

SUBJECT:	Strategic Risk Assessment
MEETING:	Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	3rd December 2024
DIVISIONS/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

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

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That members scrutinise, on an on-going basis, the risk assessment and responsibility holders to ensure that strategic risks have been appropriately identified and risk is being appropriately managed.
- 2.2 That members use the risk assessment to inform the future work programme of the committee and brief chairs of other committees where issues are of relevance to their work.

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 Appendix 1 provides the latest strategic risk register for the Council. The format of the strategic risk register has been updated to assess risk in line with the updated policy, including applying risk appetite levels. 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.
- 3.3 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. The strategic risk register is a live document and is continually updated based on the latest evidence. This will include adjusting the focus, detail and risk levels of risks where necessary. Some of the significant progress made with mitigation measures for the risks in the last six months includes:
- The development of a Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets key principles to guide medium term financial planning and provide the link between the council's long-term policy objectives and its financial capacity (risk 2). Significant financial risk remains in year and in the medium term for which mitigating actions are being implemented.
 - The development of a People Strategy that contains activity aimed at mitigating risks to recruitment and retention (risk 4). There is immediate pressure faced within workforce planning. The measures put in place by the people strategy are assessed to support the reduction in the risk in the medium-term.
 - The development of strategies to provide the provision to meet social care needs for children requiring support in specific placements (risk 7), and adults who require care at home (risk 8,) supporting mitigation for the risks. There are continuing challenges in responding to the complexity of demand for social care support.

- Implementing a range of approaches and support to improve attendance in schools and reduce exclusions, as part of mitigating risk 9a, school attendance, and risk 9b, behaviours that challenge in schools, which have been assessed as high risks.
- The development of an RLDP deposit plan, that full Council endorsed for detailed public consultation in October 2024. This forms part of the mitigation for some risks including risk 11, climate and risk 13, housing. The risk of delays in adopting the plan is identified in risk 10.
- The development of a Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy, underpinned by four action plans, the delivery of which are an important part of the mitigation of risk 11, climate.
- The risk on the delivery of public bus services, previously risk 14, has been de-escalated from the strategic risk register as it is no longer a significant risk to the whole organisation. This risk will be monitored closely within the relevant directorate risk register, and may escalate to the strategic risk register in future, if needed.

3.4 Following consideration of the risk register by the committee in May 2024, the committee has identified specific strategic risks it would like to seek assurance on the mitigating actions in place to manage the risk. These are risk 2 related to the council's finances, risk 7 and risk 8 related to meeting the demand and complexity of cases in children's and adults social care respectively. The latest update on these risks is contained in the register in appendix 1.

3.5 Strategic risks covered by the assessment are typically 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. 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 members are able to utilise it at any point in the year to re-prioritise their work plans as appropriate.

3.6 Cabinet agreed an updated strategic risk management policy for the Council in June 2024. The council's strategic risk management policy and guidance and risk assessment helps ensure strategic risks are identified and assessed robustly, risk controls are put in place that are appropriate and proportionate, and risks are supported by effective mitigations to ensure, as far as possible, risk reduction/risk management. A period of transition in implementing the policy was agreed until April 2025 to allow the council time to strengthen arrangements in line with the revised policy.

3.7 An overview of the strategic risk register was presented to Governance and Audit Committee on the 28th November 2024 to fulfil the committee's role of assessing the effectiveness of the authority's risk management arrangements. The full risk register will be presented to Cabinet on 4th December. The feedback from committees will be considered in the continued update of the strategic risk register and implementation of the policy. Any key conclusions will be shared with Cabinet.

4. REASONS:

4.1 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.

5. AUTHORS:

Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager
E-mail: richardjones@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Hannah Carter, Performance Analyst
E-mail: hannahcarter@monmouthshire.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Monmouthshire County Council Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment – November 2024

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	Potential risk that: Financial pressures and increased complexity of demand for services, impacts on delivering all of the council’s commitments in the Community and Corporate plan, leading to longer term outcomes for the county not being achieved	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The enabling strategies which support the delivery of the community and corporate plan have now been updated. These will be subject to an annual review, as outlined in each strategy, to evaluate progress and ensure they continue to support delivery of the community and corporate plan.
1b	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	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	A number of special meetings continue to be held to ensure decisions are scrutinised in advance of Cabinet/Council decision.
2	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	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which sets out clear timescales for completion.
3	Potential risk that: The authority is unable to maintain key infrastructure and meet other identified pressures due to insufficient capital funding availability	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The pre-mitigation risk scores for this risk have increased from 12 to 16 to reflect ongoing pressure on the capital budget.
4	Potential risk that: Increases in the number of people exiting the labour market, a UK skills shortage and wage inflation will impact recruitment, retention and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (12) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Both the pre-and-post mitigation risk levels for this risk are decreasing in the longer term to reflect the anticipated future impact of the foundations put in place by the People Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in June 2024.
5	Potential risk that: Loss or corruption of data due to cyber-attack or data mismanagement, which will compromise the delivery of essential council services	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	A range of mitigating actions continue to be undertaken to mitigate this risk.
Risks to service delivery				
6	Potential risk that: Significant harm to a child or adult may occur due to a specific failure of safeguarding arrangements	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	The most recent Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2024. The report evaluates the progress of the Council’s key safeguarding priorities during 2023/24, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2024/25.
7	Potential risk that: 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	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/25 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	A commissioning and placement strategy has been developed, with a specific emphasis on the development of in-county residential and support living accommodation. This is aligned with Welsh Government’s ambition to eliminate profit from children’s care. Two children’s homes have been commissioned through partnership models, one of which was a specialised provision for children with very complex needs
8	Potential risk that: 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	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	Pre-mitigation risk scores have been re-assessed from 16 (high) to 12 (high). The potential risk of meeting the needs of some vulnerable adults remains high; a comprehensive strategy for commissioning homecare through increased block purchasing has been developed. Engagement with local providers to progress the strategy has commenced.
9a	Potential risk that:	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The previous risk 9 has been divided into two related, but separate, risks to better reflect and capture the breadth of mitigating action that is underway. The Local Authority Attendance and Engagement

