

# Public Document Pack



Neuadd y Sir  
Y Rhadyr  
Brynbuga  
NP15 1GA

Dydd Iau, 28 Mawrth 2024

**Hysbysiad o gyfarfod:**

## **Pwyllgor Craffu Lle**

**Dydd Mercher, 10fed Ebrill, 2024, 10.00 am  
Neuadd y Sir, Y Rhadyr, Brynbuga, NP15 1GA**

**Nodwch y cynhelir rhag gyfarfod 30 munud cyn dechrau'r cyfarfod ar gyfer aelodau'r pwyllgor**

### **AGENDA**

| <b>Item No</b> | <b>Item</b>  | <b>Pages</b> |
|----------------|--|--------------|
| 1.             | Ymddiheuriadau am Absenoldeb.  |              |
| 2.             | Datganiadau o Fuddiant   |              |
| 3.             | Fforwm Agored i'r Cyhoedd.   |              |
| 4.             | Strategaeth Argyfwng Natur a Hinsawdd 2024 – Craffu ar gynnydd y strategaeth cyn penderfyniad gan y Cabinet. | 1 - 100      |
| 5.             | Adferiad Natur – Craffu ar gynnydd y strategaeth cyn penderfyniad gan y Cabinet.                             | 101 - 366    |
| 6.             | Strategaeth Fwyd Leol – Craffu ar gynnydd y strategaeth cyn penderfyniad gan y Cabinet.                      | 367 - 434    |
| 7.             | Blaenraglen Gwaith a Rhestr Wehtredu y Pwyllgor Craffu Lle.  | 435 - 440    |
| 8.             | Cynllunydd Gwaith y Cyngor a'r Cabinet.  | 441 - 460    |
| 9.             | Cadarnhau cofnodion y cyfarfod blaenorol   | 461 - 464    |
| 10.            | Cyfarfod Nesaf: Dydd Iau 23 Mai 2024 am 10.00am.   |              |

**Paul Matthews**

**Prif Weithredwr**

MONMOUTHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL  
CYNGOR SIR FYNWY

MAE CYFANSODDIAD Y PWYLLGOR FEL A GANLYN:

County Councillor Louise Brown  
Shirenewton;  
Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Emma Bryn  
Wyesham;  
Independent Group  
County Councillor Tomos Dafydd Davies  
Llanfoist & Govilon;  
Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Lisa Dymock  
Portskewett;  
Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Jane Lucas  
Osbaston;  
Welsh Conservative Party  
County Councillor Maria Stevens  
Severn;  
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
County Councillor Jackie Strong  
Caldicot Cross;  
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
County Councillor Tudor Thomas  
Park;  
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru  
County Councillor Laura Wright  
Grofield;  
Welsh Labour/Llafur Cymru

## Gwybodaeth I'r Cyhoedd

### **Mynediad i gopiâu papur o agendâu ac adroddiadau**

Gellir darparu copi o'r agenda hwn ac adroddiadau perthnasol i aelodau'r cyhoedd sy'n mynychu cyfarfod drwy ofyn am gopi gan Gwasanaethau Democrataidd ar 01633 644219. Dylid nodi fod yn rhaid i ni dderbyn 24 awr o hysbysiad cyn y cyfarfod er mwyn darparu copi caled o'r agenda hwn i chi.

### **Edrych ar y cyfarfod ar-lein**

Gellir gweld y cyfarfod ar-lein yn fyw neu'n dilyn y cyfarfod drwy fynd i [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk) neu drwy ymweld â'n tudalen Youtube drwy chwilio am MonmouthshireCC. Drwy fynd i mewn i'r ystafell gyfarfod, fel aelod o'r cyhoedd neu i gymryd rhan yn y cyfarfod, rydych yn caniatáu i gael eich ffilmio ac i ddefnydd posibl y delweddau a'r recordiadau sain hynny gan y Cyngor.

**Y Gymraeg** Mae'r Cyngor yn croesawu cyfraniadau gan aelodau'r cyhoedd drwy gyfrwng y Gymraeg neu'r Saesneg. Gofynnwn gyda dyledus barch i chi roi 5 diwrnod o hysbysiad



cyn y cyfarfod os dymunwch siarad yn Gymraeg fel y gallwn ddarparu ar gyfer eich anghenion.

## Nodau a Gwerthoedd Cyngor Sir Fynwy

i ddod yn sir ddi-garbon, gan gefnogi lles, iechyd ac urddas i bawb ar bob cam o'u bywydau.

Amcanion rydym yn gweithio tuag atynt

- Lle teg i fyw lle mae effeithiau anghydraddoldeb a thlodi wedi'u lleihau;
- Lle gwyrdd i fyw a gweithio gyda llai o allyriadau carbon a gwneud cyfraniad cadarnhaol at fynd i'r afael â'r argyfwng yn yr hinsawdd a natur;
- Lle ffyniannus ac uchelgeisiol, lle mae canol trefi bywiog a lle gall busnesau dyfu a datblygu;
- Lle diogel i fyw lle mae gan bobl gartref maen nhw'n teimlo'n ddiogel ynddo;
- Lle cysylltiedig lle mae pobl yn teimlo'n rhan o gymuned ac yn cael eu gwerthfawrogi;
- Lle dysgu lle mae pawb yn cael cyfle i gyrraedd eu potensial.

### Ein gwerthoedd

- **Bod yn agored:** anelwn fod yn agored ac onest i ddatblygu perthnasoedd ymddiriedus
- **Tegwch:** anelwn ddarparu dewis teg, cyfleoedd a phrofiadau a dod yn sefydliad a adeiladwyd ar barch un at y llall.
- **Hyblygrwydd:** anelwn fod yn hyblyg yn ein syniadau a'n gweithredoedd i ddod yn sefydliad effeithlon ac effeithiol.
- **Gwaith tîm:** anelwn gydweithio i rannu ein llwyddiannau a'n methiannau drwy adeiladu ar ein cryfderau a chefnogi ein gilydd i gyflawni ein nodau.
- **Caredigrwydd** – Byddwn yn dangos caredigrwydd i bawb yr ydym yn gweithio gyda nhw, gan roi pwysigrwydd perthnasoedd a'r cysylltiadau sydd gennym â'n gilydd wrth wraidd pob rhyngweithio.

## Canllaw Cwestiynau Craffu Sir Fynwy

1. Pam mae'r Pwyllgor yn craffu ar hyn? (cefndir, materion allweddol)
2. Beth yw rôl y Pwyllgor a pha ganlyniad mae'r Aelodau am ei gyflawni?
3. A oes digon o wybodaeth i gyflawni hyn? Os nad oes, pwy allai ddarparu hyn?

- Cytuno ar y drefn holi a pha Aelodau fydd yn arwain
- Cytuno ar gwestiynau i swyddogion a chwestiynau i Aelod y Cabinet

### Cwestiynau'r Cyfarfod

### Craffu ar Berfformiad

1. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â'r blynyddoedd blaenorol? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
2. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â chynghorau eraill/darparwyr gwasanaethau eraill? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
3. Sut mae perfformiad yn cymharu â thargedau gosodedig? Ydy e'n well/yn waeth? Pam?
4. Sut cafodd targedau perfformiad eu gosod? Ydyn nhw'n ddigon heriol/realistig?
5. Sut mae defnyddwyr gwasanaethau/y cyhoedd/partneriaid yn gweld perfformiad y gwasanaeth?
6. A fu unrhyw awdid ac archwiliadau diweddar? Beth oedd y canfyddiadau?
7. Sut mae'r gwasanaeth yn cyfrannu at wireddu amcanion corfforaethol?
8. A yw gwelliant/dirywiad mewn perfformiad yn gysylltiedig i gynnydd/ostyngiad mewn adnodd?  
Pa gapasiti sydd yna i wella?

### Craffu ar Bolisi

1. Ar bwy mae'r polisi yn effeithio ~ yn uniongyrchol ac yn anuniongyrchol? Pwy fydd yn elwa fwyaf/leiaf?
2. Beth yw barn defnyddwyr gwasanaeth /rhanddeiliaid? Pa ymgynghoriad gafodd ei gyflawni? A wnaeth y broses ymgynghori gydymffurfio ag Egwyddorion Gunning? A yw rhanddeiliaid yn credu y bydd yn sicrhau'r canlyniad a ddymunir?
3. Beth yw barn y gymuned gyfan – safbwynt y 'trethdalwr'?
4. Pa ddulliau a ddefnyddiwyd i ymgynghori â'r rhanddeiliaid? A oedd y broses yn galluogi pawb â chyfran i ddweud eu dweud?
5. Pa ymarfer ac opsiynau sydd wedi eu hystyried wrth ddatblygu/adolygu'r polisi hwn? Pa dystiolaeth sydd i hysbysu beth sy'n gweithio? A yw'r polisi yn ymwneud â maes lle mae diffyg ymchwil cyhoeddedig neu dystiolaeth arall?
6. A yw'r polisi'n ymwneud â maes lle ceir anghydraddoldebau hysbys?
7. A yw'r polisi hwn yn cyd-fynd â'n hamcanion corfforaethol, fel y'u diffinnir yn ein cynllun corfforaethol? A yw'n cadw at ein Safonau Iaith Gymraeg?
8. A gafodd yr holl ddatblygu cynaliadwy, y goblygiadau cydraddoldeb a diogelu perthnasol eu hystyried?

Er enghraifft, beth yw'r gweithdrefnau sydd angen bod ar waith i amddiffyn plant?

9. Faint fydd y gost hon i'w gweithredu a pha ffynhonnell ariannu sydd wedi'i nodi?

10. Sut fydd perfformiad y polisi yn cael ei weithredu a'r effaith yn cael ei gwerthuso?

**Cwestiynau Cyffredinol:**

### Grymuso Cymunedau

- Sut ydym ni'n cynnwys cymunedau lleol a'u grymuso i ddylunio a darparu gwasanaethau i gyd-fynd ag angen lleol?
- A ydym ni'n cael trafodaethau rheolaidd gyda chymunedau am flaenoriaethau'r gwasanaeth a pha lefel o wasanaeth y gall y cyngor fforddio ei ddarparu yn y dyfodol?
- A yw'r gwasanaeth yn gweithio gyda dinasyddion i egluro rôl gwahanol bartneriaid wrth ddarparu gwasanaeth a rheoli disgwyliadau?
- A oes fframwaith a phroses gymesur ar waith ar gyfer asesu perfformiad ar y cyd, gan gynnwys o safbwynt dinesydd, ac a oes gennych chi drefniadau atebolrwydd i gefnogi hyn?
- A oes Asesiad Effaith Cydraddoldeb wedi'i gynnal? Os felly a all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet /Uwch Swyddogion roi copïau i'r Aelodau ac eglurhad manwl o'r Asesiad o'r Effaith ar Gydraddoldeb (EQIA) a gynhaliwyd mewn perthynas â'r cynigion hyn?
- A all yr Arweinydd a'r Cabinet/Uwch Swyddogion sicrhau aelodau bod y cynigion hyn yn cydymffurfio â deddfwriaeth Cydraddoldeb a Hawliau Dynol? A yw'r cynigion yn cydymffurfio â Chynllun Cydraddoldeb Strategol yr Awdurdod Lleol?

### Galwadau'r Gwasanaeth

- Sut fydd newid polisi a deddfwriaeth yn effeithio ar y ffordd mae'r cyngor yn gweithredu?
- A ydym ni wedi ystyried demograffeg ein cyngor a sut bydd hyn yn effeithio ar ddarparu gwasanaethau a chyllid yn y dyfodol?
- A ydych chi wedi adnabod ac ystyried y tueddiadau tymor hir a allai effeithio ar eich maes gwasanaeth, pa effaith allai'r tueddiadau hyn ei chael ar eich gwasanaeth/allai eich gwasanaeth ei gael ar y tueddiadau hyn, a beth sy'n cael ei wneud mewn ymateb?

### Cynllunio Ariannol

- A oes gennym ni gynlluniau ariannol canolig a hirdymor cadarn yn eu lle?
- A ydym ni'n cysylltu cyllidebau â chynlluniau a chanlyniadau ac adrodd yn effeithiol ar y rhain?

### Gwneud arbedion a chynhyrchu incwm

- A oes gennym ni'r strwythurau cywir ar waith i sicrhau bod ein dulliau effeithlonrwydd, gwelliant a thrawsnewid yn gweithio gyda'i gilydd i sicrhau'r arbedion mwyaf posibl?
- Sut ydym ni'n gwneud y mwyaf o incwm? A ydym ni wedi cymharu polisiau eraill y cyngor i sicrhau'r incwm mwyaf posibl ac wedi ystyried yn llawn y goblygiadau ar ddefnyddwyr gwasanaeth?

- A oes gennym ni gynllun gweithlu sy'n ystyried capasiti, costau, a sgiliau'r gweithlu gwirioneddol yn erbyn y gweithlu a ddymunir?

Cwestiynau i'w gofyn o fewn blwyddyn i'r penderfyniad:

- A gafodd canlyniadau arfaethedig y cynnig eu cyflawni neu a oedd canlyniadau eraill?
- A oedd yr effeithiau wedi'u cyfyngu i'r grŵp yr oeddech chi ar y dechrau yn meddwl fyddai wedi cael ei effeithio h.y. pobl hŷn, neu a gafodd eraill eu heffeithio e.e. pobl ag anableddau, rhieni â phlant ifanc?
- A yw'r penderfyniad yn dal i fod y penderfyniad cywir neu a oes angen gwneud addasiadau?

**Cwestiynau i'r Pwyllgor ar ddiwedd y cyfarfod ...**

A oes gennym ni'r wybodaeth angenrheidiol i ffurfio casgliadau/i wneud argymhellion i'r pwyllgor gwaith, cyngor, partneriaid eraill? Os nad oes, a oes angen i ni:

- (i) Ymchwilio i'r mater yn fwy manwl?
- (ii) Gael rhagor o wybodaeth gan dystion eraill - Aelod o'r Bwrdd Gweithredol, arbenigwr annibynnol, aelodau o'r gymuned, defnyddwyr gwasanaeth, cyrff rheoleiddio...

Cytuno ar gamau pellach sydd i'w cymryd o fewn amserlen/adroddiad monitro yn y dyfodol.



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|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                 | <b>CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCY STRATEGY 2024</b> |
| <b>MEETING:</b>                 | <b>PLACE SCRUTINY</b>                             |
| <b>DATE:</b>                    | <b>10 APRIL 2024</b>                              |
| <b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b> | <b>ALL</b>  |

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek scrutiny of the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy (Appendix 1) and 4 Action Plans which set out how the Strategy is to be delivered (Appendix 2).

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Place Scrutiny scrutinises the proposed Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and 4 Action Plans, prior to it being agreed by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024. The action plans set out how the council will address: Council Emissions, Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Communities and Climate.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agrees that the Action Plans are delivered by Service Area Officers/Managers and coordinated by the Chief Officer – Communities and Place. This will enable strategy ownership and delivery across all services. Progress will be reported to the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 In 2019 Council agreed to declare a Climate Emergency unanimously passing a motion committing the council to:
- Strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030;
  - Encourage and support residents and businesses to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions;
  - Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 °C.
- 3.2 In October 2019 a strategy and action plan were adopted, and in November 2021 the action plan was refreshed to include the nature emergency.
- 3.3 Since 2021, other work streams have developed, including work on rivers and oceans, following the council's Motion for the Rivers and Ocean. In February 2024 the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy has been reviewed and updated to include these additional work streams and to better reflect the Community and Corporate Plan. The Strategy and 4 action plans are key to delivering council's purpose of "a zero carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life".
- 3.4 A refreshed Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group has met over the last year to learn more about these work streams and provide challenge. The Steering Group has

cross-party membership and has agreed the following format for the new strategy and action plans:

# Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy

Council  
Emissions



Nature  
Recovery



Rivers and  
Ocean



Communities  
and Climate



- 3.5 The delivery of the Action Plans will be led by Service Area Officers and Managers and reported on every six months to the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group.
- 3.6 The purpose and objectives of each Action Plan are as follows:

## Council Emissions

**Purpose:**

Strive to reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030

**Objectives:**

- 1 Strategic – Support the collection of data and resource management
- 2 Buildings – Reduce and remove the carbon emissions from our built environment
- 3 Transport – Reduce and remove the carbon emissions from operational, business and commuting emissions
- 4 Procurement– Reduce in-direct emissions from the supply chain
- 5 Land Use– Reduce emissions from land use polices and how the Council uses its land

## Nature Recovery

**Purpose:**

Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems resilience through the Council's operations and working in partnership with communities

**Objectives:**

- 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

- 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature
- 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience
- 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience
- 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
- 7 Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action
- 8 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

## **Rivers and Oceans**

### ***Purpose:***

Work towards clean, healthy and productive rivers and ocean

### ***Objectives:***

- 1 Reduce sewage, phosphate and other chemical pollution in our rivers
- 2 Reduce plastic and other litter pollution in rivers and coast areas
- 3 Protect natural habitats along our rivers, estuaries and coast
- 4 Minimise the impacts of flooding on communities by mitigation and adaptation (rivers and coastal areas)
- 5 Raise awareness of the importance of our rivers and coasts

## **Communities and Climate**

### ***Purpose:***

Work with communities, partners and business to reduce carbon emissions

### ***Objectives:***

- 1 Reduce energy use and increase renewable energy across the county
- 2 Reduce waste and what we buy by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more
- 3 Encourage active travel, public transport and low emission vehicles
- 4 Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference
- 5 Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change

3.7 The Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan cannot be delivered by the Council alone. We need other partners to join us in helping to reduce carbon emissions across the county including public bodies and anchor institutions sitting on the Public Service Board, citizens, businesses and voluntary groups. As a result, many of the actions within the 4 Action Plans can only be delivered through partnership.

3.8 We must do this while continuing to provide the services which form part of the social foundations on which our communities are built. We know that this will not be easy, given the financial and resource challenges that the Council, along with all public services are facing.

## **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

4.1 The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy has significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular it has strong benefits for a Prosperous Wales, by

developing a low carbon economy and thinking carefully about sustainable procurement. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on changes to the way we manage green spaces. A Healthier Wales will be enhanced by improvements to air quality from more sustainable travel and more walking and cycling. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals.

4.2 There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of the Action Plans.

## 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 Doing nothing is not an option. Addressing climate change is a key priority of the council, and we are required by Welsh Government to reduce our carbon emissions and work towards becoming net zero. However, the extent of our ambition around climate and nature remains subject to a number of options, set out below:

|   | <b>Option</b>   | <b>Pros</b>   | <b>Cons</b>  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Focus solely on direct MCC emissions and our own land   | Easy to manage and measure<br>Within the remit of the council   | Will miss large emissions from the wider community   |
| 2 | Focus on direct MCC emissions and our own land as well as some actions which will reduce emissions and assist nature recovery across the whole county | Many actions are easy to manage and measure<br>Will impact on a wider range of emissions<br>Potential to involve wider community and partners<br>Maximises policy levers that we do have in place to influence county emissions e.g. transport, waste | Harder to measure county emissions<br>Will require further resources   |
| 3 | Broaden the action plan to address all the emissions of the whole county  | Could potentially give the most comprehensive carbon reductions<br>Potential to involve wider community and partners  | Hard to measure and manage<br>Policy levers to influence wider county emissions are not in place<br>Emissions are beyond council control<br>Lack of council resources to address emissions of whole county |

5.2 The decision has been made to continue along the lines of option 2 as a pragmatic approach which incorporates our own emissions and land management as well as some wider county emissions and nature recovery where we have the policy levers, resources and capacity to do so.

## 6 EVALUATION CRITERIA

6.1 Updates on progress against each of the actions are presented to the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group with the Cabinet member providing periodic updates to Cabinet.

## 7 REASONS:

- 7.1 To ensure that the Council sets out how it intends to address the climate and nature emergencies, in order to deliver its policy commitment and moral obligations to reduce carbon emissions and help nature recovery.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 Achieving this commitment will not be cost neutral and there are likely to be decisions that will have to be made in future which will require additional capital and revenue financial resources to be allocated.
- 8.2 The cost for all the actions is not yet fully known, for example the cost of future net zero buildings will depend on a range of factors at the design stage. Actions will be funded in different ways, some are zero cost or will require officer time alone, some will be grant funded, some will be funded by prudential borrowing and invest to save schemes. It is anticipated that where additional funds are needed these will be subject to subsequent decision making processes.

## **9 CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet  
Senior Leadership Team  
Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 – Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy  
Appendix 2 – Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plans

## **11 AUTHORS:**

Hazel Clatworthy, Sustainability Policy Officer

## **12 CONTACT DETAILS:**

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E-mail: [hazelclatworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:hazelclatworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

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# Integrated Impact Assessment document

(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio Economic Duty)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Name of the Officer</b> completing the evaluation<br/>Hazel Clatworthy</p> <p><b>Phone no: 0776 8898587</b><br/><b>E-mail: hazelclatworthy@monmouthshire.gov.uk</b></p> | <p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b></p> <p>To agree the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and 4 Action Plans, which set out how the council will address: Council Emissions, Nature Recovery, Rivers and Oceans and Communities and Climate.</p> |
| <p><b>Name of Service area</b></p> <p><b>Policy and Performance</b></p>   | <p><b>Date</b></p> <p><b>10 April 2024</b></p>   |

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**Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

| Protected Characteristics | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic  | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| Age                       | The Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plans will have positive impacts for all age groups. In particular, tackling the climate emergency will have particular benefits for young people and future generations. There may also be specific benefits for young people for example by increasing active travel to school. | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |
| Disability                | There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.   | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |

| Protected Characteristics     | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Gender reassignment           | .There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.               | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |
| Marriage or civil partnership | There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.                | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |
| Pregnancy or maternity        | There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.                | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |
| Race                          | .There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.               | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |
| Religion or Belief            | There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.                | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |
| Sex                           | There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.                | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |



| Protected Characteristics | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Sexual Orientation        | .There will be positive impacts on all protected characteristics.               | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |

## 2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

|   | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage  | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage. | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</b> | There should not be any adverse impacts on low income households. Measures to save energy in the home and improve access to public transport may well benefit low income households. However, central government will need to ensure that low income homes have the financial incentives in order to help them to reduce carbon emissions in their homes. | None known at the time of writing   | Not applicable  |

### 3. Policy making and the Welsh language.




| How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:  | Describe the positive impacts of this proposal   | Describe the negative impacts of this proposal | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Policy Making</b></p> <p>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,</p> <p>Promoting Welsh language</p> <p>Treating the Welsh language no less favourably</p> | <p>The Climate Emergency action plan will be published bilingually on the Council website, and all climate related press and publicity will be done bilingually.</p> | <p>None</p>                                    | <p>Not applicable</p>  |
| <p><b>Operational</b></p> <p>Recruitment &amp; Training of workforce</p>   | <p>Not applicable</p>  | <p>None</p>                                    | <p>Not applicable</p>  |
| <p><b>Service delivery</b></p> <p>Use of Welsh language in service delivery</p> <p>Promoting use of the language</p>   | <p>All Climate related materials will be published bilingually.</p>  | <p>None</p>                                    | <p>Not applicable</p>  |



**4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

| Well Being Goal   | Does the proposal contribute to this goal?<br>Describe the positive and negative impacts.   | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|
| <b>A prosperous Wales</b><br>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs  | The action plans directly contribute to the Prosperous Wales vision of a low carbon society and action on climate change. There is the potential for green economy jobs to be developed.                                | None  |
| <b>A resilient Wales</b><br>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g. climate change)                                      | The action plans contribute to more sustainable management of green spaces and includes measures which will build resilience of ecosystems and assist nature recovery.  | None  |
| <b>A healthier Wales</b><br>People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized and health impacts are understood   | Transport measures will improve air quality and increasing walking and cycling will improve physical and mental health.   | None  |
| <b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b><br>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected   | Many of the actions will involve working closely with local communities to produce local community benefits. Transport measures should increase connectivity between communities, particularly for those without a car. | None  |
| <b>A globally responsible Wales</b><br>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing                                | Reducing carbon emissions in Monmouthshire will provide a small contribution towards reducing levels of climate change, which are having global impacts including flooding, drought and sea level rise.                 | None  |
| <b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b><br>Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation | Welsh language will be used for all Climate Emergency communications in line with the Welsh Language measure.   | None  |

| Well Being Goal   | Does the proposal contribute to this goal?<br>Describe the positive and negative impacts.   | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|
| <b>A more equal Wales</b><br>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances | We are keen to work with the Community Climate Champions and other partners, of all ages and all backgrounds, to help us achieve our ambitions. | None  |

**5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?**

| Sustainable Development Principle  | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.  | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|--|--|---|
|  <p>Long Term</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> | <p>The Action Plans set out how we are working towards a target of zero carbon by 2030. This is a plan for the long term, but it requires quick and immediate action now, to reduce the devastating impacts of climate change in the longer term.</p>  | <p>None</p>   |
|  <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p>      | <p>Many of the actions in the Action Plans are being delivered through collaboration, both with community groups, regionally through Gwent and in south east Wales through the Cardiff Capital Region.</p>   | <p>None</p>   |
|  <p>Involvement</p> <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p>         | <p>Members of the Community Climate Champions, including Transition town representatives, town and community councils, a community interest company and energy agency will be consulted on the Strategy and action plans. The Nature Recover Action Plan and Green Infrastructure are having wider consultation.</p> | <p>None</p>   |

| Sustainable Development Principle   | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.  | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|--|---|
|  <p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p>Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p>   | <p>The whole aim of reducing our carbon emissions is to prevent (or at least reduce the scale of impact) of runaway climate change.</p>  | <p>None</p>   |
|  <p><b>Integration</b></p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> | <p>.Bringing together work on council emission reduction, nature recovery, rivers and oceans and community climate action aims to consider these these themes in an integrated, holistic way. Many actions cross over with other themes, and many depend on working with other organisations, but bringing them altogether under one umbrella strategy should ensure joined up thinking and integration.</p> | <p>None</p>   |

**6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

|                     | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has | What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------|---|---|--|
| Safeguarding        | There are no safeguarding implications          | None  | Not applicable   |
| Corporate Parenting | There are no corporate parenting implications   | None  | Not applicable   |

**7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

Evidence for the urgency to tackle climate change has come from numerous IPCC reports, such as: <https://www.ipcc.ch/2018/10/08/summary-for-policymakers-of-ipcc-special-report-on-global-warming-of-1-5c-approved-by-governments/>

Local information about energy and climate change has come from our Wellbeing Assessment, 3rd UK Climate Change Risk Assessment etc.

Data and statistics on energy use, emissions etc has come from the Decarbonisation Team and National Statistics data.

**8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

The Climate Emergency Action Plan has significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular it has strong benefits for a Prosperous Wales, by developing a low carbon economy and thinking carefully about sustainable procurement. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on changes to the way we manage green spaces. A Healthier Wales will be enhanced by improvements to air quality from more sustainable travel and more walking and cycling. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals. There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the

protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of the Strategy and Action Plans.

**9. ACTIONS:** As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

| What are you going to do | When are you going to do it? | Who is responsible |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
|                          |                              |                    |
|                          |                              |                    |
|                          |                              |                    |

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**10. VERSION CONTROL:** The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

| Version No. | Decision making stage | Date considered | Brief description of any amendments made following consideration |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|
| 1           | Place Scrutiny        | 10 April 2024   |  |
|             |                       |                 |  |
|             |                       |                 |  |

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**Monmouthshire County Council  
Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy  
February 2024**



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>            | Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy   |
| <b>Purpose</b>          | This strategy outlines the council's response to the climate emergency declared in May 2019, the Motion for Rivers and Ocean declared in March 2022 and nature emergency declared in ???? |
| <b>Owner</b>            | Monmouthshire County Council  |
| <b>Approved by</b>      |   |
| <b>Date</b>             |   |
| <b>Version Number</b>   | 3.0   |
| <b>Status</b>           |   |
| <b>Review Frequency</b> | Annual  |
| <b>Next review date</b> |   |
| <b>Consultation</b>     |   |

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## Foreword

How we reduce our contributions to climate change, manage the impacts of climate change and reverse the decline in species and habitats is one of the major challenges facing society today. At Monmouthshire County Council, we recognise that we have a critical role to play by looking at our organisation, estate and assets and how we manage them to reduce carbon and improve biodiversity. But perhaps even more significantly we have a hugely important role to play in working with other organisations, community groups, business and others to help everyone who visits, lives or works in Monmouthshire to reduce their environmental impact too.

Our Community and Corporate Plan sets out our purpose “to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life”. One of the objectives which will deliver this purpose is to work towards a Green Place for people to live and work, with reduced carbon emissions, and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.

In 2019 councillors in Monmouthshire were unanimous in declaring a climate emergency. Since that date, the Council has published a climate emergency action plan, and then updated it and increased the focus on the nature emergency. In 2022 we declared a Motion for the Rivers and Ocean, and are working with multiple partners to try and improve water quality in our rivers.

This strategy aims to tie together the focus on all of these areas of work, and forms a high level strategy under which 4 action plans sit, which address Council Emissions, Nature Recovery, Rivers and Ocean and Communities and Climate.

We recognise that we cannot address the climate and nature emergencies alone. All of the action plans require us to work with public bodies, partners, businesses, community groups and individuals.

We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. We will work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding and promote the circular economy.

But even if we do all these things, we will still see the impacts of climate change such as warmer, wetter winters, hotter, drier summers and more extreme weather events. We need to ensure that our county is resilient to these impacts and that people, society and nature are able to adapt to a changing climate.

These are all big challenges, that we are undertaking at a time of great financial pressure on the council against a backdrop of the cost of living crisis. It will not be easy, but we are committed to working with others to do all that we can to address the climate and nature emergencies for the wellbeing of present and future generations.

**Cllr Catrin Maby,**  
**Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**



## Background

In May 2019 Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency, with unanimous support from Councillors across all parties. This set out a clear policy commitment for the council to:

- strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030;
- encourage and support residents and businesses to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions;
- Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 °C.

In October 2019 an action plan and strategy was adopted which set out how we planned to do this. The Action Plan was refreshed in 2021 to better reflect our commitment to tackling the nature emergency, and in 2024 has been completely reviewed to reflect the priorities of Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan. Since 2019, there has been a greater focus on how tackling the nature emergency is an intrinsic part of how we address the climate emergency. In addition, we have declared a Motion for the Rivers and Ocean which sets out how we will work in partnership to play our part in reducing river pollution and protecting the ocean. The Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Steering group has helped to develop this new integrated approach. This new overarching strategy is underpinned by 4 different work streams with action plans, as set out below, which between them incorporate how we will address both the Climate and Nature Emergencies:

# Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy

**Council  
Emissions**



**Nature  
Recovery**



**Rivers and  
Ocean**



**Communities  
and Climate**



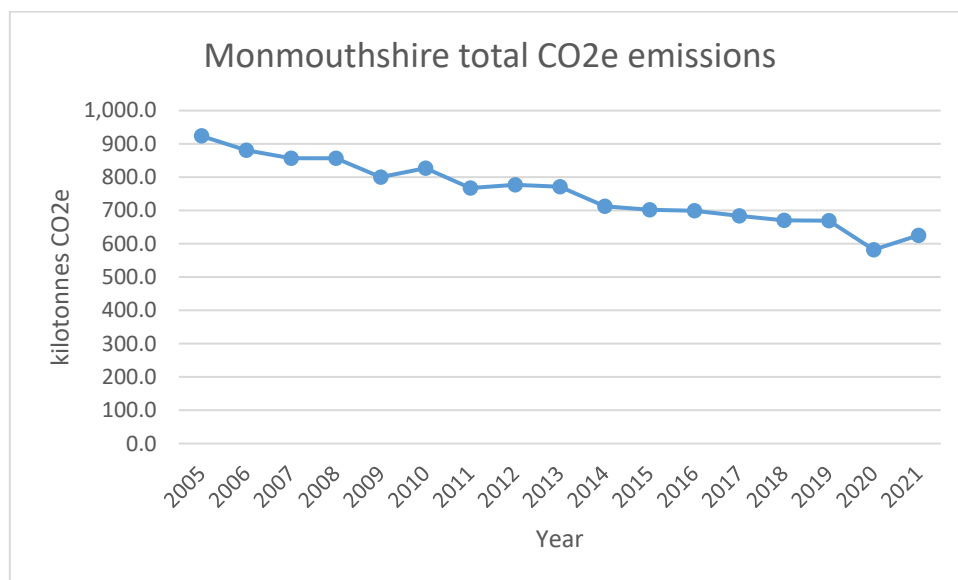
This strategy is an important contribution to the council’s purpose which is: “a zero carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life”.

## Setting the scene

### Climate Change and carbon emissions

We cannot fail to have seen the plethora of reports and evidence that are pointing to a changing climate. The UK 3<sup>rd</sup> Climate Change Risk Assessment<sup>1</sup> published in 2021 states that the average annual UK temperature is 1.2 degrees warmer than in the pre-industrial period, the likelihood of experiencing hot summers like 2018 have doubled, and since 1900 sea level around the UK has risen by 16cm and is set to continue. The impacts of these changes are numerous, affecting the natural environment, infrastructure, health, communities, the built environment, business, industry and international relations<sup>2</sup>.

Our climate is changing as a result of man-made greenhouse gas emissions, and in particular carbon dioxide. So what is Monmouthshire’s contribution to carbon emissions? Since 2005 net carbon emissions across the county as a whole have reduced by 32% from 924 kilotonnes to 625 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year in 2021<sup>3</sup> while our population has increased by around 5% over the same period<sup>4</sup>. The graph below shows this trajectory, with a slight drop in 2020 as a result of the Covid pandemic. The downward trajectory mirrors a similar trend across the UK as a result of things like an increase in the use of cleaner energy.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/>

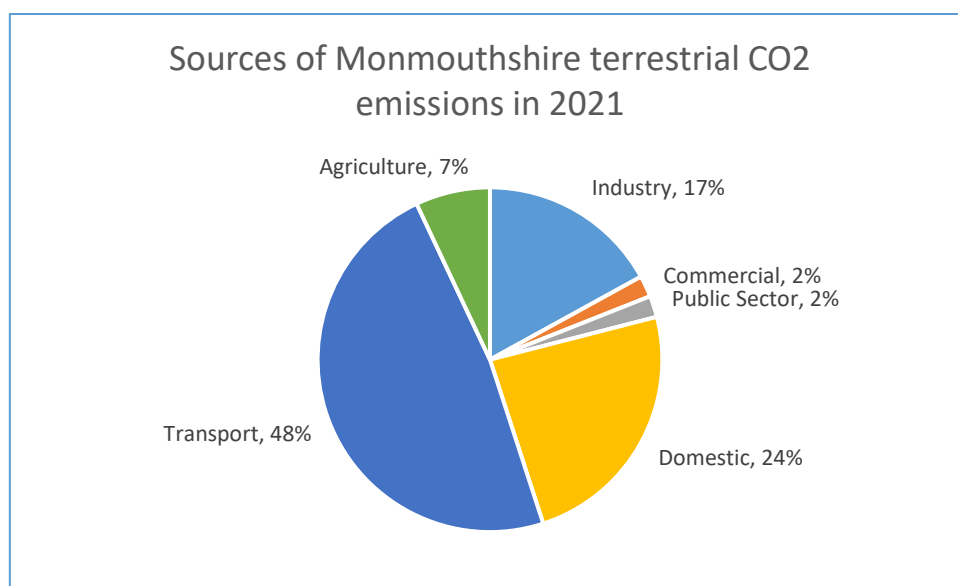
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/publications/summary-for-wales-ccra3-ia/#section-1-about-this-document>

<sup>3</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64a67b3a4dd8b3000f7fa546/2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx> (accessed 2/1/24)

<sup>44</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-age>

Source: UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2005 to 2021

What are the main sources of carbon emissions in Monmouthshire? The pie chart below shows the breakdown of where Monmouthshire's emissions are from. Just under half of emissions come from transport (which includes all road transport and diesel rail) and around a quarter from domestic properties<sup>55</sup>. This reflects the rural nature of the county with more journeys being made by car, as well as major trunk roads carrying private cars and commercial vehicles running through the county, together with relatively old and energy inefficient housing stock. This data indicates where we will need to take action if the county is to play its part in reducing global emissions.



Source: UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2005 to 2021

In 2021, Monmouthshire's per capita CO2e emissions were 6.7 tonnes CO2e, higher than the UK average of 4.8 tonnes, but lower than the Welsh average of 7.3 tonnes (which is heavily skewed by the steelworks emissions in Neath Port Talbot).

The Council does not control or have a direct influence on all the things that need to change to reduce emissions in the county. You can see from the pie chart that the public sector only accounts for 2% of Monmouthshire's emissions. This is why it is important that as well as working hard to reduce our own emissions, Monmouthshire County Council will also work closely with the Public Service Board, local businesses and community groups to reduce emissions.

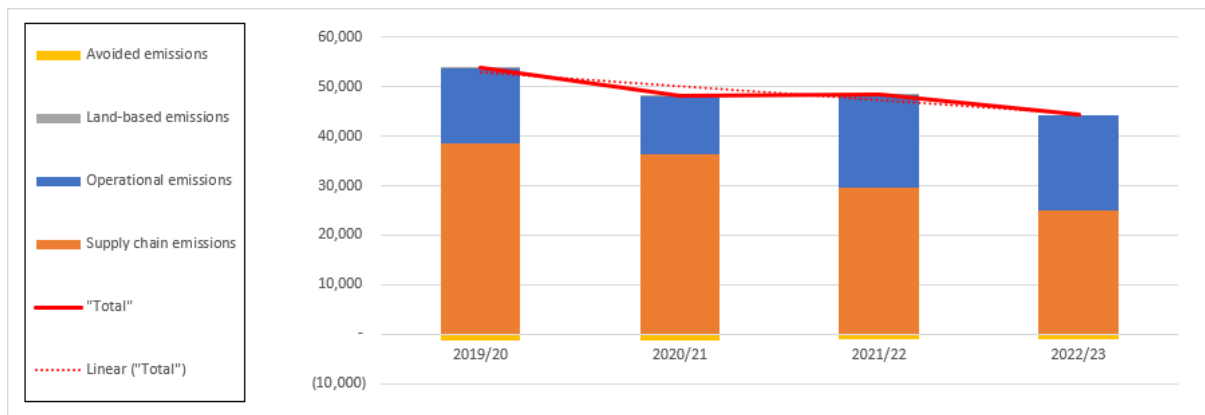
<sup>55</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>



The Council itself was responsible for 44,248 tonnes of CO2e emissions in 2022/23, which is steadily decreasing year on year, as the following graph shows. Emissions in 2022/23 were 17.8% lower than the 2019/20 baseline. The graph also shows that a significant proportion of the Council’s emissions are from the supply chain – in other words from goods and services which we procure. Annex 1 gives more details about how the council’s carbon emissions are measured and reported.

1124 tonnes of CO2 were avoided through renewable energy generation, from solar panels on Council buildings and from the Council’s solar farm at Oak Grove Farm in Crick.

Monmouthshire County Council Tonnes of CO2e per year



Source: Monmouthshire County Council return to Welsh Government for 2022/23

## Nature recovery

It is important that the climate emergency and the nature emergency are considered hand in hand, since the two are so interlinked. Climate change is having a significant impact on habitats and species, and is one of many pressures on our natural world. At the same time, our green infrastructure has a crucial role to play in helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change, reduce flooding, build resilience and sequester (or lock away) carbon. A degraded natural environment will be less able to offer these benefits, as well as other important services we refer to as ecosystem services, such as providing food and timber, health and wellbeing benefits, tourism, pollination and many more<sup>6</sup>.

We are facing a biodiversity crisis, globally, nationally and locally. Within the UK 38% of species in decline, with one in six species threatened with extinction<sup>7</sup>.

Latest data from the State of Nature 2023 report for Wales shows that since monitoring of 380 Welsh species began in 1994, the numbers of those species has declined on average by 20%, and 42% of Wales’ plant species are found in fewer places than before<sup>8</sup>. The need for

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/about/biodiversity>

<sup>7</sup> State of Nature 2023 <https://stateofnature.org.uk/infographics/>

<sup>888</sup> <https://stateofnature.org.uk/countries/wales/>

nature recovery in our local area is also clear with 34% of the 100 species considered in the Greater Gwent State of Nature report showing a decline in their numbers<sup>9</sup>. Only 12% of the species that were studied showed stable populations.

The State of Natural Resources Report 2020 (SoNaRR)<sup>10</sup> reported that all ecosystems in Wales had only low to moderate resilience. Climate change, pollution, invasive non-native species, habitat loss and deterioration, over-exploitation, pests, and disease were all given as significant pressures and demands affecting the resilience of ecosystems.



Source: State of Nature 2023 <https://stateofnature.org.uk/infographics/> data for the UK

## Rivers and ocean

The health of our rivers, waterways and ocean is a particular area of concern which led to the adoption of an action plan following the Council's Motion for the Rivers and Ocean.

Phosphate targets for the Usk are being failed at a rate of 88% and the Wye at 68%<sup>11</sup>. Algal blooms smother other life in the rivers having a direct impact on the species that they provide habitat for. The health of our rivers is also affected by litter, in particular plastics which can be seen on riverbanks. Studies have also found increasing levels of microplastics in fish and other species.

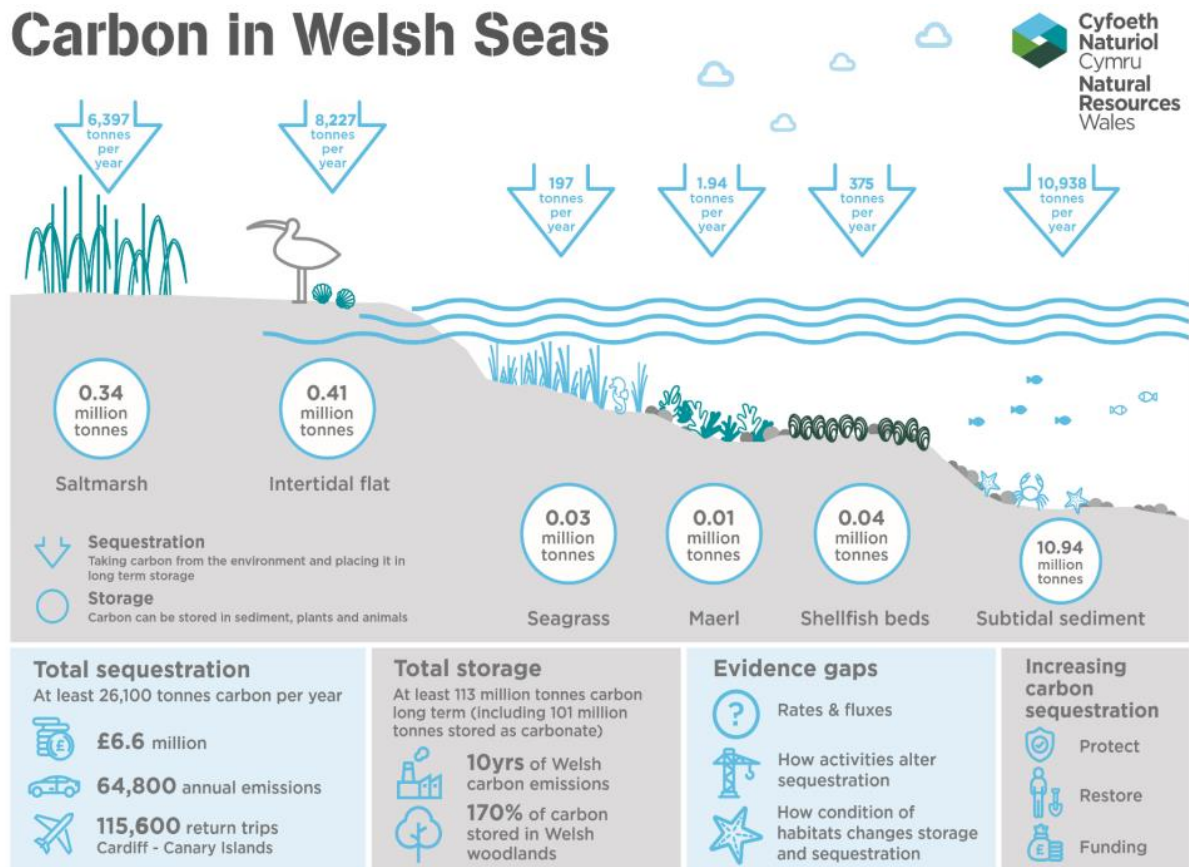
The health of our ocean is inextricably linked with our climate and with human health, wellbeing and prosperity. A healthy ocean is fundamental in regulating the global climate system and is an essential ally in our fight against climate change. The ocean absorbs more

<sup>9</sup> Jones S M, Karran A, Bosanquet S, Barter G, Garrett H and Hancocks L. 2021. Greater Gwent State of Nature. Produced by the Resilient Greater Gwent Partnership

<sup>10</sup> <https://naturalresources.wales/media/695923/sonarr2020-executive-summary.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning/water-quality/#:~:text=Any%20proposed%20development%20within%20the,contribution%20to%20the%20water%20body.>

than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system<sup>12</sup> as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions generated by human activity<sup>13</sup>. The following diagram illustrates how much carbon is sequestered and carbon storage potential in Welsh seas.



Source: SoNaRR 2020 [SoNaRR2020 Ecosystem: Marine \(naturalresources.wales\)](https://naturalresources.wales/SoNaRR2020-Ecosystem-Marine)

An ocean in crisis, and likewise rivers in crisis are not only bad news for our climate, but also for our fishing industry, aquaculture industry, tourism industry and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal and river communities. Delivering the pledges set out in the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean could yield new jobs and opportunities, more resilient coastal and riverside economies, and happier, healthier people; as well as a cleaner, healthier and more productive natural environment. Healthy oceans and rivers are essential allies in our fight against climate change.

<sup>12</sup> [Global reconstruction of historical ocean heat storage and transport \(pnas.org\)](https://pnas.org)

<sup>13</sup> [WMO The State of Greenhouse Gases in the Atmosphere Based on Global Observations through 2018](https://www.wmo.int)

## How are we responding?

Climate change, the nature emergency and the condition of our rivers and ocean are all inextricably linked. This is why the Council's response to these has been drawn together into this one overarching strategy. Under the strategy sit four different objectives, each with an action plan. Some of the actions within the 4 plans will link with the other plans, since climate, nature and rivers and ocean cannot be considered in isolation and all have links with each other.

### Council Emissions



**Purpose: Strive to reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030**

This sets out how the council plans to reduce its own carbon emissions to meet the Welsh Government target of a net zero public sector by 2030 public sector. This is the commitment we made in our Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. The actions in this plan focus on the themes set out in the Welsh Government Decarbonisation Route Map<sup>14</sup> of: Buildings, Mobility and Transport, Procurement and Land Use.

**Objectives:**

- 1 Strategic – Support the collection of data and resource management
- 2 Buildings – Reduce and remove the carbon emissions from our built environment
- 3 Transport – Reduce and remove the carbon emissions from operational, business and commuting emissions
- 4 Procurement– Reduce in-direct emissions from the supply chain
- 5 Land Use– Reduce emissions from land use polices and how the Council uses its land

### Nature Recovery



**Purpose: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems resilience through the Council's operations and working in partnership with communities**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-07/a-route-map-for-decarbonisation-across-the-welsh-public-sector.pdf>

This action plan incorporates actions taken from the refreshed Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, the Nature Recovery Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Actions include how the Council will maintain and enhance biodiversity when carrying out its own operations, as well as working with communities to help them restore and protect nature. Also included are landscape scale actions which are delivered in partnership.

**Objectives:**

- 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature
- 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience
- 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience
- 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
- 7 Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action
- 8 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

## Rivers and Ocean



### **Purpose: Work towards clean, healthy and productive rivers and ocean**

Actions focus on ways to improve the quality of our rivers and ocean. Some of these actions the Council is the main lead on, but many of the actions rely on working in close partnership with neighbouring authorities and partners like Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water.

**Objectives:**

- 1 Reduce sewage, phosphate and other chemical pollution in our rivers
- 2 Reduce plastic and other litter pollution in rivers and coast areas
- 3 Protect natural habitats along our rivers, estuaries and coast
- 4 Minimise the impacts of flooding on communities by mitigation and adaptation (rivers and coastal areas)
- 5 Raise awareness of the importance of our rivers and coasts

## Communities and Climate



### **Purpose: Work with communities, partners and business to reduce carbon emissions**

Since only 2% of Monmouthshire's carbon emissions come from the public sector, it is really important that the Council works closely with communities, residents, partners and businesses to help them reduce emissions. This action plan sets out what the Council is doing to reduce wider emissions from across the county, not those which we are directly responsible for ourselves. This includes actions to help reduce emissions for example through active travel, waste and recycling and education.

**Objectives:**

**1 Reduce energy use and increase renewable energy across the county**

2 Reduce waste and what we buy by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more

3 Encourage active travel, public transport and low emission vehicles

4 Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference

5 Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change

## Climate Adaptation

Even if we were to stop all carbon emissions today, we will still have to face the impacts of climate change that are already happening. Over the next few decades we are facing significant levels of climate change regardless of any action to reduce our emissions now. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales<sup>15</sup> published in 2021 forecasts hotter, drier summers, warmer, wetter winters and more extreme weather events. The Risk Assessment considered 61 different risks and opportunities from climate change, and in Wales 26 of these risks have increased in urgency in the 5 years since the previous Risk Assessment in 2016.

In particular risks include:

- The impacts of climate change on the natural environment, including terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine species, forests and agriculture.
- An increase in the range, quantities and consequences of pests, pathogens and invasive species.
- More frequent and severe flooding and coastal erosion, causing damage to our infrastructure services, homes, communities and business
- The impact of extreme temperatures, high winds and lightning on the transport network.
- The impact of increasing high temperatures on people's health and wellbeing.
- Disruption to the delivery of health and social care services from extreme weather.
- Damage to our cultural heritage assets as a result of temperature, precipitation, groundwater and landscape changes.
- Impacts internationally that may affect the UK, such as risks to food availability, safety and security, risks to international law and governance from climate.

It is crucial that the Council gives careful thought to how it will respond to these risks. Rather than have a separate action plan for climate adaptation, adaptation is embedded into each of the four action plans, since they all need to identify climate risks, measures to mitigate those risks and opportunities to help nature and people to adapt.

Council services have begun thinking about what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start planning how to adapt to these risks. The Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure that our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

With an increase in winter rainfall and rising sea levels, flooding is likely to increase, and this will be a particular concern in parts of Monmouthshire. Much of the work to co-ordinate

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-Wales-Summary-Final.pdf>

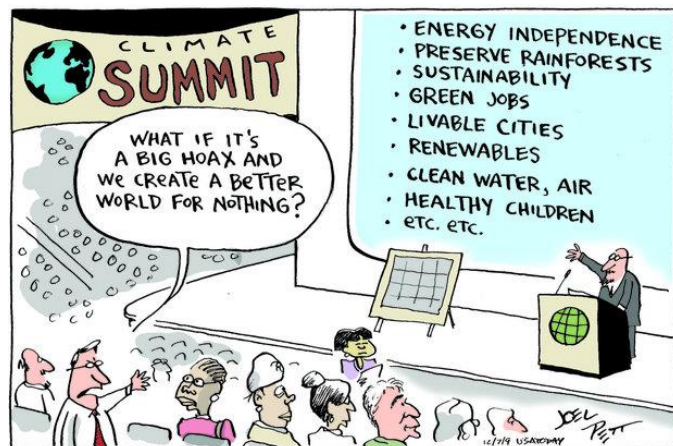


emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We will continue to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.

## The benefits of action

It is important that addressing the climate and nature emergencies is done in a just and equitable way that does not widen inequalities. Those who contribute the least to climate change are often those who suffer the impacts of climate change the most, both globally and here within the UK. Solutions need to be developed that benefit everyone, not just those who can afford expensive new technologies. The aim of this strategy is that as well as reducing carbon emissions and helping to slow climate change, there will be other co-benefits that will benefit communities, business, visitors and everyone who lives and works in Monmouthshire. These include things like:

- Lower energy bills for residents and businesses
- Better air quality and the resulting health benefits
- Improved health and less congestion through use of active travel like walking and cycling
- Less damage to the local environment from drought, floods and fire
- Increased demand for green technologies and the resulting potential for job growth in these sectors
- Better habitat management, increased biodiversity and creation of green space
- Improved mental and physical health when people connect more with the natural environment
- More globally responsible citizens
- Benefits for tourism through maintaining an attractive, clean, green environment



## Playing your part

The Climate Emergency Action Plan cannot be delivered by the Council alone. We need other partners to join us in helping to reduce carbon emissions across the county. To that end, we will be working with Public Service Board partners over coming months. Much



decarbonisation work is also done at a regional scale, with close working with Cardiff Capital Region, and some of our actions will contribute to their Energy Vision and Strategy.

We hugely value the enthusiasm, energy and expertise of the residents of Monmouthshire who have such a lot to contribute, and we continue to collaborate with our communities and other partners to work together on our action plan. For example, Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions is a network of community organisations, town and community councils, council staff and elected members who are all working on practical projects to help reduce carbon emissions and build sustainable and resilient communities. The group has met quarterly since 2008 to share ideas and information and develop projects to reduce our impact on climate change.

There are things that every resident, visitor or worker in Monmouthshire can do to play their part in reducing carbon emissions and helping to slow down climate change. We are all part of the problem, but can all be part of the solution too. The Communities and Climate Action Plan sets out some of the steps that we can all take as individuals to help reduce our contribution to climate change.

## Monitoring progress

It is important that we know whether the actions we will be taking to address the climate and nature emergencies are making a difference. Some things are easier to measure than others. We can measure how much carbon some of the actions will save, for example based on the Council's energy or fuel bills. However, carbon savings from some of the actions in the wider community are much harder to measure, but we can at least make sure that we are doing what we have said we will do. Likewise, we can measure how many trees have been planted, or how many hectares of grassland have been managed for pollinators, but it can be very hard to quantify the impact that this has.

Each of the 4 action plans has a lead officer, responsible for driving progress and collating and reporting on progress. The actions are delivered by Service Area Officers/ Managers and coordinated by the Chief Officer – Communities and Place. This enables strategy ownership and delivery across all services. Progress will be reported regularly to councillors through the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group. The action plans contained within this strategy will be updated and reported on annually but the actions will be continuous, as we look globally for examples of leading edge practice that can help us accelerate our progress. Progress will be monitored by Performance and Overview Scrutiny, followed by the Cabinet member reporting to Cabinet on progress.

## Annex 1 - The Councils Carbon Emissions – How they are calculated and reported

### 1. Reporting Methodology

Welsh Government (WG) have an ambition for the public sector to be collectively net zero by 2030. This will require MCC to cut both our direct emissions from energy and our built estate and the indirect emissions arising from service delivery and procurement activities. To monitor progress against this target, Welsh Government have required the Welsh Public Sector to submit annual carbon emission returns since 19/20 . The reporting model is divided into three emission scopes as follows.

*Scope 1* - are direct emissions from operations that are owned or controlled by the Council.

*Scope 2* – indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heating and cooling.

*Scope 3* - indirect emissions that occur in the value chain of the Council, e.g. purchased goods & services, business travel and employee commuting.

Welsh Government have developed a reporting template for recording public sector emissions which is illustrated in the table below:

| Section      | Category                             | Sources   |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Estate       | Buildings                            | Generation of electricity, heat or steam                                    |
|              |                                      | Generation, transmission & distribution of purchased electricity.           |
|              |                                      | Generation, transmission & distribution of purchased heat or steam.         |
|              |                                      | Fuel & energy related upstream activities.                                  |
|              |                                      | Upstream leased assets (where not included elsewhere in the public sector)  |
|              |                                      | Downstream leased assets  |
|              | Land based emissions & Sequestration | Sequestration from owned estate   |
|              | Waste generated in operations        | Waste generated in operations.<br>Municipal waste collected                 |
| Transport    | Fleet & other mobile equipment       | Transportation of employees / goods in company-controlled vehicles.         |
|              |                                      | Fuel and energy related upstream activities                                 |
|              | Business Travel                      | Public Transport<br>Service Travel<br>Private car for business (grey fleet) |
| Supply Chain | Procurement                          | Purchased Services<br>Purchased Goods                                       |
| Employees    | Employee commuting                   | Employee commuting<br>Employee homeworking                                  |

Source : Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide Version 3

## 2. Council Emissions

Public Sector organisations are required to submit annual returns each September that record the emissions generated in the preceding financial year. Monmouthshire's return for the financial year 22/23 is detailed in the table below.

| <b>Buildings Fleets &amp; Other Assets</b> |                         |                           |                           |                  |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|  |                         |                           |                           | Units of         |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e                        |                         |                           |                           |                  |
| <b>Categories</b>                          | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b>     |
| Buildings                                  | 3,407,253               | 1,310,966                 | 1,079,249                 | 5,797,468        |
| Streetlighting                             |                         | 205,381                   | 72,400                    | 277,781          |
| Fleet & equipment                          | 2,799,061               |                           | 668,500                   | 3,467,561        |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>6,206,315</b>        | <b>1,516,347</b>          | <b>1,820,149</b>          | <b>9,542,810</b> |

The WG template applies a standardised formula to inputted energy consumption data to calculate direct and indirect emissions. Whilst the Council purchases through a green tariff (100% renewable) we are still required to record the data assuming standard grid energy which does distort the electricity emissions factor. The green tariff can be factored into the renewable's aspect of the template. In 22/23 we purchased 7,826,198 kWh of energy and generated 4,783,567kwh of renewable energy, 4,217,524kwh of which was exported to the grid.

Fuel and equipment emissions are calculated based on the purchased fuel data (1,006,176 litres of petrol, diesel and LPG for operational fleet and 93,268 litres of LPG, gas oil and diesel for equipment).

| <b>Business Travel</b> |                         |                           |                           |                  |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|                        |                         |                           |                           | Units of         |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e    |                         |                           |                           |                  |
| <b>Categories</b>      | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b>     |
| Business Travel        | 6,465                   |                           | 336,620                   | 343,085          |
| Commuting              |                         |                           | 3,713,585                 | 3,713,585        |
| Homeworking            |                         |                           | 700,832                   | 700,832          |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>6,465</b>            |                           | <b>4,751,038</b>          | <b>4,757,503</b> |

In the above table, the business travel emissions are calculated using business mileage claims and emissions are determined by the vehicle size, fuel type and miles travelled. In 22/23, business mileage amounted to 1,045,008 miles of which 24,014 miles was travelled in vehicles hired by MCC, 1,460,354 miles was undertaken in private cars (5,325 in electric

cars, 18,432 in hybrid) and 10,640 on public transport. Commuting data is calculated based on kilometres travelled and this has been calculated using home and work base locations, number of working days and agile working days (this is based on a staff survey in 22/23).

Homeworking emissions was introduced in 22/23 and is based on an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent staff and the average homeworking percentage. The emissions are generated from the assumed electricity and heating consumption when working from home.

| <b>Waste</b>         |                         |                           |                           |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                      |                         |                           |                           | Units of          |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e  |                         |                           |                           |                   |
| <b>Categories</b>    | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b>      |
| Organisational Waste |                         |                           |                           | No data available |
| Municipal Waste      |                         |                           | 226,320                   | 226,320           |
| <b>Total</b>         |                         |                           | 226,320                   | 226,320           |

No data for organisational waste was available at the time of the submission, hence why no emissions are recorded against this category. Municipal waste includes recycling tonnage, albeit the emission factor is substantially lower for recycling (9.122/kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/unit) than landfill (436.007/kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/unit).

| <b>Supply chain – Tier 1 &amp; Tier 2 combined</b>     |                         |                           |                           |              |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
|  |                         |                           |                           | Units of     |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e                                    |                         |                           |                           |              |
| <b>Categories</b>                                      | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| Agriculture, forest & fishing                          |                         |                           | 250,673.2                 | 250,673.2    |
| Mining & quarrying                                     |                         |                           | 101,644.97                | 101,644.97   |
| Manufacturing  |                         |                           | 5,781,879.90              | 5,781,879.90 |
| Water supply, sewerage, waste management & remediation |                         |                           | 4,764,308.87              | 4,764,308.87 |
| Construction   |                         |                           | 7,687,025.34              | 7,687,025.34 |
| Transportation & Storage                               |                         |                           | 4,090,752.93              | 4,090,752.93 |
| Accommodation & food service activities                |                         |                           | 141,483.85                | 141,483.85   |
| Information and communication                          |                         |                           | 337,483.12                | 337,483.12   |
| Financial & insurance activities                       |                         |                           | 78,562.22                 | 78,562.22    |

|   |  |  |                   |                   |
|---|--|--|-------------------|-------------------|
| Professional, scientific and technical activities |  |  | 2,514,949.7       | 2,514,949.7       |
| Administrative & support service activities       |  |  | 592,572.84        | 592,572.84        |
| Education   |  |  | 294,606.12        | 294,606.12        |
| Human health & social work activities             |  |  | 3,107,143.55      | 3,107,143.55      |
| Arts, entertainment & recreation                  |  |  | 20,668.57         | 20,668.57         |
| Other service activities                          |  |  | 25,649.20         | 25,649.20         |
| <b>Total</b>                                      |  |  | <b>29,780,404</b> | <b>29,780,404</b> |

Supply chain emissions are generated through spend data and are indicative estimates of the resulting emissions. This method will not factor in any efforts to reduce supply chain emissions as an average factor is applied to each product group. In the 22/23 accounting year we spent circa £32million on construction related activities, £9,458,000 on manufactured goods and £30,565,758 on human health and social work activities.

