SUBJECT:	**Performance Assessment of Enabling Strategies 2025/26**
MEETING:	**Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee**
DATE:	**8th September 2026**
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	**All**

1 PURPOSE:

1.1 To provide the committee with an assessment of performance of the council's enabling strategies during 2025/26. The strategies set the direction for the council's assets and resources to deliver the purpose and objectives set in the Community and Corporate Plan. The enabling strategies comprise the Asset Management Strategy, Digital & Data Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy, People Strategy and Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the committee uses the assessment to scrutinise the performance of the council's enabling strategies during 2025/26.

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1 The Community and Corporate Plan sets a clear purpose for Monmouthshire to be a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life. This is supported by six well-being objectives. A set of enabling strategies were subsequently developed. These ensure that all the council's assets and resources are aligned to the core purpose in the Community and Corporate Plan. This alignment is set out in the council's performance framework shown in Appendix 2.

3.2 To ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the enabling arrangements, an assessment of the performance of each of the enabling strategies in the last year, 2025/26, has been completed. The assessment has been undertaken alongside the council's self-assessment process to ensure alignment between the enabling arrangements and delivery of the Council's objectives.

3.3 The assessment evaluates the performance of the objectives set within each enabling strategy. It assesses 'How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes' using a range of information to assess progress and impact of this work so far. It sets out 'How do we know' which identifies the evidence that supports the assessment made. It also proposes areas for development that will ensure the continued successful implementation of the strategy. The assessment also provides an overall score of progress using the framework, set out in appendix 1.

3.4 This is the second annual assessment of the enabling strategies produced by the council. An overview of the scores provided as part of the evaluations can be found below. The arrow indicates that in all cases, the score is unchanged from the previous year:

Medium Term Financial Strategy. We assessed this as level 4(Good). Unchanged from last year.	↔
People Strategy. We assessed this as level 4 (Good). Unchanged from last year.	↔
Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy. We assessed this as level 3 (Adequate). Unchanged from last year.	↔
Asset Management Strategy. We assessed this as level 5 (Very Good). Unchanged from last year.	↔

Digital and Data Strategy. We assessed this as level 3 (Adequate). Unchanged from last year.	↔

3.5 Performance and Overview Scrutiny Committee has an important role in scrutinising the council's performance. This report provides the committee with an assessment of performance with the enabling strategies to inform this role. The committee may also wish to use the reports to identify any further areas it may want to scrutinise the performance of in more detail as part of its forward work plan or refer to another committee if the area is within their remit.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

4.1 There are no additional resource implications as a result of this report. However, there may be resource implications in undertaking further actions identified in the performance assessment. These would be subject to the usual council decision-making processes.

5. BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Asset Management Strategy 2023-2027
Digital and Data Strategy 2024-2027
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029
People Strategy 2024-2027
Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy 2023-2028
Community and Corporate Plan 2022-28

Draft Self-assessment Report 2025/26 – To be presented to Council on 24th September

6. AUTHORS:

Asset Management Strategy: Nicholas Keyse, Head of Landlord Services

Digital and Data Strategy: Sian Hayward, Head of Information Security and Technology, Richard Jones, Performance and Data Insight Manager and James Vale, SRS, Head of Digital, Data and Information Technology Service

Medium Term Financial Strategy: Jonathan Davies, Head of Finance

People Strategy: Matthew Gatehouse, Chief Officer People, Performance and Partnerships

Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy: Cath Fallon, Head of Strategic Change, Partnerships and Procurement, coordinating input from Ardal, collaborative procurement service.

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Appendix 1 – Performance Assessment of Enabling Strategies 2025/26

We have assessed performance against each of our enablers overall using the Council's self-assessment framework, based on a scale of 1-6 using the following principles:

Level	Definition	Description
6	Excellent	Excellent or outstanding – all performance measures have achieved the target set and all actions have been delivered
5	Very Good	Major strengths – a significant majority of actions and measures are on track. No more than one or two falling short
4	Good	Important strengths with some areas for improvement – the weight of evidence shows that the successes are greater than the areas that have not been achieved
3	Adequate	Strengths just outweigh weaknesses – the evidence of success marginally outweighs areas that are not on track. Some actions are behind schedule and some measures are falling short of planned targets
2	Weak	Important weaknesses – the majority of measures and actions have not been achieved
1	Unsatisfactory	Major weakness – in most areas, performance is assessed as moving in the wrong direction and the vast majority of actions have not been delivered

In addition, progress of each outcome and milestone has been rated Red, Amber or Green (RAG), to indicate progress made under the three categories below:

- **Green:** Progressing Well – Progress made that is meeting timescales and project milestones set; if the action is implemented, there is evidence that the expected impact is being achieved
- **Orange:** Progressing but not on target – Progress made that is behind timescales or project milestones set; if the action is implemented, there is evidence that the expected impact is not being completely achieved
- **Red:** Attention needed – Progress is not being made and timescales or project milestones have been missed, or the action has not been started; if the action is implemented, there is evidence that the expected impact is not being achieved at all

People Strategy - Level 4 Good		
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	**How do we know?**	**RAG**
What we want to achieve: A clear purpose, supported by an enabling culture where colleagues have the information they need and are empowered to make a difference to the people we serve.		
We have strengthened the connection between the council's purpose, priorities and the contribution of colleagues by launching our new employee performance and development review. However, more needs to be done to ensure these are completed. Ninety percent of colleagues tell us they understand the authority's purpose and their connection to it. We have also taken steps to improve how colleagues receive information and feel connected to the organisation through PageTiger which improves access to information for colleagues who do not have a work laptop. We have re-instigated the staff conference and a more impactful People Leaders' Workshop programme. Alongside this we have held Q&A sessions with colleagues, the Leader and Chief Executive have also held sessions with many teams to elicit feedback. The percentage of respondents to the staff survey saying they feel up-to-date has improved at team, directorate and whole authority level. The percentage of colleagues who say they feel valued and listened to has increased from 65% to 71% over the past year. Our workforce radar is beginning to give management teams data to form a clearer view of people-related risks. This should enable better targeted action to improve sickness, turnover, and workforce planning. Progress is positive, but we still need to embed the appraisal approach consistently and make communications about starters, leavers and internal moves more systematic.	New appraisal scheme launched; Workforce radar developed and being rolled out through DMTs; PageTiger secured and personal email sign-up launched; staff survey results improved for team, directorate and organisation-wide updates; Colleague Survey results - 71% of colleagues said they felt valued and listened to; People Leaders' Workshop attendance increased by an average of 310%.	Green
What we want to achieve: A workforce with a diverse range of experiences, skills and backgrounds where people can be themselves.		
We have used staff networks to strengthen colleague voices and involve people with lived experience in employment policy development. This is beginning to improve confidence that colleagues can be themselves at work. Our gender pay gap is narrowing but women are underrepresented in the upper pay quartiles indicating that more works needs to be done to increase development opportunities for women. We do not yet have accurate data on all employees' protected characteristic information and are pushing colleagues to update this to improve our pay gap reporting to get better insight and inform any actions we need to take. We have achieved Disability Confident Employer (level 2) status and are now pursuing Disability Confident Leader (level 3) status. We also secured Age Friendly Employer Status, retained Armed Forces Gold Employer status and became an accredited Real Living Wage Employer.	Disability/neurodivergent colleague network and BAME network established; HR business partner support allocated to staff networks; protected characteristic data collection being improved through MyView; Colleague Survey Results - 87% of colleagues said the authority promotes an inclusive working environment;	Green

Eighty-Seven percent of colleagues responding to the staff survey said they felt that MCC promoted an inclusive working environment.	gender pay gap reduced to a median difference of £0.50 or 3.22%.	
What we want to achieve: People can access the training they need to do their job and the development opportunities to take the next step in their career.		
We have significantly improved access to learning by launching our online learning platform, Thinqi, authority-wide and using it to deliver essential learning alongside broader development opportunities. 1658 colleagues have completed all essential learning. We have also reduced licence costs by 31% in the past year through collaboration with other partners and generated significant cost-avoidance by sharing training modules with partners, increasing value for money while widening the learning available to colleagues. 84% of colleagues said they have access to the training they need, up from 81%. However, response rates for the survey tend to be lower for those who do not have access to a laptop and the next stage is to improve access to training for colleagues who do not regularly use a laptop or PC. We have secured additional investment for training and are in the process of developing a training needs analysis and producing a business case to create a dedicated training space for the authority. We will use the new appraisal process and training needs analysis to target learning more effectively. This will dovetail with a new training pathway which is being developed for all job roles.	Thinqi launched authority-wide; 1,658 colleagues completed all essential learning; collaboration with other authorities reduced licence costs by 31%; shared modules generated over £532,500 in cost avoidance; Colleague Survey - 84% of colleagues said they have access to the training they need, up from 81%.	
What we want to achieve: We are an employer of choice, attracting talent from a wide range of industries with career pathways that enable us to retain the best people.		
We have strengthened our position as an employer of choice by improving our recruitment platform, refreshing the jobs section of the website, promoting development opportunities and laying the foundations for stronger workforce planning. Turnover is at 8.1% which is healthy but marginally higher than the optimal position. We are not making full use of exit interview data to understand the reasons people are leaving the organisation alongside other data sources. However, our survey shows us that 89% of colleagues would recommend the council as an employer to friends and family, an increase of five percentage points on the previous year. This was reenforced by the Peer Panel Assessment conducted in February 2026 which highlighted that staff were seen as loyal, committed, and integral to the council's culture and delivery model. We have launched our e-recruitment system and improved the applicant experience, although there have been some challenges and automation benefits have not yet been fully realised. We have also developed a work experience policy, an apprentice-first approach and internal work experience options to widen routes into careers with the council. Workforce planning and succession planning remains an area for further development. This is a commitment made in the People Strategy and also highlighted in the Peer Panel Assessment report.	Peer Panel Assessment Report Staff turnover - 8.1; e-recruitment system launched; new work experience policy and apprentice-first approach developed; 89% of colleagues said they would recommend working for MCC to friends and family; expenditure on agency staff fell from £311k in quarter four 2024/25 to £112k in quarter one 2025/26, with latest data awaited.	