	Failure to return attendance figures to those seen before the pandemic, particularly among vulnerable pupils and those eligible for free school meals, could lead to a negative impact on educational attainment			Policy has been updated to encompass all aspects of the Engaging, Belonging and Participating guidance issued by Welsh Government in October 2023 and will be consulted on with schools.
9b	Potential risk that: An increase in behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic may lead to harm to a pupil or member of staff	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	The previous risk 9 has been divided into two related, but separate, risks to better reflect and capture the breadth of mitigating action that is underway. A range of action is being undertaken to mitigate this risk, including the work of the Education Support Team which has enabled those primary aged learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) or of Permanent Exclusions (PEX) to receive support from specialist professionals, alongside the continued input of the Educational Psychology Service.
Risks to policy priorities				
10	Potential risk that: The Council does not support the Replacement Local Development Plan, leading to delays in its adoption which restricts our ability to take forward key policy objective such as job creation, affordable housing development and the adoption of key policies to protect the environment and tackle climate change	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	This risk has been refocused to reflect progress made in developing the replacement local development plan and the risk that this may not be approved by Council following public consultation. The post-mitigation risk level for 26/27 has increased from medium to high.
11	Potential risk that: 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	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	2024/25 – High (16) 2025/26 – High (16) 2026/27 – High (16)	The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. This strategy is underpinned by four 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. Progress in implementing the strategy is regularly monitored by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.
12	Potential risk that: The rising cost of living tips more families into crisis requiring public service interventions which diverts resources from other policy priorities	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	In October 24, the Community Development Team, together with partners such as Citizen's Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others, held the first in a series of events across the county to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Representatives from Benthgyl library of things also attended to ensure a joined-up approach to tackling poverty interventions.
13	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	2024/25 – High (12) 2025/26 – High (12) 2026/27 – High (12)	2024/25 – Medium (8) 2025/26 – Medium (8) 2026/27 – Medium (8)	Rapid rehousing is facilitating increased resource into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. Accommodation has started to be acquired for temporary accommodation use and the first approval has been given to re-purpose a council owned agricultural property.
14	Potential risk that: Increased legal challenge to council decisions and service delivery resulting in delays, increased costs and reputational harm.	2024/25 – Medium (9) 2025/26 – Medium (9) 2026/27 – Medium (9)	2024/25 – Medium (6) 2025/26 – Medium (6) 2026/27 – Medium (6)	This has been identified due to the risk of delays to council decision making as a result of legal challenges.

Risks to resources

Ref & Status	1	Risk	Potential Risk that: Financial pressures and increased complexity of demand for services, impacts on delivering all of the council's commitments in the Community and Corporate plan, leading to longer term outcomes for the county not being achieved.						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Paul Matthews (Chief Executive) and Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All All	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
The council has an agreed Community & Corporate Plan 2022-28 that contains six well-being objectives which focus on the longer-term future of the county and aims to address complex challenges, in line with the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The objectives include a focus on equality, climate change, economy and skills, housing, care and support and learning. The Council is facing significant budget pressures and increasing complexity in demand for its services. The contemporary policy challenges that need to be addressed, working with communities, are complex and evolving. The immediate pressures the council is facing risks impacting on the ability and resources to deliver the longer-term objectives in the plan and meeting the requirements on the Act.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Regularly review progress made in implementing the commitments of the community and corporate plan, ensuring resource is targeted in the most pertinent areas		Strategic Leadership Team Six Monthly (December 2024 & June 2025)		A six-month progress report and annual self-assessment report on the delivery of the community and corporate plan is completed. This provides a regular review of progress made in implementing the commitments made in the plan and facilitates targeted activity and intervention in areas requiring further development. The community and corporate plan measurement framework has been revised and agreed by Cabinet in September. This has ensured an increased focus on outcomes in measuring progress of the plan. A dashboard is updated quarterly to track progress in meeting milestones, measures and targets.					
Review the progress of the Enabling Strategies which support delivery of the community and corporate plan to ensure alignment of resources with policy priorities		Enabling Strategy lead officers. Annual review timescales as per each strategy, ranging from February – June 2025.		The enabling strategies which support the delivery of the community and corporate plan have now been updated. These include: the People Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy and Digital and Data strategy. These will be subject to an annual review, as outlined in each strategy, to evaluate progress and ensure they continue to support delivery of the community and corporate plan.					
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 March 2025		The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. This strategy provides the strategic framework for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and a set of key principles to guide medium term financial planning. These two together form the link between the council's long-term policy objectives and its financial capacity. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which sets out clear timescales for completion; this is monitored regularly by Cabinet and Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee. Given significant financial pressures modelled in the MTFP, a programme of change is being implemented. This is being developed as part of the budget setting process. This will assess the opportunities for service change and cost reduction, whilst ensuring appropriate service resilience is maintained. Areas of consideration include: the role of commissioning services, identifying scope for further income generation and sustained focus on productivity and efficiency.					
Engage with communities to understand challenges and opportunities from their perspective including participation of residents and service users		Strategic Leadership Team March 2025 (further activity ongoing)		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 development of Community and Corporate Plan. A resident survey is being undertaken to understand resident's views on their local area and council services. The results will be analysed and used to evaluate progress with the community and corporate plan and inform future decision making in the council. A consultation exercise on the proposed 2025/26 budget will be undertaken in January and February 2025.					

		The involvement and participation of and engagement with Monmouthshire's community groups, public service partners, service users and residents continue to be strengthened to help further understand experiences in the County.
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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) and Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All All	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic, Service delivery Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
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 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
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
2026/27	Almost certain	Substantial	High	12	2026/27	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) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All All	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
Councils across the UK are continuing to face significant financial challenges. It is widely acknowledged that local government funding has not kept pace with increased service demand and inflationary pressures. The Council has seen continuing financial headwinds which are severely impacting the service operating environment. The Inflationary drivers impacting pay and supplies and services continue to far outstrip available resources: demand led pressures continue to increase in the areas of Homelessness, Social Care, Children's additional learning needs, and Transport; interest rates remain significantly higher than seen in previous years; the Council continues to deal with a shortage of staff resources due to ongoing labour market challenges which require the use of more costly temporary solutions; supply chain issues continue which require more costly alternative or expedited arrangements; the cost of living crisis continues to have a significant impact on our communities. This will be further exacerbated over the medium term by a weak growth forecast in the UK economy impacting on public sector spending, and by heightened interest rates that will impact housing costs. All the aforementioned results in a growing need for supportive Council services, a reduced demand for income generating services, increased risks around debt recovery, and a continued high-cost operating environment.									
Current modelling predicts a continuously increasing budget deficit, despite a higher than expected increase in Welsh Government funding, with a projected cumulative shortfall of £34.7m by 2028/29. 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.									

