being implemented. Recent Estyn reports indicate that learners eligible for free school meals are making good progress in their learning. The restructure and creation of a broader Inclusion Team has meant that the articulation of an ALN strategy will now form part of a broader umbrella suite of interconnected strategies and related</p>				

			<p>toolkits/resources/policies. The Inclusion Team is developing this currently. Evaluation sits at the heart of understanding how well our service works and the impact that we are having on our learners' progress and the effectiveness of the services we run. The recently adopted Community and Corporate Plan now provides a clear framework for action and evaluation of services to ensure that we are working most effectively in the areas of need.</p> <p>It is harder to form an overall view against our Estyn recommendations due to their areas of focus: progression of FSM learners and excellent standards requiring more extensive access to schools to understand and evidence their progress.</p>
Ensure that the Additional Learning Needs review delivers sustainable, adequate and appropriate support to pupils with Additional Learning Needs	Head of Achievement and Attainment	Ongoing	<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. 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 in 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 developments associated with ALN implementation through head teacher meetings and targeted communications.</p> <p>Our model of specialist provision places specialist resource bases (SRBs) at the heart of identified mainstream schools. There is a need to ensure the quality of ALN provision in SRBs is consistent across the county. We are prioritising the development of a framework for the management of SRB provisions which ensures a consistent, equitable approach across all settings. There remains increased demand for specialist provision places. We are developing our forecasting of complex ALN needs to help inform provision required to meet need.</p>
Continue to monitor the implementation of the new school curriculum	EAS & Chief Officer, Children and Young People	Ongoing	<p>The new curriculum was implemented in September 2022, which was a significant challenge. The position of schools in implementing the new curriculum was varied; some were in a strong position as they had undertaken significant work prior to the pandemic; others less so and will require additional support and time to bring them up to speed. For those schools that have been unable to move forward at pace, there is bespoke support available, and a framework around them to continue the move forward at their own pace. Schools will have support from their school improvement partner or their school-to-school link. School development planning guidance has been provided to help with strategic planning over the next year, and there is a national professional learning programme for senior leaders, headteachers and middle leaders. Professional learning support is also available for Teaching Assistants. Estyn inspections of nine primary and two secondary schools indicate that most schools have a clear vision for the curriculum.</p> <p>The Council and EAS continue to work with schools in ensuring that they are successfully implementing the new curriculum and meeting the needs of students. The authority has commissioned from the EAS a county wide review of teaching of learning in all schools. Around 50% has been completed but progress has slowed due to industrial action. EAS and the council continue to monitor the progress schools are making towards the implementation of the curriculum and identify those who may need additional support.</p>
Deliver the Welsh Education Strategic Plan (WESP) in collaboration with neighbouring authorities	Head of Achievement and Attainment	Timescales as per WESP	<p>The agreed WESP is a long-term planning tool, which sets our direction for the next 10 years. It is an ambitious plan and interfaces clearly and closely with the local authority five-year Welsh language strategy, which is currently being reviewed. Despite the short timescale, progress has been made in many areas. This includes the expansion of provision of Welsh medium education. The refurbishment of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Ffin to increase the capacity of the school to 210 places from Reception to year 6 is complete.</p> <p>We have secured additional Welsh Government funding for three years to continue the Immersion class in Y Ffin and extend this provision in other areas of the county. We are consulting on a seedling school in</p>

			Monmouth town, with the plan for it and Cylch Meithrin opening in Monmouth town in September 2024. Progress in other areas of the plan is limited and, in a few, work is to commence during the next financial year.
Continue to improve the quality of self-evaluation in the Children and Young People (CYP) directorate.	Chief Officer Children & Young People	Ongoing	The Chief Officer's report provides an assessment of performance in the Children & Young People directorate. It captures the emergence from the pandemic and the challenges that remain for the local authority. It also assesses performance in line with the emergent Corporate Priorities of the newly elected administration. An evaluation of the progress of CYP in meeting the wellbeing objectives of the Council formed part of the Self-assessment Report which was presented to Council in October 2023.