An Audit Wales Review of recruitment and retention has been carried out at all 22 local authorities in Wales with the local findings due to be presented to Governance and Audit Committee in September.		
What we want to achieve: Colleagues have access to the resources to manage their own well-being and can access tiered support to help them back to work if they experience sickness related absence.		
We have improved how colleagues understand and access our wellbeing and benefits offer by promoting it through the jobs website, colleague conferences and filmed material for wider access. We have also developed better early-warning mechanisms through the workforce radar, team Q&A sessions and colleague survey, giving us stronger insight into cultural issues before they become more serious. Staff survey results suggest a broadly healthy culture, with improved levels of manager support, psychological safety and colleagues looking forward to work. However, the scores for emotional, financial and physical well-being are lower than for other questions. Support for financial well-being was the only staff survey scope that declined although this may be related to wider cost-of-living concerns. Sickness absence and our approach to this has been revised to improve the focus on well-being.	Benefits and wellbeing offer promoted through colleague conferences and filmed content; Colleague Survey: 89% of colleagues would recommend working for MCC; 85.3% feel supported by their manager; 83.4% can share issues freely with colleagues; 92.6% feel safe at work; 77.9% look forward to coming to work. Average days lost to sickness increased from 11.9 to 12.7 days per FTE.	
What we want to achieve: People have the mindset, skills and support needed to develop and implement the solutions, including the use of technology, to the biggest challenges facing the council and the communities we serve.		
Talent is essential to the delivery of the authority's change programme – For Purpose, on Purpose. We have begun to build the skills, tools and support needed to help colleagues develop solutions to the council's biggest challenges, primarily through Thinqi modules based on InFuSe tools. We have commissioned the development of a HR bot that will improve access to advice for colleagues and managers, freeing up HR Business Partners to focus on strategic work. We are also working with our new digital and data collaboration with SRS to develop and role out training opportunities to ensure staff can use AI sensibly and responsibly, in line with our commitment to 'take the robot out of the human, and allow staff to focus on the areas that require problem solving, compassion and empathy. Work on the future of work is less developed, so this remains an important priority as the impact of AI on professional and knowledge-based roles becomes clearer.	Thinqi modules developed for InFuSe tools; HR chatbot in development; 69% of colleagues said they feel able to make improvements happen in their area of work, up from 64%.	

Areas for development	**Who and When**
Production of the Workforce Plan	Head of HR – September 2026
Development Training Pathways for all job-roles	Head of Workforce Development - Ongoing
Re-tendering for payroll and HR system (inc. recruitment module)	Head of Systems and Data – December 2027

Climate adaptation / impact on workforce			Chief Officer, People, Performance and Partnerships – June 2027
Holiday pay / time and attendance			Head of Systems and Data – March 2027
Learn from and build on work experience programmes run in 2026			Head of HR – July 2027
Milestones	**Progress**	**Target**	**Comments**
New appraisal scheme launched	Green	July 24	We have launched the new approach and agreed the associated policy with trade unions. The next task is to embed consistent use and use appraisal data to inform training priorities.
Workforce data is featured in all service business plans and a whole authority dashboard	Green	Sept 24	We have developed the workforce radar and are rolling it out through DMTs, giving leaders a clearer evidence base for prioritising people-related action.
New section features in our regular staff newsletter 'The Compass'	Amber	Sept 24	Work is ongoing to develop 'The Compass' to be delivered via the PageTiger platform.
Programme to roll-out the skills and tools taught as part of the InFuSe programme in place	Green	Dec 24	Thinqi modules developed for InFuSe tools.
Staff survey in place	Green	March 25	Colleague survey undertaken in 2024/25 and 2025/26.
Research concluded and recommendations made on action likely to have greatest success in reducing the gender pay gap in the authority	Green	Sept 25	The Gender Pay Gap report published in March 2026 details the research undertaken and consequent recommendations made.
E-learning system launched authority-wide	Green	June 24	Thinqi launched authority-wide; 1,658 colleagues completed all essential learning.
New training space is in place	Amber	2025	Work is underway to identify a new training space.
New scheme for work experience, apprenticeships and graduate recruitment in place	Amber	Dec 24	A new scheme and associated policies and guidance are in place for work experience

			and apprenticeships; work is ongoing around graduate recruitment.
New staff benefits page in place	Green	Sept 25	Currently accessed via the intranet and soon to be launched via PageTiger, so all colleagues can access this information.
Culture audit undertaken	Amber	March 26	This work is ongoing, with colleague survey results being analysed.

Measures	**Previous**	**Current**	**Target**	**Comments**
Percentage of staff receiving an appraisal using the new Employee Review and Development scheme *(this figure does not include those carried out using previous or local arrangements such as supervision)*	n/a	6.36% (excluding schools)	100%	New corporate colleague appraisal scheme launched in 2025/26.
Average difference in pay between employees who are disabled and those who are not (£)	n/a	n/a	n/a	To be calculated and published from March 2027.
Average difference in pay between males and females (£) i) Mean ii) Median	Mean: £0.85 Median: £0.49	Mean: £0.75 Median: £0.50	£0	Male pay exceeds that of females
Percentage of non-teaching workforce accessing courses on Thinqi.	n/a	68.57%	100%	All non-teaching colleagues have access to Thinqi. 68.57% of colleagues with access have completed the mandatory training.
Staff turnover (%)	12.1%	8.2%	<8%	
Number of agency staff	49	22	n/a	Figures are for first quarter
Average number of applicants for each new role	Not Available	204 post openings/ 1798 applications = 8.8	To be confirmed	The reporting functions in Talentlink will provide this information, in the future. Information for Q1 taken from TalentLink.
Sickness absence (Days per FTE)	12.75	10.85	10.5	Current figure is the forecasted value for the year based on Q1 reporting

Digital and Data Strategy - Level 3 - Adequate		
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	**How do we know?**	**RAG**
What we want to achieve: Work with partners to develop and maintain strong foundations to support delivery of the strategic vision		
We have strengthened the foundations that support delivery of the Digital and Data Strategy through clearer governance, stronger partnership working and improved arrangements for managing information, data and systems. **Information governance & Security** We have reviewed, implemented and promoted information governance policies, procedures and data sharing agreements. The Information Governance Group provides an established forum for key stakeholders to review policy content, assess the adequacy of arrangements and make decisions that support the safe and effective management of data. We have robust arrangements in place to safeguard data and systems from cyber security risks, including physical network controls, staff awareness and training, structured governance, risk analysis and business continuity planning. These arrangements reduce the likelihood and potential impact of incidents, while recognising that cyber risk cannot be eliminated completely. We are working with the SRS security service to complete cyber security accreditation frameworks by the end of September 2026 and contribute to the consolidated national Cyber Assessment Framework assessment that will further strengthen assurance. We use anonymous phishing exercises to help us understand staff awareness, identify gaps and target future training more effectively. The transfer of the Information Security Service into SRS has increased resilience by moving from reliance on a single Chief Information Security Officer to access to a wider team of security specialists. This strengthens capacity, improves continuity of support and provides greater access to specialist expertise across partners. Reporting to Governance and Audit Committee provides additional oversight of cyber security arrangements, data performance and the actions being taken to reduce risk. We have mandated Business Continuity Plans for our business systems and will put plans in place for all systems by the end of 2026/27. This will strengthen arrangements for maintaining critical services, safeguarding line-of-business systems and supporting both data extraction and analytics. They will support services to have clearer, more consistent arrangements for protecting key systems and sustaining access to the data needed for operational delivery and insight. **Standards & Capability** We have established data standards that provide guidance to improve the reliability, accessibility and usability of data. These standards support a more consistent approach to data management and provide a foundation for better	Data Standards Information governance and Data Protection Policies and Procedures. Cyber security arrangements and assurance reports to Governance & Audit Committee. Digital, Data and Technology SRS collaboration case Strategic Digital and Data Board & Digital and Data Steering Group	Amber

operational use, reporting and analytics. Our established data and system administrator officer network, which has 163 members, is helping embed these standards in practice. Through six interactive training sessions during the year, the network has strengthened peer support, improved consistency of practice and supported services to make better use of the data held in their systems. This support has included joint delivery from SRS digital and data teams, including topics such as master data management fundamentals.