A continuation of challenges seen during the pandemic has meant that an increasing number of our schools are experiencing budget deficits. At 2022/23 year end, just 5 schools were in deficit; this increased to 16 by year-end 2023/24. This is projected to increase to 19 by year-end 2024/25, over 50% of schools.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
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
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	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>A 24/25 revenue budget update presented to Cabinet in October notes an overall revenue budget deficit forecast of £3,388,000. This deficit is made up of in-year budget pressures of £1,334,000 that have developed since the budget was set in February 2024, alongside a forecast shortfall in meeting budgeted savings target of £2,055,000.</p> <p>Pressures continue in adult's and children's social care. Demand, and complexity of demand, continues to increase. An increase in demand for residential placements in adult's and a shortfall in meeting savings targets has resulted in pressures of over £1.5m. The pressure of new referrals and more complex needs has generated additional unbudgeted costs of over £1.1m in children's social care. These pressures sit alongside continued increased demand for costly ALN placements, increased demand for Home to School transport placements, and continued inflationary and maintenance costs across the estate.</p> <p>In order to deliver a balanced budget for 24/25, which will be fundamental in ensuring financial sustainability moving into the 25/26 budget setting process, a programme of budget recovery actions will be implemented. This includes, but is not limited to: Maximising all grant and income opportunities, including the transfer of core costs into grant where conditions allow; Vacancy management with a targeted freeze on filling vacant posts; Bearing down on all non-essential expenditure; Service reduction and efficiency; Maximising the opportunity to meet the costs of organisational reform from capital receipts where regulations allow.</p>					
Develop a set of budget proposals for 2025/26		Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources March 2025		<p>A medium-term financial plan update and budget setting process for 2025/26 was presented to Cabinet in October 2024. This sets out the council's timeline for setting its 25/26 budget, with final budget proposals due to be presented in Council in March 2025. Given difficult financial and economic circumstances, the 25/26 budget has a need to demonstrate clear alignment between financial choices and service/policy impact, with consideration of the commitments set in the community and corporate plan forming a key part of decision making.</p> <p>Budget workshops are currently underway with SLT, Cabinet and officers. High level pressure and saving mandates are currently being produced, with final mandates to be completed by December 2024. These mandates, alongside current budget assumptions, will then be subject to further Cabinet scrutiny. Welsh Government's final settlement is yet to be released; this will be key to understanding whether any additional funding is likely to be received. This, alongside other currently unknown budget assumption, will be incorporated when available. Scrutiny and public consultation of proposals will take place in January and February 2025 ahead of consideration by Cabinet and Council in March 2025.</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 Ongoing		<p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved by Council in July 2024. This strategy provides the strategic framework for the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and a set of key principles to guide medium term financial planning. These two together form the link between the council's long-term policy objectives and its financial capacity. As part of the development of the strategy, a delivery plan has been established, which sets out clear timescales for completion; this is monitored regularly by Cabinet and Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee as part of six-monthly MTFP updates.</p> <p>The authority's budget modelling assumptions are reviewed regularly. Current budget assumptions were reviewed as part of the setting of the MTFP in July 2024, and currently project a budget deficit of £11.5m for 25/26, with continued significant deficits for the years following. With reserve balances at low levels, and the layers of efficiency being driven from services over time, the council will need to seek significant change, particularly in areas where there is consistent and significant overspend.</p> <p>Given significant pressures, the council will implement a programme of change. This will work to assess the opportunities for service change and cost reduction, whilst ensuring appropriate service resilience is maintained. Areas of consideration include: the role of commissioning services, identifying scope for further income generation and sustained focus on productivity and efficiency.</p>					

		A range of further activity is also underway as part of the MTFP to strengthen medium term planning. This includes the delivery of a change and improvement plan to enable delivery of required savings; this is being developed as part of the budget setting process. Other activity includes a rollout of budget holder training to strengthen knowledge, an enhanced approach to budget modelling, the establishment of a financial risk register to ensure suitable mitigations are in place and undertake an independent financial resilience review.
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	The overall level of school reserves is currently forecast to move further into deficit by £4,929,000 by the end of the 2024/25 financial year, to a collective deficit balance of £5,832,000. The legacy impact of the pandemic continues within the school environment, particularly in respect of attendance, behaviours and increased additional learning needs. This has required increased staff and specialist resources to tackle the issues presenting and increased overall costs of provision. Higher than budgeted pay awards for both teaching and non-teaching staff have also impacted upon budgets. It is currently anticipated that nineteen of the Council's thirty-four schools will be in a deficit balance by the year-end. All schools that are budgeting to register a deficit balance at the end of the 2024/25 financial year are required to bring forward budget recovery plans. These recovery plans will be confirmed with both the Local Education Authority, each School's Governing Body and, in some cases, the plans will need to be agreed by the relevant Cabinet Member. All recovery plans are expected to be received by October Half Term. Close monitoring and support will be given to these schools, as well as those at risk of entering a deficit position over the medium term, to ensure that the proposed actions to address medium term budget challenges are instigated.

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) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
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.									
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.									
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.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
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
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	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		The MTFP model was reviewed and updated as part of the development of the MTFS in July 2024. The Capital Programme for 2025-2029 will be reviewed and reconsidered during the 2025/26 budgetary process to ensure that the revenue implications of capital expenditure are accurately reflected in the revenue budget and that the capital expenditure plans of the Council remain affordable, prudent and sustainable.				

		<p>Whilst the core capital programme is being sustained, and sees planned investment in the Council's infrastructure, there still remains a considerable number of backlog pressures that sit outside the core capital programme given the affordability and funding constraints facing the Council. This will continue to have varying levels of risk associated with it and will have to be managed and mitigated. Schemes already included in the indicative programme will be reviewed in respect of timing and their continued alignment to strategic objectives. Schemes that are not time critical may be deferred to focus capacity on the delivery of priority schemes, or to allow capital receipts to be released to aid in meeting wider Council service redesign.</p> <p>The value of Capital receipts is forecast to decrease significantly between 2024/25 and 2028/29. This 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> <p>The Council has strengthened its scrutiny and challenge of the Capital Programme through the establishment of Capital and Asset Management working groups. The respective working groups look to ensure that projects are prudent, affordable and will deliver tangible benefits to core policy objectives over the long term.</p>
Review and refresh the council's Capital Strategy	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources March 2025	The Council's Capital Strategy outlines how the Authority makes and manages capital investment decisions that support its corporate objectives. It also provides a framework that the Council can rely on to develop a clear, consistent, and informed process to make investment decisions. The Council faces more demand for capital spending than it can afford, and therefore it has to prioritise projects, leverage other sources of funding, work with partners, and keep capital investment within affordable limits. The Capital strategy will be refreshed and brought alongside final budget proposals to Council in March 2025.
Continue to monitor the Capital budget	Deputy CEX/Chief Officer, Resources Ongoing	<p>The 2023/24 capital expenditure at outturn totalled over £65m, with a net over spend of £485k. This is primarily due to meeting costs under capitalisation within the revenue budget. This overspend was offset by a lower than anticipated volume of vehicle replacements.</p> <p>A total of 107 capital schemes require slippage into 2024/25 totalling £28,605,000, representing 30% of the total budget for the year. The economic environment during 2023/24 continued to have a significant impact on the overall capital programme with cost inflation and supply chain issues continuing to present a challenge to project delivery. The large number of schemes requiring slippage does however still point to more underlying issues in project planning, unrealistic profiling of budgets, and a lack of resourcing to manage the volume of schemes being planned. Finance teams will need to continue to work with budget holders to assess if any further amendment to project delivery plans are required given the impact that capital expenditure progress can have on the profiling of capital financing costs.</p> <p>Capital receipts are projected to be in surplus for the medium-term. Whilst the current balance is healthy, 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 currently 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 Landlord Services Ongoing	<p>A regular programme of property condition surveys is underway, supported by routine compliance checks for all assets. This information as well as technical input from MCC's Landlord Services team, will continue to be used to inform prioritisation of planned 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 Working Groups and Asset Management Working Groups will contribute to decisions on the capital spend and MTFP.</p>
Deliver the Asset Management Plan to manage the Council's land and property portfolio	Head of Landlord Services Ongoing	The Asset Management Strategy has been adopted, introducing clearer alignment to the Community & Corporate Plan and establishing key principles which will inform strategic decision making for the council's land and property portfolio. The Asset Management Strategy is delivered via the associated Asset Management Plan, which is subject to regular monitoring and progress reporting.
Help sustain Council Services and enhance the asset base by investing in commercial property assets in order to increase the	Head of Landlord Services Ongoing	The Asset Management Strategy commits to maximising and commercialising assets wherever possible, including achieving income generation or revenue enhancement where opportunities are identified to do so. The core principle is achieved with acknowledgement of the council's policy objectives and ambition to achieve both financial and social returns.

