



**Y GYLLIDEB
BUDGET**

2024/25

**DRAFT
BUDGET
PROPOSALS**

**Gyda'n gilydd, ar gyfer ein dyfodol
Together, for our future**



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

Foreword



Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby

(Leader – Monmouthshire County Council)



Cllr Ben Callard

(Cabinet Member for Resources)

Monmouthshire County Council has published its draft budget for 2024/25. It is particularly challenging for all councils due to the costs and demands on services increasing beyond the modest rise in funding.

This coming year, we are planning for our funding to increase to just under 200 million pounds. This sum is made up of council tax, which is 37% of the pot and money from the Welsh government, which is the other 63%.

Any budget setting means making choices about how the money is spent. This year, our choices are stark: our funding will not cover all the services we provide in their current form. Our absolute choice for the proposals we bring to you is to protect and sustain, for now and for the future, the services which we know are important to all of you here in Monmouthshire. We will do so without compromising the financial stability of our Council. We know that you expect us to be **fair**, to base our choices on protecting the **most vulnerable** and our increasingly fragile **environment** while always delivering the best **value for money**.

With what we are proposing, most of you won't notice any change to the council services you receive. Bin collections will remain the same. Leisure centres, recycling centres, libraries and hubs will all remain open. We propose increasing our funding for health and social care by 5.8% and for schools by 2.5%. However, sad to say, even these increases will not fully cover the increase in demand and inflationary costs. So, in order to fund these services, we are intending to change the way some things operate. And we are also planning to increase council tax by an average of 7.5% to cope with the considerable pressure on your services.

Rest assured, we will continue to fully fund the council tax reduction scheme to support those who need most help paying council tax.

We will continue to invest in our communities. As examples, there is a new school under construction in Abergavenny, complementing the new schools in Caldicot and Monmouth. Improvements in active travel will still include the new bridge over the rivers in Abergavenny and Monmouth and a new cycle path connecting communities in Caldicot.

We will continue to tackle inequalities and protect the most vulnerable in our society.

This means our support for additional learning needs provision will increase, as will the specialist resource bases for children and young people with disabilities, helping them stay in their local schools. Above all, we will work with partners and support our communities, providing advice and practical help

for those worst hit by the Cost-of-Living crisis; such as community fridges, mental health support, housing and welfare advice.

In putting these proposals forward, you can see that we have had to share really difficult decisions. Now we want to hear from you. Do you think we are making the right choices?

Are there things we can do together with you that will better protect our services, people and the environment?

We know that in difficult times, the people of Monmouthshire come together, supporting each other and its communities.



A FINANCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COUNCIL

REDUCING INEQUALITIES

**2024/25
DRAFT
BUDGET
PROPOSALS**

PROTECTING OUR ENVIRONMENT

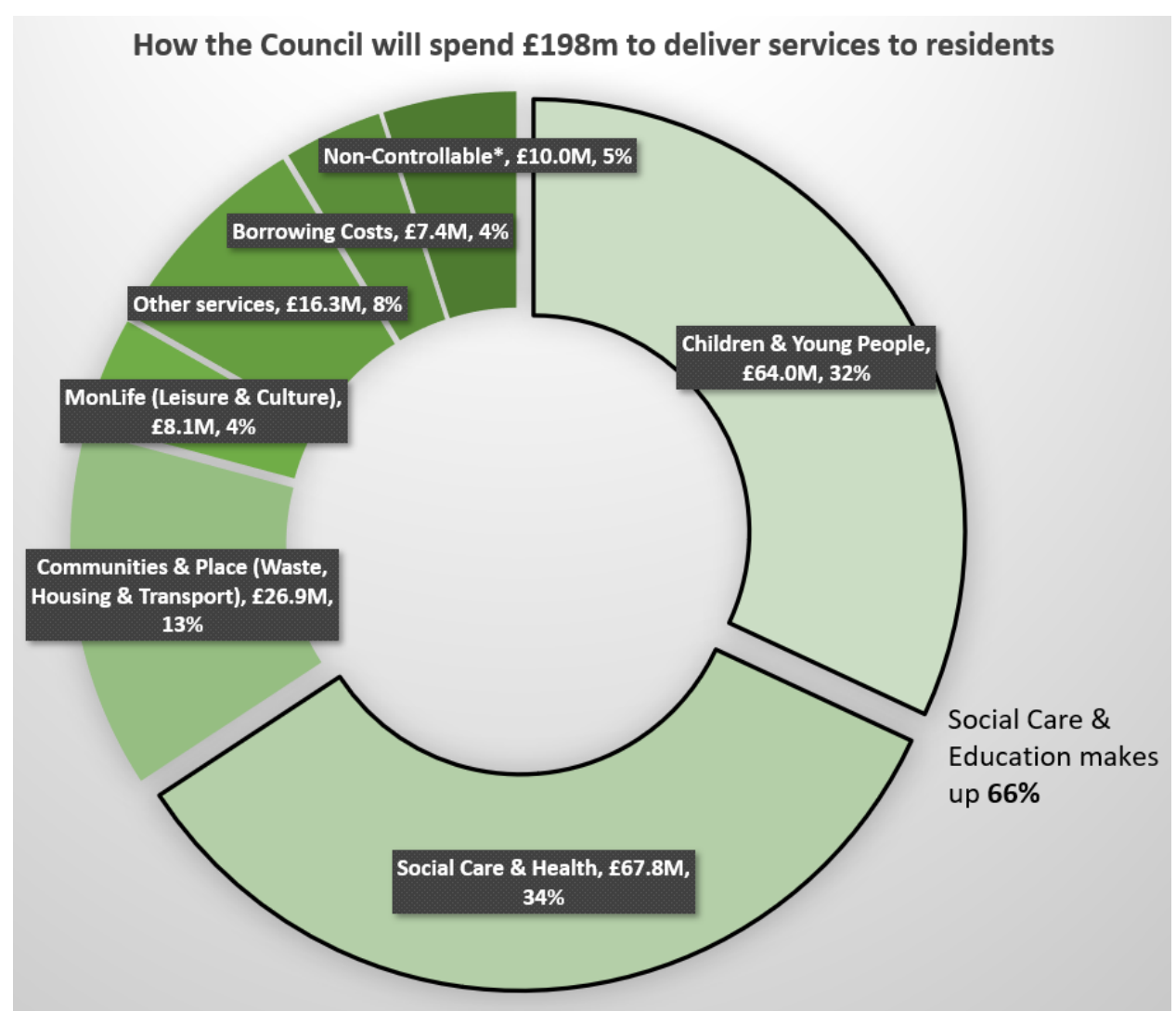
PROTECTING OUR MOST VULNERABLE

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

**Gyda'n gilydd, ar gyfer ein dyfodol
Together, for our future**

The Council's Budget Challenge

The Council is proposing an overall net budget of £198m for 2024/25 that it will use to fund local services. How the proposed budget is allocated across services is set out below:



*Levies paid to other organisations such as the Fire Service, National Parks, and Drainage Boards.

In setting the budget for 2024/25, the Council is having to deal with one of the most difficult budget challenges it has faced. We estimate that the cost of delivering the same services next year has increased by around £21.9m.

Service Demand & Inflation: The Council is facing cost pressures resulting from increasing demand for Council services alongside the increased cost of provision in a high inflation environment. These are predominantly centred around the service areas of social care, transport, waste, homelessness, and children’s additional learning needs. These cost pressures are outlined in more detail in **Section 2** of this document.

Pay inflation: Higher pay awards are being agreed nationally, reflecting the rate of inflation, but this is also putting pressure on our budget for 2024/25.

How we propose to close the budget gap

Even though Monmouthshire is due to receive an increase in Welsh Government support of 2.3% for next year, roughly £2.6m, this needs to be considered against the £21.9m of additional costs the Council is now facing.

The Council has undertaken a review of its borrowing costs and will bring forward a recommendation to reprofile the amount it sets aside to meet future debt repayments that will result in lower costs for the current year and 2024/25 of £1.8m.