We have continued to provide specific digital and data training and support where needs have been identified, or where services have requested help. This includes targeted Copilot support, service-specific training sessions, digital champion engagement, development of new e-learning modules and Excel skills training. Alongside this, pilots are being undertaken with other partners to develop an Essential Digital Skills Framework, which includes AI modules, and an AI Leadership Programme. Subject to the AI leadership programme pilot the aim is to facilitate cohort two of the programme including participants from Monmouthshire in quarter 3 this year. These will support a structured, long-term approach to workforce digital confidence, AI adoption and skills development. We have also agreed to improve alignment between digital champions networks in the collaboration to create a more consistent and co-ordinated approach to digital adoption, engagement and peer support. As part of this approach, we have already seen over 100 digital champions from across the three partners come together for a jointly delivered support session.

We have developed an approach to undertake digital and data maturity assessments by October 2026. These will improve our understanding of organisational strengths, capability gaps and where targeted support would have the greatest impact. They will also enable services to plan their digital and data developments.

We have implemented a shared service model for digital and data in collaboration with Torfaen County Borough Council and Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council through an expanded role for the Shared Resource Service. The transfer of our digital team into SRS has been completed and an initial additional investment in data capability has been agreed. We have retained data protection, information governance, geospatial data and data insight capacity within the council. This gives us access to broader digital and data expertise while maintaining local capacity for governance, insight and place-based analysis.

Overall, the progress made in delivering this objective is strengthening the foundations needed to deliver the Digital and Data Strategy. Updated information governance policies, data sharing agreements, cyber security arrangements, business continuity planning, data standards, training, practitioner networks and the expanded SRS collaboration are improving how data, systems and digital capability are governed, protected and supported. The evidence we have assessed shows this is helping to reduce risk, improve resilience, build staff capability and create more consistent arrangements for services to use digital and data effectively. The digital and data maturity assessment when completed will provide more specific evidence by assessing strengths and areas for developments across services against strong foundations for the use of data. While the benefits and value framework will help evidence whether specific projects

are leading to clearer benefits such as improved capability and measurable improvements in how digital and data are used.		
What we want to achieve: Use data analytics and insight, digital advancements and a user-centred focus, to change how the diverse needs of citizens and service users are met		
We are developing the use of data analytics, insight, digital tools and user-centred approaches to improve how the diverse needs of citizens and service users are understood and met. Progress has been made in building the foundations for more advanced analytics and AI, improving access to local information, strengthening geospatial analysis, and developing digital channels that make services easier to access. These arrangements are beginning to improve the way data is used to support planning, operational response, engagement and service delivery, although some of the most significant benefits will depend on completing the next phases of the data modernisation programme. **Data modernisation and AI** We are working with Gwent-wide partners to develop a modern data platform that will enable previously separate data sets to be ingested, cleansed, matched and visualised. This has the potential to support stronger insight, self-service analytics and, over time, predictive analytics. An initial proof of concept with one partner has been completed and has informed the business case to establish a dynamically connected Single View of the Child in Monmouthshire. Cabinet has agreed a further business case to complete phase 1 of the Data Modernisation Programme, including delivery of the core data platform and the Single View of Child as the first operational use case for joined-up insight. **Case Study- Single View of Child** The Single View of Child is being used as the first use case because it addresses an area of high demand, high risk and high cost. It is intended to help professionals build a more joined-up view of need, identify issues earlier, improve decision-making and make better use of professional time. Importantly, the benefit does not come from presenting a single view alone. The benefit comes from how the insight is used to support earlier intervention, targeted support, improved management of demand and better practice. The potential this provides for predictive analytics is intended to support professional judgement, not replace it. Delivery has been slower than originally planned because of the complexity of the work and limited capacity in service areas to support implementation. We have responded by taking a phased and gated approach, with review and evaluation points built into phase 1. The Cabinet report also made additional resources available to boost capacity where necessary. This will help ensure the programme remains deliverable, that learning from the Single View of Child and the additional agreed project informs future development, and that further data sharing opportunities are	Digital, Data & Technology collaboration Single View business case Data & AI investment case MonMaps (Internal) and Local Info (residents) Geographical Information Systems (GIS) Workforce radar National Resident Survey Data Insight analysis	

prioritised where they can add the greatest value. The exact timeline for implementation in Monmouthshire is being determined, this will be informed by the implementation in other partner councils.

A second collaborative project has been identified in the region using the Single View technology focused on demand into key customer service channels in the Council. The full scope of the project is currently being defined with identified service leads. This Single View of Demand will bring together demand, contact and service data across the region to better understand pressure, patterns and opportunities for earlier intervention and improved decision making. The project aims to be completed by March 2027. The project will also include work to resolve long standing reporting issues and improve access to insight from data held within MyMonmouthshire. Further opportunities to utilise the Unified Data Platform are also being explored including, opportunities to collate performance date and cross-analysis alongside other datasets already being developed through the regional data platform.

We are also progressing a partnership-wide approach to AI. The AI proposal is intended to establish a secure and governed shared AI foundation across SRS partners, replacing fragmented and inconsistent use with a common AI Management Hub and associated delivery capability. The first stage will provide approved AI capabilities for staff, such as summarisation, translation, redaction and approved bots including a HR bot to improve efficiency. Early adopter pilot testing commenced at the start of August and aims to conclude at the end of September. This will inform the further roll out. Alongside this we will create an initial Digital Front Door capability for citizen enquiries. The second stage is intended to support more advanced use cases, wider automation, council-wide chatbots, 24/7 digital services and broader service transformation where value is evidenced.

Case Study- Digital Front door

The development of an initial AI Front Door capability for citizen enquiries and transactions is intended to support quicker and more accessible digital service for residents. This will enable automated handling of queries, improving access to information and advice and ensuring officer support is targeted at those who need it most.

Taking a shared approach should reduce duplication, strengthen governance, create economies of scale and support more consistent use of AI across partners. These proposals are not simply an investment in technology. They are intended to help release staff time for higher-value work, reduce avoidable administrative and process costs, support earlier intervention, improve targeting of resources and create the conditions for future financial efficiencies and better long-term value for money. The proposal recognises and will respond to the environmental impact of increased use of AI and will carefully manage and respond to implications for the workforce. To realise these benefits and ensure appropriate management of risks, we will need to ensure the AI Policy is adopted, governance is embedded and internal capacity is available to support implementation.

Place based information and Insight

We have strengthened our use of specialist Geographical Information Systems through infrastructure upgrades, continued management of existing datasets and development of new datasets. This has improved access to internal and external data and is enabling staff to create richer localised views through MonMaps. This empowers staff to access the data they need and undertake geospatial analysis to inform better understanding of our communities.

Case Study – Use of GIS in flooding response

The use of GIS during the Storm Claudia flooding response demonstrates the practical value of these arrangements. We used our GIS technology and data to accurately map impacted households and vulnerable residents. This supported the coordination of wellbeing checks by creating mapped zones and property lists for volunteers, and linked datasets together from different teams. This helped to establish one source of data collated at a unique household level to inform the response and recovery.

We have improved our Local Info website with a new 'My Community' tab, Local Info provides residents tailored information specific to their property. This includes cost of living support, public toilet locations, and links to wellbeing services near their postcode. We have also implemented a new postcode lookup to make it easier and quicker for residents to access waste and recycling dates. 'When is my bin day?' functionality has been added into existing council waste and recycling web pages. These improvements make it easier for residents to access relevant local information quickly, reduce the need to navigate multiple pages and support residents to stay informed and connected.

We have developed a range of data insight products to support evidence-informed planning, delivery and performance management. These include analysis of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2025, population projections, a workforce radar for Strategic Leadership Team, the national resident survey and quarterly performance dashboards. These products are helping services and senior leaders better understand changing demographics, deprivation, workforce issues, resident views and organisational performance, supporting more informed decisions about priorities, resources and improvement activity. We also have also been provided access through the SRS collaboration to Local Insights, a strategic capability to support local and place-based intelligence and evidence-led decision making and remain engaged with partner wide work in relation to Marmot reporting.