The above data evidence the challenges faced by the public sector to decarbonise their activities by 2030. Between 19/20 and 22/23, Monmouthshire has achieved a 17.8% reduction in its emissions, largely due to a reduction in supply chain spend. In 22/23 the total reported emissions were 44,248,418 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e. Below is a table that shows the reported emissions between 19/20 and 22/23.

| WG Net Zero Carbon Reporting - Summary |  |               |               |               |  |
|--|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|
|  | Carbon Emissions (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e) |               |               |               | Comments   |
|  | 2019/20  | 2020/21       | 2021/22       | 2022/23       |  |
| Operational emissions                  | 15,198   | 11,579        | 13,889        | 14,527        | Energy and fuel used in estate, fleet and equipment.         |
| Supply chain emissions                 | 38,587   | 36,396        | 34,547        | 29,780        | Procured goods and services.                                 |
| Land-based emissions                   | 49   | 170           | 140           | - 59          | -ve figure indicates sequestration (offsetting) of emissions |
| <b>Total MCC carbon emissions</b>      | <b>53,835</b>                                  | <b>48,145</b> | <b>48,576</b> | <b>44,248</b> |  |
| <b>Reduction on previous year</b>      | -  | <b>10.6%</b>  | <b>-0.9%</b>  | <b>8.9%</b>   |  |
| <b>Reduction from 2019/20 baseline</b> | -  | <b>10.6%</b>  | <b>9.8%</b>   | <b>17.8%</b>  |  |
| Avoided emissions                      | - 1,254  | - 1,325       | - 1,124       | - 1,029       | Renewable energy generation                                  |
| Number of FTE staff                    | 2,448  | 2,585         | 2,614         | 2,710         |  |
| <b>tCO<sub>2</sub>e per FTE</b>        | <b>22.0</b>                                    | <b>18.6</b>   | <b>18.6</b>   | <b>16.3</b>   |  |
| Scope 1 (direct)                       | 6,303  | 5,646         | 5,960         | 6,154         |  |
| Scope 2 (indirect – energy)            | 2,420  | 1,542         | 1,715         | 1,516         |  |
| Scope 3 (indirect)                     | 45,063   | 40,786        | 40,761        | 36,578        |  |

We are in the process of developing costed decarbonisation plans for our built estate and fleet transition which will provide data to support decision making around the use of assets

and financial investment. The Council Emissions Action Plan sets out the core activities necessary to support our net zero journey and associated indicators to measure progress.

**Council Emissions Action Plan**

| Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member | Timescale (month & year) | Funding              | How to Measure Progress                       | Also cited in                   | Progress (February 2024) | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Buildings – Actions to reduce and remove the carbon emissions from our built environment. 22/23 emissions 5,797,468 kgCO<sub>2e</sub></b>                        |                                  |                          |                      |   |                                 |                          |                              |
| Develop a costed decarbonisation plan for the built estate  | Decarbonisation Manager          | 24/25                    | Capital funding.     | Budget monitoring /development                | C& C Plan                       |                          |                              |
| Obtain funding approvals and deliver Re:fit <sup>1</sup> Phase 2 programme of works   | Decarbonisation Manager          |                          | Salix & Capital      | Saving of 83,000kgCO <sub>2e</sub> emissions  |                                 |                          |                              |
| Develop and implement an Energy Strategy for Council occupied buildings to reduce consumption demand and support behavioural change                                 | Decarbonisation Manager          | 09/24                    | Core funding         | Saving of 177,310kgCO <sub>2e</sub> emissions | 23/24 Revenue & Capital Budgets |                          |                              |
| Develop a low carbon heat strategy and action plan  | Decarbonisation Manager          | 03/2029                  | Core funding /grants | Saving of 652,000kgCO <sub>2</sub> emissions  |                                 |                          |                              |
| Work with SSE to develop an investment grade proposal for a programme of works for Re:fit phase 3   | Decarbonisation Manager          | 24/25                    | Capital / Salix      | Saving of 51,000kgCO <sub>2e</sub> emissions  |                                 |                          |                              |
| <b>Transport – Actions to reduce and remove the carbon emissions from operational, business, and commuting mileage. 22/23 emissions 8,225,064 kgCO<sub>2e</sub></b> |                                  |                          |                      |   |                                 |                          |                              |

<sup>1</sup> Re:Fit is a programme of energy efficiency works undertaken to non domestic public buildings to make them more energy efficient, reduce carbon emissions and save public money on energy costs.

Council Emissions Action Plan

|   |   |          |                       |  |                                 |  |  |
|---|---|----------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Develop a transition plan to convert the Council's operational fleet to ULEV alternatives.  | Transport Manager   | 03/29    | Core funding & grants | 1,271,428 reduction in CO <sub>2</sub> emissions     | C&C Plan                        |  |  |
| Reduce business mileage emissions through the introduction of an EV /hybrid pool car fleet.   | Head of Decarbonisation & Transport                         | 03/29    | Core funding          | 137,234 reduction in kwCO <sub>2</sub> emissions     | 23/24 Revenue & Capital Budgets |  |  |
| Reduce commuting mileage emissions through Tusker car lease scheme and site travel plans  | Transport Manager / Public Transport Planning Manager       | 03/29    | Core funding          | 742,717 reduction in kwCO <sub>2</sub> emissions     |                                 |  |  |
| <b>Procurement– Actions to reduce in-direct emissions from the supply chain.</b>  |   |          |                       |  |                                 |  |  |
| <b>22/23 emissions 29,780,404 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e</b>   |   |          |                       |  |                                 |  |  |
| Undertake a baseline assessment of the carbon footprint of the Council's purchased goods and services and target carbon reduction activity to the areas of spend with the highest emissions | Strategic Procurement Manager                               | 03/29    | Core funding          | 8,934,121 reduction in kwCO <sub>2</sub> e emissions | Procurement Strategy            |  |  |
| Supplier carbon calculator to be developed collaboratively across SE Wales Councils to provide standard approach for businesses to calculate their own carbon footprint.                    | Strategic Procurement Manager                               | On-going | Core funding          | Reduction in carbon emissions - amount tbc           | Procurement strategy            |  |  |
| <b>Land Use– Actions designed to reduce emissions from land use polices and how the Council uses its land</b>   |   |          |                       |  |                                 |  |  |
| Use tendering processes for re-letting County Farms to increase sustainable land management and carbon sequestration  | Head of Landlord Services/ Sustainable Food Project Manager | On-going | Core funding          | Reduction in carbon emissions                        |                                 |  |  |



| Objective 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels  |   |           |  |   |   |          |                     |
|--|---|-----------|--|---|---|----------|---------------------|
| Action   | Responsible Service Area(s)   | Timescale | Funding  | Also cited in   | How to measure progress   | Progress | (red, amber, green) |
| Ensure Plans and Strategies embed biodiversity and support nature recovery   | Planning Policy, Green Infrastructure, Landlord services, Sustainable Food, Flooding  | 2024      | Part, Core   | RLDP, GI Strategy, Asset Management Strategy, Food Strategy | Policies and guidance in place  |          |                     |
| Continue to identify services & operations that have potential to deliver a net benefit for biodiversity   | Highways, Landlord Services, Procurement, Green Infrastructure  | 2024      | Full, Core, Local Places for Nature Revenue        | Carbon Emissions Plan                                       | Audits undertaken and further actions identified, More procurement considers climate & nature |          |                     |
| Ensure consents, decisions and permissions deliver, maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience   | Planning Policy, Development Management, Highways, Flooding, Licensing.   | 2024      | Full, Core   | RLDP, Asset Management Strategy                             | More schemes delivering meaningful biodiversity benefits                                      |          |                     |
| Objective 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature   |   |           |  |   |   |          |                     |
| Continue to deliver nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being including food, and encourage action for nature through the Gwent Green Grid and other projects, utilising the resources of flagship sites such as the One Planet Centre. Seeking alternative | Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing, Leisure Services, Development and Heritage, Attractions, Sustainable Food, Outdoor Education | Ongoing   | Full, Core, Nature Networks, SPF, Food Partnership | Food Strategy, GI Strategy                                  | Grant relevant Key Performance Indicators   |          |                     |

|  |  |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
|--|--|------------------|---|----------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| funding mechanisms e.g. Green Finance to ensure sustainability.  |  |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
| Provide corporate nature training through an eLearn module. Continue with a programme of training for site managers, operatives & development management officers  | Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing, Leisure Services, Development and Heritage, Attractions, Sustainable Food, Outdoor Education, Highways, Flooding, Development Management, | 2024             | Full, SPF/Local Places for Nature                                     | -                    | Completion of eLearning module.<br><br>Number of officers completed training.                    |                 |                            |
| Deliver Nature & Climate awareness raising to the wider public via a comms campaign and through targeted groups  | Green Infrastructure, Communications, Grounds and Cleansing, Development and Heritage Attractions  | Ongoing          | Core, Local Places for Nature   | -                    | TBC  |                 |                            |
| <b>Objective 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience</b>   |  |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Responsible Service Area(s)</b>   | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Funding</b>  | <b>Also cited in</b> | <b>How to measure progress</b>   | <b>Progress</b> | <b>(red, amber, green)</b> |
| Develop the management of green infrastructure to improve climate & ecosystem resilience<br>Continue to deliver green infrastructure improvements and changes to management practices through the Gwent Green Grid Partnership including | Grounds and Cleansing, Countryside Access, Development and Heritage Attractions, MonLife Attractions   | Ongoing          | Part, Local Places for Nature, Brilliant Basics, Nature Networks, SPF | -                    | Grant relevant Key Performance Indicators<br><br>Nature Isn't Neat Management Maintained at 38Ha |                 |                            |

|   |   |            |   |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|------------|---|---|---|--|--|
| maintaining 38Ha of Nature isn't Neat management.   |   |            |   |   |   |  |  |
| Develop Green Infrastructure Management Plans and Management Strategies for sites including River Gavenny, Mill Common, River Neddern, Nant y Castell Country Park, Breezy Bank | MonLife Attractions, Green Infrastructure, Countryside Access, Grounds & Cleansing, Flood Risk Management | March 2026 | Part, Section 106, Planning Obligation, | - | Plans completed   |  |  |
| Seek TWIG funding for woodland management plans and future woodland management and Secure National Forest Accreditation for priority woodland sites                             | Green Infrastructure, Landlord services, MonLife Attractions, Countryside Access, Grounds and Cleansing   | 2024       | Part, Nature Networks                   | - | Funding secured.<br><br>Number of MCC sites with National Forest Accreditation. |  |  |

**Objective 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience**

| Action  | Responsible Service Area(s)                                | Timescale | Funding                | Also cited in                            | How to measure progress  | Progress | (red, amber, green) |
|---|--|-----------|------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Promote and, as opportunities arise, use our county farms as exemplars for nature friendly, sustainable, and regenerative agriculture | Sustainable Food, Landlord Services, Flood Risk Management | Ongoing   | Part, Food Partnership | Asset Management Strategy, Food Strategy | Number of Exemplar sites |          |                     |
| Promote sustainable land management and agricultural practices,   | Flood Risk Management, Sustainable Food                    | Ongoing   | Part, Food Partnership | -  | TBC                      |          |                     |

|   |   |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
|---|---|------------------|---|----------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| including nutrient/soil management and natural flood management   |   |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
| Continue to work with the expert panel to identify sites that meet the Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation criteria. | Green Infrastructure  | Ongoing          | Full, Core  | -                    | Number of Local Wildlife Sites / Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation |                 |                            |
| Signpost Town and Community Councils and businesses to support, advice and information to help them to contribute to Nature Recovery                | Enterprise and Community Animation, Destination Management, Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing | Ongoing          | Part, Core  | -                    | Number of Community Councils engaged<br><br>Number of businesses engaged.    |                 |                            |
| <b>Objective 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats</b>   |   |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsible Service Area(s)</b>  | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Funding</b>                                      | <b>Also cited in</b> | <b>How to measure progress</b>   | <b>Progress</b> | <b>(red, amber, green)</b> |
| Continue to develop the Nature Recovery Action Plan and support and encourage delivery  | Green Infrastructure  | Ongoing          | Part, Local Places for Nature                       | -                    | NRAP published.  |                 |                            |
| Continue to identify and promote new Green Infrastructure projects through the Green Infrastructure Strategy  | Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing, Sustainable Food, Flood Risk Management                    | Ongoing          | Part, Nature Networks, SPF, Local Places for Nature | -                    | No of green infrastructure projects delivered.                               |                 |                            |
| Develop a Dark skies policy and explore a street lighting charter which   | Street Lighting, Green Infrastructure, Planning Policy and Development Management                       | Ongoing          | Part, Local Places for Nature                       | RLDP                 | Policy and charter formulated.   |                 |                            |

|   |   |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
|---|---|------------------|---|----------------------|--|-----------------|----------------------------|
| consider reducing and limiting impacts on nature  |   |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
| Delivery of Net Benefit for biodiversity through Active Travel and other sustainable travel infrastructure projects                                 | Active Travel, Countryside Access, Green Infrastructure         | Ongoing          | Full, Active Travel Fund                | -                    | TBC                                    |                 |                            |
| Work in partnership to plant more trees, increase area of woodland, improve woodland management, and retain and protect existing woodland and trees | Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing, Countryside Access | Ongoing          | Part, Nature Networks, SPF, Section 106 | -                    | TBC                                    |                 |                            |
| <b>Objective 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery</b>   |   |                  |   |                      |  |                 |                            |
| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsible Service Area(s)</b>                              | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Funding</b>                          | <b>Also cited in</b> | <b>How to measure progress</b>         | <b>Progress</b> | <b>(red, amber, green)</b> |
| Continue to lead on the Gwent Green Grid through Nature Networks and SPF funding  | Green Infrastructure  | Ongoing          | Nature Networks, SPF                    | -                    | Continued leadership of GGG            |                 |                            |
| Continue to support landscape scale partnerships including Living Levels Landscape Partnership, Usk & Wye Catchment Partnerships                    | Elected Members, Green Infrastructure                           | Ongoing          | Full, Core                              | -                    | Continued involvement with partnership |                 |                            |

|   |  |                  |                               |                             |   |                 |                            |
|---|--|------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Continue to work on the coast and the wider estuary through Coastal Capacity, ASERA, Severn Estuary Partnership and Severn Estuary Coastal Group. | Elected Members, Chief officer Communities and Place, Green Infrastructure, Sustainability, Planning, Placemaking and Flooding | Ongoing          | Full, Core                    | -                           | Continued involvement with partnerships                     |                 |                            |
| Continue to host and maintain the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership  | Green Infrastructure   | Ongoing          | Part, Local Places for Nature | Nature Recovery Action Plan | Continued hosting of Local Nature Partnership               |                 |                            |
| <b>Objective 7 Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action</b>   |  |                  |                               |                             |   |                 |                            |
| <b>Action</b>   | <b>Responsible Service Area(s)</b>   | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Funding</b>                | <b>Also cited in</b>        | <b>How to measure progress</b>                              | <b>Progress</b> | <b>(red, amber, green)</b> |
| Continue to monitor grassland diversity and pollinators (through POMS) to provide evidence to our Nature isn't Neat management                    | Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing  | Ongoing          | Full, Nature Networks, Core   | -                           | TBC   |                 |                            |
| Continue to secure the Service Level Agreement with the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBRc)                                      | Planning Policy and Development Management   | Ongoing          | Full, Core                    | -                           | Continuation of SLA.  |                 |                            |
| Development of Nature Networks Mapping and continue to work with NRW to develop Resilient   | Planning Policy and Development Management, Green Infrastructure   | Ongoing          | Part, Nature Networks         | -                           | Nature Networks and Resilient Ecological Networks complete. |                 |                            |

|  |  |                  |                |                      |                                |                 |                            |
|--|--|------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Ecological Networks, using this information to identify opportunities for Net Benefit for Biodiversity through Development                 |  |                  |                |                      |                                |                 |                            |
| Seek funding to explore opportunities / methods for monitoring carbon and water storage on Council land and in Green Infrastructure assets | Green Infrastructure, Grounds and Cleansing, Landlord Services | TBC              | No             | -                    | TBC                            |                 |                            |
| <b>Objective 8 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review</b>  |  |                  |                |                      |                                |                 |                            |
| <b>Action</b>  | <b>Responsible Service Area(s)</b>                             | <b>Timescale</b> | <b>Funding</b> | <b>Also cited in</b> | <b>How to measure progress</b> | <b>Progress</b> | <b>(red, amber, green)</b> |
| Review the plan in 2025 in line with the Section 6 reporting requirement   | Green Infrastructure   | 2025             | Full, Core     | -                    | Plan Reviewed.                 |                 |                            |
| Assess the need to review the forward plan in 2026   | Green Infrastructure   | 2026             | Full, Core     |                      | Assessment undertaken.         |                 |                            |

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|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                                | Timescale (month & year)                | Funding         | How to measure progress  | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|------------|---|---|---|-----------------|--|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>   | <b>Objective 1: Reduce sewage, phosphate and other chemical pollution in our rivers</b>                           |   |   |                 |  |               |   |                              |
| <b>1.1</b> | Ensure that new development does not have an adverse impact on the conservation status of the Rivers Wye and Usk. | Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor)                               | Ongoing.<br><br>RLDP adoption July 2025 | MCC core budget | Decisions are made in accordance with agreed WG, NRW and DCWW guidance |               | Planning applications and the development of the RLDP accord with WG and NRW guidance. Development in phosphate sensitive areas is screened and, if necessary, is subject to a Habitat Regulations Assessment in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). Development is not approved if phosphate betterment or neutrality cannot be demonstrated. | <b>green</b>                 |
| <b>1.2</b> | Deliver dog fouling campaign which will reduce water pollution  | Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson) | Ongoing from June 2022                  | MCC core budget | 2024/25 campaign is delivered by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025           |               | Dog fouling campaign ongoing to encourage dog owners to clean up after their pets. Dog fouling awareness days are held twice a year, alternating between north and south of the County.   | <b>green</b>                 |
|            | <b>Actions where MCC is part of a partnership</b>   |   |   |                 |  |               |   |                              |

|     | Action   | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                                      | Timescale (month & year) | Funding | How to measure progress   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|-----|--|---|--------------------------|---------|---|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 1.3 | Continue to play an active role in the Wye Nutrient Management Board in order to ensure the Wye phosphate issues are addressed                                 | Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor)<br><br>Cllr Catrin Maby             | Ongoing                  | n/a     | MCC Attendance at all Wye Nutrient Management Board meetings.                       |               | We continue to attend meetings, influence outcomes and participate on key strategic issues, including attending WG summits and contributing to delivery of action plans where appropriate.  | green                        |
| 1.4 | Continue involvement in the Wye Nutrient Management Board Technical Advice Group to identify and analyse options for delivering improvements for water quality | Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe)                        | Ongoing                  | n/a     | MCC Attendance at all Wye Nutrient Management Board Technical Advice Group meetings |               | TAG has not met since June 2023. The Natural England Chair has moved on to a new role and will be replaced by an Environment Agency officer. Nutrient Management Board including the TAG is being redesigned. Monmouthshire CC officers will remain as part of the main TAG group as per recently published structure but will no longer sit on the 'Evidence' subgroup which has tightened membership. | amber                        |
| 1.5 | Play a key role in the development of the Usk Catchment Partnership to ensure the Usk phosphate issues are addressed   | Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor)<br><br>Green Infrastructure Manager | Ongoing from June 2022   | n/a     | MCC Attendance at all Usk Catchment Partnership meetings                            |               | An Usk Catchment Partnership Core Group has been established, draft terms and conditions have been developed. MCC is represented by 1 member and 1 officer. Key outputs include completed Usk Catchment Farm Engagement Scoping Study,  | green                        |

|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/<br>Lead Member   | Timescale (month & year) | Funding | How to measure progress   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|------------|---|---|--------------------------|---------|---|---------------|---|------------------------------|
|            |   | (Colette Bosley)<br>Cllr Catrin Maby  |                          |         |   |               | Coordination of high level response to SFS consultation, review of partners resources to inform the Action Plan. A Knowledge Hub has been established with two MCC Ecologists sitting on the group to ensure continuity of presence.  |                              |
| <b>1.6</b> | Continue involvement with the Wye Catchment Partnership in order to protect water quality, water quantity and biodiversity  | Environment & Culture Manager (Matthew Lewis)<br>Wye Valley National Landscape (Andrew Blake) | Ongoing                  | n/a     | Actively participate in the Wye Catchment Partnership sub-group when resources allow. |               | A Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) is being adopted with refreshed systems mapping and planning with subgroup formation. Herefordshire CC represent all Local Authorities on the Wye Catchment Partnership Steering Group. Wye Valley National Landscape are also represented on the steering group. | <b>amber</b>                 |
| <b>1.7</b> | Take part in a new cross-border working group of agencies, local authorities, MPs and other key parties to develop the first five-year integrated plan to cut pollution in the River Wye. | Cllr Catrin Maby  | May 2022 – May 2027      | n/a     | Attend working group meetings when arranged.  |               | This was to be initiated by the Secretary of State for the Environment, but has not happened. It is understood that there is not at present any appetite within DEFRA to proceed with this. The NMB intends nevertheless to update the nutrient management plan.                                    | <b>red</b>                   |

|  | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                    | Timescale (month & year) | Funding | How to measure progress   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|--|---|---|--------------------------|---------|---|---------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1.8  | Use the Space for Local Production Programme pilot of four farms to understand how the farms look now and how they could look in the future if certain measures were taken. Use this learning to understand how land management can better protect waterways. | Sustainable Food Projects Manager (Marianne Fisher) | 2022/23                  | RDF     | Land mapped by appointed advisor by x<br><br>Detailed report provided by each farmer by y |               | The RDF- funded project now referred to as Living Land Management Wales is in the process of recruiting and screening farmers to participate in the programme that will work with an externally procured agricultural advisor and researchers from Aberystwyth University to map current land use practices and consider water management and the impact of farming practices on water quality. With the aim to consider opportunities for improving water quality objectives. The work is linked to the outline proposals for the Sustainable Farming Scheme published last year by Welsh Government. | green                        |
| <p><b>Overarching actions for MCC to have a lobbying/influencing role in these key areas:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing phosphate stripping facilities at Llanfoist and Monmouth to improve water quality and facilitate new development in the Usk and Wye Catchment areas</li> <li>• Lobby Welsh Government to ensure Natural Resources Wales has the resources needed to protect our river and marine environment Maintain regular officer and Cabinet Member liaison meetings with NRW and broaden their scope to cover river water quality issues, with regular updates and information on sewage incidents and forward plans for improvements.</li> <li>• Lobby Welsh Government to ensure Natural Resources Wales has the resources needed to protect our river and marine environment</li> </ul> |   |   |                          |         |   |               |  |                              |

|   | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                                | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                  | How to measure progress                                   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|---------------|--|------------------------------|
| 2   | <b>Objective 2: Reduce plastic and other litter pollution in rivers and coast areas</b> |   |                          |                          |   |               |  |                              |
| <b>Actions where MCC is the lead body</b> |   |   |                          |                          |   |               |  |                              |
| 2.1                                       | Deliver litter campaigns with a focus on the impact of litter entering rivers and sea   | Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson) | Ongoing                  | WG Brilliant Basics Fund | 2024/25 campaign completed by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |               | <p>Raglan depot Litter Free Zone; monthly litter picks and publicity.</p> <p>Funding achieved from Welsh Government's Brilliant Basics Fund was successful. New suite of colourful recycling litter bins and hubs to enable recycling on the go and increase bin capacity. The bins will also be provided with sensors to enable improved data capture and monitor use/over-use. A separate funding bid has been successful in achieving funds for provision of more limited recycling on the go/litter recycling in Chepstow. Both of these schemes will be in place by end of 2023-24.</p> <p>Education assemblies have been provided to primary schools on litter (Monmouth, Abergavenny and Chepstow schools).</p> | <b>green</b>                 |

|   | Action   | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                                | Timescale (month & year) | Funding         | How to measure progress                                  | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------|--|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 2.2   | Work with schools to raise awareness of the impact litter has on Rivers and Oceans   | Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson) | 2022/23                  | MCC core budget | 2024/25 education programme completed by 31st March 2025 |               | Assemblies and school lessons provided at primary schools In Monmouth Abergavenny and Chepstow (including Llanfoist, Cantref, Llanvihangel Crucorney, Ysgol Cymraeg Y Fenni, Cross Ash, Kymin View. Outlining harm it poses to wildlife and the environment, how litter travels from land to sea, and the time taken for different materials to decompose. We have worked with Monmouth Litter Group volunteers on a school poster competition related to litter and the artwork will appear on the new bins. | green                        |
| <b>Actions where MCC is part of a partnership</b> |  |   |                          |                 |  |               |   |                              |
| 2.3   | Input to the development of the SEP Resilient Communities application to NRW to expand the Discover the Severn and Litter Free Coast and Seas projects across Monmouthshire and neighbouring LAs | Hazel Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)          | 2022/23                  | n/a             | Coastal Capacity Building funding secured for 2024/25    |               | n/a. Due to SEP team capacity we decided not to pursue this funding at this time. The current plan is to explore this next financial year through the Coastal Capacity Building fund  | red                          |

|   | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                                | Timescale (month & year)    | Funding                                | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|---|---|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 2.4   | Work with community groups and Keep Wales Tidy to provide support for local litter picks and implement litter picking hubs. | Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson) | Ongoing from September 2022 | Marine Clean Cymru and Keep Wales Tidy | Ongoing                 |               | Support provided for Marine Clean Cymru, Keep Wales Tidy's autumn litter campaign in Sept 2022.<br>Litter pick in partnership with Eurogarages to tackle litter from A40 service station.   | green                        |
| 2.5   | Work with Keep Abergavenny Tidy (KAT) litter campaign targeting business in Abergavenny                                     | Green Infrastructure & Litter Education Officer (Sue Parkinson) | 2022/23                     | Keep Wales Tidy                        | Ongoing                 |               | Six retailers in Abergavenny's Lower Cross Street signed up as supporting a Keep Wales Tidy (KWT) Litter Free Zone in that area. General Improvements to street litter bins including cleaning of bins and making them more visible, provision of cigarette butt ballot bins, street chalking (KWT) and regular monitoring of result to measure effectiveness. A second litter free zone is being developed in St John Square Abergavenny by KAT We will provide kit, signage and window stickers. Launch is due Q4 24/25 | green                        |
| <p><b>Overarching actions for MCC to have a lobbying/influencing role in these key areas:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue support of plastic-free towns in Monmouthshire</li> <li>• Engage with Welsh Government throughout the development of the Single Use Plastic Bill.</li> </ul> |   |   |                             |  |                         |               |   |                              |

|            | Action   | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                 | Timescale (month & year)    | Funding         | How to measure progress  | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|------------|--|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|--|---------------|--|------------------------------|
| <b>3</b>   | <b>Objective 3: Protect natural habitats along our rivers, estuaries and coast</b>   |  |                             |                 |  |               |  |                              |
|            | <b>Actions where MCC is part of a partnership</b>  |  |                             |                 |  |               |  |                              |
| <b>3.1</b> | Continue participation in ASERA partnership to discharge statutory duties to protect European Marine site in line with EU Habitats Directive | Environment & Culture Manager (Matthew Lewis)    | Ongoing                     | n/a             | An MCC representative is present at 100% of ASERA meetings   |               | Continued to participate in ASERA meetings. ASERA progresses the implementation of the single management scheme for the Severn Estuary European Marine Site (EMS) which has recently been extended to 2025.  | <b>green</b>                 |
| <b>3.2</b> | Through membership of the Severn Estuary Partnership, connect with, learn from and work in partnership with other estuary stakeholders       | Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) | Ongoing from September 2022 | MCC core budget | An MCC representative is present at 100% of SEP meetings<br><br>February 2024 lunchtime briefing is held |               | MCC is a member of SEP and sits on the SEP Management Group. MCC are part of a governance review of how SEP operates and can be most effective. SEP have organised a lunchtime learning briefing in Feb 2024 to make members more aware of the role and work of SEP. | <b>green</b>                 |
| <b>3.3</b> | Through membership of SEP, engage with the Welsh Government Wales Marine Action and Advisory Group (WMAAG) on the development of a           | Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) | Ongoing                     | n/a             | 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2024 workshop is held  |               | Through membership of SEP, views of members are fed back to Welsh Government via the Wales Coasts and Seas Partnership meetings (was WMAAG).   | <b>green</b>                 |



|     | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member  | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                          | How to measure progress                     | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|-----|---|---|--------------------------|----------------------------------|---|---------------|---|------------------------------|
|     | Blue Recovery Plan for Wales to support sustainable development actions to both help coastal communities to recover, and to achieve our vision of Welsh seas that are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse.  |   |                          |                                  |   |               | Biodiversity 30 by 30 workshop on the 15 <sup>th</sup> February.  |                              |
| 3.4 | Work with partners over the next 12 months to secure longer term funding for the Living Levels partnership. The Living Levels aims to re-connect people and communities to the Gwent levels landscape and provide a sustainable future for this historic and unique area. | Environment & Culture Manager (Matthew Lewis)<br>Green Infrastructure Officer (Colette Bosley)<br>Cllr Catrin Maby<br>Cllr Frances Taylor | 2022/ - 2024             | Coastal Capacity Funding         | Funding secured                             |               | The partnership is in a transition phase funded to March 2024 and is exploring the options for ongoing funding. Coastal Capacity Funding has been secured for this financial year and next. | amber                        |
| 3.5 | Through membership of SEP, work with the Blue Marine Foundation and cross-border partners to  | Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)  | 2023/24                  | Championing Coastal Coordination | Workshop held to discuss the Possibility of |               | Through membership of SEP, we will have an input into these discussions. This work is being taken forward by the Severn   | green                        |

|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member                                | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                          | How to measure progress                             | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
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|            | scope the potential for a National Marine Park for the Severn Estuary   | and colleagues  |                          | tion DEFRA funding               | a National Marine Park                              |               | Vision project (currently funded until 2023). A workshop to gather views and discuss the possibility of a National Marine Park will be held this financial year.  |                              |
| <b>3.6</b> | Through membership of SEP work to explore options for the development of the Severn Vision work into a deliverable framework for action; one which maximises nature restoration, climate mitigation and adaptation benefits for the whole Severn Estuary and outer reaches area | Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) and colleagues | 2022/23                  | Coastal Capacities Building Fund | Costed Delivery Plan by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |               | This year the project aims to gather information on current and planned projects being delivered in the Severn Vision area (action mapping) to measure progress against the actions highlighted in last year’s Severn Vision report. This will inform the development of a costed delivery plan to take the Severn Vision work forward over the next few years.<br>ASERA have re-launched the Good Practice Guidelines (available via “Wales Coast Explorer” app ). These guidelines encourage the sustainable use of the estuary and its coastline for recreational users and visitors to enjoy. ASERA partners also continue to have discussions about the potential for a wider “Severn Aware” approach. | <b>green</b>                 |

|     | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member   | Timescale (month & year) | Funding         | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|-----|---|--|--------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 3.7 | Through membership of ASERA and SEP engage with coastal disturbance through behaviour change. | Environment & Culture Manager (Matthew Lewis)<br><br>Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor) | 2023/24                  | MCC core budget | Ongoing                 |               | <p>The ASERA officer and ASERA members continue to discuss and share information on coastal disturbance. National projects like Operation Seabird, Wild Seas Wales, Wales Coastal Explorer App and the Welsh Partnership of MPA disturbance project outputs are shared through SEP and ASERA. Messaging on disturbance and behaviour change is regularly distributed via the SEP social media channels and shared with partners.</p> <p>The Habitats Regulations Assessment for the RLDP has highlighted the need to consider mechanisms for reducing coastal disturbance in accordance with the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Further work is needed on the mechanisms to address this, learning from experience in Stroud, Strategic Mitigation Measures are likely to be needed. This could take the form of a recreation mitigation</p> | green                        |

|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member   | Timescale (month & year) | Funding  | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
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|            |   |  |                          |  |                         |               | and management strategy and could include a mixture of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) measures.   |                              |
| <b>3.8</b> | Continue to lead the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP) and explore ways to sustain the partnership beyond the end of current funding in 2026 in order to maintain a regional approach to green infrastructure (GI) and nature recovery, including river and ocean recovery. | Green Infrastructure Manager (Colette Bosley)<br><br>Environment & Culture Manager (Matthew Lewis) | 2022/23                  | Shared Prosperity Fund and Heritage Lottery Fund | Ongoing                 |               | GGGP RDP in its last 6 months of delivery has delivered £1.4 million work – including development of Regional GI Strategy/Spatial Plan, Regional Access Strategy, GI Project delivery work across whole of Gwent, Nature recovery videos and training sessions.<br><br>GGGP Shared Prosperity Fund has secured £544,541 across Gwent enabling two staff posts to be extended and the programme or work to be delivered starting April 2023- 2025.<br><br>GGGP HLF Nature Networks funding secured £999,000 regionally for expansion of the project with focus on protected sites and intervening land matrices including area such as | <b>green</b>                 |

|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member               | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                        | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
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|            |   |  |                          |                                |                         |               | Gwent Levels. SPF and capital used as match funding. Extending funding of SPF posts and allowing appointment /extension of a further 9 regional posts, 3 of which sit in MCC - including the GGGP Collaboration Manager, Nature isn't Neat Officer and the Nature and Climate Awareness Officer. Project outputs will include a range of nature-based solutions across protected sites, climate and nature awareness raising events, community health and wellbeing initiatives and development of green skills. |                              |
| <b>3.9</b> | Continue to lead Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership (LNP) to share best practice and resources to maximise benefits for people and wildlife | Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe) | Ongoing                  | Coastal Capacity Building Fund | Ongoing                 |               | LNP promotion and outputs continued during 2023.<br><br>2023<br>Coastal Capacity Building initial project complete (53k). Delivery partners included GWT together with key stakeholders NRW, Living Levels Partnership RSPB and Cardiff, Vale of Glamorgan, Bridgend, and Swansea LNP's.   | <b>green</b>                 |

|  | Action | Officer Responsible/<br>Lead Member | Timescale (month & year) | Funding | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------------|--|------------------------------|
|  |        |                                     |                          |         |                         |               | <p>Development of a delivery plan to deliver the recommendations of the Championing Coastal Coordination Delivering a Vision for the Bristol Channel and Severn report. (action mapping, coastal habitat and enhancement workshops, development of a Gwent Levels Seascape assessment brief, scoping exercises to fit with Wales Marine plan and support Motion for the Ocean webinar, development for implementation stage 23/24 ).</p> <p>2023-2025 Delivering the Vision for Môr Hafren (Severn Estuary &amp; Bristol Channel)</p> <p>Coastal Capacity Building Fund approved (£121,000) to build upon the work undertaken in early 2023. Delivery partners include SEP, Becky MacDonald Lofts, Living Levels Partnership RSPB &amp; GWT together with key stakeholders NRW, and Cardiff City Council, Newport City Council. Three workstreams:</p> |                              |

|      | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member               | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                                    | How to measure progress   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|------|---|--|--------------------------|--|---|---------------|--|------------------------------|
|      |   |  |                          |  |   |               | 1.Vision Project Support Officer (SEP)<br>2.Pilot Beyond the seawall citizen science project (RSPB + GWT)<br>3. Seascape Assessment (MCC)  |                              |
| 3.10 | Develop the Monmouthshire and Newport Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) with the Local Nature Partnership to include river and marine environments | Biodiversity & Ecology Lead (Kate Stinchcombe) | 2023                     | MCC core budget                            | Habitat and Species Action Plans developed from Spring 2024.                                |               | Consultation Draft of Part One (Strategy) of the Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) complete December 2023.Habitat and Species Action Plans shall be developed from Spring 2024. For marine habitats, the Severn Vision shall be the key action plan to coordinate action and prevent duplication. | green                        |
| 4    | <b>Objective 4: Protect communities from flooding (rivers and coastal areas)</b>  |  |                          |  |   |               |  |                              |
|      | <b>Actions where MCC is the lead body</b>   |  |                          |  |   |               |  |                              |
| 4.1  | Complete Local Flood Management Strategy  | Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)                | 2024/25                  | MCC core budget and WG flood revenue grant | Political approval of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy by 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2024 |               | MCC’s new Local Flood Risk Management Strategy is currently being drafted (Dec 2023) and will replace the current Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2013 and Flood Risk Management Plan 2016. The new Strategy will meet the requirements of the Flood  | green                        |

|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                       | How to measure progress   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
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|            |   |                                  |                          |                               |   |               | and Water Management Act 2010 which requires all 22 LLFAs in Wales to produce, develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for their administrative area. It is anticipated the new Strategy will be published in Spring/Summer 2024.  |                              |
| <b>4.2</b> | Support catchment-wide action, nature-based solutions and natural flood management and seek to develop partnerships and funding to deliver these. | Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)  | 2022/23                  | WG NFM Accelerator or funding | Installation at sites in Mitchel Troy, Dingestow, Monmouth and Llantilio Crossenny by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025<br><br>NFM assessment at some County Farms and Norton Brook, Skenfrith by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |               | MCC has received £70k (2023-25) through WG’s NFM Accelerator grant to promote and implement NFM. Building on previous works which identified NFM opportunities across Monmouthshire, liaison with landowners is ongoing, previous interest low due to lack of financial incentive. It is hoped the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme will improve take up in future. Currently focussed on progressing sites with positive landowner engagement, installation works planned in 2024 at sites in Mitchel Troy, Dingestow, Monmouth and Llantilio Crossenny. | <b>amber</b>                 |



|            | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                                    | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|---------------|--|------------------------------|
|            |   |                                  |                          |  |                         |               | Landowner engagement has been limited while farmers MCC now sits on the Welsh Water (Brecon Beacons Mega Catchment) NFM sub-working group. We will use this forum and the new regional NRW liaison meetings to initiating discussion with NRW and other LAs/WG/National Infrastructure Commission on more major upstream works, seeking a more fundamental approach to adaptation to climate change on a whole catchment basis. NFM assessment at some County Farms and Norton Brook, Skenfrith planned in 2024. NFM also considered as part of all capital flood schemes. |                              |
| <b>4.3</b> | Use our powers as a Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) Approving Body to ensure new developments manage on site surface water in a sustainable way in accordance with WG’s National SuDS Standards. | Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)  | Ongoing                  | MCC core budget and WG Flood Revenue Grant | Ongoing                 |               | Our role as SuDS Approving Body (SAB) is an ongoing statutory function. SuDS proposals associated with new developments requiring SAB approval continue to be assessed against Welsh Government’s National SuDS Standards.   | <b>green</b>                 |

|   | Action  | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member  | Timescale (month & year) | Funding         | How to measure progress   | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 4.4   | Use our powers as Land Drainage Authority to ensure works undertaken within ordinary watercourses do not have a negative impact on water quality or on the local environment. | Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)   | Ongoing                  | MCC Core Budget | Ongoing   |               | As Land Drainage Authority we continue to respond to complaints and queries on ordinary watercourses and liaise with riparian owners and/or relative organisations to resolve issues as they occur. This work includes processing Ordinary Watercourse Consent applications to ensure compliance with the Land Drainage Act 1991. | green                        |
| <b>Actions where MCC is part of a partnership</b> |   |                                   |                          |                 |   |               |   |                              |
| 4.5   | Continue as an active member of the Severn Estuary Coastal Group (SECG) to be responsible for the implementation of the Shoreline Management Plan.                            | Flood Risk Manager (Ross Price)   | Ongoing                  | n/a             | MCC Attendance at all of Severn Estuary Coastal Group meetings  |               | Attendance at the SECG meetings is an ongoing action.   | green                        |
| 4.6   | Work with NRW to identify improvements to the Caldicot sea wall to reinstate its function as a defence against future tidal flooding.   | Head of Planning (Craig O'Connor) | 2022/24                  | n/a             | Understand framework of the work by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025 |               | Delayed pending SFCA work by JBA and the WG review of TAN15 (now expected Summer 2024).   | red                          |

|            | Action   | Officer Responsible/<br>Lead Member              | Timescale (month & year) | Funding         | How to measure progress                     | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|------------|--|--|--------------------------|-----------------|---|---------------|---|------------------------------|
|            | <b>Overarching actions for MCC to have a lobbying/influencing role in these key areas:-</b>  |  |                          |                 |   |               |   |                              |
|            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend NRW Internal Drainage District meetings to lobby for change</li> </ul>                   |  |                          |                 |   |               |   |                              |
| <b>5</b>   | <b>Objective 5: Raise awareness of the importance of our rivers and coasts</b>   |  |                          |                 |   |               |   |                              |
|            | <b>Actions where MCC is the lead body</b>  |  |                          |                 |   |               |   |                              |
| <b>5.1</b> | Use the One Planet Centre as a focus for education about marine and river pollution  | Reuse and Recycling Officer (Rebecca Blount)     | Ongoing                  | MCC core budget | Ongoing                                     |               | Provision of education at One Planet Centre on climate change, circular economy, marine and river pollution. For example, 56 pupils visited in January 2023.                                | <b>green</b>                 |
| <b>5.2</b> | Facilitate ongoing discussion between MCC and community groups on river and coastal issues through Community Climate Champions network | Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) | Ongoing                  | n/a             | Ongoing                                     |               | Discussions with community groups on rivers and coasts continues, with information about events, research etc regularly shared through the network at quarterly meetings and through email. | <b>green</b>                 |
| <b>5.3</b> | Develop information and resources on rivers and oceans to put on MCC website.  | Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy) | Autumn/<br>Winter 2022   | MCC core budget | Website live by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024 |               | Draft information for website has been prepared. Turnover of staff has delayed completion of this action.   | <b>amber</b>                 |
|            | <b>Actions where MCC is part of a partnership</b>  |  |                          |                 |   |               |   |                              |

|     | Action   | Officer Responsible/ Lead Member   | Timescale (month & year) | Funding                        | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)  | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|-----|--|--|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|---|------------------------------|
| 5.4 | Target socially and environmentally responsible visitor segments in our destination marketing  | Destination Manager (Nicola Edwards)   | Ongoing                  | n/a                            | Ongoing                 |               | New green holiday content developed and promoted <a href="https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/plan-your-visit/green-holidays">https://www.visitmonmouthshire.com/plan-your-visit/green-holidays</a>  | green                        |
| 5.5 | Participate in the Diverse Marine Values research project with Cardiff University and other research partners to help understand how diverse values can influence marine policy and decision making. | Hazel Sustainability Policy Officer (Hazel Clatworthy)   | 2022/24                  | n/a                            | Ongoing                 |               | Regular meetings with Cardiff University and partners to help inform their research project. Diverse Marine Values survey went out late February 2023.  | green                        |
| 5.6 | Encourage local action, community awareness initiatives, demonstration projects and encourage participation in volunteer monitoring and data collection  | Environment & Culture Manager (Matthew Lewis) and Head of Neighbourhood Services (Carl Touhig) | Ongoing                  | Coastal Capacity Building Fund | Ongoing                 |               | Discussions with the Wales Coastal Monitoring Centre around installation of CoastSnap citizen science project fixed photography points at Black Rock picnic site are underway. Engagement and awareness through Nature Isn't Neat GGGP project work.<br><br>GGGP sustainable communities and health and wellbeing projects<br>The Monmouthshire NRAP is being developed as a tool to motivate communities to actively | green                        |

|  | Action | Officer Responsible/<br>Lead Member | Timescale (month & year) | Funding | How to measure progress | Also cited in | Progress (February 2024)   | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|--|--------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-------------------------|---------------|--|------------------------------|
|  |        |                                     |                          |         |                         |               | contribute to the effective restoration and protection of nature in Monmouthshire.<br><br>Current application for Coastal Capacity Building application which has incorporated community engagement and workshops and starting discussions with Groundwork through their Healthy Rivers Project for potential roll out across Gwent. |                              |
| <p><b>Overarching actions for MCC to have a lobbying/influencing role in these key areas:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the Visit Wales <a href="#">addo</a> (promise to care for Wales’ communities and environment)</li> <li>• Play a role in the development of an Ocean Literacy action plan in Wales</li> </ul> |        |                                     |                          |         |                         |               |  |                              |

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| Action  | Officer Responsible  | Timescale (month & year) | Funding          | How to measure progress                        | Also cited in                                       | Progress | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|--|--------------------------|------------------|--|---|----------|------------------------------|
| <b>ENERGY – Reduce energy use and increase renewable energy across the county</b>   |  |                          |                  |  |   |          |                              |
| Use the Replacement Local Development Plan to support net zero and renewable energy developments.                           | Head of Planning   | 2024/25                  | RLDP budget      |  | RLDP  |          |                              |
| Work regionally on decarbonisation and climate change through partnerships such as the Gwent PSB and Cardiff Capital Region | Head of Decarb; Strategic Partnerships Manager                   | TBC                      | CCR/WG/PSB       |  | Gwent PSB Wellbeing Assessment; CCR Energy Strategy |          |                              |
| Develop low carbon skills in current and future workforce   | Head of Economy, Employment and Skills; Building Control Manager | Ongoing                  |                  |  | Economy, Employment, Skills Strategy                |          |                              |
| Promote, educate and help residents take actions to reduce their carbon emissions   | Head of Decarb; Sustainability Policy Officer                    |                          | Nil              |  |   |          |                              |
| <b>REDUCE WASTE AND WHAT WE BUY – By encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more</b>                              |  |                          |                  |  |   |          |                              |
| Focus on reducing, reusing and repairing waste whilst continuing to increase domestic, business and schools recycling       | Head of Neighbourhood Services; Sustainability Policy Officer    | Ongoing                  | Some SPF funding | % Recycling rate<br>No. borrows<br>No. repairs |   |          |                              |

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| Action   | Officer Responsible   | Timescale (month & year) | Funding             | How to measure progress                      | Also cited in                 | Progress | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|--|---|--------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------------|----------|------------------------------|
| Work with Size of Wales to explore the development of deforestation free communities   | Sustainability Policy Officer   | Starting 2024            | Nil                 |  | Socially Resp. Proc. Strategy |          |                              |
| <b>GETTING AROUND – Encourage active travel, public transport and low emission vehicles</b>  |   |                          |                     |  |                               |          |                              |
| Develop schemes that will increase active travel   | Road Safety Officer; Active Travel Officer; Group Engineer – Highways                                     |                          | Active travel grant | No. active travel routes created or enhanced | Local Transport Plan          |          |                              |
| Ensure the RLDP allocates sites that promote the twenty Minute Town concept to reduce the number of car journeys people have to make | Head of Planning  | 2024/25                  | Nil                 |  | Local Transport Plan<br>RLDP  |          |                              |
| Develop and implement an Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, building on good practice from elsewhere.                               | Head of Decarbonisation, Transport & Support Services   | 2024/45                  | Nil                 | No. EV charging points available             | EV Charging Strategy          |          |                              |
| Encourage public transport use as set out in the MCC local transport strategy  | Passenger Transport Planning & Project Manager  | 2024 onwards             |                     |  | Local Transport Plan          |          |                              |
| <b>EDUCATION AND INVOLVEMENT – Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference</b>                   |   |                          |                     |  |                               |          |                              |
| Work with children and young people to enable them to take positive action on climate change   | Youth Sport and Active Travel Manager; Head of Neighbourhood Services; Head of Achievement and Attainment | Ongoing                  | Nil                 | No. children reached                         |                               |          |                              |



| Action  | Officer Responsible                                   | Timescale (month & year) | Funding | How to measure progress           | Also cited in  | Progress | Progress (red, amber, green) |
|---|---|--------------------------|---------|-----------------------------------|--|----------|------------------------------|
| Signpost businesses to support, advice and information to help them to reduce their carbon emissions  | Business Insight Manager                              | Ongoing                  | Nil     |                                   | Economy, Employment, Skills Strategy   |          |                              |
| Use comms, training and partnership working to build local action on climate and signpost to useful advice and guidance   | Sustainability Policy Officer; Head of Communications | Ongoing                  | Nil     |                                   |  |          |                              |
| <b>CLIMATE ADAPTATION – Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change</b>  |   |                          |         |                                   |  |          |                              |
| Develop and act on Climate Change Risk Assessments for council services to fully understand adaptation requirements   | Sustainability Policy Officer                         | Waiting for WG guidance  | Nil     | No. of completed risk assessments |  |          |                              |
| Continue to promote and support council services and external businesses with business continuity, adverse weather and emergency response strategies, and signpost to support on climate adaptation | Emergency Planning Manager; Business Insight Manager  | Ongoing                  | Nil     |                                   | Emergency Mgt Plan; Adverse weather, flood arrangements; Bus. Continuity Mgt Plans |          |                              |
| Use planning policy to reduce flood risk  | Head of Planning                                      | Ongoing                  | Nil     |                                   | RLDP   |          |                              |

## Appendix 1 What can individuals, communities and business do to play their part?

Although Monmouthshire County Council has an important role to play in reducing emissions from across the county, there are things that everyone can do to help reduce their carbon footprint. So whether you are an individual, household, local community group or business, have a look at the suggestions below.

### Energy



- Make sure you have got draft proofing, loft and cavity wall insulation in your home – save money and energy. <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-insulation>
- Simple things like switching off the lights, not leaving things on standby and only boiling the water you really need in the kettle can really make a difference. <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/home-energy-efficiency>
- Understand how your heating controls work and using thermostats properly can save energy.
- If you use a dishwasher, make sure you only use it when full.
- Make sure your washing machine is full and dry clothes on a line rather than tumble dry if you can.
- Switch your energy supplier to a renewable energy contract. <https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/cheap-green-energy/>
- Find out whether you could install solar panels or another renewable energy in your home. <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/renewable-energy>

## Nature Recovery



- Leave part of your garden wild, make habitats for wildlife and plant trees to absorb carbon dioxide. <https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions>
- Join a “Friends of” group to get involved in sustainable green space management, or find out about local groups who are doing community gardening and growing. <https://www.farmgarden.org.uk/>
- Get involved in community allotments or establish a new allotment and have a go at growing your own fruit and veg. <https://www.theallotmentgarden.co.uk/vegetable-gardening-beginners/>
- Could your community group plant trees to reduce flooding, provide habitat and shade? <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/>
- Find out how you can make sure your garden is resilient to our future climate. <https://www.rhs.org.uk/science/gardening-in-a-changing-world/climate-change>
- Do your bit to keep our rivers clean – remember only put the 3 Ps down the loo – poo, pee and paper!

## What we buy and reducing waste



- Think about how much you buy and whether you really need it.
- When you are buying food think local, in season, reduced and recyclable packaging.
- Think about where meat you buy comes from and have a varied diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Support your local charity shop or re-use shop and buy second hand plus donated unwanted goods, or use schemes such as Freecycle <https://www.freecycle.org/>

- Reduce the amount of “stuff” you buy by borrowing from your local Library of Things, and getting items repaired at a Repair Café. <https://monmouthshire.benthyg.cymru/>
- Consider buying “experiences” for people as gifts, or charity gifts that support sustainable projects, rather than buy gifts that aren’t wanted or needed. <https://onlineshop.oxfam.org.uk/unwrapped/category/oxfam-unwrapped>
- Find out about and use all the different types of recycling that Monmouthshire does. <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/recycling-and-waste/>
- Get recipes and tips for using food and reducing food waste. <https://lovefoodhatewaste.com/>
- Use refillable water bottles, and reusable containers for your lunch. <https://refill.org.uk/>
- Try and cut down on single use plastics. <https://www.sas.org.uk/plastic-free-communities/>
- Look after your clothes, repair them and don’t buy disposable fashion. <https://www.loveyourclothes.org.uk/>

## Getting around



- Try and walk for short journeys, and reduce carbon while getting fit at the same time!
- Find out about local cycle routes and cycling groups and get on your bike. <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/national-cycle-network/>
- Try out an electric bike if you live somewhere hilly or could do with a bit of an extra boost! <https://www.which.co.uk/reviews/electric-bikes/article/electric-bikes-everything-you-need-to-know>
- Team up with parents and your local school to develop a walking bus to walk your little ones to school.
- Get involved with local public rights of way volunteering opportunities. <https://volunteer.monmouthshire.gov.uk/>
- Ask your employer if they can provide showers and lockers so that you can cycle to work.
- Try and car share when you can, to save fuel and money. There are schemes to help. <https://liftshare.com/uk>
- If you are thinking of replacing your vehicle, think about whether an electric car would work for you. There are grants which can help. <https://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/transport/electric-cars-and-vehicles/electric-vehicles>
- Find out about public transport options that could work for you. <https://www.traveline.cymru/>

- If you are 16 to 21 you can get bus travel discounts. <https://mytravelpass.gov.wales/en/>
- If you are 16 to 25 you can apply for a young persons railcard. <https://www.16-25railcard.co.uk/>
- Concessionary bus passes are available from Transport for Wales. <https://tfw.wales/info-for/over-60s>

## Using your voice



- Get involved with your school's Eco Committee, or if your school isn't an Eco School, find out more and ask them if they would consider it. <https://www.keepwalestidy.cymru/pages/category/eco-schools>
- Does your workplace have recycling or other environmental issues in place? Why not try and start something.
- Get involved with one of the many voluntary groups in Monmouthshire doing great work on climate change. <https://www.transitionchepstow.org.uk/> <https://transitionmonmouth.org/> <https://www.friendsoftheearthabandcrick.wales/>
- Consider moving your savings or pensions into ethical and socially responsible funds. <https://www.ethicalconsumer.org/money-finance/shopping-guide/ethical-savings-accounts>
- If you live somewhere prone to flooding, make sure you know what to do. Find out more at <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/services/planning-for-emergencies/flooding/>

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**Monmouthshire County Council  
Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy  
February 2024**



|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>            | Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy   |
| <b>Purpose</b>          | This strategy outlines the council's response to the climate emergency declared in May 2019, the Motion for Rivers and Ocean declared in March 2022 and nature emergency declared in ???? |
| <b>Owner</b>            | Monmouthshire County Council  |
| <b>Approved by</b>      |   |
| <b>Date</b>             |   |
| <b>Version Number</b>   | 3.0   |
| <b>Status</b>           |   |
| <b>Review Frequency</b> | Annual  |
| <b>Next review date</b> |   |
| <b>Consultation</b>     |   |



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## Foreword

How we reduce our contributions to climate change, manage the impacts of climate change and reverse the decline in species and habitats is one of the major challenges facing society today. At Monmouthshire County Council, we recognise that we have a critical role to play by looking at our organisation, estate and assets and how we manage them to reduce carbon and improve biodiversity. But perhaps even more significantly we have a hugely important role to play in working with other organisations, community groups, business and others to help everyone who visits, lives or works in Monmouthshire to reduce their environmental impact too.

Our Community and Corporate Plan sets out our purpose “to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life”. One of the objectives which will deliver this purpose is to work towards a Green Place for people to live and work, with reduced carbon emissions, and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.

In 2019 councillors in Monmouthshire were unanimous in declaring a climate emergency. Since that date, the Council has published a climate emergency action plan, and then updated it and increased the focus on the nature emergency. In 2022 we declared a Motion for the Rivers and Ocean, and are working with multiple partners to try and improve water quality in our rivers.

This strategy aims to tie together the focus on all of these areas of work, and forms a high level strategy under which 4 action plans sit, which address Council Emissions, Nature Recovery, Rivers and Ocean and Communities and Climate.

We recognise that we cannot address the climate and nature emergencies alone. All of the action plans require us to work with public bodies, partners, businesses, community groups and individuals.

We recognise the outstanding beauty of Monmouthshire. As custodians of this stunning place we need to encourage residents and visitors to enjoy it, protect it and conserve it. The natural world in all its guises is the backdrop to our tourism and visitor economy. We will work with others to promote access to our special places whilst protecting the environment, support nature recovery, reduce our carbon emissions, reduce the risk of flooding and promote the circular economy.

But even if we do all these things, we will still see the impacts of climate change such as warmer, wetter winters, hotter, drier summers and more extreme weather events. We need to ensure that our county is resilient to these impacts and that people, society and nature are able to adapt to a changing climate.

These are all big challenges, that we are undertaking at a time of great financial pressure on the council against a backdrop of the cost of living crisis. It will not be easy, but we are committed to working with others to do all that we can to address the climate and nature emergencies for the wellbeing of present and future generations.

**Cllr Catrin Maby,**  
**Cabinet Member for Climate Change and the Environment**



## Background

In May 2019 Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency, with unanimous support from Councillors across all parties. This set out a clear policy commitment for the council to:

- strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030;
- encourage and support residents and businesses to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions;
- Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 °C.

In October 2019 an action plan and strategy was adopted which set out how we planned to do this. The Action Plan was refreshed in 2021 to better reflect our commitment to tackling the nature emergency, and in 2024 has been completely reviewed to reflect the priorities of Monmouthshire's Community and Corporate Plan. Since 2019, there has been a greater focus on how tackling the nature emergency is an intrinsic part of how we address the climate emergency. In addition, we have declared a Motion for the Rivers and Ocean which sets out how we will work in partnership to play our part in reducing river pollution and protecting the ocean. The Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Steering group has helped to develop this new integrated approach. This new overarching strategy is underpinned by 4 different work streams with action plans, as set out below, which between them incorporate how we will address both the Climate and Nature Emergencies:

# Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy

**Council  
Emissions**



**Nature  
Recovery**



**Rivers and  
Ocean**



**Communities  
and Climate**



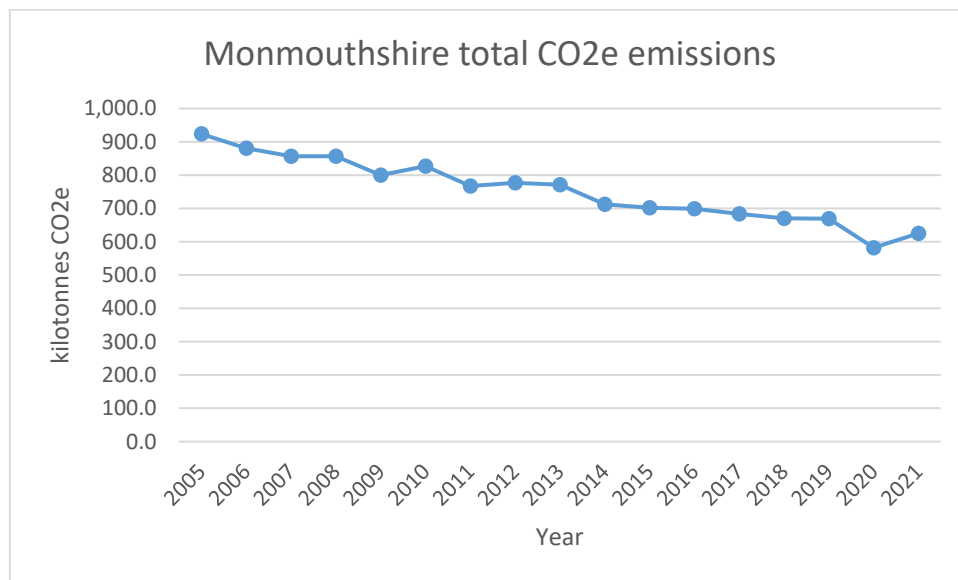
This strategy is an important contribution to the council’s purpose which is: *“a zero carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life”*.

## Setting the scene

### Climate Change and carbon emissions

We cannot fail to have seen the plethora of reports and evidence that are pointing to a changing climate. The UK 3<sup>rd</sup> Climate Change Risk Assessment<sup>1</sup> published in 2021 states that the average annual UK temperature is 1.2 degrees warmer than in the pre-industrial period, the likelihood of experiencing hot summers like 2018 have doubled, and since 1900 sea level around the UK has risen by 16cm and is set to continue. The impacts of these changes are numerous, affecting the natural environment, infrastructure, health, communities, the built environment, business, industry and international relations<sup>2</sup>.

