

Looking Ahead, Delivering Now Our Strategy to Summer 2022

We have been asking ourselves some very big questions. Where now and where next for our county?

We need Monmouthshire to be a place where every community is full of opportunity. We want to be a kind county where we do well by doing good things. We are invested in our place, your family and your future. You have a right to receive good services from us and we won't let you down but the expectations we have of ourselves go further.

The contemporary policy challenges that we need to meet together are centred on Net Zero, taking on the determinants of health inequality, making sure our children do well and ensuring that nobody is left behind. We are turning our attention to these things between now and the summer of 2022 when a new Council Administration will be ready to introduce its own direction. We cannot lose time, we have to move forward.

We do so with your best interests at heart. We do so blessed with incredible communities and people that care about their place and each other.

We have set out our purpose, our priorities, our values and we ask that you join with us in achieving them. Without you we are just a Council, together we are a force to be reckoned with. Everything starts with your health and well-being and that of your family and friends - without that, everything else is pretty meaningless.

Our Purpose

We want Monmouthshire to be:

- an ambitious place full of hope and enterprise
- a fair place where your family is safe
- a sustainable place where people care about each other
- a place you are proud to call home

Our Values

Our purpose is underpinned by a clear sense of who we are as an organisation. We expect people who work with us to share a strong value set and expect that these are evident in the ways in which we work and engage with our communities.

- **Teamwork** - We will work with you and our partners to support and inspire everyone to get involved. We will make the best of the ideas, and resources available to make sure we do the things that most positively impact our people and places.
- **Openness** - We are open and honest. People have the chance to be involved and tell us what matters.
- **Flexibility** - We are flexible, enabling delivery of the most effective and efficient services. This means a genuine commitment to working with everyone to embrace new ways of working.
- **Fairness** - We provide opportunities for people and communities to thrive. We will always try to treat everyone fairly and consistently.
- **Kindness** - We will show kindness to all those we work with, putting the importance of relationships and the connections we have with one another at the heart of all interactions.

Our Principles

We are advocates of The Well-being of Future Generations Act and apply the principles that underpin it to our decision-making:

- Looking to the long term so that we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
- Taking an integrated approach so that we maximise the impact of all of our objectives;
- Involving people in the decisions that affect them;
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions;
- Understanding the root causes of issues to prevent them from occurring.

Our Actions

An ambitious place full of hope and enterprise

- Begin to build a new, carbon neutral, school in Abergavenny and develop a detailed plan for the future of Chepstow School ahead of Band C of the 21st Century Schools Programme;
- Invest more than £2 million to upgrade and redevelop the leisure centres in Chepstow and Abergavenny;
- Work with technology companies to ensure more households and businesses can benefit from high speed broadband, using fibre to the premises and speeds of up to one gigabit per second;
- Make a substantial investment in maintaining and repairing the highways network;
- Improve connectivity and create more sustainable transport through projects such as the redevelopment of Severn Tunnel Junction station and push for the development of Magor Walkway station;
- Act on the findings of the recent Chepstow transport study report to improve traffic and travel movements in and around Chepstow and the surrounding area;
- Begin significant improvements to the active travel networks in Monmouth, Caldicot and Abergavenny to make it easier for people to walk and cycle in and around our towns.

A fair place where your family is safe

- Recruit and retain more in-house foster carers to ensure that children who are looked after can grow up in a stable and supportive home;
- Identify solutions to prevent homelessness and providing support for those who find themselves without a roof over their head;
- Progress the development of a new dementia friendly care home at Crick Road;
- Work with partners to manage the additional health and social care pressures that winter can bring including recruiting and retaining the vital key workers who deliver front-line care.

A sustainable place where people care about each other

- Work with community groups to deliver the Magor with Undy Community Hub project; creating a new space for social, culture, leisure, sporting and other community activities;
- Ensure that more of our money is spent locally and ethically;
- Enable people to get more involved in shaping what happens in their area by making it easier to participate in local decision-making.

A place you are proud to call home

- Refurbish the Borough Theatre in Abergavenny ahead of a re-opening;
- Promote and support local food growing, reducing food miles, promoting sustainable land management and agricultural practices and reducing food waste;

- Work with all partners to improve the health of our rivers while also taking action to minimise the impact of flooding on communities;
- Make community learning more accessible to improve skill levels and create opportunities for people to try new things and form new friendships in a supportive and welcoming environment;

As we deliver these we will ensure that we do not do anything that will conflict with our emerging thinking on the long-term challenges we face.

Our Longer Term Challenges

Covid-19 has brought into a sharp focus the complex challenges that communities and public service organisations face. We will develop our thinking and ideas as we plan for the longer term. We want to do this alongside Monmouthshire's myriad of community groups and our public service partners to understand what matters and ensure that we have bold and ambitious programmes. We are focusing on:

- **Transition towards Net Zero** - We need to increase the pace with which we are decarbonising our operations while developing guidance and support to help individuals and businesses reduce their emissions. We updated our decarbonisation action plan in November 2021 and will be working on a more ambitious programme which will be published in 2022.
- **Health Inequalities** - We need to narrow the differences in life expectancy in, and between communities. These gaps sometimes exist because of non-medical factors like early childhood development; the availability of local amenities and places where people can build connections; their diet and job security. These are sometimes called the social determinants of health.
- **Social Care Reform** - Services for children and adults are experiencing acute pressures from a combination of factors. We need to work closely with colleagues in Welsh Government and the NHS to ensure we have the right resources in the right places for the health and social care systems to work in equilibrium with vulnerable people supported in the most appropriate setting.
- **Well-being of Children and Young People** - We need to ensure that children whose learning has been disrupted by the pandemic are able to make up for lost time, are not at a disadvantage in the long-term and ensuring that support is available to support their well-being.
- **Mental Health** - With one in four adults and one in ten children experiencing mental health problems in any given year this is a significant challenge and public services must work together to ensure the availability of information and resources so that people can protect and manage their own mental health and well-being.

In the meantime, we will continue to focus on deliver in key areas, ensuring that we do not do anything that will conflict with our emerging thinking on the above challenges.