Digital access

We have developed our use of digital tools to improve the accessibility and responsiveness of services. My Monmouthshire provides residents with 24/7 access to a range of council services, making it easier to report issues, request support, apply for services and book appointments at a time that suits them. This gives residents more direct and convenient access to services, while helping services capture requests more consistently and manage them through more efficient digital processes. Work has included the development of the new Blue Badge replacement

service (currently in user testing), which will deliver a better customer experience via a more efficient digital process, and improvements to the Pothole reporting process. We recognise from user feedback that the existing system has some limitations and is not as user-friendly. We will continue to make improvements wherever possible based on resident feedback. The SRS is currently undertaking market research on potential alternatives, whilst also exploring user experience to understand underlying issues, for example is it the system, the process or its design, or a combination. Let's Talk Monmouthshire is improving the way we involve residents, communities and stakeholders in shaping services and decisions. It provides a more consistent route for promoting engagement opportunities, gathering feedback and making consultation activity more visible and accessible. We have also expanded access to staff learning through an e-learning system. This supports completion of essential training, widens access to development opportunities and enables staff to learn more flexibly. Collaboration has also delivered cost avoidance by reducing licence costs and improving access to courses through economies of scale. Overall, these arrangements are improving access to information, strengthening the use of data in decision making, supporting more responsive services and creating the foundations for more advanced analytics and use of AI. Capacity and capability still need to be developed if the council is to move from stronger foundations to more mature use of digital and data. The AI and data modernisation business case is a key element to building the capability needed for predictive analysis and more mature data-led service transformation. This will need to be supported by targeted training, effective prioritisation and sufficient internal capacity to turn strengthened digital and data arrangements into impact across services.		
What we want to achieve: Equip and empower our citizens, communities and the organisation to get the most out of digital and data technology		
We are making progress in equipping and empowering staff, citizens and communities to get the most out of digital and data technology. Our approach combines staff training, peer networks, digital inclusion activity, strengthened governance and the development of tools that make services easier to access and use. These arrangements are helping to build confidence, improve consistency in the use of digital and data, and create stronger links between organisational priorities and service-level delivery. **Skills, support and digital inclusion** We have expanded access to digital and data training through a range of internal and partner-led learning opportunities, including use of our e-learning management system. This includes core digital and data skills, support for the effective use of business systems, and developing guidance for the safe and effective use of AI tools such as Copilot.	Digital and Data training Digital Champions network System & Data Administrators network Co-Pilot pilot project	

These provide staff with more flexible access to learning and greater confidence in applying digital and data skills to improve service delivery. We have also established and developed networks that support shared learning and practical improvement across the organisation. The Digital Champions network, System and Data Administrators network and wider service representatives provide routes for sharing practice, identifying common issues and supporting peer learning. These networks are helping services to make better use of their systems and data, strengthen local ownership of digital and data developments, and improve the connection between central support and operational practice. We are also supporting residents and communities through digital inclusion activity. We have established a cross-partner group to consider how residents can be better supported to access and benefit from digital services. Through Monmouthshire community learning centres, residents can access digital learning opportunities that help develop basic digital skills, build confidence and support everyday tasks such as using devices, accessing information safely, communicating online, applying for services, managing appointments and finding local support. These arrangements are helping reduce barriers to digital access and support residents to participate more confidently in an increasingly digital environment. The AI programme provides further opportunities to improve productivity, access and service responsiveness. The foundation stage will create a shared AI Management Hub integrated with systems and data, and provide approved AI capabilities for staff such as summarisation, translation and redaction, alongside initial Digital Front Door capability for citizen enquiries. If implemented effectively, this should help reduce avoidable administrative and process costs, support earlier intervention, improve the targeting of resources and release staff time for higher-value work. **Governance, benefits and future development** Strategic governance has been strengthened through the Strategic Digital and Data Board and the Digital and Data Steering Group. These arrangements are improving decision making, prioritisation and accountability for implementing the strategy. They also provide a clearer route for services to advocate, champion and shape the use of digital and data in their areas. These are supporting the council's digital and data activity to become more closely aligned with the council's priorities, including the *For Purpose On Purpose* change programme. There is now a stronger basis for advancing projects that can support transformation and service improvement. We are developing a benefits and value framework to improve how digital and data projects are identified, prioritised, resourced and evaluated. This will strengthen our ability to demonstrate impact, support better investment decisions and inform a review of the measures used to evaluate the Digital and Data Strategy. This is an important next step because, while activity and governance arrangements have improved, we need to be more consistent in showing how digital and data work is changing outcomes, improving services and efficiency.		

We recognise that further work is needed to embed these arrangements consistently across the organisation. Workforce planning needs to better identify the digital and data skills required within service areas, alongside the central support needed to enable delivery. The planned digital and data maturity assessment will help us understand strengths, capability gaps and where targeted training and support will have the greatest impact. Continued development of AI policy, data training and practical support will be important as new technologies become more embedded in daily tasks and service delivery. Overall, these arrangements are creating a stronger foundation for staff, residents and communities to benefit from digital and data technology. They are improving access to training, strengthening peer support, supporting digital inclusion and improving the governance needed to prioritise activity. We need to increase take-up, improve evaluation of impact and ensure digital and data skills, tools and support are embedded in the places where they can make the greatest difference to residents, communities and services.		

2025/26 Areas for development	**Who and When**
Undertake digital and data maturity assessments to understand strengths and developmental areas, and plan and deliver targeted digital and data support and training for staff using the findings.	Digital, data and information security teams – October 2026
Use the For Purpose On Purpose (F-POP) Framework to identify and prioritise specific service challenges or opportunities where improved data, AI and advanced analytics can generate insight, support earlier intervention and inform delivery of the Council's priorities.	F-POP programme and SRS digital data & technology collaboration. – March 2027
Develop an AI policy and further training and support for staff, including through AI modules in the digital skills framework, as AI becomes more embedded in daily tasks.	Information security team – September 2026 (AI policy development)
Further develop a digital and data training programme for staff, informed by the digital and data maturity assessment and service needs.	Digital, data and information security teams – March 2027
Review the performance measures used in the digital and data strategy to increase the focus on outcomes and impact of the strategy	Digital, data and information security teams- December 2026

Milestones	**Progress**	**Target**	**Comments**
Digital and Data Maturity Assessment scores		March 2026	Approach agreed and assessment being developed, not yet completed.

Document management System implementation and feedback		April 2025	We have implemented the SharePoint document management system
Annual evaluation of Digital & Data Strategy		July 2026	We have completed an annual evaluation of strategy and will use this to inform future delivery

Measures	**Previous**	**Current**	**Target**	**Comments**
Number of systems integrated for data flow	0	6	10	Part of implementation of the Master Data Management (MDM), Platform.
Number of data sets held in data warehouse	0	8	10	Part of implementation of the Master Data Management (MDM), Platform.
Number of data sets catalogued	50	100	50	Geospatial meta data catalogue only.
Percentage of Customers who score 3 or above for Customer Satisfaction	Not available	Not available	80%	Specific mechanism to report still to be established. Recent survey results on customer contact experiences included.
Results from our National Resident survey 2025 show: - 42% of respondents agreed that contacting the council is simple. - 44% of those who contacted the council were satisfied with how their query was handled while 36% were not.				
Number of open data sets published	38	38	20	
Number of digital and data training sessions held.	3	18	20	Includes, System and data administrator network sessions which feature training.
Number of system and data network sessions facilitated.	3	6	8	System and data administrator network sessions.

Asset Management Strategy – Level 5 – Very Good		
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	**How do we know?**	**RAG**

What we want to achieve: Fit for purpose and collaborative estate		
We have continued to invest in the Council's estate through a planned and proactive approach to replacement and renewal, ensuring buildings remain safe, compliant and fit for purpose. A key focus this year has been strengthening health and safety compliance, particularly through enhanced asbestos management arrangements, improved monitoring, and a review of the frequency of compliance visits and associated reporting lines to provide clearer assurance and accountability. Detailed survey work completed and construction has since started on fire compartmentation strengthening works at Deri View Primary School, Abergavenny; with refurbishment ongoing and scheduled for completion in September 2026, enabling the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni to the site. Alongside this, we have delivered and progressed a range of priority capital works across the estate, including roof replacement at Overmonnow Primary School, treatment works at Caldicot Castle, and window replacement at Chepstow Comprehensive School. We have also responded effectively to emerging issues and unplanned pressures, completing £123k of asbestos removal works across the estate. We have continued to work with directorates across the Council to understand and plan for future accommodation needs, supporting service delivery and ensuring the estate evolves in line with organisational priorities. This has included targeted improvements to office working environments and investment to optimise usable space, with positive impacts reflected in staff survey feedback, including at County Hall. Service performance has also improved in key operational areas, including an improved Cleaning Services audit opinion following the transfer of the Cleaning Services team into Landlord Services. Finally, we have supported wider corporate objectives through effective estate rationalisation and project delivery, including disposal of surplus land at Mounton House School and completion of fit-out works to support the Pupil Referral Service.	Deri View Primary School refurbishment Workspace investment and staff survey response improvement Cleaning Services audit improvement Mounton House School disposal Capital maintenance works at Overmonnow Primary School	
What we want to achieve: Good role models for climate and nature practices		
Low carbon design principles continue to shape our capital maintenance programme, with a particular focus on the net zero initiative. End-of-life boilers have been replaced with air source heat pumps and other decarbonised options at a range of properties, including temporary housing options in Caldicot and Caerwent, and through completion of Phase 1 of the 3-19 King Henry VIII School development. Castlegate Business Park has been selected as a pilot project by CCR as one of its 'Helping Business Lower the Load' case study's. Phase 1's energy audit profiling has been completed, with phase 2 anticipated later in 2026 as CCR explore intervention scenarios and investment. Such interventions will enable MCC to further reduce operating costs, thereby improving the attractiveness of the offering and reducing MCC's holding costs. Alongside this, new EV charging facilities have been installed at various locations, including Usk County Hall and Severn View Parc Care Home. Within MCC's agricultural portfolio, new farm business tenancies and extensions have been secured or agreed in principle, with a new 10-year farm business tenancy extension secured for a property in Caerwent and new tenancy's granted for holdings near Abergavenny. Tenancy renewals have enabled formalising of the management	3-19 King Henry VIII Comprehensive School Agricultural cottage investment Sustainable farming lettings Allotment Support Grant EV charging rollout and expansion	

