

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>REVIEW OF MY MONMOUTHSHIRE AND PLANNING PORTAL</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Democratic Services Committee</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>20 April 2026</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>N/A</b>

**1. PURPOSE:**

To review the functionality and effectiveness of the My Monmouthshire portal and planning portal in managing casework for councillors.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That members consider the feedback received on the two systems to identify if they are meeting the needs of members, and if not, what actions or changes should be considered to address those issues.

**3. KEY ISSUES:**

- 3.1 The council has adopted electronic system for managing a number of services that have been used for a number of years to improve accessibility to information and to automate a number of processes to improve efficiency. Two of those systems are the Planning Portal that provides information on planning applications throughout Monmouthshire and My Monmouthshire which acts as a customer portal for digital requests for a number of service areas and automatically assigns those calls to the relevant department for investigations.
- 3.2 Given the pressures on service areas in recent years, councillors have been encouraged to record their casework through the My Monmouthshire system. The system will assign the user a call reference, allow them to provide details of the call and be automatically sent updates once a service area has reviewed the call. Councillors are encouraged to use My Monmouthshire in the same way members of the public are able to register issues through the same system. Given both the public and councillors will use the systems, it is likely there is a direct impact on councillor workloads if the systems are not working effectively for the residents. For the purposes of this committee, the focus of the debate shall be on the effectiveness of the systems for councillors and the impact on their casework and ability to carry out their roles effectively. A review in to these systems that would include resident feedback would fall under the terms of reference for a scrutiny committee and not that of Democratic Services Committee.
- 3.3 The Chair of this committee has requested member feedback in relation to their use of the two systems and its effectiveness in assisting members in carrying out their roles. All councillors received a survey seeking their feedback on both systems. 7 responses were received out of the 46 councillors.
- 3.4 A summary of the responses received as part of the survey for both systems are below;

**Planning Portal**

- The planning portal is widely regarded as reliable and effective tool and viewed upon positively by members. The system is used frequently by members and depend on it as a central source for planning information.
- Members like that it is easy to access and has all documents in one place, has an effective search functionality and aids transparency and availability of planning application information.
- Concerns were raised about the navigation of the system feeling unintuitive in places particularly following recent changes, isolated concerns on document redaction and limited visibility of planning timelines and decision dates.
- It was recommended that system improvements could include more enhanced and refined search options, improved map based browsing of live applications and greater user involvement and testing when changes are implemented.

### **My Monmouthshire**

- My Monmouthshire is supported in principle and heavily used by members but does generate more concerns than the planning portal. Members rely on it for casework and continue to encourage residents to use it.
- Members reported that they like the single reporting tool for multiple council services as well as a reference number provided for each call as an audit trail for issues raised. They also like the mapping tool which is particularly helpful in rural areas and acknowledge recent improvements particularly around layout and visibility.
- Concerns raised include difficult navigation, problems accurately entering and identifying locations and poor visibility of previous calls including photographs and location details. Members also shared that it is difficult to track multiple reports over time. Concerns were also raised that long standing reports remain open with little or no feedback and resident confidence undermined by lack of updates and slow closure.
- Improvements were focussed on stronger report tracking including location searches within report lists and the ability to search historic calls more easily without relying on the reference number. Improvements were also suggested to the timeliness and detail of call updates and stronger organisational discipline so the system is used consistently and not bypassed.

#### **4. REASONS:**

To ensure that councillors have the tools to carry out their roles effectively.

#### **5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

At this stage there are no resource implications attached to this report. Any recommendations put forward by the committee will likely incur additional costs in software development where any changes are able to be made to the systems. Additionally, any changes to processes that would move away from a self service portal would incur additional costs due to the manual intervention.

#### **6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:**

There are no sustainable development or equality impacts arising from this report.

#### **7. SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS**

There are no safeguarding or corporate parenting implications associated with this report.

#### **8. CONSULTEES:**

All Councillors

**10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

None

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