net rental income stream for the Council in line with the Asset Management Strategy		The performance of the council's commercial and investment portfolios are reported to Performance & Overview committee on six monthly cycles. The updates provided include an acknowledgement of the performance of the assets, their capital value and risk, market information and transaction updates. Officers provided recommendations and updates in accordance with the revised financial performance terms, as outlined in the Asset Management Strategy.
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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, particularly for posts that require specific skills or qualifications, retention and workforce planning and affect the delivery of Council services						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Matthew Gatehouse (Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery, Governance Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		

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 facing considerably increased workloads to meet increasing demand and personal home-based factors such as financial strains due to the increased 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
2024/25	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	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	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, have seen reductions in applicants, and this is impacting on service provision. Solutions for the national recruitment issues do not sit solely with local authorities. The People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024 and contains a specific objective, and actions, aimed at improving recruitment and retention. 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. The HR team are also utilising different social media channels to reach applicants. A new work experience and apprentices' policy has been developed and will seek to increase the number of apprentice positions, creating a new pipeline of talent. The Leaders Q&A sessions are encouraging discussion between service areas to promote networking and sharing ideas. 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.
Develop the support mechanisms to support staff wellbeing	Head of Organisation Workforce Development Ongoing	Staff well-being is affected by a range of factors, including additional work pressure and demand, personal factors and societal factors. Supporting the health and well-being of our colleagues is a key objective of the People Strategy. 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. An audit has been undertaken of our wellbeing offer and location of access allowing for consolidation and ease of access for all colleagues. We are exploring the opportunity to work with CASE UK funded by Welsh Government to provide physiotherapy,

		<p>psychological and occupational therapy. We are also assessing options for providing support and guidance to colleagues in relation to financial wellbeing.</p> <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>
Embed workforce planning to ensure the right skills, expertise and knowledge are available for future changes	Chief Officer People, Performance & Partnerships Ongoing	<p>The new People Strategy has created a clear commitment to embed workforce planning across the organisation. This is aimed at addressing shortages and ensure career pathways are in place. New arrangements within the HR team will ensure that HR business partners can continue to play an active role in strategic discussions at Directorate Management Teams to ensure effective workforce planning.</p> <p>The People Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2024 and contains a clear commitment to ensuring we can retain the best people. Action includes promoting career development opportunities to ensure that we keep talent in local government. A new work experience and apprentice policy has been developed to create a new pipeline of people being recruited and trained to supply the workforce of the future.</p> <p>The development and retention of existing staff is an essential component of workforce planning. A learning management system (Thinqi) has now been rolled out to all staff; this provides a centralised training and development area for officers, and includes a host of learning resources for staff as well as the opportunity to book face to face and digital/online training.</p>
Adopt a qualitative approach to ensuring professional development, wellbeing and information flow is taking place for those that want or need it	Head of Organisation Workforce Development Ongoing	<p>The colleague appraisal scheme has been redesigned to allow all colleagues to engage in performance discussions with their line manager. This process facilitates both a training needs and skills analysis.</p> <p>A Leader/Manager Developmental Pathway has been created and due to be launched in December 2024. This pathway will comprise of a number of modules including meaningful staff/line manager engagement and communication. 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.</p> <p>Both the Colleague Survey and People Q&As provide feedback loops to ensure colleagues requirements are being met.</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) and Cllr Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Governance and Audit Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Information Governance, Service delivery Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
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 recent 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
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	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	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. Significant investments in ICT infrastructure and software have been undertaken, which will mitigate against the likelihood of a cyber-attack. 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. A cyber security report was taken to Governance and Audit Committee in February 2024 to provide assurance to the committee that the arrangements in place are robust.
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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	Jane Rodgers (Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health) & Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young people), and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Connected Place Where People Care People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
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 challenges, impacts on the council's ability to protect children and adults who are at risk.									
Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) continue to inspect and conduct assurance checks of our services. Recent reviews include a CIW Performance Evaluation Inspection of Adults social services undertaken in July 2022, and a Performance Evaluation inspection in Children services in February 2024. All recommended areas of improvement have been recognised by the council and inspection action plans are in place									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8	2026/27	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, Annual Evaluation – September 2025		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 most recent Annual Safeguarding Evaluation Report was presented to Council in October 2024. The report evaluates the progress of the Council's key safeguarding priorities during 2023/24, highlighting progress, identifying risks and setting out actions and priorities for 2023/24. The report evaluates the cornerstones of safeguarding in Monmouthshire - 3 areas of safeguarding arrangements are assessed as Level 5 Very Good– and 2 areas as Level 4 – Good. 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.				
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		The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group [WASG] has continued to meet bi-monthly on a digital platform. The group ensures that corporate Safeguarding has oversight at a senior level, with membership from each directorate lead. These meetings identify safeguarding concerns and themes; share knowledge around safeguarding issues and, where required, promote a strategic and				

	Ongoing, Annual Evaluation – September 2025	<p>coordinated approach. A Core Data set has been agreed by WASG. Moving forward, this should provide increased opportunity to inform WASG members of safeguarding performance at a whole authority level.</p> <p>Despite resource pressures across directorates and capacity issues within the Safeguarding Unit, safeguarding has remained a priority for the Council with key strengths within directorates and across council relationships. The SAFE (Safeguarding Assessment Framework for Evaluation) process has continued to roll out across directorates and reviews have taken place in a timely manner. The Safeguarding Unit continues to be available to offer support and advice as well as being the conduit for new and developing safeguarding policy and guidance from the Regional Safeguarding Board. Issues raised within the previous SAFE assessment led to the strengthening of support in the safe recruitment process, specifically in risk management following DBS certifications.</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, that they are working well, share learning and implement any recommendations.	Chief Officer, Social Care, Health & Safeguarding Ongoing, Annual evaluation – September 2025	<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 priorities set in in the regional board’s annual plan are reflected in the priority work of the Council’s Safeguarding Unit. The Whole Authority Safeguarding Group continues to receive, review, and implement developments in safeguarding flowing from regional and national policy. The Council’s safeguarding unit supports quarterly safeguarding learning networks to share learning and developments in safeguarding across agencies.</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>