of adjacent woodland within MCC ownership, thereby assisting compliance with the Sustainable Farming Scheme and securing positive biodiversity outputs. In January 2026 Cabinet approved the repurposing and sale of vacant agricultural cottages. Two agricultural cottages are shortly to be marketed for disposal, while two other vacant cottages commenced refurbishment in late 25-26. Landlord Services have successfully claimed and distributed an allotment support grant to enhance 221 allotment plots across the County, addressing waiting list demand and supporting biodiversity, site security, and plot division. MCC has been awarded a further £24k for opportunities in 2026/27. The Council's solar farm continues to generate strong net returns, exceeding budgeted income by £128,507 due to efficiency improvements, higher ROC values, and favourable weather conditions. Since 2017, the solar farm has generated gross income of £6,026,592, and MCC continues to promote new solar farm development as part of the Replacement Local Development Plan. In Cleaning Services, efforts continue to be made to improve the environmental impact of the service, with successful implementation of new facilities that have saved significant water annually and are replenished through Made Blue-supported initiatives. In August 2025, the Deputy Building Cleaning Supervisor partnered with suppliers to design a bespoke package of sustainable cleaning products for diverse sites, achieving a 95% reduction in carbon footprint compared to transporting liquid concentrates, and eliminating single-use plastics with durable, reusable bottles. PVA Hygiene products feature biodegradable, pre-dosed formulations, recyclable and compostable packaging, and are lighter for safer handling.		
What we want to achieve: Maximised and commercialised asset base		
Annual performance updates continue to be submitted to the Performance & Overview Scrutiny Committee, providing a comprehensive overview of our commercial and investment portfolios. Castlegate Business Park's lettings have now stabilised, with the majority of lettings in 25-26 stemming from the MonSpace initiative or from existing tenants expanding their presence. In the absence of a significant new letting during the reporting period, Castlegate BP remains on a difficult but significantly improved trajectory following the various lettings and expansion of tenants since the loss of Mitel as anchor tenant in 2022. Our marketing strategy remains one focused on opportunities to diversify and attract sectoral partners (e.g. complimentary businesses within the semi-conductor and MedTech sectors) and constructive dialogue with Cardiff Capital Region has contributed to a number of promising recent enquiries. At Newport Leisure Park, the portfolio remains robust, consistently delivering a healthy net return to MCC. The final vacant unit has been marketed throughout 25-26 and is now under offer. Since acquisition, these two assets have collectively generated £1,836,832 in income above borrowing repayments. Newport Leisure Park is scheduled to exceed the original 2% above borrowing investment criteria in	ROI improvement at Newport Leisure Park Occupancy rates improving on industrial and retail estate EAS letting at County Hall Monmouth Market Hall letting Pill Farm Industrial Estate letting	

26/27, but Castlegate Business Park falls significantly below this target. The total annual borrowing costs of £1,471,674 continue to be met in full. Occupancy rates and letting activity across the industrial and retail estates remain strong. Unit 5, Pill Farm Industrial Estate Caldicot has been let to a new occupier on a 5-year lease. Unit 8D, Old Pill Farm Industrial Estate has also been re-let to a new occupier on a 5-year lease. The refurbishment of the former One Stop Shop at Monmouth Market Hall using grant funding secured by the Regeneration Team was completed. A new 3-year lease has been agreed for this unit, with a change of use application submitted for a Bridal Dress Shop. These new leases generate a rental income for MCC and offset ongoing revenue costs for the respective properties. Rental arrears across the retail portfolio represent less than 2% of the rent roll. In order to further maximise the occupancy of our property, the Education Achievement Service (EAS) have successfully relocated into J Block in County Hall. The letting is generating over £50,000 of financial benefit to MCC (rent, service charge, business rates) whilst bringing an important sectoral partner close to the organisation's headquarters.		
What we want to achieve: Strengthen the enablement role of Landlord Services		
Landlord Services remains committed to supporting other MCC departments as they pursue their corporate goals and policy objectives. Significant progress has been made in this area through 25-26. Landlord Services continues to play a crucial role in acquiring and refurbishing properties to create supported accommodation, particularly for care experienced young people. Properties have been acquired in both Abergavenny and Monmouth, with further acquisitions being considered. These developments offer homely environments featuring 24-hour support, empowering young people to build independent living skills. The initiative is yielding substantial cost savings for MCC, leveraging available borrowing, funding from the Housing with Care Fund, and reducing financial pressures previously caused by spot-purchased placements. Similar support is provided to colleagues in MCC Housing, with housing acquired to support the Rapid Rehousing Strategy. The department has also contributed technical expertise to facilitate the relocation of Monmouth Museum into Shire Hall, and ongoing technical support with Phase 2 of the 3-19 King Henry construction. Altogether, these initiatives highlight Landlord Services' ongoing dedication to enabling MCC's strategic objectives, supporting vulnerable groups, and efficiently managing growth and resources across the county. Additionally, Cleaning Services has transferred directorates and into Landlord Services department, broadening its scope. Significant improvements have been achieved in this area, with three new sites having joined the service, showcasing the high standards maintained. Caldicot Comprehensive School and Cross Ash Primary School are scheduled to join in 2026, resulting in an increase of roughly 400 labour hours since transfer to Landlord Services.	Supported accommodation acquisitions and refurbishment Rapid Rehousing Strategy acquisitions and refurbishment Severn View Parc Snagging Cleaning Services expansion of services Acquisitions for Active Travel and Highways 3-19 Technical support	

Such developments underscore the robust growth trajectory and reinforce confidence in Landlord Services' ability to handle large-scale expansion while consistently delivering quality outcomes. Further progress has been made in driving cost savings and efficiency through framework management and service procurement, with strengthened compliance arrangements and the introduction of a new site checklist. Procurement of school condition surveys and updates to building and electrical frameworks have been prioritised. Efficiencies in property information reporting are anticipated with the design, procurement, and eventual implementation of a new asset management system, which will facilitate strategic planning as the asset base evolves. MCC has also secured extension of its existing property partnership arrangement with Gwent Police, an arrangement by which Landlord Services provide maintenance and technical design support to Gwent Police. This partnership has been renewed until March 2027, securing financial returns to MCC for the period. Whilst good progress has been made to strengthen the enablement role and governance arrangements around Landlord Services and use of Council assets, further work will be done to develop individual Service Asset Plans such that more proactive planning on the potential for assets and developing service requirements can be forecast. Service Asset Working Groups will be established for each directorate to inform the development of the capital maintenance budget. We will continue to work with directorates to determine whether the spaces they occupy remain fit for purpose, in the right places, accessible and best meeting current and future service needs. Further efficiencies in the reporting of property information can be achieved through design, procurement and implementation of a new asset management system. This will enable clearer strategic planning with an evolving asset base. Capital funding has been secured for the implementation of the system and procurement of the new system is ongoing. Review and application of the Council's Rental Concessionary Policy will continue, as more leases reach their expiry and require renewal. We will continue to identify worst performing assets from an energy and revenue perspective to consider the requirement future investment or potential alternative uses.		
What we want to achieve: Utilise community assets to optimise social value		
During 2025–26, an extensive programme of lease renewals and extensions has been underway for a variety of community assets, ensuring their continued value and support to local residents. Facilities such as Abergavenny Community Centre, Portskewett Recreation Hall, and Caldicot AFC Football Club have progressed negotiations to secure lease extensions, which are vital for their long-term sustainability. Additionally, Tudor Street in Abergavenny has entered a new Tenancy at Will, with ongoing discussions to establish a more robust tenancy agreement and improve governance structures. At the Melville Centre in Abergavenny, a new lease has been entered with Monmouthshire Veterans Association for the establishment of a horticultural garden and facility on the former Green Fingers Space. Work continues at Melville Centre to secure a lasting lease arrangement, all in	Bridges Centre negotiations and renovation Letting or former Green Fingers space MMCA tender award	