Risks to policy priorities

Ref & Status	10	Risk	Potential Risk that:				
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The council is unable to proceed with the Deposit Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) due to a failure to identify and agree suitable Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites b) The council does not support the Deposit RLDP c) Delays to the adoption of a RLDP inhibits our ability to take forward key policy objectives such as job creation and affordable housing development d) High phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye limit development opportunities within a significant proportion of the county 				
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible			Mark Hand (Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding) & Cllr Paul Griffiths (Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development)	Scrutiny Committee	Place Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	A Safe Place to Live A Thriving and Ambitious Place
Reason why Identified							
<p>The current Local Development Plan ran until 31st December 2021; it will remain the principal development plan for decision-making purposes until the adoption of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP). This does not change the urgent need for the council to make timely progress on its RLDP and to adopt it as soon as realistically possible to address key issues and challenges, including rebalancing our demography and responding to the climate emergency, and to meet the future needs of the county.</p> <p>Factors contributing to the delays include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Covid-19 pandemic delayed progress of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) by interrupting programmed public engagement. • Updated evidence, for example the Welsh Government published the corrected 2018-based population and household projections in August 2020. This new data resulted in the need to revisit the Growth and Spatial Options and Preferred Strategy stages of the RLDP process in 2021. • Welsh Government challenged the level of development in the June 2021 Preferred Strategy on the basis that it is not consistent with Future Wales: the National Plan 2040, which identifies that new housing development, essential services and facilities, advanced manufacturing, transport and digital infrastructure should be in Newport, Cardiff and the Valleys. A revised preferred strategy was therefore required. • High levels of phosphates in the rivers Wye and Usk have resulted in Natural Resources Wales placing restrictions on development that can take place within the catchment area. • Local elections and the need to ensure the RLDP direction of travel aligns with the new Administration's priorities. • Delays to the council identifying and agreeing appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites • Multiple organisations and funding mechanisms beyond the Council's remit are involved in delivering infrastructure improvements <p>The Council is now proceeding with a new Preferred Strategy that responds to the Welsh Government objection and unresolved water quality constraint in the upper River Wye catchment. A revised Delivery Agreement has therefore been prepared which sets out an amended timetable for Plan preparation. The revised timetable shows that the adoption of the RLDP is anticipated in Summer 2025. This unavoidable delay will impact on the Council's ability to address the identified issues and objectives until the RLDP is adopted and puts pressure on the deliverability of the housing and employment figures over the Plan period, with more reliance on delivery towards the end of the Plan.</p> <p>There are a range of issues and challenges the RLDP will need to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The delivery of affordable housing continues to be a concern. There are a significant number of households on the Councils waiting list, and there are limited remaining opportunities within the current LDP to deliver affordable homes because most strategic sites have been delivered and the remaining few cannot currently proceed due to phosphates. • There is a recognised lack of suitable employment land in the northern part of the County (Abergavenny and Monmouth in particular). Delays to the RLDP mean that new allocations to attract investors or retain growing businesses will not be available. There may be some scope for employment sites to come forward adjacent to settlement boundaries outside of the current LDP allocations but in parts of the county these are affected by phosphate restrictions. • The RLDP will identify areas with potential for renewable energy. A delay to the RLDP will have limited impact in this regard because renewable energy schemes such as solar farms can come forward for consideration via the existing LDP and under national planning policy. 							

- There is a need to ensure the RLDP's growth ambition is matched by infrastructure delivery, much of which is delivered by other bodies. This alignment is required to ensure sustainable development to support future economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress					
Prepare a replacement Local Development Plan to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.		Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning	Summer 2025	<p>A Preferred Strategy was subject to statutory public consultation and engagement for 8 weeks during July – August 2021. The Second Call for Candidate Sites commenced alongside the Preferred Strategy consultation. Approximately 450 responses were received to the Preferred Strategy consultation. Approximately 150 candidate sites proposed for development were submitted, together with 8 candidate sites for protection.</p> <p>Following the consultation/engagement on the Preferred Strategy, a number of challenges arose which have impacted on the progression of the RLDP and require further consideration, including the Welsh Government objection to the Preferred Strategy level of growth and phosphate water quality issues in the Rivers Wye and Usk.</p> <p>In response, an amended Preferred Strategy was endorsed by Council in December 2022 for consultation in December 2022 and January 2023. The amended Preferred Strategy has regard to the above challenges, whilst also ensuring that the RLDP delivers on the Council's objectives and addresses the core issues of delivering much needed affordable housing at pace and scale, responding to the climate and nature emergency by delivering zero carbon ready new homes for our communities, and ensuring our communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic. This strategy also provides the strategic direction for the development and use of land in Monmouthshire (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park) over the Plan period 2018 to 2033 and identifies how much sustainable growth is needed and where this growth will broadly be located.</p> <p>The consultation resulted in approximately 220 responses and 650 representations on the Candidate Sites register. Of significant note, the Welsh Government Planning Division's response was supportive. As a result of the consultation, a small number of changes were proposed, with this amended strategy being presented for scrutiny in September before being presented for Council approval in October. This amended strategy will form the basis for the Deposit Plan, due to be reported to Council in Spring 2024 for endorsement for public consultation.</p> <p>There is a risk that the council will be unable to proceed with the Deposit RLDP if appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites are not identified. Three sites have been identified for consultation by Cabinet following assessments by officers of council owned land. These sites are now subject to six weeks of public consultation. Cabinet's decision on which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites will be included in the Deposit Plan will be informed by the findings of this consultation.</p>					
Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the Rivers Usk and Wye		Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning	Ongoing	<p>Natural Resources Wales (NRW) announcement of water quality (phosphate) issues in Riverine Special Areas of Conservation, including the River Wye and River Usk, has significant implications for the progression and implementation of the RLDP. The Preferred Strategy that we consulted on in July-August 2021 directed future growth to key sustainable settlements (including Abergavenny and Monmouth) within these affected catchment areas over the plan period (2018-2033). The council is proactively liaising/working with various organisations, including NRW, Welsh Water and Welsh Government, and local authorities and the development industry, to seek solutions/a way forward with this issue.</p> <p>Without a solution to phosphate levels, the RLDP Preferred Strategy is unable to deliver the Council's objectives, including the delivery of new affordable homes, in those settlements in the phosphate affected</p>					