Energy costs are projected to reduce by £1.6m compared to the current financial year. Work continues to reduce consumption and work towards the Cabinet objective of reducing carbon emissions and positively contributing to addressing the climate and nature emergency.

It is proposed that additional income of £0.8m for 2024/25 will be generated through increases in discretionary fees & charges for services. The remaining sum of £13.8m can only be met through a combination of service efficiencies, service reductions and through council tax increases.

Striking the right balance between council tax rises and the reduction of services that support the most vulnerable in our community is not easy and involves making difficult decisions. The draft budget proposes a council tax increase of 7.5%, introducing additional income of £5.4m. This equates to an increase of £2.26 per week for a Band D property.

It is anticipated that 64% of households will meet this charge in full, with the remaining 36% benefiting from a level of exemption. The final level of Council Tax will only be decided following the consultation process as part of the final budget proposals.

The remaining shortfall of £8.5m will be met by service savings proposals, which are set out in **Section 1** of this document.

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Children & Young People

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £62,428,000 | £64,018,000 | +2.5% |

The Directorate is responsible for the funding, management and leadership of the thirty-four schools in Monmouthshire County Council. There are approximately 11,000 pupils in Monmouthshire's schools and the Directorate provides funding to its schools to provide a wide and balanced curriculum to its learners. The Directorate is also responsible for supporting schools to provide additional support for learners with additional learning needs and those learners who need extra help in attending school. These services have seen significant growth in demand in the period post pandemic.

Schools budget efficiency after uplifting budget for funding of projected pay pressures

- **Saving: £835,000**
- **Proposal Title:** The proposal will see schools asked to make efficiency savings of £835,000 after uplifting budgets by the projected pay pressures for 2024/25.
- **Saving and Pressure:** The proposal is expected to save £835,000, but it will create pressure for the schools to absorb a proportion of the pay awards and inflation from their existing budgets.
- **Staffing Impact:** The proposal could result in staff reductions in schools, as each 1% pay award for teachers and non-teaching staff is equivalent to a pressure of £375k and £141k respectively. Schools' Governing Bodies will have to take local decisions which will determine the impact on a school-by-school basis.
- **Service Impact:** The proposal could have a negative impact on service delivery. It may also increase inequality and reduce the chances of children having the best start in life because additional support will no longer be afforded.
- **External Funding:** All available funding opportunities have been explored. Schools will have the ability to access grant funding streams to support learners.
- **Corporate Alignment:** The proposal does not require any amendments to MCC policy.

CYP support - Release expected reserve from solar panels on schools

- **Saving: £120,000**
- **Proposal Title and Description:** The proposal aims to use the rebates from the solar panels installed on some schools to fund the mainstream education budget instead of holding them in a central reserve.
- **Budget Impact:** This would generate a benefit of £120,000 per year for the CYP Resources service area, starting from 2024/25.
- **Service Delivery Impact:** The proposal would not impact schools.
- **Policy Impact:** The proposal would have no impact on any policies or service delivery.

CYP Support - Freeze vacancy in student access team

- **Saving: £34,000**
- **Proposal:** There is currently a vacancy in the student access team, which will remain frozen.

Net saving on Additional Learning Needs (ALN) placements

- **Saving: £534,000**
- **Proposal title and description:** The proposal is about Additional Learning Needs (ALN) placements costs. It aims to reduce the cost of out-of-county and independent specialist placements for pupils with ALN by investing in the quality and capacity of local, community schools and specialist resource bases (SRBs).
- **Proposal savings and pressures:** The proposal expects to save £937k from reduced placements in other local authorities and independent schools and incur £403k of increased costs for Monmouthshire schools. This will result in a net saving of £534k.
- **Proposal impact on staffing and service delivery:** It does not involve any reduction in Monmouthshire staff, but rather a potential increase in staff employed across Monmouthshire schools and SRBs, funded by the cost avoidance of placement fees from other local authorities. The proposal will improve the inclusion and quality of provision for Monmouthshire pupils with ALN.
- **Proposal alignment and evaluation:** This aligns with the MCC Community & Corporate plan to reduce inequality and allows everybody to have the opportunity to reach their potential. The proposal does not require any amendments to MCC policy or any option appraisal.

ALN & Standards - Continue to hold a vacancy open in the MoSTS (Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service) team

- **Saving: £20,000**
- **Proposal:** There is currently a vacancy in the Monmouthshire Specialist Teaching Service (MoSTS) team which will remain frozen.

ALN & Standards - EAS contribution reduction of 10%

- **Saving: £35,000**
- **Proposal title and description:** The proposal will reduce the core contribution of Monmouthshire County Council to the Education Achievement Service (EAS) by 10%, which amounts to £35,000. The current budget for the EAS is £363,434.
- **Proposal scope and description:** The EAS is a regional service that provides school improvement support to all schools in Monmouthshire and four other partner authorities.
- **Service delivery impact:** The impact of the proposal on the service delivery depends on the decisions made by the EAS. This will be done in conjunction with Monmouthshire elected members and officers. There are significant risks associated with any diminution of school improvement support, which is a crucial statutory role.
- **Policy impact:** The impact of the proposal on the policy could result in the removal of some direct services to schools. However, this would have no or minimal impact on the core school improvement activities provided by the EAS.
- **Mitigation:** The proposal suggests mitigating actions to reduce the budget pressure, such as increasing the engagement with schools through professional discussions, school self-evaluation and encouraging schools to collaborate. The EAS may choose to reduce the range of support and professional learning they offer.

Gwent Music - reduce subsidy with hardship fund maintained

- **Saving: £39,000**
- **Proposal title and budget:** The proposal is a budget reduction for the contribution MCC makes to Gwent Music, a service that provides music lessons and projects to schools in Monmouthshire. The proposal aims to reduce the total contribution to Gwent Music by £39,000 in 2024/25.
- **Budget impact and staffing impact:** The proposal will not affect the staffing of Monmouthshire, but it will affect the capacity of Gwent Music. Most music teachers are self-employed, with a small number of core staff who are employed. The proposal will have an impact towards the experiences provided for children and young people across Monmouthshire schools.
- **Proposal scope and description:** The proposal is to reduce the subsidy for class projects, such as whole-class string projects, which give pupils a first chance to learn an instrument. The hardship fund for low-income families will be maintained, but the costs of class lessons will have to be met by parents or schools (this can be done through grant funding such as the Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG)).
- **Supporting data and evidence:** The proposal is based on the annual contributions made to Gwent Music by Monmouthshire, as well as other partners and the previous reductions and changes that Gwent Music has made to its delivery.
- **Key risks and issues:** The proposal poses a risk of Gwent Music being unable to continue to provide the same level of service across Monmouthshire and pupils being unable to access music lessons. The mitigating actions are to maintain the hardship fund and for Gwent Music to identify where savings can be made.

Breakfast club charges

- **Saving: £70,000**
- **Proposal title and objective:** The proposal is to increase the charges of before school clubs to generate an extra income of £70,000 per year. The clubs provide childcare and breakfast for primary pupils and the charge is only for the childcare element.
- **Supporting data and evidence:** The service has identified a range of different scenarios of how the charge increase would affect the income, assuming a variable drop-off rate of pupils. The current charge is £1 per session, and the proposed options are £1.50, £2.00, or £2.50.
- **Staffing impact:** All the staff are school based staff and funded via the Local Authority, if this increase were not to be agreed a number of staff may see their hours reduced or face redundancy.
- **Service impact:** The service acknowledges that there will be a negative impact on families who may not be able to afford the increased charges and on schools that may face a reduction in pupil numbers and staff. However, providing a free breakfast is a statutory requirement and pupils entitled to free school meals will not be charged for the childcare element.
- **External funding and corporate alignment:** The proposal indicates that there are no external funding opportunities for this service area at this current time. The service remains committed to providing children with access to the provision in line with national policies.