line with the Council's policies, such as the Community Asset Transfer and Rental Concessionary Policy. These frameworks are designed to ensure fairness and consistency in how Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) supports both assets and tenants. Within the realm of community development, TogetherWorks in Caldicot has been granted a new licence to occupy, safeguarding their immediate future while Friends of TogetherWorks develop a business plan for sustainable long-term service provision. Following a competitive tender, Cabinet awarded a 30-year lease for the Former Abergavenny Library to the Monmouthshire Muslim Community Association (MMCA) in May 2025, with the Council now actively implementing this decision. MCC has continued to manage lease renewals in alignment with lease anniversaries and impending expiries, maintaining their commitment to asset stewardship. The aftermath of Storm Claudia saw MCC facilitate the temporary relocation of the Bridges Centre to Monmouth Market Hall, demonstrating prompt support and adaptability. Renovation works in response to the flooding are ongoing, underpinned by a desire to enter a new 30-year lease which is expected to be signed imminently, representing a significant step forward for their future operations. Raglan Old School has advanced towards resolving a longstanding legal dispute, following a commissioned valuation with the Diocesan Trust in early 25-26.	TogetherWorks licence award 'The Gathering' tenancy renewal	
Areas for development	**Who and When**	
The Asset Management Strategy remains relevant and appropriate, with the Asset Management Plan requiring continuous update as new objectives and operational matters materialise. Whilst good progress has been made on all of the AMS objectives, a number of long-standing lease renewals and negotiations will continue into 26-27 to better demonstrate successful outcomes. Formal consultation is underway on the proposed restructuring of the Landlord Services department, ensuring it is fit for purpose to meet current challenges and opportunities. Proposed merging of the Design and Development Teams within Landlord Services, will better enable service efficiency and technical support of projects from feasibility and concept design through to handover. Recruitment is schedule in Summer 2026 to appoint to a number of vacant posts. The strategic approach applied to MCC's rationalisation opportunities will be improved via implementation of the new Asset Management System, scheduled for August 2026. This will enable stronger application of MCC's capital maintenance scheme, best identifying those opportunities on assets that best serve service providers and users in their communities. Working groups will be established with colleagues in Decarbonisation and other directorates, to ensure stakeholders are being appropriately consulted and taking informed decisions with property implications.	Nick Keyse, Head of Landlord Services 2026-27	

Milestones	Progress	Target	Comments
King Henry VIII 3-19 School development		Feb 24	Phase 1 completed.
Severn View Parc Care home development		Feb 24	Completed.
Affordable housing development of land at Caldicot Comprehensive School		July 24	Site sold. Planning conditions being discharged.

Measures	Previous	Current	Target	Comments
Total income target for the investment portfolio	£1,049,505	£1,028,658	£979,698	
No, of affordable homes granted planning consent on MCC land	n/a	n/a	50% AH on all dev sites	No residential sites sold during reporting period
ROI of Investment Portfolio, as per Asset Investment Policy Castlegate Business Park Newport Leisure Park	-1.81% 1.44%	-2.8% 1.80%	2% 2%	
Average DEC Rating of Operational Estate	C (51-75)	D (79)	C (51-75)	Lower grade due to backlog of DEC's yet to be recorded. Anticipated score will improve and exceed previous score once completed.
Design/Maintenance Income Target	On budget	On budget	On budget	Staff restructure under consultation, which will result in increased capacity within service
Cemeteries net income target	£230,267	£172,853	£183,041	
Industrial units net income target	£233,876	£207,106	£188,275	
County Farms net income target	£274,012	£275,832	£269,120	
% of rental arrears from investment portfolio's total income	5%	3.8%	2%	

Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy – Level 3 – Adequate		
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	**How do we know?**	**RAG**
What we want to achieve: Contribute to reducing the Council's carbon emissions to Net Zero by 2030		
To improve our ability to identify services with high carbon usage and explore carbon reduction opportunities, a Power BI dashboard has been produced. The dashboard will enable the procurement team to work with services such as food,	Power BI dashboard	

highways and social care, during their procurement activities and identify opportunities to reduce their carbon outlay in the future. To further improve knowledge, officers have also been actively involved in WRAP workshops and deforestation training was provided by Size of Wales in September 2025. We have developed a Carbon Reduction Guidance and Data Collection Tool and revised strategy which has been agreed by the Southeast Wales WLGA Procurement Group. Further activities will include the progressions of discussions to roll out the Carbon Tool developed by Powys County Council across all Southeast Wales local authorities. To raise further awareness of the importance of climate change issues in procurement activities, the Socially Responsible Procurement Policy was approved by Cabinet in December 2025 which will be promoted via our local business networks. Additional WRAP/Ardal carbon & circular economy training will be held for Officers during 2026/27 and an accompanying Carbon infographic and animation has been developed which is available on the Ardal website. More targeted communications are being developed to increase supplier knowledge, and a communication strategy is being developed to highlight the Local Authority's low-carbon requirements. The effectiveness of this will be assessed through the numbers of tenders being received where suppliers actively identify how they intend to reduce their carbon emissions through the development and implementation of their carbon reduction plans. Progress will be monitored by assessing the number and quality of plans received by suppliers.	WRAP and Size of Wales Officer workshops held. Carbon Reduction Guidance and Data Collection Tool Socially Responsible Procurement Policy Infographic, Carbon Animation and social media content Carbon Reduction Plans	
What we want to achieve: Making procurement spend more accessible to local small businesses and the third sector		
As increasing procurement spend with local businesses is a key priority for the Council, a deeper analysis has been undertaken, the results of which, more accurately reflect the delivery site of the spend rather than the head office location of the company for example, typically where either construction contracts where a large proportion of spend will be on local labour and materials or social care where the services are being delivered by local care workers. This analysis has resulted in an increase in local (Monmouthshire) spend from 16.55% in 2024/25 to 34.29% in 2025/26. These increases are also seen across other areas, with the percentage of spend in Southeast Wales increasing from 61.4% to 73.6%, spend in Wales increasing from 66.7% to 79.1% and spend with small and medium enterprises increasing from 43.98% to 47.3%. However, the spend with third sector has reduced from 5.55% to 3.85% due to a change in suppliers for social care and children's residential care services. More awareness will be undertaken to raise awareness of public sector procurement opportunities with third sector partners moving forward. A 'Meet the Buyer' joint supplier networking event to increase further awareness of procurement opportunities with local suppliers took place in April 2026 which targeted suppliers wishing to tender for procurement opportunities below the £75k threshold. The event was well attended by MCC and Torfaen staff along with representatives from ARDAL. Positive feedback was received from the staff who attended from MCC, with over 80 companies attending from across Monmouthshire/Torfaen; neighbouring counties, wider Wales and the rest of the UK. Additional awareness raising activities for local businesses wishing to tender for opportunities above the £75k threshold will also take place throughout 2026/27 in	Local spend data analysis undertaken. Local Supplier Networking Events Attendance at Business Forums Contract Forward Plan	

association with Economy, Employment and Skills colleagues, through their Business Forums, the first of which took place on the 9th of June. Whilst a Contract Forward Plan exists it is recognised that further work needs to be undertaken to ensure it captures future activity more accurately, as the Plan and Pipeline Notice will need to be published in line with new Social Partnership and Public Procurement Wales Act 2023. Targeted activities will be undertaken with directorates to raise awareness of the need to ensure that the Contract Forward Plan is kept up to date to ensure adequate support for officers can be put in place, in advance of procurement activities being undertaken. The target date for completion of the Contract Forward Plan is the end of Q2 26/27.		
What we want to achieve: Improving Fair Work, Equity and Safeguarding practices adopted by suppliers		
'Fair work supply chain' training is planned to be developed and rolled out in partnership with Ardal and the safeguarding team. In addition, a range of activity is planned during 2026/27, including: Exploring the adoption of Ardal's Safeguarding Policy for Contractors within MCC and supporting Guidance for officers; Reviewing the Modern Slavery Statement and publishing an updated statement annually in April; Assessing the potential to adopt Cardiff's Procurement Safeguarding Assessment Guide to support both Directorates and the Procurement Team to ensure that Safeguarding is included within tenders and contracts are managed in a consistent way that is proportionate to the risk.		
What we want to achieve: Increasing Community Benefits and social value delivered by suppliers		
A quarterly 'Thrive' newsletter is being circulated to staff to raise awareness of the community well-being benefits that are being delivered as a direct result of procurement activity and service and contracts being delivered. However, it has been recognised that more examples of the type of community projects and organisations that can be supported need to be included in the Invitation to Tender documents to maximise opportunities to derive local benefits from our activities. News stories are being requested from Contractors and Contract Managers on a quarterly basis however there is room for more, therefore the Strategic Procurement Lead will work with 'Thrive' to identify additional case studies to include in the newsletter so further buy in can be encouraged and best practice can be shared in order to develop a knowledge bank of case studies on community benefits/social value. A cross-directorate Social Value Delivery Group has been established which meets regularly and includes officers from a range of service areas including the members of the economy, skills and employment team. It is intended that the Group will raise awareness of the need to include opportunities for the under employed or apprentices within local authority contracts, to increase the community well-being value and benefits of Council procurements to the wider local community. Tailored support will also be provided to contractors and contract managers to assist them to deliver their 'Themes, Outcomes and Measures' commitments to ensure maximum value from local procurement spend.	Quarterly Thrive newsletter established Social Value Delivery Group	
What we want to achieve: Securing value for money and managing demand		
Regular updates to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on procurement performance will be reinstated following the change of personnel in the Ardal Head of Procurement role. The updates will provide an opportunity to monitor	SLT procurement updates to improve procurement visibility.	