			<p>upper River Wye catchment. At the time of preparing the Preferred Strategy, there is no identified strategic solutions to the treatment of phosphates in the upper River Wye catchment area during the Plan period, this shortcoming is unavoidable. In contrast, strategic solutions are being developed to enable the treatment of phosphates in the River Usk catchment area. This will enable sustainable growth within the most sustainable settlements within the River Usk catchment area over the Plan period. The southern part of the County where the rivers are tidal remain unaffected by this constraint.</p> <p>If a strategic solution to the phosphate issue is secured in the Monmouth Wastewater Treatment Works during the Plan period, three named existing Monmouth sites are identified in the amended Preferred Strategy which, along with windfall sites within settlement boundaries, could be developed.</p> <p>In March 2022, a Motion for the Rivers and Ocean was declared, followed by a draft action plan in September which outlined the steps the Council will take to protect our rivers and ocean. The plan outlines exactly how the Council will work with partners and organisations to tackle the issues currently preventing development in both the river Wye and Usk catchments and how it will work proactively to seek solutions to river pollution. It has recently been restructured to ensure clarity on where we lead, where we are partners and where we lobby. The updated action plan will be presented to Place Scrutiny in January.</p> <p>One of the challenges in tackling this issue has been learning our role. The principle causes of the phosphate issues are largely out of the council's direct control and arise outside the county – around 66-70% of the problem is as a result of agriculture based upstream from Monmouthshire, where we have no legislative control. Given the council's limited control of the issue, we have focused on working with partner organisations such as Welsh Government, National Resources Wales and Dŵr Cymru to influence and collaborate on finding an effective solution.</p>
Ensure RLDP growth ambition is met by essential infrastructure	<p>Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding</p> <p>Head of Decarbonisation, Transport and Support Services</p> <p>Head of Enterprise and Community Animation</p>	February 2024/ ongoing	<p>Close working is being undertaken on infrastructure between the Local Planning Authority and colleagues in the Local Education Authority, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Highways Authority, Passenger Transport Unit, Active Travel Team, SUDs Approval Body and Green Infrastructure team.</p> <p>A Local Transport Plan will be presented for scrutiny in November 2023 before being presented to Cabinet in February 2024.</p> <p>An Employment, Economy & Skills Strategy will be presented for scrutiny in November 2023 before being presented to Cabinet in February 2024.</p>

Ref & Status	11	Risk	<p>Potential Risk that:</p> <p>a) The council is unable to deliver its commitment to decarbonise its operations in sufficient time to achieve net zero by 2030 because our resources are not commensurate with the scale and complexity of the challenge</p> <p>b) The Council is unable to deliver services as a result of the increasing frequency of climate-related emergencies such as floods or extreme heatwaves that increase the demand for emergency responses and can cause damage to infrastructure and the closure of facilities</p>			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Strategic Leadership Team & Cllr Catrin Maby (Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment)		Scrutiny Committee	Place Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	All
Reason why Identified						
<p>Tackling climate change and moving to a low carbon economy is one of the biggest challenges facing our society. Rising temperatures and more extreme weather events bring increased risks to our communities and are causing long-term and potentially irreversible damage to our planet's eco-systems, with significant local impacts such as flooding and loss of species. If we are to stand a chance of slowing the rise in the Earth's temperature, we need to act now. In 2019, councillors were unanimous in declaring a climate emergency. The council will strive to reduce its own emissions and work with communities and local businesses to help them reduce their emissions. This will require engagement, community involvement and commitments from third parties. Current modelling predicts a continuously increasing Council budget deficit, with many pressures on the Council's budget. The council's medium-term financial planning needs to be developed, reflecting realistic and accurate funding requirements, to allow a structured and planned approach to service delivery in the medium term, in line with corporate priorities.</p>						