Social Care & Health

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £64,094,000 | £67,817,000 | +5.8% |

The Directorate continues to provide personalised care and support to vulnerable residents, supporting people to live safely and independently within their own homes and communities. We have care and support plans in place for more than 1,500 adults and more than 550 children and families; we provide foster care or residential placements for more than 200 children and support more than 300 adults to access residential placements. Despite a challenging context of high demand across social care and health and inflationary pressure on the cost of care, we continue to maintain good quality services and develop innovative, practice-based solutions to achieving financial sustainability whilst minimising the impact on our most vulnerable individuals.

Adults' social services - Directorate Staffing Review

- **Saving: £1,494,000**
- **The proposal's objective and scope:** The proposal is about creating savings by reducing the workforce within adults' services.
- **Core objective and saving target:** The core objective is to save money whilst causing as minimal service disruption as possible. The overall saving target for this mandate in year 2024 - 2025 is £1,494,000.
- **Four ways to achieve the mandate:** The proposal will be achieved by consolidating existing vacancies within direct care, ceasing the in-house residential respite provision for adults with learning disabilities, reorganising the My Day, My Life and Individual Support Service, and replacing some social workers with social care assessors.
- **Supporting data and evidence:** The proposal is based on data and evidence, such as the current and projected staffing savings, the recent cabinet decisions and recommendations on the future delivery, the differential between qualified and unqualified roles and the impact on service delivery.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal shows the current and proposed budget for the adults' service area, and the total budget change proposed is £1,494,00 in 2024/25.

Children's services - Placement and Practice Change

- **Saving: £1,300,000**
- **The proposal's objective and scope:** The proposal aims to reduce the money spent on children's placements by £1,300,000 by reviewing children's care plans in high-cost placements and developing appropriate services and placements to support their long-term needs.
- **The proposal's alignment with the WG policy and MCC plan:** This is in accordance with the WG policy direction of eliminating profit from children's social care and the MCC Community & Corporate plan of increasing in-house placements and fostering for Monmouthshire children.
- **The proposal's budget impact and saving target:** It is expected to reduce the budget for children's services by £1,300,000 in 2024/25 by moving children and young people to more cost-effective and suitable placements.
- **The proposal's staffing impact and mitigation:** The proposal does not involve any reduction in staff, but it creates additional pressure on the workforce and leadership within Children's Services. The proposal plans to use grants, additional resources and support from other departments to mitigate this impact.

- **The proposal's service impact and risk management:** This supports the statutory requirement and the best outcomes for children who are looked after by providing appropriate and sufficient placements close to their homes and communities. The proposal identifies potential barriers and risks, such as the difficulty of recruiting in-house foster carers and developing in-house residential and 16-plus placements, and outlines mitigating actions to address them.
- **The proposal's consultation and external funding:** The service continues to work with stakeholders and has considered the opportunities for external funding from Welsh Government grants to support the development of placements and family support services.

Adults' services - practice change agenda

- **Saving: £1,130,000**
- **The proposal's objective:** The proposal is a budget saving for adult social care in 2024/25, with the core objective of reducing the overall cost by £1,130,000 while ensuring fair and equitable care for people with care and support needs.
- **Proposal scope and description:** This involves several strategies to manage demand, strengthen oversight, control costs, generate savings and enable practice change in adult social care. These include applying consistent eligibility criteria, reviewing current care packages, pursuing health contributions, re-commissioning services, expanding reablement and direct payments, and aligning with community and housing support.
- **Supporting data and evidence:** The service has provided data and evidence to support the proposal, such as the impact of the daily panel that scrutinises new packages of care, the number and amount of reductions achieved through reviews, the potential savings from Continuing Health Care disputes, re-commissioning, the demographic and public health challenges that affect the demand and cost of care. All of this work is underpinned by a three-tiered approach to assessing and providing care and support to those who most need it.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal indicates a reduction of £1,130,000 in 2024/25. It is anticipated that the reduction will not impact the number of staff within the service (over and above the staffing savings proposals already set out.)
- **Service impact:** The proposal outlines the impact on the standards of service delivery, such as requiring practice development, oversight panels, additional resources for reviews, re-organisation of home care, communication with people and re-prioritising commissioning and brokerage. The service also considers the implications of being able to meet statutory and legal duties.
- **External funding and corporate alignment:** No external funding has been identified to support the proposal. It aligns with the MCC Community and Corporate plan objective to provide good quality social care and support the wellbeing of people with care and support needs.

Adults' services - Reduction in Adult partnership arrangements for Gwent service delivery models

- **Saving: £55,000**
- **Proposal title and objectives:** The proposal is to reduce the partnership contributions of the Adults' and Children's Services by £55K in 2024/25 by seeking alternative funding sources and reviewing arrangements with health.
- **Regional Partnership Team (RPT) and health funding:** The proposal aims to save £31K by changing the way the partnership team is funded, drawing on regional grant money. A further target of £24K is proposed through reviewing the shared costs of integrated settings with health.

- **Service and Corporate Alignment:** The proposal does not have a direct impact on service delivery or staffing and it aligns with the MCC Community & Corporate plan. It also does not require any amendments to MCC policy, procurement, or asset management.
- **External funding and collaboration opportunities:** The proposal considers the opportunity for external funding from the RIF grants, which can be used to support the Regional Partnership Board executive functions. It also maintains the existing collaboration with health and other Gwent LAs through the RPB and joint arrangements.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The main risk of the proposal is that the RPB may not agree to the different funding arrangements for the RPT, which could affect the regional partnership working. The mitigation strategy is to work jointly with the other Gwent LAs to seek the RPB agreement.

Adults' Services - Savings from service to afford Severn View replacement

- **Saving: £105,000**
- **Proposal:** The financing package of the new Crick Road care home included borrowing, which was required to be paid by the service the year after the new asset becomes operational. This budget reduction reflects the final cost of borrowing and will be used to finance the corresponding loans required.

Review the legal non-residential weekly charge cap from £100 to £120

- **Saving: £578,000**
- **Proposal:** At present, the Welsh Government Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act forbids Local Authorities from charging more than £100 per week for clients receiving non-residential care. This proposal looks at what additional income would be obtained should the cap increase following all-Wales negotiations with the Welsh Government. The amount that people are charged for their care would remain subject to an individual financial assessment. Any change in the amount we can charge people for non-residential care would be subject to Welsh Government approval.

Adults' Services - Review and increase of directorate schedule of fees and charges

- **Saving: £388,000**
- **Proposal:** An increase in a range of fees and charges across social care and health as outlined within the consolidated fees and charge schedules. All fees and charges are subject to an individual financial assessment.

Public Protection - Partial vacancy saving from Environmental Health Officer post

- **Saving: £23,000**
- **Proposal:** To mitigate the budget pressure of the Head of Service post being held, the vacant Environmental Health Officer post will be held.

Communities & Place

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £25,272,000 | £26,876,000 | +6.3% |

The Directorate covers services such as waste, recycling, planning, highways, home to school transport, housing, and the environment. It will keep delivering the many services it offers to residents even though the costs of services are rising, demands are growing and challenges are increasing. It plans to reduce costs by carrying out different proposals across its service areas, such as altering service provision, evaluating existing services and raising fees and charges.

Savings from Silbuster recycling partnership

- **Saving: £20,000**
- **Proposal:** Savings from the disposal of street sweepings through the Silbuster recycling plant and partnership were achieved in 2023/24. The additional £20,000 was identified in last year's Medium Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 and can be achieved this year.

Fees & charges - Uplift in garden waste collection costs by 10%

- **Saving: £75,000**
- **Proposal:** The charge for the garden waste collection service has been increased by 10% in line with the Cabinet decision taken in January 2023 to ensure the service undertakes full cost recovery.
- **Budget impact:** This will reduce the budget deficit by £75,000 in 2024/25, by increasing the garden waste collection costs from £50 to £55.
- **Rationale for the proposal:** This is based on the full cost recovery model agreed in 2023, which ensures that the garden waste service is funded by the customers who use it rather than all residents. This uplift in the charge reflects the increased costs that were incurred in 2023/24 for collection and disposal due to the higher-than-expected customer base.
- **Service delivery and policy impact:** It will not affect the quality or frequency of the garden waste collection service, which is a non-statutory service that can be charged for. The proposal will also continue to support the carbon reduction goals by offering the service and reducing individual journeys to the household waste recycling centres. The cost uplift may have a negative impact on lower-income households, who may find the increased costs unaffordable. However, the proposal also offers cost price composters and water butts as alternatives to reduce and treat garden waste at home, which are more environmentally friendly options. The additional service of a Christmas Tree collection was offered in January 2023 and will continue.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The proposal may face the risk of a drop in customer base or a downturn in recycling percentage, which could affect the income and performance targets of the service. However, these risks are low, as the previous consultation and changes in the service did not result in significant customer or recycling loss.