Ref & Status	7	Risk	Potential Risk that: 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) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Connected Place Where People Care People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
<p>The number of contacts into the ‘front-door’ of children’s services has increased by 21% to 7071 in 2023/24. The council is supporting 205 children who are looked after (September 2024). The number has stabilised in recent years, although it remains higher than the average number of children who are looked after across Wales. The number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) being looked after by the local authority is currently 12.</p> <p>The 2024/25 budget for Children’s Services is forecast to overspend by £1.1 million at Month 4. This is mainly as a result of increased demand for very high-cost placements for children who are looked after. The workforce position within children’s services also remains challenging, with reliance on agency workers which can affect continuity of social work relationships for children.</p> <p>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. Instability within the placement provider market is being exacerbated by the Welsh Government’s policy commitment to eliminate profit from the care of looked after children. This creates an on-going risk for the council that is difficult to fully mitigate at present.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress				
Continue to strengthen the preventative offer to support children living safely at home, with their families and communities, and continue to review and monitor the Children Looked after			Head of Children’s services Ongoing		The council is supporting 205 children who are looked after (September 2024). The number has stabilised in recent years, although it remains higher than the average number of children who are looked after across Wales. Over the year, the number of contacts into the ‘front-door’ of children’s services has increased by 21% to 7071 contacts. The focus has been on keeping children safe, which				

population in line with Welsh Government expectations around reduction		<p>means there has been less time for strength-based engagement with parents and children. A detailed analysis of referral activity is being undertaken to in order to consider the best way of intervening.</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 they need. Services are in place to support the rehabilitation of children following periods of being looked after e.g. Families Re-connect; 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>Family support has been further strengthened to provide intensive community supervision and support to children. The focus remains on practice development and working with families to support strengths, manage risks and achieve good outcomes, reducing the need for children to be looked. An additional focus is to increase resilience within Child Protection services 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	<p>Head of Children's services</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>A commissioning and placement strategy has been developed, with a specific emphasis on the development of in-county residential and support living accommodation. This is aligned with Welsh Government's ambition to eliminate profit from children's care. Two children's homes have been commissioned through partnership models, one of which was a specialised provision for children with very complex needs. Further opportunities to develop residential and supported accommodation placements are in place. Establishing a residential workforce and bringing the projects into operation is a priority. There are huge challenges with this work particularly around workforce, resources and the time it takes to develop provision.</p> <p>In the meantime, however, finding appropriate placements for children remains challenging. The policy direction of removing profit from children's care has created instability and uncertainty within the provider market (for both foster care and residential care) resulting in placement insufficiency and driving up the cost of placements. 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>
Continue to implement the fostering strategy on the recruitment, retention and skills development of in house fostering.	<p>Head of Children's Services</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The recruitment and retention of foster carers remains an area of significant challenge. 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 2023/24 little progress has been made in the net numbers of in-house foster carers despite considerable effort and attention. This creates an over-reliance on private and independent providers, where the right placement for a child cannot be assured.</p> <p>The number of foster carers increased from 36 to 38 (including 7 new carers) with a corresponding increase in placement capacity from 64 to 67 (at year end 40 children were placed). Current projections for 2024/25 include a further 6 carers currently going through the assessment process. The overall offer to foster carers is being reviewed to see where and how more foster cares can join the in-house team.</p>

Ref & Status	8	Risk	Potential Risk that: 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) and Cllr Ian Chandler (Cabinet Member for Social Care, Safeguarding and Accessible Health Services)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Connected Place Where People Care People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
<p>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, particularly for reablement care at home, and mental capacity act assessments. There has also been an increase in the number of residential care placements due to the complexity of people's needs. Monmouthshire has specific challenges in providing sufficient home care due to the more rural parts of the county. The impact of the pandemic, together with the aging demographic has increased the complexity of presenting need, and services are under immense pressure as a result, particularly given the added challenges of the Council's financial situation.</p> <p>The availability of workforce in some key posts remains a risk - specifically mental health practitioners and Therapies. There is insufficient capacity within the current workforce structure to meet the demand pressures, particularly given the demands associated with hospital discharge. The current financial context for both health and social care places restrictions on the ways in which services can respond to need. In 2024/25 the Adult Services budget is forecasting an overspend of £1.5 million at Month 4, with pressures due to increases in external residential care home placements and increased demand for care at home.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score

2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	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		Ensuring that there is a sufficient workforce has been a risk for some time, particularly in key posts around direct care, mental health, team leader posts and occupational therapy, and this is an on-going endeavour. The perceptions of working in social care tend to be negative; recruitment is focussed on counteracting these negative perceptions and demonstrate the opportunities, career progression, work life balance and job satisfaction that people experience who work within the sector. Generally, the workforce in Adults social care remains stable, however attraction and recruitment of people into the social care sector, particularly in some roles, continues to be a challenge. Workforce planning remains a priority within the service to ensure that scarce resources are utilised in the best way possible.					
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 and Head of Adult Services Ongoing		There are on- going regional and local 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 particular within hospital discharge; supporting people with frailty to remain well at home, and ensuring the development of effective early help and preventative services via the Integrated Wellbeing Network. Establishing targeted early help and ensuring there are good pathways between social care and community based wellbeing support is central to trying to mitigate demand pressures over time.					
Rebalance reablement and long-term care within our in-house care at home service.		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health Ongoing		There is increased capacity to provide reablement service to those who would benefit from it, with 331 packages of reablement provided in the last year. While this is good progress the aim is to improve this further. In line with the aims of the commissioning strategy the focus is on further increasing the availability of in-house home care to support reablement as opposed to providing long term care, and to increase the number of people accessing the opportunities that reablement provides. Over time this should help to mitigate demand pressures.					
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 there are continued challenges in being able to respond to people's care and 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. Case reviews are being undertaken, 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. Access to care and support is not always timely; however, overall there is increased capacity across home care which has assisted in supporting 96% of demand in the last year. Action is being undertaken to ensure that home care runs, both in-house and provider services, are coordinated as efficiently as possible. The commissioning strategy is being implemented to strengthen locality based provision of home care and increase capacity into rural areas.					
Implement a 'place-based' approach to create sustainability in care at home services		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health – As per commissioning strategy		The Council remains committed to developing a more sustainable care at home sector for the future. A comprehensive strategy for commissioning home care through increased block purchasing has been developed. Engagement with local providers to progress the strategy has commenced. The micro-care project within Monmouthshire continues to support the self-employed carers to develop their businesses. This is increasing care and support capacity across the county and allowing people increased choice and control over how they receive support.					
Ensure the long-term sustainability of social care providers		Chief Officer, Social Care & Health & Head of Public Protection Ongoing		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. The Council has built positive relationships with local providers and intervenes and provide support where difficulties emerge. There is effective contract monitoring in place, based on partnership approaches. The position in Monmouthshire, whilst challenging, has seen very few providers withdraw their services and most have managed to weather the difficulties around recruitment and retention with the social care sector. Positively home care services have increased and there has been a reduction in the number of people waiting and the average length of wait time. The number of residential placements has increased by 42 placements over the year (from 268 to 310 at year end). Occupancy of care home placements is high at around 95% which is positive from a provider perspective and ensures businesses are viable.					