performance in relation to progress against the KPIs, raise awareness of legislation changes and subsequent procedure changes, encourage updates to the Contract Forward Plan and Contract Register and encourage participation in the Procurement Network and training opportunities, with a view to improving Officers skills and knowledge. To provide Chief Officers with greater visibility and assurance of procurement spend, Ardal's Power Bi dashboard will be rolled out to individual Directorates. Work is ongoing to ensure the use of the Ardal Councils Contract Forward Plans (CFP) to identify opportunities to collaborate to create better economies of scale given the potential aggregate spend across the Ardal Partnerships. The Forward Plans will also be used to identify potential officer support required from the Ardal Category Management teams when significant procurement spend is scheduled. The Ardal Category Management Teams will also use the Contract Forward Plan to initiate discussions with directorates to identify efficiencies and opportunities to innovate and review compliance of Contracted Spend vs Non-Contracted Spend. Whilst compliant spend has increased from 44.88% to 56.61%, demonstrating an improvement in compliance, focus will be maintained to increase this percentage in following years to reduce the risk of any potential legal challenges. As part of the new legislation a Contract Register must also be published to ensure transparency. Whilst a Contract Register exists it is not as extensive as needed therefore the Strategic Procurement Lead will be working with directorates to increase entries and subsequently visibility of procurement activities.	Use of Contract Forward Plans to identify Officer support requirements.	
What we want to achieve: Ensuring legal compliance and robust and transparent governance		
We have rolled out Contract Management Training council-wide to ensure that Contracts are being managed in line with the Invitation to Tender documentation and the Council is gaining maximum value from contracts. Local Partnerships have delivered two online training sessions. Standard Ardal Contract Management Guidance and Templates are due to be launched in Q2 26/27 to increase compliance and improve transparency. As part of the legislative requirements of the Social Partnership and Public Procurement Wales Act 2023, from 2026 Ardal will need to publish an Annual Procurement Report. Preparations for this will start in April 2026 for delivery in 2027. To improve officer's knowledge and procurement capabilities, a new Procurement Intranet Site is being developed which will provide a repository for all the necessary procurement routes, digital forms, etc. In the interim, all this information can be found on the updated Ardal website.	Contract Management Training delivered. Ardal Annual Report New MCC Intranet site to be developed. Intranet site	
What we want to achieve: Promoting innovative and best practice solutions		
The Shared Resource Service (SRS) have been commissioned to produce an AI Procurement Bot which will help simplify data procurement routes for Officers and provide links to the documentation required for procurement activities. The Bot will reduce the margins for error and provide support and comfort for Officers undertaking procurement activities.	AI Procurement Bot Case Studies	

Case Studies will be produced to highlight best practice in procurement and encourage Officers to undertaken procurements in a transparent and compliant manner.		

Areas for development	**Who and When**
• Strengthening strategic links with Monmouthshire's Economy, Employment and Skills team and Ardal to develop a programme of awareness raising activities for local businesses. • Explore the adoption of Ardal's Safeguarding Policy for Contractors within MCC and supporting Guidance for officers. • Review Modern Slavery Statement and publish updated statement annually in April. • Assess potential to adopt Cardiff's Procurement Safeguarding Assessment Guide to support both Directorates and the Procurement Team to ensure that Safeguarding is included within tenders and contracts are managed in a consistent way that is proportionate to the risk. This can be amended and be available to roll out in MCC and the wider Ardal partners. • Monmouthshire's Adult Employment and Skills Team are working closely with Ardal's CWB team following the award of tenders to ensure the appropriateness and delivery of the associated community benefits and to avoid duplication and double counting. • Undertake a half year review of Community Well-being Benefits programme and reporting through Thrive and Look to include more MCC specific case studies in the Ardal Community Well-being Newsletter • Contract Forward Plan to be used to identify contracts where CWB (Community Wellbeing Benefits) can be delivered. • Review of Contract Management to be undertaken across all Ardal Councils in 2025/26 • Development of a Procurement Thinqi training module for procuring Officers • Category Management Teams to use Contract Forward Plan to initiate discussions with Directorates to identify efficiencies and opportunities to innovate. • Develop a draft template for the Ardal Annual Procurement Report for use in 2026. • Produce Procurement Performance Reports for SLT every six months timing to align across Ardal partners. • Report to MCC Performance and Overview Committee on an annual basis. • Ensure Ardal Procurement Team are members of working groups developing new Welsh Government Policy and/or Guidance.	Ardal/MCC Employment and Skills team – on going. Ardal/MCC/Safeguarding – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going. Ardal – on going. Ardal/Thrive/MCC – on going. Ardal/Thrive/MCC – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going. Ardal 2026 Ardal – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going. Ardal/MCC – on going.

Measures	**Previous**	**Current 2025/26**	**Target 2026/27**	**Comments**

No. of Contracts awarded with Carbon Reduction Plans	N/A	0	2026/27 target to be set in collaboration with Ardal partners	
Percentage of spend with local business	16.55%	34.29%	As above	
Percentage of spend in Southeast Wales	61.35%	73.60%	As above	
Percentage of spend in Wales	66.72%	79.12%	As above	
Percentage of spend with SME	43.98%	47.25%	As above	
Percentage of spend with Third Sector	5.55%	3.85%	As above	
The number of accredited real Living Wage employers	N/A	11	As above	
Number of workers employed by an accredited real Living Wage employer	N/A	4,401	As above	
The number of workers employed by an accredited real Living Wage employer receiving a pay rise onto at least the real Living Wage	N/A	35	As above	
Additional money going into the local economy as a result of uplifts to the real Living Wage	N/A	Not currently available	As above	
Community Wellbeing Benefits Committed and Delivered (during FY and total) (£)	CWB Committed – £113,468.00 CWB Delivered – £11,279.92	CWB committed - £11,797.38 CWB Delivered - £502.46	As above	
Employment / Jobs (number and days worked)	N/A	0	As above	
Apprenticeship (number and weeks worked)	N/A	33	As above	
Work Placement (number and weeks worked)	N/A	0	As above	
Number and value of Pre Tender Reports processed during the year	20 / £4,814,989.87	32 / £374,438,167.87	As above	
Number and value of Contracts Awarded during the year	2 / £552,546.00	42 / £14,832,507.89	As above	
Number / percentage of exceptions based on spend (compliance)	44 / £6,885,552.56/44.88%	56.61%	As above	

Medium Term Financial Strategy - Level 4 - Good		
How well are we achieving our agreed outcomes?	**How do we know?**	**RAG**
What we want to achieve: Develop and deliver a programme of change		
We have made progress in strengthening the financial and organisational foundations needed to deliver change over the medium term. The Medium Term Financial Strategy is now embedded as the framework for budget planning, with six-monthly updates to the Medium Term Financial Plan used to refresh assumptions, assess risks and support early engagement with Cabinet, scrutiny and services. This has helped move the Council towards a more disciplined and forward-looking approach to financial planning. The 2026/27 budget was set on a balanced basis, without reliance on the Council Fund reserve, and included a package of service efficiencies, reform and income measures alongside targeted investment in priority services. The budget process continued to be supported by scrutiny, public consultation and impact assessment, helping ensure that difficult choices were considered in the context of the Community and Corporate Plan, equality, climate and the needs of residents. A programme of change reserve has been strengthened through the 2025/26 outturn, with additional resources set aside to support transformation activity and invest-to-save work. This gives the Council greater capacity to progress change in a planned way. However, the scale of the medium-term financial challenge remains significant. The indicative 2027/28 revenue gap is currently estimated at £9.9m and further work is needed to translate change activity into fully costed, deliverable and recurrent savings options. Capital pressures, particularly highways and infrastructure, also have revenue consequences through borrowing costs, so future change plans will need to be selective, affordable and clearly linked to service priorities. Overall, progress is positive, but delivery risk remains. The next phase needs to focus on turning the programme of change into a sharper delivery plan, with clear ownership, milestones, benefits tracking and stronger links into service business planning and the 2027/28 budget process.	Medium Term Financial Strategy approved and six-monthly MTFP updates established; 2026/27 budget set on a balanced basis; £3.5m of service efficiencies and reforms included in the 2026/27 budget; Council Fund maintained at 5% of net revenue budget; Programme of Change Reserve replenished by £253k from the 2025/26 outturn; Indicative 2027/28 revenue gap estimated at £9.9m; Capital programme affordability and infrastructure pressures considered as part of early 2027/28 budget briefing.	
What we want to achieve: Deliver an improved budget holder training offer across the organisation		
Budget holder training remains an important part of strengthening financial management across the organisation. The MTFS delivery plan identified the need to refresh and roll out training to all budget holders so that managers have a clearer understanding of their financial responsibilities, the budget management cycle, forecasting expectations, use of reserves, procurement links and the need to identify mitigating action promptly when pressures arise.	MTFS delivery plan includes refresh and rollout of budget holder training;	