Waste and street services - Restructure to reduce staff costs and not replace a vacant post

- **Saving: £50,000**
- **Proposal:** The Policy and Performance Manager post became vacant in 2023 and a decision was taken not to replace this post to support in-year savings. This post will be kept vacant through 2024/25.

Stop free provision of food waste bags

- **Saving: £50,000**
- **Proposal:** The proposal is to stop the free provision of food waste bags and make bags available for purchase at cost price at outlets across Council buildings and at some local independent stores in Monmouthshire to save costs and reduce single-use plastic. Food waste bins can also be lined with other bags, paper or reusing other bags as liners.
- **Supporting data and evidence:** The service estimates a saving of £50,000 in the first year and £70,000 in the second year, but this does not account for the potential increase in disposal costs and fines if recycling rates drop. There is currently little available data and evidence regarding the impacts of changing from the free provision of food waste bags to charging for them.
- **Budget impact and staffing impact:** This aims to reduce the recycling and waste service budget by £50,000 in 2024/25 by stopping the provision of food waste bags for free. The proposal does not impact the number of staff in the service.
- **Service delivery and policy impact:** The proposal acknowledges that charging for food waste bags could have a negative impact on service participation and recycling rates if people put their food waste in the residual waste bags instead of buying food waste bags or reusing other bags. The proposal may have a negative impact on lower-income households.
- **External funding and options appraisal:** There are no external funding opportunities for the service at present. The service has considered three options: do nothing, cease provision completely, or cease free provision and charge. The proposal favours the third option as the most feasible and cost-effective, making bags available to purchase at £2.50 per roll, which should last the average household one year.
- **Mitigation and up-front investment requirement:** The service suggests some mitigation measures to reduce the negative impact of charging for food waste bags, such as providing cost price bags, promoting alternative options for containment, and introducing in-cab technology to allow online purchase and delivery of bags.

Restructure of the Environmental Protection Act Team

- **Saving: £25,000**
- **Proposal:** Restructuring of the Environmental Protection Act Team in Abergavenny has been completed in 2023/24, which has resulted in a reduction of one post. This efficiency saving can be offered up in the 2024/25 budget.

Removal of Council Car

- **Saving: £8,000**
- **Proposal:** The lease of the car has been cancelled and the vehicle has been returned to the leasing company in 2023/24 generating a £3,000 in-year saving. The full year budget of £8,000 is the full year saving.

Review the provision of small vehicle home to school transport contracts

- **Saving: £93,000**
- **Proposal:** The proposal is to undertake a review of the home to school contracts that utilise vehicles that have 8 seats or fewer with a view to bringing service delivery in-house for the high-cost contracts.
- **Current situation and challenges:** The Council has a statutory duty to provide school transport for eligible learners and it currently commissions 245 contracts. This academic year, 109 contracts are being undertaken in vehicles that have 8 seats or fewer. However, the external market is failing and unstable, resulting in higher costs and lower reliability.
- **Potential savings and benefits:** The proposal estimates that by internalising 17 external small vehicle contracts that exceed £32,000 per academic year, a potential full year saving of £97,000 could be realised. The saving of £64,000 is a partial year saving reflecting the time required for implementation. Moreover, the proposal would mitigate the risk of market failure and support the Council's policy of tackling climate change by using hybrid or electric vehicles.
- **Operational impact and risks:** The proposal would require changing the current service operating model, including expanding the fleet and the workforce, ensuring compliance with vehicle maintenance and licensing requirements and finding suitable locations to store and charge the vehicles. It also identifies several risks and mitigating actions, such as securing the required vehicles, recruiting, and retaining drivers, and monitoring costs.

Home to school transport - Increase the cost of concessionary transport seats from £440 to £484 (10% uplift)

- **Saving: £3,000**
- **Proposal:** The proposal is to increase the cost of concessionary seats on home to school transport by 10% to generate additional income and offset the rising transport cost.
- **Budget impact and saving:** This would result in a total saving of £5,421 for the full academic year 2024/25. The saving of £3,000 reflects the commencement date from September 2024.
- **Policy impact and risks:** Providing parents/carers with the option to purchase a concessionary seat does result in fewer car journeys, which positively contributes to the climate change policy. The proposal may have a negative impact on lower-income households, who may find the increased costs unaffordable. The main risk is that parents/carers may stop paying for concessionary seats, which can be mitigated by allowing them to pay over the academic year.

Increase renewable energy generation opportunities across our estate to reduce demand on grid supply

- **Saving: £50,000**
- **Proposal:** Installation of additional solar panels across the Council estate via the refit scheme to increase renewable energy and generate income.

Planning Income

- **Saving: £50,000**
- **Proposal:** Planning income target increase by £50,000. This target income has been uplifted based on the anticipated increase in the number of major applications that will be received as the Replacement Local Development Plan nears adoption in 2025. However, the limited scope of the Replacement Local Development Plan means that this income increased will not be sustained and so the income target needs to be reviewed and reduced again in 2026/27.

Request to Welsh Government to increase statutory planning application fees by 25%

- **Saving: £98,000**
- **Proposal title and scope:** This saving reflects a request to the Welsh Government from all 25 Local Planning Authorities and the WLGA to increase statutory planning application fees by 25% to help towards covering the full costs of providing the planning service. The decision on planning application fees sits with the Welsh Government.
- **Budget impact and service delivery impact:** This would generate an estimated £98k additional income, help cover the costs of the planning service and maintain current staffing levels. Maintaining service delivery by ensuring the planning service is adequately resourced and funded is essential to support the delivery of the Council's policies.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The main risk of the proposal is that the Welsh Government may not agree to the requested fee increase, which would jeopardise the income target. The mitigation is that a joint letter has been sent by all 25 Welsh LPAs and the WLGA and a similar fee increase has been introduced in England. Another risk is that the increased fees may deter developers, but this is considered low as the fees are still low compared to the development costs.

Fees & Charges - Increase fees by 10% for street naming and numbering, licences, road closures and inspections

- **Saving: £33,000**
- **Proposal:** Increase fees by 10% for street naming and numbering, licences and highway inspections.

Fees & Charges - Uplift in Car Parking Charges by 10%

- **Saving: £66,000**
- **Proposal:** The proposal is to increase car parking charges and charges for permits by 10%.
- **Budget impact and net saving:** The proposal would generate an estimated additional £156,000 per annum. However, various cost pressures offset this, such as reduced income from season permits, business rates bills for new car parks, and civil enforcement service shortfall. The net saving is £66,801 for 2024/25.
- **Car park price increases and permits:** The new car parking charges for different durations, locations and the prices for season tickets are rounded. Residential permits will increase from £69.00 per annum to £75.00 per annum.

| | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 2 hr. stay | £2.00 |
| 3 hr. stay | £2.40 |
| 4 hr. stay | £3.00 |
| All day | £6.20 |
| Daily charge at Rogiet Playing Fields | £2.20 (no change) |
| Daily charge at Drill Hall, Chepstow, Cinderhill Street, Monmouth and Rowing Club, Monmouth car park | £2.00 |
| 5 Day Tariff | £23.00 |
| 6 Day Tariff | £27.50 |
| Sunday Tariff | First 2 hours free then £1.30 |
| Long Stay Car Parks Season Tickets: | |
| 12 months | £545.00 |
| 6 months | £280.00 |
| 3 months | £145.00 |
| Short Stay Car Parks – Season Tickets: | |
| 12 months | £670.00 |
| 6 months | £350.00 |
| 3 months | £180.00 |

- **Service delivery and policy impact:** The increased income from car parking will be reinvested into delivering the highways service. The proposal enables current staffing and service delivery levels to be maintained, including civil enforcement, car park maintenance and signage, which is essential to support a safe highway network. The proposal may have a negative impact on those with a lower income, who may find the increased costs unaffordable. Free parking for blue badge holders will continue.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The service identifies two main risks with the proposal: that the increased fees might deter car park usage and displace parking to neighbouring streets and that the increased fees might deter shoppers or visitors from coming to the towns. The fees are still relatively low compared to other locations and the active travel improvements and season tickets could mitigate the risks. There is limited evidence regarding the impact of free parking on town centre vitality. The service is also going to conduct a review of car parks and civil enforcement in 2024-2025.