		The increase in residential placements and costs of residential care had a big impact the budget in Adult Social Care. The main pressure on the budget during 2023/2024 was down to provider fees. At the beginning of the year the cost of the care that commissioned was calculated at a higher rate than was able to be accommodated within the budget set. Through extensive fair fee negotiations with provider agencies this was reduced; however, not to the extent that this delivered within the financial envelope agreed within the budget.
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Ref & Status	9a	Risk	Potential Risk that: Failure to return attendance figures to those seen before the pandemic, particularly among vulnerable pupils and those eligible for free school meals, could lead to a negative impact on educational attainment						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young People) and Cllr Martyn Groucutt (Cabinet member for Education)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All People Scrutiny Committee, Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		

Reason why Identified

The pandemic caused widespread disruption to learning, with a significant effect on both teachers and learners. 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. 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 (eFSM) remains a concern. There is variation in eFSM learner progress and outcomes across schools. Leadership, management, capacity and performance has been identified as in need of improvement in some schools.

Attendance levels have been particularly affected. Though attendance at a primary level has slowly returned to pre-pandemic levels, attendance in our secondary schools remains below levels seen before the pandemic. Attendance of those eligible for free schools meals remains below pre-pandemic levels and below those of their peers not eligible for free school meals. The low attendance of those eFSM has been identified by Estyn as an area for concern in one of our secondary schools. We need to increase attendance for those eFSM to ensure no pupil is left behind.

Ensuring pupils return to school, and understanding the barriers to prevent them doing so, will be key to ensuring our learners are achieving their potential.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Complete the consultation on the new Attendance and Engagement Policy and processes	Head of Attainment Ongoing	The Local Authority Attendance and Engagement Policy has been updated to encompass all aspects of the Engaging, Belonging and Participating guidance issued by Welsh Government in October 2023 and is currently in draft form ready for consultation with schools. Alongside the policy, the team have created a draft handbook for schools to summarise the roles and responsibilities in the new policy, the graduated response for attendance, model policy and the local code for fixed penalty notices and prosecutions. The Education Welfare Service have also prepared training for governors as they implement the new policy.
Work with Education Welfare Services to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and are able to access excellent teaching and learning	Head of Attainment Ongoing	The Education Welfare Service (EWS) team continue to work collaboratively with external supporting services to provide a holistic approach to supporting families to overcome barriers to school attendance. This year, EWS has reviewed processes for closing cases where attendance has improved, there has been a change in provision, or a pupil has relocation to another area. As a result, 50 cases were closed during the year, which has released additional time for Education Welfare Officers to focus on the increasing number of complex cases involving a wide range of agencies.
Work with schools and partners to better understand drivers of low attendance	Head of Inclusion Ongoing	The team have developed their awareness of drivers of low school attendance through engagement in programmes such as Community Focused Schools (which focuses on the way in which families work with schools), Trauma Informed Schools and emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) approaches. This means that the team consistently reinforce the language, expectations and approaches used in other teams within the directorate. EWS are also working closely with the Inspire Outreach Team who offer support to secondary pupils with attendance below 50% through a reintegration and qualification approach for pupils who may be dis-engaged or experience Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

		For the first time a team of Family Liaison Officers has been working with schools and families to build relationships, overcome barriers to attendance and support pupils back into school. This means pupils and families are receiving support earlier, and Education Welfare Officers have more time to deal with increasing numbers of complex cases and support schools to review systems and processes to secure high levels of attendance for all pupils. However, during the year, the capacity of the service has been reduced for periods.
Support pupils' wellbeing and address barriers to learning	Head of Inclusion Ongoing	The whole school approach to emotional and mental well-being has been implemented. Which helps schools to understand how they are best placed to promote well-being. This has been introduced in a phased approach and increased the number of schools engaged in the approach from 43% to 74%. This is increasing the support available for the well-being needs of pupils and has a significant effect on children's attendance and achievement in school. All schools and settings are engaged with Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), and there are currently 67 practicing ELSAs who access regular supervision, operating across all but one school in the county, making a positive impact on the emotional literacy of pupils. School are also engaged in professional learning related to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA); Trauma Informed Approaches; and Autism; currently 68% of schools are engaged.

Ref & Status	9b	Risk	Potential Risk that: An increase in behaviours that challenge in schools as a result of the continuation of trends that first emerged during the pandemic may lead to harm to a pupil or member of staff						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Will Mclean (Chief Officer Children & Young People) and Cllr Martyn Groucutt (Cabinet member for Education)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All People Scrutiny Committee, Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Safeguarding, Health and Safety Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
Reason why Identified									
Monmouthshire is currently experiencing exceptionally high levels of both Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) and Permanent Exclusions (PEX) and this presents a risk to the positive engagement and outcomes for children / young people and increasing pressure on local authority services and provisions.									
Permanent Exclusion (PEX) and Fixed Term exclusions (FTE) have both increased over the past year. Local authorities across Wales and England have experienced similar trends post covid. The reasons for this are complex and not easily resolved. As of the end of the 2023/24 academic year there were 22 upheld PEX. The number and rate of PEX and FTE is higher than the South East Wales consortia overall rate. Of concern is that the data shows clear rises in the issue of FTE for reasons linked to violent or aggressive behaviour, this can be verbal or physical against another student or an adult.									
Increased levels of exclusions increase the pressure on the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) which currently does not have the capacity to accept any new learners unless they have been permanently excluded. This means that even where a graduated response has been applied within a school, and where behaviours and risk assessments indicate the learner may merit a PRS intervention, there is limited capacity to access this. Increased referrals to the PRS as a result of exclusions also puts pressure on the service and impacts its ability to deliver its statutory function to education learners who cannot attend school due to ill-health.									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action			Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress				
Support learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions or of Permanent exclusions through the Education Support Team (EST)			Head of Inclusion Ongoing		The Education Support Team (EST) was created in March 2023 and alongside the Educational Psychology Service has enabled primary aged learners most at risk of repeat Fixed Term Exclusions (FTE) or of Permanent Exclusions (PEX) to receive support from specialist professionals. These teams have experience in responding to behaviours of concern/ challenge, an enhanced understanding of social emotional and mental health needs and additional learning needs (ALN) in a way that is trauma informed and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) aware. These supportive teams work to enable learners to maintain their current placement by reducing the risk of PEX by stabilising behaviours and thus reducing risk. The EST have supported learners to integrate into other schools via managed moves to prevent PEX and supported in year transfers of learners with prior FTE.				
Implement the outcomes of the Pupil Referral Service (PRS) review			Head of Inclusion Ongoing		The Pupil Referral Service has been reviewed. This has helped understand the current demand, while considering the future role and function of the PRS. The findings of this review will now be implemented including increasing the capacity of the PRS to provide				