When considering climate change, it is important to consider both how Monmouthshire is contributing to climate change, but also how resilient the county is to the likely impacts of climate change. Extreme weather, such as flooding and the record high temperatures in Summer 2022, can impact significantly on infrastructure, homes and businesses, along with disruption to community life and public services, particularly critical public services people rely on such as care services.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2023/24	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16
2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2025/26	Almost certain	Major	High	16
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Deliver the Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Strategy			Head of Decarbonisation, Transport and Support Services	Timescales as per strategy	<p>The climate emergency action plan was updated in 2021, informed by extensive community engagement and the latest evidence, including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, ensuring actions remain up to date. We have made good progress on some of the actions in the plan.</p> <p>We have developed baseline carbon emissions data for 2019/20, and reported emissions to Welsh Government in 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23, but there is not yet enough detailed understanding about the extent to which some of the actions in the plan reduce emissions to understand the precise impact some of the work we are undertaking is having. This makes it difficult to ensure activity and resources are focused in the right areas. We are sourcing additional expertise and capacity to help develop trajectories and pathways to the 2030 net zero carbon target. This will enable us to establish where we should best be focusing our resources to generate the maximum carbon savings. A carbon footprint data baseline assessment will be completed. Costed trajectory plans are currently underway which will be completed by the end of the financial year.</p> <p>Work to reduce carbon emissions at a regional level continues through the work of the Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) who have identified climate and environment as one of their two key priorities. This work is strengthened through the development of a Gwent PSB Wellbeing Plan which was approved by Council in June 2023 before being approved by the Gwent PSB. In addition, there is also collaboration across the Cardiff Capital Region to reduce carbon emissions, including the development of Local Area Energy Plans.</p> <p>A new Community and Corporate Plan was approved by Council in April 2023 which has set updated well-being objectives for the Council. The Climate Emergency Strategy is being reworked into an overarching Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy to align with the new Community and Corporate Plan, and is due to be presented to Cabinet in February. This reworked strategy will be underpinned by 4 action plans to better reflect the breadth of work that is taking place: Internal decarbonisation, Biodiversity and Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Community climate change. A mechanism to evaluate delivery of these outcomes will be established, including performance metrics where relevant.</p>				
Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change.			Strategic Leadership Team	Ongoing	<p>In recent years, council services have considered what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start thinking about how to adapt to these risks. In 2021, some services updated these Climate Change Risk Assessments to allow service areas to better understand their necessary adaptation requirements. We are in discussion with Welsh Government to better understand their expectations around climate adaptation. We are also part of broader assessments of climate risk being carried out by the Cardiff Capital Region as part of their Carbon Disclosure Project commitments.</p> <p>The Replacement Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change. Changes to national planning policy on flooding are still awaited, but officers intend to take a precautionary approach, avoiding all built development on greenfield sites at known flood risk. Welsh Government has produced The National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales, and in response, Monmouthshire is currently reviewing our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and Flood Risk Management Plan; a new combined strategy document will be produced in 2024.</p>				