Fees & charges - Increase the Sustainable Drainage Systems Approving Body (SAB) discretionary pre-application charges

- **Saving: £2,000**
- **Proposal:** Increase fees for discretionary SAB pre-application. Increases vary from 0% for small projects on sites less than 1000sqm to 25% for the largest projects on sites over 1 hectare, which increase from £726 to £908 for a Level 2 meeting with written advice.

Sustainable Drainage Systems Approving Body application (SAB) income

- **Saving: £25,000**
- **Proposal:** SAB income target increased by £25,000. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Approving Body (SAB) regulations are now fully in place and most new development proposals require SAB approval. Applications (and therefore application fee income) should increase as the Replacement Local Development Plan nears adoption in 2025 and new applications for major development are submitted.

Fees & Charges - Increase in Trade waste fees, sale of bags & bins

- **Saving: £30,000**
- **Proposal:** Fees and Charges - The introduction of Workplace Recycling Regulations in Wales from April 2024 will require all business, public and third sector workplaces to separate key recyclable materials. The formalisation of the pricing structure for 2024/25 will result in a 6% equivalent increase in trade waste costs. Many businesses will see an increase in costs for this service, but recycling can help reduce an element of cost.

Homelessness – Rapid Rehousing

- **Saving: £400,000**
- **Proposal:** The proposal aims to reduce the number of people in unsuitable and costly temporary accommodation and move towards a more sustainable model of housing provision.
- **Potential savings and benefits:** This is a proposed service change that seeks to save £400,000 in 2024/25 by reducing the overall costs by reducing the use of expensive and unsuitable bed and breakfasts and private sector lettings and providing alternative in-house accommodation by repurposing existing Council properties and provide continued support for residents.
- **Proposal scope and description:** This proposal involves the continuation of several strategies which follow the core objectives and activities of the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan, which was approved in 2023. These include preventing homelessness, delivering a housing led and person-centred approach, reducing the time spent in temporary accommodation, acquiring, and accessing additional accommodation and increasing the supply and quality of affordable housing.
- **Supporting data and evidence:** Whilst the number of homeless enquiries is currently reducing, there are still 50 residents in bed and breakfast accommodation with numbers regularly fluctuating. The cost of this accommodation is expensive. The service has undertaken a cost analysis of the proposed in-house provision compared to the external provider to estimate these savings.
- **Risks and mitigation:** There are a number of risks to delivering the saving, including changes to the numbers requiring B&B accommodation, delays in potential properties becoming vacant and available, negotiation of leases, refurbishment costs exceeding the budget available and delays in securing planning permission. These risks will be mitigated by maximising opportunities for early intervention to prevent homelessness, maintaining strong relationships with landlords and progressing with necessary plans at the earliest stage.

MonLife

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £8,353,000 | £8,088,000 | -3.2% |

The Directorate continues to provide a range of highly valued customer experiences to enhance the well-being of the residents and visitors of the county. These services aim to provide highly valued quality customer experiences, contribute to delivering the Council's well-being objectives and support the local economy and environment. More than 9,000 residents hold leisure memberships. Thousands of children and adults attend structured programmes that support skills, confidence and learning. Our Cultural assets (including Community Hubs and Attractions) receive over 400,000 visitors each year. Our Rights of Way, Green Infrastructure and Active Travel continue to contribute to decarbonisation in response to the climate and nature emergency. To mitigate the effects of the budget reduction and to improve the sustainability and effectiveness of MonLife, the services continue to explore alternative ways of delivery, such as digital platforms, outsourcing, and working with key partners such as Town and Community Councils, voluntary and community organisations, and funding bodies to enhance its offer and reach.

Realign services within the Town/Market Hall in Abergavenny to improve their potential and ensure continued service delivery

- **Saving: £20,000**
- **Proposal:** The recent vacancy of the Markets Manager post and the realigning of services within directorates, provides an opportunity to review the current operational capacities of the services within the Town/Market Hall and how we can bring these together in a cohesive, cost-effective way.

Realigning existing roles and introducing a new post of Town Hall/Market Hall Operational Site & Events Manager would bring consistency, transparency and a central point of contact for the site. Centralisation of site responsibility will enable current managers to focus on their specific roles, whilst also affording time to focus on the commercial aspect of the services, increasing the usage of the Town/Market Hall, Corn Exchange and theatre spaces.

Museums - Close Abergavenny and Chepstow museums an additional day a week and review business support

- **Saving: £40,000**
- **Proposal title and scope:** The proposal is a budget saving in the museum service area of MonLife, which aims to realign the services by closing two museums for an additional day per week and reviewing business support.
- **Budget impact and saving target:** The proposal estimates a saving of £40,000 in the current budget of £364,000 for the museum service area. The saving target is to be achieved by 2024/25 and maintained for the following years.
- **Service delivery impact and policy alignment:** The proposal claims that there will be limited impact on the service standards for visitors and communities and no impact on statutory or legal duties. The proposal also outlines how the museum service aligns with the council's priorities of tackling inequality and reducing carbon footprint, by providing examples of activities and initiatives that support those goals.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The service identifies that whilst there will be a reduction in opening hours, high quality service delivery will be maintained aligned with the emerging Cultural Strategy.

Attractions - Close Old Station Tintern one day a week

- **Saving: £10,000**
- **Proposal title and description:** The proposal is to close Old Station Tintern, a heritage attraction site in the Wye Valley, for one day a week on Mondays from 1st April 2024, except for four bank holidays. The proposal aims to create a more sustainable service in the long term and align with the other heritage services. The site will remain open and accessible 7 days a week to support walking and wellbeing.
- **Proposal budget impact:** The proposal will reduce the budget of the Heritage Attractions service by £10,000 each year from 2024/25 to 2027/28.
- **Proposal service delivery impact:** This will have a limited impact on the service standards for visitors and local communities, as the site will offer its full range of services on the six-day opening. However, the proposal may affect other businesses and tourism numbers in the area, as well as reduce recruitment opportunities for local people.
- **Proposal policy impact:** The site will continue to support the council's priorities of tackling climate change and reducing inequality by continuing to provide electric charging points and solar panels, going plastic free, using local suppliers, ensuring accessibility, creating learning opportunities, and telling appropriate stories.

Attractions - Utilisation of Share Prosperity Fund (SPF) grants to cover core staffing whilst delivering Todays' Heritage Tomorrow and Creative Futures

- **Saving: £60,000**
- **Proposal:** The proposal is a budget saving of £60k by using our current workforce to deliver the outputs of the Share Prosperity Fund (SPF). This funding will deliver the Todays Heritage Tomorrow project – which will enhance 10 of the county's Heritage sites through the implementation of the Heritage Strategy Action Plan and Creative Futures project – which will work across arts agencies, with youth services and training providers to support and manage creative arts opportunities for young people.

Countryside & Culture - Additional Income Generation

- **Saving: £25,000**
- **Proposal:** Recovering additional project management and project delivery costs from grants.