		preventative intervention for pupils at risk of PEx and enhanced support for learners to reintegrate into mainstream having had a period of support in the PRS.
Work with officers in community partnerships to secure Home Office grant funding to support the reduction of violence in schools	Vulnerable Learners Lead Ongoing	The Vulnerable Learner Lead worked with officers in community partnerships to secure Home Office grant funding to support the reduction of violence in schools and to reduce exclusions (both FTE and PEx) associated with this. This funding enabled several learners at risk of PEx to avoid this outcome, including learners in their final year of school, who were able to complete their exams in school. Work is already underway on a bid for the current financial year to extend and enhance this work. Further multi agency work has also been undertaken to consider how to reduce FTE and PEx linked to aggression and violence amongst both pupils and towards staff. Focused efforts are underway to improve representation at multi agency meetings in schools and with focused consideration of learners who have been excluded for these reasons in the intervening periods between each meeting.
Continue to roll out training for all staff in all school and settings (i.e. ACEs and Trauma Informed practice) to increase the understanding of the impact on learner behaviours, strategies and approaches to deescalate and ensure safety and wellbeing.	Head of Inclusion Ongoing	A key part of our approach to reducing exclusions is to improve an understanding of the drivers for children's behaviours. Trauma Informed approaches form part of a universal, whole-school, preventative approach supporting school communities to become trauma informed and mentally healthy places for all. Being Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) aware and trauma-informed is recognised by the Welsh Government in guidance and reflects the evidence base that it is important to build relational practice to improve positive outcomes for all learners. Trauma Informed Schools (TIS) and relational practice approaches are being developed and embedded. A multi-agency TIS Steering Group, including colleagues from health and social care, has been established to achieve this, led by the Educational Psychology Service (EPS), and a tiered training programme has been developed. Monmouthshire schools continue to request Trauma Informed training, three schools have been identified to pilot our Trauma Skilled training in the Autumn Term 2024.

Risks to policy priorities

Ref & Status	10	Risk	Potential Risk that: The Council does not support the Replacement Local Development Plan, leading to delays in its adoption which restricts our ability to take forward key policy objective such as job creation, affordable housing development and the adoption of key policies to protect the environment and tackle climate change						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Craig O'Connor (Chief Officer Place) and Cllr Paul Griffiths (Cabinet member for Planning and Economic Development)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Thriving and Ambitious Place A Safe Place to Live Place Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Governance, Strategic Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		
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. Factors contributing to the delays include challenge from Welsh Government, which resulted in the need for a new Preferred Strategy, high phosphate levels in the rivers Usk and Wye which resulted in restrictions on developments, and delays in agreeing appropriate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller sites.</p> <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
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12

2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	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.	Chief Officer Place Spring 2026			The RLDP Preferred Strategy was endorsed by Council in October 2023. This has formed the basis of the Deposit Plan, which was endorsed by Council for a detailed public consultation in October 2024. The Deposit Plan sets the ambition for development within the county. This plan also addresses a number of key issues and align with the priorities of the organisation; it has allocated 50% affordable housing on each new development and is introducing enabling policies which will allow for further affordable housing developments to come forward. This includes facilitating more single person accommodation in the county which is currently extremely limited and is a factor contributing to homelessness. All homes developed under this plan will also be net zero carbon. Council will consider the results of the consultation in Summer 2025, following which the RLDP will be subject to public examination.					
Work with partner organisations to identify and implement solutions to phosphate pollution in the Rivers Usk and Wye	Chief Officer Place Ongoing			In May, Cabinet approved the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy. This includes an action plan on how we will work in partnership to improve the health of our rivers and oceans. Progress will be monitored regularly by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group. Over the last few years there has been significant work in this area and there is planned strategic phosphate mitigation work in the form of phosphate stripping being installed in Llanfoist (Abergavenny) and Monmouth to serve their settlements. This will enable appropriate development to be permitted within these settlement areas. There has also been a comprehensive review of the Environmental Permits of wastewater treatments across Monmouthshire and, where there is capacity, appropriate development proposals will be permitted. The candidate sites proposed within the Deposit Plan will not have an adverse impact on water quality within the River Wye or Usk.					
Ensure RLDP growth ambition is met by essential infrastructure	Chief Officer Place Chief Officer Infrastructure Chief Officer Children and Young People			Close working is being undertaken on the infrastructure requirements and the delivery 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. The Infrastructure Plan will be published alongside the Deposit Plan. A Local Transport Plan was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. The Employment, Economy & Skills Strategy was approved by Cabinet in February 2024.					

Ref & Status	11	Risk	Potential Risk that: 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						
Risk Owner and cabinet Member responsible	Strategic Leadership Team & Cllr Catrin Maby (Cabinet member for Climate Change and the Environment)		Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All Place Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Strategic, Environmental, Service Delivery Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate	
Reason why Identified									
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.									
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 record high temperatures, 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

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
2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16	2026/27	Almost certain	Major	High	16

Mitigating Actions

Mitigating Action	Responsibility Holder & Timescale	Mitigation action progress
Deliver the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy	Strategic Leadership Team Timescales as per strategy	<p>The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy was approved by Cabinet in May 2024. This strategy is underpinned by four 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. Progress in implementing the strategy is regularly monitored by the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.</p> <p>Work is underway as part of this strategy to better understand the scale of the challenge we face in striving to collectively become net zero. A costed decarbonisation plan and survey for our built estate has been commissioned to ensure a sound understanding of the funding needed to implement change. Without significant increases in public funding, it is unlikely we will meet the collective target of net zero by 2030.</p> <p>Support is being provide to communities to reduce their carbon emissions through circular economy projects such as Benthg library of things and reuse shops. Grant funding has been obtained to employ two officers to help expand this offering. The Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) continues to share best practice and resources. This partnership developed the Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP); the public consultation of this action plan was launched in September. The action plan provides practical and achievable actions to help reverse the decline in biodiversity and ecosystem resilience in the county.</p> <p>The council is a member of the Wye Nutrient Management Board Technical Advice Group which is identifying and analysing options for delivering improvements in water quality. The council also has continued involvement in the Wye Catchment Partnership to protect water quality, water quantity and biodiversity. An Usk Catchment Partnership Core Group has been established and has agreed its priorities for the draft Integrated Catchment Plan.</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. Discussion are also taking place with Welsh Government to better understand their expectations around climate adaptation. The council is 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 developing an updated Flood Risk Management Strategy.</p> <p>Much of the work to coordinate emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The council continues 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, has been 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>

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	Ian Saunders, Chief Officer Customer, Culture and Wellbeing, Jane Rodgers,	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery, Economic Cautious	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Tolerate		

Chief Officer Social Care, Safeguarding & Health & Cllr Angela Sandles, Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement							
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Reason why Identified

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.