			<p>Much of the work to coordinate emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We will continue to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.</p> <p>As part the reworking of the Climate Emergency Strategy, climate adaptation, which includes preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change, will be embedded across each of the 4 action plans. Some of the actions within this include developing the management of green infrastructure to improve climate resilience; increasing urban tree canopy, including new street trees and in car parks to provide a cooling effect; and continuing to promote and support council services with business continuity and emergency response strategies.</p>
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Ref & Status	12	Risk	Potential Risk that: The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		Frances O’Brien (Chief Officer Communities and Place) & Cllr Angela Sandles (Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement)	Scrutiny Committee	People Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	All			
Reason why Identified									
<p>Monmouthshire is a beautiful county, blessed with strong communities and a competitive local economy. However, the county’s relative affluence compared to much of Wales, when viewed through the lens of aggregated data, masks the day-to-day reality and lived experience of those citizens who are experiencing poverty, financial hardship and who do so in the context of the considerable financial inequality that exists within the county. In many ways, living in an area of relative affluence and wealth whilst struggling to make ends meet can make that experience even harder and more isolating. This is Monmouthshire’s particular challenge and one that we are determined to understand and address.</p> <p>For families on lower incomes the rising cost of living, including higher energy prices and cost of fuel, rising food prices and high inflation – risks adding additional financial pressures to households. This also follows financial challenges experienced through the pandemic. This is causing significant pressures and is resulting in an increasing number of families requiring additional public service support from services such as housing support, Mental health, health, debt advice and customer contact and support services. Many of these services have already seen increasing demands and complexity support required through the pandemic. The cost-of living will also impact Council staff, including costs for working, which could impact staff well-being and capacity to deliver services.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder		Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Undertake data modelling to identify communities at greatest risk and use this to target pro-active responses such as commissioning of services		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation and Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships		Ongoing	We have undertaken extensive data analysis and qualitative research furthering understanding of inequality at a local level and how the affects people’s lives. Close working with partners is being undertaken to help understand the situation and act accordingly (e.g. the number of food bank parcels issued, referrals for housing support, nature or queries to Citizens Advice, use of Register Social Landlords hardship funds).				
To implement the discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation		Ongoing	<p>In July 2022, Cabinet agreed a Monmouthshire discretionary Cost of Living Support Scheme to distribute £498,551 of funding to support those most impacted by the Cost-of-Living crisis. The scheme has been designed following engagement with national and local partners, and stakeholders and comprises of direct payments and targeted resilience support in the county. This is in addition to the mandatory Welsh Government scheme, which provided funding to local authorities to provide a one-off £150 cost-of-living payment to all households in properties in Council Tax bands A to D, and to households in all Council Tax bands who receive support through our Council Tax Reduction Scheme.</p> <p>The Council is also delivering a range of activities to support residents including the Money Matters campaign which signposts to sources of support and further delivery of the campaign to staff in schools and other</p>				

			projects related to the costs of the school day. The Council also teamed up with Mind Monmouthshire and Citizens Advice Monmouthshire to set up cost of living support drop-in sessions at schools and leisure centres across the county. These sessions are available to all, including residents and colleagues, and offer advice on ensuring people are getting all the money and benefits they are entitled to, making money go further and guidance on managing energy bills. They also provide help and advice on getting back into work or more secure employment as well as emotional and wellbeing support.
Work in partnership with community fridges to identify individuals and families in need of further support.	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	Ongoing	<p>Community Fridges are citizen-led projects that seek to prevent food waste and to stop fresh food going to landfill. The food is accessible to the whole community with no means-testing. Whilst their ethos is primarily environmental, their presence in a community does have the ability to reduce the amount of money spent on essential outgoings for poorer families.</p> <p>Community Fridges are currently operating in Monmouth, Abergavenny, Caldicot, Goytre and Chepstow, with around 480 people visit a community fridge each week, with each fridge saving around 2 tonnes of food going to landfill per month. We have secured funding for consultancy support to help the community fridge volunteers and to look at sustainable funding options, common policies, practices and developing new fridges.</p> <p>There is a risk that community fridges support residents who otherwise would have reached the foodbanks, which require a referral process and can trigger more extensive support which may be required. We are working alongside the community fridges to sensitively support frequent users to connect with appropriate support, particularly through the Housing Gateway.</p>
Work with the Gwent PSB to use the Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce inequalities across Gwent	Chief Executive	Ongoing	Gwent Public Services Board (PSB) has formally agreed to become a 'Marmot Region', and to work in partnership with the Institute of Health Equity (IHE) to use the social determinants of health approach as the basis for the response to well-being and health inequalities in Gwent. The Gwent PSB have adopted the eight Marmot Principles as the framework for action to reduce inequalities across Gwent as part of the Gwent PSB Well-being Plan.