Our climate is changing as a result of man-made greenhouse gas emissions, and in particular carbon dioxide. So what is Monmouthshire’s contribution to carbon emissions? Since 2005 net carbon emissions across the county as a whole have reduced by 32% from 924 kilotonnes to 625 kilotonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent per year in 2021<sup>3</sup> while our population has increased by around 5% over the same period<sup>4</sup>. The graph below shows this trajectory, with a slight drop in 2020 as a result of the Covid pandemic. The downward trajectory mirrors a similar trend across the UK as a result of things like an increase in the use of cleaner energy.



<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/>

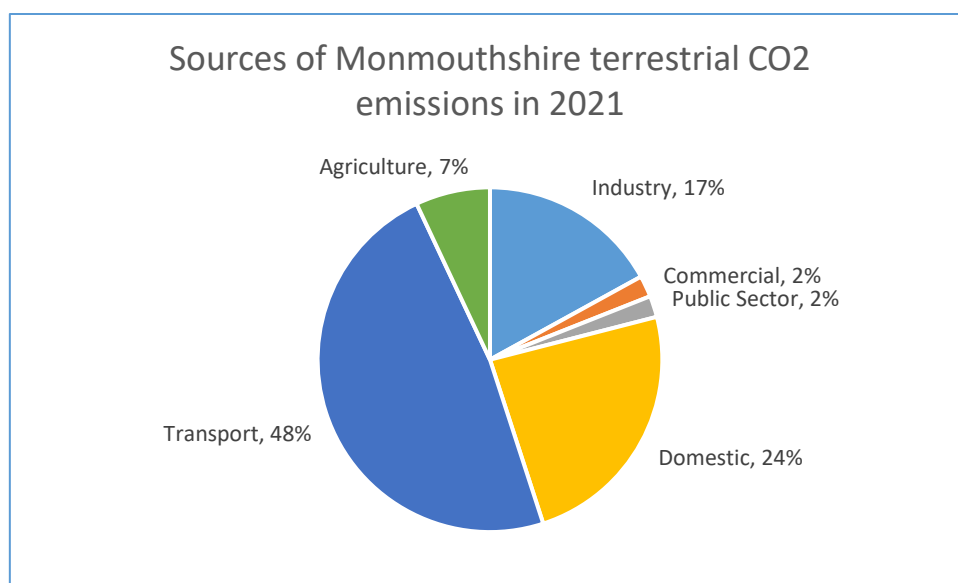
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/publications/summary-for-wales-ccra3-ia/#section-1-about-this-document>

<sup>3</sup> <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64a67b3a4dd8b3000f7fa546/2005-21-uk-local-authority-ghg-emissions-update-060723.xlsx> (accessed 2/1/24)

<sup>44</sup> <https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Population-and-Migration/Population/Estimates/Local-Authority/populationestimates-by-localauthority-age>

Source: UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2005 to 2021

What are the main sources of carbon emissions in Monmouthshire? The pie chart below shows the breakdown of where Monmouthshire's emissions are from. Just under half of emissions come from transport (which includes all road transport and diesel rail) and around a quarter from domestic properties<sup>55</sup>. This reflects the rural nature of the county with more journeys being made by car, as well as major trunk roads carrying private cars and commercial vehicles running through the county, together with relatively old and energy inefficient housing stock. This data indicates where we will need to take action if the county is to play its part in reducing global emissions.



Source: UK Local Authority and Regional Greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2005 to 2021

In 2021, Monmouthshire's per capita CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions were 6.7 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e, higher than the UK average of 4.8 tonnes, but lower than the Welsh average of 7.3 tonnes (which is heavily skewed by the steelworks emissions in Neath Port Talbot).

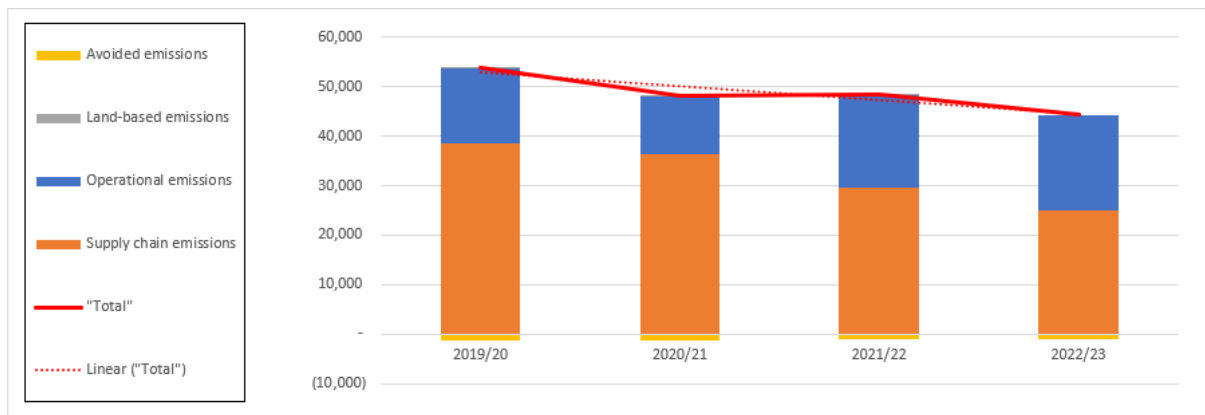
The Council does not control or have a direct influence on all the things that need to change to reduce emissions in the county. You can see from the pie chart that the public sector only accounts for 2% of Monmouthshire's emissions. This is why it is important that as well as working hard to reduce our own emissions, Monmouthshire County Council will also work closely with the Public Service Board, local businesses and community groups to reduce emissions.

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2021>

The Council itself was responsible for 44,248 tonnes of CO2e emissions in 2022/23, which is steadily decreasing year on year, as the following graph shows. Emissions in 2022/23 were 17.8% lower than the 2019/20 baseline. The graph also shows that a significant proportion of the Council’s emissions are from the supply chain – in other words from goods and services which we procure. Annex 1 gives more details about how the council’s carbon emissions are measured and reported.

1124 tonnes of CO2 were avoided through renewable energy generation, from solar panels on Council buildings and from the Council’s solar farm at Oak Grove Farm in Crick.

Monmouthshire County Council Tonnes of CO2e per year



Source: Monmouthshire County Council return to Welsh Government for 2022/23

## Nature recovery

It is important that the climate emergency and the nature emergency are considered hand in hand, since the two are so interlinked. Climate change is having a significant impact on habitats and species, and is one of many pressures on our natural world. At the same time, our green infrastructure has a crucial role to play in helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change, reduce flooding, build resilience and sequester (or lock away) carbon. A degraded natural environment will be less able to offer these benefits, as well as other important services we refer to as ecosystem services, such as providing food and timber, health and wellbeing benefits, tourism, pollination and many more<sup>6</sup>.

We are facing a biodiversity crisis, globally, nationally and locally. Within the UK 38% of species in decline, with one in six species threatened with extinction<sup>7</sup>.

Latest data from the State of Nature 2023 report for Wales shows that since monitoring of 380 Welsh species began in 1994, the numbers of those species has declined on average by 20%, and 42% of Wales’ plant species are found in fewer places than before<sup>8</sup>. The need for

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/about/biodiversity>

<sup>7</sup> State of Nature 2023 <https://stateofnature.org.uk/infographics/>

<sup>888</sup> <https://stateofnature.org.uk/countries/wales/>

nature recovery in our local area is also clear with 34% of the 100 species considered in the Greater Gwent State of Nature report showing a decline in their numbers<sup>9</sup>. Only 12% of the species that were studied showed stable populations.

The State of Natural Resources Report 2020 (SoNaRR)<sup>10</sup> reported that all ecosystems in Wales had only low to moderate resilience. Climate change, pollution, invasive non-native species, habitat loss and deterioration, over-exploitation, pests, and disease were all given as significant pressures and demands affecting the resilience of ecosystems.



Source: State of Nature 2023 <https://stateofnature.org.uk/infographics/> data for the UK

## Rivers and ocean

The health of our rivers, waterways and ocean is a particular area of concern which led to the adoption of an action plan following the Council's Motion for the Rivers and Ocean.

Phosphate targets for the Usk are being failed at a rate of 88% and the Wye at 68%<sup>11</sup>. Algal blooms smother other life in the rivers having a direct impact on the species that they provide habitat for. The health of our rivers is also affected by litter, in particular plastics which can be seen on riverbanks. Studies have also found increasing levels of microplastics in fish and other species.

The health of our ocean is inextricably linked with our climate and with human health, wellbeing and prosperity. A healthy ocean is fundamental in regulating the global climate system and is an essential ally in our fight against climate change. The ocean absorbs more

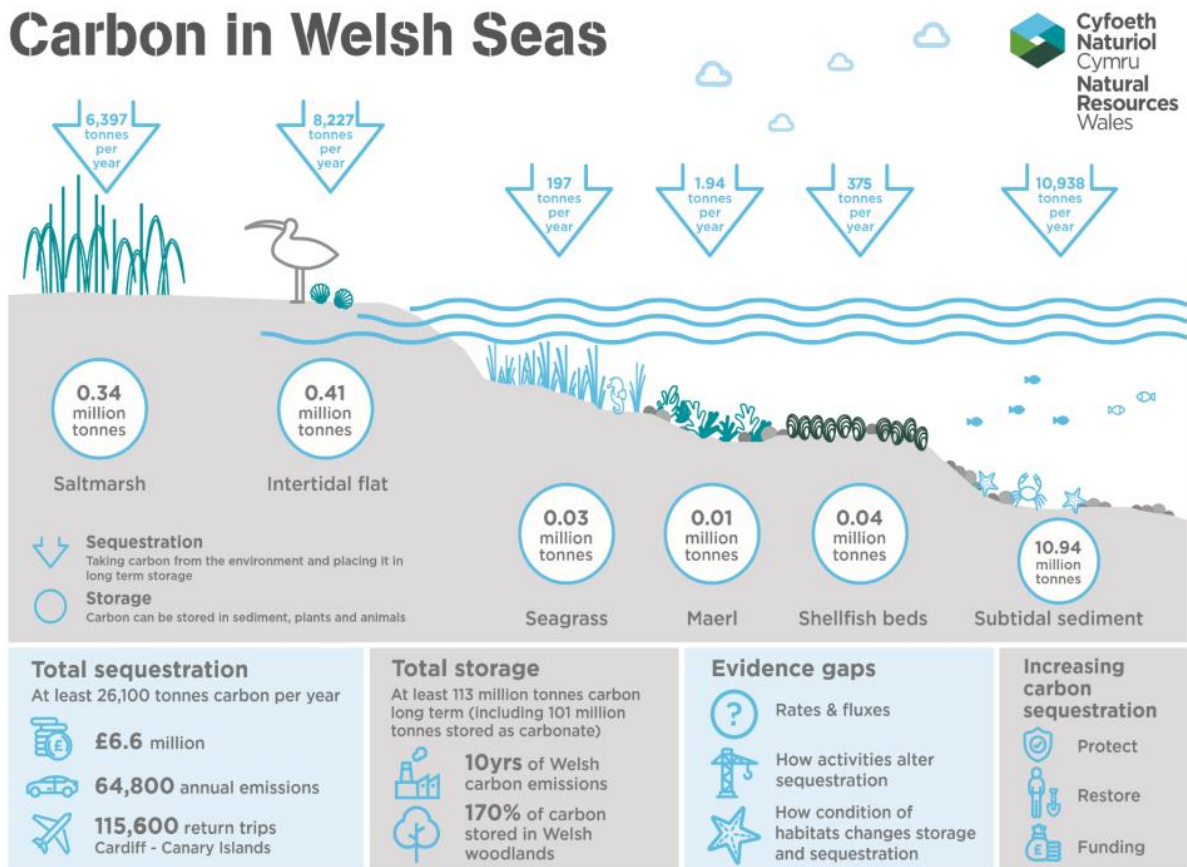
<sup>9</sup> Jones S M, Karran A, Bosanquet S, Barter G, Garrett H and Hancocks L. 2021. Greater Gwent State of Nature. Produced by the Resilient Greater Gwent Partnership

<sup>10</sup> <https://naturalresources.wales/media/695923/sonarr2020-executive-summary.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning/water-quality/#:~:text=Any%20proposed%20development%20within%20the,contribution%20to%20the%20water%20body.>



than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system<sup>12</sup> as well as absorbing around 20% of annual carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions generated by human activity<sup>13</sup>. The following diagram illustrates how much carbon is sequestered and carbon storage potential in Welsh seas.



Source: SoNaRR 2020 [SoNaRR2020 Ecosystem: Marine \(naturalresources.wales\)](https://naturalresources.wales/SoNaRR2020-Ecosystem-Marine)

An ocean in crisis, and likewise rivers in crisis are not only bad news for our climate, but also for our fishing industry, aquaculture industry, tourism industry and for the health, wellbeing and prosperity of our coastal and river communities. Delivering the pledges set out in the Motion for the Rivers and Ocean could yield new jobs and opportunities, more resilient coastal and riverside economies, and happier, healthier people; as well as a cleaner, healthier and more productive natural environment. Healthy oceans and rivers are essential allies in our fight against climate change.

<sup>12</sup> [Global reconstruction of historical ocean heat storage and transport \(pnas.org\)](https://pnas.org)

<sup>13</sup> [WMO The State of Greenhouse Gases in the Atmosphere Based on Global Observations through 2018](https://www.wmo.int)

## How are we responding?

Climate change, the nature emergency and the condition of our rivers and ocean are all inextricably linked. This is why the Council's response to these has been drawn together into this one overarching strategy. Under the strategy sit four different objectives, each with an action plan. Some of the actions within the 4 plans will link with the other plans, since climate, nature and rivers and ocean cannot be considered in isolation and all have links with each other.

### Council Emissions



**Purpose: Strive to reduce the council's carbon emissions to net zero by 2030**

This sets out how the council plans to reduce its own carbon emissions to meet the Welsh Government target of a net zero public sector by 2030 public sector. This is the commitment we made in our Climate Emergency declaration in 2019. The actions in this plan focus on the themes set out in the Welsh Government Decarbonisation Route Map<sup>14</sup> of: Buildings, Mobility and Transport, Procurement and Land Use.

**Objectives:**

- 1 Strategic – Support the collection of data and resource management
- 2 Buildings – Reduce and remove the carbon emissions from our built environment
- 3 Transport – Reduce and remove the carbon emissions from operational, business and commuting emissions
- 4 Procurement– Reduce in-direct emissions from the supply chain
- 5 Land Use– Reduce emissions from land use polices and how the Council uses its land

### Nature Recovery



**Purpose: Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems resilience through the Council's operations and working in partnership with communities**

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-07/a-route-map-for-decarbonisation-across-the-welsh-public-sector.pdf>

This action plan incorporates actions taken from the refreshed Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, the Nature Recovery Action Plan and the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Actions include how the Council will maintain and enhance biodiversity when carrying out its own operations, as well as working with communities to help them restore and protect nature. Also included are landscape scale actions which are delivered in partnership.

**Objectives:**

- 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature
- 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience
- 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience
- 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
- 7 Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action
- 8 Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

## Rivers and Ocean



### **Purpose: Work towards clean, healthy and productive rivers and ocean**

Actions focus on ways to improve the quality of our rivers and ocean. Some of these actions the Council is the main lead on, but many of the actions rely on working in close partnership with neighbouring authorities and partners like Natural Resources Wales and Welsh Water.

**Objectives:**

- 1 Reduce sewage, phosphate and other chemical pollution in our rivers
- 2 Reduce plastic and other litter pollution in rivers and coast areas
- 3 Protect natural habitats along our rivers, estuaries and coast
- 4 Minimise the impacts of flooding on communities by mitigation and adaptation (rivers and coastal areas)
- 5 Raise awareness of the importance of our rivers and coasts

## Communities and Climate



### **Purpose: Work with communities, partners and business to reduce carbon emissions**

Since only 2% of Monmouthshire's carbon emissions come from the public sector, it is really important that the Council works closely with communities, residents, partners and businesses to help them reduce emissions. This action plan sets out what the Council is doing to reduce wider emissions from across the county, not those which we are directly responsible for ourselves. This includes actions to help reduce emissions for example through active travel, waste and recycling and education.

**Objectives:**

**1 Reduce energy use and increase renewable energy across the county**

2 Reduce waste and what we buy by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more

3 Encourage active travel, public transport and low emission vehicles

4 Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference

5 Prepare and adapt for the impact of climate change

## Climate Adaptation

Even if we were to stop all carbon emissions today, we will still have to face the impacts of climate change that are already happening. Over the next few decades we are facing significant levels of climate change regardless of any action to reduce our emissions now. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Climate Change Risk Assessment for Wales<sup>15</sup> published in 2021 forecasts hotter, drier summers, warmer, wetter winters and more extreme weather events. The Risk Assessment considered 61 different risks and opportunities from climate change, and in Wales 26 of these risks have increased in urgency in the 5 years since the previous Risk Assessment in 2016.

In particular risks include:

- The impacts of climate change on the natural environment, including terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine species, forests and agriculture.
- An increase in the range, quantities and consequences of pests, pathogens and invasive species.
- More frequent and severe flooding and coastal erosion, causing damage to our infrastructure services, homes, communities and business
- The impact of extreme temperatures, high winds and lightning on the transport network.
- The impact of increasing high temperatures on people's health and wellbeing.
- Disruption to the delivery of health and social care services from extreme weather.
- Damage to our cultural heritage assets as a result of temperature, precipitation, groundwater and landscape changes.
- Impacts internationally that may affect the UK, such as risks to food availability, safety and security, risks to international law and governance from climate.

It is crucial that the Council gives careful thought to how it will respond to these risks. Rather than have a separate action plan for climate adaptation, adaptation is embedded into each of the four action plans, since they all need to identify climate risks, measures to mitigate those risks and opportunities to help nature and people to adapt.

Council services have begun thinking about what the potential risks to their services are, in order to start planning how to adapt to these risks. The Local Development Plan has a key role to play in making sure that our communities are sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change.

With an increase in winter rainfall and rising sea levels, flooding is likely to increase, and this will be a particular concern in parts of Monmouthshire. Much of the work to co-ordinate

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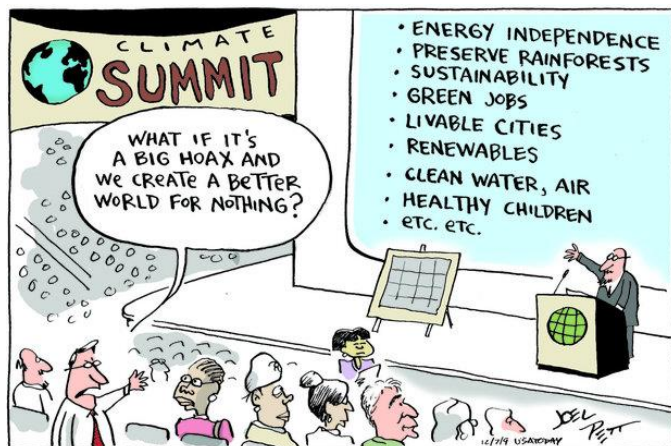
<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-Wales-Summary-Final.pdf>

emergency responses is organised through the Gwent Local Resilience Forum (LRF). We will continue to work with partners on the LRF to make sure that we are prepared for severe weather events.

## The benefits of action

It is important that addressing the climate and nature emergencies is done in a just and equitable way that does not widen inequalities. Those who contribute the least to climate change are often those who suffer the impacts of climate change the most, both globally and here within the UK. Solutions need to be developed that benefit everyone, not just those who can afford expensive new technologies. The aim of this strategy is that as well as reducing carbon emissions and helping to slow climate change, there will be other co-benefits that will benefit communities, business, visitors and everyone who lives and works in Monmouthshire. These include things like:

- Lower energy bills for residents and businesses
- Better air quality and the resulting health benefits
- Improved health and less congestion through use of active travel like walking and cycling
- Less damage to the local environment from drought, floods and fire
- Increased demand for green technologies and the resulting potential for job growth in these sectors
- Better habitat management, increased biodiversity and creation of green space
- Improved mental and physical health when people connect more with the natural environment
- More globally responsible citizens
- Benefits for tourism through maintaining an attractive, clean, green environment



## Playing your part

The Climate Emergency Action Plan cannot be delivered by the Council alone. We need other partners to join us in helping to reduce carbon emissions across the county. To that end, we will be working with Public Service Board partners over coming months. Much

decarbonisation work is also done at a regional scale, with close working with Cardiff Capital Region, and some of our actions will contribute to their Energy Vision and Strategy.

We hugely value the enthusiasm, energy and expertise of the residents of Monmouthshire who have such a lot to contribute, and we continue to collaborate with our communities and other partners to work together on our action plan. For example, Monmouthshire Community Climate Champions is a network of community organisations, town and community councils, council staff and elected members who are all working on practical projects to help reduce carbon emissions and build sustainable and resilient communities. The group has met quarterly since 2008 to share ideas and information and develop projects to reduce our impact on climate change.

There are things that every resident, visitor or worker in Monmouthshire can do to play their part in reducing carbon emissions and helping to slow down climate change. We are all part of the problem, but can all be part of the solution too. The Communities and Climate Action Plan sets out some of the steps that we can all take as individuals to help reduce our contribution to climate change.

## Monitoring progress

It is important that we know whether the actions we will be taking to address the climate and nature emergencies are making a difference. Some things are easier to measure than others. We can measure how much carbon some of the actions will save, for example based on the Council's energy or fuel bills. However, carbon savings from some of the actions in the wider community are much harder to measure, but we can at least make sure that we are doing what we have said we will do. Likewise, we can measure how many trees have been planted, or how many hectares of grassland have been managed for pollinators, but it can be very hard to quantify the impact that this has.

Each of the 4 action plans has a lead officer, responsible for driving progress and collating and reporting on progress. The actions are delivered by Service Area Officers/ Managers and coordinated by the Chief Officer – Communities and Place. This enables strategy ownership and delivery across all services. Progress will be reported regularly to councillors through the Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group. The action plans contained within this strategy will be updated and reported on annually but the actions will be continuous, as we look globally for examples of leading edge practice that can help us accelerate our progress. Progress will be monitored by Performance and Overview Scrutiny, followed by the Cabinet member reporting to Cabinet on progress.

## Annex 1 - The Councils Carbon Emissions – How they are calculated and reported

### 1. Reporting Methodology

Welsh Government (WG) have an ambition for the public sector to be collectively net zero by 2030. This will require MCC to cut both our direct emissions from energy and our built estate and the indirect emissions arising from service delivery and procurement activities. To monitor progress against this target, Welsh Government have required the Welsh Public Sector to submit annual carbon emission returns since 19/20 . The reporting model is divided into three emission scopes as follows.

*Scope 1* - are direct emissions from operations that are owned or controlled by the Council.

*Scope 2* – indirect emissions from purchased electricity, heating and cooling.

*Scope 3* - indirect emissions that occur in the value chain of the Council, e.g. purchased goods & services, business travel and employee commuting.

Welsh Government have developed a reporting template for recording public sector emissions which is illustrated in the table below:

| Section      | Category                             | Sources  |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Estate       | Buildings                            | Generation of electricity, heat or steam<br>Generation, transmission & distribution of purchased electricity.<br>Generation, transmission & distribution of purchased heat or steam.<br>Fuel & energy related upstream activities.<br>Upstream leased assets (where not included elsewhere in the public sector)<br>Downstream leased assets |
|              | Land based emissions & Sequestration | Sequestration from owned estate  |
|              | Waste generated in operations        | Waste generated in operations.<br>Municipal waste collected  |
| Transport    | Fleet & other mobile equipment       | Transportation of employees / goods in company-controlled vehicles.<br>Fuel and energy related upstream activities   |
|              | Business Travel                      | Public Transport<br>Service Travel<br>Private car for business (grey fleet)  |
| Supply Chain | Procurement                          | Purchased Services<br>Purchased Goods  |
| Employees    | Employee commuting                   | Employee commuting<br>Employee homeworking   |

Source : Welsh Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide Version 3



## 2. Council Emissions

Public Sector organisations are required to submit annual returns each September that record the emissions generated in the preceding financial year. Monmouthshire's return for the financial year 22/23 is detailed in the table below.

| <b>Buildings Fleets &amp; Other Assets</b> |                         |                           |                           |                  |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|  |                         |                           |                           | Units of         |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e                        |                         |                           |                           |                  |
| <b>Categories</b>                          | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b>     |
| Buildings                                  | 3,407,253               | 1,310,966                 | 1,079,249                 | 5,797,468        |
| Streetlighting                             |                         | 205,381                   | 72,400                    | 277,781          |
| Fleet & equipment                          | 2,799,061               |                           | 668,500                   | 3,467,561        |
| <b>Total</b>                               | <b>6,206,315</b>        | <b>1,516,347</b>          | <b>1,820,149</b>          | <b>9,542,810</b> |

The WG template applies a standardised formula to inputted energy consumption data to calculate direct and indirect emissions. Whilst the Council purchases through a green tariff (100% renewable) we are still required to record the data assuming standard grid energy which does distort the electricity emissions factor. The green tariff can be factored into the renewable's aspect of the template. In 22/23 we purchased 7,826,198 kWh of energy and generated 4,783,567kwh of renewable energy, 4,217,524kwh of which was exported to the grid.

Fuel and equipment emissions are calculated based on the purchased fuel data (1,006,176 litres of petrol, diesel and LPG for operational fleet and 93,268 litres of LPG, gas oil and diesel for equipment).

| <b>Business Travel</b> |                         |                           |                           |                  |
|------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
|                        |                         |                           |                           | Units of         |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e    |                         |                           |                           |                  |
| <b>Categories</b>      | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b>     |
| Business Travel        | 6,465                   |                           | 336,620                   | 343,085          |
| Commuting              |                         |                           | 3,713,585                 | 3,713,585        |
| Homeworking            |                         |                           | 700,832                   | 700,832          |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>6,465</b>            |                           | <b>4,751,038</b>          | <b>4,757,503</b> |

In the above table, the business travel emissions are calculated using business mileage claims and emissions are determined by the vehicle size, fuel type and miles travelled. In 22/23, business mileage amounted to 1,045,008 miles of which 24,014 miles was travelled in vehicles hired by MCC, 1,460,354 miles was undertaken in private cars (5,325 in electric

cars, 18,432 in hybrid) and 10,640 on public transport. Commuting data is calculated based on kilometres travelled and this has been calculated using home and work base locations, number of working days and agile working days (this is based on a staff survey in 22/23).

Homeworking emissions was introduced in 22/23 and is based on an estimate of the number of full-time equivalent staff and the average homeworking percentage. The emissions are generated from the assumed electricity and heating consumption when working from home.

| <b>Waste</b>         |                         |                           |                           |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
|                      |                         |                           |                           | Units of          |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e  |                         |                           |                           |                   |
| <b>Categories</b>    | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b>      |
| Organisational Waste |                         |                           |                           | No data available |
| Municipal Waste      |                         |                           | 226,320                   | 226,320           |
| <b>Total</b>         |                         |                           | 226,320                   | 226,320           |

No data for organisational waste was available at the time of the submission, hence why no emissions are recorded against this category. Municipal waste includes recycling tonnage, albeit the emission factor is substantially lower for recycling (9.122/kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/unit) than landfill (436.007/kgCO<sub>2</sub>e/unit).

| <b>Supply chain – Tier 1 &amp; Tier 2 combined</b>     |                         |                           |                           |              |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--------------|
|  |                         |                           |                           | Units of     |
| kgCO <sub>2</sub> e                                    |                         |                           |                           |              |
| <b>Categories</b>                                      | <b>Direct – Scope 1</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 2</b> | <b>Indirect – Scope 3</b> | <b>Total</b> |
| Agriculture, forest & fishing                          |                         |                           | 250,673.2                 | 250,673.2    |
| Mining & quarrying                                     |                         |                           | 101,644.97                | 101,644.97   |
| Manufacturing  |                         |                           | 5,781,879.90              | 5,781,879.90 |
| Water supply, sewerage, waste management & remediation |                         |                           | 4,764,308.87              | 4,764,308.87 |
| Construction   |                         |                           | 7,687,025.34              | 7,687,025.34 |
| Transportation & Storage                               |                         |                           | 4,090,752.93              | 4,090,752.93 |
| Accommodation & food service activities                |                         |                           | 141,483.85                | 141,483.85   |
| Information and communication                          |                         |                           | 337,483.12                | 337,483.12   |
| Financial & insurance activities                       |                         |                           | 78,562.22                 | 78,562.22    |
| Professional, scientific and technical activities      |                         |                           | 2,514,949.7               | 2,514,949.7  |
| Administrative & support service activities            |                         |                           | 592,572.84                | 592,572.84   |

|                                       |  |  |              |              |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--------------|--------------|
| Education                             |  |  | 294,606.12   | 294,606.12   |
| Human health & social work activities |  |  | 3,107,143.55 | 3,107,143.55 |
| Arts, entertainment & recreation      |  |  | 20,668.57    | 20,668.57    |
| Other service activities              |  |  | 25,649.20    | 25,649.20    |
| Total                                 |  |  | 29,780,404   | 29,780,404   |

Supply chain emissions are generated through spend data and are indicative estimates of the resulting emissions. This method will not factor in any efforts to reduce supply chain emissions as an average factor is applied to each product group. In the 22/23 accounting year we spent circa £32million on construction related activities, £9,458,000 on manufactured goods and £30,565,758 on human health and social work activities.

The above data evidence the challenges faced by the public sector to decarbonise their activities by 2030. Between 19/20 and 22/23, Monmouthshire has achieved a 17.8% reduction in its emissions, largely due to a reduction in supply chain spend. In 22/23 the total reported emissions were 44,248,418 kgCO<sub>2</sub>e. Below is a table that shows the reported emissions between 19/20 and 22/23.

| WG Net Zero Carbon Reporting - Summary |  |               |               |               |  |
|--|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|--|
|  | Carbon Emissions (tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> e) |               |               |               | Comments   |
|  | 2019/20  | 2020/21       | 2021/22       | 2022/23       |  |
| Operational emissions                  | 15,198   | 11,579        | 13,889        | 14,527        | Energy and fuel used in estate, fleet and equipment.         |
| Supply chain emissions                 | 38,587   | 36,396        | 34,547        | 29,780        | Procured goods and services.                                 |
| Land-based emissions                   | 49   | 170           | 140           | - 59          | -ve figure indicates sequestration (offsetting) of emissions |
| <b>Total MCC carbon emissions</b>      | <b>53,835</b>                                  | <b>48,145</b> | <b>48,576</b> | <b>44,248</b> |  |
| <b>Reduction on previous year</b>      | -  | <b>10.6%</b>  | <b>-0.9%</b>  | <b>8.9%</b>   |  |
| <b>Reduction from 2019/20 baseline</b> | -  | <b>10.6%</b>  | <b>9.8%</b>   | <b>17.8%</b>  |  |
| Avoided emissions                      | - 1,254  | - 1,325       | - 1,124       | - 1,029       | Renewable energy generation                                  |
| Number of FTE staff                    | 2,448  | 2,585         | 2,614         | 2,710         |  |
| <b>tCO<sub>2</sub>e per FTE</b>        | <b>22.0</b>                                    | <b>18.6</b>   | <b>18.6</b>   | <b>16.3</b>   |  |
| Scope 1 (direct)                       | 6,303  | 5,646         | 5,960         | 6,154         |  |
| Scope 2 (indirect – energy)            | 2,420  | 1,542         | 1,715         | 1,516         |  |
| Scope 3 (indirect)                     | 45,063   | 40,786        | 40,761        | 36,578        |  |

Whilst there has been an overall decrease in carbon emissions, operational emissions increased between 21/22 and 22/23. This can be attributed to the increase in the staff base (96) and the inclusion of an additional reporting category for emissions arising from home working.

We are in the process of developing costed decarbonisation plans for our built estate and fleet transition which will provide data to support decision making around the use of assets

and financial investment. The Council Emissions Action Plan sets out the core activities necessary to support our net zero journey and associated indicators to measure progress.

|                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                 | <b>Nature Recovery Reports 2024</b> |
| <b>MEETING:</b>                 | <b>PLACE SCRUTINY</b>               |
| <b>DATE:</b>                    | <b>10 APRIL 2024</b>                |
| <b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b> | <b>ALL</b>                          |

## 1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 and approval for public consultation of the;
- Monmouthshire Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) Part 1: Strategy
  - Monmouthshire's Green Infrastructure Strategy Vol 1&2
- Which sets out the Council's statutory duties and responsibilities and associated actions for delivery.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 and gives approval for a public consultation exercise for the Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) Part 1: Strategy (Draft) and Monmouthshire's Green Infrastructure Strategy Volumes 1&2 (Draft).
- 2.2 The Section 6 Action Plan which forms Appendix 1 of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 is sought for approval alongside the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy cabinet report.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 As a local authority we now have a duty (via the Environment Act 2016) to maintain and enhance biodiversity in all our functions, so the responsibility sits across all services and functions. Climate change is having a significant impact on habitats and species and is one of many pressures on our natural world. In 2021 the Senedd declared a 'Nature Emergency' promoted by the State of Nature Report (2019) highlighting the extinction of 17% of species across Wales. In Gwent the State of Nature Report (2021) showed a 34% decline of assessed species. More recently the updated 2023 the State of Nature report makes the stark statement that Wales is now one of the most nature depleted countries on Earth and along with the rest of the world is facing a biodiversity crisis, with one in six species in Wales at risk of extinction.
- 3.2 The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan 2024-28 (Appendix 1), outlines how the Council fulfils its legal biodiversity duties. It aligns with actions specified in the Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) and Green Infrastructure Strategy.

The Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience ( Section 6 ) Forward Plan key objectives :

Objective 1 Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels

Objective 2 Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature

Objective 3 Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience

Objective 4 Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience

Objective 5 Tackle key pressures on species and habitats

Objective 6 Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery

Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action

Objective 8: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

3.3 As part of its statutory obligations the Council is also required to report every 3 years on actions taken to deliver its biodiversity duties; the current report for 2020-2023 has been prepared and submitted to Welsh Government after which it will be published.

3.4 The Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP) helps to deliver the Section 6 Forward Plan and aims to provide practical, achievable actions designed to help reverse the decline in biodiversity and build ecosystem resilience in Monmouthshire. Supported by the Local Nature Partnership (LNP) the Plan will comprise 4 Parts. Part 1 is the Strategy that sets out our approach for nature recovery in Monmouthshire and a general Action Plan. Parts 2, 3 & 4 will be developed in collaboration with the Local Nature Partnership and will comprise, Habitat Action Plans, Species Action Plans, and a collation of case studies of projects.

Nature Recovery Action Plan Part 1 :Strategy ( Draft) includes the following key areas of action:

- Policies, plans and procedures.
- Education and Awareness
- Evidence and Understanding
- Promoting Ecosystem Resilience
- LNP Governance and Monitoring

3.5 The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy (Appendix 3) sets out the Council's approach to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience through GI in line with the Forward Plan prepared under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It also sets out the Council's approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes through GI in line with objectives of the Gwent Well-being Plan (2023), South East Wales Area Statement, Monmouthshire's Communities and Corporate Plan and the emerging Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy, seeking to deliver climate action through landscape scale projects and partnerships.

## The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy (Draft)

### Core Aims :

- 1 Enrich people's lives through engagement and activity
- 2 Build strong and vibrant places and communities in Monmouthshire
- 3 Conserve, protect and enhance Monmouthshire's GI assets

### GI Objectives :

- Improve Health & Wellbeing
- Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience
- Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness
- Increase Climate Change Resilience
- Support Sustainable Economic Development

The relationship between the plans is set out in Appendix 4

#### **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):**

- 4.1 All three reports have significant positive contributions to make to the Wellbeing Goals. In particular a Healthier Wales through health and wellbeing opportunities through projects and partnerships, well connected multifunctional green spaces and community growing initiatives. There are also benefits for a Resilient Wales, based on supporting nature-based solutions for land management, raised awareness through training and education of the nature crisis and working in partnership to deliver landscape scale projects to support resilient ecological networks. There is also significant potential to contribute to Cohesive Communities, by working collaboratively and in partnership with our communities. Finally contributing to a Globally Responsible Wales through sustainable use of natural resources to support Monmouthshire's local green economy and develop skills and learning. There are no negative impacts on the Well-being Goals.
- 4.2 There are no significant positive or negative impacts on the protected characteristics, safeguarding or corporate parenting. The principles of Long term, Prevention, Integration, Collaboration and Involvement have been used throughout the development of the Action Plans.

#### **5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

- 5.1 Doing nothing is not an option. Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must seek to promote the resilience of ecosystems. This means that Monmouthshire County Council must take a pro-active approach to improve and not reduce biodiversity when carrying out its functions. In addition, the recent publication of Planning Policy Wales edition 12, specifically Chapter 6 changes has significant implications for biodiversity and green infrastructure which aims to avoid biodiversity loss, provide Net Benefit for Biodiversity, and protect and enhance green infrastructure, setting out requirements for Green Infrastructure Assessments / Strategies as part of the planning process.

## **6 EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- 6.1 Updates on progress will be reported upon in line with statutory requirements as set out in the Section 6 duty.

## **7 REASONS:**

- 7.1 To ensure that the Council delivers upon its statutory Biodiversity Section 6 duty, and seek to fulfil requirements of Planning Policy Wales edition 12, supporting the Gwent Well Being Plan and South East Wales Area Statement and addressing its commitments to the climate and nature emergencies through the Council's Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and the Communities and Corporate Plan.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

- 8.1 Actions will be funded in different ways, some are zero cost or will require core funded officer time alone, others will involve Project and Partnership funding delivered through current grant programmes. It is anticipated that where additional funds are needed these will be subject to subsequent decision-making processes.

## **9 CONSULTEES:**

SLT  
Informal Cabinet  
Climate and Nature Emergency Steering Group

## **10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix 1 – Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan  
Appendix 2 – Nature Recovery Action Plan (Draft)  
Appendix 3a & b – Green Infrastructure Strategy Volume 1 & 2 ( Draft )  
Appendix 4 – Nature Recovery Diagram

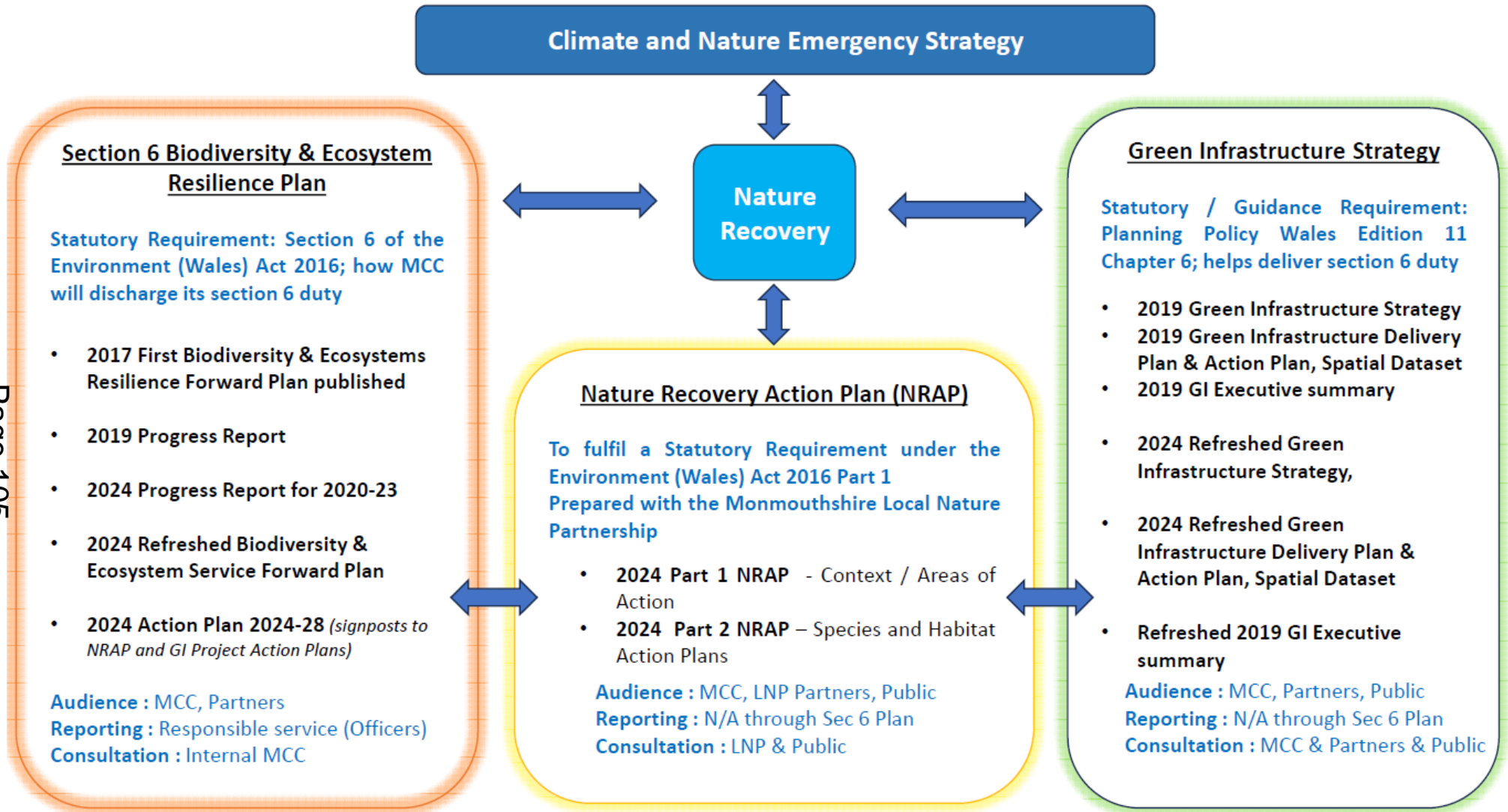
## **11 AUTHORS:**

Colette Bosley Green Infrastructure Manager

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**Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan**  
**Monmouthshire County Council**  
**February 2024**



|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Title</b>            | Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience (Section 6) Forward Plan       |
| <b>Purpose</b>          | Statutory Requirement: Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 |
| <b>Owner</b>            | Monmouthshire County Council   |
| <b>Approved by</b>      | Cabinet  |
| <b>Date</b>             | XX/XX/2024   |
| <b>Version Number</b>   | 3  |
| <b>Status</b>           | Pre-approval   |
| <b>Review Frequency</b> | Every 3 years following 2025   |
| <b>Next review date</b> | December 2025  |
| <b>Consultation</b>     | Officers and Elected Members   |

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity where it is within the proper exercise of their functions. In doing so, public authorities must seek to promote the resilience of ecosystems. This means that Monmouthshire County Council must take a pro-active approach to improve and not reduce biodiversity and ecosystem resilience when carrying out its functions.
- 1.2 The legislation also requires Public Bodies to prepare a 'Forward Plan' to outline how they shall meet the duty and report on that plan every three years from the first reporting round in 2019. This '**Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan**' supersedes the plan of the same title which was published in 2017, following two rounds of statutory reporting (2019 & 2023) and six years of a rapidly changing landscape for nature recovery in Monmouthshire and Wales. The Forward Plan covers the unitary authority of the County Council including the area in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park where functions of Monmouthshire County Council are relevant.
- 1.3 The updated Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan will:
  - ✦ Summarise the relevant legislative requirements for biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems, governance and the corporate framework, and its relationship to the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and other plans.
  - ✦ Consider the current known state of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience of Monmouthshire and consider how the Area Statements and Section 7 Habitats and Species should shape delivery.
  - ✦ Identify the Refreshed Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan Objectives for Monmouthshire
  - ✦ Identify actions and delivery mechanisms to meet the objectives during the period of 2023-2028.
  - ✦ Identify a reporting framework for future reporting rounds.

## 2 THE CLIMATE & NATURE EMERGENCY

- 2.1 Monmouthshire County Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. The initial Climate Emergency Action Plan focused on decarbonisation of Monmouthshire County Council but also identified the importance of managing green spaces to reduce energy use, absorb carbon and be resilient. The plan was updated in 2021, the emphasis on nature recovery was strengthened and action addressing water quality was added to improve protection of our rivers and coasts.
- 2.2 In March 2022, a Motion for Rivers and Ocean was passed by MCC elected members, taking the Motion for the Ocean model developed by the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, and adapting it to recognise the importance of taking a catchment to coast approach to protecting water quality. MCC produced a report containing recommendations for how the council should act to realise clean, healthy, and productive rivers and oceans, alongside the commitment to tackle the climate emergency.
- 2.3 In October 2022, Welsh government published the [Recommendations of the 'Biodiversity Deep Dive'](#) as part of the two-part UN biodiversity summit COP 15. The main aim of this work is to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030. Of relevance for Local Government is the action to Embed Nature Recovery in Policy and Strategy in Public Bodies in Wales.
- 2.4 In April 2023, Monmouthshire County Council published the Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028, which aims to take Monmouthshire forward, working together for a fairer, greener, more successful county. The objectives of the plan include making Monmouthshire a “green place” to live work, with reduced carbon emissions, and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency. The Plan recognises that we are a partner in the Public Service Board, which is responsible for setting well-being objectives for the county of Gwent. The local authority’s own well-being objectives are set by Council and form the backbone of the Community and Corporate Plan.
- 2.5 These significant changes in Wales, Gwent and Monmouthshire have triggered a need for a change in the governance structure around Climate and Nature. Monmouthshire’s approach will be based on four key pillars, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Climate & Nature Strategy planning

- 2.6 The Nature Recovery pillar includes 3 key and interconnected plans for delivery:
  - ✦ Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2024-2028) i.e. this plan,
  - ✦ Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Action Plan (2024), and
  - ✦ Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024).
  
- 2.7 The Monmouthshire Local NRAP is being prepared by MCC in partnership with the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP). This partnership, hosted and coordinated by Monmouthshire County Council, exists to co-ordinate, promote and record conservation actions to promote and enhance nature locally. The Local Nature Recovery Action Plan for Monmouthshire is a key element to effective delivery of Nature Recovery by providing practical actions that meet the objectives of strategic plans, as well as promoting collaborative working with communities and other stakeholders to achieve common goals.
  
- 2.8 The refreshed Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy is being prepared to reflect the statutory and guidance requirement of Planning Policy Wales. Setting out Monmouthshire’s approach to the delivery of GI; it identifies a clear vision, aims, strategic objectives and associated principles to inform and contribute to a range of national, regional and local goals plans and objectives. It forms a delivery mechanism for Nature Recovery, supports ways of addressing health and well-being outcomes, identifies solutions for tackling climate change, supports active travel, public rights of way and provides the framework for partnership working through a GI approach.

### 3 BIODIVERSITY & ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE OF MONMOUTHSHIRE

3.1 Monmouthshire is a large and varied county, with the estuarine coast at the southern limits and the uplands of Bannau Brycheiniog to the north west. The landscape takes us from the wooded Wye Valley to our boundary with the eastern valleys of Gwent.

3.2 Monmouthshire has major biodiversity and ecosystem resources, many of which are internationally or nationally recognised. The Monmouthshire Unitary Authority area contains the following resources:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| The Severn Estuary European Marine Site (EMS)       | The Severn Estuary is designated as a Special Area for Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Ramsar Site (Wetland of international importance).                      |
| Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)                 | There are seven other SACs in Monmouthshire: Cwm Clydach woodlands*, River Wye, River Usk, Sugar Loaf woodlands*, Usk Bat Sites*, Wye Valley woodlands and the Wye Valley (and Forest of Dean) bat sites.                          |
| Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)         | There are 68 SSSIs in Monmouthshire, 16 of which are within BBNP area. Most are woodland or grassland sites with others designated for their wetland or geological interest.   |
| National Nature Reserves                            | Cwm Clydach*, Coed y Cerrig*, Fiddler's Elbow and Lady Park Wood.  |
| Local Nature Reserve                                | Cleddon Bog  |
| Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) | There are approximately 759 non-statutory SINC sites predominantly in relation to grassland and ancient and semi-natural woodland areas within the Monmouthshire planning area and eight SINCs within the BBNP part of the County. |
| Priority habitat and protected species              | Priority habitats and species are those recognised as being of principle importance for nature conservation in Wales listed on Section 42 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.   |

\*Sites within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park

3.3 The South East Wales Area Statement published by Natural Resources Wales in 2019 identified five landscape profiles in Monmouthshire which are useful to illustrate the differences across the county: Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains, South Wales Valleys, Central Monmouthshire, Wye Valley and Wentwood, and the Gwent Levels (see Figure 2). The landscape profiles primarily share the same natural habitats but with clear differences which give them their distinctive character.



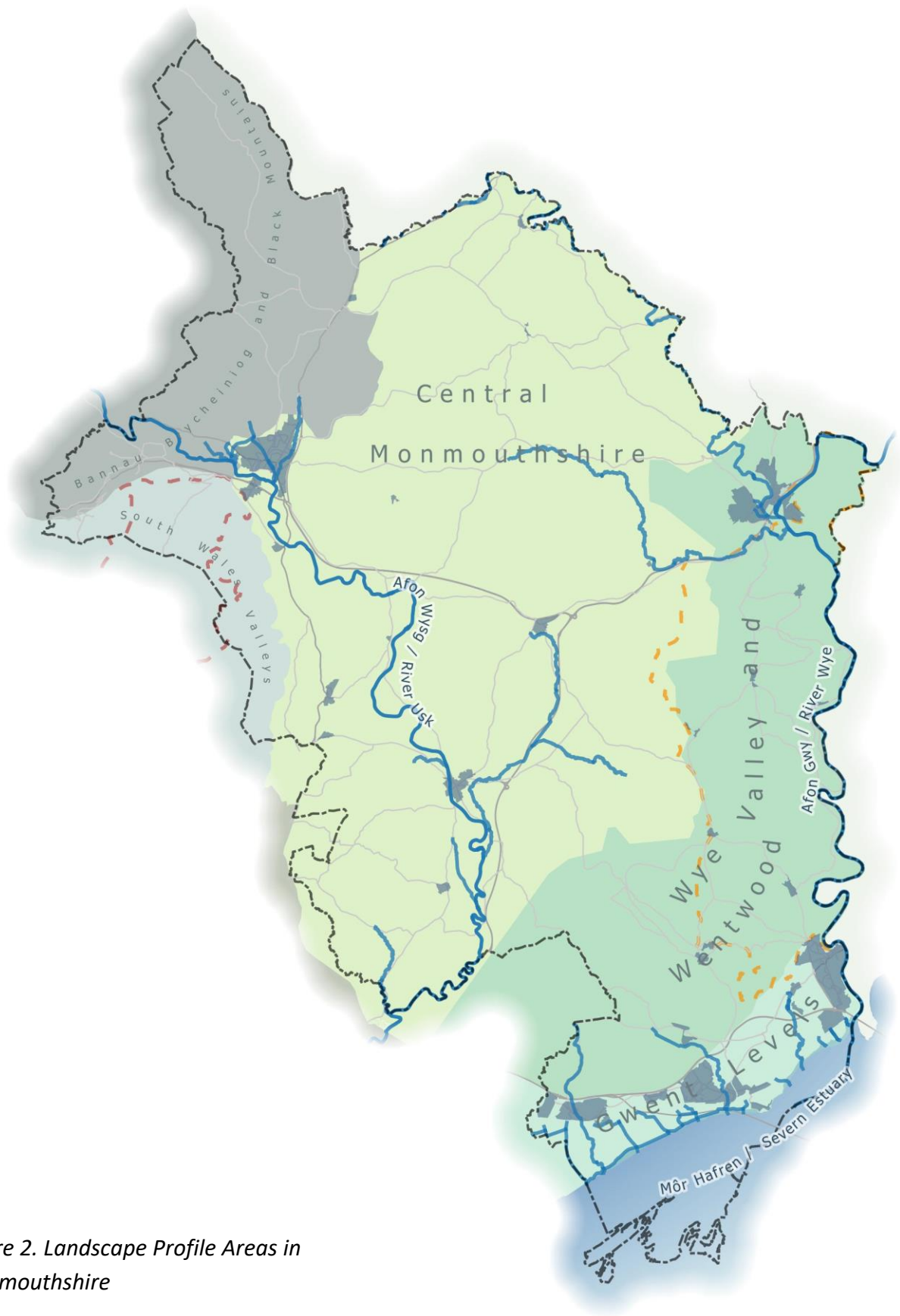


Figure 2. Landscape Profile Areas in Monmouthshire

- 3.4 Central Monmouthshire is noted for its undulating lowlands comprising pasture and arable farmland with isolated pockets of woodland. It is a valuable farming area with agriculturally improved pasture and arable fields. Hedgerows provide important links between small, isolated, ancient woodlands, often on hilltops and steep valley sides where farming is difficult. Parcels of unimproved grassland remain, and considered in the context of massive historical decline are of significant ecological importance.
- 3.5 Wye Valley and Wentwood is predominantly a wooded and riverine landscape. The steep sides of the Wye Valley are clothed in extensive blocks of internationally important woodlands, designated as the Wye Valley Woodlands Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Wye Valley is home to internationally important bat species including Greater Horseshoe Bats and Lesser Horseshoe Bats with many of their roosts included in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Parts of the Wye Valley are known to be used by at least 15 species of bats including the rare Barbastelle Bat and Bechstein's Bat. The area is also important for species such as dormouse, nightjar, and woodland invertebrates.
- 3.6 In the south, the unique Gwent Levels form an extensive coastal habitat along the Severn Estuary comprising reclaimed agricultural land drained by a network of ditches known as reens. The reens support a particularly diverse community of insects and other invertebrates (for example water beetles) and are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Following a successful reintroduction program at Magor Marsh SSSI in 2012, water voles have spread across the Gwent Levels with the furthest record 16km from the original release site.
- 3.7 Outside of the Monmouthshire Planning and Nature Recovery Action Plan area but within the administrative area of the MCC Unitary Authority, are areas of the Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains and South Wales Valleys (Eastern Valleys) landscapes. The Bannau Brycheiniog landscape profile includes the Vale of Ewyas and surrounding upland in the Black Mountains, and the distinctive peaks of the Skirrid and Sugar Loaf framing the Usk Valley at Abergavenny. With exposed upland moorland with extensive views, this is a landscape noted for tranquillity, dark skies, and limited development. Conifer and broad-leafed woodland are present. Pastures are often enclosed by thick hedgerows, often with narrow lanes, scattered small settlements are in the valleys with prehistoric archaeology and Medieval sites including Llanthony Priory and historic parkland.
- 3.8 The Eastern Valleys includes the Bloreng mountain and eastern slopes of Mynydd Garn-wen, some areas are included in the Bleanavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. Common land is a large and important component of the Eastern Valleys and there are extensive areas of beech woodland. Cave systems across the area are important to internationally important bat roosts protected by the Usk Valley Bat Sites SAC. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal on the National Park border is a perfect example of how this once industrial landscape can provide for wildlife today.

- 3.9 The two major rivers in Monmouthshire are the River Usk and River Wye. Both are designated as Special Areas of Conservation and together with their tributaries provide important wildlife corridors and migratory routes for key species such as otters, shad and white clawed crayfish. Another important freshwater habitat in Monmouthshire is the Llandegfedd Reservoir, designated as a SSSI for supporting overwintering wildfowl.
- 3.10 Despite having a wealth of protected and priority species, Monmouthshire's ecosystems are currently facing significant challenges. The State of Nature identified the key drivers of change in Wales (see Figure 2). These drivers are relevant to Monmouthshire. Grassland sites are at risk from poor management, air pollution and development pressures. The Wye Valley is our most ecologically rich area, but quality of the woodland is under threat from lack of management and the spread of ash dieback and invasive species. A considerable proportion of reens and ditches on the Gwent Levels are degraded and at risk from unsuitable development. Freshwater habitats are under threat from water abstraction, pollution, and siltation. Monmouthshire, like the rest of the world, is facing a Nature Emergency.

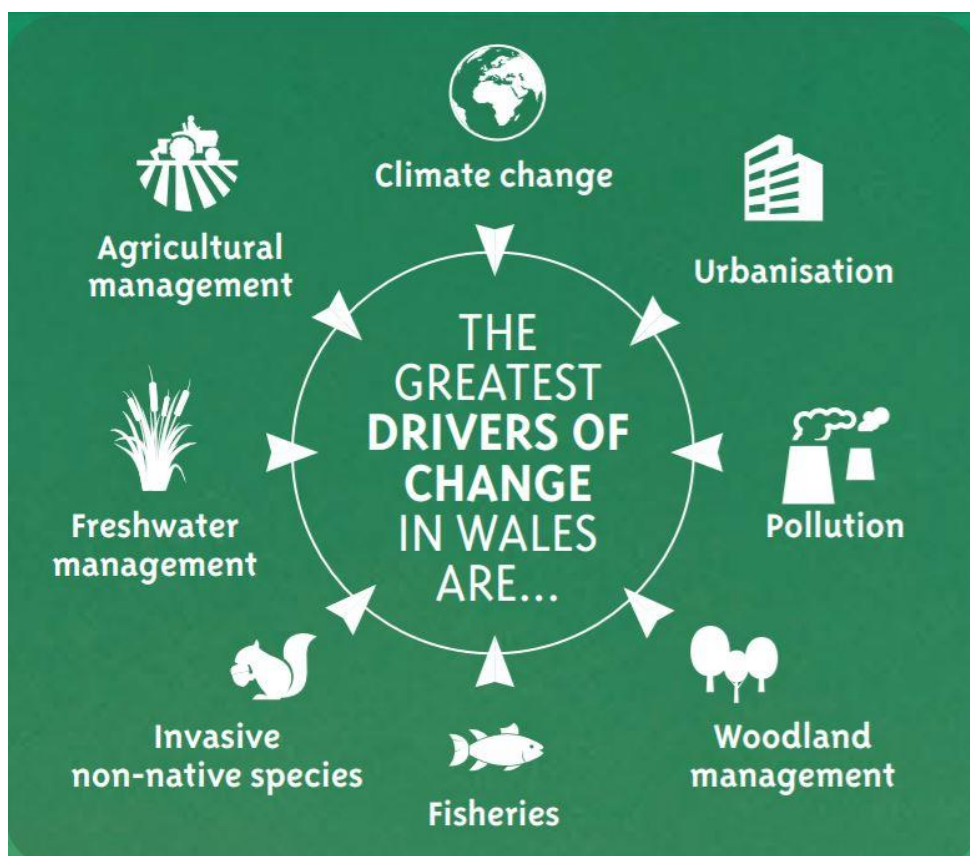


Figure 3 State of Nature: Drivers of Change

- 3.11 Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act says that the Welsh Ministers will publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitats in Wales, which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales. An updated list is expected in 2024 however, in its absence, the list compiled in response to section 42 of the NERC Act 2006 is referenced.
- 3.12 An audit of the Section 7 species and habitats that occur in Monmouthshire undertaken in 2022 are included in the Nature Recovery Action Plan that will be published for consultation alongside this document. These are our 'Priority' habitats & species for nature recovery in Monmouthshire. Additional habitats and or species may be identified as local priorities continue to be developed through the Local Nature Recovery Action Plan.
- 3.13 The Greater Gwent State of Nature was published in 2021 and used existing data to analyse the status and trends of species within the Greater Gwent area. The report analysed individual species and groups of species representing over 500 individual species, presented as 100 different stories of these species and species groups. Of all the species and species groups analysed, 34% of species showed a decline in their numbers or are predicted to continue to decline. Only 12% showed stable populations. Twenty-one percent showed a welcome increase in their numbers, but the remaining 21% did not have enough data to describe the population trends.