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 in 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.

Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	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 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).
Support residents with the cost-of-living crisis through ensuring they have the right advice and support	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation Ongoing	The Council is 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 projects related to the costs of the school day. In October 24, the Community Development Team, together with partners such as Citizen’s Advice, Warm Wales, local foodbanks and many others, held the first in a series of events across the county to give support, ideas and advice to residents to help with the cost of living. Representatives from our Benthylg library of things will also attend to ensure a joined-up approach of our tackling poverty interventions.
Review the Tackling Poverty and Inequality Action Plan	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation December 2024	A Tackling Poverty and Inequality Lead was appointed in April 2024. It has been agreed that a new strategy or formal tackling poverty and inequality action plan is not the preferred option at this time. The Community Development Team, who coordinate delivery of work in this area, will continue to work to their targeted work plan.
Work across the organisation to address food insecurity	Head of Enterprise & Community Animation Ongoing	We continue to support community-based food insecurity interventions including community fridges. These provide an indirect source of support for those experiencing food insecurity. The number of people accessing community fridges has increased in recent years; there is a need to ensure the long-term sustainability of these interventions. 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. We have delivered Food and Fun schemes in five primary schools across the county. The scheme provides healthy meals and activities for children during the summer holidays. Attendances have increased from 2,005 in 22/23 to 4,445 in 23/24, with 617 children supported, and 8,950 healthy meals were provided. Youth Centres provided access to healthy meals on days the centres were open in the summer, with take-home food parcels also available for those who needed them.

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	Cath Fallon, Head of Rural Development, Housing and Partnerships, Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships & Cllr Angela Sandles, Cabinet member for Equalities and Engagement	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	A Safe Place to Live A Fair Place to Live People Scrutiny Committee	Risk category and appetite level	Service delivery Minimalist	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
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 unrepeated, 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 of 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 challenges 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 delays in implementing the RLDP.</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 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.</p> <p>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.</p>									
Risk Level (Pre-mitigation)					Risk Level (Post-mitigation)				
Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score	Year	Likelihood	Impact	Risk Level	Risk Score
2024/25	Likely	Major	High	12	2024/25	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2025/26	Likely	Major	High	12	2025/26	Possible	Major	Medium	8
2026/27	Likely	Major	High	12	2026/27	Possible	Major	Medium	8
Mitigating Actions									
Mitigating Action		Responsibility Holder & Timescale		Mitigation action progress					
Prevent homelessness through Rapid Rehousing		Head of Enterprise & Community Animation As per Homeless Transition Plan		<p>The Rapid Re-Housing Transition plan was adopted by Cabinet in April 2023. 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> <p>Rapid rehousing is facilitating increased resource into homeless prevention, for example through additional staffing and the availability of the Homeless Prevention Fund. The council is working with working with partner agencies such as the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Shared Benefit Service to support more people at risk of homelessness, granting awards to households</p>					

		<p>to help tackle arrears/debt and households experiencing homelessness to enable them to remain in their current accommodation or access alternatives.</p> <p>The Housing Support service has been remodelled to include dedicated substance misuse support, temporary accommodation support and re-settlement support. This also includes dedicated 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. These initiatives have contributed to the increase in the percentage of homeless applications who are successfully prevented from becoming homeless to 71%. We collaborate across council services to prevent care leavers from becoming homeless. We regularly hold a Corporate Parenting Panel with a range of teams from across the organisation that coordinate and provide support to care leavers.</p>
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	<p>Head of Enterprise & Community Animation</p> <p>As per Homeless Transition Plan</p>	<p>The RLDP was recently approved by Council for public consultation. Council will consider findings of this consultation in Summer 2025. The delivery of the RLDP will be key to increasing the availability of housing in the county; the plan has allocated 50% affordable housing on each site and is introducing enabling policies which will allow for further affordable housing developments to come forward. This includes facilitating more single person accommodation in the county which is currently extremely limited and is a factor contributing to homelessness</p> <p>We are increasing the availability of both temporary and settled homes for homeless households through a range of means including partnerships with private landlords through Monmouthshire Lettings and more homes through new build developments and acquisitions. We have worked with housing association partners to make additional general needs social housing available for homeless households; currently 55% of social housing is allocated to homeless households. We need to determine how much scope there is to allocate further social housing to homeless applicants without being overly detrimental to other housing need groups.</p> <p>We have started to acquire accommodation for temporary accommodation use and the first approval has been given to re-purpose a council owned agricultural property. We have developed a proposal to re-purpose Severn View residential home for temporary accommodation. The increased support for those at risk of homelessness, combined with the increase in availability of both temporary and settled accommodation, have contributed to the reduced use of bed and breakfast (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.	<p>Chief Officer Place</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Detailed update contained in risk 10.</p>
Work with Welsh Government, local sponsors and landlords to identify a range of accommodation to accommodate Ukrainian refugees	<p>Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The authority has been successful helping those fleeing the war in Ukraine to find properties in the area. Hosting, under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, has remained stable, with residents going above and beyond what was initially asked of them. We have exceeded the 'population share' of refugees identified by Welsh Government.</p> <p>Recognising the challenges faced by this community, we have established a specialised team comprising of two homeless prevention workers, two Community and Wellbeing Officers, complemented by dedicated translation and administration support. Our approach involves close collaboration with local landlords to cultivate strong local networks and access to properties (PRS), addressing concerns related to affordability and financial assessments.</p>
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.	<p>Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>The Home Office has 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. The Home Office's chosen accommodation provider has struggled to find suitable and affordable properties in Monmouthshire, mirroring the challenges faced by the local population. Officers continue to meet with the Wales Strategic Migration Partnership and Home Office and indications are that some a small number properties may come forward in 2024-25.</p> <p>In September 2023 Council passed a motion committing the authority to formally becoming a county of sanctuary. An application was submitted to the UK-wide City of Sanctuary network in April; discussions with the body have identified further work is needed before the council has met the criteria for accredited membership. A multi-agency working group has been developed to drive forward this application, working closely with school leads to develop, as part of this, schools of sanctuary across the county.</p>

Ref & Status	14	Risk	Potential Risk that: 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) and Cllr Mary-Ann Brocklesby (Leader)	Strategic objective & Scrutiny Committee	All All	Risk category and appetite level	Legal and Regulatory Averse	Terminate/treat/transfer/tolerate	Treat		
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
2024/25	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2024/25	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
2025/26	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2025/26	Possible	Substantial	Medium	6
2026/27	Likely	Substantial	Medium	9	2026/27	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.

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)