Ref & Status	13	Risk	Potential Risk that: Residents are unable to secure or retain suitable accommodation, leading to rising homelessness and outward migration as a result of failures in the housing market			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Frances O'Brien (Chief Officer Communities and Place), Matthew Gatehouse (Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships) & Cllr Angela Sandles (Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement)	Scrutiny Committee	People Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	A Safe Place to Live A Fair Place to Live	
Reason why Identified						
<p>The Council is currently experiencing significant challenges and risks in relation to homelessness. Initially due to the pandemic, Welsh Government required Councils to avoid people sleeping rough, then made the subsequent decision to transition homeless services with the aim of homeless becoming rare, brief and unrepeatable, together with an improvement in the quality of homeless accommodation. Welsh Government homeless policy changes through the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Support, whilst positive, has created challenges. Although homeless presentations have remained broadly consistent, the impact of Welsh Government policy has seen a significant increase in demand for homeless accommodation. This in turn has impacted significantly on the Housing Options Team operationally in respect the need to identify alternative accommodation, which largely has relied on B & B, re-housing households, housing management and placement break downs. This has also created placement and staffing challenges.</p> <p>There are problems regarding the availability of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation, the type and quality of accommodation and the range of housing support available necessary to meet current and emerging homeless need. Further challenges are also being experienced in respect of acquiring existing accommodation and repurposing properties due to the buoyant market in Monmouthshire and constraints relating to funding eligibility and Planning. There are also delays in the construction of new homes due to labour and supply chain problems, and phosphates issues in the north of the county.</p> <p>The Renting Homes Act, which came into force from 1 December 2022, has made significant change the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties. There is a risk this could impact on the private rented sector in the County and reduce the availability of rental properties, further decreasing housing availability and increasing accommodation challenges in the County. The Council is anecdotally seeing evidence of landlords leaving the market.</p> <p>Monmouthshire has welcomed more refugees from Ukraine, in absolute terms, than any area in Wales apart from Cardiff. Hosts have opened their homes and all these refugees will need alternative accommodation when these temporary arrangements come to an end. In addition, many of those who have come through the Welsh Government Super Sponsor Scheme have found jobs and placed children in local schools, but are now struggling to find suitable</p>						

accommodation and are faced with unaffordable rent prices in the private sector. A shortage of move-on accommodation combined with uncertainty over long-term funding will challenge our ability to provide suitable long-term accommodation for fleeing the war in Ukraine.

The widening of asylum dispersal from 2022 will put further pressure on the housing market as the council plays its part in assisting the Home Office to move asylum seekers from hotels and other unsuitable accommodation in line with aspirations for Monmouthshire to become a county of sanctuary.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Major	High	12	2023/24	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Implement systems to meet the requirements of the new Phase 2 Homeless Transition Plan	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	<p>Welsh Government has released the Phase 2 Planning Guidance for Homelessness and Housing Related Support, which sets out their future homeless policy intentions. The core of the policy is rapid rehousing and to provide long-term accommodation with support if needed. The necessity to provide temporary accommodation continues to increase, and many applicants need specialist accommodation and housing support, which largely is not available in Monmouthshire.</p> <p>The Council's Phase 2 Homeless Transition Plan, seeks to address the identified issues listed above, and help to transform homeless services in Monmouthshire. We have worked with housing association partners to make additional social housing available for homeless households, and the proportion has increased from 47% in 2021/22 to 62% in 2022/23. Whilst positive, there is concern how much scope there is to allocate further social housing to homeless applicants without being overly detrimental to other housing need groups. We have remodelled housing support to include high-need accommodation for young people, dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement support. We have also expanded private sector accommodation under the Monmouthshire Lettings Service.</p> <p>There remain challenges that need to be addressed including the lack of temporary, supported and permanent accommodation, and the need to introduce either new support schemes or expand existing schemes for homeless applicants, particularly in respect of young people and those with mental health and substance misuse needs. Support is needed for those households in temporary accommodation, which there are currently 117.</p> <p>A Rapid Re-Housing Transition plan was taken to People Scrutiny in February, before being approved and adopted by Cabinet in April. This sets out the Council's five-year plan to prevent homelessness, increase accommodation and focus support, and includes active buy-in from wider agencies involving homelessness, for example, the role of Health and Social Care is extremely important in homeless prevention and helping people (such as young people and those with mental health issues) maintain their existing accommodation.</p>
Deliver the Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26 and action Plan	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	In July 2022 Cabinet approved the Housing Support Programme Strategy 2022-26. The document provides a single strategic view of the Council's approach to homelessness prevention, housing support service delivery, statutory homelessness functions (delivered by the Housing Options Team) funded through the revenue settlement and non-statutory preventative services funded through the Housing Support Grant (HSG) programme. The Council has and will continue to engage closely with Welsh Government in respect of the Council's HSG annual funding allocation, which at present is insufficient to meet identified support needs in the County.
Develop suitable accommodation for homeless people, including long-term housing for all those accommodated in temporary housing and specialist provision for those with additional needs	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation	As per Homeless Transition Plan	A Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan was approved by Cabinet this year, which includes a detailed action plan setting out how the council will address the challenges it faces around homelessness and homeless accommodation. A young person's homeless panel has been established and work has been ongoing for six months. Attendees include the housing and housing support teams, the economy, employment and skills teams as well as colleagues from Compass – the youth homelessness project. The findings of this work will influence work moving forward and will help us to focus resources where we are told they are needed.