## 4 REFRESHED FORWARD PLAN

4.1 During the 2020-23 report, a review of each of the Forward Plan objectives has been undertaken. It concluded that overall, much was being achieved under the objectives composed in 2017 however, the environmental education objective was too narrow in its scope and should be expanded to include wider nature-based solutions and their role in health & well-being in addition to raising public awareness. It was also considered that there was a gap around data and evidence which fell short of the Wales Nature Recovery Action Plan. The following table lists the Refreshed Forward Plan Objectives and the service areas of Monmouthshire County Council that they particularly appertain to:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Objective 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Corporate Policy, Well-being Policy and Planning, Strategic Plans e.g. RLDP, Consents, Operational decisions,</li></ul>  |
| <b>Objective 2: Provide nature-based opportunities to raise awareness, support health and well-being and encourage action for nature</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Environmental Education, Health &amp; Wellbeing activities in nature, providing interpretation and guidance, supporting local groups and citizens to act for nature.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Objective 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Management of Council estate for nature recovery.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Objective 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Supporting other landowners and stakeholders to make positive changes e.g. Regenerative Farming and Natural Flood Management.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Objective 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Addressing drivers through project and procedure e.g. Delivering net benefit through Development Management, Invasive non-native species control, impacts of lighting.</li></ul> |
| <b>Objective 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Collaboration, co-design and co-production through Catchment Partnerships, landscape partnerships, project partnerships.</li></ul>   |
| <b>Objective 7: Use improved evidence, understanding and monitoring to inform action</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Nature Networks, undertaking and encouraging others to undertake monitoring and biological recording.</li></ul>  |
| <b>Objective 8: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Undertake statutory reporting and assess the need to update the plan.</li></ul>  |

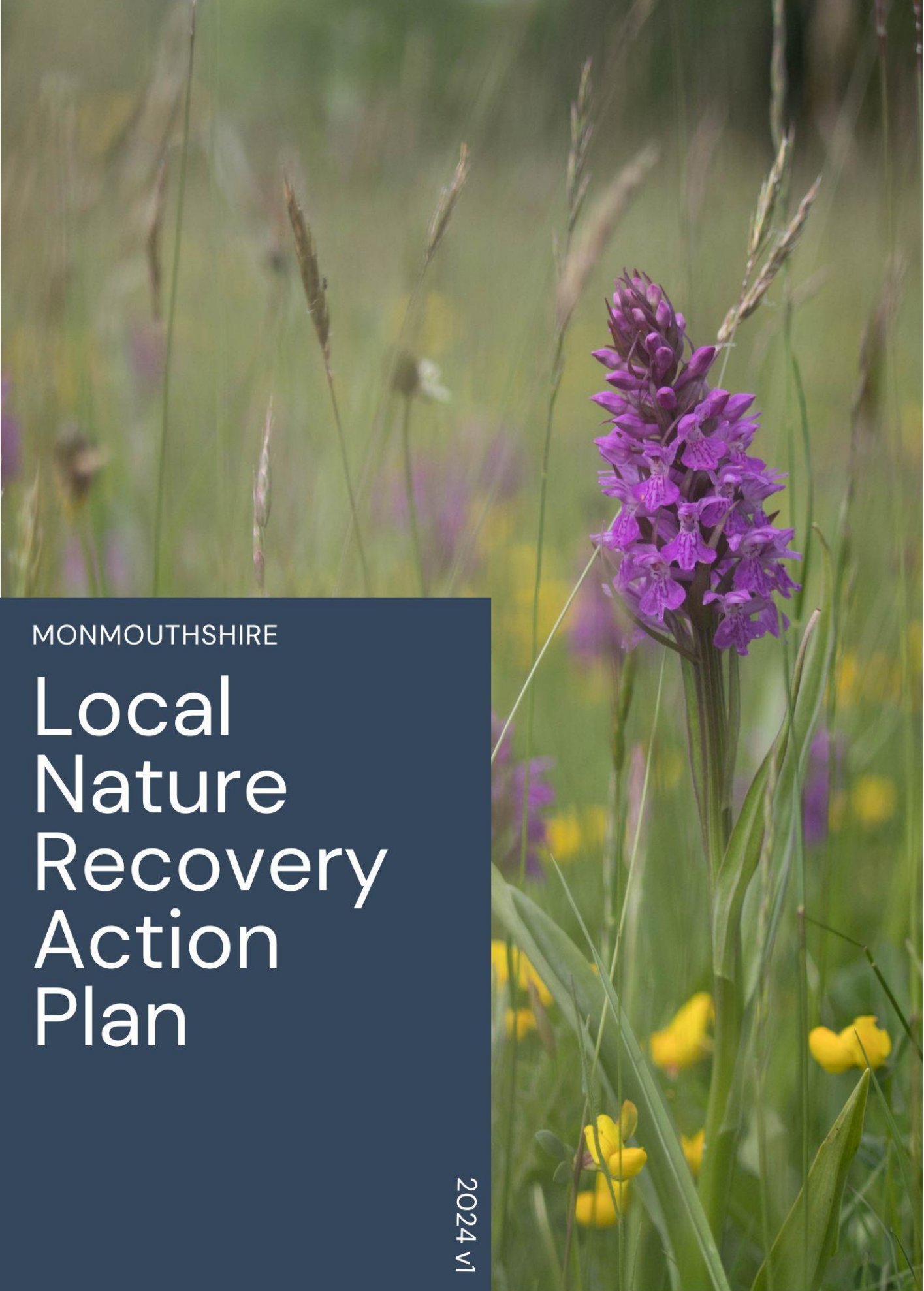
## 5 ACTIONS FOR DELIVERY 2024-2028

- 5.1 Unlike the first iteration of the Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, this refreshed version sets out specific actions together with key service areas responsible for delivery. A table of actions is available in Appendix 1 of this document.
- 5.2 The table also identifies the current funding status of the action, the source(s) of that funding.
- 5.3 The actions make up the 'living' element of the Section 6 plan. These will evolve as additional legislation, policy, funding come into place.

## 6 REPORTING FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 In line with Monmouthshire County Council Performance reporting the actions will be reported against every 6 months.
- 6.2 Statutory reporting to Welsh Government is due in December 2025 and every 3 years following this.
- 6.3 It is proposed that the Forward Plan Objectives and associated Actions shall be reviewed at the time of the 2028 statutory reporting round.





MONMOUTHSHIRE

# Local Nature Recovery Action Plan

2024 v1

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Title</b>            | Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Action Plan |
| <b>Version Number</b>   | 1   |
| <b>Version Date</b>     |   |
| <b>Review Frequency</b> | Annually  |
| <b>Next review date</b> |   |



**Coordinated and distributed by:**

Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership  
c/o Monmouthshire County Council  
County Hall  
The Rhadyr  
Usk  
NP15 1GA

Monmouthshire Local  
Nature Partnership



Partneriaeth Natur  
Lleol Sir Fynwy



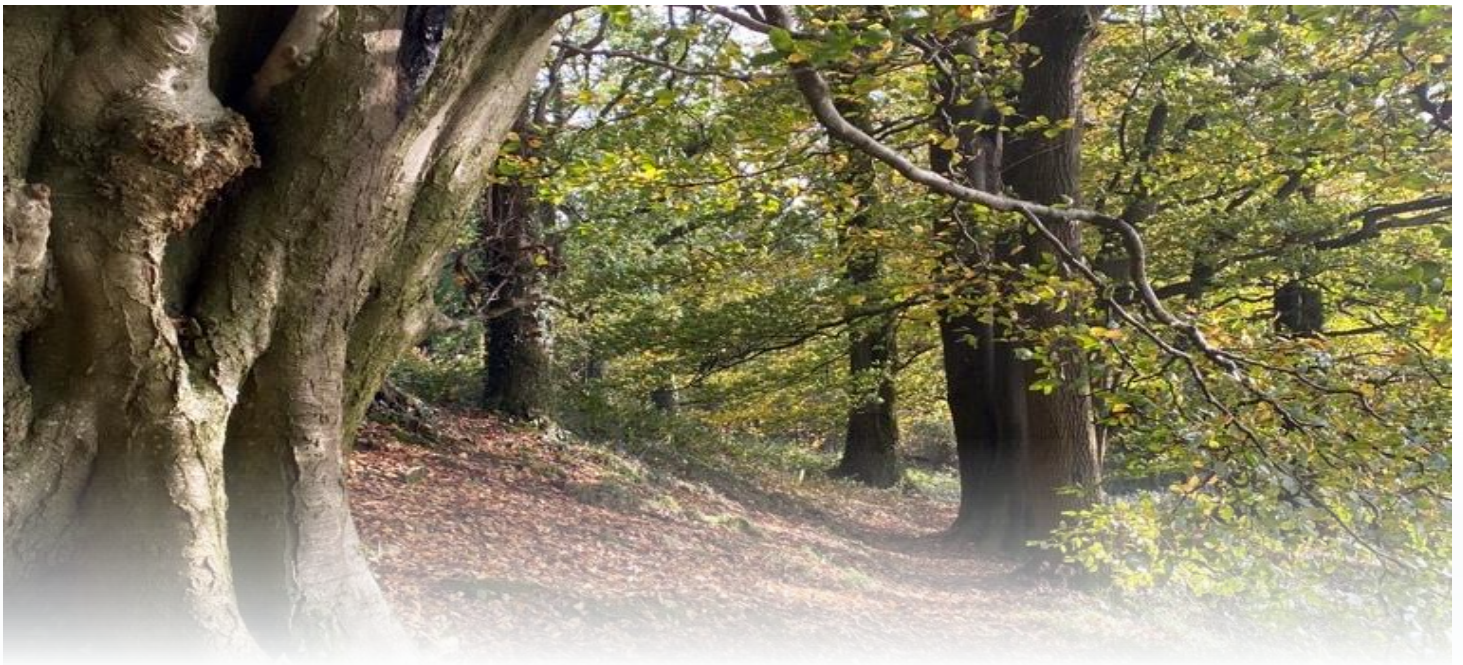
# Part 1: Strategy

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This document is hyperlinked. Click on **bold green** text for references.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Monmouthshire Local **Nature Recovery Action Plan (NRAP)** is a guide to conservation work in Monmouthshire to deliver outcomes to benefit nature recovery. The plan aims to provide practical, achievable actions designed to help reverse the decline in biodiversity and build ecosystem resilience in Monmouthshire. We want to motivate communities to actively contribute to the effective restoration and protection of nature in Monmouthshire.

The Monmouthshire Local NRAP has been produced by the Monmouthshire **Local Nature Partnership (LNP)**. The LNP exists to co-ordinate, promote and record conservation actions to promote and enhance nature locally. The Monmouthshire LNP covers the local authority area of Monmouthshire County Council, excluding that in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park which has a separate Local Nature Partnership and **Local NRAP**. For ease of use we refer to the area covered by the LNP and this NRAP as "Monmouthshire" throughout the document.

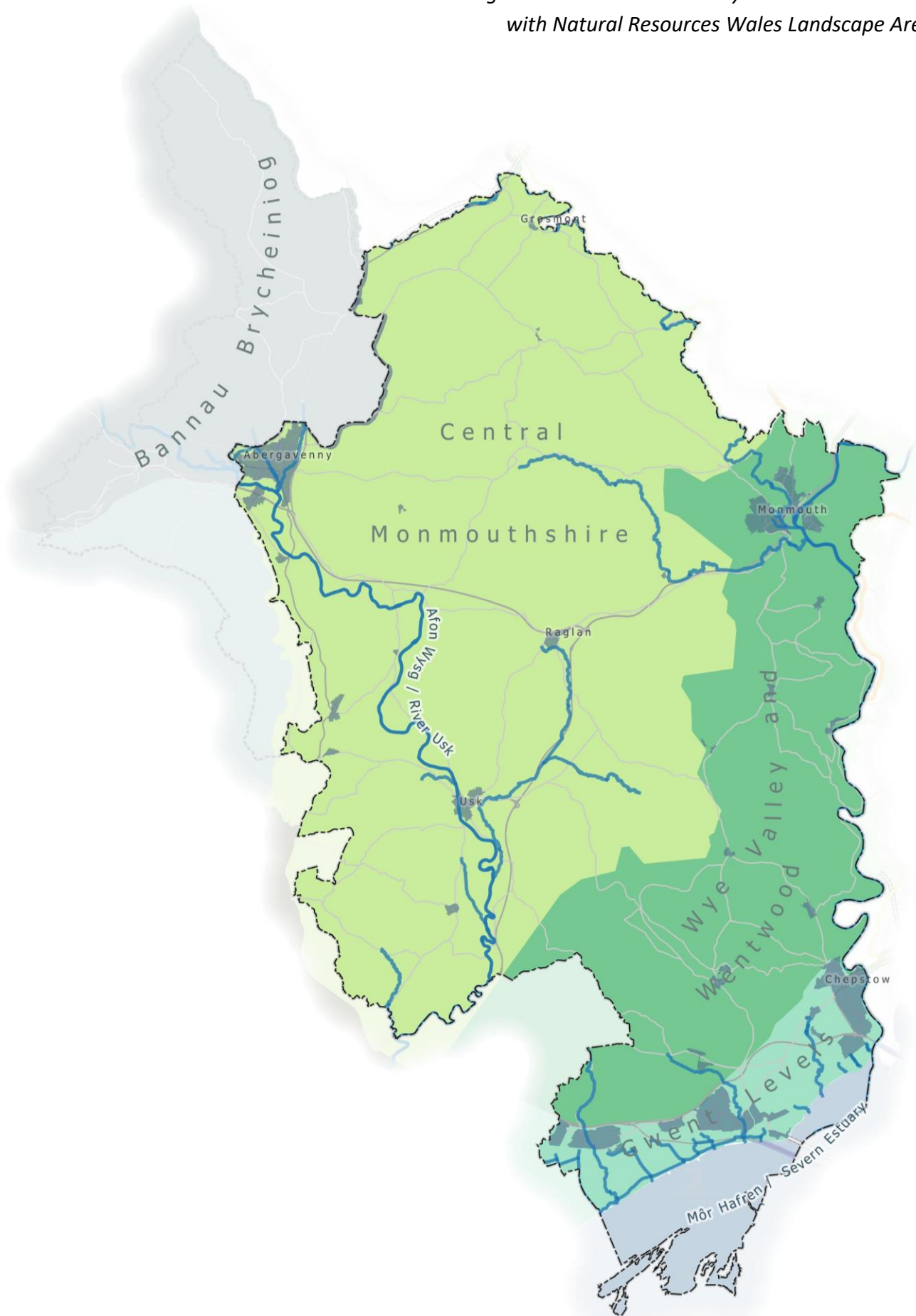
The Local NRAP is being collated and edited by LNP coordinators hosted by Monmouthshire County Council in collaboration with key partners with expertise and responsibilities for conservation and nature recovery in Monmouthshire. It is intended to be a "living document" with regular updates to record and expand on the work of the LNP.

Consistent with the NRAP for Wales, this Local NRAP does not include actions for marine habitats.

For actions affecting the Severn Estuary, partners should refer to the Severn Estuary Partnership.



Figure 1: The area covered by Monmouthshire LNP, with Natural Resources Wales Landscape Areas



## 1.1. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

The Local NRAP is a replacement of the Monmouthshire **Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)**, published in 2005 by the predecessor to the LNP, Monmouthshire Biodiversity Partnership. The LBAP included action plans for six habitats and 15 species. The Local NRAP will expand on the work started by the LBAP, identify current priorities and threats, and revise the actions to bring them up to date.

The **NRAP for Wales** was launched in 2015 and sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's Strategic Plan for Biodiversity. The NRAP for Wales is broad, designed to be a guide for all public bodies in Wales that sets out the objectives to support Welsh Government's ambition **"to reverse the decline in biodiversity, for its intrinsic value, and to ensure benefits to society"**.

The **Greater Gwent NRAP** was produced by Resilient Greater Gwent and Gwent Green Grid Partnerships and published in 2022. It provides guidance and recommendations on nature recovery actions within the Greater Gwent area, i.e. Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Newport, and Monmouthshire. The Greater Gwent NRAP encourages partnership working between all public bodies and organisations within Greater Gwent and promotes a regional approach to nature recovery at all levels, aligned to national and local priorities.

Monmouthshire County Council published its **Forward Plan** in 2017. The plan was produced to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and to provide a mechanism for delivering the County's requirements under the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Monmouthshire County Council have a duty to report every three years on progress made in delivering the plan. The 2023 report has identified the need to refresh the Forward Plan which will include eight objectives and actions for delivery over the next 4 years.

**Our Local NRAP will take the objectives established in the regional and national plans and turn them into deliverable actions that we can achieve within the LNP, for our local sites and our local communities.**

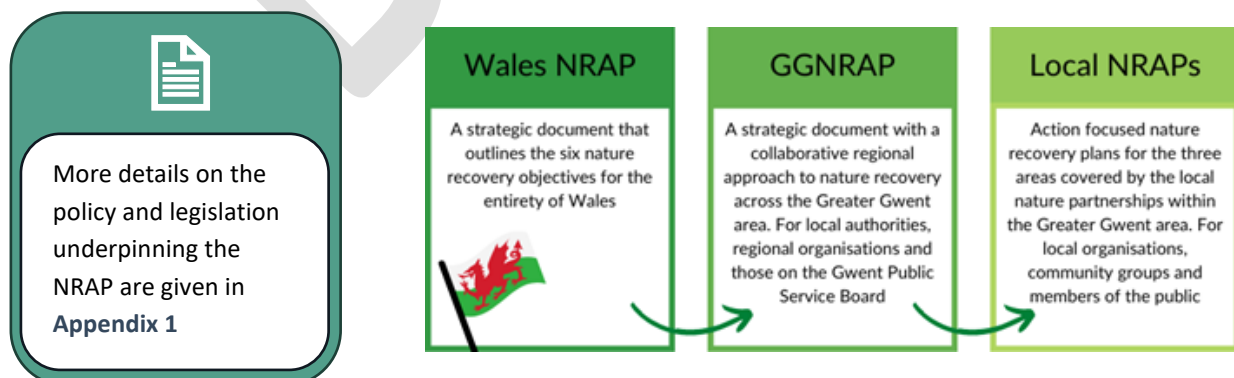


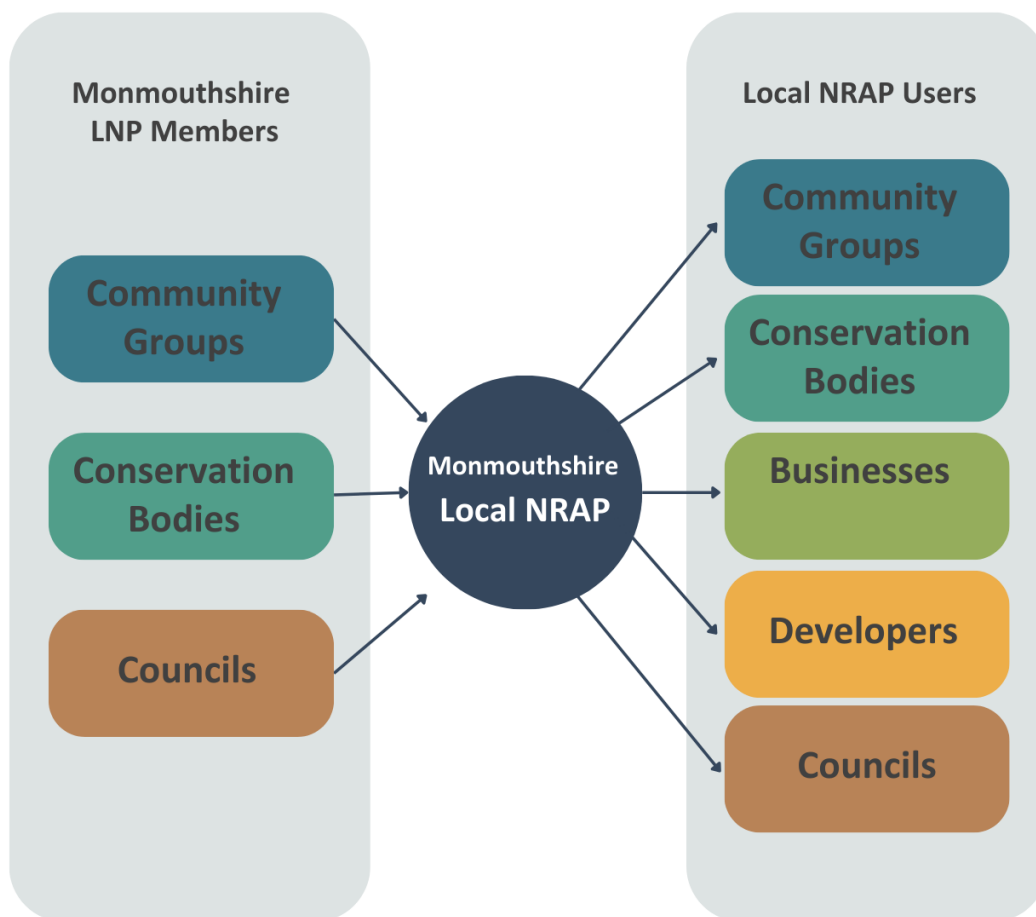
Figure 2: The relationship between plans  
(from Greater Gwent NRAP)



## 1.2. WHO IS IT FOR?

The Local NRAP is for anyone undertaking operations, projects or action in Monmouthshire which may affect biodiversity or nature recovery.

- ✦ It is for community groups and conservation bodies carrying out boots-on-the-ground conservation activities.
- ✦ It is for businesses looking to contribute to effective nature recovery. It is for developers to inform meaningful net benefit for biodiversity as part of their developments in Monmouthshire.
- ✦ It is for the county, town, and community councils to aid and guide their functions whilst meeting the Section 6 biodiversity duty.
- ✦ It is both a source of activities to be funded and an evidence base for funding applications.



*Figure 3: Contributors and users of the Local NRAP*

### **Box 1: The Local NRAP and Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership**

The LNP is a key mechanism for delivering a Local NRAP for Monmouthshire, but the NRAP is also fundamental in delivering the aims of the LNP to: **Co-ordinate, promote and record existing and new actions to conserve, promote and enhance nature in Monmouthshire...taking account of local and national priorities.**

The Local NRAP meets the purposes of the LNP set out in the Terms of Reference through:

- Enabling partnership working between key organisations and individuals that protect and enhance nature in Monmouthshire.
- Supporting the development of projects undertaken by individual organisations to address local priorities.
- Identifying opportunities for integrating the conservation, promotion, and enhancement of nature into other policy areas, plans and projects throughout Monmouthshire.
- Supporting and encouraging new and existing action groups to take forward the implementation of actions identified in the plans.
- Raising awareness of nature conservation related issues and priorities in Monmouthshire

### **Box 2: The Local NRAP and Monmouthshire County Council**

Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 places a duty on public authorities to seek to **maintain and enhance biodiversity where it is within the proper exercise of their functions.** In doing so, public authorities must seek to promote the resilience of ecosystems. This means that Monmouthshire County Council must take a pro-active approach to improve and not reduce biodiversity when carrying out its functions. The legislation also requires Public Bodies to prepare a 'Forward Plan' to outline how they shall meet the duty and report on that plan every three years from the first reporting round in 2019.

Monmouthshire County Council declared a **Climate Emergency** in 2019. The first Climate Emergency Action Plan identified the importance of managing green spaces to reduce energy use, absorb carbon and be resilient. However, when it was updated in 2021, the emphasis on nature recovery was strengthened and an action on addressing water quality was added to improve protection of our rivers and coasts.

In March 2022, a **Motion for Rivers and Ocean** was passed by elected members, taking the Motion for the Ocean model developed by the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interest Group, and adapting it to recognise the importance of taking a catchment to coast approach to protecting water quality. Monmouthshire County Council produced a report containing recommendations for how the council should act to realise clean, healthy and productive rivers and oceans, alongside the commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

In April 2023, Monmouthshire County Council published the **Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028**, which aims to take Monmouthshire forward, working together for a fairer, greener, more successful county. The objectives of the plan include making Monmouthshire a "green place" to live work, with reduced carbon emissions, and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency.

Following two rounds of statutory reporting and a rapidly changing landscape for nature recovery in Monmouthshire and Wales, Monmouthshire County Council are publishing revised Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, which will be available mid 2024.

**The Local NRAP is a key element to effective delivery of these plans and strategies by providing practical actions that meet the objectives of strategic plans, as well as promoting collaborative working with communities and other stakeholders to achieve common goals.**

### 1.3. WHY DO WE NEED A LOCAL NRAP?

#### 1.3.1. UNDERSTANDING BIODIVERSITY

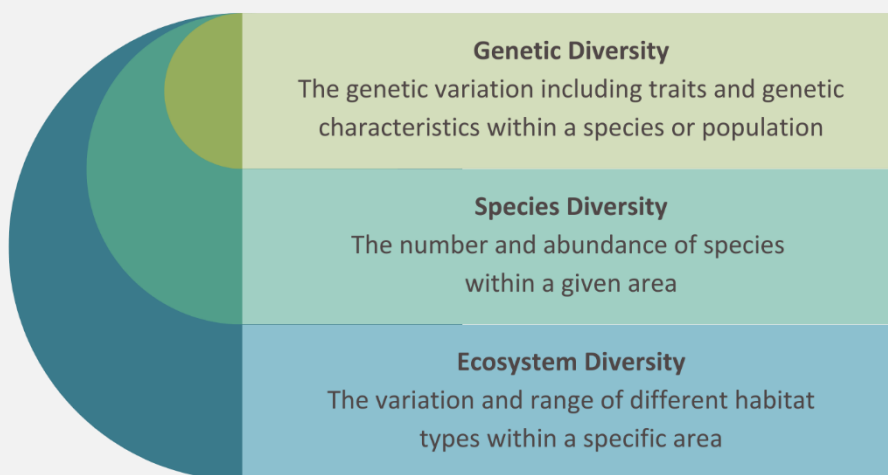
Biodiversity is short for biological diversity and simply means the variety of life. It includes all the living things that occur in the natural world and the variation between them. Biodiversity is not just about the number of species that occur in a place, it also includes the genetic variation between and within species, and the interactions between species and individuals.

Biodiversity is not just restricted to rare or threatened species, although Monmouthshire has plenty of both, it encompasses all living things in the natural world, from those that are common to those that are critically endangered.

Nature, although more commonly understood, is perhaps more difficult to define. Nature is broader than biodiversity, encompassing not only species and habitats but all the physical processes on Earth that create and support life. An ecosystem is a dynamic and interconnected system of living organisms and physical environment contained within specific geographical area. When we talk of "**nature recovery**" we talk of restoring species populations, habitat condition, natural processes and all the things in between that make up a healthy and resilient ecosystem.

Nature Recovery is essential because nature plays a critical role in all aspects of our lives, and there is substantial evidence for the negative impacts of degraded ecosystem services on life as we know it.

Figure 4: Definition of Biodiversity



*“Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.”*

The Convention on Biological Diversity (1993)

### 1.3.2. ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

Ecosystem Services are the natural systems which create an environment in which we can live and thrive, ranging from providing resources, temperature and flood regulation and mitigation, to cultural benefits including recreation and well-being. Biodiversity underpins most, if not all, essential ecosystem services including provision of food, materials, flood defences and carbon sequestration.

The most vital ecosystem services provided by biodiversity are provision of oxygen and carbon sequestration through photosynthesis; the process by which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere by plants, broken down into carbon for growth and oxygen released back into the air for us to breathe. As plants grow, they store carbon in their leaves, twigs, and trunks, and importantly in their roots and the soil around them.

Ecosystem services help society adapt to a changing climate and provide mitigation for flooding. Trees and woodlands play a crucial role in mitigating air pollution, minimising noise, and providing cooling and shade. Green spaces and access to nature provides opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles. Evidence supports associations between access to nature and increased mental well-being.

The concept of ecosystem services is proven to be successful in demonstrating the necessity of taking action for nature recovery. It also provides us with criteria to measure impacts and demonstrate success, but our use of the term does not mean we consider the intrinsic value of nature and biodiversity any less.



Figure 5: Ecosystems services (NRW)



### 1.3.3. ECOSYSTEM RESILIENCE

Ecosystem resilience refers to the ability of an ecosystem to withstand disturbances, adapt to changes, and recover its structure and function after being exposed to various stresses or shocks. This concept is a fundamental aspect of ecology and its importance in the fields of conservation and nature recovery has been recognised in recent years.

**Natural Resources Wales (NRW)** developed the **DECCA** framework (sometimes also the DECC framework) which describes the attributes which contribute to a resilient ecosystem; **Diversity, Extent, Condition and Connectivity**. The first iteration of the framework included Adaptability which is now replaced by "other **Aspects**" to recognise that adaptability is a function of the four key attributes. The speed and success of nature recovery and species climate-change adaptation will mainly depend on actions that maintain or enhance all four attributes of resilience (see Figure 6).

Welsh Government **National Natural Resources Policy** recommends the maintenance and restoration of **Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs)** at a landscape-scale level to build ecosystem resilience. Effective Resilient Ecological Networks are defined as connected landscape features that:

- have networks of habitat in good ecological condition that link protected sites and other biodiversity hotspots across the wider landscape.
- enable the movement of species across landscapes to fulfil their life cycle or respond to climate change.
- provide important ecosystem services and maximum benefit for well-being.

In 2010, Defra published "**Making Space for Nature**", known as The Lawton Report, which provides the most succinct conclusion on what is required; "*the essence of what needs to be done to enhance the resilience and coherence of [an] ecological network can be summarised in four words: **more, bigger, better and joined***". Small, isolated sites do not contain enough food, shelter or genetic diversity required to support sustainable populations. We need **more** sites that are rich in biodiversity. We need **bigger** sites to allow for larger, more stable, populations and greater diversity of habitats and species composition. We need **better** quality sites and to manage sites better, to ensure protected sites are not degraded by neglect, inappropriate management, or development. And we need to **join** our nature sites to allow movement between populations, allow species to move away from sites where they can no longer thrive, or repopulate an area.

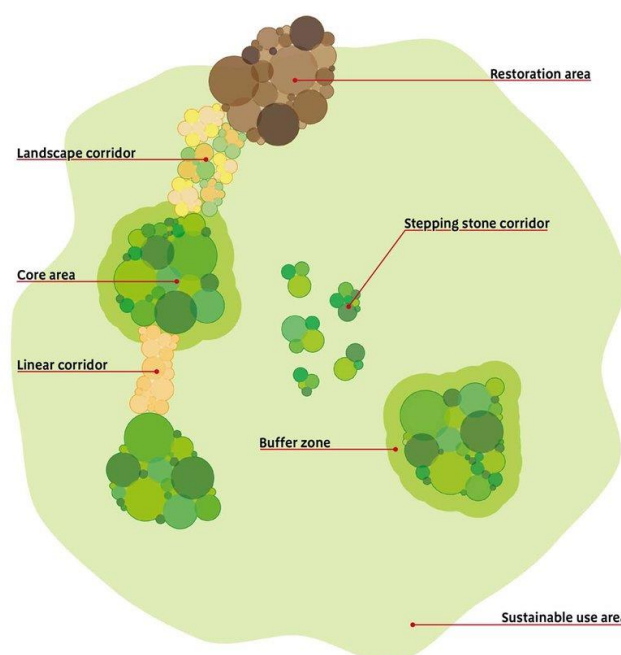
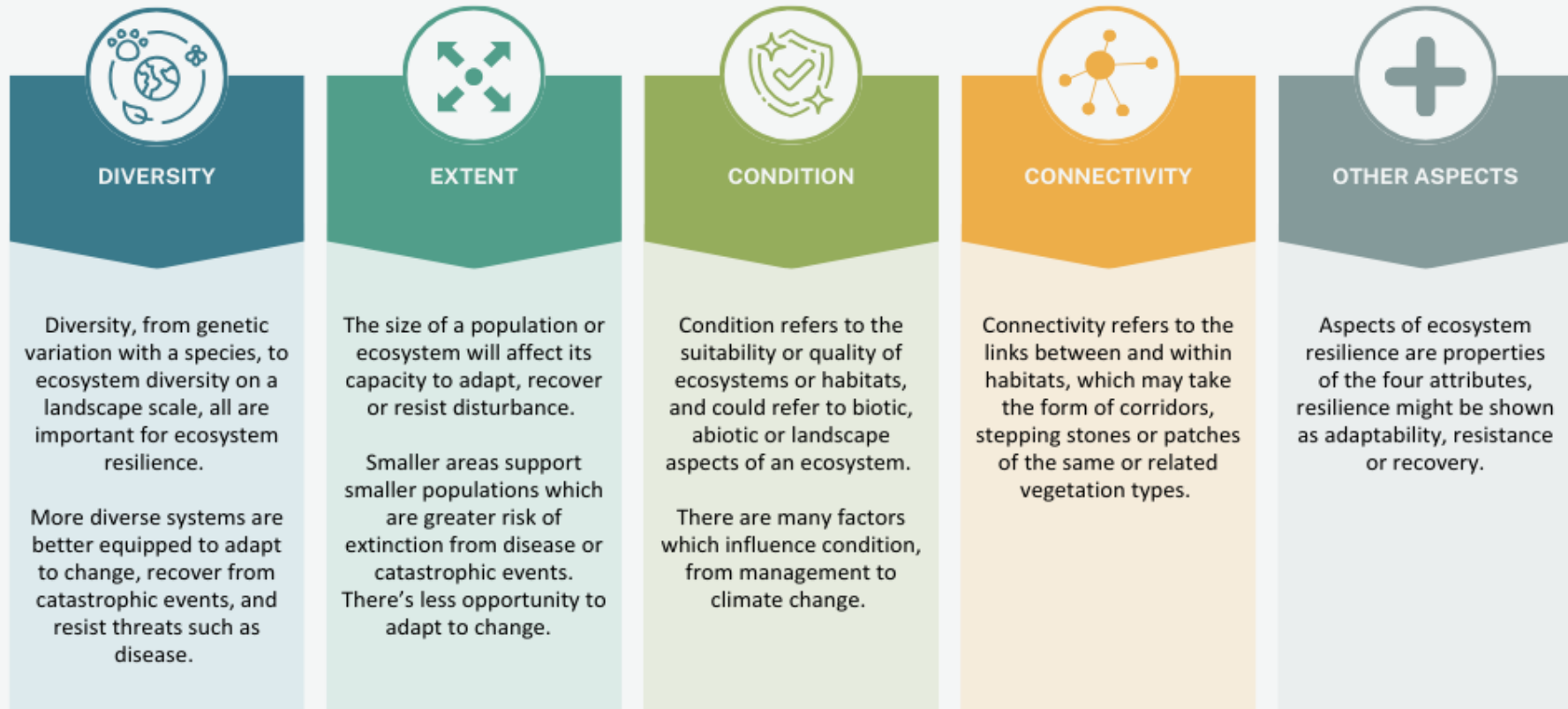


Figure 6: The Lawton Principles

Figure 6: The DECCA Framework



## 1.4. BIODIVERSITY IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

Monmouthshire is a large and varied county, with distinct differences between north and south, east and west. It is a coastal county, but its estuary location means that it is often not viewed as such. The **South East Wales Area Statement** identified three landscape profiles in Monmouthshire which are useful to illustrate the differences across the county: **Central Monmouthshire**, **Wye Valley and Wentwood**, and the **Gwent Levels**. The landscape profiles primarily share the same natural habitats but with clear differences which give them their distinctive character. The areas covered by each profile are shown on Figure 1.

**Central Monmouthshire** is noted for its undulating lowlands comprising pasture and arable farmland with isolated pockets of woodland. It is a valuable farming area with agriculturally improved pasture and arable fields. Hedgerows provide important links between small, isolated, ancient woodlands, often on hilltops and steep valley sides where farming is difficult. Parcels of unimproved grassland remain, and considered in the context of massive historical decline are of significant ecological importance.

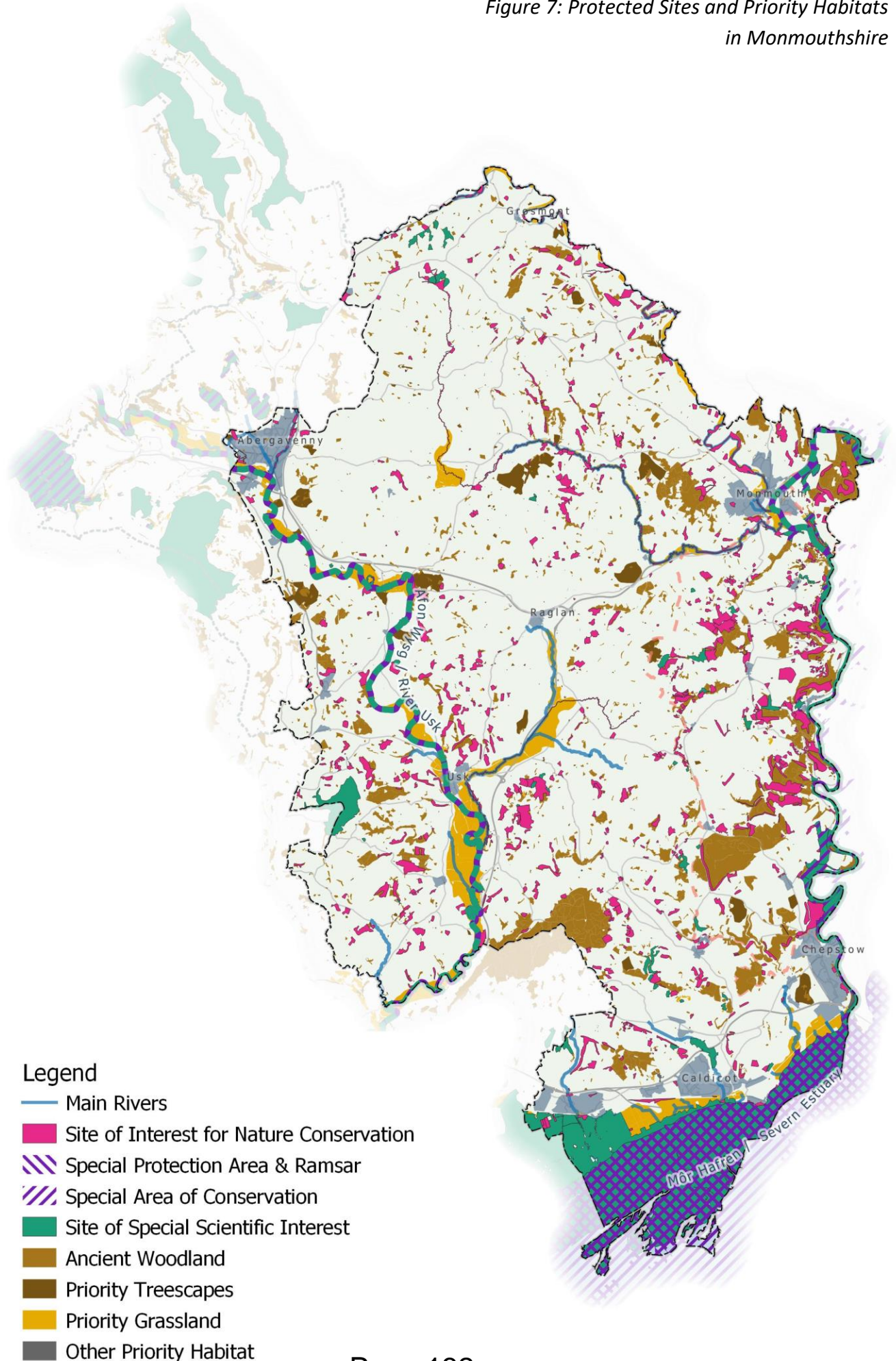
**Wye Valley and Wentwood** is predominantly a wooded and riverine landscape. The steep sides of the Wye Valley are clothed in extensive blocks of internationally important woodlands, designated as the Wye Valley Woodlands **Special Area of Conservation (SAC)**. The Wye Valley is home to internationally important bat species including greater horseshoe bats and lesser horseshoe bats, with many of their roosts included in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC. Parts of the Wye Valley are known to be used by at least 15 different species of bats including the rare Barbastelle bat and Bechstein's bat. The Wye Valley is also a stronghold for dormouse, and polecats reintroduced in England have been observed on this side of the river on more than one occasion.

In the south, the unique **Gwent Levels** form an extensive coastal habitat along the Severn Estuary comprising reclaimed agricultural land drained by a network of ditches known as reens. The reens support a particularly diverse community of insects and other invertebrates (for example water beetles) and are designated as a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**. Following a successful reintroduction program at Magor Marsh SSSI in 2012, water voles have spread across the Gwent Levels with the furthest record 16 km from the original release site.





Figure 7: Protected Sites and Priority Habitats in Monmouthshire



Legend

-  Main Rivers
-  Site of Interest for Nature Conservation
-  Special Protection Area & Ramsar
-  Special Area of Conservation
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest
-  Ancient Woodland
-  Priority Treescaping
-  Priority Grassland
-  Other Priority Habitat

The two major rivers in Monmouthshire are the River Usk and River Wye. Both are designated as Special Areas of Conservation and together with their tributaries provide important wildlife corridors and migratory routes for key species such as salmon, otters, shad and white clawed crayfish. Another important freshwater habitat in Monmouthshire is the Llandegfedd Reservoir, designated as a SSSI for supporting overwintering wildfowl. The breakdown of protected sites is shown in Figure 8 and more information on the legislation behind protected sites is given in Appendix 2.

Despite having a wealth of protected and priority species, Monmouthshire's ecosystems are currently facing significant challenges. Grassland sites are at risk from poor management and development pressures. The Wye Valley is our most ecologically rich area, but the quality of the woodland is under threat from lack of management and the spread of ash dieback. A large proportion of reens and ditches on the Gwent Levels are degraded. Freshwater habitats are under threat from water abstraction, pollution, and siltation. Monmouthshire, like the rest of the world, is facing a Nature Emergency.

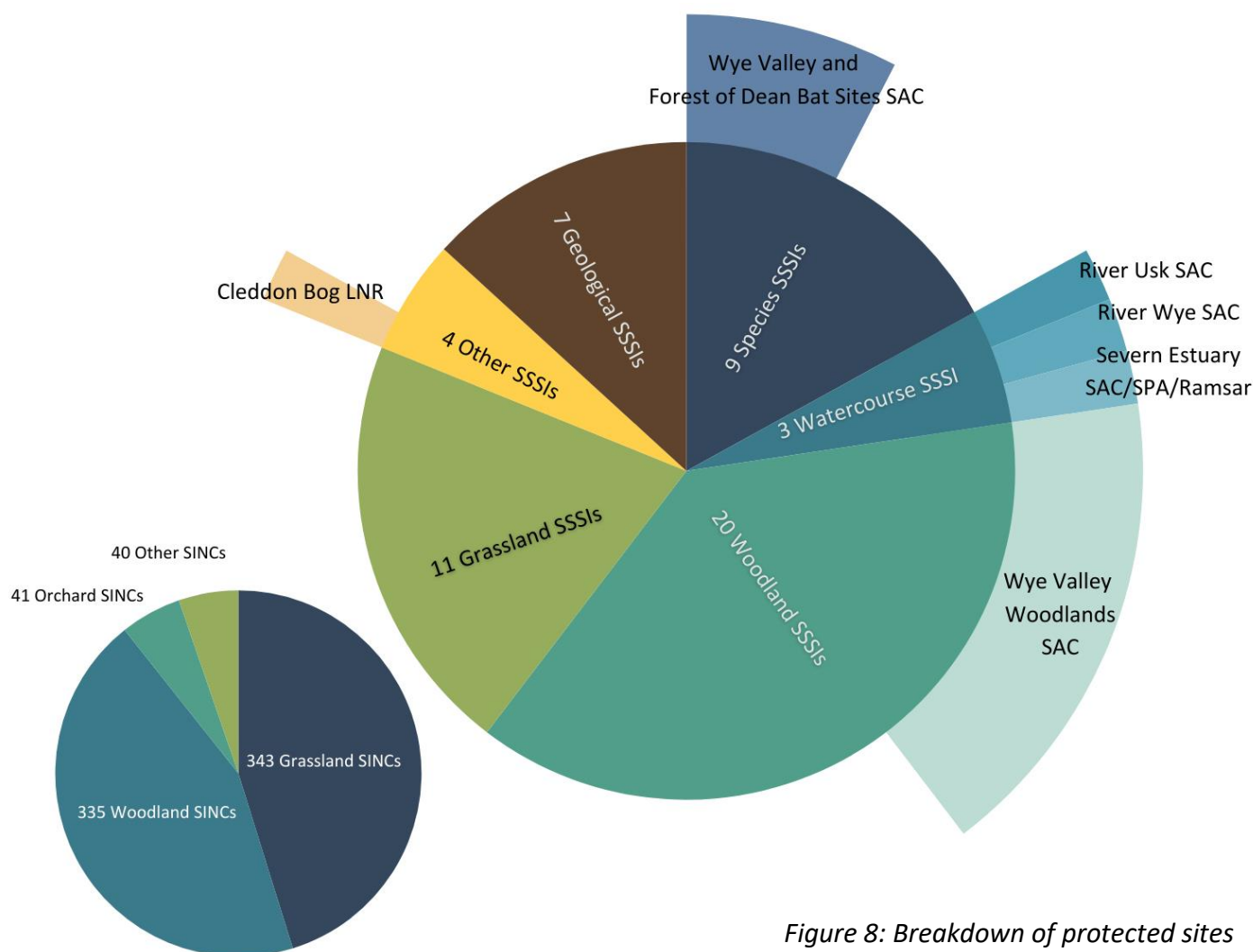


Figure 8: Breakdown of protected sites in Monmouthshire

## 2. NATURE EMERGENCY

We are in the midst of a global nature crisis. The planet is changing as a result of human activity and biodiversity loss is the clearest warning sign that we are facing a planetary emergency. In June 2021, the Senedd declared a **nature emergency** recognising that continued and drastic biodiversity loss is a clear sign of a global crisis. The **Wales Summary** for the **State of Nature 2023** makes the stark statement that **Wales is now one of the most nature depleted countries on Earth.**

The first **UK State of Nature** report was published in 2013 and although the last decade has seen continued research and nature recovery action, the most recent report continues to show substantial declines in biodiversity. The headlines from the 2023 summary include 18% of species assessed in Wales are threatened with extinction. That's over 600 species. There has been an average decline of 20% in species abundance since 1994, and the distribution of species and composition of our flora and fauna is changing.

We have local evidence of the nature emergency. The **Greater Gwent State of Nature** was published in 2021, and used existing data to analyse the status and trends of species within the Greater Gwent area. The report analysed individual species and groups of species representing over 500 individual species, presented as 100 different stories of these species and species groups. Of all the species and species groups analysed, 34% of species showed a decline in their numbers or are predicted to continue to decline. Only 12% showed stable populations. Twenty-one percent showed a welcome increase in their numbers, but the remaining 21% did not have enough data to describe the population trends.

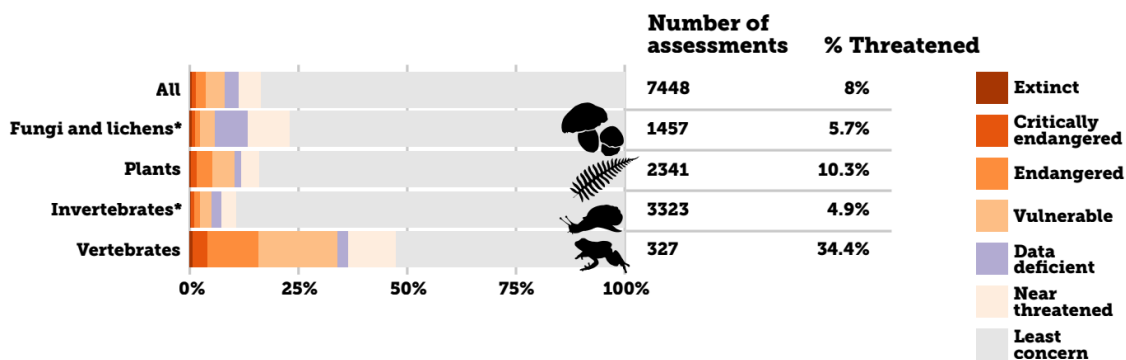


Figure 9: Summary of Great Britain National Red Lists for species present in Wales, showing the proportion of assessed species in each Red List category, by broad taxonomic group. (from State of Nature Wales Summary Report 2023)



## 2.1. DRIVERS OF CHANGE

The **State of Nature** report published in 2019 focused on major drivers of ecological change in the UK over the past 50 years. The report identified that the two biggest impacts are from agricultural land management and climate change. Other drivers are, in no particular order of importance: freshwater management, invasive non-native species, fisheries, woodland management, pollution and urbanisation. The impact of some of these drivers in Monmouthshire is discussed below. This is not a comprehensive list and we will aim to add to, update and review the threats as part of monitoring the Local NRAP and as new evidence becomes available.

### 2.1.1. AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT

Farmland ecosystems are hugely important for food production, but the drive for increasing yields has led to the loss of habitat, degradation of remaining habitat and loss of many species associated with the traditional farmed landscape. Our ecology and landscapes were created by farming; our most species-rich hay meadows developed because of traditional farming techniques. The Gwent Levels were created by draining marsh land for use as farmland. But the industrialisation of farming has resulted in loss of space for wildlife and degradation of remaining habitats.

Studies show that between the 1930s and 1990s, 97% of the UK's species-rich grassland was lost to intensive agriculture, either improved grassland or arable. The areas of species-rich grassland that remain are often small and isolated, although almost half of the over 700 **Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)** in Monmouthshire are designated for species-rich grasslands. Nevertheless, these are often under threat from lack of management or development. Some larger unimproved grassland areas are statutorily protected as **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**; however, protected sites baseline assessments undertaken by NRW in 2020 shows that of the 11 grassland SSSIs in Monmouthshire, three are in unfavourable condition and the condition of the others is unknown due to insufficient information.





As well as loss of habitat and connectivity for species, agricultural intensification has resulted in negative impacts on the environment. Degraded soils store less carbon and disturbing carbon in soils releases it to the atmosphere, contributing to climate change. Use of fertilisers negatively impacts water quality in our rivers and streams and has negative impacts for recreation and businesses, as well as the wildlife which call them home.

Some of the clearest evidence for how farmland management continues to affect biodiversity is the trend in farmland birds. Birds have always been the best recorded taxonomic group in the UK therefore we have a good data set to assess trends. Across the UK the farmland bird indicator<sup>1</sup> has shown a fall of more than 54% since 1970.

**The Greater Gwent State of Nature** uses a similar indicator suitable for lowland farmland birds in Gwent. The index follows the same general decline since 1994 but with greater variation and the overall average is lower than the rest of UK. The Gwent Levels should be ideal habitat for breeding lapwing but there are no recent successful breeding records in the Monmouthshire area. Known attempted breeding efforts in the last few years have been interrupted by grass cutting for silage, which is carried out earlier and more frequently than traditional hay meadow management.

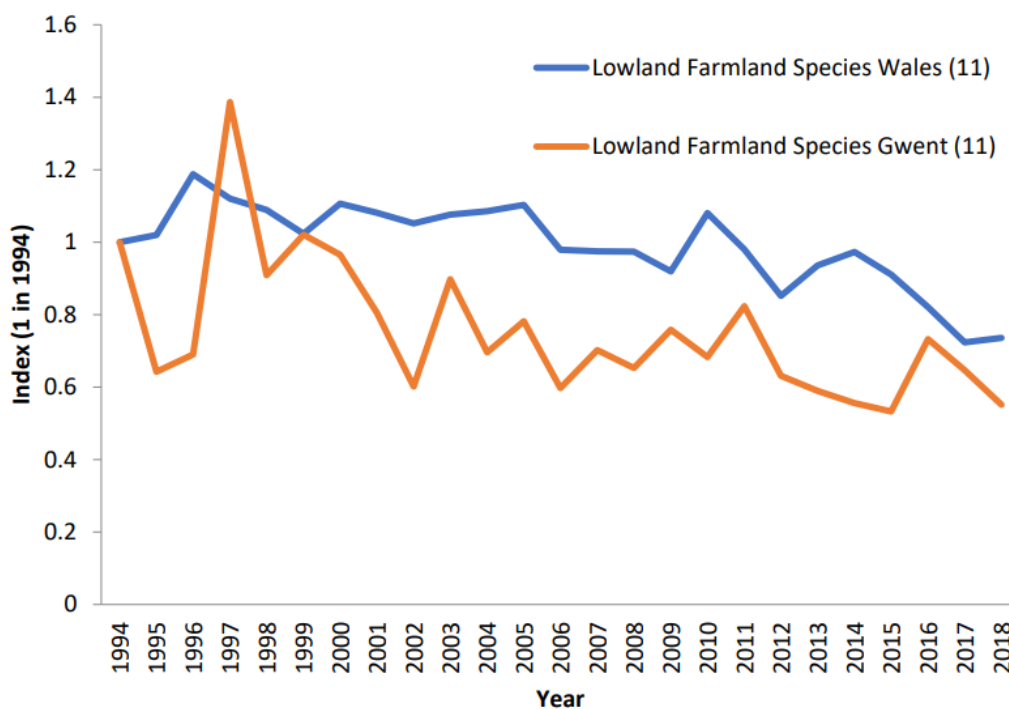
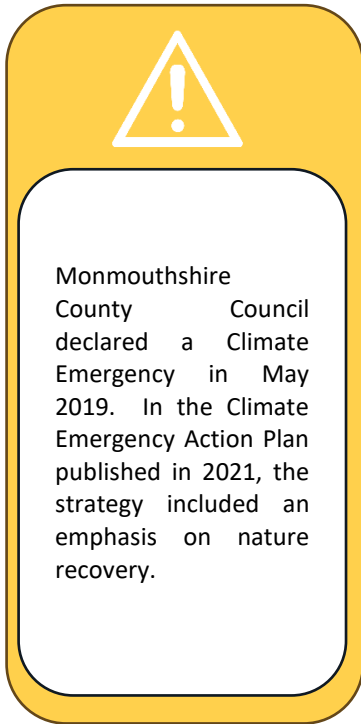


Figure 10: Multi-species lowland farmland bird indicators for Wales and the Greater Gwent region from 1994 to 2018 for the same 11 indicator bird species.

(from the Greater Gwent State of Nature)

<sup>1</sup> A composite index that measures the rate of change in the relative abundance of common bird species.





### 2.1.2. CLIMATE CHANGE

Changes in temperature, rainfall and other climatic factors that caused by climate change affect the abundance and distribution of species. Seasonal weather variation disrupts species phenology (timing of seasonal events such as egg laying) and increased extreme weather events can cause catastrophic disruption to populations more frequently. Summer drought can have a significant impact on the growth and survival of tree species, leading to major changes in the composition and structure of woodland. At present climate change is the second biggest pressure, and its impacts are expected to increase as the climate emergency intensifies.

There is widespread evidence that climate change has affected species populations globally and in the UK. On a local scale, comparable declines can also likely be attributed to climate change but further analysis of data is required.

The **Gwent Wildlife Trust “Bugs Matter”** study published in 2022 records a 64% decrease in abundance and availability of insects in Gwent since 2004. This is a significant change from 40% decrease recorded in 2021. It is likely that decreases can be at least partly attributed to climate change, but other influences such as land management will also be a contributory factor.

The Gwent Nest Box Monitoring Scheme has also seen impacts in recent years, taking just one example of Priory Wood SSSI, where 29 occupied boxes were recorded in the 2009 breeding season compared to just 12 in the most recent season. Recorder observations of brood failures following unseasonably cold or wet weather would suggest at least part of the decline is due to climate change.

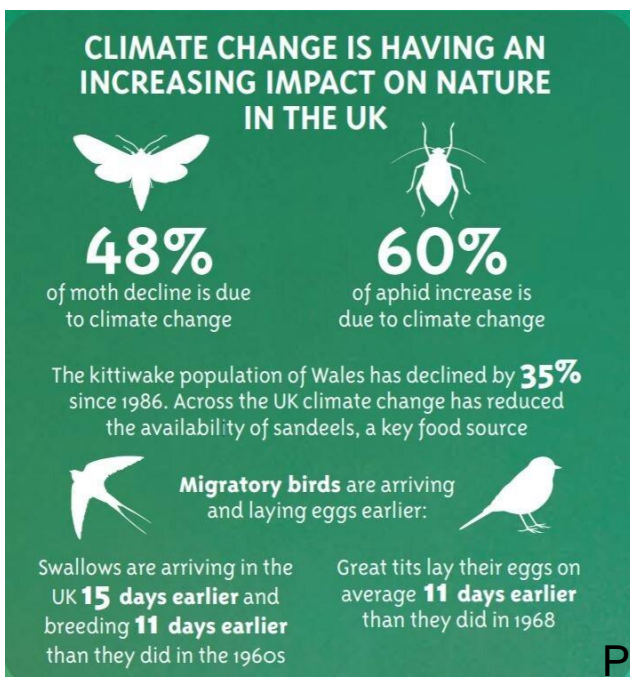


Figure 11: Impacts of Climate Change (from State of Nature 2019)



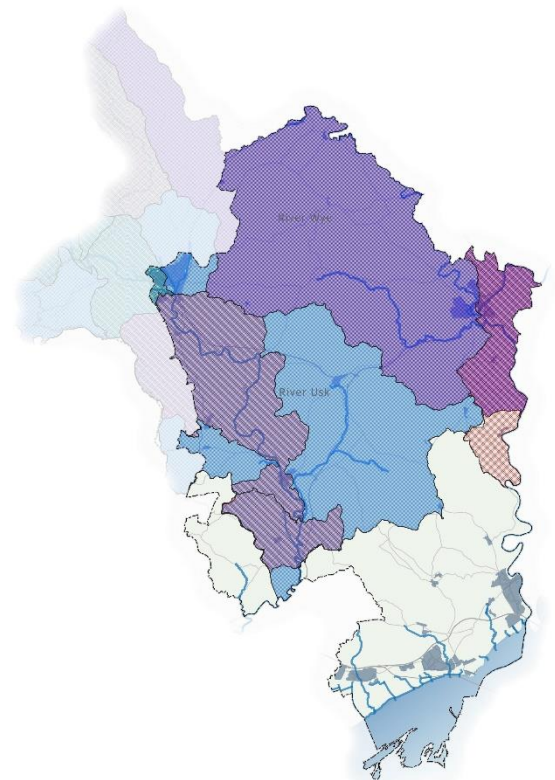


### 2.1.3. RIVER POLLUTION

The Rivers Wye and Usk are both designated as **Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)** for their water quality, but in recent years the water quality has deteriorated significantly. This is due to a complex range of issues, including sewage releases into the rivers and phosphates and nitrates entering the rivers as a result of agricultural activity. Excess nutrients in rivers cause a process called eutrophication, where algal blooms reduce light and oxygen levels, killing fish and other species.

NRW are responsible for monitoring the condition of SAC sites in Wales, including nutrients in rivers. The targets were tightened in 2020 as a result of evidence that nutrients had a negative impact on riverine ecology at much lower levels than originally thought. Additionally, the impact of climate change on rivers (warmer water temperatures and lower water levels) is similar to nutrient enrichment, so the tighter targets were also necessary to counteract the impacts of climate change.

The Rivers Usk and Wye are failing monitoring targets; data shows high phosphorous levels in absolute terms with widespread failures of large magnitude in both rivers. NRW and Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water have undertaken modelling of Welsh catchments to identify sources of phosphorus in rivers. The Usk modelling data shows effluent from sewage treatment works accounts for 21% of the average daily load (kg/d), with rural land use contributing 67%, storm overflows contributing 1% and a further 11% from other sources including septic tanks and urban run-off.



*Figure 12: SAC river catchment areas and failing phosphorus areas*

#### 2.1.4. INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES AND PLANT HEALTH

There are over 2000 non-native species in Great Britain which can sustain wild populations and are therefore considered established. Most of these are not a problem, but when species have negative impacts on native ecology or are detrimental to human health or economy, they are considered to be **Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)**. INNS can have adverse impacts on native ecosystems by:

- ✦ outcompeting or predating native species
- ✦ introducing diseases which native populations have no tolerance to, and
- ✦ hybridisation with native species.

The **Wales Biodiversity Partnership** has produced a list of 45 priority species for action. The list includes 16 species to prevent arrival in Wales, 11 more recent introductions to manage before they take hold (of which two have been recorded in Monmouthshire, ruddy duck and sika deer), and 18 species which are well established and require long-term management, all but two of which are found in Monmouthshire. Most of our river systems in Monmouthshire are affected by Himalayan balsam: a garden escapee which is valued by some as a forage resource for bees, but actually has multiple significantly detrimental impacts such as outcompeting native plant species for space, light, nutrients and pollinators. It also leaves riverbanks exposed when it dies back in winter leaving them more liable to erosion.

There is a clear link between plants pests and diseases and INNS, although they are covered by a separate strategy nationally. There are over 1200 plant pests and pathogens on the UK **Plant Health Risk Register**, but far and away the biggest current threat from plant pathogens is ash dieback caused by *Hymenoscyphus fraxineus* (previously known as *Chalara fraxinea*).

Although the 2019 data available to the Greater Gwent State of Nature reported only eight records in the whole of Gwent, we know it had taken hold across the county by then and is now ubiquitous in towns and woodlands alike.

Loss of ash from our landscape is not only a tragic loss but it will have a consequent negative impact on ash dependent species of fungi and invertebrates. Management of the problem will result in the release of carbon into the atmosphere as diseased trees are removed for health and safety reasons.