Countryside & Culture - Countryside Access Income Generation

- **Saving: £35,000**
- **Proposal title and context:** The proposal is a budget saving proposal for the Countryside Access service within the MonLife directorate for 2024/25.
- **Proposal scope and description:** It aims to realign the Countryside Access team to maximise the ability to recover project management and related costs from project budgets and increase income generation. This will require reprioritising the team's activity and adjusting roles and responsibilities.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal expects to reduce the current budget of Countryside Access service by £35,000 each year from 2024/25, whilst project funding is available.
- **Service delivery impact:** The proposal will diminish the flexibility of the Countryside Access team to respond to issues and resolve maintenance and legal problems. It will also constrain future delivery of the council's priorities of tackling climate change and reducing inequality.

Countryside & Culture - Review financial contribution and support to Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre

- **Saving: £10,000**
- **Proposal title and reference number:** The proposal is to withdraw MCC contribution to Abergavenny Tourist Information Centre. The service is run by Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Association (BBNPA) in partnership with Abergavenny Town Council.
- **Budget impact and target year:** The proposal aims to save £10,000 per year by reducing the contribution to BBNPA. The target year is 2024/25.
- **Proposal scope and description:** The proposal involves reconfiguring the service offered within Abergavenny Town Hall, where the TIC is located. A potential future model is integrating a tourism information point within the existing MonLife Hub / Library and box office services.
- **Service delivery and policy impact:** The proposal reflects the financial strain on the partnership arrangements and the high cost per user of the current service. The proposal will maintain access to information for those unable to access online resources and will follow Welsh language policy and procedure.
- **Risks and mitigation:** The main risk is the need to consult and agree on the future operating model with partners and stakeholders. The mitigating action is to have discussions with BBNPA and Abergavenny Town Council. Depending on the final operating model, the proposal may also present collaboration opportunities with the partners.

Countryside & Culture – Recover officer time from S106 funding

- **Saving: £15,000**
- **Proposal:** Recovering project management costs directly associated with the delivery of section 106 funded green infrastructure and recreation schemes.

Leisure, Sports & Outdoor Adventure - Move to a more sustainable operating model, creating a multi-function site with re-engage Pupil Referral Service (PRS) and Social Services

- **Saving: £70,000**
- **Proposal title and service area:** The proposal is to move to a more sustainable model for the outdoor adventure service, which is part of the MonLife directorate based at Gilwern.
- **Proposal scope and description:** The proposal aims to reduce the subsidy for the service, which offers outdoor residential and day visits for young people, by exploring new opportunities with education and social services, developing a more cost-effective business model, and addressing inequalities in outdoor education provision.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal expects to reduce the budget for the outdoor adventure service by £70,000 each year from 2024/25 to 2027/28.
- **Staffing impact:** The proposal does not involve reducing the number of posts but relies on freelance instructors to cover the core services and business in the peak season.
- **Service impact:** The proposal does not affect the statutory or legal duties of the service but may result in less flexibility and commitment from freelance instructors and more pressure on the limited team.
- **External funding:** The proposal does not currently identify any external funding sources, but the service will continue to seek grant funding opportunities in the future through partnership working.

Leisure centres - Change closing times - Weekday Closing 21:30 weekend closure 16:30

- **Saving: £140,000**
- **Budget impact and saving target:** The proposal aims to reduce the budget for the leisure centre service by £140,000 each year from 2024/25 to 2027/28 by reducing opening hours.
- **Proposed reduction in opening hours:** The proposal suggests closing the leisure centres and activities to the public at 9:30pm on weekdays and 4:30pm on weekends and adjusting the staff rota accordingly.
- **Impact and mitigation for customers and staff:** The service acknowledges that some customers and clubs may be affected by the reduced hours and offers to discuss and provide alternative options. The proposal also states that staff will be offered alternative shifts or redeployment opportunities where possible across MonLife services to minimise the loss of hours.
- **Corporate alignment and integrated impact assessment:** The proposal aligns with the MCC Community & Corporate plan by continuing to provide localised leisure opportunities to support wellbeing and contribute to carbon reduction.
- **Options appraisal and consultation:** The proposal considers alternative closures, such as early mornings or one day per week, but rejects them based on the data available and historic usage.

Re-alignment of Youth club provision

- **Saving: £20,000**
- **Proposal title and scope:** The proposal is to explore alternative delivery models for open access youth provision, including community youth clubs, to reduce the core expenditure by £20,000.
- **Supporting data and evidence:** The service has used existing data for the number of individual young people and contacts made at each youth club and youth centre.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal will reduce the current budget by £20,000 in the target year 2024/25.
- **Staffing impact:** The proposal will not affect the number of full-time equivalent staff or posts in the service area, as the alternative delivery models will rely on volunteers, third-sector organisations, and community councils.
- **Service impact:** The service will aim to retain the level of open access youth provision but will require consultation and collaboration with partners and stakeholders, as well as the development of a toolkit to support community animation.
- **External funding:** The proposal will consider the opportunities for external funding, such as the Welsh Government's Youth Support Grant, the Town and Community Councils, and the charities and third sector partners.

Marketing and Memberships Service Redesign

- **Saving: £50,000**
- **Proposal title:** This is a budget saving proposal for the Marketing and Memberships Service in the MonLife Directorate.
- **Proposal scope and description:** The proposal aims to achieve efficiencies by realigning services between departments, reviewing and realigning posts and enhancing the front-of-house software provision for collecting membership payments.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal will result in a cash reduction of £50,000 in the current budget year 2024/25.

- **Service delivery impact:** The proposal will not affect the service standards or the statutory or legal duties. It will align the marketing and promotional offers across all sites, increase footfall and customer satisfaction, and provide more flexible payment options and better collection rates.
- **Policy impact:** The proposal will not affect the council's priorities of tackling climate change and reducing inequality in the Community & Corporate Plan.
- **Equality, Welsh Language, Safeguarding and Future Generations impacts:** The proposal will not impact the groups with protected characteristics, the use of the Welsh language, or the safeguarding responsibilities. It will comply with the national well-being goals described in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

High level management restructure – Area management model

- **Saving: £120,000**
- **Proposal title and reference number:** The proposal is to introduce a phased area management structure within Monlife.
- **Proposal scope and description:** The proposal aims to improve efficiency, collaboration and customer satisfaction by reducing management layers, using data and central resources, increasing local delivery and empowerment and where possible creating a single point of contact for each area.
- **Budget impact:** The proposal would result in a budget reduction of £120,000 for 2024/25.
- **Staffing impact:** The proposal would affect a number of full-time equivalent staff in Monlife and the reduction of any subsequent posts following the initial review would be managed on an individual basis.
- **Service impact:** It is expected the proposal would have no impact on the standard of service delivery with mitigations implemented where possible. There are no implications on the statutory or legal duties of Monlife.
- **Corporate alignment:** The proposal aligns with the MCC Community & Corporate plan to continue to deliver valued local services.

Increase in fees and charges that are not captured in separate proposals

- **Saving: £27,000**
- **Proposal:** Increase in fees and charges for discretionary services in line with the increase costs of delivering these services.

Resources

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £8,302,000 | £8,326,000 | +0.3% |

The Directorate provides a range of corporate functions that look to both safeguard the Council and in supporting services to adapt and evolve in response to changing circumstances and requirements. The portfolio covers all central finance and revenues functions necessary to maintain oversight and administer the Council's finances. Central teams work with services to drive digital design and innovation, as well as ensuring robust arrangements are in place for information governance and technology. Our Landlord Services teams look to ensure that the Council's land and property portfolio remains fit for purpose. Internal Audit and Corporate Health and Safety fulfil important roles to ensure that controls are in place and operating and that risks are being identified and managed.

Commercial Investments – Reversal of income pressure

- **Saving: £208,000**
- **Proposal:** To reflect the forecast improvement in rental income across the commercial investment portfolio as a result of revised tenancies agreed.

Income - Industrial units, cemeteries, county farms

- **Saving: £100,000**
- **Proposal:** The three service areas have consistently exceeded their income targets over the last number of years, so budgets are being increased to reflect this.

Property services - Gwent Police collaboration

- **Saving: £50,000**
- **Proposal:** The authority provides property design & maintenance services to Gwent Police as part of a collaboration agreement. Projections for 24/25 estimate that income recovery can be increased by £50k to cover pay award and inflation.