Progress has been slower than originally intended and the training offer is not yet fully embedded across the organisation. However, the need for stronger budget ownership has been reinforced through the 2025/26 outturn and early 2026/27 budget monitoring. These reports show that while the Council achieved a positive year-end position, this was supported in part by one-off funding and favourable corporate movements, with continuing underlying pressures in demand-led and income-sensitive services. Early 2026/27 pressures in council tax collection, property, fleet and commercial investment properties further underline the importance of budget holders understanding cost drivers, income risks and the need for timely corrective action. The next stage is to finalise and deploy the training offer as part of a broader financial management development pathway. This should include practical modules on forecasting, budget monitoring, savings delivery, use of financial systems, income and debt management, procurement compliance and the links between financial decisions and service outcomes. It should also include an evaluation mechanism so that the Council can assess whether the training is improving the quality and timeliness of budget management. Overall, this is an area where the direction is clear but delivery needs to accelerate.	Budget management and financial monitoring arrangements remain in place; 2025/26 outturn identified a positive position but continuing underlying service pressures; early 2026/27 monitoring highlights pressures in council tax collection, property, fleet and commercial investment properties; Further strengthening of budget ownership is required to support delivery of savings, mitigation and medium-term financial resilience.	
What we want to achieve: Continuous review and self-assessment of systems to ensure compliance with policy and regulation		
The Council continues to maintain robust core financial governance arrangements, including regular budget monitoring, annual budget setting, treasury and capital reporting, statutory accounts production and oversight through Cabinet, scrutiny and Governance and Audit Committee. The Annual Governance Statement concluded that the Council's governance arrangements remain effective and provide a sound framework for delivering services, and financial management arrangements conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government. There has also been external assurance on the Council's financial sustainability arrangements. The Audit Wales financial sustainability review acknowledged the Medium Term Financial Strategy positively and confirmed the robustness of arrangements more widely in place. The Council has also committed to progressing the delivery plan associated with the strategy, including self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code and an independent financial resilience review. The 2025/26 draft accounts were prepared and published, and the budget and outturn reports demonstrate continued compliance with statutory and professional financial management requirements. The 2026/27 budget also included the	Annual Governance Statement concludes governance arrangements are effective; Financial management arrangements conform to CIPFA Chief Financial Officer requirements; Audit Wales financial sustainability review acknowledged the MTFS positively and confirmed robust arrangements;	

Responsible Financial Officer's assessment of robustness and reserves, and the Council Fund was maintained at the MTFS minimum of 5% of net revenue budget. Further work is still needed to formalise a structured self-assessment framework, update financial regulations and standing orders where required, and ensure learning from external review, internal audit, budget monitoring and the Annual Governance Statement is brought together into one coherent improvement plan. This will help ensure the Council continues to meet changing regulatory expectations and strengthens resilience in a more complex financial environment.	Statutory budget and accounts processes continue to be delivered; 2026/27 budget included Responsible Financial Officer assessment of robustness and reserves; MTFS delivery plan includes CIPFA Financial Management Code self-assessment and an independent financial resilience review.	
What we want to achieve: A sound understanding of financial risks, future pressures and cost drivers		
The Council has strengthened its understanding of financial risks, future pressures and cost drivers through the Medium Term Financial Strategy, six-monthly MTFP updates, detailed budget modelling and regular financial monitoring. The budget process now places greater emphasis on updated assumptions, risk assessment, service pressures, savings delivery, reserve adequacy and the affordability of capital investment. The 2025/26 outturn provides a more stable starting point, with a net underspend of £1.068m transferred to the Council Fund and £3.020m used to replenish earmarked reserves, including the Risk Mitigation Reserve, ICT Reserve and Programme of Change Reserve. This has strengthened financial resilience. However, the outturn also showed that the favourable position was supported in part by one-off funding and corporate movements, and that significant underlying pressures remain in children's social care, housing and homelessness, passenger transport, fleet, planning and building control, and Additional Learning Needs. School balances remain a major financial risk. The cumulative school deficit increased to £6.88m at 31 March 2026, with nineteen schools in deficit and recovery plans in place. The Council will need to continue to monitor and challenge these plans, recognising that recovery is likely to take place over the medium term rather than in a single year. The Council also has a clearer view of the medium-term challenge. The indicative 2027/28 revenue gap is currently estimated at £9.9m, driven by pay, inflation, service pressures, funding assumptions and reduced capitalisation support. Capital affordability is also becoming more challenging. The 2027/28 capital programme is already	MTFS and six-monthly MTFP updates in place; 2025/26 outturn delivered a £1.068m transfer to the Council Fund and £3.020m to earmarked reserves; Council Fund maintained at 5% of net revenue budget; Risk Mitigation Reserve replenished by £2.5m; school deficits increased to £6.88m with nineteen schools in deficit; early 2026/27 risks identified in council tax collection, property, fleet and commercial investment properties; indicative 2027/28 revenue gap estimated at £9.9m; emerging highways and infrastructure capital pressures identified with revenue	

constrained, with unsupported borrowing built into the programme, and emerging highways and infrastructure pressures could add significant revenue costs through MRP and interest if further borrowing is required. Overall, the Council has a sound and improving understanding of its financial risks and cost drivers. The key challenge is now to convert that understanding into deliverable choices, stronger scenario planning and a clearer prioritisation framework for both revenue and capital.	consequences from unsupported borrowing.	
Areas for development	**Who and When**	
Programme of change delivery • Translate the programme of change into a sharper delivery plan, with clear ownership, milestones, financial benefits, dependencies and delivery risks. • Strengthen benefits tracking so that change activity can be linked more clearly to recurrent savings, demand management, productivity improvements and service outcomes. • Ensure the programme is fully aligned to service business planning and the 2027/28 budget process, so that transformation activity supports the development of deliverable budget options.	Cabinet / SLT / Programme of Change Board – by Autumn 2026, to inform the 2027/28 budget cycle	
Budget holder training and financial management capability • Finalise and roll out the refreshed budget holder training offer, covering forecasting, budget monitoring, savings delivery, reserves, income, debt management, procurement links and the use of financial systems. • Develop a proportionate evaluation framework to assess whether the training improves the quality, timeliness and consistency of financial management practice. • Create a rolling programme of refresher modules and targeted support for services with significant demand-led, income-sensitive or recurrent budget pressures.	Head of Finance / Finance Business Partners – initial rollout by December 2026, then ongoing	
Financial governance, compliance and self-assessment • Complete a structured self-assessment against the CIPFA Financial Management Code and use the findings to inform a prioritised improvement plan. • Scope and commission an independent financial resilience review to provide external assurance on the robustness of medium-term financial planning, reserves, savings delivery and financial governance. • Review and update financial regulations, standing orders and supporting guidance where required, ensuring learning from external audit, internal audit, budget monitoring and the Annual Governance Statement is brought together coherently.	S151 Officer / Head of Finance – March 2027	
Financial risk, cost drivers and scenario planning • Further develop the financial risk framework so that pay, inflation, demand, income, capital financing, reserves, school balances and service-specific cost drivers are assessed consistently through MTFP updates. • Strengthen scenario planning for the 2027/28 budget and later years, including downside funding scenarios, capital affordability pressures and the revenue consequences of unsupported borrowing.	Head of Finance / Finance Business Partners – ongoing through six-monthly MTFP updates and the 2027/28 budget cycle	

- Improve data quality and consistency across financial monitoring, service planning and performance reporting so that emerging pressures and mitigation plans are identified earlier.

Milestones	Progress	Target	Comments
Set a legal and balanced budget within the statutory deadline every year	Achieved	Before 11th March	2026/27 budget approved 5 March
Draft MCC annual accounts presented to Audit Wales by statutory deadline	Achieved	30th June	2025/26 – 26 June
Audited annual accounts approved and signed by statutory deadline	Achieved	30th November	2024/25 – 30 October
Medium-term financial plan update provided on a six-monthly basis	Achieved	Six-monthly	

Measures	Current	Target	Comments
Revenue budget outturn, subject to any agreed budget recovery plan	Under spend	Balanced	Gross under spend of £4m for 25/26
Use of one-off revenues reserves to meet recurrent costs	Nil	Nil	
Council Fund balance at or above 5% of net revenue expenditure budget	=>5%	=>5%	
Minimum useable capital receipts reserve balance	£5.5m	£2m	
% of capital financing costs to net revenue budget	5.6%	<7%	
Liquidity ratio (current assets: current liabilities)	0.7	>1	Short term borrowing remains higher than historic levels due to heightened rate environment
Cumulative school balances	-£6.9m	>nil	
Number of schools in deficit	19	Nil	
Delivery of planned revenue budget savings	92.6%	>90%	
% net return on commercial property investments	1.6%	2%	
In-year council tax collection rate	96.6%	97%	
Long term council tax collection rate	TBC	99%	
Percentage of sundry debt over 30 days	29.3%	<=35%	
Average number of days sundry debt is outstanding	TBC	<=30days	

Appendix 2

Performance Management Framework

Our performance management framework makes sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction to deliver real and tangible outcomes.

Building a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life is the unifying purpose of the diverse range of services for which we are responsible. We are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county. The council's own well-being objectives are set by Council and form the backbone of our Community and Corporate Plan. Each of our teams has a service business plan that aligns to these objectives. We have a range of performance measures that we use to keep track of our progress. Our risk management policy enables us to manage strategic risks to our delivery. Our employee aims and objectives show the contributions that individual colleagues make to these objectives and delivering our vision in accordance with our values.