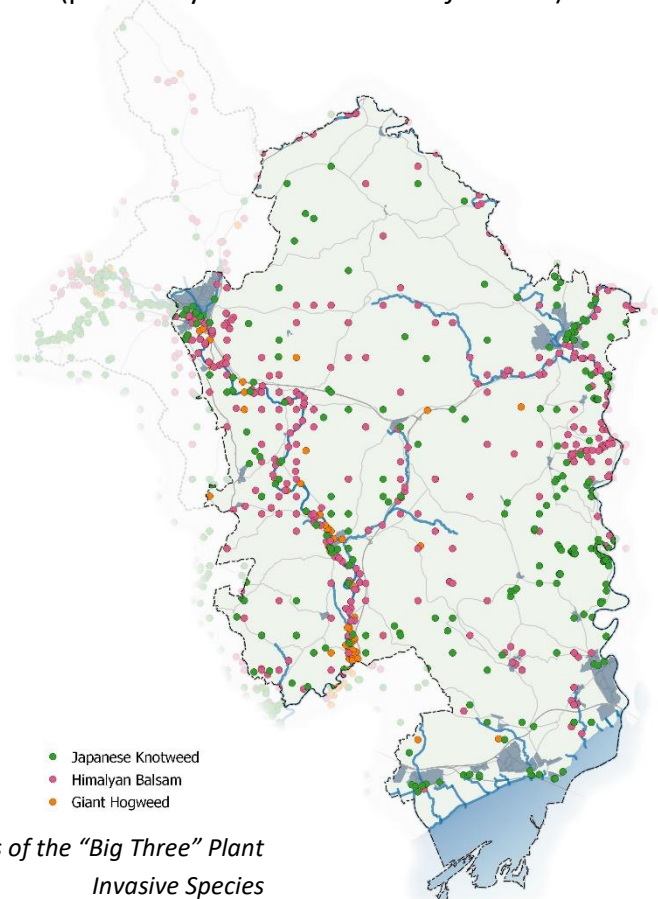


Figure 13: Records of the “Big Three” Plant Invasive Species



## 2.2. POSITIVE CHANGE

Although the situation is grave, there is reason to be hopeful for recovery. The climate crisis has been part of our vernacular for many years, yet it seems like the nature emergency has not received as much mainstream attention. That is now changing, with highly publicised ecological disasters such as the condition of the River Wye capturing the public's attention.

Nature recovery is embedded into **Future Wales National Plan**, and Welsh Government have been clear that the nature crisis should be given parity with the climate emergency. We still have work to do to make this a reality, but the basis for action is clear.

The following section provides details of just some of the nature recovery concepts currently being implemented in Monmouthshire.

### 2.2.1. REGENERATIVE FARMING

There is a growing interest and uptake in regenerative farming practices nationally and locally. Regenerative farming, or regenerative agriculture, can apply to any farming methods which aim to improve the environment whilst producing crops or livestock. The primary goal is to improve soil health, to not only facilitate crop production but also recognising the role of healthy soils in water quality, climate change and human health. The primary themes of regenerative farming are: keeping the soil covered, keeping living roots in the soil, minimising soil disturbance, growing a wide variety of crops, and including livestock in the system. Changing from arable or high intensity pasture to low-input semi-natural grassland allows for carbon to be stored in depleted soils, creating a carbon sink, as well as having benefits for biodiversity.

In Monmouthshire, a mentoring scheme has been established in partnership with **Action for Climate Emergency (ACE) Monmouth**, Monmouthshire Food Partnership, and world-renowned Herefordshire-based regenerative agriculture consultant Ben Taylor-Davies. At present the scheme includes three Monmouthshire farm businesses; key themes of the mentoring are increasing soil health, reducing chemical inputs, and seeking alternatives to soya and palm in livestock feed. There is also a regenerative agriculture discussion group (Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire), led by a local farmer with support from Monmouthshire County Council Sustainable Food Development officers.



Resilient ecological networks are vital for nature recovery and are networks of habitat in good ecological condition linking protected sites and other biodiversity hotspots across the wider landscape, providing maximum benefit for biodiversity and well-being

*Future Wales, Policy 9*

### 2.2.2. NATURAL FLOOD MANAGEMENT

A key priority of Welsh Government’s **National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management in Wales** is to deliver more natural interventions and catchment approaches to help improve environmental, social, and economic resilience. This includes working with natural processes and green infrastructure to “reduce flood and coastal erosion risk by implementing measures that help to protect, restore and emulate the natural functions of catchments, floodplains, rivers and the coast”, defined as **Natural Flood Management (NFM)**. Examples of NFM include interventions such as tree planting, in-stream obstructions, soil and land management, and creation of new wetlands.

Since 2020 Monmouthshire County Council has been working to identify NFM opportunities in Monmouthshire, including identification of priority catchments, landowner engagement, hydraulic modelling, site surveys and multi-agency collaboration. One of the largest barriers has been identifying landowners willing to engage with the process, but a number of sites within the River Wye catchment have progressed to detailed design stage, with construction anticipated in 2024/25.

### 2.2.3. ECOLOGICAL NETWORK MAPPING

Natural Resources Wales and Gwent Green Grid Partnership are undertaking mapping **Resilient Ecological Networks (RENs)** and **Priority Ecological Networks (PENs)** across South East Wales; the process interrogates how different stakeholders could co-operate to achieve multiple environmental and socio-economic benefits.

The Gwent Green Grid Partnership is also developing Nature Recovery Opportunity Mapping, to highlight key connectivity opportunities. The maps will build on PENs mapping and incorporate local environmental data to focus nature recovery actions where they will be most effective in building ecosystem resilience. The resulting maps will be publicly available on purpose-built portal and will enable users to develop impactful local projects.



### 3. DELIVERY OF THE LOCAL NRAP

The success of the Monmouthshire Local NRAP will depend on collaboration and long-term commitment of the Monmouthshire LNP. By working together our efforts can be maximised, making the most of our collective knowledge, skills, and experience and allowing us to respond any opportunities for partnership working as and when they arise.

The way actions are delivered will vary. Some actions may be delivered by one partner and others by partners working collaboratively. All partners can contribute to delivery of the Local NRAP whether they are a large organisation, small community group, or an individual.

#### 3.1. CONTENT OF THE LOCAL NRAP

The Monmouthshire Local NRAP will comprise four parts described in Figure 14 and will focus on habitats and species that national priorities for conservation and are locally important. Priority habitats and species recorded in Monmouthshire are provided in Appendix 3.

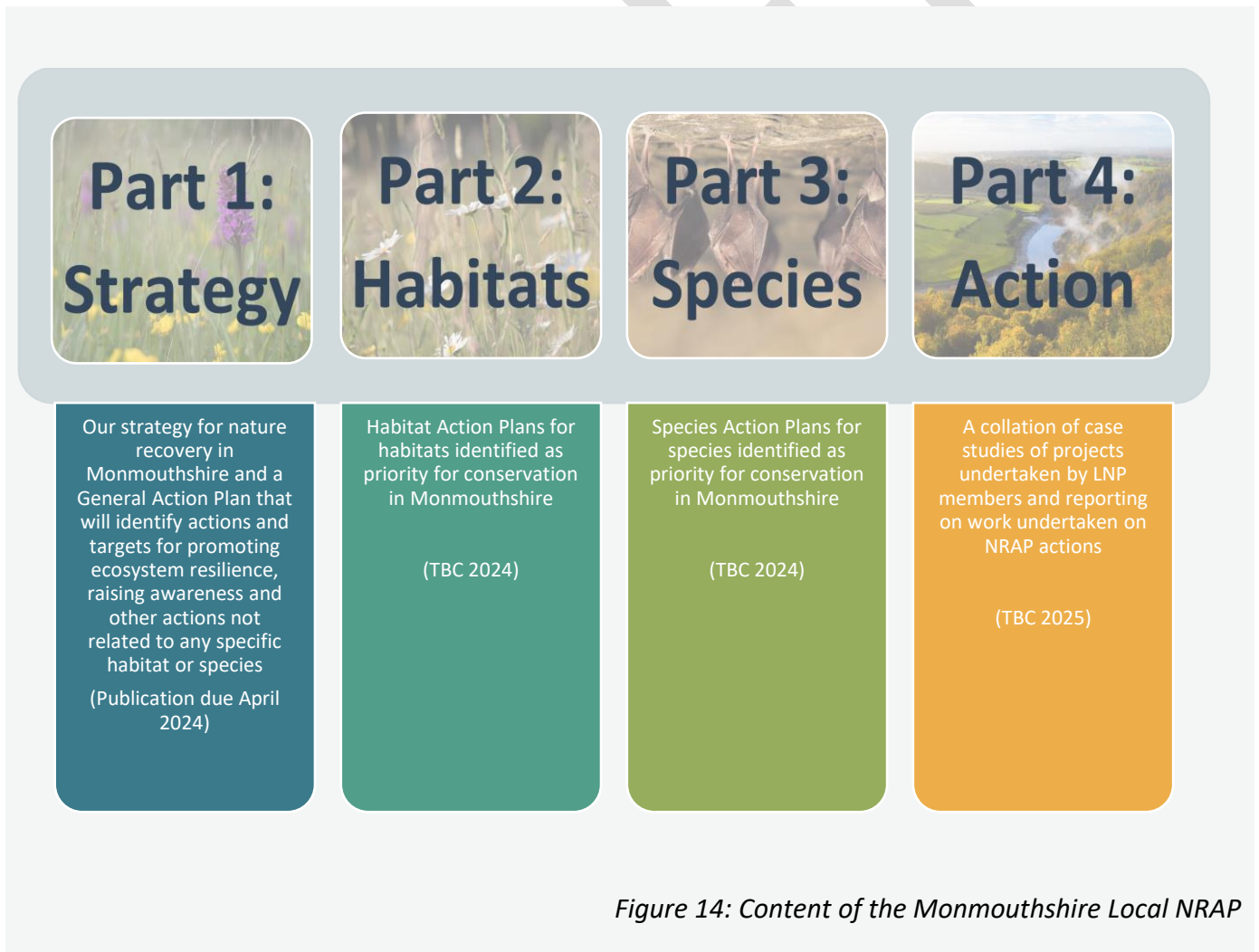


Figure 14: Content of the Monmouthshire Local NRAP



As lead partner, LNP coordinators hosted by Monmouthshire County Council are responsible for editing and collating the content of the Monmouthshire Local NRAP. Partners are encouraged to contribute and develop action plans for species or habitats within their field of interest. Action Plans will be reviewed and approved by a working group of LNP members before being published.

### 3.2. MONITORING AND REVIEW

A key feature of the Monmouthshire Local NRAP is that it is flexible and adaptable. The actions plans are published separately to enable continual additions, review, and updates.

The number of Habitat and Species Action Plans will be added to depending on the availability of funding and the level of contributions from our partners. Existing plans will be reviewed annually by the Local NRAP working group so actions can be added to or removed in response to updates in local species and habitat information. The working group will report back to LNP following the annual review.

The **General Action Plan** will be part of the annual review. The supporting text of this Part of the Local NRAP will be updated with regards to resources, policy, legislation at minimum once every five years.



## 4. GENERAL ACTION PLAN

The General Action Plan provides a set of actions not related to a specific habitat or species that have been identified as local priorities to deliver nature recovery in Monmouthshire. The plan identifies which of the NRAP for Wales objectives each action meets, see Appendix 4 for the full objectives. Actions are numbered for reference only; numbers do not relate to their priority level or the order in which actions will be delivered.

|                                      | Action  | Lead Partner             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Polices, Plans and Procedures</b> |   |                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| G1.1                                 | Ensure that measures to protect, maintain and enhance biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems are embedded into MCC plans, strategies and policies  | MCC, MLNP<br>Coordinator | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| G1.2                                 | Ensure MCC Highways and sub-contractors manage habitats with biodiversity interest sympathetically through following Codes of Best Practice and Llwybr Newydd i Natur – the Nature Recovery Action Plan for our Strategic Road Network where appropriate                                    | MCC, MLNP<br>Coordinator |   | ✓ |   | ✓ |   |   |
| G1.3                                 | Ensure that partnership organisations' management, plans and agreements (including tenancy agreements where appropriate) address nature recovery and maximise biodiversity opportunities.   | MLNP                     | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |   |   |
| G1.4                                 | Ensure land in public ownership (including lease land e.g. county farms) to be managed appropriately to maintain and enhance biodiversity   | MCC, MLNP                |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |
| G1.5                                 | Produce and distribute clear practical advice to developers about how they can contribute to nature recovery and minimise the impacts on ecosystem resilience   | MCC, MLNP                |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |
| <b>Education and Awareness</b>       |   |                          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| G2.1                                 | Develop a website/other web-based presence for the LNP to promote nature recovery activities and key messages, as well as celebrating and informing about nature in Monmouthshire and provide signposts for those seeking further information on nature recovery                            | MCC                      | ✓ |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G2.2                                 | Engage with local communities to raise awareness of the nature crisis and promote community involvement and engagement in nature recovery efforts   | MCC, MLNP                | ✓ |   |   |   |   |   |
| G2.3                                 | Provide support and advice for landowners and land managers on best practice management for biodiversity including understanding their current resource and function in the landscape; improving soil quality and soil biodiversity; and promoting collaboration and sharing best practice. | MCC, MLNP                | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |



|                                   | Action  | Lead Partner   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|-----------------------------------|---|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G2.4                              | Encourage tourism businesses to see biodiversity and ecosystem services as an asset that can assist in the development of environmentally sensitive local tourism initiatives   | MCC            | ✓ |   |   |   |   |   |
| G2.5                              | Provide Town and Community Councils with the means (training, information, support and funding opportunities) to initiate local Biodiversity projects involving the local community, or to get involved in monitoring (e.g. roadside verges). | MCC            | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |
| G2.6                              | Compile a list of existing biodiversity information resources, identify gaps that require new material, and promote use of resources in educational and community settings.   | MCC, MLNP      |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| <b>Evidence and Understanding</b> |   |                |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| G3.1                              | Compile and maintain an inventory of previous, current and planned nature recovery action projects and data, to identify potential overlaps and opportunities for collaboration.  | MCC            |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.2                              | Ensure all survey and monitoring data captured by Monmouthshire LNP members is submitted to SEWBReC   | MLNP           |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.3                              | Create a list of locally important species and habitats for Monmouthshire and a programme for recording and monitoring their status   | MLNP, SEWBReC  |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.4                              | Support the mapping and surveying of priority habitats and species in Monmouthshire   | MCC, GGG, MLNP |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.5                              | Develop a suite of resilient ecological network maps to establish a baseline for ecosystem resilience planning and identify opportunities for nature recovery   | MCC, GGG       |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.6                              | Support volunteer survey efforts by providing training courses and access to advice, equipment, and promoting national recording schemes and citizen science projects.  | MLNP, SEWBReC  |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.7                              | Develop a programme with SEWBReC for supporting recording, training and recruiting the next generation of biological recorders and taxonomists.   | MLNP, SEWBReC  |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.8                              | Identify specific threats and opportunities to address nature recovery in Monmouthshire, on physical, political and climatic scales, including investigated future predicted trends   | MLNP           |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |
| G3.9                              | Improve monitoring of INNS and encourage citizen scientists to submit records, to help target efforts for INNS management.  | MLNP           |   |   |   |   | ✓ |   |

|                                       | Action  | Lead Partner         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
|---------------------------------------|---|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Promoting Ecosystem Resilience</b> |   |                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>G4.1</b>                           | Develop collaborative projects to increase resilience of species, habitats, and ecosystems to address climate change and biodiversity loss  | MCC, GGG, MLNP       |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |
| <b>G4.2</b>                           | Support any collaborative projects on common land which involve action to maintain and enhance biodiversity e.g., by providing advice   | MCC, GGG, MLNP       |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |
| <b>G4.3</b>                           | Use nature-based solutions (such as restoring wetlands to slow the flow of water and alleviate flooding) wherever possible, to help create sustainable environments for future generations. | MCC, GGG, MLNP       |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |
| <b>G4.5</b>                           | Support delivery of Wales Resilient Ecological Networks (WaREN) INNS project and INNS management programmes developed by GGG Partnership  | MCC, GGG             |   | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   |   |
| <b>LNP Governance and Monitoring</b>  |   |                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| <b>G5.1</b>                           | Provide a strong and functioning Local Nature Partnership to act as an interface between local and national delivery partners and Welsh Government.   | MCC; LNP coordinator |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| <b>G5.2</b>                           | Promote engagement and collaboration between LNP members and increase membership  | MCC; LNP coordinator |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| <b>G5.3</b>                           | Hold biannual LNP meetings and produce a biannual newsletter to keep members up to date with partnership activities   | MCC; LNP coordinator |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |
| <b>G5.4</b>                           | Develop appropriate indicators to monitor the Local NRAP's progress and stakeholder engagement  | MCC; LNP coordinator |   |   |   |   | ✓ | ✓ |
| <b>G5.5</b>                           | Collaborate with other Local Nature Partnerships to develop and deliver projects to maximise the impact of the Local NRAP   | MCC; LNP coordinator |   |   |   |   |   | ✓ |

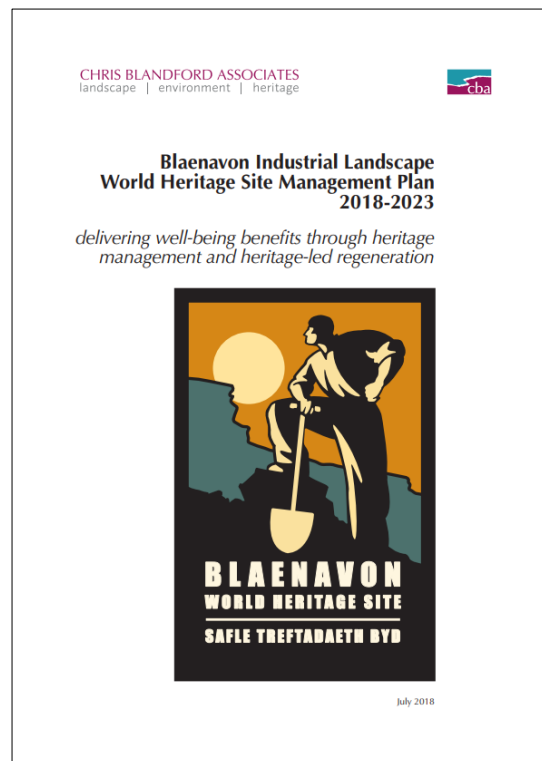
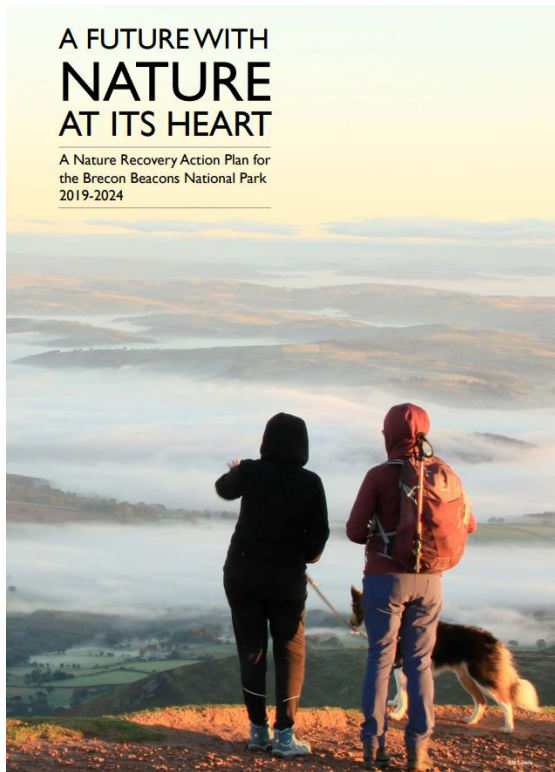
## 5. SIGNPOSTING

We don't want to duplicate efforts where we don't need to, so for some habitats and species we direct people towards actions plans created by partners working locally or wider afield but still applicable in our area. Where habitats and species have been identified as priorities in the Monmouthshire LNP area, we will aim to review partners action plans and identify local actions which can contribute to them as appropriate.

### 5.1. BANNAU BRYCHEINIOG NATIONAL PARK

The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park has its own Local Nature Partnership which produced a Local NRAP published in 2019 and is currently reviewing the actions for next issue, forecast to be published in 2024. The BBNP Local NRAP is intended to guide nature recovery efforts within the National Park, as one part of the jigsaw to deliver an Ecosystem Approach. The Monmouthshire Local NRAP will identify actions that enable cross border working and collaboration with the Bannau Brycheiniog LNP but activities within the park area should be guided by their Local NRAP.

Partners working in the BBNP should also be aware of the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site Management Plan. Many of the actions in the plan which are designed to protect the features of the WHS will also have positive impacts for biodiversity and nature recovery, such as reducing damaging activities like off-roading.





# Ymddiriedolaet Natur **Gwent** Wildlife Trust

Gwent Wildlife Trust set their 2030 goal to recover ten vulnerable species in Gwent, reasoning that by spotlighting a small number of species action can be targeted and the impact better measured. The species were chosen as they are threatened in Gwent and also action for the chosen species would benefit other species in the varied counties across Gwent. Action plans were created for the following species:

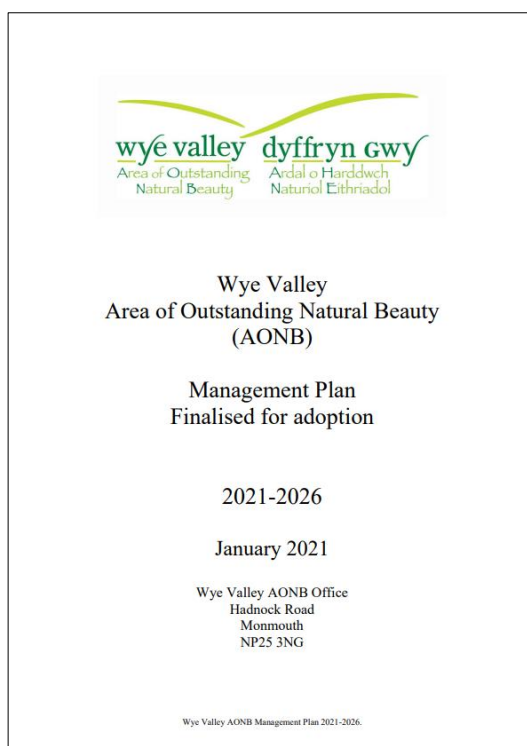
- **Adder**
- Barn owl
- Dipper
- Grayling
- Hedgehog
- Nightjar
- Pine marten
- Pink waxcap
- **Shrill carder bee**
- **Water vole**

All the species have been recorded in Monmouthshire, although for some species the records are historic or unconfirmed. Species in bold were also identified as priorities in Monmouthshire by LNP members.

### 5.3. WYE VALLEY NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

The Wye Valley National Landscape is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which covers parts of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire. The AONB Management Plan sets out the vision for the designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the priorities for its management. The Wye Valley National Landscape’s Nature Recovery Plan will focus on habitats identified as Special Qualities of the protected landscape, their current extent, condition and aims and objective for nature recovery in each. Accompanying Species Action Plans for five species or assemblage of species related to key habitats will also be produced. The plans will cover:

- Woodland and assemblage of woodland butterflies, with particular interest in wood white and pearl bordered fritillary
- Species rich grassland and assemblage of bumblebees, with a particular interest in shrill carder bee, brown banded carder bee, redshank carder bee and long-horned bee
- Orchards and the noble chafer beetle
- Watercourses (i.e. the River Wye and its tributaries) and water crowfoot
- Boundary habitat features (e.g. hedgerows and dry-stone walls) and hedgehogs
- Veteran trees



*This link provides further information on Priority Species chosen and will be updated when the Nature Recovery Plan is published.*

## APPENDIX 1: POLICY AND LEGISLATION

### WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT 2015

The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is concerned with improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. The Act places a duty on public bodies listed in the Act to carry out sustainable development. To do this public bodies are required to work towards the following seven well-being goals:



All public bodies listed in the Act must set up and publish well-being objectives. The Act has also established Public Services Boards (PSBs) for each local authority area in Wales. Their role is to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in its area by strengthening joint working across all public services in Wales.

An annual Well-being of Wales report The Future Generations commissioner publishes an annual report which summarises progress with reference to a set of 46 national indicator, including (43) area of healthy ecosystem and (44) the status of biodiversity in Wales.

### THE ENVIRONMENT (WALES) ACT 2016

The Environment (Wales) Act 2016 puts in place the legislation needed to plan and manage Wales' natural resources in a more proactive, sustainable and joined-up way.

#### BIODIVERSITY AND RESILIENCE OF ECOSYSTEMS DUTY

Section 6 under Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 introduced an enhanced biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems duty (Section 6 Duty) for public bodies. The duty requires that public bodies must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as

consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems.

### SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (SMNR) FRAMEWORK

Part 1 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 sets out Wales' approach to planning and managing natural resources at a national and local level with a general purpose linked to statutory Principles of Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) defined within the Act.

There are three main components to the associated SMNR framework:

#### **Part 1: The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR)**

The Report (produced by Natural Resources Wales, NRW) sets out the state of Wales' natural resources. It assesses the extent to which natural resources in Wales are being sustainably managed, and recommends a proactive approach to building resilience. For the first time the Report links the resilience of Welsh natural resources to the well-being of the people of Wales.

#### **Part 2: Natural Resources Policy (NRP)**

Produced by Welsh Government, it sets out the priorities, risks and opportunities for managing natural resources sustainably. The Policy takes into account the findings of the State of Natural Resources Report. The focus of the NRP is the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources, to maximise their contribution to achieving goals within the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The policy sets out the following three National Priorities:

- Delivering nature-based solutions,
- Increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency,
- Taking a place-based approach

#### **Part 3: Area Statements**

Area Statements will translate the high level strategic priorities while taking account of local need, opportunities and pressures, such as listed in this NRAP. An area profile will identify potential opportunities and priorities at a local level and possible collaboration opportunities for different bodies to work. Monmouthshire is in the South East Wales Area Statement area which takes a landscape approach to working, recognising the special and distinct landscape profiles of the area.



## APPENDIX 2: PROTECTED SITES

| Type of Designation   | Details  |
|---|--|
| <p>Ramsar Site</p> <p><i>The Convention on Wetlands 1971</i></p>  | <p>Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance, designated following the Convention on Wetlands signed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. All are designated as SSSI as well and through that are legally protected against damaging activities.</p> <p>The Severn Estuary is designated as a Ramsar site for estuarine habitat, assemblages of migratory fish species and internationally important populations of waterfowl.</p>  |
| <p>Special Protection Area (SPA)</p> <p><i>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019</i></p>                                  | <p>Internationally important sites for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds are designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs). There is a legal duty to manage and monitor SPA sites. All are designated as SSSI as well and through that are legally protected against damaging activities.</p> <p>The Severn Estuary SPA is one of the most important estuaries in the UK for overwintering wildfowl and waders, especially when severe weather conditions affect sites further north and east. The Estuary regularly supports over 20,000 wintering wildfowl, with over 80,000 individual waterfowls recorded in the winter seasons.</p>   |
| <p>Special Area of Conservation (SAC)</p> <p><i>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019</i></p>                             | <p>Sites which support internationally important habitats or species populations are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). There is a legal duty to manage and monitor SAC sites. All are designated as SSSI as well and through that are legally protected against damaging activities.</p> <p>There are five SACs in Monmouthshire. The Severn Estuary is designated as one of the largest coastal plain estuaries in Europe, with a classic funnel shaper and one of the highest tidal ranges in the world. Together with the Ramsar and SPA designations the site is known as the Severn Estuary European Marine Site.</p> <p>The Rivers Usk and Wye SACs are both designated as watercourses which support migratory and non-migratory fish, as well as otter and water crowfoot habitat.</p> <p>The Wye Valley Woodlands SAC comprises over 900 ha of mixed ash, beech and yew woodlands, on both Welsh and English representing the western-most range of most of the woodland types recorded.</p> <p>The Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Bat Sites SAC is another cross border SAC the protects an internationally important network of lesser and greater horseshoe bat roosts. In Monmouthshire there are four roosts which include the only known greater horseshoe maternity roost in Wales.</p> |
| <p>Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)</p> <p><i>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000</i></p> | <p>Sites which support habitats or species population of national importance. Some sites are also designated for geological reasons. Activities which are likely to damage a SSSI require consent from the relevant nature conservation body.</p> <p>There are 67 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) including nine sites designated for the species they support, 20 woodland SSSIs and 11 designated for species-rich or ancient grassland. The full breakdown of SSSI types is given in Figure 8.</p>   |

| Type of Designation   | Details   |
|---|---|
| <p>National Nature Reserve (NNR)</p> <p><i>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981</i></p>  | <p>NNRs are designated by the relevant nature conservation body. They are all nationally important sites designated as SSSIs which are also open to the public (with some exceptions).</p> <p>There are two National Nature Reserves in Monmouthshire; Fiddlers Elbow and Upper Wye Gorge, both of which are part of Wye Valley Woodlands SAC</p>   |
| <p>Local Nature Reserve (LNR)</p> <p><i>National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949</i></p>                           | <p>LNR sites are designated by the council. There is no legal protection as a result of the LNR designation but they are usually protected by management agreements and local plans.</p> <p>Cleddon Bog SSSI is designated as Local Nature Reserve in Monmouthshire.</p>  |
| <p>Local Wildlife Site (LWS) or Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)</p> <p><i>Not a statutory designation</i></p> | <p>LWS or SINCs have substantive nature conservation value and play a critical role in conservation, but have no legal protection. National and local planning policy provides some protection against development, and recent updates to Planning Policy Wales have strengthened the commitment to protect locally designated sites and irreplaceable habitats.</p> <p>At time of publication there are 759 sites designated as SINCs identified in Monmouthshire LPA predominantly in relation to grassland and ancient and semi-natural woodland. Gwent Wildlife Trust identify new sites each year so this number is subject to change.</p> |

## APPENDIX 3: PRIORITY HABITATS AND SPECIES

### PRIORITY HABITATS RECORDED IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

The habitats in the following table are habitats listed on Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 that are known to occur within Monmouthshire. We have used data sets available on Data Map Wales and designated site citations to inform the list.

| Habitats                            | Cynefin                           | Priority Habitats                                 | Cynefin sy'n Flaenoriaeth   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland | Coedwig lydanddail, gymysgac ywen | Traditional orchards                              | Perllannau traddodiadol   |
|                                     |                                   | Wood pasture & parkland                           | Porfa goediog a pharcdir  |
|                                     |                                   | Lowland beech and yew woodland                    | Coedwig ffawydd ac ywenar dir isel                                  |
|                                     |                                   | Wet woodland                                      | Coedwig wlyb  |
|                                     |                                   | Lowland mixed deciduous woodland                  | Coedwig gollddail gymysgar dir isel                                 |
| Boundary and linear features        | Coedwig lydanddail, gymysgac ywen | Hedgerows   | Gwrychoedd  |
| Improved grassland                  | Glaswelltir wedi ei wella         | Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh              | Tir pori corslyd ar forfaarfordirol a gorlifdir                     |
| Neutral grassland                   | Glaswelltir niwtral               | Lowland meadows                                   | Gweirgloddiau yr iseldir  |
| Calcareous grassland                | Glaswelltir calchaid              | Lowland calcareous grassland                      | Glaswelltir calchaid yriseldir                                      |
| Acid grassland                      | Glaswelltir asidaidd              | Lowland dry acid grassland                        | Glaswelltir asidaidd sychiseldir                                    |
| Dwarf shrub heath                   | Gweundir o gorlwyni               | Lowland heathland                                 | Gweundir yr iseldir   |
| Fen, marsh and swamp                | Ffen, cors a chors siglennaidd    | Lowland fens                                      | Ffeniau ar dir isel   |
|                                     |                                   | Reedbeds  | Gwelyau cyrs  |
| Bogs                                | Corsydd                           | Lowland raised bog                                | Cyforgors ar dir isel   |
| Rivers and Streams                  | Afonydd a nentydd                 | Rivers  | Afonydd   |
| Standing open waters and canals     | Dŵr llonydd agored a chamlesi     | Ponds   | Pyllau dŵr  |
| Inland rock                         | Craig fewndirol                   | Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land | Brithwaith o gynefinoeddagored ar dir a oedd cynt wedi ei ddatblygu |
| Supralittoral rock                  | Craig uwch-lanw                   | Maritime cliff and slopes                         | Clogwyni a llethrau arforol   |

## PRIORITY SPECIES IN MONMOUTHSHIRE

The species in the following table have all been recorded in Monmouthshire and are listed as priority species on Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The list and number of records is from data provided by SEWBReC in May 2022.

| Species Group             | Scientific Name                     | English Name           | Welsh Name           | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------|
| <b>Mammals</b>            | <i>Arvicola amphibius</i>           | European Water Vole    | Llygod Pengrwn y Dwr | 1959          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>     | Western Barbastelle    | Ystlum Du            | 2010          | 2020        |
|                           | <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>          | West European Hedgehog | Draenog              | 1964          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Lepus europaeus</i>              | Brown Hare             | Ysgyfarnog           | 1959          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Lutra lutra</i>                  | European Otter         | Dyfrgi               | 1958          | 2022        |
|                           | <i>Martes martes</i>                | Pine Marten            | Bele                 | 1873          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Micromys minutus</i>             | Harvest Mouse          | Llygod yr Yd         | 1968          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>     | Hazel Dormouse         | Pathew               | 1905          | 2022        |
|                           | <i>Mustela putorius</i>             | Polecat                | Ffwlbart             | 1900          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Mustela putorius subsp. furo</i> | Ferret                 | Ffuret               | 1995          | 2006        |
|                           | <i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>           | Bechstein's Bat        | Ystlum Bechstein     | 2011          | 2020        |
|                           | <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>             | Noctule Bat            | Ystlum Mawr          | 1959          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Phocoena phocoena</i>            | Common Porpoise        | Ilamidyddion         | 2013          | 2020        |
|                           | <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>    | Common Pipistrelle     |                      | 1986          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>        | Soprano Pipistrelle    |                      | 1996          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Plecotus auritus</i>             | Brown Long-eared Bat   | Ystlum Hirglust      | 1969          | 2021        |
|                           | <i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>    | Greater Horseshoe Bat  | Ystlum Pedol Mwyaf   | 1961          | 2020        |
|                           | <i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>     | Lesser Horseshoe Bat   | Ystlum Pedol Lleiaf  | 1959          | 2022        |
| <i>Tursiops truncatus</i> | Bottle-Nosed Dolphin                | Dolffin Trwyn Potel    | 1988                 | 1988          |             |
| <b>Birds</b>              | <i>Acanthis cabaret</i>             | Lesser Redpoll         |                      | 1960          | 2022        |
|                           | <i>Alauda arvensis</i>              | Eurasian Skylark       | Ehedydd              | 1961          | 2022        |
|                           | <i>Anser albifrons</i>              | White-fronted Goose    | Gwydd Dalcen-Wen     | 1891          | 1983        |
|                           | <i>Anthus trivialis</i>             | Tree Pipit             | Corhedydd y Coed     | 1961          | 2021        |

| Species Group | Scientific Name                      | English Name              | Welsh Name           | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|-------------|
|               | <i>Botaurus stellaris</i>            | Eurasian Bittern          | Adar y Bwn           | 1985          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>      | Dark-bellied Brent Goose  |                      | 2011          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>         | Nightjar                  | Troellwr Mawr        | 1959          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>          | Common Ringed Plover      | Cwtiad Torchog       | 1972          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>    | Black-headed Gull         |                      | 1971          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Circus cyaneus</i>                | Hen Harrier               | Boda Tinwyn          | 1994          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i> | Hawfinch                  | Gylfinbraff          | 1961          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Crex crex</i>                     | Corncrake                 | Rhegen yr Yd         | 1973          | 1981        |
|               | <i>Cuculus canorus</i>               | Cuckoo                    | Cog                  | 1959          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>   | Bewick's Swan             | Alarch Bewick        | 1966          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Dryobates minor</i>               | Lesser Spotted Woodpecker | Cnocell Fraith Leiaf | 1959          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Emberiza calandra</i>             | Corn Bunting              | Bras yr Yd           | 1973          | 2009        |
|               | <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>           | Yellowhammer              | Bras Melyn           | 1961          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>          | Common Reed Bunting       | Bras y Cyrs          | 1965          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>             | Kestrel                   | Cudyll Coch          | 1961          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Ficedula hypoleuca</i>            | European Pied Flycatcher  | Gwybedog Brith       | 1959          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Lagopus lagopus</i>               | Red Grouse                |                      | 1964          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Lagopus lagopus scotica</i>       | Red Grouse (scotica)      | Grugiar Goch         | 1964          | 2018        |
|               | <i>Larus argentatus</i>              | European Herring Gull     | Gwylan y Penwaig     | 1961          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Limosa lapponica</i>              | Bar-tailed Godwit         |                      | 1971          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Linaria cannabina</i>             | Linnet                    | Llinos               | 1966          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Locustella naevia</i>             | Grasshopper Warbler       | Troellwr Bach        | 1959          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Lullula arborea</i>               | Woodlark                  | Ehedydd y Coed       | 1985          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Melanitta nigra</i>               | Common Scoter             | Mor-Hwyaden Ddu      | 1971          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Motacilla flava</i>               | Western Yellow Wagtail    | Siglen Felen         | 1960          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Muscicapa striata</i>             | Spotted Flycatcher        | Gwybedog Mannog      | 1961          | 2021        |

| Species Group                  | Scientific Name                | English Name       | Welsh Name               | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                                | <i>Numenius arquata</i>        | Curlew             | Gylfinir                 | 1960          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Passer domesticus</i>       | House Sparrow      | Adar y To                | 1965          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Passer montanus</i>         | Tree Sparrow       | Golfan y Mynydd          | 1961          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Perdix perdix</i>           | Grey Partridge     | Petris                   | 1959          | 2017        |
|                                | <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> | Wood Warbler       | Telor y Coed             | 1961          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>     | Golden Plover      | Cwtiad Aur               | 1901          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Poecile montanus</i>        | Willow Tit         | Titw'r Helyg             | 1981          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Poecile palustris</i>       | Marsh Tit          | Titw'r Wern              | 1961          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Prunella modularis</i>      | Dunnock            | Llwyd y Gwrych           | 1961          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>       | Eurasian Bullfinch | Coch y Berllan           | 1961          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Streptopelia turtur</i>     | Turtle Dove        | Turtur                   | 1959          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>        | Starling           | Drudwen                  | 1961          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Turdus philomelos</i>       | Song Thrush        | Bronfraith               | 1959          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Turdus torquatus</i>        | Ring Ouzel         | Mwyalchen y Mynydd       | 1960          | 2020        |
| <i>Vanellus vanellus</i>       | Lapwing                        | Cornchwiglen       | 1959                     | 2022          |             |
| <b>Reptiles and Amphibians</b> | <i>Anguis fragilis</i>         | Slow-worm          | Nadroedd Defaid          | 1883          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Bufo bufo</i>               | Common Toad        | Llyffant Dafadennog      | 1833          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Natrix helvetica</i>        | Grass Snake        | Nadroedd y Gwair         | 1958          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Triturus cristatus</i>      | Great Crested Newt | Madfall Ddwr Gribog      | 1833          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Vipera berus</i>            | Adder              | Gwiber                   | 1963          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>        | Common Lizard      | Madfall                  | 1956          | 2021        |
| <b>Fish</b>                    | <i>Alosa alosa</i>             | Allis Shad         | Herlod                   | 1964          | 1964        |
|                                | <i>Alosa fallax</i>            | Twaite Shad        | Gwangen                  | 1980          | 2013        |
|                                | <i>Anguilla anguilla</i>       | European Eel       | Llysywen                 | 1967          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Gadus morhua</i>            | Atlantic Cod       | Penfras                  | 1981          | 1981        |
|                                | <i>Lampetra fluviatilis</i>    | Lampern            | Llysywen Bendoll yr Afon | 1975          | 2011        |
|                                | <i>Petromyzon marinus</i>      | Sea Lamprey        |                          | 1963          | 2011        |

| Species Group            | Scientific Name               | English Name                    | Welsh Name            | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                          | <i>Raja clavata</i>           | Roker                           | Morgath Styds         | 2017          | 2017        |
|                          | <i>Salmo salar</i>            | Atlantic Salmon                 | Eog                   | 1976          | 2014        |
|                          | <i>Salmo trutta</i>           | Brown/Sea Trout                 | Brithyll              | 1964          | 2014        |
| Butterflies and Moths    | <i>Acronicta psi</i>          | Grey Dagger                     | Bidog Llwyd           | 1912          | 2021        |
|                          | <i>Acronicta rumicis</i>      | Knot Grass                      | Bidog Tafol           | 1966          | 2021        |
|                          | <i>Adscita statices</i>       | Forester                        | Coediwr               | 1982          | 2015        |
|                          | <i>Agonopterix atomella</i>   | Greenweed Flat-body             |                       | 1977          | 1977        |
|                          | <i>Agrochola helvola</i>      | Flounced Chestnut               | Castan Grech          | 1965          | 2017        |
|                          | <i>Agrochola litura</i>       | Brown-spot Pinion               | Castan Smotywn Brown  | 1966          | 2017        |
|                          | <i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>    | Beaded Chestnut                 | Castan Leiniog        | 1912          | 2016        |
|                          | <i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>  | Green-brindled Crescent         | Cilgant Brych         | 1962          | 2017        |
|                          | <i>Amphipoea oculea</i>       | Ear Moth                        | Clustwyfyn Llygeidiog | 1973          | 2015        |
|                          | <i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i> | Mouse Moth                      |                       | 1966          | 2016        |
|                          | <i>Anania funebris</i>        | White-spotted Sable             |                       | 1966          | 1974        |
|                          | <i>Apamea remissa</i>         | Dusky Brocade                   | Brithion Llwydolau    | 1961          | 2017        |
|                          | <i>Arctia caja</i>            | Garden Tiger                    | Teigr yr Ardd         | 1964          | 2016        |
|                          | <i>Argynnis adippe</i>        | High Brown Fritillary           | Britheg Frown         | 1905          | 1989        |
|                          | <i>Asteroscopus sphinx</i>    | Sprawler                        | Cwccwll Bwaog         | 1965          | 2021        |
|                          | <i>Atethmia centrigo</i>      | Centre-barred Sallow            | Melyn yr Ynn          | 1935          | 2016        |
|                          | <i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>     | Pearl-bordered Fritillary       | Britheg Berlog        | 1890          | 2019        |
|                          | <i>Boloria selene</i>         | Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary | Britheg Berlog Fach   | 1906          | 2021        |
|                          | <i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>  | Minor Shoulder-knot             | Gwarglymau Bach       | 1967          | 2015        |
|                          | <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>     | Mottled Rustic                  | Gwladwr Brith         | 1966          | 2017        |
| <i>Celaena haworthii</i> | Haworth's Minor               | Gwyfyn Plu'r Gweunydd           | 2013                  | 2013          |             |
| <i>Ceramica pisi</i>     | Broom Moth                    | Gwyfyn Banadl                   | 1966                  | 2020          |             |
| <i>Chesias legatella</i> | Streak                        | Rhesen y Banadl                 | 1962                  | 2016          |             |



| Species Group | Scientific Name                 | English Name                  | Welsh Name                       | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|---------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|               | <i>Chesias rufata</i>           | Broom-tip                     | Rhesen Gam                       | 1967          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>       | Latticed Heath                | Seffyr Delltog                   | 1968          | 2014        |
|               | <i>Cirrhia gilvago</i>          | Dusky-lemon Sallow            | Melyn y Llwyf                    | 1966          | 2005        |
|               | <i>Cirrhia icteritia</i>        | Sallow                        | Melyn Penfelyn                   | 1966          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>    | Small Heath                   |                                  | 1906          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Cossus cossus</i>            | Goat Moth                     | Gwyfyn Drewllyd                  | 1971          | 1971        |
|               | <i>Cupido minimus</i>           | Small Blue                    | Gleision Bach                    | 2007          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Cymatophorina diluta</i>     | Oak Lutestring                | Tannau'r Deri                    | 1971          | 2012        |
|               | <i>Diarsia rubi</i>             | Small Square-spot             | Smotiau Sgwar Bach               | 1912          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Diloba caeruleocephala</i>   | Figure of Eight               | Crwbach Ffigwr Wyth              | 1963          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>    | Small Phoenix                 | Ffenics Bach                     | 1912          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Ennomos erosaria</i>         | September Thorn               | Carpiog Medi                     | 1969          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>      | Dusky Thorn                   | Carpiog Tywyll                   | 1966          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Ennomos quercinaria</i>      | August Thorn                  | Carpiog Awst                     | 1966          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Entephria caesiata</i>       | Grey Mountain Carpet          | Brychan Llwyd y Mynydd           | 1984          | 1999        |
|               | <i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>         | Galium Carpet                 | Brychan y Friwydd                | 1984          | 2010        |
|               | <i>Eriopygodes imbecilla</i>    | Silurian                      | Gwyfyn Gwent                     | 1999          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Erynnis tages</i>            | Dingy Skipper                 | Gwibiwr Llwyd                    | 1906          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>      | Autumnal Rustic               | Gwladwr yr Hydref                | 1966          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Eulithis mellinata</i>       | Spinach                       | Brychan Cwrens                   | 1967          | 2015        |
|               | <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>       | Marsh Fritillary              | Britheg y Gors                   | 1890          | 1994        |
|               | <i>Euxoa nigricans</i>          | Garden Dart                   | Dart y Gerddi                    | 1972          | 2004        |
|               | <i>Graphiphora augur</i>        | Double Dart                   | Dart Deunod                      | 1967          | 2015        |
|               | <i>Helotropha leucostigma</i>   | Crescent                      | Clustwyfyn Cilgantog             | 1974          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Hemaris tityus</i>           | Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth | Gwalch-Wyfyn Gwenynaidd Ymyl Gul | 1933          | 1933        |
|               | <i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i> | Small Emerald                 | Emrallt Barf yr Hen Wr           | 1967          | 2017        |

| Species Group | Scientific Name              | English Name              | Welsh Name             | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|---------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|               | <i>Hepialus humuli</i>       | Ghost Moth                | Chwimwyfyn Rhithiol    | 1963          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Hipparchia semele</i>     | Grayling                  |                        | 1941          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>     | Rustic                    | Llwyd Llyfn            | 1966          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>     | Rosy Rustic               | Gwladwr Gwridog        | 1966          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Lasiommata megera</i>     | Wall                      |                        | 1906          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Leptidea sinapis</i>      | Wood White                | Gwyn y Coed            | 1935          | 2018        |
|               | <i>Leucania comma</i>        | Shoulder-striped Wainscot | Gwensgod Gwar Rhesog   | 1966          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Limenitis camilla</i>     | White Admiral             | Mantell Wen            | 1952          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Litologia literosa</i>    | Rosy Minor                | Corachod Gwridog       | 1967          | 2015        |
|               | <i>Lycia hirtaria</i>        | Brindled Beauty           | Rhisgl Brith           | 1965          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Macaria wauaria</i>       | V-Moth                    | Seffyr y Ffyrch        | 1966          | 1990        |
|               | <i>Malacosoma neustria</i>   | Lackey                    | Gwaswyfyn              | 1966          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Melanchra persicariae</i> | Dot Moth                  | Gwyfyn Dotiog          | 1963          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Melanthia procellata</i>  | Pretty Chalk Carpet       | Brychan Hardd y Calch  | 1966          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Minoa murinata</i>        | Drab Looper               | Dolennwr Llwydfelyn    | 1911          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Mniotype adusta</i>       | Dark Brocade              | Pali Tywyll            | 1970          | 2013        |
|               | <i>Noctua orbona</i>         | Lunar Yellow Underwing    | Isadain Felen Loerol   | 2019          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Orthonama vittata</i>     | Oblique Carpet            | Brychan Lletraws       | 1966          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Orthosia gracilis</i>     | Powdered Quaker           | Crynwr Llychlyd        | 1967          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Perizoma albulata</i>     | Grass Rivulet             | Gwregys y Gwair        | 1967          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Plebejus argus</i>        | Silver-studded Blue       | Gleision Serennog      | 2015          | 2015        |
|               | <i>Pyrgus malvae</i>         | Grizzled Skipper          | Gwibiwr Brith          | 1906          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>   | Argent & Sable            | Brychan Pennau Saethau | 1988          | 2004        |
|               | <i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>       | Large Wainscot            | Gwelltwyfyn Mawr       | 1967          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Sabra harpagula</i>       | Scarce Hook-tip           | Bachadain Brin         | 1961          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Satyrium w-album</i>      | White-letter Hairstreak   | Brithribin W Wen       | 1876          | 2018        |

| Species Group                  | Scientific Name                  | English Name                 | Welsh Name                | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                                | <i>Scopula marginepunctata</i>   | Mullein Wave                 | Ton Arfor                 | 2005          | 2016        |
|                                | <i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>  | Shaded Broad-bar             | Rhesen Lydan Dywyll       | 1967          | 2019        |
|                                | <i>Sideridis reticulata</i>      | Bordered Gothic              | Rhwyl Ymylog              | 1892          | 1892        |
|                                | <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>     | White Ermine                 | Ermin Gwyn                | 1935          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Spilosoma lutea</i>           | Buff Ermine                  | Ermin Llwydfelyn          | 1935          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Stilbia anomala</i>           | Anomalous                    | Llwyd Gloyw               | 1968          | 2014        |
|                                | <i>Synanthedon scoliaeformis</i> | Welsh Clearwing              | Cliradain Gymreig         | 2015          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Thecla betulae</i>            | Brown Hairstreak             | Brithribin Brown          | 1983          | 2000        |
|                                | <i>Tholera cespitis</i>          | Hedge Rustic                 | Rhwyl y Crawcwellt        | 1912          | 2014        |
|                                | <i>Tholera decimalis</i>         | Feathered Gothic             | Rhwyl Bluog               | 1966          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Timandra comae</i>            | Blood-vein                   |                           | 1966          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Trichiura crataegi</i>        | Pale Eggar                   | Wylun Gwelw               | 1966          | 2016        |
|                                | <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>           | Cinnabar                     | Teigr y Benfelen          | 1968          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Watsonalla binaria</i>        | Oak Hook-tip                 | Bachadain y Deri          | 1937          | 2018        |
|                                | <i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>      | Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet | Brychan Deusmotiog Tywyll | 1966          | 2016        |
|                                | <i>Xestia agathina</i>           | Heath Rustic                 | Clai'r Rhos               | 1986          | 1986        |
| <i>Xestia castanea</i>         | Neglected Rustic                 | Clai'r Waun                  | 1973                      | 2014          |             |
| <i>Xylena exsoleta</i>         | Sword-grass                      | Cleddwyfyn Cyffredin         | 1892                      | 1892          |             |
| Bees, Wasps, Ants and Sawflies | <i>Bombus humilis</i>            | Brown-banded Carder-bee      |                           | 1997          | 2022        |
|                                | <i>Bombus muscorum</i>           | Moss Carder-bee              |                           | 1956          | 2019        |
|                                | <i>Bombus ruderarius</i>         | Red-shanked Carder-bee       |                           | 1997          | 2010        |
|                                | <i>Bombus sylvarum</i>           | Shrill Carder Bee            |                           | 2003          | 2017        |
|                                | <i>Chrysis fulgida</i>           | Shimmering Ruby-tail         |                           | 2020          | 2020        |
|                                | <i>Eucera longicornis</i>        | Long-horned Bee              |                           | 1922          | 2021        |
|                                | <i>Formicoxenus nitidulus</i>    | Shining Guest Ant            |                           | 1995          | 1995        |
| Other Invertebrates            | <i>Asilus crabroniformis</i>     | Hornet robberfly             |                           | 1959          | 2019        |
|                                | <i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> | Freshwater Crayfish          |                           | 1900          | 2021        |

| Species Group | Scientific Name  | English Name                 | Welsh Name                  | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|---------------|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|               | <i>Baetis niger</i>                                    | Southern Iron Blue           |                             | 1977          | 2014        |
|               | <i>Bembidion quadripustulatum</i>                      | Scarce Four-dot Pin-palp     |                             | 1997          | 2012        |
|               | <i>Bembidion testaceum</i>                             | Pale Pin-palp                |                             | 1977          | 2015        |
|               | <i>Brachyptera putata</i>                              | Northern February Red        |                             | 1983          | 2001        |
|               | <i>Calosoma inquisitor</i>                             | Caterpillar-hunter           |                             | 2002          | 2002        |
|               | <i>Carabus monilis</i>                                 | Necklace Ground Beetle       |                             | 1985          | 2013        |
|               | <i>Clorismia rustica</i>                               | Southern Silver Stiletto-fly |                             | 1969          | 2005        |
|               | <i>Empis limata</i>                                    | English Assassin Fly         |                             | 2000          | 2002        |
|               | <i>Lipsothrix nervosa</i>                              | Southern Yellow Splinter     |                             | 1968          | 2007        |
|               | <i>Lipsothrix nobilis</i>                              | Scarce Yellow Splinter       |                             | 2005          | 2005        |
|               | <i>Lucanus cervus</i>                                  | Stag Beetle                  |                             | 1961          | 2012        |
|               | <i>Meloe proscarabaeus</i>                             | Black Oil-beetle             |                             | 1971          | 2022        |
|               | <i>Meloe rugosus</i>                                   | Rugged Oil-beetle            |                             | 2006          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Meloe violaceus</i>                                 | Violet Oil-beetle            |                             | 2015          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Meotica anglica</i>                                 | Shingle Rove Beetle          |                             | 1998          | 1998        |
|               | <i>Monocephalus castaneipes</i>                        | Broad Groove-head Spider     |                             | 1991          | 1998        |
|               | <i>Pisidium tenuilineatum</i>                          | Fine-lined Pea Mussel        |                             | 1973          | 2003        |
|               | <i>Potamanthus luteus</i>                              | Yellow Mayfly                |                             | 1954          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Pseudanodonta complanata</i>                        | Depressed River Mussel       |                             | 1955          | 2010        |
|               | <i>Rhabdomastix japonica</i>                           | River-shore Crane-fly        |                             | 1972          | 1997        |
|               | <i>Saaristoa firma</i>                                 | Triangle Hammock-spider      |                             | 2000          | 2000        |
|               | <i>Synaptus filiformis</i>                             | Hairy Click Beetle           |                             | 1852          | 2003        |
| <b>Plants</b> | <i>Anomodon longifolius</i>                            | Long-leaved Tail-moss        |                             | 1911          | 2012        |
|               | <i>Asplenium trichomanes</i> subsp. <i>pachyrachis</i> | Lobed Maidenhair Spleenwort  | Duegredynen Gwallt y Forwyn | 1988          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Bupleurum tenuissimum</i>                           | Slender Hare's-ear           | Paladr Trwyddo Eiddildail   | 1972          | 2011        |

| Species Group | Scientific Name                               | English Name              | Welsh Name                 | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|---------------|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|               | <i>Campanula patula</i>                       | Spreading Bellflower      | Clychlys Lledaenol         | 1944          | 2018        |
|               | <i>Centaurea cyanus</i>                       | Cornflower                | Glas yr Yd                 | 1991          | 2020        |
|               | <i>Cephalanthera longifolia</i>               | Narrow-leaved Helleborine | Caldrist Culddail          | 1879          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Clinopodium acinos</i>                     | Basil Thyme               | Brenhinllys                | 2011          | 2011        |
|               | <i>Dianthus armeria</i>                       | Deptford Pink             | Penigan y Porfeydd         | 1980          | 1980        |
|               | <i>Didymodon tomaculosus</i>                  | Sausage Beard-moss        |                            | 2004          | 2004        |
|               | <i>Euphrasia officinalis subsp. anglica</i>   | Glandular Eyebright       | Effros Chwareog Gwalltog   | 1985          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Euphrasia officinalis subsp. monticola</i> | Eyebright                 |                            | 1997          | 1997        |
|               | <i>Euphrasia officinalis subsp. pratensis</i> | Eyebright                 | Effros Blodau Bach Gludiog | 1971          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Euphrasia pseudokernerii</i>               | Eyebright                 | Effros y Calch             | 2003          | 2017        |
|               | <i>Fumaria purpurea</i>                       | Purple Ramping-fumitory   | Mwg y Ddaear Glasgoch      | 1984          | 2014        |
|               | <i>Galeopsis angustifolia</i>                 | Red Hemp-nettle           | Penboeth Culddail          | 1983          | 1983        |
|               | <i>Hordeum marinum</i>                        | Sea Barley                | Haidd y Morfa              | 1972          | 1972        |
|               | <i>Hypopitys monotropa</i>                    | Yellow Bird's-nest        | Cyd-Dwf                    | 1845          | 2021        |
|               | <i>Hypopitys monotropa subsp. hypophegea</i>  | Bird's-nest               |                            | 1969          | 2010        |
|               | <i>Lycopodium clavatum</i>                    | Stag's-horn Clubmoss      | Cnwbfwsogl Corn Carw       | 1980          | 2016        |
|               | <i>Melittis melissophyllum</i>                | Bastard Balm              | Gwenynog                   | 1977          | 1977        |
|               | <i>Mentha pulegium</i>                        | Pennyroyal                | Brefai                     | 1964          | 1964        |
|               | <i>Oenanthe fistulosa</i>                     | Tubular Water-dropwort    | Cegid Pibellaidd           | 1965          | 2019        |
|               | <i>Ophrys insectifera</i>                     | Fly Orchid                | Caineirian yr Ednogyn      | 1878          | 1979        |
|               | <i>Orthotrichum pumilum</i>                   | Dwarf Bristle-moss        |                            | 2011          | 2011        |
|               | <i>Platanthera bifolia</i>                    | Lesser Butterfly-orchid   | Baladr Dwyddeiliog         | 1878          | 2011        |
|               | <i>Ranunculus arvensis</i>                    | Corn Buttercup            | Blodyn-Ymenyn yr Yd        | 1973          | 1981        |
|               | <i>Scleranthus annuus</i>                     | Annual Knawel             | Dinodd Blynnyddol          | 2005          | 2005        |

| Species Group                     | Scientific Name                | English Name                    | Welsh Name             | Earliest Year | Latest Year |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------|
|                                   | <i>Sorbus eminens</i>          | Round-leaved Whitebeam          | Cerddinen Mynwy        | 1903          | 2005        |
|                                   | <i>Sorbus leptophylla</i>      | Thin-leaved Whitebeam           | Cerddinen Gymreig      | 1988          | 1988        |
|                                   | <i>Stellaria palustris</i>     | Marsh Stitchwort                | Serenllys Llwydlas     | 1982          | 1983        |
|                                   | <i>Trollius europaeus</i>      | Globeflower                     | Blodeuyn y Gronnell    | 2011          | 2011        |
|                                   | <i>Weissia multicapsularis</i> | Many-fruited Beardless-moss     |                        | 1980          | 2010        |
|                                   | <i>Weissia squarrosa</i>       | Spreading-leaved Beardless-moss |                        | 2003          | 2011        |
| Fungi, Lichen and Moulds<br>Slime | <i>Clavaria zollingeri</i>     | Violaceous Fairy Club           | Cwrel Fioled           | 2000          | 2021        |
|                                   | <i>Entoloma bloxamii</i>       | Big Blue Pinkgill               | Tagell Binc Fawr Las   | 2006          | 2016        |
|                                   | <i>Microglossum olivaceum</i>  | Earth Tongue                    | Tafod Daear MelynwyRDD | 1998          | 2016        |
|                                   | <i>Parmelia ernstiae</i>       |                                 |                        | 2016          | 2016        |
|                                   | <i>Phylloporus pelletieri</i>  | Gilled Bolete                   | Boled Tagell Aur       | 2017          | 2017        |
|                                   | <i>Piptoporus quercinus</i>    | Oak polypore                    |                        | 2006          | 2006        |
|                                   | <i>Punctelia jeckeri</i>       |                                 |                        | 1986          | 2009        |
|                                   | <i>Punctelia reddenda</i>      |                                 |                        | 1975          | 1975        |
|                                   | <i>Pyrenula nitida</i>         |                                 |                        | 1982          | 1982        |
|                                   | <i>Usnea articulata</i>        |                                 |                        | 2016          | 2016        |
|                                   | <i>Usnea florida</i>           | Witches' Whiskers Lichen        |                        | 2005          | 2005        |

## APPENDIX 4: NRAP FOR WALES OBJECTIVES

The following table gives the NRAP for Wales objectives, which are also the Greater Gwent NRAP objectives. We have also included the outcomes of the Greater Gwent NRAP.

| NRAP for Wales Objectives |   | GGNRAP Outcomes |  |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------|--|
| <b>1</b>                  | Engage and support participation and understanding to embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels | <b>1.1</b>      | Nature is valued with biodiversity enhancements embedded in decision making. Our habitats and species are thriving, biodiversity is maximised and wildlife is abundant               |
|                           |   | <b>1.2</b>      | Peoples, communities and services are connected with nature having a clear understanding of the value of biodiversity and nature for society   |
| <b>2</b>                  | Safeguard species and habitats of principal importance and improve their management                               | <b>2.1</b>      | Priority species and habitats are at the forefront of nature recovery actions  |
|                           |   | <b>2.2</b>      | Our most important sites are safeguarded, enhanced and connected. Species and habitats are healthy functioning and resilient.  |
| <b>3</b>                  | Increase the resilience of our natural environment by restoring degrading habitats and habitat creation           | <b>3.1</b>      | Priorities for habitat restoration are identified outside of the protected site network  |
|                           |   | <b>3.2</b>      | Our broad habitats and ecosystems are safeguarded, restored and are resilient  |
|                           |   | <b>3.3</b>      | Nature based solutions are at the forefront of habitat restoration and creation, reducing effectively and efficiently the pressures impacting the natural environment and well-being |
| <b>4</b>                  | Tackle key pressures on species and habitats  | <b>4.1</b>      | Increased capacity of habitats and ecosystems to respond, resist and recover from climate change risk.   |
|                           |   | <b>4.2</b>      | Natural resources are managed and used more sustainably and equitably, supporting more resilient services that maximises well-being.   |
|                           |   | <b>4.3</b>      | The pressures of pollution driving biodiversity loss is reduced and prevented  |
|                           |   | <b>4.4</b>      | Land-use and land-use change is incrementally maximising biodiversity and other ecosystem  |



|          |   |            |  |
|----------|---|------------|--|
|          |   |            | services for well-being whilst maintaining or enhancing productivity.  |
|          |   | <b>4.5</b> | INNS is being prevented, frequency and distribution is declining   |
| <b>5</b> | Improve our evidence, understanding and monitoring              | <b>5.1</b> | Regular monitoring and data collection is used to evidence future nature recovery actions  |
| <b>6</b> | Put in place a framework of governance and support for delivery | <b>6.1</b> | The Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan is reviewed and updated over a suitable timescale, outlining the intended legacy of the GGNRAP |
|          |   | <b>6.2</b> | The GGSON is updated over a suitable timescale   |
|          |   | <b>6.3</b> | Creation and use of Local Nature Recovery Action Plans at a local level within Greater Gwent   |

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# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

March 2024

Volume 1 **Strategic Framework**





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## Key Messages

- First published in 2019, the Green Infrastructure Strategy has been reviewed to reflect changes in policy, the new Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy and updated baseline data. The review also reflects progress in delivery of green infrastructure projects over the last 5 years.
- Planning Policy Wales 12 defines Green Infrastructure as 'the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places' (such as towns and villages).
- This Green Infrastructure Strategy promotes an integrated and joined up approach to delivering Green Infrastructure that takes into account the needs of Monmouthshire's communities, environment and economy.
- An important overarching principle underpinning the Strategy is the need to recognise the multi-functionality of Green Infrastructure assets and to maximise the benefits different assets can deliver through an integrated approach. For example, greenspaces can be used for sustainable food production, contribute to flood management and provide access to nature for informal recreation.
- It is essential that the inter-relationship and connections between the individual projects outlined in the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan are considered in the round to ensure that opportunities for shared outcomes and mutual benefits are maximised.