Reduction in the shared resource service contribution

- **Saving: £17,000**
- **Proposal:** A reduction in the required contribution to the Shared Resource Service (SRS) following identification of efficiency savings by the organisation. SRS is a collaborative ICT provider in South Wales that provide services to a number of public sector organisations, including Monmouthshire County Council.

Chief Executive's Unit

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £3,181,000 | £3,288,000 | +3.3% |

This Directorate is responsible for a range of support services. This includes Human Resources, Training, Payroll, Policy and Performance, Partnerships, Customer Relations and the Council's scrutiny function. We are focused on reducing costs through better use of data and technology.

Policy - Training & Workforce Development - Staffing re-alignment (£65k) Partnership working in online training delivery (£10.5k)

- **Saving: £75,500**
- **Proposal description:** The proposal aims to restructure the staffing arrangements, delete a vacant post and collaborate with other partners to share online training resources and costs.
- **Budget impact of the proposal:** The proposal would result in saving of £75,500 in 2024/25.
- **Service delivery and policy impact of the proposal:** The proposal would reduce HR capacity by deleting a Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualified post. Improving self-service opportunities for managers would provide some mitigation for this. The proposal would also align training development with the employee and corporate objectives, such as carbon literacy.
- **Risks and mitigation of the proposal:** The service face two main risks: the potential delay in developing the online learning system due to joining a consortium and the reduction in the level of support for staffing issues due to the deletion of a post. The mitigation actions include working directly with the developer and using new technology to increase self-service and reduce manual processing. The proposal does not result in any redundancies, legal implications, or policy amendments.

Payroll & HR - Release of contingency budgets for implementation of e-recruitment

- **Saving: £10,000**
- **Proposal:** This funding had been set aside for the implementation of new software. Work by the team has resulted in this being delivered below anticipated costs, enabling part of the budget to be released.

Law & Governance

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £2,667,000 | £2,894,000 | +8.5% |

The Law & Governance Directorate is responsible for providing legal advice and support to the Council and its departments, as well as providing the democratic services and monitoring officer functions. This includes all aspects of legal work from procurement & contracts, property, civil and criminal litigation, employment law, adult and child welfare and land charges. The Directorate is also responsible for ensuring that the decision-making processes across the Council is robust, providing guidance on these issues to elected members and senior officers. Additionally, the Directorate is responsible for overseeing the conduct of elections, managing the Council's records, and providing support to the Council's committees and meetings.

Vacancy Freeze - Paralegal post

- **Saving: £33,000**
- **Proposal:** The Paralegal post became vacant in 23-24 and the decision was made not to fill it to help with in-year budget recovery. The decision has been made to freeze the post for a further 12 months to release the savings in 24-25.

Corporate Costs & Levies

| 2023/24 Budget | 2024/25 Draft Budget | % Change |
|----------------|----------------------|----------|
| £27,517,000 | £29,462,000 | +7.1% |

The Directorate oversees the collection and payment of the precepts and levies set by external bodies such as the Police, Community Councils, Fire Service, National Parks and Drainage Boards. It also manages the oversight of the Council's insurances and risk management service to ensure the Council has appropriate cover in place for the services it delivers.

Where cross-cutting pressure and saving proposals are identified at budget setting stage, the corporate budget will often hold these until such time that the proposals are sufficiently developed and able to be apportioned over service budgets.

Draw down against Ukrainian reserve for further related costs

- **Saving: £200,000**
- **Proposal:** Passporting core costs relating to the ongoing support and assistance provided to our Ukrainian residents.

Section 2: Cost Pressures for 2024/25

| Cost Pressure | £ |
|---|----------------|
| Children & Young People | |
| King Henry 3 – 19: With the new school due to open in Autumn 2024 the rates will increase. It is a requirement through the finance regulations for schools that all rates are funded fully by the Local Authority. This proposal is to see the additional budget granted to the individual school budget to be able to be passed direct to the new school. | 125,000 |
| King Henry 3 – 19: Management costs for the new specialist resource base (SRB) to support additional learning provision. A lead teacher for the SRB is needed to start as soon as possible in order to reduce the existing risk factors and develop the provision effectively. The lead teacher would also facilitate the transition process, engage with parents and recruit staff for the SRB. The SRB will require two additional classes for September 2024, one in the primary phase and one in the secondary phase, with a total cost of £199,344. This cost includes one teacher and two level 2 TAs per class, as per the expectation for all other SRBs. | 199,000 |
| There are significant pressures in the transport budget due to the costs from contractors. Given the current market contractors and high fuel costs there has been an increase in the costs charged. Part of the transport budget supports pupils with additional learning needs to ensure that they can be taken to a school / specialist placement that can meet their needs. The number of pupils attending out of county placements are reducing but the cost of the existing contracts are significantly increasing. In addition, while pupils are remaining in Monmouthshire schools some will still need to be transported to Monmouthshire specialist resources bases. | 745,000 |
| Contingency Fund for ALP: Additional contingency fund of £100,000 for schools to provide short-term intensive support for pupils with Additional Learning Provision (ALP) who are facing a crisis situation. This aims to help children and young people with highly complex additional learning needs and at risk of exclusion, to improve their attendance, to prevent or reduce fixed term and permanent exclusions, and to keep them in MCC schools and avoid expensive out of county provision. The fund is available for pupils with statutory Individual Development Plans (IDPs) who are experiencing a period of crisis, as well as for looked after children (CLA) who do not have an ALN/IDP but who have highly dysregulated behaviour. | 100,000 |
| To secure an additional £375,000 to provide adequate Additional Learning Provision (ALP) for children/young people with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) who require a local authority led Individual Development Plan. This will ensure that children/young people with ALN have appropriate ALP to meet their needs, to ensure that children/young people who are looked after have appropriate ALP to meet their needs and to keep children/young people in their community schools whenever possible. This aims to have a positive impact on attendance and reducing exclusions, and to create a truly inclusive educational system that recognises learners' starting | 375,000 |

| Cost Pressure | £ |
|--|------------------|
| points, strengths and educational needs, in line with the Community & Corporate Plan. | |
| To secure an additional £67,000 to create increased capacity in the Vulnerable Learner Lead role / scope to meet the high / increasing demand, with a potential uplift in the current VLL role and to create a new post for an additional officer who can support the current VLL. This will enable more capacity to manage and support schools to reduce levels of exclusion, to manage the needs of the Children Looked After (CLA) within education in MCC, and to address the challenging bullying agenda, the anti-racism action agenda and the monitoring of Pastoral Support Plans (PSP). | 67,000 |
| Total - Children & Young People | 1,611,000 |
| Social Care & Health | |
| To recognise the budget pressure projected from the review of care provider fees across Childrens and Adults social care as part of the annual fee negotiations. Care providers face various costs and pressures, such as the increase of the real Living Wage, inflation, fuel, insurance, and non-care staff pay. The fee negotiations with the care providers are challenging. Despite the backdrop of reducing inflation, circa 2/3rds of the cost pressure are due to staffing, which is largely impacted by increases in the real living wage. | 2,760,000 |
| Foster Care - Annual review of allowances ahead of Welsh Government's announcement of the 2024/25 fee structure in January 2024. Recruiting and retaining more foster carers from the local authority, rather than relying on independent fostering agencies (IFAs) to improve outcomes and reduce costs for children who are looked after (CLA). MCC has a high proportion of children in non-kinship foster care who are placed with IFAs (54.7%), which limits MCC's ability to monitor and support the quality of care, and costs more than local authority placements. Foster Wales is working towards a consistent offer for all foster carers in Wales, known as the "National Commitment", which includes the harmonisation of payments and which is significantly higher than MCC's current skills payments. | 185,000 |
| Public Protection - Reinstate the Head of Service budget following review of the resourcing of the service. | 99,000 |
| Adult & Children services 2023/24 recurrent overspend. £3.909m - Adult services remain in a highly volatile operating position with risks associated with demand levels, complexity of demand, inflationary pressures, and labour shortages. Adult services have a significant overspend: There is an additional need for 26 care home placements, a recurrent pressure from the provider fee proposal and demand for non-residential services and hospital discharge. A quality assurance group has been put in place to review all care packages before approval. £0.207m - Children's services have an estimated pressure due to increasing costs because of staffing, provider fees and inflation. The service has implemented an ambitious savings plan to review placements, but still faces challenges in recruiting and retaining child protection social workers. | 4,116,000 |
| Social care workforce grant – Welsh Government have announced a 22% reduction in this grant for 2024/25 that is supporting core expenditure within social care. | 250,000 |
| Total Social Care & Health | 7,410,000 |

