

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

People Scrutiny Committee ~ Feedback to Cabinet of Meeting held on 14th July 2026

Report Item 4: Homelessness

The Committee undertook thorough scrutiny of the report, highlighting the following important issues for the Cabinet Member's consideration:

Key points raised by the Committee:

- The Committee welcomed the progress made in preventing homelessness, particularly the effective elimination of bed and breakfast use, the development of improved temporary accommodation, the stronger focus on prevention, and the increased geographical spread of accommodation. Members recognised the significant work undertaken by the homelessness team and noted that the service is in a stronger position than in previous years, with additional staffing, greater capacity, and a clearer strategic focus.
- Members nevertheless highlighted a number of continuing challenges. These included the length of time some households spend in temporary accommodation, the shortage of suitable permanent and social housing, the impact of delays to the Replacement Local Development Plan and planning processes on future housing supply, and the difficulty of accommodating people close to their family, community and support networks. The Committee also noted the importance of increasing affordable housing delivery and unblocking the housing development pipeline.
- The Committee raised concerns about people with complex needs, particularly where housing issues are closely linked to health, mental health, trauma, substance misuse or wider support needs. Members emphasised the need for stronger integration with health and social care partners, recognising that housing services alone cannot meet all of these needs. The Committee welcomed examples of joint working, including the Health Inclusion Service at Severn View, but noted the importance of continuing to develop a more joined-up approach.
- Members discussed the forthcoming homelessness legislation and the implications for the Council, including the move towards homelessness prevention becoming a wider public service responsibility. The Committee asked that future scrutiny of the legislation should include consideration of the experiences and views of care-experienced young people. Members also noted the importance of progressing the Young Persons Housing Group and developing a joint protocol for 16 and 17-year-olds and care leavers.
- The Committee considered the issue of repeat homelessness and requested further information on how many households return to the service within 12 to 24 months after homelessness has been prevented. Members also explored intergenerational homelessness and stressed the importance of early intervention with children's services, social care and other partners to prevent young people entering the homelessness system.

Monmouthshire Scrutiny

- Members raised questions about empty homes, derelict properties and redundant commercial buildings, and whether these could be brought back into use to help meet housing need. The Committee noted the existing work to reduce empty homes, but also recognised that more difficult sites may require additional resource, partnership working and funding. Members were encouraged to share examples of long-term empty commercial or derelict sites with officers for investigation.
- The Committee discussed Severn View in detail, including its role as temporary accommodation, the length of stay for residents, community concerns, monitoring arrangements, security, complaints, anti-social behaviour and liaison with police. Members noted the operational improvements made since Severn View opened and the lessons learned for future supported accommodation schemes. The Committee also welcomed the intention to provide more constructive and therapeutic activities for residents, including the possibility of community-supported gardening or similar projects.
- Members noted the pressures on the homelessness service given the scale of the work programme, new legislative duties, the need to remodel accommodation, the complexity of cases and the six priorities set out in the report. Officers explained that these areas are interconnected and cannot easily be separated, and that increased staffing and strategic capacity have helped the service manage these pressures. The Committee acknowledged this but recognised the importance of ensuring that future duties are properly resourced.

Chair's conclusion

The Chair concluded that the report was detailed, informative and useful, and had given the Committee a clear understanding of current performance, the progress made in recent years, and the challenges still facing the homelessness service. The Chair noted that members had scrutinised both the strengths of the current approach and the areas requiring further development, particularly housing supply, prevention, support for people with complex needs, early intervention for young people, and the implications of forthcoming legislation.

The Chair asked that the Committee's thanks be conveyed to the wider homelessness team, including frontline staff supporting people experiencing homelessness, staff working with residents at Severn View, officers supporting rough sleepers and those at risk of homelessness, and the service's responsiveness in dealing with cases raised by councillors. The Committee's overall conclusion was that the service has made significant progress and is well placed to respond to future changes, but continued Executive focus will be needed on housing supply, partnership working, resourcing and prevention.

Points requiring a further response by the Cabinet Member:

None raised.