## Green Infrastructure Vision for Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire has a well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure network comprising high quality green spaces and links that offer many benefits for people and wildlife.

The network's integrity and connectivity is maintained, protected and enhanced in a planned and managed way, which recognises the interdependency and multifunctionality of landscape, heritage and biodiversity elements.

Investment in green infrastructure underpins the County's ongoing economic, social and environmental success by supporting sustainable growth, improving quality of life and place, delivering ecosystem services and tackling climate change.

Monmouthshire is a green and healthy place to live, with an increasingly coherent and resilient ecological network of wildlife habitats, helping conserve biodiversity.







1

Setting the Scene





## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This Strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to the planning, management and delivery of Green Infrastructure (GI) focussed around the following strategic objectives and priorities:

- Improve Health & Wellbeing
- Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience
- Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness
- Increase Climate Change Resilience
- Support Sustainable Economic Development

1.1.2 In doing so, the GI Strategy will help contribute to the delivery of:

- MCC Community & Corporate Plan
- MCC Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan
- MCC Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan
- Public Service Board Wellbeing Plans

1.1.3 There is great benefit from working in a collaborative, integrated and joined-up way to deliver GI through a multi-disciplinary approach as illustrated on **Diagram 1.1**, both at the local and regional scale. This way of working is championed by the Gwent Green Grid Partnership through the Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### Green Infrastructure Strategy Review

The 2019 Green Infrastructure Strategy has been reviewed to reflect changes to national planning policy; alignment with the new Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy; updated local plans and strategies; updated green infrastructure mapping data/information; and progress in delivery of green infrastructure projects.

## 1.2 Structure of the Strategy

1.2.1 The Strategy was prepared by CBA on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council.

### Volume 1 – Strategic Framework (this document)

1.2.2 Volume 1 of the Strategy sets out the Council's strategic framework for GI provision in Monmouthshire. It identifies key priorities and strategic opportunities where the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits, both on a county-wide basis and for locations where growth is planned in the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2018-2033 Preferred Strategy (endorsed October 2023).

1.2.3 As required by Planning Policy Wales, the GI Strategy is informed by a Green Infrastructure Assessment for Monmouthshire (see **Appendix D**) developed in accordance with the principles of the NRW Green Infrastructure Assessment Guidance Note 42 (2023).

1.2.4 An Executive Summary of the GI Strategy is set out in a separate document.

### Volume 2 – Delivery Plan

1.2.5 Volume 2 of the Strategy provides the Council's delivery plan for GI in Monmouthshire. Provided as a separate document, the Delivery Plan includes prioritised action plans for delivery of strategic/landscape-scale GI projects, and local GI projects to support development at the key growth locations and rural secondary settlements. The action plans are designed to support funding bids by the Council and its delivery partners.

| Planning Policy Wales Edition 12 (February 2024)<br>Green Infrastructure Strategy/Assessment Requirements  | GI Strategy Signposts   |
|--|---|
| Identify landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, historic and cultural features which need to be safeguarded as part of multi-functioning urban and rural landscapes (para 6.2.7)   | Vol 1 - Appendix D (GI Assessment)<br><br>Vol 1 - Section 3 (GI Strategy)<br><br>Vol 2 - Delivery/Project Action Plan |
| Identify how a net benefit for biodiversity will be secured and the attributes of ecosystem resilience will be enhanced, making the links to other land management activity and maintenance regimes (para 6.2.7)   |   |
| Facilitate the reduction of pollution by identifying nature based solutions which form part of, or complements, wider activity at a catchment scale to address pollution and improve the restoration of riverine and other habitats (para 6.2.7)   |   |
| Address the climate emergency by ensuring tree canopy cover in urban areas is increased, incorporating measures for maintaining good air quality and appropriate soundscapes and by requiring effective natural flood management and sustainable urban drainage schemes (para 6.2.7)   |   |
| Ensure communities have accessible natural green spaces of various sizes and scales within reasonable walking and cycling distances (para 6.2.7)   |   |
| Identify how the provision of green infrastructure could form an integral part of strategies for growth and provide broad parameters for securing its implementation which recognises the dynamic nature of its provision and identifies measures which will need to be provided to safeguard it over the long term (para 6.2.7) |   |
| The need for ecosystems, habitats and species to adapt to climate change and other pressures should be considered as part of the Green Infrastructure Assessment. (para 6.2.8)   |   |

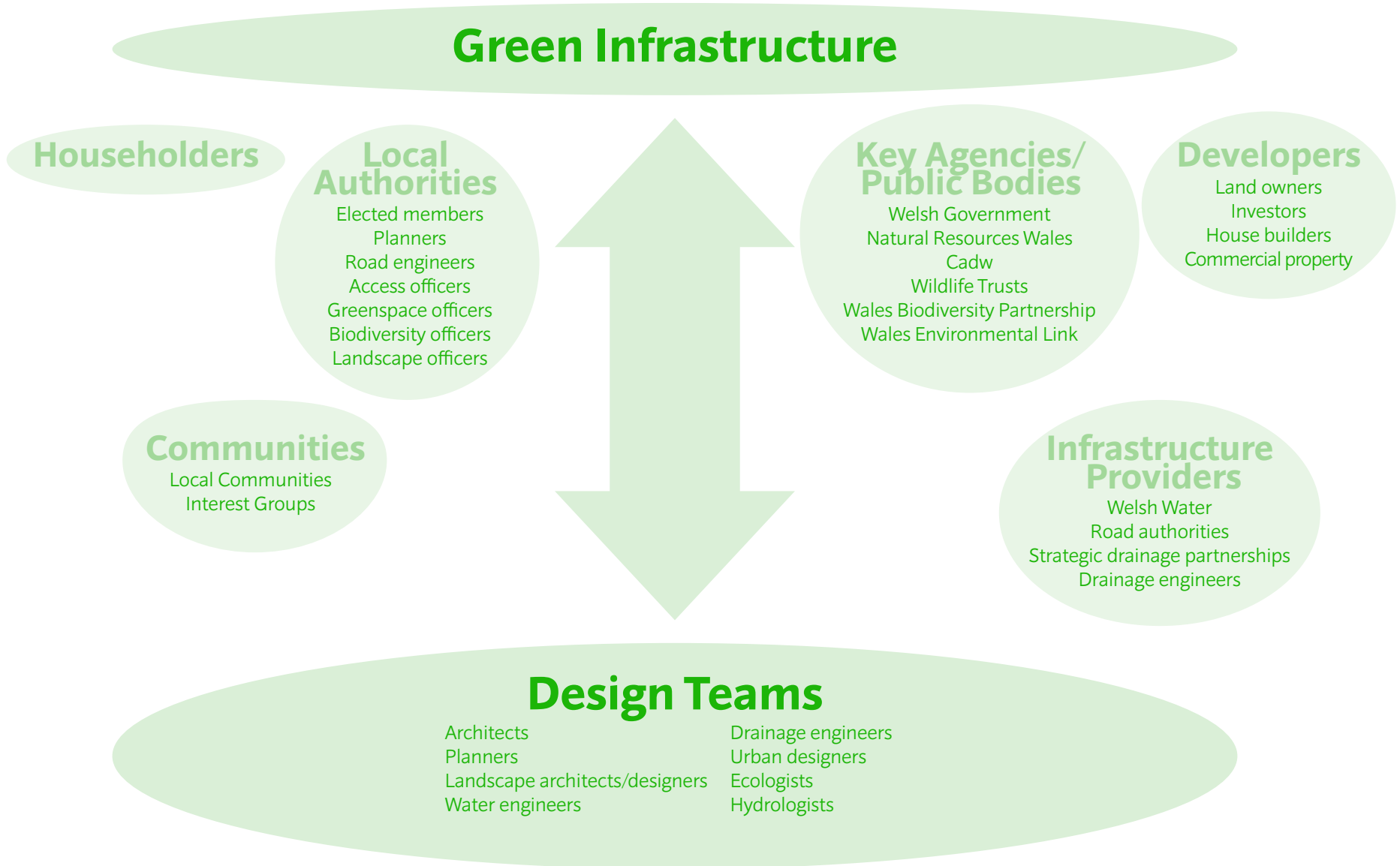
**GIS Database of GI Assets**

1.2.6 A comprehensive and user-friendly GIS Database of GI assets and related information is held by the Council, which provides a tool for informing land use planning and land management decision-making with regards to GI.

1.2.7 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be kept under review by the Council and updated as necessary to have regard to changing circumstances.

**DIAGRAM 1.1 Multidisciplinary Working**

(Adapted from *GI Design and Placemaking* (Scottish Government, 2011))



## 1.3 Links to Other Documents

1.3.1 The GI Strategy was informed by, and should be read in conjunction with, the other key relevant plans and strategies shown on **Diagram 1.2**. The GI Strategy also supports the Management Plan For Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 2023-2028 and the Wye Valley National Landscape AONB Management Plan 2021-26.

1.3.2 This GI Strategy should also be read in conjunction with the Council's Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Guidance adopted in April 2015. A number of other relevant guidance documents are interrelated with this GI Strategy. These are listed in **Box 1.1**.

1.3.3 A number of studies and assessments, carried out to inform the development of the adopted Local Development Plan, provide valuable baseline GI information in respect of the location, quality, quantity and accessibility of a range of GI assets/types (see **Boxes 1.2-1.5**). They also form an important starting point in terms of identifying local GI needs and opportunities.

### BOX 1.1 Links to Relevant Guidance

#### Supplementary Planning Guidance

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Green Infrastructure                   | MCC adopted this SPG in April 2015 to support the interpretation and implementation of GI policies S13 and GI1 of the adopted LDP.  |
| Landscape Character                    | MCC adopted this SPG to support the interpretation and implementation of landscape policies S13 and LC5 of the adopted LDP.   |
| Planning Obligations                   | MCC intends to produce a Planning Obligations SPG (work in progress). The Interim Policy on the Approach to Planning Obligations (March 2013) sets out an approach to guide negotiations for Section 106 planning obligations between MCC and applicants. |
| Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency | MCC adopted this SPG in March 2016 to support the interpretation and implementation of policies S3, S12, SD1, SD2 and DES1 of the LDP.  |

#### Other Guidance

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Countryside Access Design Guide (2012)                       | Intended to assist anyone installing countryside furniture on public rights of way (PRoW) and other access areas in Monmouthshire.  |
| Rights of Way Network Condition & Opportunities Study (2017) | Sets out the condition of the County's Public Rights of Way network and opportunities for improving countryside access.   |
| Public Rights of Way Biodiversity Action Plan (2011)         | Aims to ensure that biodiversity is taken into account in the planning and carrying out of all maintenance operations, improvement schemes and other PRoW work. Sets out specific habitat and species action plans. |
| Gwent Levels Green Infrastructure Strategy (2017)            | Provides an overarching long-term vision, principles and framework for the planning and delivery of GI through the Living Levels Landscape Partnership Scheme.  |

**DIAGRAM 1.2** Links to Other Key Relevant Plans & Strategies





### BOX 1.2 Open Space Study

Sets out the results of an audit of all open space sites located within 13 settlements/sub-areas in Monmouthshire. Findings relate to the quantity, quality and accessibility of sites/open space types. An assessment of provision against minimum standards is provided.

It should be noted that the definition given to natural/semi-natural greenspace differs to that in the Greenspace Study. This is likely to have a bearing on the levels of provision (surplus/deficiency) identified in the Study. Further advice can be sought from MCC (see **Appendix G**). The 2008 Open Space Study is being updated as part of the RLDP 2018-2033 process.



Allotments form part of the typology of open spaces in Monmouthshire

### BOX 1.3 Greenspace Study

Identifies potential greenspace sites, natural sites and accessible natural sites within a 2km buffer zone of 10 settlements/sub-areas in Monmouthshire. An analysis of provision and assessment of opportunities for improvement in relation to accessible natural greenspace is provided.

It should be noted that greenspaces were identified on the basis of available datasets, which suggests that additional sites may exist. Further advice can be sought from MCC (see **Appendix G**). The 2010 Greenspace Study is not being updated as part of the RLDP 2018-2033 process.



The grounds of Caldicot Castle provide accessible greenspace



### BOX 1.4 Ecological Connectivity Assessment

Provides an objective assessment of semi-natural habitat connectivity in and around eight settlements/sub-areas in Monmouthshire. This forms the basis for identifying and informing future habitat management and creation opportunities.

The value of the Assessment's maps and the accuracy with which predictions can be made will be enhanced as the baseline datasets are verified. Further advice can be sought from MCC (see **Appendix G**). The 2010 Ecological Connectivity Assessment is not being updated as part of the RLDP 2018-2033 process. This will be superseded by the Nature Networks Ecological Opportunity Mapping for Gwent.



The Usk Valley is an important ecological corridor within Monmouthshire

### BOX 1.5 Other Studies

**Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Studies (2009/2010) and Landscape Sensitivity Update Study (2020)**

These studies set out detailed assessments of sensitivity and capacity of local landscape character areas (around main settlements and villages) and candidate strategic sites. As part of the RLDP 2018-2033 process, an updated study was undertaken in 2020 to take into account settlement boundary changes due to new development.

**Strategic Transport Study** Provides some baseline information relating to sustainable modes of transport and possible transport proposals around development sites. The 2009 Strategic Transport Study is being updated as part of the RLDP 2018-2033 process.



The landscape setting of Llanellen



# 2

## The Green Infrastructure Approach



Start of Wales Coast Path, Chepstow

## 2.1 Local Policy Drivers

### Monmouthshire County Council Community & Corporate Plan 2022-2028

2.1.1 The Community & Corporate Plan sets out MCC's ambition to become a zero-carbon county, while supporting the well-being of Monmouthshire's communities. Monmouthshire will be a:

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions and making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency
- Thriving and ambitious place, where there are vibrant town centres and where businesses can grow and develop
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in
- Connected place where people feel part of a community and are valued
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.

2.1.2 These goals are underpinned by a series of actions that will shape the Council's medium-term financial spending plan and priorities, and includes a range of measures to enable progress to be monitored.

### Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan 2021-2030

2.1.3 This strategy and action plan was developed to meet the target to reduce the Council's carbon emissions to zero by 2030. Following community consultation, an action plan was published in November 2021 that includes actions under a range of themes:

- Reducing energy use - reducing the amount of energy that is used for buildings and street lighting
- Using renewable energy - speed up the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy

- Supporting nature recovery and managing green spaces - absorb carbon to support biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, and the ability to adapt
- What we buy - reducing carbon by thinking carefully about when and what we buy and whole life costs
- Reducing waste - by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more
- Walking and cycling - encouraging and making it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive
- Greener vehicles - reducing the impact of vehicle use and encouraging use of electric and hydrogen vehicles
- Public transport - encouraging people to use public transport rather than cars
- Education and involvement - helping people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference
- Climate adaptation - preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change

### Monmouthshire County Council Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan

2.1.4 The Plan was published by the Council in 2017 to meet the Section 6 Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duty of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and to provide a mechanism for maximising the Council's contributions to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Well-being Goals.

2.1.5 The Forward Plan considers the current biodiversity and ecosystem resilience of Monmouthshire's relevant habitats and species of principal importance for nature conservation, and sets out ways in which the Council can influence biodiversity and ecosystem resilience when exercising its functions as a Public Authority. It considers conservation work that is already underway by the Council and other relevant organisations and identifies opportunities for enhanced delivery and improved governance. The Plan also highlights the importance of green infrastructure delivery to strengthening biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

2.1.6 The Plan is being updated as part of the Local Development Plan review process.

### **Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan**

2.1.7 Published by the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB) in 2018, the Plan sets out four objectives for improving well-being:

1. giving children and young people the best possible start in life
2. working to improve prosperity in the county
3. making the most of the assets older people bring whilst ensuring their needs are met
4. maximising the benefits of the natural environment

### **Gwent Public Service Board Well-being Plan**

2.1.8 Informed by an assessment of the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Gwent undertaken in 2021/22, the Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) Well-being Plan published in 2023 sets out actions to help improve well-being across the region. The Plan sets out what the PSB could do over the next five years to tackle the social, economic, environmental and cultural issues which affect well-being in Gwent under two objectives:

1. We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all.
2. We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations

### **Pollinator Policy**

2.1.9 A Pollinator Policy was adopted by MCC in 2014 in response to the Welsh Government's Action Plan for Pollinators to demonstrate the Council's commitment to change and in recognition of our role as land managers. Prepared in partnership with Bee Friendly Monmouthshire, the policy commits MCC to:

- Reduce mowing of road verges - safety cut only for first cut on A & B routes
- Reduce mowing of green spaces
- Urban wildflower planting in towns/villages in place of unsustainable flower beds
- Identify opportunities for development of meadows within open spaces
- Use the Bee Friendly Monmouthshire logo to raise awareness
- Monitor the effectiveness of changes



## Local Development Plan

2.1.10 This GI Strategy is intended to expand on policies S13 (see **Box 2.1**) and G11 (see **Box 2.3**) of the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) 2011-2021, which are central to the protection and delivery of GI as part of development in the County.

### **BOX 2.1 Strategic Policy S13 Landscape, Green Infrastructure & the Natural Environment**

Development proposals must:

- 1 Maintain the character and quality of the landscape by:
  - (i) Identifying, protecting and, where appropriate, enhancing the distinctive landscape and historical, cultural, ecological and geological heritage, including natural and man-made elements associated with existing landscape character;
  - (ii) Protecting areas subject to international and national landscape designations;
  - (iii) Preserving local distinctiveness, sense of place and setting;
  - (iv) Respecting and conserving specific landscape features, such as hedges, trees and ponds;
  - (v) Protecting existing key landscape views and vistas.
- 2 Maintain, protect and enhance the integrity and connectivity of Monmouthshire's green infrastructure network.
- 3 Protect, positively manage and enhance biodiversity and geological interests, including designated and non-designated sites, and habitats and species of importance and the ecological connectivity between them.
- 4 Seek to integrate landscape elements, green infrastructure, biodiversity features and ecological connectivity features, to create multifunctional, interconnected spaces that offer opportunities for recreation and healthy activities such as walking and cycling.

2.1.11 The Preferred Strategy (2023) for the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2018-2033 includes a proposed replacement for the adopted Strategic Policy S13 (see Policy S17 in **Box 2.2**).

### **BOX 2.2 Strategic Policy S17 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation**

Development proposals will embrace the placemaking approach and incorporate Green Infrastructure assets and opportunities that are assessed, designed and managed to deliver a multifunctional resource; capable of delivering a wide range of social, economic, environmental and health and well-being benefits for local communities and the County as a whole, including climate change action, biodiversity action, mitigation and net gain.

Development proposals must:

Maintain, protect and enhance the integrity and connectivity of Monmouthshire's green infrastructure, landscapes, biodiversity, public rights of ways and heritage assets through the following key functions:

- (i) Landscape setting and quality of place, by identifying, assessing, protecting and enhancing the distinctive landscape, historical, cultural, ecological and geological heritage, including natural and man-made elements associated with existing landscape character;
- (ii) Biodiversity and resilient ecosystems by protecting, assessing, positively managing and enhancing biodiversity and geological interests, including designated and non-designated sites, protected and priority species and their habitats, and the ecological connectivity between them;
- (iii) Greenspace provision, connectivity and enjoyment by ensuring the creation of accessible multifunctional interconnected spaces that offer opportunities for recreation and health and well-being;
- (iv) Sustainable energy use;
- (v) Local food production; and
- (vi) Flood attenuation and water resource management.

### **BOX 2.3 Development Management Policy GI1 Green Infrastructure**

Development proposals will be expected to maintain, protect and enhance Monmouthshire's diverse green infrastructure network by:

- a) Ensuring that individual green assets are retained wherever possible and integrated into new development. Where loss of green infrastructure is unavoidable in order to secure sustainable development appropriate mitigation and/or compensation of the lost assets will be required;
- b) Incorporating new and /or enhanced green infrastructure of an appropriate type, standard and size. Where on-site provision of green infrastructure is not possible, contributions will be sought to make appropriate provision for green infrastructure off-site.



**Residential development in Rogiet incorporating a sustainable drainage system**

2.1.12 These policies are supported by the adopted Green Infrastructure and Landscape Character Supplementary Planning Guidance. Other key adopted LDP policies that relate to GI are listed in **Diagram 2.1**.



DIAGRAM 2.1 Relevant adopted LDP Policies



## 2.2 Regional Policy Drivers

2.2.1 Key strategies and plans that provide the regional framework for GI planning, delivery and management in Monmouthshire are listed in Box 2.4.

2.2.2 Of particular importance is the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy developed by the Gwent Green Grid Partnership (GGGP). The Partnership is working to improve the regions' GI network and ensure its natural resources are healthy and resilient to change, and thereby better able to provide vital well-being benefits for current and future generations. Established in March 2020, the GGGP includes the five local authorities of Gwent (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen Councils) as well as Natural Resources Wales, Forest Research and Severn Wye Energy Agency.

### BOX 2.4 Regional Plans and Strategies Context

#### Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy (2024)

This strategy aims to support the Gwent Green Grid Partnership's aspirations to improve the region's green infrastructure, which has a crucial role to play in addressing nature, climate change and health emergencies, as well as providing green job opportunities. It sets out a high-level, regional framework to support public bodies on the Gwent Public Service Board working in a collaborative, integrated and joined up way to discharge their duties under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 through a regional approach to green infrastructure delivery reflecting Welsh Government natural resources and planning policy.

The strategy is intended to act as a mechanism for green infrastructure delivery to support the Gwent Public Service Board's Well-being Plan, the Natural Resources Wales South East Wales Area Statement and the forthcoming Strategic Development Plan for Gwent. Crucially, the strategy aims to support a coordinated approach to green infrastructure project development, funding and delivery through a set of strategic action plans. These are intended to support a range of positive well-being outcomes for Gwent's communities, particularly within urban communities experiencing health inequalities.

#### NRW South East Wales Area Statement (2020)

Developed in response to the national Natural Resources Policy through a collaborative process involving local stakeholders, the South East Wales Area Statement covers the Local Authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen. The South East Wales Area is also referred to as Gwent.

The Area Statement sets out landscape-scale nature-based solutions to addressing the increasingly complex and widespread environmental, social and political challenges that transcend traditional management boundaries. It aims to inform internal and external planning and help stakeholders to consider different ways of working together. To ensure everyone involved in the Area Statement process is thinking of South East in the same context, four strategic themes are used to investigate and understand place:

1. Linking Our Landscapes.
2. Climate Ready Gwent.
3. Healthy Active Connected.
4. Ways of Working.

#### Gwent Public Service Board Regional Well-being Plan (2023)

The Gwent Public Service Board (PSB) carried out its Assessment of the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Gwent in 2021/22. The PSB have used the information from the assessment to create its Well-being Plan to help improve well-being across the region.

The Plan sets out what the PSB could do over the next five years to tackle the social, economic, environmental and cultural issues which affect well-being in Gwent.

The PSB has identified two objectives:

1. We want to create a fairer, more equitable and inclusive Gwent for all.
2. We want a climate-ready Gwent, where our environment is valued and protected, benefitting our well-being now and for future generations.

The Gwent PSB Well-being Plan was published in August 2023.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>South East Wales Strategic Development Plan (forthcoming)</b></p> | <p>All Strategic Development Plans (SDPs) and Local Development Plans (LDPs) prepared in Wales now have to be in general conformity with Future Wales: The National Plan 2040.</p> <p>The South East Wales SDP was the first SDP in Wales to formally commence preparation in 2022. This introduces a tier of regional planning to address matters extending beyond Local Authority boundaries.</p> <p>As a cross-boundary asset, strategic GI lends itself well to a more regional scale of planning. SDPs may provide a mechanism through which to consider regional scale planning for connections and larger, strategic GI assets.</p>  |
| <p><b>Gwent State of Nature Report (2021)</b></p>                       | <p>The Greater Gwent State of Nature report, produced in 2021, looks at the status and trend of 100 species found within Greater Gwent, providing a snapshot of biodiversity status, trends and threats in the wider area.</p> <p>The species included are a wide selection from different groups and different habitats, chosen with the aim of providing a snapshot that represents much of the biodiversity that is to be found within the diverse Gwent region. A secondary aim of this report is to examine the availability of biological data at the regional level; to demonstrate what can be shown with the wealth of data that has already been collected; and to highlight where there are knowledge gaps or data issues.</p> |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Greater Gwent Nature Recovery Action Plan (2021)</b></p>                            | <p>Developed by the Resilient Greater Gwent Partnership in 2021, the GGNRAP provides a 10-year plan for guiding public bodies in taking action to support nature recovery by creating a resilient and connected ecological network at a regional scale across Gwent.</p> <p>The GGNRAP has been developed to both inform and support the integration between the national and local NRAPs, which are being developed for each Local Nature Partnership (LNP) to support cohesive joined up approaches when developing and delivering strategies plans and actions</p> <p>The GGNRAP's aims are relevant to GI delivery, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecosystems that are functioning and resilient</li> <li>• Increased diversity of species and habitats</li> <li>• People connected with nature</li> <li>• Reduction of pollution and invasive non-native species</li> <li>• Partners that are working better together</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Pollinators in South East Wales (2015)</b></p> | <p>The Action Plan was commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen Councils. Published in 2015, the Action Plan is part of the wider Pollinators for Life project funded by Welsh Government's Nature Fund, which aims to address the decline in Welsh biodiversity through landscape-scale projects.</p> <p>Action Plans for pollinators are provided for different green infrastructure types on publicly owned land, which include for example school grounds; roadside verges; civic spaces; allotments and community gardens; and public parks. Many actions relate to changes to management regimes for the benefit of pollinators such as cutting grass to different heights and/or at different times of the year. Some actions require more extensive changes such as development of wildflower meadows or formal planting areas.</p>   |

Gwent Green Grid  
Green Corridors  
Strategic Access  
Action Plan (2024)

Developed by the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, the Action Plan provides a strategic approach to delivery of improved and sustainable countryside access by public bodies and stakeholder organisations working collaboratively across local authority boundaries in Gwent to:

- Enable people to lead active healthy lifestyles
- Provide economic opportunities
- Support local communities and volunteering
- Expand, where possible, the network available to cyclists and horse riders
- Provide sustainable and long-term solutions

It provides a framework for a clear strategic approach and stronger partnership working across the five local authority areas within the Gwent region in relation to access planning and management.

Gwent Green Grid  
Woodland Priority  
Planting Action Plan  
(forthcoming)

Developed by the Gwent Green Grid Partnership, the Action Plan provides a 10-year priority woodland planting and implementation programme to support public bodies and stakeholder organisations across the region in taking positive action to tackle climate change through carbon storage and increasing the resilience of ecosystems to the risks from a changing climate.

It provides a framework for a consistent approach to woodland planting and management across Gwent. In addition to supporting Welsh Government's Woodlands for Wales Strategy and National Forest for Wales commitments, it provides a delivery mechanism for the South East Wales Area Statement, the Gwent PSB Well-being Plan and the Gwent Strategic Development Plan, as well as supporting local authorities' climate change action plans.

Upland Commons  
of South-east Wales  
Natural Resources  
Management Plan  
(2015)

The Plan is based on an ecosystems approach to the management of the uplands commons of South East Wales (encompassing parts of Torfaen, Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire and the Brecon Beacons National Park). The Plan identifies and informs the delivery of a portfolio of projects intended to restore important areas of upland habitat to favourable condition; enhance biodiversity; improve opportunities for sustainable grazing; identify innovative additional commercial uses including land-based products; support tourism development; and assist with climate change resilience by storing water and capturing carbon.

## 2.3 National Policy Drivers

2.3.1 The concept of a GI approach to land-use planning, design and management can deliver a wide range of policy outcomes (e.g. in relation to sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity, place-making, economic growth and health and well-being). It is well established through the Welsh spatial planning system and provides a means to bring together and deliver policy and advice messages in a holistic way. National legislation and policies that provide the framework for the conservation, delivery and promotion of GI in Monmouthshire are listed in **Box 2.3**.

### BOX 2.5 National Legislative & Policy Context

#### The Environment (Wales) Act 2016

Section 4 of the Act sets out principles for promoting a joined-up and sustainable approach to the management of natural resources and ecosystem services in Wales. The Act places a duty (Section 6) on public bodies to prepare a Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan, demonstrating how they intend to deliver the plan in collaboration with other partners, taking into consideration the Nature Recovery Plan for Wales and the Well-being of Future Generations Act. Section 7 of the Act requires Welsh Government, in consultation with NRW, to publish a list of the organisms and habitats of principal importance (priority habitats), and take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance this list, including encouraging others to do the same.

#### Natural Resources Policy (Welsh Government, 2017)

A statutory requirement of the Environment (Wales) Act, this sets out Welsh Government's policy for the sustainable management of Wales' natural resources to maximise their contribution to the goals of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The Policy outlines three national priorities: delivering nature-based solutions; increasing renewable energy and resource efficiency; and taking a place-based approach. The Policy sets the context for the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) and Area Statements produced by NRW, which aim to ensure that the national priorities inform the approach to local delivery.

#### Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

This Act seeks to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. Public bodies must do what they do in a sustainable way and think more about the long term; work better with people and communities and each other; look to prevent problems; and take a more joined-up approach to delivering services and advice. Public bodies need to make sure that, when making their decisions, they take into account the impact they could have on people living in Wales. The Act includes GI related indicators for monitoring implementation, such as:

- Areas of healthy ecosystems in Wales.
- Status of Biological diversity in Wales.
- Percentage of surface water bodies, and groundwater bodies, achieving good or high overall status.
- Emissions of greenhouse gases within Wales.
- Levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) pollution in the air.
- The Ecological Footprint of Wales.
- Percentage of people feeling safe at home, walking in the local area, and when travelling.

#### Nature Recovery Plan for Wales (Welsh Government, 2015)

The Plan sets out how Wales will deliver the commitments of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to halt the decline in biodiversity by 2020. It includes a strategy for our current and proposed action, particularly through the Well-being of Future Generations Act, and through the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, will contribute to reversing the loss of biodiversity in Wales. Part 2 (updated 2020) of this plan is an Action Plan setting out those actions which have been specifically identified to meet objectives to reverse the decline of biodiversity.

#### Vital Nature: Making the Connections between Biodiversity and the People and Places of Wales (NRW, 2018)

Vital nature is NRW's strategic steer for biodiversity to 2022. It sets out NRW's priorities, direction of travel and ways of working with regards to delivering its Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience duties through the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. Through a series of goals and commitments, it establishes a high-level framework for action in line with the Nature Recovery Action Plan for Wales.

Future Wales 2040

The National Development Framework sets out a 20-year land use framework for Wales. It will be reviewed every 5 years, and sets out where nationally important growth and infrastructure is needed and how the planning system can deliver it. It provides direction for Strategic and Local Development Plans and supports the determination of Developments of National Significance; sitting alongside Planning Policy Wales, which sets out the Welsh Government's planning policies and which will continue to provide the context for land use planning. It supports national economic, transport, environmental, housing, energy and cultural strategies and ensures they can be delivered through the planning system

Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales (2019)

Prosperity for All: A Climate Conscious Wales is the climate change adaptation plan for Wales. It sets out Welsh Government commitments to respond to the impacts from climate change we already see and those we expect to see in the future. The plan complements the steps to decarbonise the economy of Wales. The Plan shows how Welsh GOovernment is taking action, over the next five years, to address the areas of greatest risk. This includes:

- protecting people, communities, buildings and infrastructure from flooding,
- protecting water supplies from drought and low river flows,
- tackling land management practices that exacerbate climate risks,
- managing risks to ecosystems and agricultural businesses.

Planning (Wales) Act 2015

The Planning (Wales) Act provides the legislative framework for the operation of the planning system in Wales. It supports the delivery of national, local and community aspirations by creating sustainable places where citizens have improved access to quality homes, jobs and built and natural environments and supports the use of the Welsh language.

Natural Resources Wales State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR) for Wales 2020

SoNaRR 2020 assesses how Wales is achieving the sustainable management of natural resources to improve Wales' well-being (Natural Resources Wales' purpose). It assesses Wales' progress against 4 aims and outlines opportunities for action for a sustainable future:

1. Stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced.
2. Ecosystems are resilient to expected and unforeseen change.
3. Wales has healthy places for people, protected from environmental risks.
4. Contributing to a regenerative economy, achieving sustainable levels of production and consumption.

Planning Policy Wales: Edition 12 (Welsh Government, February 2024)

Planning Policy Wales 12 (PPW 12) sets out the current land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. The core objective of national planning policy is to ensure that the planning system contributes towards the delivery of sustainable development and improves the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales as required by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

In response to the need for addressing the nature emergency through the planning system, parts of Chapter 6 (Distinctive & Natural Places) of Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 were updated in October 2023 to strengthen national planning policy on GI, Net Benefit for Biodiversity, protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Trees and Woodlands.

The main changes to national GI policy in PPW 12 include: stronger emphasis on taking a proactive approach to green infrastructure covering cross boundary considerations, identifying key outputs of green infrastructure assessments, the submission of proportionate green infrastructure statements with planning applications and signposting Building with Nature standards. See **Appendix E** for details.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Welsh Government's Net Zero Strategic Plan (September 2022)   | This Plan is the start of the journey to net zero and a greener, stronger, fairer Wales. It focuses on Wales' second carbon budget (2021–2025). The Plan brings together evidence and thinking from across the Welsh Government to outline priority decarbonisation initiatives out to 2030. Implementing them successfully will be required to reach net zero as an organisation and support the wider public sector to achieve a collective net zero |
| Technical Advice Note 5: Nature Conservation and Planning (Welsh Government, 2009)  | Provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation. Supplements Planning Policy Wales and should be read in conjunction with it.  |
| Technical Advice Note 12: Design (Welsh Government, 2016)   | Provides advice on good design. Supplements Planning Policy Wales and should be read in conjunction with it.   |
| Technical Advice Note 15: Development and Flood Risk (Welsh Government, 2004)   | Provides advice in relation to development and flooding, advising on development and flood risk as this relates to sustainability principles. Supplements Planning Policy Wales and should be read in conjunction with it.   |
| Technical Advice Note 16: Sport, Recreation and Open space (Welsh Government, 2009)   | Provides advice for communities, developers and local planning authorities in Wales preparing local development plans and taking decisions about planning applications with regards to sport, recreation and open space. Supplements Planning Policy Wales and should be read in conjunction with it.  |
| Natural Heritage: a Pathway to Health (Countryside Council for Wales Policy Research for the Welsh Assembly Government, 2007) | Sets out the findings of a 12 month study into the impact of the natural environment on health and wellbeing, conducted by the Institute of Rural Health. The study found that the natural environment can play a key role in improving public health and wellbeing.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013   | The Active Travel (Wales) Act sets out provisions to make walking and cycling the preferred option for shorter journeys, particularly everyday journeys, such as to and from a workplace or education establishment, or to access health, leisure or other services or facilities. The Act requires local authorities to produce Integrated Network Maps, identifying the walking and cycling routes required to create fully integrated networks for walking and cycling to access work, education, services and facilities. |
| Active Travel Action Plan for Wales (Welsh Government, 2016)   | Summarises the key steps planned to increase levels of walking and cycling in Wales - to realise the benefits that active travel brings for both individuals and society.   |
| Framework for South East Wales Networked Environmental Regions (CCW, EA Wales & Wales Environmental Link for Welsh Government, 2009) | First stage in a collaborative project to turn the concept of a Networked Environmental Region (NER) into reality. The report reviews the policy context, briefly describes the unique characteristics of the South East Wales landscape and considers opportunities and challenges across the city region. It also highlights the next steps needed towards implementing the NER.  |
| Community Grown Food Action Plan (Welsh Government, 2010)  | Action Plan to promote, support and encourage opportunities for community grown food in Wales.  |



## 2.4 What is GI?

2.4.1 Chapter 6 (Distinctive & Natural Places) of Planning Policy Wales 12 defines GI as follows:

*'Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places.'*

*Component elements of green infrastructure (see **Box 2.6**) can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels (see **Diagram 2.2**).*

*At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands.*

*At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems.*

*At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.'*

### BOX 2.6 Examples of GI Components/Assets

- **Parks and gardens** including urban parks; country and regional parks; formal and private gardens; and institutional (e.g. schools and hospitals) grounds (e.g. Caldicot Country Park and the Linda Vista Gardens in Abergavenny).
- **Amenity greenspaces** including informal recreation spaces; play areas; outdoor sport facilities; housing green spaces; domestic gardens; village greens; urban commons; other incidental space; green roofs; hedges; civic squares and spaces; and highway trees and verges (e.g. Fairview open space Chepstow, Undy playing field and Dixton Field in Monmouth).
- **Allotments, community gardens, city farms, orchards, roof gardens, and urban edge farmland** (e.g. Usk Road allotments in Raglan and Sudbrook Road allotments in Portskewett/Sudbrook).
- **Cemeteries and churchyards** (e.g. Osbaston cemetery in Monmouth and St Mary's Churchyard in Abergavenny).
- **Natural and semi-natural rural, peri-urban and urban greenspaces** including woodland and scrub; grassland, heath and moor; wetlands; open and running water; brownfield sites; bare rock habitats (e.g. cliffs and quarries); coast and beaches; and Community Forests. It includes important and protected species and habitats such as existing national and local nature reserves and locally designated sites for nature conservation (e.g. Nedern Brook Wetlands SSSI and Fiddler's Elbow National Nature Reserve).
- **Green corridors** including rivers and canals and their banks; road and rail corridors; cycling routes; and public rights of way (e.g. Ifton Lane in Rogiet and the River Usk).
- **Functional green space** including sustainable urban drainage schemes and flood storage (e.g. residential development in Rogiet).
- **Heritage sites** including historic country estates; historic urban public parks; and historic sites and monuments (e.g. St Pierre near Chepstow and Abergavenny Castle and grounds).

Adapted from the Town and Country Planning Association: 'The essential Role of Green Infrastructural: Eco-towns Green Infrastructure Worksheet' (2008).



## DIAGRAM 2.2 Range of GI Scales/Connectivity

Adapted from GI Design and Placemaking (Scottish Government, 2011)



2.4.2 Planning Policy Wales goes on to say:

*'Green infrastructure is capable of providing several functions at the same time and as a result offers multiple benefits, for social, economic and cultural as well as environmental resilience.*

*The components of green infrastructure, by improving the resilience of ecosystems (see **Box 2.7**), can result in positive benefits to well-being including flood management, water purification, improved air quality, reduced noise pollution and local climate moderation, climate change mitigation and food production.*

*These benefits are important in urban environments where they can facilitate health and well-being related benefits of open space, clean air and improved tranquility, for example, as well as creating a sense of place and improved social cohesion. In addition, green infrastructure has a role in protecting local distinctiveness, providing economic benefits and social and community opportunities.'* (see **Box 2.8**)

#### **BOX 2.7 Ecosystem Services**

- **Supporting services** - essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services (e.g. water and nutrient cycling, soil formation and the processes of plant growth)
- **Regulating services** - that help regulate the environment (e.g. pollination, flood management, pest and disease control, carbon sequestration, water, air and soil quality)
- **Provisioning services** - that provide resources and goods (e.g. food, fresh water, building materials, energy and fuel)
- **Cultural services** - that provide aesthetic, spiritual, religious, recreational or scientific enrichment (e.g. access to green space, tourism, distinctive places and mental wellbeing)

## BOX 2.8 GI Benefits

Adapted from GI Design and Placemaking (Scottish Government, 2011)



### Local distinctiveness

- Improving townscape, landscape quality and visual amenity.
- Heritage preservation and cultural expression.
- Reinforcing the local landscape character.
- Making places more interesting and distinctive.
- Giving places character and a strong identity.



### Economic

- Supporting a reduction in healthcare costs and increased productivity.
- Helping attract and retain a quality workforce.
- Supporting the local green economy.
- Reducing environmental costs such as those associated with the reduction of flood risk.
- Improving the image of a place.
- Boosting property values including house prices due to proximity to greenspace.
- Helping developers get the most out of the site by combining uses, e.g. open space & Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS), helping development viability.
- Attracting businesses and inward investors by creating attractive settings.
- Saving energy and money for residents and end users.
- Generating employment.



### Climate change

- Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by providing non-vehicular travel routes and encouraging walking and cycling.
- Providing carbon storage and sequestration in vegetation.
- Providing shelter and protection from extreme weather.
- Managing flood risk: living roofs, large trees and soft landscape areas absorb heavy rainfall.
- Providing for storage of surface water in times of peak flow in SuDS and other water features.
- Cleaning and cooling the air, water and soil, countering the 'heat island' effect of urban areas.
- Saving energy: through using natural rather than engineered solutions.
- Saving energy: living roofs insulate buildings, and large trees provide shade, reducing the need for air.
- Conditioning in the summer and raising ambient temperatures in the winter, reduction in heating costs in the winter due to slowing of wind speeds in urban areas.
- Supplying locally sourced timber, biomass or other bio-fuels to replace fossil fuels.



## BOX 2.6 GI Benefits

(Adapted from GI Design and Placemaking (Scottish Government, 2011))



Countryside around Abergavenny

### Environmental

- Protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
- Reducing pollution through use of SuDS and buffer strips.
- Providing new and linking existing habitats or natural features, to allow species movement and increase available habitat areas.
- Protecting aquatic species through appropriate management of waterside habitats.
- Preventing fragmentation of habitats.
- Allowing diverse habitats to be created which are rich in flora and fauna.



Tintern Old Station

### Community and social

- Improving community cohesion and social inclusion.
- Creating green spaces for socialising, interaction and events.
- More opportunities and places for children to play.
- Providing improved physical connections through green networks to get between places; and to communities, services, friends and family and wider green spaces.
- Providing spaces for practising and promoting horticultural skills.
- Creating opportunities for community participation and volunteering.
- Providing spaces for education and training.



Canoeing along the River Wye

### Health and well-being

- Encouraging exercise and physical activity by providing quality green spaces for walking, cycling, sports and play.
- Providing better opportunities for active travel and physical activity.
- Improving mental well-being by providing access to nature and attractive green spaces and breathing spaces.
- Providing opportunities for growing food locally and healthy eating.





Heritage sites



Private gardens



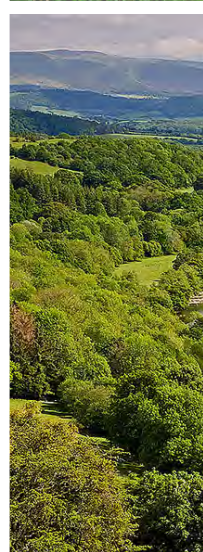
Allotments



Green walls



Community greenspaces



# GI ASSETS





Page 200



Grasslands, heaths and moors

# GI ASSETS



Village greens



Churchyards



Gardens



Play areas



## 2.5 Monmouthshire's Existing GI Network

2.5.1 This section provides an overview of Monmouthshire's existing GI network. A detailed assessment of existing GI assets within different parts of the County is provided in **Appendix D1**.

### Monmouthshire's GI network

2.5.2 The County of Monmouthshire lies in South East Wales, between the major centres in South Wales and the South West of England and the Midlands. It covers an area of approximately 88,000 hectares and has an estimated population of 93,000 (2021 census). The main settlements are the three historic market towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth; Caldicot; Usk and Magor/Undy. The landscape is predominately rural with agriculture and tourism forming the main industries.

2.5.3 Monmouthshire is noted for its rural beauty and has a rich and diverse landscape stretching from the flat open coastline of the Gwent Levels in the south, to the exposed uplands of the Black Mountains in the north and the picturesque river corridor of the Wye Valley in the east (MCC, LDP). The Blaenavon Industrial World Heritage Site (WHS), Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and Wye Valley National Landscape, landscapes of international/national value, are all distinctive features which partly fall within Monmouthshire.

2.5.4 The County includes a wealth of biodiversity/nature conservation assets such as the Severn Estuary, Fiddler's Elbow National Nature Reserve, 68 Sites of Special Scientific Interest, 10 of which are designated as European Sites, 752 non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and a wide range of species and important habitats. Monmouthshire is particularly well wooded with a range of extensive blocks of ancient, semi-natural, broadleaved and coniferous woodlands such as Trellech Forests, Hale Wood and Chepstow Park Woods. Numerous watercourses (and associated predominantly undeveloped floodplains) cross the County - the main rivers are the Usk, the Wye and the Monnow.

2.5.5 Despite the range of habitats across the county, the Monmouthshire

Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2017) notes that '*the extent and quality of habitats in the County is largely reducing*'. In addition, a number of the European Sites are in unfavourable condition.

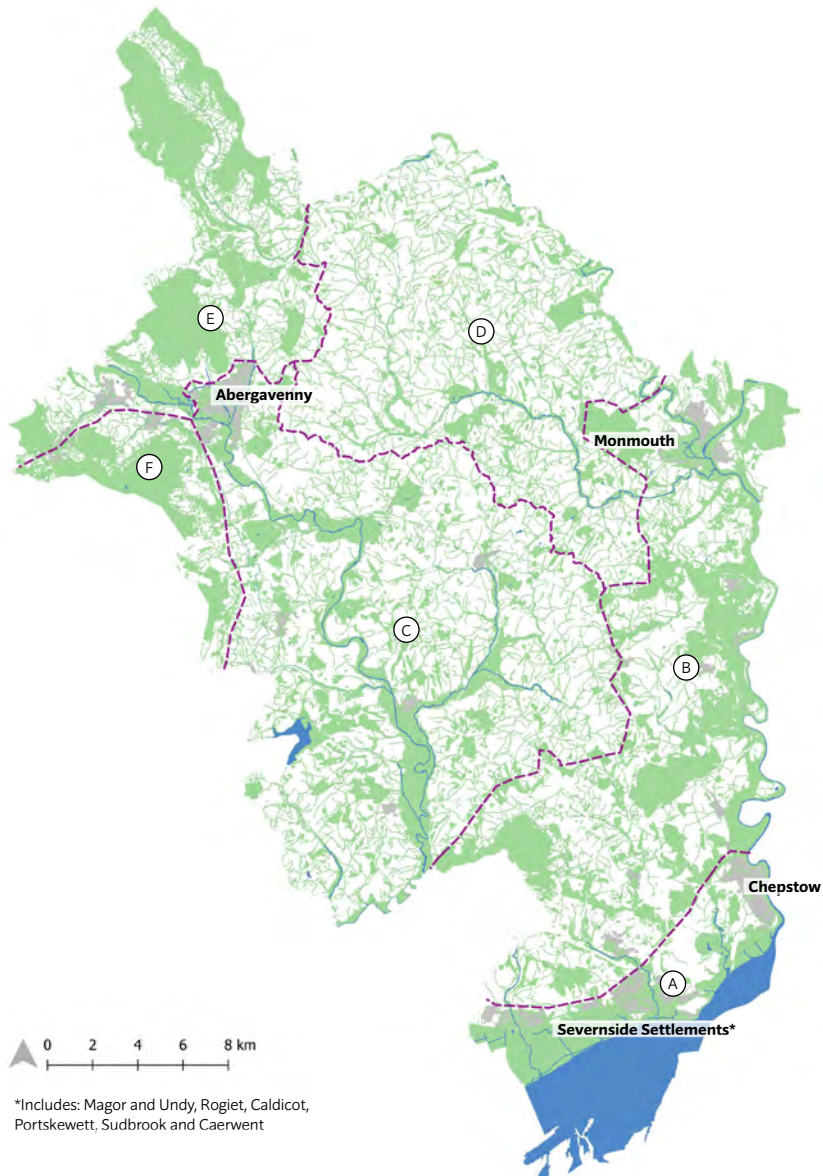
2.5.6 Monmouthshire also contains a rich built heritage and historic environment which includes conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, scheduled ancient monuments and approximately 2400 listed buildings. As well as those GI assets already described, the County comprises a range of open/green spaces (e.g. allotments, parks and outdoor sport areas) located in and around the main settlements. There are also a number of existing 'Incredible Edible' sites and community orchards as well as the traditional allotment settings.

2.5.7 An extensive network of public rights of way provides a range of sustainable access routes for people (non-motorised users) and wildlife across Monmouthshire. It enables movement between settlements and GI assets, to the wider countryside and to amenities beyond the County boundary. This network is complemented by permissive paths, three long distance regional trails, a national trail and two national cycle routes. The All-Wales Coast Path also starts in Monmouthshire. Farmland, private gardens, street trees and other features (e.g. green roofs and SuDS) are other examples of GI assets in Monmouthshire.

2.5.8 As indicated by the above context analysis, Monmouthshire contains a wide range of GI assets. They include public and private assets, with and without public access. Grouped together they represent the County's existing GI network, the extent of which (based on available GI datasets) is shown in **Diagram 2.3**. It should be noted that this diagram only illustrates GI assets within Monmouthshire. However, it should be recognised that some 'landscape-scale' assets extend across administrative boundaries, such as the Wye Valley and the coastline. It is therefore of primary importance that GI is strategically planned to provide a comprehensive and integrated network at the strategic scale.

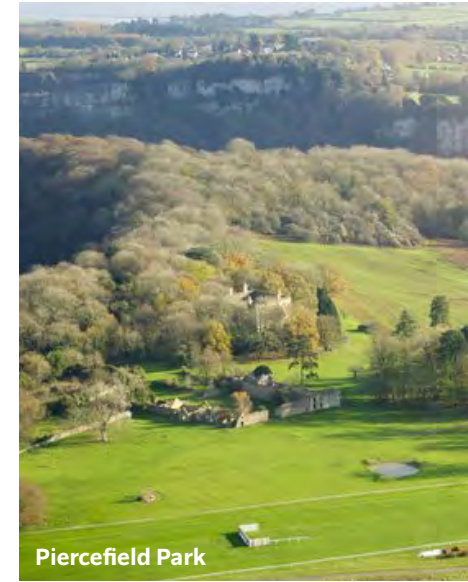
2.5.9 An assessment of the ecosystem services provided by Monmouthshire's GI assets within different parts (or GI Zones) of the County is set out in **Appendix D2**.

**DIAGRAM 2.3 Monmouthshire's Existing GI Network**



\*Includes: Magor and Undy, Rogiet, Caldicot, Portskewett, Sudbrook and Caerwent

- Existing GI Network
- - - GI Zones:
- GI Zones:**
- A: Gwent Levels
- B: Wye Valley & Wentwood
- C: Central Monmouthshire – South
- D: Central Monmouthshire – North
- E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains
- F: Eastern South Wales Valleys



The existing GI network represents GI assets defined by the following datasets: Greenspace Study (excluding non-natural greenspace), Open Space Study, county-wide public rights of way, county-wide designated sites of nature conservation value, county-wide designated features of historic value, county-wide watercourses and water bodies, predominantly undeveloped floodplains (flood risk areas), and county-wide woodlands. See Appendix B for details.



3

Green Infrastructure Strategy



Skirrid Fawr, from the Sugar Loaf

### 3.1 General

3.1.1 Communities in Monmouthshire depend on the benefits provided by its natural systems to live and prosper. Over centuries, humans have developed methods of controlling the environment for their own benefit, such as channelling water by diverting rivers and draining the land for agriculture. These changes can result in unintended consequences elsewhere, such as flooding and habitat fragmentation. As a result, the long-term sustainability, resilience and capacity of natural systems in Monmouthshire to respond to environmental change and human pressures is at risk.

3.1.2 Careful planning and management is important in identifying interventions that maximise the multiple functions and benefits which integrated networks of GI can provide. There are opportunities for GI creation, enhancement and investment in Monmouthshire, which in turn can benefit local communities, the economy and the environment. This strategic framework identifies important elements of the GI network that require protection and management actions to improve their function or quality.

### 3.2 Vision for GI in Monmouthshire

3.2.1 The long-term aspirational vision for the future provision and management of GI in Monmouthshire is set out in **Box 3.1**.

3.2.2 The GI vision is underpinned by the following three core aims:

1. **Enrich people's lives through engagement and activity**
2. **Build strong and vibrant places and communities in Monmouthshire**
3. **Conserve, protect and enhance Monmouthshire's GI assets**

3.2.3 Together, the vision and three core aims provide the overarching framework for positive actions by all stakeholders involved in the future protection, management and enhancement of GI in Monmouthshire.

#### BOX 3.1 Green Infrastructure Vision for Monmouthshire

**Monmouthshire has a well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure network comprising high quality green spaces and links that offer many benefits for people and wildlife.**

**The network's integrity and connectivity is maintained, protected and enhanced in a planned and managed way, which recognises the interdependency and multifunctionality of landscape, heritage and biodiversity elements.**

**Investment in green infrastructure underpins the County's ongoing economic, social and environmental success by supporting sustainable growth, improving quality of life and place, delivering ecosystem services and tackling climate change.**

**Monmouthshire is a green and healthy place to live, with an increasingly coherent and resilient ecological network of wildlife habitats, helping conserve biodiversity.**





### 3.3 Strategic GI Objectives and Priorities

3.3.1 The GI Strategy's vision and core aims are supported by five strategic objectives and associated priorities for guiding the planning, management and delivery of GI in Monmouthshire (see **Box 3.2**). These objectives and priorities are reflected in the GI projects identified in the Delivery Plan (see Volume 2), and are also intended to be used in monitoring the outcomes of projects.

#### BOX 3.2 Strategic Green Infrastructure Objectives

1. **Improve Health & Wellbeing**
2. **Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience**
3. **Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**
4. **Increase Climate Change Resilience**
5. **Support Sustainable Economic Development**



Provision of public open space

3.3.2 The GI Strategy supports many of the national well-being goals (see **Box 3.3**) that public bodies have a duty under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act to contribute to, in delivering sustainable development as defined in the Act - *to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*

#### BOX 3.3 National Wellbeing Goals

1. **A Prosperous Wales** – *an innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.*
2. **A Resilient Wales** - *a nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).*
3. **A Healthier Wales** - *a society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.*
4. **A More Equal Wales** - *a society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic background and circumstances).*
5. **A Wales of Cohesive Communities** - *attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.*
6. **A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** - *a society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.*
7. **A Globally Responsive Wales** – *a nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.*

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



3.3.3 In addition, the GI Strategy also promotes the following five “ways of working” advocated by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act:

- **Integration** – it reflects a joined up approach to communities and people, the economy, the environment and culture.
- **Long-term thinking** – the Strategy aims to balance current and long-term needs for GI.
- **Prevention** – the GI Strategy encourages taking action now to prevent problems in the future.
- **Collaboration** – it promotes working with a range of stakeholders to meet its GI objectives
- **Involvement** – it involves people affected by actions in delivery of GI projects.

3.3.4 At a local level, the GI Strategy also seeks to contribute to the well-being objectives of the Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan (see **Box 3.4**).

#### **BOX 3.4 Local Well-being Objectives**

1. **Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life**
2. **Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change**
3. **Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change** (see **Appendix F** for details)
4. **Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county**

Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan (Monmouthshire PSB, February 2018)

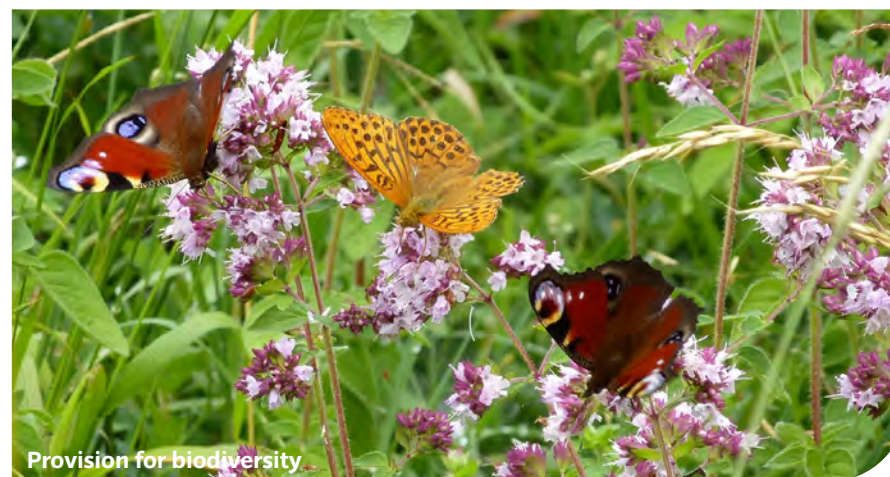
3.3.5 The GI Strategy also supports the objectives of the Monmouthshire Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (see **Box 3.5**) developed by the Council in line with its duties under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

#### **BOX 3.5 Monmouthshire Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan Objectives**

1. **Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels**
2. **Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action**
3. **Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience**
4. **Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience**
5. **Tackle key pressures on species and habitats**
6. **Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery**
7. **Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review**

See **Appendix H** for full details

Monmouthshire Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (MCC, March 2017)



**Objective 1 – Improve Health & Wellbeing**

3.3.6 Contributing to improving the health and well-being of communities in Monmouthshire is a key objective for the GI Strategy.

3.3.7 The GI Strategy’s priorities for improving the health and well-being of communities in Monmouthshire are:






- Helping people to live healthier and more fulfilled lives through improved access to outdoor opportunities for health and wellbeing.
- Promoting actions that enable and encourage local communities to use, manage and enjoy their local areas for health, wellbeing and community cohesion – with a particular focus on disadvantaged communities and active travel routes.
- Promoting opportunities for sustainable access and recreation that encourage healthy lifestyles and improve well-being for communities in Monmouthshire, including creating and improving safe and pleasant off-road walking and cycling routes.
- Access to GI assets via public rights of way, cycle routes and navigable waterways should be enhanced to maximise opportunities for urban communities and visitors to enjoy the Monmouthshire countryside.

- Provision of well-connected, multifunctional greenspaces close to urban communities in Monmouthshire to encourage physical exercise, and create community gardens/allotments and places for people to meet and interact.
- Support opportunities for community growing initiatives and local sourcing of food production
- Seek opportunities to improve air quality supporting interventions in key areas such as Chepstow, Usk, Abergavenny and across the Severnside area

3.3.8 This objective contributes towards National Wellbeing Goal 3 (creating ‘A Healthier Wales’ in respect of people’s physical and mental well-being), Goal 5 (‘A Wales of Cohesive Communities’ in respect of creating well-connected communities) and Goal 6 (creating ‘A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language’ in respect of participation in recreational activities).