| Cost Pressure | £ |
|--|------------------|
| Communities & Place | |
| <p>Waste - Recycling market pressures, contract inflation and recurrent pressures from 2023/24</p> <p>The recycle market has been severely volatile, resulting in an annual cost of £600,000 for disposal instead of the expected net zero. This is the main driver for the overspend in 23-24 and the projected pressure for 24-25.</p> <p>Recycling collections are now seen as core council costs and levels of grant funding have been reduced. This means that the service must rely more on its own budget to meet the statutory 70% recycling targets and the workplace recycling regulations.</p> <p>The service has £3.9m of external contracts for the storage, haulage, disposal and treatment of recycling and waste. These contracts have price increases every year, which have been managed with in-year savings and income in the past, but this approach is unsustainable.</p> <p>Recycling and waste collection is one of the few services that impact every resident every week, with over 3.9m direct interactions per year. The demands and expectations on the service are extremely high and already under pressure. The increase in budget will allow the service to continue as is, without providing additional capacity or reducing demand.</p> | 1,009,000 |
| <p>Transport costs pressure: £200k due to the rising costs of fuel, hire, parts and maintenance for the transport fleet.</p> <p>The service has tried to reduce the pressure by reviewing the fleet and off-hiring, selling or terminating lease arrangements for some vehicles.</p> <p>The service still needs a core operational fleet that must be maintained, serviced and inspected. The costs of parts and fuel are increasing and there are delays in obtaining parts.</p> <p>The service has embarked on a fleet transition for cars and light commercial vehicles, but the fleet is predominantly dependent on diesel and exposed to fuel price fluctuations.</p> | 200,000 |
| <p>Transport - Green Car Scheme income target shortfall</p> <p>The Tusker scheme was re-launched in 2023 on the basis that the corporate savings would be transferred to the applicant rather than retained by the authority to make the scheme more accessible to staff. The income target will need to be removed as this will not be achievable.</p> | 46,000 |
| <p>Annual contract uplift for home to school contracts</p> <p>The Council spends about £5.85m per year on 174 contracts for home to school transport. The contracts have an annual uplift clause that reflects the rising costs of fuel, maintenance and drivers' costs. The uplift is based on the Cost Monitor report by the Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT).</p> <p>The Council has estimated that the annual uplift for the home to school contracts will result in an additional cost of £50,000 for the next academic year. This is based on a 3% uplift rate, which may change depending on the final CPT report.</p> | 50,000 |
| Total – Communities & Place | 1,305,000 |

| MonLife | |
|---|----------------|
| Reinstate budget from one-off sale of Caterpod | |
| The service benefited from a one-off sale of £10k in 2023/24. This budget will need to be reinstated as planned for 2024/25. | 10,000 |
| Borough Theatre income pressure. | |
| The Borough theatre is still recovering from a 3-year closure and late opening in January 2023 due to refurbishment, which has compounded the pressures. | |
| Due to the closure through covid and the refurbishment, we have seen a loss of income and some of the performances booked in could not rebook due to their own scheduling. It has taken nearly 12 months to reinstate acts and audiences to pre covid levels, and we now find ourselves in a better position with the programme for 2024. | 100,000 |
| Various strategies are being undertaken to increase the income of the theatre, such as adding more shows, seeking corporate sponsorship, applying for external grants, and reviewing the operational structure of the service. | |
| Contact Centre - Insufficient Software Budget | |
| Teams' telephony licence costs have significantly increased. The authority allocates all authority licences to the contact centre this is a whole authority pressure and a licence that is essential to allow the day-to-day operations of our council. | 69,000 |
| Community Hubs - Pressures arising from redundancies, service staffing and associated staffing costs. | 30,000 |
| Youth - Reduction in grant funding | |
| The Youth Services core funding has been reduced and the service relies more on grant income and income generation, which are not sustainable. The service has received specific grants for youth mental health and has created innovative ways to use and access them with partners and stakeholders. | 25,000 |
| The cost-of-living crisis and the timing of grant funding have affected the service's ability to generate income and cover core services. The service has also lost members of the team who were funded by temporary grants. The service has reduced its holiday programme due to staffing levels and faces difficulties in sustaining core services when staff members are sick or on leave. | |
| Markets Income Pressure | |
| A need to increase footfall, events and support local businesses with the market towns and through our market offer and alternative events. The proposals will increase the number of markets held in the market hall, such as farmers market, street food markets, and antiques fayre, as well as other events and activities that are suitable for the season and the visitors. | 45,000 |
| The market hall traders' units and stalls will be reviewed to ensure they reflect a full cost recovery model, as some events previously held in the market hall were not hired at cost price. | |
| Blue Badge funding shortfall | |
| Blue badges are funded at £6k per annum via Welsh Government RSG. Badge cost is around £12k per annum - a 50% shortfall. | 6,000 |
| Total – MonLife | 285,000 |

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| Chief Executive's Unit | |
| Increased costs of payroll licenses | 17,000 |
| Payroll software is critical. We are anticipating an above inflation increase in the annual license costs from 2024-25. | |
| Increased demand for Welsh language translations | 30,000 |
| Increase the budget for the translation of public documents in line with increased number of documents being published in line with the authority's value of openness. The publication of publicly available documents in Welsh is a statutory requirement under the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and the associated Welsh Language Standards. | |
| Total - Chief Executive's Unit | 47,000 |
| Law & Governance | |
| Cost of members allowances and associated oncosts will exceed available budget. This is made up of the recurring pressure already reported in 2023/24 plus the effect of the potential pay award for 2024/25. | 135,000 |
| Total - Law & Governance | 135,000 |
| Resources | |
| Head of Service - Landlord & property | 108,000 |
| The proposal looks to allow for the budget for the Head of Commercial and Landlord Services to be re-instated to allow for the post to be permanently recruited into and in turn to enable the leadership capacity of Landlord Services to be restored. | |
| This will enable it to make better and faster progress in delivering against the Council's policy objectives in so far as they relate to the Council's land and property portfolio. | |
| Shared benefits service pay inflation. | 54,000 |
| The Shared Revenues and Benefits Service is run by Torfaen County Borough Council. Each year the annual contribution Monmouthshire makes increases to reflect the annual pay award and increments for officers of the Shared Service. | |
| Administration of Council tax premiums | 128,000 |
| Additional posts to assist with the administration of council tax premiums (£78k), and £50k recharges for finance staff time that will be funded from the income generated from premiums. | |
| Total - Resources | 290,000 |
| Corporate Costs & Levies | |
| Insurance premium increase | 200,000 |
| The projected increase in premiums payable as a result of market pressures and claims history. | |
| Coroner levy increase | 107,000 |
| Additional costs as a result of the Chief Coroner review of facilities and resourcing within Gwent. This will result in a move of premises and additional staffing being required. | |
| Audit Wales Fee increase | 43,000 |

Y GYLLIDEB BUDGET



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| Budget pressure as a result of fee increases in relation to the introduction of the ISA315 standard and additional resourcing required. This budget pressure represents the increase in 2023/24 and 2024/25. | |
| Fire levy increase | |
| A combination of inflationary pressure and funding shortfalls impacting the Authority has required an increase of 5.31% in the total Levy | 291,000 |
| Total - Corporate Costs & Levies | 641,000 |
| Total Pressures | 11,724,000 |

**For more information on how to engage
in the 'draft budget proposals 2024/25
consultation' please visit:**

**[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/
budget-2024-2025](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/budget-2024-2025)**



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