			<p>Through Rapid Rehousing the council has facilitated increased resources into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. New arrangements have been established with partner agencies such as the DWP and Shared Benefit Service to support more people at risk of homelessness. Between April and October 2023, 165 awards were given to both households at risk of homelessness to help tackle arrears/debt and households experiencing homelessness to enable them to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives. The Council has also built on previous initiatives to support homelessness, such as introducing Housing First, Substance Misuse Support and support for young people with higher need through the recent expansion of the Housing First scheme with Pobl and the introduction of MoYo - dedicated housing floating support for young people.</p> <p>The council has also increased the availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households through a range of means including partnerships with private landlords through Monmouthshire Lettings; more social homes being allocated to homeless households; more homes through new build developments and acquisitions. This has included dedicated temporary accommodation for young people; the council has been well supported by Monmouthshire Housing, Pobl and Melin in this regard. The increased support for those at risk of homeless combined with the increase in availability of both temporary and settled accommodation have both contributed to the reduced use of costly B&B accommodation.</p>
Prepare an RLDP to address the county's issues/challenges, including in relation to the provision of housing (market and affordable) and employment opportunities, and to facilitate the identification and allocation of additional housing land and appropriate employment land, with associated infrastructure.	Head of Placemaking, Regeneration, Highways and Flooding Head of Planning	Ongoing	Detailed update provided as in risk 10.
Work with Welsh Government, local sponsors and landlords to identify a range of accommodation to accommodate Ukrainian refugees.	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	The authority has been successful helping those fleeing the war in Ukraine to find properties in the area. This task has been made easier by the presence of a pool of local residents who have continued to provide accommodation and informal support under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Eighteen months after the schemes inception, there are presently 54 active hosts with many of these lasting beyond the initial 6 month commitment. In addition to making public appeals for hosts and accommodation, the Council is using Homes for Ukraine expressions of interest provided by Welsh Government to identify new host sponsors and Monmouthshire Lettings to engage with private landlords and identify self-contained accommodation as well as working with refugees to help them find their own accommodation with the help of financial contributions to rent and paying their bonds where they lack the financial means to do this.
Work with national providers and the Home Office to identify suitable accommodation for those fleeing persecution and ensure that appropriate support services, including trauma informed support, are available.	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	December 2023	<p>The Home Office has now made all local authorities Asylum Dispersal Areas. This has broadened the responsibility for accommodating asylum seekers in Wales which had previously been shouldered by a small number of authorities. At present the Home Office's chosen accommodation provider has been unable to secure any suitable sites in Monmouthshire. Officers have regular meetings with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership, Home Office and Clearsprings Ready Homes</p> <p>In September 2023 Council passed a motion committing the authority to formally becoming a county of sanctuary and we are presently working towards awarded criteria. This involves providing evidence that we are: Learning about what it means to be seeking sanctuary, both in general and specifically; Taking positive action to embed concepts of welcome, safety and inclusion. To take steps to ensure this progress remains sustainable; Sharing our vision, achievements, what we have learned, and good practice with other local authorities, the local community and beyond. The responsible cabinet member will continue to be briefed on progress in these areas of work to ensure the Council is doing everything it can to assist those fleeing war and persecution and ensuring that this is done in line with our commitments to community safety and cohesion.</p>

Ref & Status	14	Risk	Potential Risk that: A reduction in public bus services as a result of a reduction in funding makes it harder for people to access key services across the county			
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Frances O'Brien (Chief Officer Communities and Place) & Cllr Catrin	Scrutiny Committee	Place Scrutiny Committee	Strategic objective	All	