3.3.9 This objective for improving the health and well-being of communities in Monmouthshire also contributes towards Local Wellbeing Objectives 1 and 3.

3.3.10 Subject to grant funding from the Welsh Government, the Regional Gwent Green Grid Partnership is proposing to produce a Health Impact Assessment of regional GI provision that will feed into local GI strategies.

| GI Strategy Objective                               | National Well-being Goals<br>(see Box 3.3) |   |   |   |   |  |   | Local Well-being Objectives<br>(see Box 3.4)  |   |   |   | Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives<br>(see Box 3.5) |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | 1  | 2 | 3   | 4 | 5   | 6  | 7 | 1   | 2 | 3   | 4 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
| <b>Objective 1 – Improve Health &amp; Wellbeing</b> |  |   |  |   |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |

### Objective 2 – Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience

3.3.11 Contributing to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience in Monmouthshire is a key objective for the GI Strategy.











3.3.12 The GI Strategy’s priorities for increasing biodiversity in Monmouthshire are:

- Implement the forthcoming Monmouthshire Local Nature Recovery Plan
- Improving ecosystem resilience through improved land management for biodiversity.
- Promoting actions that work with a range of partners in Monmouthshire to deliver landscape scale interventions delivering multiple benefits (such as improving the habitat condition and connectivity of natural areas on or between protected sites and sites of importance for nature conservation; natural flood risk management opportunities; woodland creation; climate change adaptation and mitigation; and species specific management).
- Ecosystem services on which the prosperity and well-being of communities in Monmouthshire depend should be safeguarded and enhanced by an integrated approach to management of natural resources (as advocated by the GI Action Plan for Pollinators in South East Wales and Bee Friendly Monmouthshire's Hedgerow Manifesto).
- Increase opportunities for people to engage and reconnect with the intrinsic and cultural value of nature in Monmouthshire to provide health and well-being benefits.

3.3.13 This objective contributes towards National Wellbeing Goal 2 (creating ‘A Resilient Wales’ in respect of maintaining a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecosystem resilience and the capacity to adapt to change) and Goal 3 (creating ‘A Healthier Wales’ in respect of people’s mental well-being by increasing access to nature).

3.3.14 This objective for enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience also contributes towards Local Wellbeing Objective 3.

3.3.15 This objective contributes towards all of the Monmouthshire Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan objectives.

| GI Strategy Objective   | National Well-being Goals<br>(see Box 3.3) |   |   |   |   |   |   | Local Well-being Objectives<br>(see Box 3.4) |   |   |   | Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives<br>(see Box 3.5)                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 1  | 2   | 3   | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1  | 2 | 3   | 4 | 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   | 6   | 7   |
| <b>Objective 2 – Enhance Biodiversity &amp; Increase Ecosystem Resilience</b> |  |  |  |   |   |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Objective 3 – Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**



3.3.16 Contributing to strengthening the landscape character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire is a key objective for the GI Strategy.

3.3.17 The GI Strategy’s priorities for strengthening the landscape character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire are:

- Improving townscape character and visual amenity through integration of multi-functional greenspace into new development.
- Reinforcing local heritage and cultural identity through place-based solutions.
- Enhancing the distinctive character of Monmouthshire’s landscape through an integrated approach to natural resource management (as highlighted in Objective 2).
- Protecting and restoring distinctive historic and semi-natural landscape features.
- Enhancing the condition of degraded landscapes where appropriate.
- Engaging local communities and visitors in appreciating and understanding the cultural and natural influences that shaped the character of the landscape.
- Reinforcing the strong sense of tranquillity, remoteness and wildness found within many places in Monmouthshire that makes a contribution to people’s mental well-being.

3.3.18 This objective contributes towards National Wellbeing Goal 6 (creating ‘A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language’ in respect of promoting and protecting culture, heritage and the Welsh language) and Goal 3 (creating ‘A Healthier Wales’ in respect of the mental well-being benefits for people from experiencing the special qualities of the Monmouthshire landscape).

3.3.19 This objective for strengthening the landscape character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire also contributes towards Local Wellbeing Objective 3.

| GI Strategy Objective   | National Well-being Goals<br>(see Box 3.3) |   |   |   |   |  |   | Local Well-being Objectives<br>(see Box 3.4) |   |   |   | Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives<br>(see Box 3.5) |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 1  | 2 | 3   | 4 | 5 | 6  | 7 | 1  | 2 | 3   | 4 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <b>Objective 3 – Strengthen Landscape Character &amp; Distinctiveness</b> |  |   |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Objective 4 – Increase Climate Change Resilience**

3.3.20 Contributing to increasing climate change resilience in Monmouthshire is a key objective for the GI Strategy.




3.3.21 The GI Strategy’s priorities for increasing climate change resilience in Monmouthshire are:

- Ensuring land and water in Monmouthshire is managed sustainably in an integrated way and reducing the risk from environmental hazards such as flooding and pollution.
- Adapt to and mitigate the potential effects of climate change by enabling Monmouthshire to be more resilient to the risk of flooding, drought and higher urban temperatures.
- Opportunities for local sustainable (small-scale) renewable energy generation and food production in Monmouthshire should be promoted to help mitigate climate change by reducing the area’s carbon footprint.
- Consideration of the potential of GI to reduce flood risk through the restoration of natural flood plains and the increased use of sustainable drainage systems/rain gardens in urban areas.
- Promoting opportunities to improve ecological connectivity to support biodiversity.

3.3.22 This objective contributes towards National Wellbeing Goal 2 (creating ‘A Resilient Wales’ in respect of maintaining healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to climate change) and Goal 7 (creating ‘A Globally Responsive Wales’ in respect of making a positive contribution to global well-being by helping address the challenges of climate change locally).

3.3.23 This objective for increasing climate change resilience in Monmouthshire also contributes towards Local Wellbeing Objective 3.

3.3.24 This GI objective will also contribute to delivery of the Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Strategy & Action Plan 2021-2030.

| GI Strategy Objective                                   | National Well-being Goals<br>(see Box 3.3) |   |   |   |   |   |   | Local Well-being Objectives<br>(see Box 3.4) |   |   |   | Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives<br>(see Box 3.5) |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | 1  | 2   | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7   | 1  | 2 | 3   | 4 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |
| <b>Objective 4 – Increase Climate Change Resilience</b> |  |  |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |  |   |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |

**Objective 5 – Support Sustainable Economic Development**

3.3.25 Contributing to supporting sustainable economic development in Monmouthshire is a key objective for the GI Strategy.

3.3.26 The GI Strategy’s priorities for supporting sustainable economic development in Monmouthshire are:

- Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources to support Monmouthshire’s local green economy and develop skills and learning.
- Promoting actions that bring partners together to work with businesses in Monmouthshire to develop opportunities for delivering ecosystem services; improve resource efficiency and reduce energy consumption; identify opportunities and facilitate the sharing of resources between businesses; and re-localise the supply chain.
- Creating opportunities for new businesses/income generation, skills development and job creation in Monmouthshire from environmental land management and conservation, tourism and green technologies.
- Investing in the maintenance and enhancement of greenspaces and other GI assets that contribute to the environmental quality and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire’s landscapes and settlements, helping attract and retain inward investment.

- Capitalise on the ability of ecosystems services provided by GI assets to alleviate local social and economic issues in Monmouthshire such as management of flood risk.
- Making appropriate provision for GI in the masterplanning of new developments in Monmouthshire that meets local needs, and is well designed and constructed to high environmental sustainability standards.
- Promoting the economic value of our public rights of way network/green corridors as an important investment in the future for the residents and visitors of Monmouthshire.

3.3.27 This objective contributes towards National Wellbeing Goal 1 (‘A Prosperous Wales’ in respect of creating an innovative, productive and low carbon society, developing a skilled and well-educated workforce and generating wealth and employment opportunities).

3.3.28 This objective for supporting sustainable economic development in Monmouthshire also contributes towards Local Wellbeing Objective 4.

| GI Strategy Objective   | National Well-being Goals<br>(see Box 3.3) |   |   |   |   |   |   | Local Well-being Objectives<br>(see Box 3.4) |   |   |   | Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives<br>(see Box 3.5) |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <b>Objective 5 – Support Sustainable Economic Development</b> | £  |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |   |   | £ |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |



### 3.4 Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network

3.4.1 The Strategic GI Network for Monmouthshire is illustrated conceptually on **Diagram 3.1**. The Strategic GI Network provides an overarching framework for GI planning, management and delivery across the County as an integral part of the wider Gwent Green Grid. The network embraces strategic GI corridors connecting GI assets within the County and in neighbouring areas, providing important GI links to Monmouthshire's main settlements.

3.4.2 Drawing on the detailed assessment of the GI Zones set out in **Appendix D3**, this section provides an overview of the strategic needs and opportunities for restoring, maintaining, creating and/or connecting GI assets to help strengthen Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network for the future.

3.4.3 The GI Zones reflect the Gwent Green Grid Sub-Areas identified by the Regional GI Strategy, which provide a spatial framework for strategic planning, management and delivery of GI within Gwent.

**Strategic GI Corridors:**

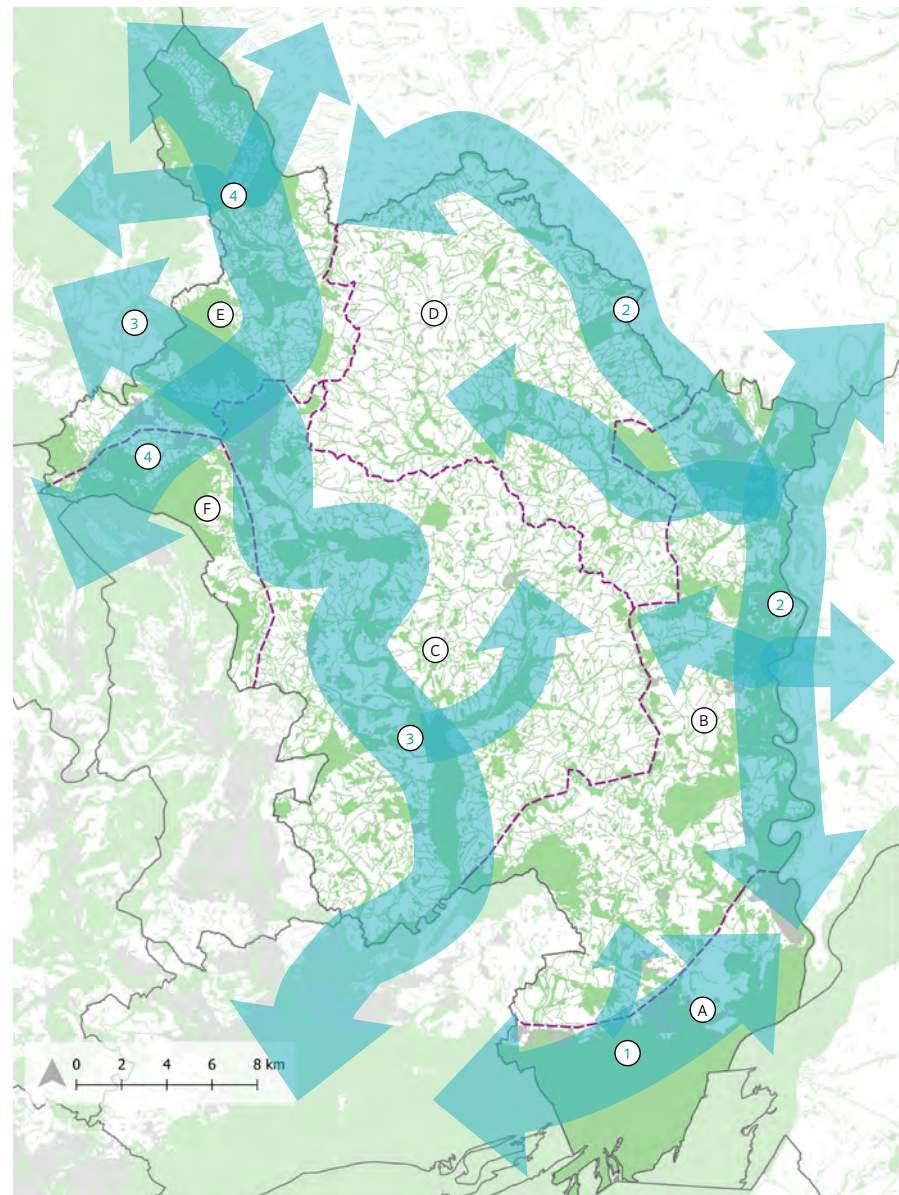
- 1: Gwent Levels/Coast
- 2: Wye Valley & Tributaries
- 3: Usk Valley & Tributaries
- 4: Bannau Brycheiniog Uplands

**GI Zones:**

- A: Gwent Levels
- B: Wye Valley & Wentwood
- C: Central Monmouthshire – South
- D: Central Monmouthshire – North
- E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains
- F: Eastern South Wales Valleys

 Existing GI Network

**DIAGRAM 3.1 Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network**



### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

3.4.4 The County is generally well provided for in terms of accessible greenspace provision. However, there is an overarching **need** to enhance the connectivity of accessible greenspaces within the Strategic GI Network by improving access linkages, particularly to settlements; and to improve interpretation and promotion of existing assets, widening access to those who could most benefit from the County's accessible GI assets such as people with mental well-being challenges (particularly dementia) and physical/visual impairments.

3.4.5 The strategic GI **opportunities** in relation to improving the health and well-being of communities in Monmouthshire are:

- Reviewing and addressing gaps in and accessibility to the public rights of way network, particularly around settlements and their adjacent accessible greenspaces.
- Promoting existing accessible assets to ensure those who would most benefit from access to greenspaces can do so.
- Improving interpretation for existing accessible green infrastructure assets.
- Reviewing, improving and creating new health walks around the County and making rights of way accessible as possible to all as opportunities arise.
- Reconnecting people with nature through improved promotion and facilitation of volunteer/'Friends of' groups.
- Tree planting to improve air quality.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience

3.4.6 The County is generally well provided for in terms of natural greenspace and habitats. However, there is an overarching **need** to reverse the erosion and fragmentation of natural and semi-natural habitats in Monmouthshire, in order to reduce biodiversity loss, provide resilience to climate change and provide greater access to nature within the Strategic GI Network.

3.4.7 The strategic GI **opportunities** in relation to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience in Monmouthshire are:

- Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats, providing management recommendations or support where habitats have been degraded, including the use of nature-based solutions.
- Encouraging and supporting the appropriate management of publicly owned land (including lease land e.g. county farms) and common land, to include where possible the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects.
- Ensuring that highways habitats are managed (by MCC and sub-contractors) sympathetically for biodiversity interest, following Codes of Best Practice and Llwybr Newydd i Natur – the Nature Recovery Action Plan for the Strategic Road Network, where appropriate.
- Where opportunities exist, promoting the benefits of high nature-value farming.
- Reconnecting people with nature via traditional and non-traditional education approaches.
- Maximising biodiversity benefits of projects through project design, retention of semi-natural habitats and long-term management for biodiversity.
- Identifying and promoting ecological connectivity in the landscape and utilising biodiversity opportunity mapping tools such as Buglife's Bee Lines.
- Produce and distribute clear practical advice to developers about how they can contribute to nature recovery and minimise the impacts on ecosystem resilience

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness

3.4.8 There is an overarching **need** to promote high quality design of new development to enhance the integrity and local distinctiveness of the County's landscapes and townscapes, and to encourage appropriate management of woodlands and grasslands that are of particular importance in defining the character of the County. There is also a need to understand, conserve and enhance the historic environment, which contributes significantly to landscape character in Monmouthshire.

3.4.9 The strategic GI **opportunities** in relation to strengthening the landscape character and distinctiveness of Monmouthshire are:

- Encourage effective place-making, supporting high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, to ensure that they complement and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and minimise the impact on the natural environment. This should help to create more sustainable and resilient communities.
- Manage and maintain as appropriate the natural and semi-natural habitats that make Monmouthshire distinctive, including woodlands and grasslands.
- Researching, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and conserving archaeology.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience

3.4.10 There is an overarching **need** to manage the water environment appropriately, to ensure biodiversity, flood management, water and soil quality are maintained and enhanced in a changing climate.

3.4.11 The strategic GI **opportunities** in relation to increasing climate change resilience in Monmouthshire are:

- Working in partnership with Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water (DCWW) and NRW, to achieve better flood risk management that reflects GI objectives.
- Increasing the use of SuDS and river buffer zones, helping to hold water back in the catchment and therefore helping to reduce runoff and flood risk.
- Increasing the use of SuDS in new developments where appropriate through implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, which establishes SuDS Approving Bodies (SABs) in local authorities and sets a statutory standard for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of SuDS.
- Improve land management to benefit soils (for example, reducing frequency of grass cutting).
- Creating and managing green spaces/habitats to absorb carbon and support biodiversity and ecosystem resilience.

## GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

3.4.12 There is an overarching **need** to support a sustainable farming and tourism industry, and appropriate sustainable housing development, in Monmouthshire in ways that deliver the supporting, regulating, provisioning and cultural services essential to the functioning of ecosystems.

3.4.13 The strategic GI **opportunities** in relation to supporting sustainable economic development in Monmouthshire are:

- Providing public benefits in the countryside through farming, working with farmers to support and advise them in sustainable agricultural practices, and appropriate changes to farm practices where necessary.
- Developing a coherent approach to the sustainable management of natural resources, including diversified agricultural land uses and increased renewable energy generation.
- Encouraging and supporting local producers to supply local food and to promote and encourage the use of local produce by public bodies, consumers, accommodation providers and local food outlets.
- Encouraging and supporting the development of the local green economy.
- Supporting actions which improve the image of places, especially with regard to the design of new development, being aware that inward investment is captured by attractive and diverse settings, and that property values can be boosted through proximity to green space.





4

**Settlement Green Infrastructure Networks**







## 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Preferred Strategy (endorsed October 2023) focusses growth in and around the following key locations (see **Diagram 4.1**).

### Primary Settlements:

- Abergavenny (including Llanfoist)\*
- Monmouth\*
- Chepstow\*
- Caldicot (including Severnside Settlements)\*

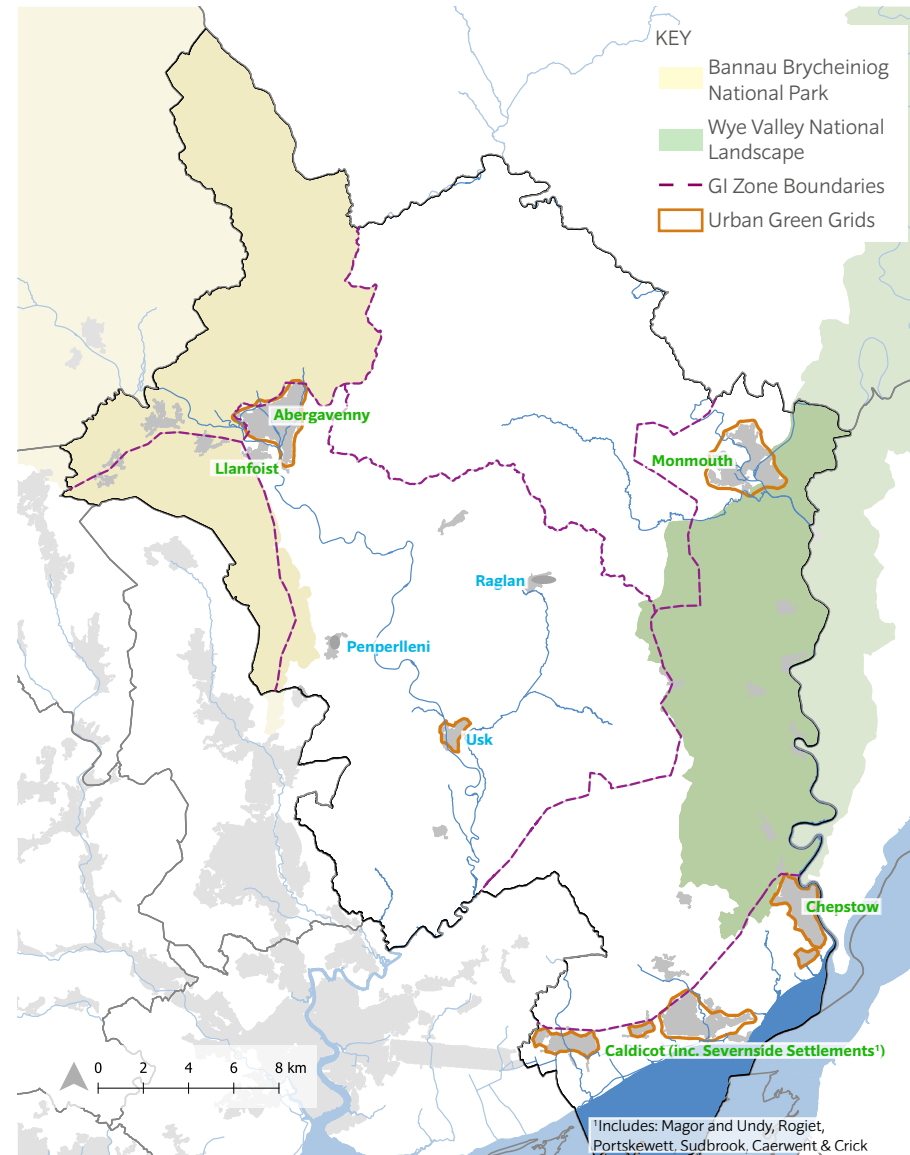
### Secondary Settlements:

- Usk\*
- Raglan
- Penperlleni

4.1.2 The settlements marked with an asterisk (\*) are identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy as Urban Green Grids comprising multifunctional networks of green and blue infrastructure that thread through the built environment, weaving together urban green spaces in areas where people live and work with the wider countryside.

4.1.3 Set within the context of the Strategic GI Network for Monmouthshire illustrated on **Diagram 3.1**, the key opportunities for strengthening the GI Networks in and around the above settlements are highlighted in this section. Where appropriate, these opportunities are carried forward into the projects set out in the GI Delivery Plan (Volume 2).

**DIAGRAM 4.1** Key Growth Locations



## 4.2 Abergavenny & Llanfoist

### GI Assets

4.2.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around the settlements of Abergavenny & Llanfoist are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.2**).

4.2.2 Abergavenny is a distinctive historic market town nestled within the Usk Valley, immediately outside the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park's eastern boundary. Its town centre is a conservation area containing many listed buildings, including the ruins of the Norman Abergavenny Castle. Together with nearby Llanfoist, it is overlooked and sheltered by the Blorenges and the Sugar Loaf mountains, located to the south-west and north-west respectively. The Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site stretches to the south-west.

4.2.3 Other key GI assets include:

- The River Usk (also a SAC) and its floodplain (to the south of Abergavenny), which includes accessible natural greenspaces such as Castle Meadows.
- The River Gavenny which flows through Abergavenny and the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal situated to the south of Llanfoist.
- Historic parks/gardens including Bailey Park within Abergavenny, Abergavenny Priory Deer Park to the north and Coldbrook House to the south-east.
- Public Rights of Way and the Usk Valley Walk long distance path.
- Partly accessible woodlands such as Twyn-yr-allt and Deri-fach (also designated as SSSI and SAC) to the north and Coed-y-person to the south (designated as a SSSI).



## GI Opportunities

4.2.4 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around the settlements of Abergavenny/Llanfoist through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.2**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be<sup>1</sup>:

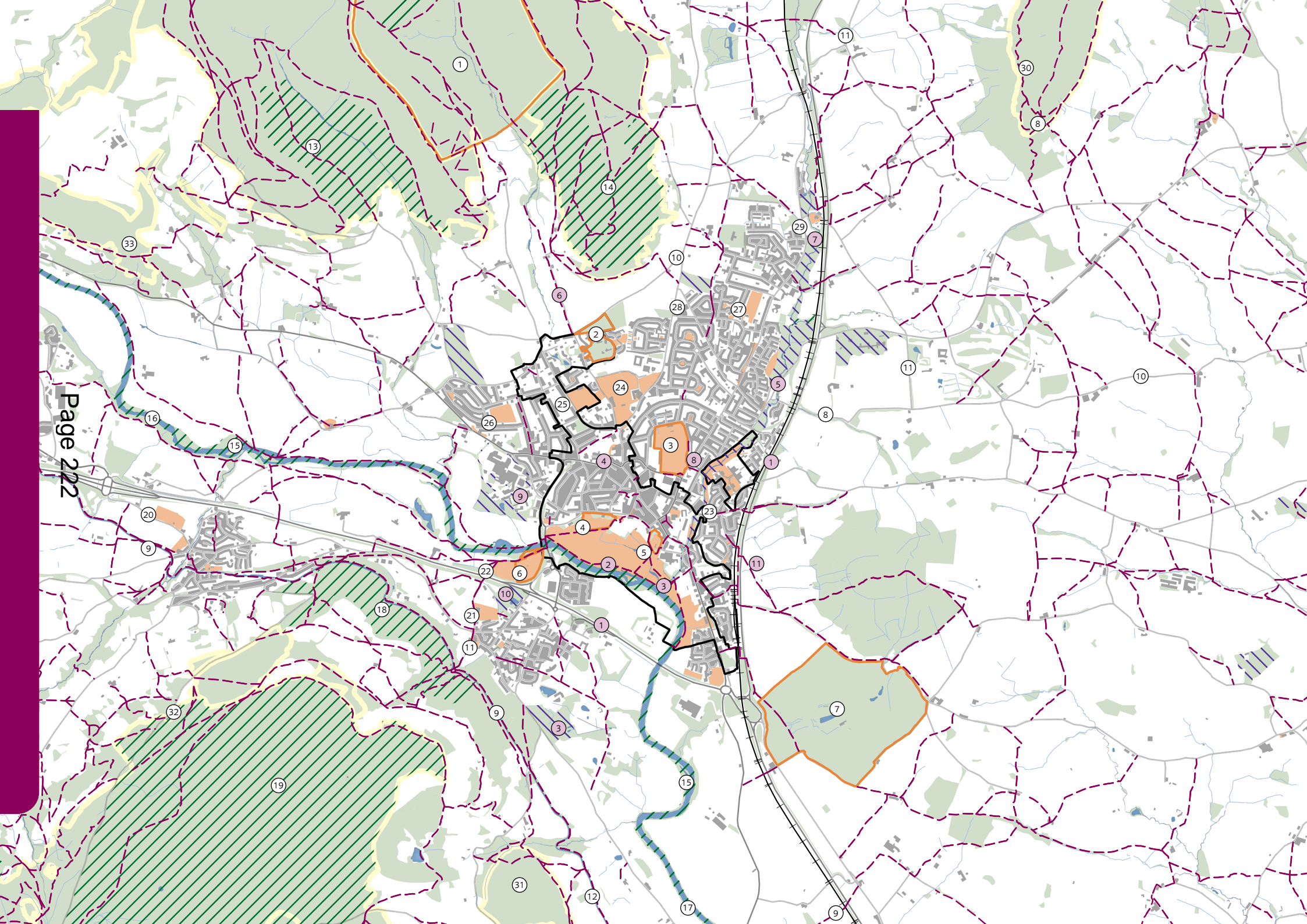
1. Strengthen the A465 and railway corridor, ensuring tree line and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed.
2. Improve the ecological quality and value of the green corridor adjacent to the River Usk.
3. Create and enhance links between the River Usk, River Gavenny, A465, A4143 and railway corridors with the semi-natural habitats around Llanfoist, including reinforcing connections to the nearby SINC, the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and the ancient woodlands.
4. Integrate trees in open green (grassed) space where appropriate<sup>2</sup> within the Abergavenny Conservation Area.
5. Implement the River Gavenny Project to deliver improvements for nature, identifying opportunities for habitat restoration, creation and improvements to the river health (such as understanding the significance of the culverts as barriers to wildlife dispersal and exploring potential options for reducing their fragmentary effects).
6. Form or strengthen ecological links between The Hill site and the Sugar Loaf ancient woodlands
7. Form or strengthen ecological links between the River Gavenny railway corridor and the woodland and watercourse near St Teilo's vicarage.
8. Enhance ecological connectivity between sections of the Afon Cibi in central Abergavenny with the trees and watercourse of Bailey Park, which itself could be better connected to the River Gavenny to its east.
9. Form or strengthen ecological links between patches of trees in and around The Knoll and Nevill Hall Hospital and also to the Nant Iago to the west, the A4143 corridor to the east and a block of woodland, semi-improved grassland and a small tributary of the River Usk to the south.

<sup>1</sup> See Monmouthshire Open Space Study, Greenspace Study and Ecological Connectivity Assessments for more details

<sup>2</sup> See Abergavenny Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Proposals (2016) for more details

10. Increase access to rights of way and greenspaces between Abergavenny and Llanfoist that are currently not accessible.
  11. Consider opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Abergavenny East, such as provision of pedestrian/cycle links and greenspaces for people, and ecological connections for wildlife.
- 4.2.5 Other general GI opportunities are:
- Improve the quality and value of the natural and semi-natural greenspace sites within Abergavenny, which at present is variable.
  - Ensure ongoing sensitive management of grassland verges.
  - Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected.
  - Ensure blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
  - Improve the quality of amenity greenspace in Abergavenny.
  - Improve the quality and value of churchyards & cemeteries.
  - Strengthen the major river corridors through Abergavenny. Ensure a buffer of semi-natural habitat with adjacent fields and the built landscape and where possible improve connectivity to nearby areas of semi-natural habitat. Consider improvements to the Usk Valley Walk.
  - Enhance connectivity between the small patches of habitats in Abergavenny and distributed across the settlement. For example, linking the woodland and semi-improved grassland of Maindiff Court Hospital with the railway-A465 corridor to its north and west.
  - Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.
  - Ongoing street tree planting and tree management in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Area
  - Ongoing tree planting and management in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
  - Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites
  - Identify opportunities to implement/retrofit SuDS systems, where appropriate, to help improve water quality





## DIAGRAM 4.2 Abergavenny & Llanfoist GI Network Plan

### GI Assets

-  Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
-  Statutory Biodiversity Designations
-  Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
-  Watercourses/Waterbodies
-  Historic Parks & Gardens
-  Conservation Area
-  Public Open Space
-  Country Park
-  Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
-  Public Right of Way

### Statutory Biodiversity Designations

13. Sugar Loaf Woodlands (Deri-fach Woodland) SAC & SSSI
14. Sugar Loaf Woodlands (Twyn-yr-Allt Woodland) SAC & SSSI
15. River Usk SAC
16. River Usk (Upper Usk)/Afon Wysg (Wysg Uchaf) SSSI
17. River Usk (Lower Usk)/Afron Wysg (Wysg Isaf) SSSI
18. Coed-y-person SSSI
19. Bloreng/Blorens SSSI

### Historic Parks & Gardens

1. Abergavenny Priory Deer Park
2. The Hill
3. Bailey Park
4. Linda Vista Gardens
5. Abergavenny Castle
6. New Cemetery
7. Coldbrook House

### Public Open Space

20. King George's Playing Field
21. Llanfoist/Llan-ffwyst Playing Field
22. Llanfoist/Llan-ffwyst Cemetery
23. St Mary's Church
24. Pen-y-pound (Football Ground, Sports Ground & Playing Field)
25. Cricket Ground
26. Cresta Road Recreation Ground
27. Mardy Recreation Ground
28. Playing Field on Old Hereford Road
29. St Teilo's Church with Bettws Chapel

### Open Access Land (CRoW Act)

19. Bloreng/Blorens
13. Deri-fach Woodland
14. Twyn-yr-allt Woodland
30. Ysgyryd Fawr
31. Ffwd Wood
32. Woodland near to Coedytwyn
33. Graig

### Promoted Routes

8. Beacons Way (Brecon)
9. Usk Valley Walk
10. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 42
11. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 46
12. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 49

### GI Opportunities

- ① Green Infrastructure Opportunities - see text for details

## 4.3 Monmouth

### GI Assets

4.3.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around Monmouth are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.3**).

4.3.2 The market town of Monmouth is situated at the confluence of the Rivers Monnow, Trothy and Wye, close to the Welsh border and adjacent to the Wye Valley National Landscape's western edge. The town's castle, listed buildings, Norman bridge and Roman roads, all reflect its historic value. It is overlooked and sheltered by a number of partly accessible woodlands including Buckholt Wood, Hayes Coppices and Kingswood.

4.3.3 Other key GI assets include:

- Fiddler's Elbow National Nature Reserve (to the east) and Wonastow SINC.
- Accessible natural greenspace sites such as the Chippenham Recreational Ground in the centre of Monmouth, Vauxhall Fields, the Claypatch Wood, and the Millennium Field/allotment site adjacent to the River Wye.
- Public Rights of Way, included the promoted Wysis Way and Peregrine Path, and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail and Wye Valley Walk long distance path. There are also a number of locally promoted circular walks.





## GI Opportunities

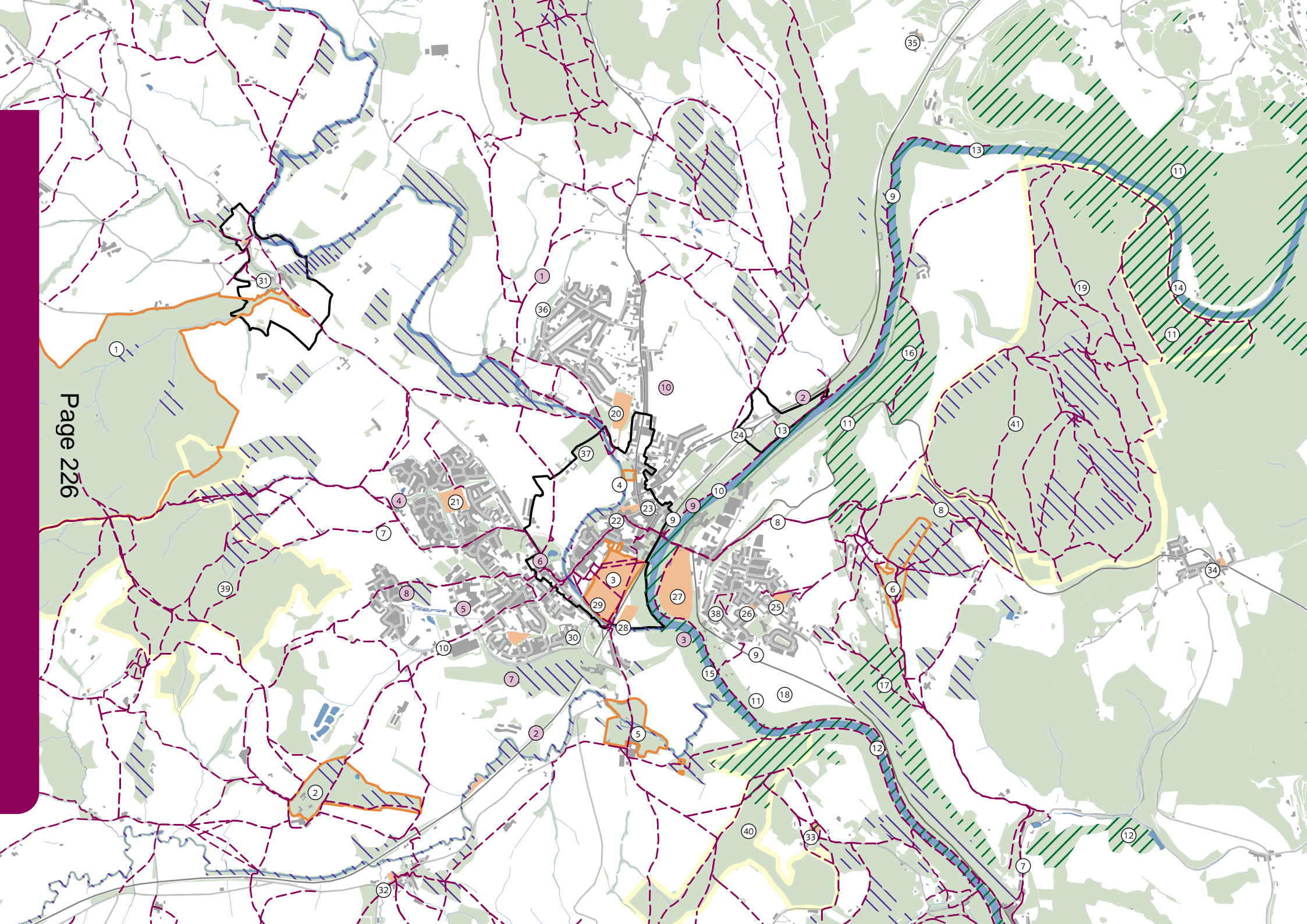
4.3.4 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Monmouth through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.3**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

1. Improve provision and access to natural and semi-natural greenspace, particularly to the north of the town.
2. Ensure tree lines and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed, and ensure sensitive management of grassland verges along the A40 corridor.
3. Improve both ecological and pedestrian/cycle linkages of the disused viaduct with other nearby semi-natural habitats to further bolster corridors through the settlement.
4. Form ecological links between the central extensive green corridor dominated by the Rivers Wye and Monnow and other smaller habitat corridors (such as the Watery Lane watercourse, semi-improved grassland and ancient woodlands to the west of the settlement).
5. Form ecological links between the ditch, semi-improved grassland and woodland habitat in and around Wonastow Industrial estate.
6. Form ecological links between the northern tip of the Clawdd du ditch and the Wonastow road ditch, as well as improving connectivity between these sections of ditch and Drybridge pond and the 'fire station woodland' to the north.
7. Form ecological links between the western end of the Wonastow Road ditch and semi-improved grassland and St Dial's wood to the south. Opportunity to increase access to the MCC owned part of St. Dials Wood.
8. Form ecological links between Wonastow Field SINC and the ditch and semi-improved grassland to the south and Watery Lane to the north.

9. Improve and extend the Wye Valley Walk to make it accessible all the way from the Boat House to the Church
10. Consider opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Monmouth Leasbrook, such as provision of pedestrian/cycle links and greenspaces for people, and ecological connections for wildlife.

4.3.5 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Form links between the variety of small additional habitat patches scattered across the settlement.
- Improve the quality and value of open spaces in Monmouth.
- Improve the quality and value of natural and semi-natural greenspace sites in Monmouth.
- Ensure a buffer of semi-natural habitat with adjacent fields and the built urban landscape; and connect with near-by areas of semi-natural habitat where possible along the major river corridors. Extend this to include smaller watercourses, many of which are culverted through the residential zones of Monmouth.
- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected.
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where feasible or appropriate.
- Carry out works to prevent the loss of the Wye Valley Walk to bank and flood erosion along the Wye, whilst protecting sensitive habitats.
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.
- Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Area
- Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
- Continue to progress projects to improve pedestrian/cycle links between Wyesham and Monmouth, including the Iron Bridge and Beyond Cycle Link Project
- Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites such as Chippenham Field.



## DIAGRAM 4.3 Monmouth GI Network Plan

### GI Assets

-  Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
-  Statutory Biodiversity Designations
-  Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
-  Watercourses/Waterbodies
-  Historic Parks & Gardens
-  Conservation Area
-  Public Open Space
-  Country Park
-  Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
-  Public Right of Way

### Statutory Biodiversity Designations

11. Wye Valley Woodlands/Coetiroedd Dyffryn Gwy (Wales) SAC
12. Wye Valley Woodlands (England) SAC
13. River Wye/Afon Gwy (Wales) SAC
14. Upper Wye Gorge SSSI
15. River Wye (Lower Wye)/Afon Gwy (Gwy Isaf) SSSI
16. Fiddler's Elbow SSSI & National Nature Reserve
17. Harper's Grove-Lord's Grove SSSI
18. Livox Wood SSSI
19. Lady Park Wood National Nature Reserve (& Other Stat Access Land)

### Historic Parks & Gardens

1. The Hendre, Llangattock-vibon-Avel
2. Wonastow Court
3. Chippenham Recreation Ground
4. Chapel House, Monmouth
5. Troy House, Monmouth
6. The Kymin

### Public Open Space

20. Osbaston Cemetery
21. Rockfield Recreation Ground
22. St Mary's Church, Monmouth
23. Sports Facility
24. St Peter's Church, Monmouth
25. Playing Field, Wyesham
26. St James's Church, Wyesham
27. Sports Field
28. Allotments
29. Chippenham Recreation Ground & Sports Ground
30. Elstob Way Play Space
31. St Cenedlon's Church, Rockfield
32. St Michael's Church, Mitchel Troy
33. Penallt Old Church, Penallt
34. Other Sports Facility
35. St Swithin's Church, Gararew

### Other Open Spaces

36. Lancaster Way Open Space
37. Vauxhall Field Amenity Green Space
38. Wyesham Road Community Woodland

### Open Access Land (CRoW Act)

19. Lady Park Wood National Nature Reserve
39. Kings Wood
40. Livox Wood, Troypark Wood, Troy Orles and Church Hill Common
41. Lady Park Wood NNR & Highmeadow Woods (including Redding's Inclosure)

### Promoted Routes

7. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail
8. Wysis Way
9. Wye Valley Walk
10. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 423

### GI Opportunities

- ① Green Infrastructure Opportunities - see text for details



## 4.4 Chepstow

### GI Assets

4.4.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around Chepstow are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.4**).

4.4.2 The historic market town of Chepstow, once a wealthy port, is located on steeply sloping land at the mouth of the Wye Valley, immediately adjacent to the southern edge of the Wye Valley National Landscape. The historic core of the town is centred around the castle, which overlooks the River Wye. The Wye meanders past Chepstow's eastern edge, eventually merging with the River Severn/Severn Estuary (designated as a SSSI, SPA, SAC and Ramsar) directly to the south of the town. Accessible woodlands including St Pierre's Great Wood and Great Barnets Wood are located to the west/north-west of the town.

4.4.3 Other key GI assets include:

- Accessible natural greenspaces within the town such as Warren Slade and Park Redding Woods and Bulwark Road Open Space.
- Public Rights of Way and the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail, Wye Valley Walk long distance path and Wales Coast Path.
- Piercefield Park, a designated historic park/garden to the north of Chepstow. Although mainly in private ownership, it is partly accessible by rights of way and an access agreement.



## GI Opportunities

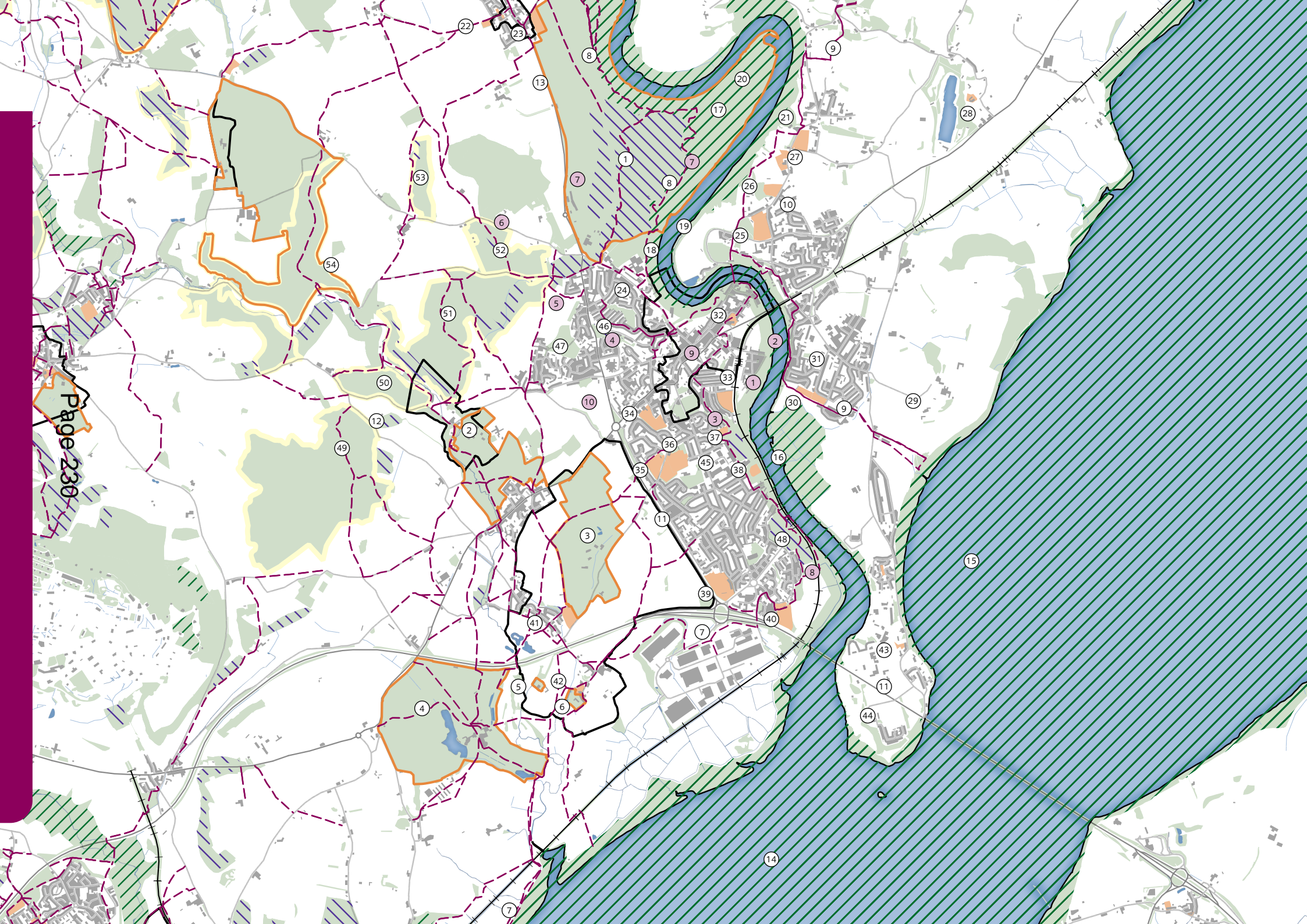
4.4.4 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Chepstow through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.4**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

1. Continue to improve accessible greenspace access through opportunities generated by ongoing new development adjacent to the River Wye.
2. Improve accessible greenspace access for the centre of Chepstow adjoining the River Wye, where access to the river is limited.
3. Form or strengthen ecological links between the discrete groups of trees/ woodland scattered in and around Hardwick with one another
4. Form or strengthen ecological links between Parc Penterry grassland SINC to the north-west and Beaufort Quarry wood to the south east.
5. Form or strengthen ecological links between Parc Penterry SINC and Cockshoot Wood to its north west via enhanced connectivity with a strip of additional habitat patches (semi-improved grassland and trees) located mid-way between the two main habitat blocks.
6. Form or strengthen ecological links between Cockshoot Wood and Fryth Wood to its north.
7. Form or strengthen ecological links between Chepstow Racecourse grassland SINC to include additional patches of semi-improved grassland to the east and west, and beyond to the River Wye woodland corridor to the east and Fryth Wood to the west.
8. Form or strengthen ecological links between groups of trees/woodland patches near the outskirts of Chepstow town, and the railway and River corridor.
9. Consider landscape mitigation of parking by increasing tree planting where appropriate in the Chepstow Conservation Area<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See Chepstow Conservation Area Appraisal & Management Proposals (2016) for more details

10. Consider opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Mounton Road Chepstow, such as provision of pedestrian/ cycle links and greenspaces for people, and ecological connections for wildlife.
- 4.4.5 Other general GI opportunities are:
- Improve the quality and value of amenity greenspaces in Chepstow.
  - Where appropriate, improve the quality of natural and semi-natural greenspace sites in and around the town.
  - Improve the quality and value, where appropriate, of the cemeteries and churchyards in Chepstow.
  - Strengthen the railway and motorway corridors, ensuring tree lines and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed.
  - Improving cycle links, including considering a route connecting Chepstow to the Wye Valley.
  - Ensure ongoing sensitive management of grassland verges.
  - Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features.
  - Ensure blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
  - Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
  - Ensure a buffer of semi-natural habitat with adjacent fields and the built urban landscape and connect with near-by areas of semi-natural habitat where possible along the River Wye corridor.
  - Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups
  - Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Areas.
  - Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
  - Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites.
  - Tree planting to improve air quality







## DIAGRAM 4.4 Chepstow GI Network Plan

### GI Assets

-  Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
-  Statutory Biodiversity Designations
-  Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
-  Watercourses/Waterbodies
-  Historic Parks & Gardens
-  Conservation Area
-  Public Open Space
-  Country Park
-  Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
-  Public Right of Way

### Statutory Biodiversity Designations

14. Severn Estuary Wales SPA/SAC/SSSI/Ramsar
15. Severn Estuary (England) SPA/SAC/SSSI/Ramsar
16. River Wye (Lower Wye)/Afon Gwy (Gwy Isaf) SSSI
17. Pierce, Alcove & Piercefield Woods SSSI
18. River Wye (Wales)/Afon Gwy (Wales) SAC
19. River Wye (England) SAC
20. Wye Valley Woodlands/Coetiroedd Dyffryn Gwy (Wales) SAC
21. Wye Valley Woodlands (England) SAC

### Historic Parks & Gardens

1. Piercefield Park
2. Mounton House, Mathern
3. Wyelands
4. St Pierre Park
5. Moynes Court, Mathern
6. Mathern Palace

### Public Open Space

22. King George's Playing Field
23. Playing Field, St Arvan's
24. Sports Ground & Playing Field, Chepstow Comprehensive School & Leisure Centre
25. Play Space & Playing Field, Coleford Road, Tutshill
26. Recreation Ground, Coleford Road
27. St Luke's Church & Playing Field
28. St Mary's & St Peter's Church, Tidenham
29. Sedbury Park
30. Football Field & Allotments on Buttington Road, Sedbury
31. Play Space, Buttington Road (near Offa's Mead Primary School)
32. St Mary's Church, Chepstow
33. Sports Field, Severn Crescent, (is this Hardwick Playing Pitch in previous study?)
34. Chepstow Town AFC
35. Cemetery, Mathern Road
36. Chepstow Athletic Club
37. Allotments (off Strongbow Road)
38. The Bulwarks
39. Chepstow Rugby Club & Playing Field
40. Playing Field on Tenby Lane

41. Playing Field, Newton Green
42. St Tewdrig's Church, Merthyr Tewdrig/Mathern
43. Religious Grounds, Beachley Barracks
44. Sports Ground, Beachley Point
45. Bulwark Bowl Skate Park, Bulwark Road
46. Huntfield Road Open Space
47. Woolpitch Wood Open Space
48. Warren Slade & Park Redding Woods

### Open Access Land (CRoW Act)

49. St Pierre's Great Woods
50. Kite's Bushes/Ticken Hill
51. Great Barnets Wood
52. Cockshoot Wood
53. Brier's Grove
54. Yewtree Wood

### Promoted Routes

7. Wales Coastal Path
8. Wye Valley Walk
9. Offa's Dyke Path National Trail
10. Gloucestershire Way
11. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 4
12. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 42
13. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 31

### GI Opportunities

- ① Green Infrastructure Opportunities - see text for details

## 4.5 Severnside Settlements

### GI Assets

4.5.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around the Severnside Settlements are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.5**).

4.5.2 The Severnside Settlements (which includes Caerwent, Crick, Magor and Undy, Rogiet, Caldicot, Portskewett and Sudbrook) is located immediately north of the Severn Estuary. The latter is designated as a Ramsar, SSSI, SPA and SAC, reflecting the estuary's high nature conservation value. The area comprises a number of woodlands, some accessible (e.g. Thicket Wood and Ifton Great Wood to the north of Rogiet).

4.5.3 Other key GI assets include:

- Nature Reserves such as Magor Marsh.
- The Wales Coast Path, St Tewdrig's Trail, and locally promoted circular walks.
- Accessible natural greenspaces such as Harold Park, Caldicot Castle Country Park, the Nedern Brook Wetlands SSSI and Magor/Undy Gwent Levels SSSI.
- Rogiet Countryside Park and Black Rock.



## GI Opportunities

### Magor & Undy

4.5.4 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Magor and Undy through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.5**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

1. Improve access to larger greenspaces for the eastern areas of Magor.
2. Strengthen the St Bride's Brook / Mill Reen corridor through the creation / management of semi-natural habitat buffers with adjacent fields and the built urban landscape, and to connect with other near-by areas of semi-natural habitat where possible.
3. Form or strengthen ecological links between Upper Grange grassland SINC with the St Brides Brook to its west, and linking the woodland/semi-improved grassland by Rockfield Farm to the M48 verge corridor to its north, as well as to additional habitat patches (trees/scrub) by Vinegar Hill Farm to its south west.
4. Form or strengthen ecological links between the woodland blocks near Vinegar Hill to each other and to the primary route of connectivity via a connection to woodland to the north, St Bride's.
5. Form or strengthen ecological links between St Bride's Brook / Mill Reen to the west, and the green corridor of the railway to the south.
6. Form or strengthen ecological links between small groups of trees/scrub, as well as linking them to the main routes of connectivity, i.e. the B4245 corridor to the east and woodland strip to the west, in the vicinity of Magor Brewery.

4.5.5 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Improve the quality and value of amenity greenspace in Magor and Undy, where appropriate.
- Improve the quality and value of natural and semi-natural greenspace sites in and around the settlements, where appropriate.
- Improve connectivity to the wider landscape, both in terms of access and ecological connectivity, which is currently limited for Magor and Undy due to the settlements being bounded by roads and railway.
- Investigate the potential for a number of new greenways/cycle routes linking the Severnside settlements to one another and beyond
- Strengthen the railway and motorway green corridors, ensuring tree lines and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed.
- Ensure ongoing sensitive management of grassland verges.
- Identify the significance of culverts as barriers to wildlife dispersal and explore potential options for reducing their fragmentary effects.
- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features (particularly woodlands).
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
- Improve routes linking to the Wales Coastal Path for education, and connectivity with landscape, biodiversity and history.
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.
- Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Area.
- Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
- Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites.

## Rogiet

4.5.6 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Rogiet through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.5**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

7. Improve the quality and value of the green corridor in Ifton Lane.
8. Form or strengthen ecological links between the series of small groups of trees stretching north-south between the M48 and the railway corridors to the east of Rogiet.

4.5.7 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Improve the quality and value of smaller amenity greenspace sites in the village.
- Ensure ongoing sensitive management of grassland verges.
- Improve connectivity to the wider landscape, both in terms of access and ecological connectivity, which is currently limited for Rogiet as the settlement is bounded by roads and railway.
- Investigate the potential for a number of new greenways/cycle routes linking the Severnside settlements to one another and beyond
- Strengthen the railway and motorway corridors, ensuring tree lines and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed.
- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features (particularly woodlands).
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups
- Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Area.
- Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
- Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites.

## Caldicot

4.5.8 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Caldicot through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.5**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

9. Improve the quality and value of the natural and semi-natural greenspace site (Caldicot Pill Nature Reserve ) adjacent to the town.
10. Strengthen the Nedern Brook corridor, which is the main semi-natural corridor through the settlement, identifying the significance of the culverts as barriers to wildlife dispersal and exploring potential options for reducing their fragmentary effect.
11. Form or strengthen links between the block of woodland and ponds off Dewstow Road (north-west part of the settlement) and the M48 road verge corridor to its south.
12. Form or strengthen links between patches of trees adjacent to the Nedern Brook corridor, north of Caldicot Castle.
13. Consider opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Caldicot East, such as provision of pedestrian/cycle links and greenspaces for people, and ecological connections for wildlife.

4.5.9 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Improve the value of churchyard and cemetery sites in Caldicot.
- Improve connectivity to the wider landscape, both in terms of access and ecological connectivity, which is currently limited for Caldicot as the settlement is bounded by roads and railway.
- Investigate the potential for a number of new greenways/cycle routes linking the Severnside settlements to one another and beyond

- Strengthen the railway and motorway corridors: ensure tree lines and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed.
- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features (particularly woodlands).
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
- Improve the quality and value of amenity greenspaces in Caldicot.
- Ensure ongoing sensitive management of grassland verges.
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.
- Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Area.
- Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
- Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites.



### Portskewett and Sudbrook

4.5.10 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Portskewett & Sudbrook through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.5**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

14. Investigate potential access to currently inaccessible greenspaces sites north of Portskewett.
15. Form or strengthen ecological links across the northern half of the settlement, most significantly in relation to the clusters of ASNW SINC's centred on Portskewett Hill, which could be linked to each other and to the railway corridor (to the south), Bushy Close SSSI and Withy Bed woodland (to the east).

4.5.11 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Improve the quality and value of the amenity greenspaces in Portskewett and Sudbrook.
- Improve the quality of the natural and semi-natural greenspaces around the settlements.
- Improve connectivity to the wider landscape, both in terms of access and ecological connectivity, which is limited for Portskewett and Sudbrook as the settlements are bounded in places by roads and railway.
- Investigate the potential for a number of new greenways/cycle routes linking the Severnside settlements to one another and beyond
- Strengthen the railway and motorway corridors, ensuring tree lines and hedgerows are well connected and sensitively managed.
- Ensure ongoing sensitive management of grassland verges.
- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features (particularly woodlands).
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.
- Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred.
- Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
- Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites



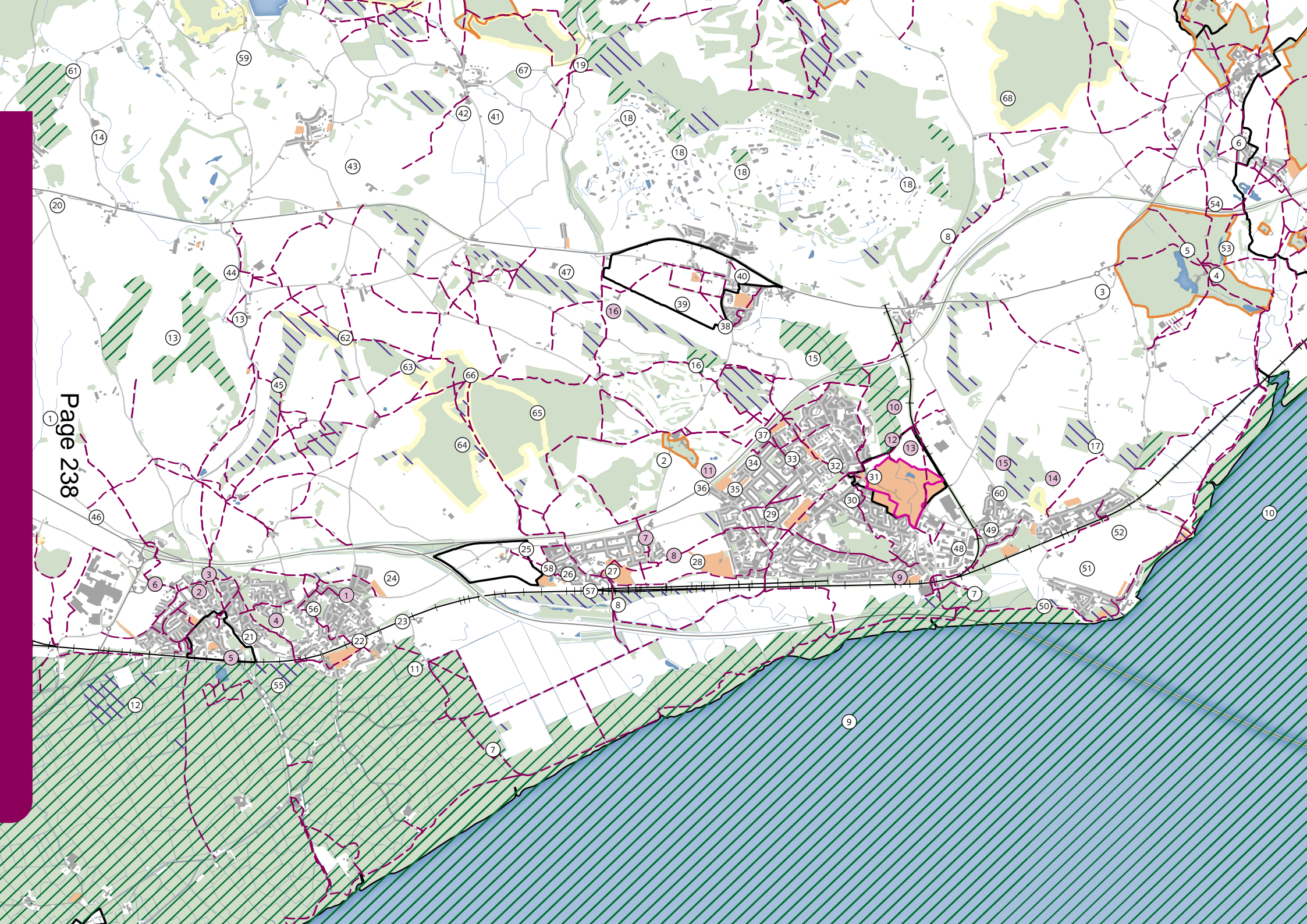
## Caerwent and Crick

4.5.12 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Caerwent and Crick through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.5**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

16. Develop and manage existing habitat corridors, such as between/through Cross-voel Wood, and Upper and Lower Rodge Wood (SINCs)

4.5.13 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features (particularly woodlands).
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
- Investigate the potential for a number of new greenways/cycle routes linking the Severnside settlements to one another and beyond
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.
- Street tree planting in areas where losses have occurred, especially in the Conservation Area.
- Tree planting in low value amenity space, including species for community orchards and pollinators.
- Interpretation to identify links and loops from key sites.