	Maby (Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment)								
Reason why Identified									
Following a collapse in passenger numbers during the pandemic, the Welsh Government stepped in to provide support to bus operators through the Bus Emergency Scheme (BES). This scheme has now been replaced with the Bus Transition Fund, however operators are claiming substantially more than envisaged. This means that the fund will be spent by December 2023, leaving a funding shortfall of £150,000 for January-March 2024. From April 2024 the affordability of the existing network is unknown at this stage. There is a risk of a material reduction in public bus services as operators would cease to operate due to financial viability, or move to more profitable commercial or out of county routes, or home to school transport costs could escalate.									
Monmouthshire is a rural county where isolation can be exacerbated when people have limited access to affordable transport. A significant reduction in public bus services could result in the isolation of some members of our community, particularly those who are reliant on public transport to access key services. An effective public transportation system is also key to reducing the county's carbon emissions, which are relatively high per person, and becoming a greener place to live.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2023/24	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12
2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2024/25	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12
2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2025/26	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Lobby Welsh Government for the funding shortfall in 23/24			Cllr Catrin Maby and Head of Decarbonisation & Transport	November 2023	A letter is being drafted outlining the position and concerns in Monmouthshire.				
Reviewing our networks and looking to enhance the demand responsive provision			Public Transport Planning Manager	Ongoing	A Review has commenced. The review is currently analysing patronage figures to assess which services will continue to receive public bus subsidy.				
Carry out tendering of bus services within the county			Public Transport Planning Manager	January 2024	Services are due to going out for tender on 13 th November at the same time as Newport and Torfaen.				

Ref & Status	15	Risk	Potential Risk of: An increase in the number of legal challenges to decisions resulting in delays and increased costs						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible		James Williams (Chief Officer Law and Governance) & Cllr Mary-Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Scrutiny Committee	All	Strategic objective	All			
Reason why Identified									
The Council has seen an increase in legal challenges in recent years. As plans are developed to address the financial challenges faced by the Council there is a risk that those challenges increase in frequency. These legal challenges expose the Council to legal and reputational risk, as well as taking increased time and cost to address.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2023/24	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2023/24	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2024/25	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2025/26	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder	Timescale	Mitigation action progress				
Impact assesses service changes and policy decisions			Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships	Ongoing	An established Integrated Impact Assessment template and guidance is in place and is completed for all decisions that require an assessment. These assessments are challenged by a panel of policy officers prior to decision. There is a need to ensure impacts are assessed at the start and throughout the development of changes and policy to ensure any appropriate mitigation can be undertaken.				

Appendix 2: Strategic Risk Management Policy – Summary

This sets out the Council’s policy and approach to strategic risk management. A copy of the full policy and guidance is available to staff and members on the council’s intranet the Hub (Finance & Performance Management section – risk assessment)

Risk Management is the process of identifying risks, evaluating their potential consequences and determining the most effective methods of controlling them or responding to them. Strategic risks are those which affect the Council as a whole. Typically these will be key risks which could significantly jeopardise the Council’s ability to achieve its objectives, statutory plans and/or provide operational services as planned.

The Council is committed to the effective management of risk. As a large public sector organisation, it is exposed to a wide range of risks and threats in delivering key services to communities. Within the Council the purpose of risk management is to:

- preserve and protect the Council’s assets, reputation and staff
- promote corporate governance and aid good management in controlling and managing risks
- support successful delivery of strategic aims, objectives and outcomes
- improve business performance and better anticipate calculated risks where these are likely in delivering improvements
- avoid unnecessary liabilities, costs and failures

The Council seeks to ensure that risk management is effective from strategic to individual services and employees. Therefore, all employees and councillors are responsible for ensuring there are good levels of internal control and risk management throughout the Council in order that the Council’s specified outcomes are achieved.

The Council uses a ‘traffic light’ system of Red/Amber/Green associated with High/Medium/Low to categorise risk levels. This is determined using the risk matrix below.

High risk	The risk is highly likely to occur and the impact will be major. Management action/control evaluation and improvement is required coupled with continued pro-active monitoring
Medium risk	The risk is unlikely to result in a major issue, however, if it did the impact would be significant or serious . This risk is relatively less significant than a High risk however it needs to be closely monitored within timely management action/controls to ensure it does not escalate.
Low risk	The risk is very unlikely to occur and the impact will be minor or moderate at worst. Risk will be managed by seeking control improvements where practical and / or monitoring and reviewing at regular intervals

Risks are also given a score. Scores of 1-4 are low risks, scores of 6-9 are medium risks and scores 12-16 are high risk. Providing a score as well as a risk level allows the variations within risk levels to be more clearly stated.

Impact/severity	Major (4)	Low (4)	Medium (8)	High (12)	High (16)
	Substantial (3)	Low (3)	Medium (6)	Medium (9)	High (12)
	Moderate (2)	Low (2)	Low (4)	Medium (6)	Medium (8)
	Minor (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)
		Unlikely (1)	Possible (2)	Likely (3)	Almost certain (4)
		Likelihood			