## DIAGRAM 4.5 Severnside Settlements GI Network Plan

### GI Assets

-  Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
-  Statutory Biodiversity Designations
-  Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
-  Watercourses/Waterbodies
-  Historic Parks & Gardens
-  Conservation Area
-  Public Open Space
-  Country Park
-  Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
-  Public Right of Way

### Statutory Biodiversity Designations

9. Severn Estuary Wales SPA/SAC/SSSI/Ramsar
10. Severn Estuary England SPA/SAC/SSSI/Ramsar
11. Gwent Levels - Magor & Undy SSSI
12. Gwent Levels - Redwick & Llandeenny SSSI
13. Penhow Woodland SSSI & National Nature Reserve
14. Parc Seymour Woods SSSI
15. Nedern Brook Wetlands SSSI
16. Brockwells Meadows SSSI
17. Bushy Close SSSI
18. Dinham Meadows SSSI
19. Coombe Valley Woods SSSI

### Historic Parks & Gardens

1. Pencoed Castle
2. Dewstow House
3. St Pierre Park
4. Mathern Place
5. Moynes Court, Mathern
6. Wyelands

### Public Open Space

20. Rockfield Close Recreation Ground
21. St Mary's Church, Magor
22. Playing Field on The Ramp, Undy
23. St Mary's Church, Undy
24. Allotments
25. Religious Grounds, The Old Court, Llanfihangel
26. St Mary's Church, Rogiet
27. Rogiet Playing Fields
28. Caldicott Rugby Club
29. King George's Field, Bowling Green & Allotments
30. Caldicott Leisure Centre Playing Fields
31. Caldicott Castle & Country Park
32. St Mary's Church, Caldicott
33. Playing Fields, St Mary's School, Caldicott
34. Religious Grounds, Nedder Way, Caldecott
35. Playing Fields, Green Lane, Caldecott
36. Cemetery & Allotments, Dewstow Road
37. Allotments
38. Caerwent Playing Fields, St Tathan's Place
39. St Stephen's Church, Caerwent
40. Play Space, Lawrence Crescent, Caer-went
41. Play Space, Llanfair-Discoed
42. St Mary's Church, Llanvair-Discoed
43. Playing Field & St Dubritous Church, Llanvaches
44. St John the Baptist Church, Penhow
45. St Bridget's Church, St Bride's Netherwent

46. St Mary's Church, Wilcrick
47. Playing Field, Trewen
48. Portskewett Recreation Ground
49. St Mary's Church, Portskewett
50. Playing Field & Play Space, Sudbrook
51. Allotments, Sudbrook
52. Black Rock Picnic Site
53. St Tewdrick's Church, Merthyr Twedrig
54. Playing Field, Newton Green

### Other Open Spaces

55. Magor Marsh
56. Mill Common
57. Rogiet Countryside Park
58. Starling Close Amenity Greenspace

### Open Access Land (CRoW Act)

59. Myndd Alltir-fach (Common Land)
60. Stow Ball Hill (Common Land)
61. Wentwood
62. Coed y Mynydd
63. Upper Seven Acres
64. Thicket Wood
65. Slade Wood
66. Lower Seven Acres
67. Cuhere Wood
68. St Pierre's Great Woods

### Promoted Routes

7. Wales Coastal Path
8. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 4

### GI Opportunities

-  Green Infrastructure Opportunities - see text for details



## 4.6 Usk

### GI Assets

4.6.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around Usk are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.6**).

4.6.2 Usk is a secondary settlement in the west of Monmouthshire, surrounded by farmland and woodland. The River Usk flows through the village, and the Usk Valley Walk follows its route.

4.6.3 Other key GI assets include:

- Cefn Ila Park and Garden
- Llanbadoc Island Access Land, adjacent to the River Usk
- Allotments
- Various sports clubs and recreation grounds
- Multiple churchyards



### GI Opportunities

4.5.14 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Usk through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.6**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

1. Usk Trail Action Group cycleway proposal along old railway line
2. Improvements to Usk Valley Walk and other local paths to make them more accessible.
3. Potential to create an Usk to Pontypool or Usk Railway path.
4. Improve the quality of the allotments.

4.5.15 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features. (Not mapped)
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate.
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed.
- Increase access to inaccessible greenspace sites, where appropriate.
- Where appropriate, improve the quality of amenity greenspaces in Usk.
- Where appropriate, improve the quality of natural and semi-natural greenspaces in Usk.
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', or similar groups.

**DIAGRAM 4.6 Usk GI Network Plan**

**GI Assets**

- Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
- Statutory Biodiversity Designations
- Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
- Watercourses/Waterbodies
- Historic Parks & Gardens
- Conservation Area
- Public Open Space
- Country Park
- Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
- Public Right of Way

**Statutory Biodiversity Designations**

- 5. Usk Valley/Afon Wysg SAC
- 6. River Usk (Lower Usk)/Afon Wysg (Wysg Isaf) SSSI

**Historic Parks & Gardens**

- 1. Cefn Ila, Llanbadoc

**Public Open Space**

- 7. Rugby Field, Coleg Gwent, Usk Campus
- 8. The Island Recreation Ground
- 9. Allotments (on A472)
- 10. Usk Rugby Football Club
- 11. Recreation Ground, Maryport Street
- 12. Usk Athletic Club
- 13. St Madoc's Church, Llanbadoc
- 14. Llanbadoc Island Play Park

- 15. Priors Church of St Mary, Usk
- 16. St Francis Xavier & St David Lewis Catholic Church
- 17. Allotments on Monmouth Road

**Open Access Land (CRoW Act)**

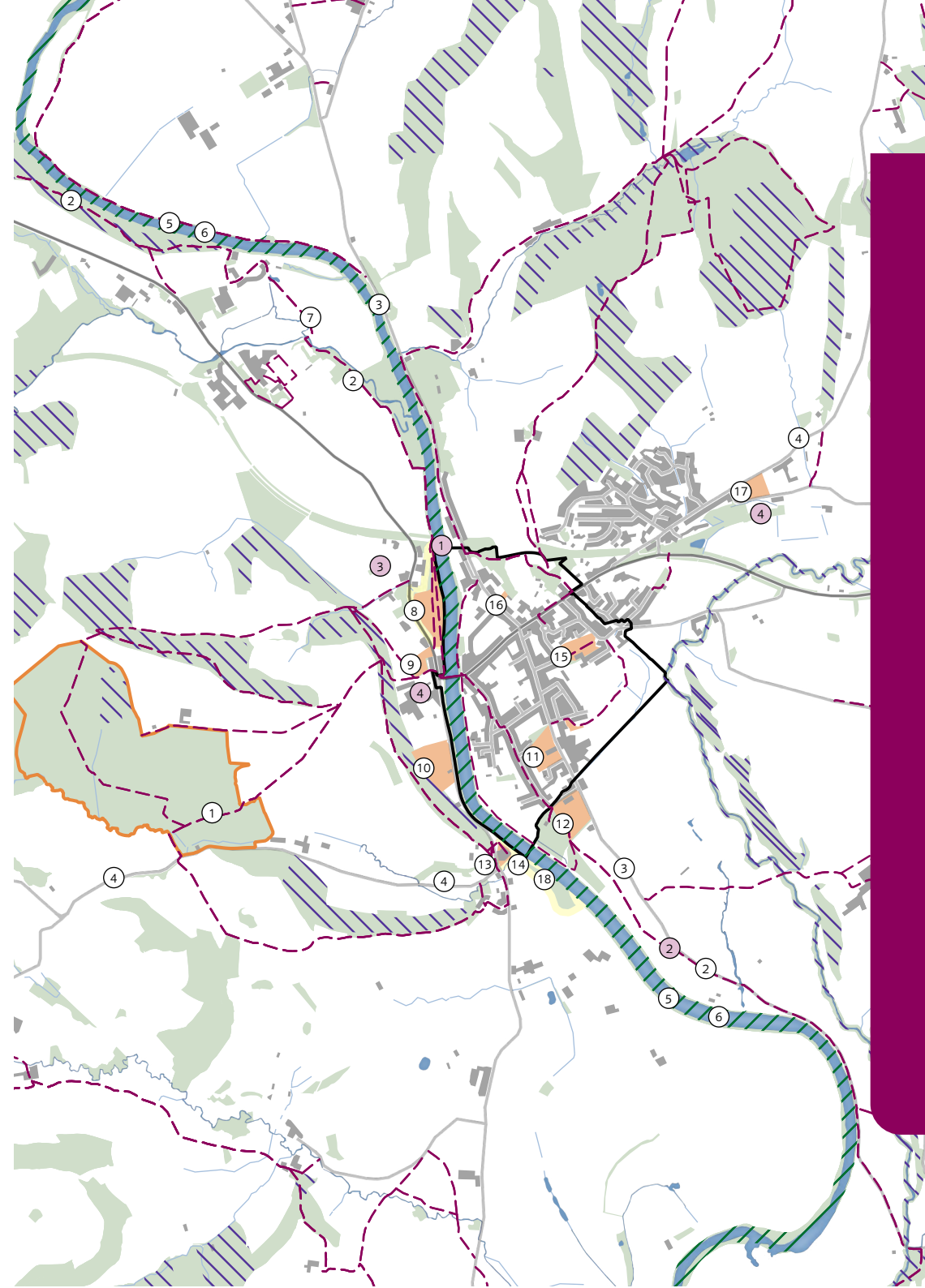
- 18. Llanbadoc Island

**Promoted Routes**

- 2. Usk Valley Walk
- 3. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 42
- 4. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 423

**GI Opportunities**

- ① Green Infrastructure Opportunities - see text for details



## 4.7 Raglan

### GI Assets

4.7.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around Raglan are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.7**).

4.7.2 Raglan is a secondary settlement in the centre of Monmouthshire, surrounded by farmland. The Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 423 runs through the centre of the settlement, which is bounded to the north by the A40. The small watercourse Nant y Wilcae flows to the south of the village.

4.7.3 Other key GI assets include:

- Raglan Castle and Historic Park and Garden
- Allotments between Usk Road and the High Street
- Playing Field on Station Road



### GI Opportunities

4.6.4 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Raglan through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.7**). The key GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

1. Opportunity to develop Raglan 'Local ways' and health walks, eg. 'Healthy Footsteps Walk'

4.6.5 Other general GI opportunities are:

- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features. (Not mapped)
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate. (Not mapped)
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed. (Not mapped)
- Increase provision of or access to larger accessible greenspace sites. (Not mapped)
- Improve the quality of the natural and semi-natural greenspaces around the settlements and public rights of way. (Not mapped)
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', of similar groups
- Ensure pond networks are sensitively managed for Great Crested Newts
- Tree planting for landscape character and biodiversity - field and hedgerow oaks are not being replaced as they die off.



## DIAGRAM 4.7 Raglan GI Network Plan

### GI Assets

-  Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
-  Statutory Biodiversity Designations
-  Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
-  Watercourses/Waterbodies
-  Historic Parks & Gardens
-  Conservation Area
-  Public Open Space
-  Country Park
-  Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
-  Public Right of Way

### Historic Parks & Gardens

1. Raglan Castle

### Public Open Space

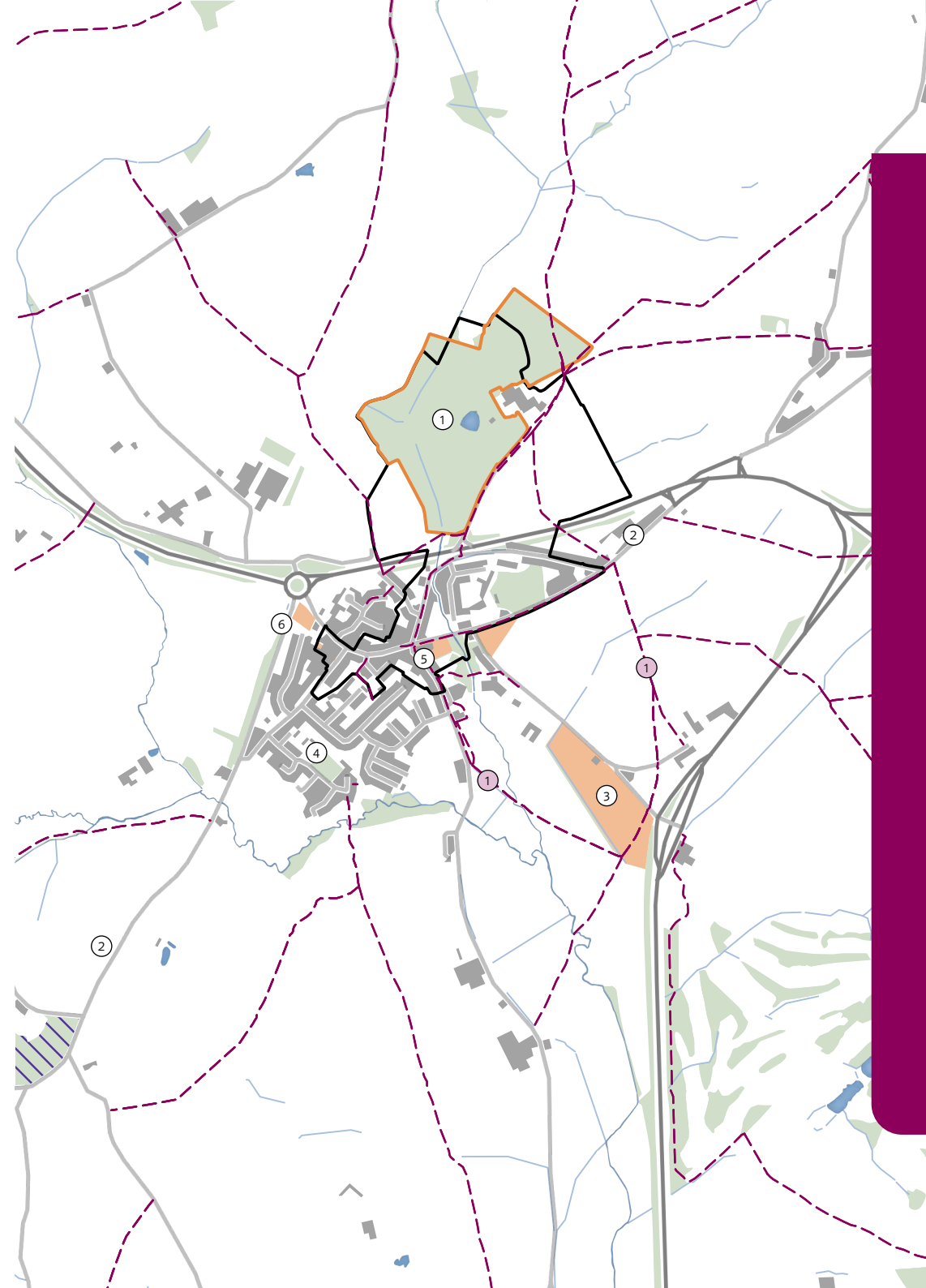
3. Playing Field, Station Road
4. Play Space on Prince Charles Road/Hoel Y Tywysog Siarl
5. The Church of St Cadoc
6. Allotments between Usk Road and High Street

### Promoted Routes

2. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 423

### GI Opportunities

- ① Green Infrastructure Opportunities - see text for details



## 4.8 Penperlleni

### GI Assets

4.8.1 The existing GI assets that provide the GI network in and around Penperlleni are shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.8**).

4.8.2 Penperlleni is a secondary settlement in the west of Monmouthshire, surrounded by farmland and woodland. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal lies approximately 0.5km to the west of the settlement.

4.8.3 Other key GI assets include:

- Areas of NRW Public Forest, including Wern Fawr to the north
- Churchyards at St Illtyd, Mamhilad; St Peter's, Goetre and Saron Baptist Church
- Playing Fields

### GI Opportunities

4.7.4 Key opportunities for strengthening the GI network in and around Penperlleni through the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of existing GI assets are also shown on the GI Network Plan (see **Diagram 4.8**). The GI opportunities that would deliver the most significant benefits for people and wildlife are considered to be:

- Ensure hedgerows are sensitively managed and well-connected with the wider hedgerow network and other semi-natural habitat features. (Not mapped)
- Ensure current blocks of semi-natural habitat and protected sites are sensitively managed and their extent increased where appropriate. (Not mapped)
- Ensure ditches are sensitively managed. (Not mapped)
- Increase public access to/provision of natural and semi-natural greenspace in and around the settlement. (Not mapped)
- Management of community spaces by 'friends of', of similar groups



**DIAGRAM 4.8 Penperlleni GI Network Plan**

**GI Assets**

- Natural or Semi-natural Greenspace
- Statutory Biodiversity Designations
- Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation
- Watercourses/Waterbodies
- Historic Parks & Gardens
- Conservation Area
- Public Open Space
- Country Park
- Open Access Land (CRoW Act)
- Public Right of Way

**Statutory Biodiversity Designations**

- 3. River Usk SAC
- 4. River Usk (Lower Usk)/Afon Wysg (Wysg Isaf) SSSI

**Public Open Space**

- 5. The Church of St Illtyd, Mamhilad
- 6. Playing Field/Play Space on Fairfield/Park Y Brain Lane
- 7. Goytre AFC (Football Ground on Plough Road)
- 8. St Peter's Church, Goetre
- 9. Saron Baptist Church, Saron Road

**Other Open Spaces**

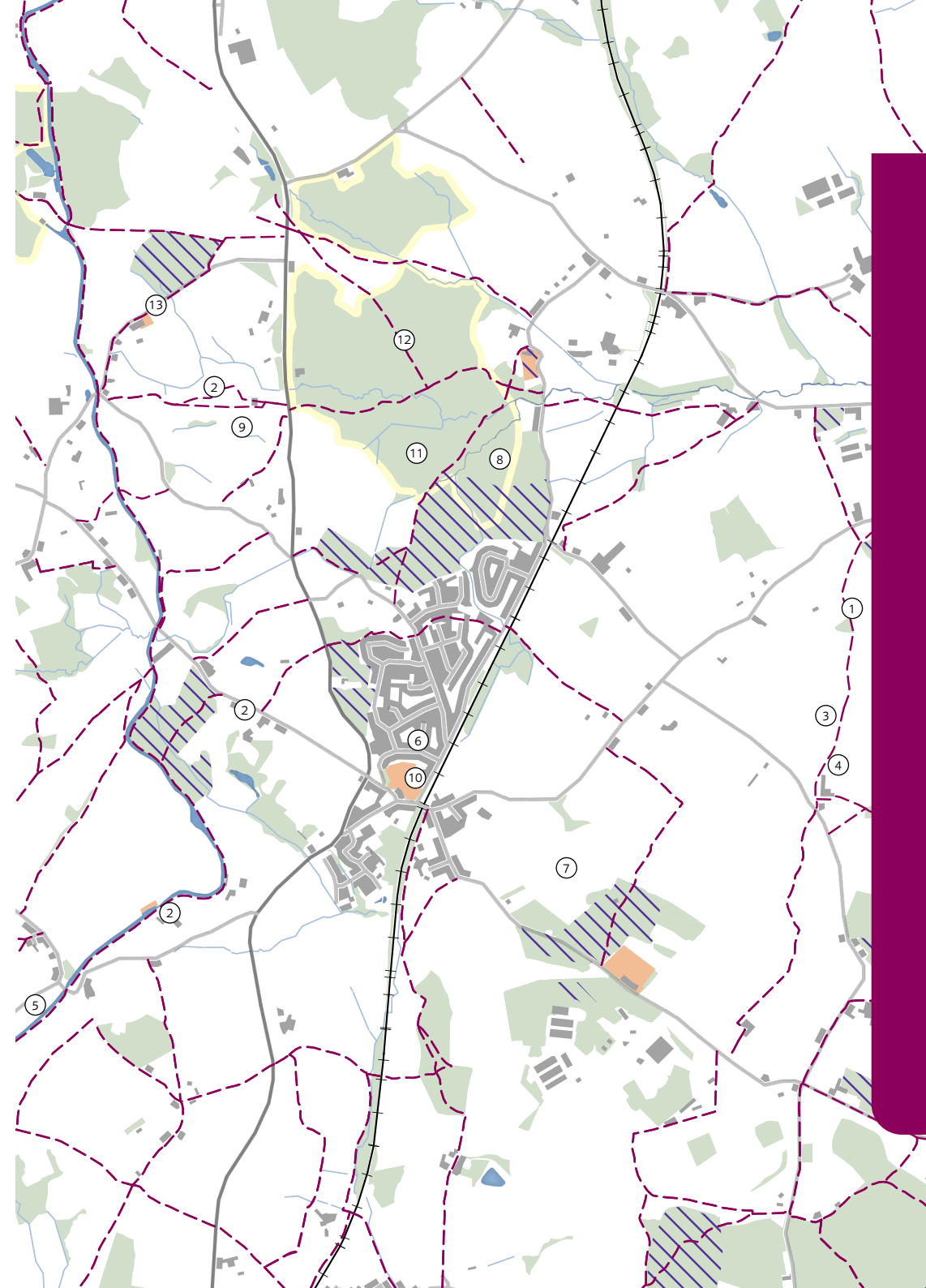
- 10. Goytre Fawr Primary School Playing Fields

**Open Access Land (CRoW Act)**

- 11. Wern Fawr
- 12. Llŵch
- 13. Coed Mawr

**Promoted Routes**

- 1. Usk Valley Walk
- 2. Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 49







# Appendices



**a**

# Acknowledgements



## Contributor acknowledgements

### Monmouthshire County Council Steering Group

Colette Bosley Green Infrastructure Team Leader

Helen Fairbank Gwent Green Grid Collaboration Lead

### CBA Consultant Team

Dominic Watkins Project Director

Harriet Stanford Project Co-ordinator

Kate Goodchild Project Technical Support

### Stakeholders

See **Appendix C** for details

## Image Acknowledgements

### Front cover

IDS.photos

### Key Messages

Alan Richards

### 1.0 Setting the Scene Flysheet

Michael Day

### Page 5 (left to right)

Graham White

Andy Cardiff

### Page 6 (left to right)

Allan Hopkins

Monmouthshire County Council

### 2.0 The GI Approach in Monmouthshire Flysheet

Stuart Wilding

### Page 9

Monmouthshire County Council

### Page 14-15 (clockwise from top left)

Andrea Vail

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La Citta Vita

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### Page 17 (left to right)

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Rene Passet

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David Evans

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AJ Yakstrangler

### Page 21 (clockwise from top left)

Peter Randall-Cook

Chris Andrews

Matt Squirrel

### 3.0 Embedding GI into Development Flysheet

Alan Richards

### Page 26

Paolo Margari

### Page 27

Linda Yarrow

### 4.0 Settlement Green Infrastructure Networks Flysheet

Google

### Page 40 (clockwise from top left)

Gavin-S

Sitye3

Pip Rolls

David Elliott

### Page 44 (clockwise from top)

Muffinn

Andrew H

Siaron James

### Page 48 (clockwise from top left)

Steve Slater

Daniel Torrejon Martinez

Ed Webster

### Page 52 (clockwise from top left)

Jaggery

Ruth Sharville

Jaggery

Chris Andrews

### Page 60 (left to right)

Jaggery

Philip Halling

### Page 62 (left to right)

Philip Pankhurst

Ruth Sharville

### Page 64 (left to right)

Colin Madge

Maigheach-gheal

### Appendices Flysheet

Mike Erskine

### Page 125

Robin Drayton

### Page 129

Andrew Bennett

### Page 132

Jaggery

### Page 135

A person with some photos

### Page 138

Graham Cole

### Back cover

IDS.photos

**b**

**GIS Database**

## GIS Database

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**Notes:**

The digital data used in this study represents currently available datasets.

The datasets have not been modified or enhanced, and their accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

Datasets sourced from Natural England/Historic England have been used to enable identification of cross-border GI assets.

C

# Stakeholder Consultation Record

### **Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Review**

Internal stakeholders within Monmouthshire County Council were consulted to inform the review of Volume 1 (Strategic Framework) and Volume 2 (Delivery Plan) of the Strategy, in particular the updating of the Action Plan to reflect delivery of GI projects over the last 5 years.

## MONMOUTHSHIRE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

### STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP NOTE

#### Workshop 1

18<sup>th</sup> June 2018, County Hall, Usk

#### Attendees

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Colette Bosley    | Monmouthshire CC - Principal Green Infrastructure and Landscape Officer |
| Craig O'Connor    | Monmouthshire CC - Development Management                               |
| Hazel Clatworthy  | Monmouthshire CC - Policy and Performance                               |
| Jill Edge         | Monmouthshire CC - Planning Policy                                      |
| Judith Langdon    | Monmouthshire CC - Community and Partnerships                           |
| Kate Stinchcombe  | Monmouthshire CC - Senior Biodiversity Officer                          |
| Mark Davies       | Monmouthshire CC - Highways   |
| Matthew Gatehouse | Monmouthshire CC - Head of Policy and Performance                       |
| Matthew Lewis     | Monmouthshire CC - GI & Countryside Manager                             |
| Mike Moran        | Monmouthshire CC - GI & Countryside (Play & Recreation)                 |
| Nick Keyse        | Monmouthshire CC - Estates  |
| Nicola Edwards    | Monmouthshire CC - Food and Tourism Manager                             |
| Nigel Leaworthy   | Monmouthshire CC - Head of Grounds Maintenance                          |
| Ruth Rourke       | Monmouthshire CC - PROW Team Leader                                     |
| Sharran Lloyd     | Monmouthshire CC - Community and Partnerships                           |
| Richard Barter    | Monmouthshire Housing Association                                       |
| Scott Thomas      | Monmouthshire Housing Association                                       |
| Andrew Nevill     | Torfaen CBC - Senior Landscape Officer                                  |
| Emily Finney      | Welsh Government - Natural Resource Policy                              |
| Lisa Fiddes       | Welsh Government - Inspector of Historic Areas                          |
| Siobhan Wiltshire | Welsh Government - Planning (Landscape and GI)                          |
| Fen Turner        | Natural Resources Wales - Senior Planner                                |
| Tim Wroblewski    | TACP (on behalf of Caerphilly CC)                                       |
| Dominic Watkins   | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |
| Bill Wadsworth    | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |
| Harriet Stanford  | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |

#### Purpose of Workshop 1

To engage stakeholder in identifying local strategic priorities for potential investment in Green Infrastructure.

#### Stakeholder Feedback

##### Discussion Group A (Facilitated by DW/HS)

- Landscape-scale projects:
  - Living Levels
  - RECS – Renewable Energy and Community Schemes
  - Wye Valley AONB
  - Flood Management and Habitat Creation/Natural Flood Risk Management
- The public value their landscape, countryside and green spaces in Monmouthshire
- Wellbeing and access to greenspace:
  - This needs to be wider than literal access
  - People who could most benefit are often missing out
  - Facilitate access to green spaces close to home rather than travelling to facilities further afield – there is a lack of public transport
- Habitat fragmentation
- What is the approach to connectivity?
- How does the GI Strategy link to other Strategies and Acts – for example the Active Travel Act and the Play Strategy?
- Public Rights of Way:
  - Need to be more functional with links to internal areas of settlements
  - What is the legibility of the connections
  - How useable are they? What state of maintenance
  - Shirenewton example – has good links to schools
  - Connections between where people live and work
  - Health walks – being addressed in the ROWIP. These facilitate GPs to be able to prescribe walks, and help GP referral walking groups
  - Healthy walking schemes and groups (eg. Raglan)
  - Promotion of these is important
  - Routes need to be easy to use and attractive
- Place-making agenda
- How to encourage people to be a part of maintenance etc – expand beyond the current demographic
- Air quality – using GI to mitigate
- Land management:
  - Biodiversity – managing MCC land for function
  - County farms – forward plans
  - Management of public sector land across the region
  - Engaging with the management of land beyond that usually managed for biodiversity/flood management etc. that is within public ownership (MCC/NRW etc)
- Pollinators need to be a priority – there are challenges in keeping the pollinators agenda in current thinking
- Living levels – integrate with current projects
- Wye Catchment Partnership – there are projects/advice etc going on within the English part of the AONB
- Natural flood risk management in the Brecon Beacons
- Raise awareness of management costs when embedding GI into new development – costs need to be sensible for tenants
- Education – in schools and elsewhere
- Breadth of user groups
- Brexit needs to be considered – including the impact of agriculture and sustainable land management. Local connections in the agricultural community. Welsh government consultation currently underway?
- Destination development plan – access to the countryside is part of the key offer
- Social Justice Strategy – access to greenspace
- MCC Corporate Plan
- AONB Management Plan – review – about to go into next cycle

**Discussion Group B (Facilitated by BW/CB)**

- Historic Theme:
  - Connectivity/links between historic assets
  - Links within settlements between greenspaces
- Wellbeing (Wellbeing Plan/Corporate Strategy):
  - Green/blue corridors for active travel
  - Ease of navigation of active travel
  - Food growing/healthy eating
  - Allotments
  - Local markets – delivering back to people
  - Mental health wellbeing
  - Health Impact Assessments
  - Promotion of access to GI - getting info to people to use assets
  - Availability of GIS info for local communities
  - Data Rationalisation
- Landscape-scale connectivity:
  - Needs and opportunities analysis for global response
  - Biodiversity and ecosystem services to underpin GI
  - Working at scale for resilience
- Ecosystem Services:
  - Flood risk in rural and urban centres
  - Farming – MCC landholding use for flood risk and control
  - Access – guiding people to high [NOx] without compensation
  - Monocropping
  - No hinterland
  - Ecosystem services analysis in terms of what GI assets can provide via, for example, management.
- Access:
  - Safe cycle routes
  - Additional access to GI
- Future Proofing:
  - Removal of toll = increased traffic/increased settlement, etc.
- Incentivising:
  - Packages/presentation to landowners
  - Online presence/info
  - Not just about best practice
  - Partnership working
- Tourism:
  - Destinations and interpretation of GI Assets/Value
  - Big/Inspiring Projects
  - Communication routes/access
  - Minimising impact
- Valuation:
  - Non-monetary valuation
  - Monetary valuation of GI to demonstrate value of GI investment
- Adaptability/Flexibility

**Workshop 2**

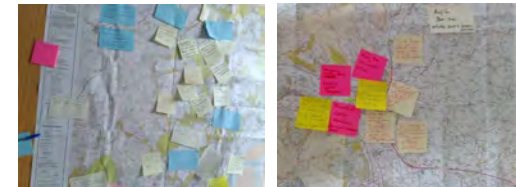
19<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Shire Hall, Monmouth

**Attendees**

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Colette Bosley      | Monmouthshire CC - Principal Green Infrastructure and Landscape Officer |
| Jill Edge           | Monmouthshire CC – Planning Policy                                      |
| Judith Langdon      | Monmouthshire CC – Policy and Communications                            |
| Kate Stinchcombe    | Monmouthshire CC – Senior Biodiversity Officer                          |
| Mark Cleaver        | Monmouthshire CC – Grounds  |
| Matthew Lewis       | Monmouthshire CC – Countryside Manager                                  |
| Ruth Rourke         | Monmouthshire CC – PRoW Team Leader                                     |
| <br>                |   |
| Cllr Ann Webb       | Monmouthshire CC  |
| Cllr R.G. Roden     | Monmouthshire CC  |
| Cllr Tony Easson    | Monmouthshire CC  |
| <br>                |   |
| Cllr Tony Konieczny | Abergavenny TC  |
| <br>                |   |
| Cllr Brian Counsell | Caerwent CC   |
| <br>                |   |
| Cllr Dave Evans     | Caldicot TC   |
| <br>                |   |
| Peter Cloke         | Natural Resources Wales   |
| <br>                |   |
| Andrew Blake        | Wye Valley AONB   |
| <br>                |   |
| Neville Hart        | Gwent Wildlife Trust  |
| <br>                |   |
| Nicola Bradbear     | Bee Friendly Monmouthshire  |
| <br>                |   |
| Steph Tyler         | Monmouthshire Meadows   |
| <br>                |   |
| Dominic Watkins     | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |
| Bill Wadsworth      | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |
| Harriet Stanford    | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |

**Purpose of Workshop 2**

To engage stakeholders in identifying potential Green Infrastructure projects in and around the key settlements through an opportunity mapping exercise (as illustrated by extracts below).





**Workshop 2**  
 19<sup>th</sup> June 2018, Shire Hall, Monmouth

**Attendees**

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Colette Bosley      | Monmouthshire CC - Principal Green Infrastructure and Landscape Officer |
| Jill Edge           | Monmouthshire CC – Planning Policy                                      |
| Judith Langdon      | Monmouthshire CC – Policy and Communications                            |
| Kate Stinchcombe    | Monmouthshire CC – Senior Biodiversity Officer                          |
| Mark Cleaver        | Monmouthshire CC – Grounds  |
| Matthew Lewis       | Monmouthshire CC – Countryside Manager                                  |
| Ruth Rourke         | Monmouthshire CC – PRoW Team Leader                                     |
|                     |   |
| Cllr Ann Webb       | Monmouthshire CC  |
| Cllr R.G. Roden     | Monmouthshire CC  |
| Cllr Tony Easson    | Monmouthshire CC  |
|                     |   |
| Cllr Tony Konieczny | Abergavenny TC  |
|                     |   |
| Cllr Brian Counsell | Caerwent CC   |
|                     |   |
| Cllr Dave Evans     | Caldicot TC   |
|                     |   |
| Peter Cloke         | Natural Resources Wales   |
|                     |   |
| Andrew Blake        | Wye Valley AONB   |
|                     |   |
| Neville Hart        | Gwent Wildlife Trust  |
|                     |   |
| Nicola Bradbear     | Bee Friendly Monmouthshire  |
|                     |   |
| Steph Tyler         | Monmouthshire Meadows   |
|                     |   |
| Dominic Watkins     | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |
| Bill Wadsworth      | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |
| Harriet Stanford    | Chris Blandford Associates (Facilitators)                               |

**Purpose of Workshop 2**

To engage stakeholders in identifying potential Green Infrastructure projects in and around the key settlements through an opportunity mapping exercise (as illustrated by extracts below).





**Stakeholder Feedback**

|  |
|--|
| <b>Abergavenny</b>   |
| Wye Usk Foundation - 1yr project with farmers to improve banks/soil erosion and identify sites for habitat improvement   |
| Abergavenny Community Orchard  |
| Incredible Edible Abergavenny  |
| Mardy Park Environmental Group   |
| Gavenny Project - Castle Meadows. Confluence of Gavenny and Usk. Bank Management/Clearance. Management of Water Meadows. NRW, MCC, ATC. Volunteers - Friends of Castle Meadows. Abergavenny Civic Society                            |
| Gavenny Project - Swan Meadow. East bank side could be developed as a wild flower meadow. Some habitat improvement undertaken by MCC   |
| Gavenny Project - Podcast. <a href="http://www.countryfile.com/podcast/wildlife-wildlife-stories/wade-welsh-river-search-wildlife">http://www.countryfile.com/podcast/wildlife-wildlife-stories/wade-welsh-river-search-wildlife</a> |
| KHS/Abergavenny Leisure Centre. 21st Century School Sport and Leisure Provision  |
| Friends of Castle Meadows - education and conservation work  |
| Possible - Introduction of Park Run - weekly 5k walk/run. Free event every Saturday  |
| <b>Caerwent</b>  |
| Limestone influenced habitats around MOD Land - Critical for rare biodiversity. Potential for greater partnership working.   |
| Introduction of Junior Park Run , weekly free event, 2k every Sunday morning   |
| King George Playing Fields Caldicot  |
| <b>Chepstow</b>  |
| Introduction of Park Run. Weekly 5k walk/run. Free event every Saturday morning.   |
| Chepstow School/Leisure centre. 21st Century School Sport and leisure provision.   |
| Piercefield House Circular Walk. Needs improving re-signage and replacing old stiles with KG. Some interpretation on-site would be beneficial for locals/tourists as lots of landscape/biodiversity/heritage                         |



|  |
|--|
| <b>Monmouth</b>  |
| Future project - Kingswood Area - pilot project demonstrating natural flood management techniques and benefits for water quality, flood reduction, biodiversity etc.     |
| Some excellent sites include along the Monnow above Osbaston Forge, within Bridges Centre etc. Management is key. Ditto road verges. Native grassland beats annual beds. |
| Stop mowing some green spaces in Monmouth until August - then cut and remove   |
| Introduction of junior park run - 2k run/walk every Sunday   |
| Introduction of Park Run - 5k weekly run/walk - possible Chippenham Fields.  |
| Erosion on bank of Wye Valley Walk at Monmouth   |
| Cycle corridor south from Monmouth   |
| Preserve Troy Gardens/Old Station/Wildlife/Eco   |
| Community Woodland Claypatch Wyesham   |
| Keep free of building houses [nb - highlight along east side of A466]  |
| Save the Catalpa Tree [in St. James' Square]   |
| Reduce run-off on hills in Osbaston. Planting in field E of Prospect Road - need landowner permission  |
| <b>Penperlleni</b>   |
| Goytre Wharf. NRW Woodland. NRW looking at how new paths for all abilities can be created, currently consulting with users.  |
| <b>Rogiet</b>  |
| NRW Slade Wood. Areas are managed for butterflies. Also management agreement with Gwent Wildlife Trust to look after meadows.  |
| <b>Usk</b>   |
| Incredible Edible Usk  |
| Usk in Bloom   |



| Other Locations  |
|--|
| Buglife Bee-Lines. Includes coast and several corridors  |
| Need to understand difference between desk-top study of rights of way and lived experience. (eg. RoW that are obstructed by nettles, mud, large cattle. etc)   |
| Deer management is key aspect of enhancing the quality of Lower Wye Valley woodlands - hence future support is critical for woodland biodiversity              |
| Connect Wentwood with Chepstow Park Wood (and then on to Wye Valley)   |
| Wentwood - NRW working with Woodland Trust on improving access and reducing anti-social behaviour. Partnership Group including volunteers needs to take place. |
| NRW Chepstow Park Wood. NRW are working with access team to look at how access can be improved.  |
| New Housing Developments - strategy for developers to provide bird boxes (swifts, sparrows etc) built into new estates. New GI for wildlife.                   |
| Nearly all NRW forestry land holding is open access and can be used for informal recreation  |
| Woodland Trust - current PAWS restoration project. GIS. GWT involved.  |
| GI and NFM on Wye tributaries Tintern to Penallt   |
| Leasing county farms to conservation groups  |
| Managing focussed landscapes for bats ('batscape') approach. Horseshoe bat SAC. 'Landscapes' around roosts.  |
| Improve quality of hedgerow management. Follow practise recommended in Bee Friendly Monmouthshire - Hedgerow Manifesto   |
| More careful mowing of Monmouthshire's verges. Training of contractors and operatives.   |
| Stop mowing! Stop destroying hedgerows! These are crucial wildlife corridors and enhance the environment for everyone.   |
| Stop glyphosate soaking every kerbside.  |
| Avoid herbicide use in Monmouth and elsewhere  |
| Veteran, ancient and future veteran trees need nurturing (and incentivising management/care)   |
| SMS funded heathland restoration project pending stage 2 application (last lowland heathland around Trellech)  |
| Connecting special wildlife sites and orchards, Monmouthshire meadows sites and tributaries and corridors throughout AONB                                      |
| Drystone walls are key habitats and corridors  |
| Flood plain restoration - reversion to grassland   |
| Green Infrastructure Management Plans on countryside and 'attractions' sites   |
| GWT - Over 400 LWS across Gwent. Owners supported, landowner days, GIS map collated.   |
| Nature isn't neat. Pilot town to be decided. RDP - Pollinator Project  |



|  |
|--|
| Potential to increase recreation and biodiversity/tourism in Wye Valley AONB area - issues with maintenance of county unclassified roads/users |
|--|

|   |
|---|
| Bread and cheese walk in bad state of repair. Private land. Rare landscape/plants |
|---|

d

# Green Infrastructure Assessment





**d1**

# Green Infrastructure Assets

### Natural and semi-natural greenspaces

Natural and semi-natural greenspaces (see **Diagram D1.1**) encompass a broad range of habitat types (see **Diagram D1.2**) that can be found both within (see **Diagram D1.3**) and outside designated wildlife sites, including:

- woodland & scrub
- grassland, heath and moor
- wetlands
- open/running water
- coast

In addition to supporting a range of habitats for wildlife, these natural and semi-natural greenspaces can also, where appropriate, provide managed access for informal recreation (such as walking and bird watching at Fiddler's Elbow and Cleddon Bog nature reserves and the surrounding undesignated or ancient woodlands, which are partially accessible).

Grasslands are concentrated in the northwest of the county, predominantly associated with the uplands, though there are scattered pockets elsewhere. Heath is also concentrated in the uplands in the northwest of the county. Monmouthshire has a high concentration of woodlands and watercourses scattered across the county, but with a particular concentration of woodlands in the Wye Valley and south of the county, and with a distinctive concentration of small watercourses in the Gwent Levels.

Information on the current condition of many of the designated sites is limited, however management plans for the European Sites demonstrate that a number of the sites are in unfavourable condition, and the Monmouthshire Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (2017) states that 'the extent and quality of habitats in the County is largely reducing'.

DIAGRAM D1.1 Natural and Semi-Natural Greenspaces

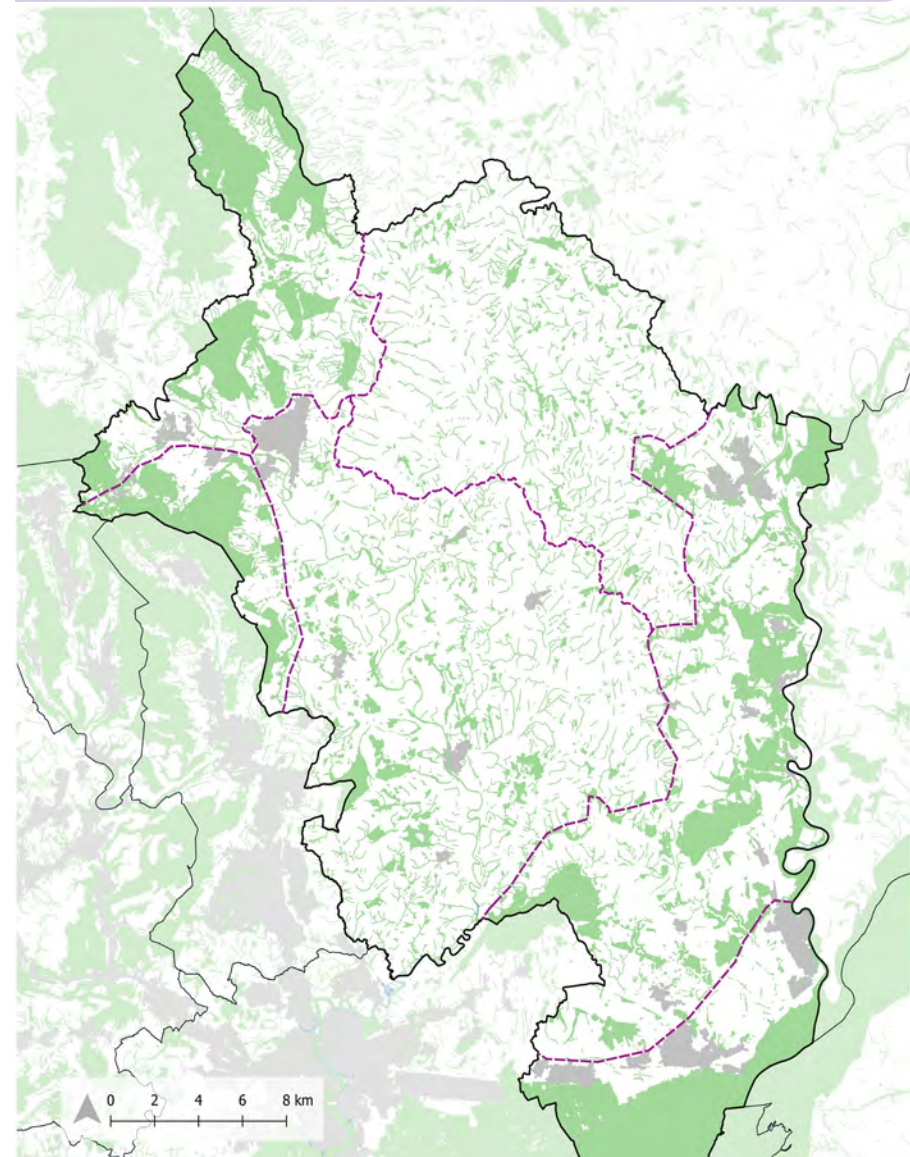




DIAGRAM D1.2 Habitats

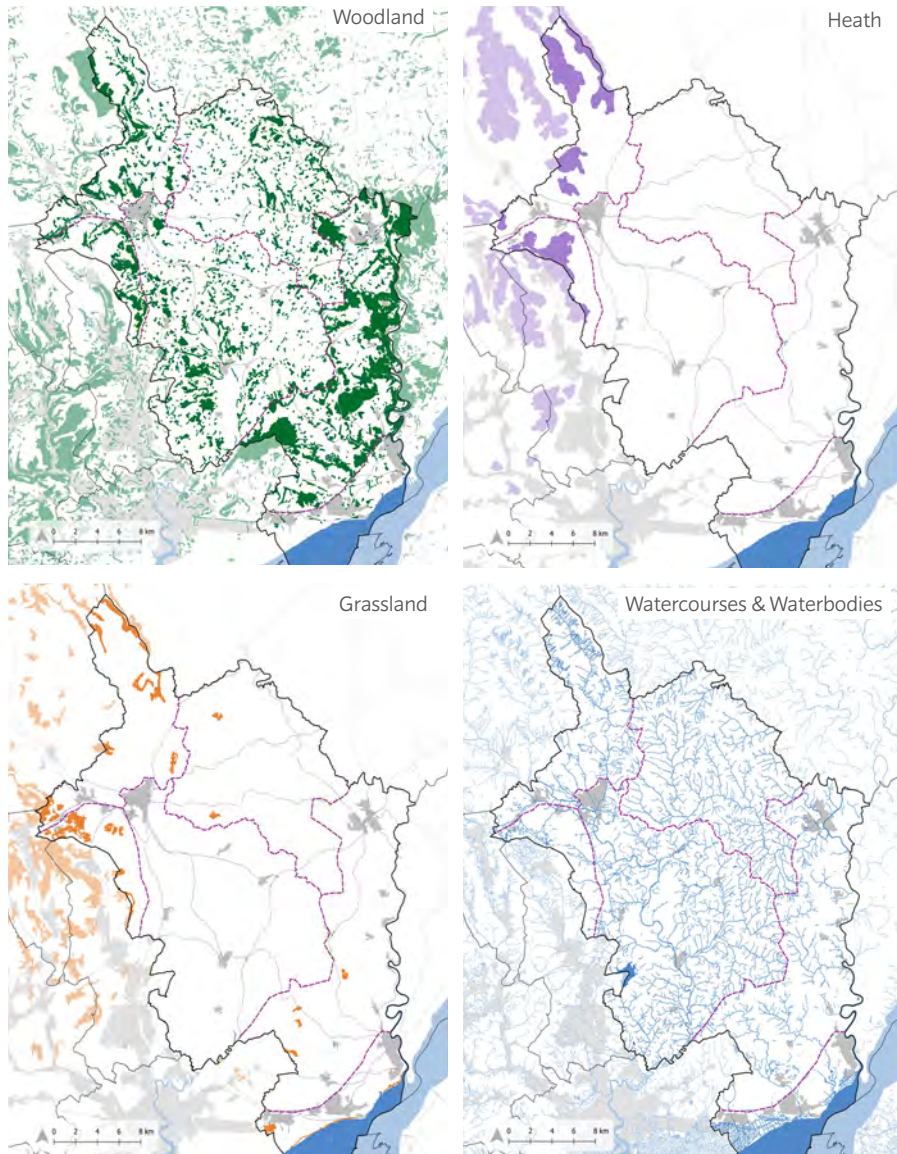
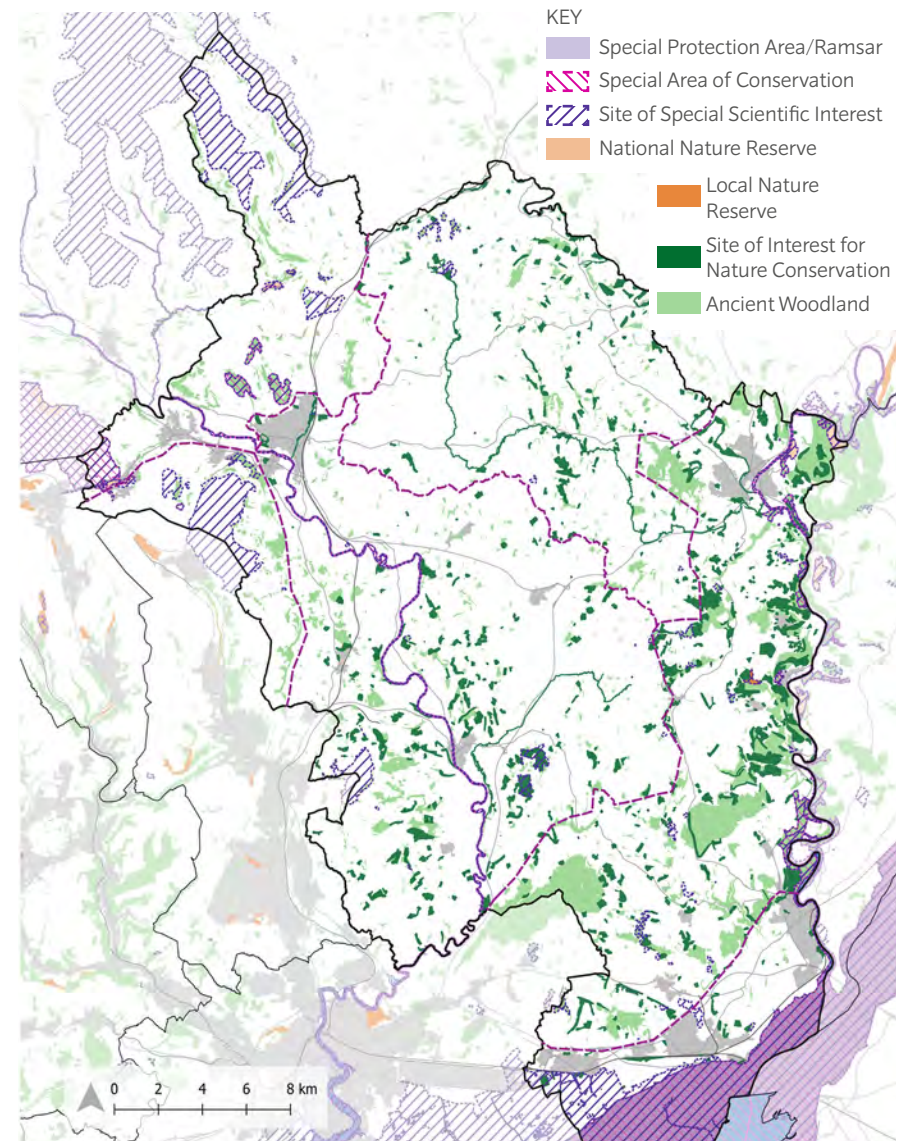


DIAGRAM D1.3 Biodiversity Designations



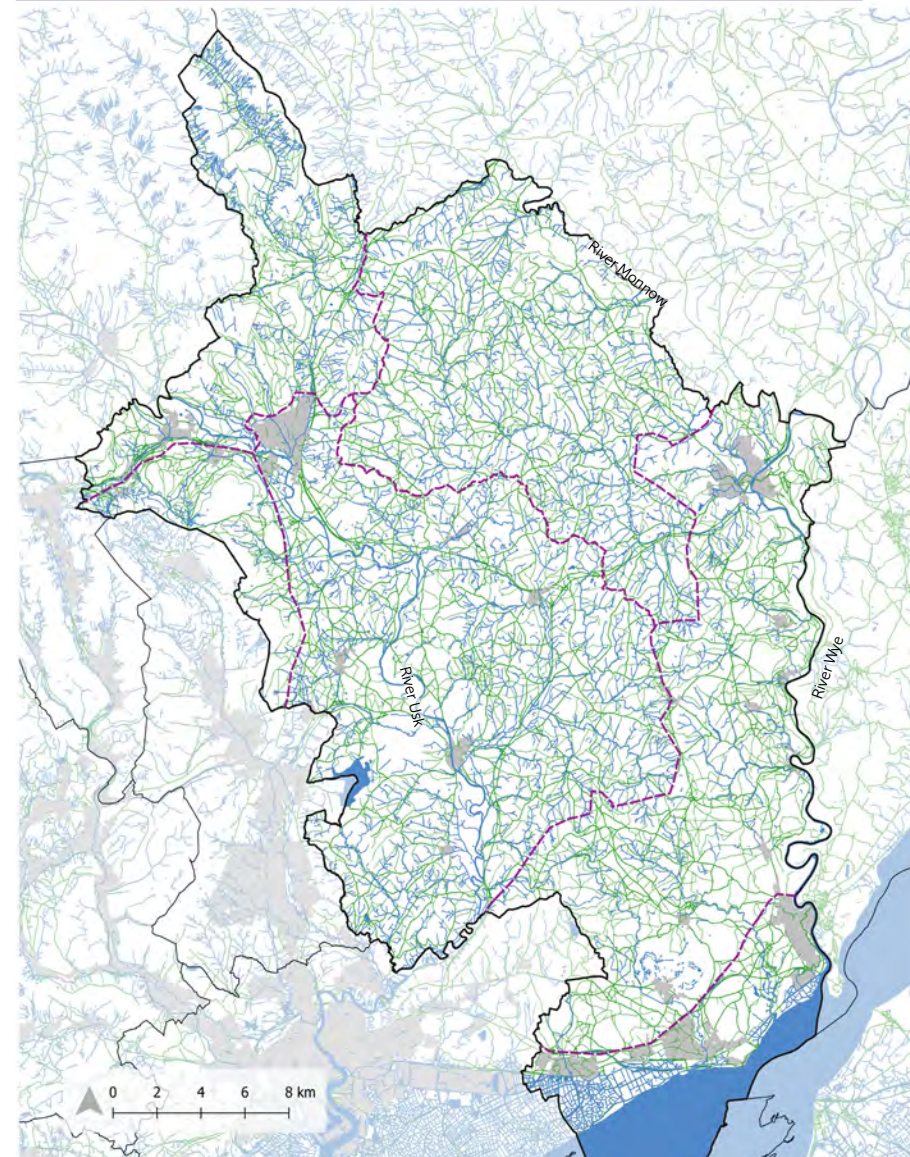


### Green and blue corridors

Linear landscape features encompassing semi-natural and natural terrestrial and aquatic habitats (see **Diagram D1.4**). In addition to function in supporting wildlife dispersal, corridors also provide opportunities for walking, cycling and other outdoor recreation activities. Within Monmouthshire, significant green and blue corridors include:

- The larger Rivers **Usk**, **Wye**, and **Monnow** (important green/blue corridors incorporating public access in some places such as the Usk and Wye Valley Walks)
- Smaller watercourses including the River Trothy, Nedern Brook, Olway Brook and Mill Reen.
- The ditch and reen network on the Gwent Levels (important green/blue corridors incorporating public access in some places)
- The Severn Estuary (an important marine blue corridor for migration of fish and birds).
- The sea wall along the Severn Estuary (an important green corridor for plant communities and pollinators, incorporating the Wales Coast Path for much of its length)
- Historic green lanes and byways
- Highway and railway verges between settlements (important green corridors)

DIAGRAM D1.4 Green and Blue Corridors



**Productive landscapes (farmland, woodlands and allotments)**

Farmland, orchards and allotments can contribute to local food production and landscape character. Monmouthshire is well wooded, particularly through the Wye Valley in the east and across to Wentwood in the southwest. Scattered small woodlands are also a feature across the farmland that makes up much of the central part of the county.

Farmland (see **Diagram D1.5**) includes both commercial farming businesses and small holdings, consisting of a predominantly pastoral farming landscape with pockets of arable land. The highest quality, and thus most productive agricultural land is found in the south of the county, in the Gwent Levels and in pockets across Central Monmouthshire – South. The poorest quality farmland is found in the uplands, and is usually grazed by sheep where it is used for farming.

| Zone                                    | % of Zone Grade 1 or 2 |
|---|------------------------|
| A: Gwent Levels                         | 17%                    |
| B: Wye Valley & Wentwood                | 27%                    |
| C: Central Monmouthshire - South        | 41%                    |
| D: Central Monmouthshire – North        | 46%                    |
| E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains | 8%                     |
| F: Eastern South Wales Valleys          | 1%                     |
| <b>Monmouthshire</b>                    | <b>31%</b>             |

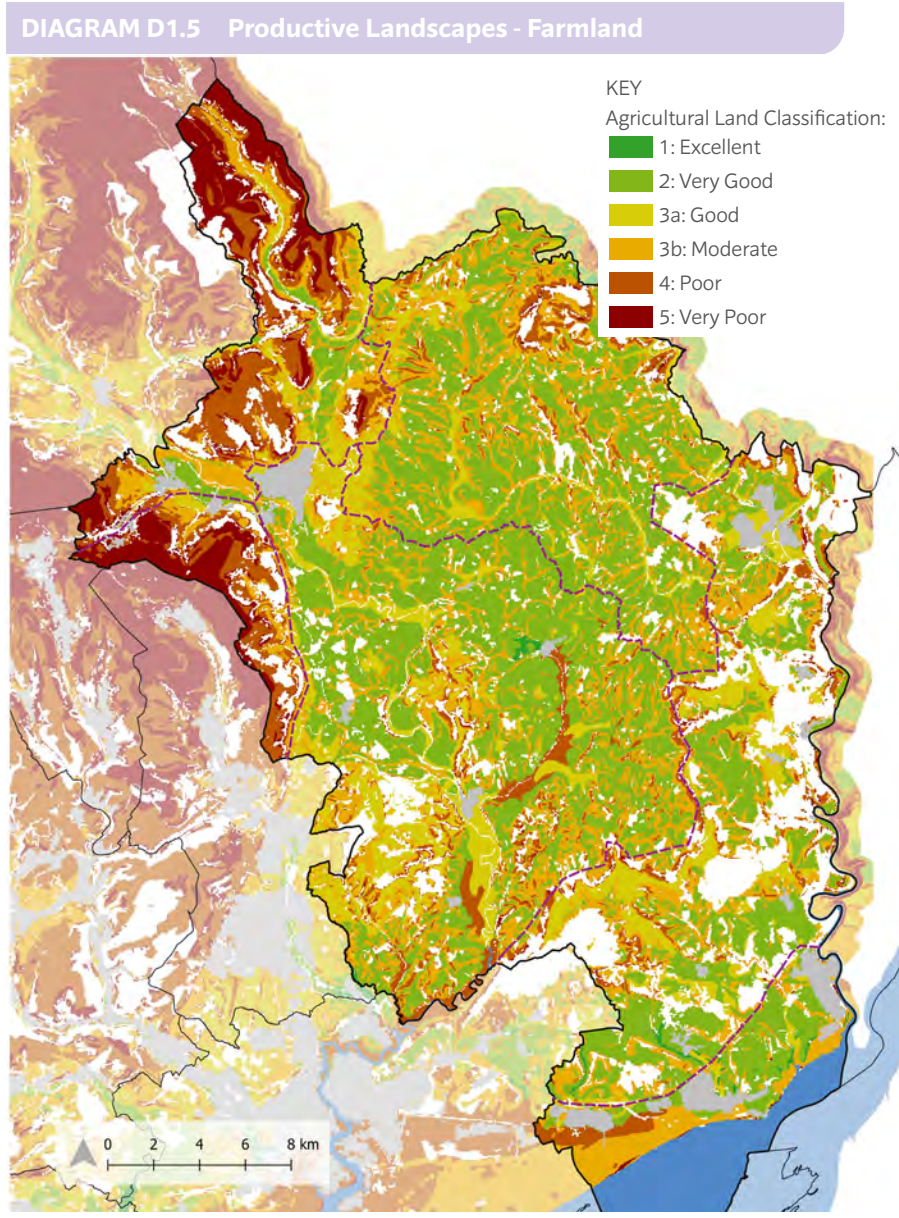
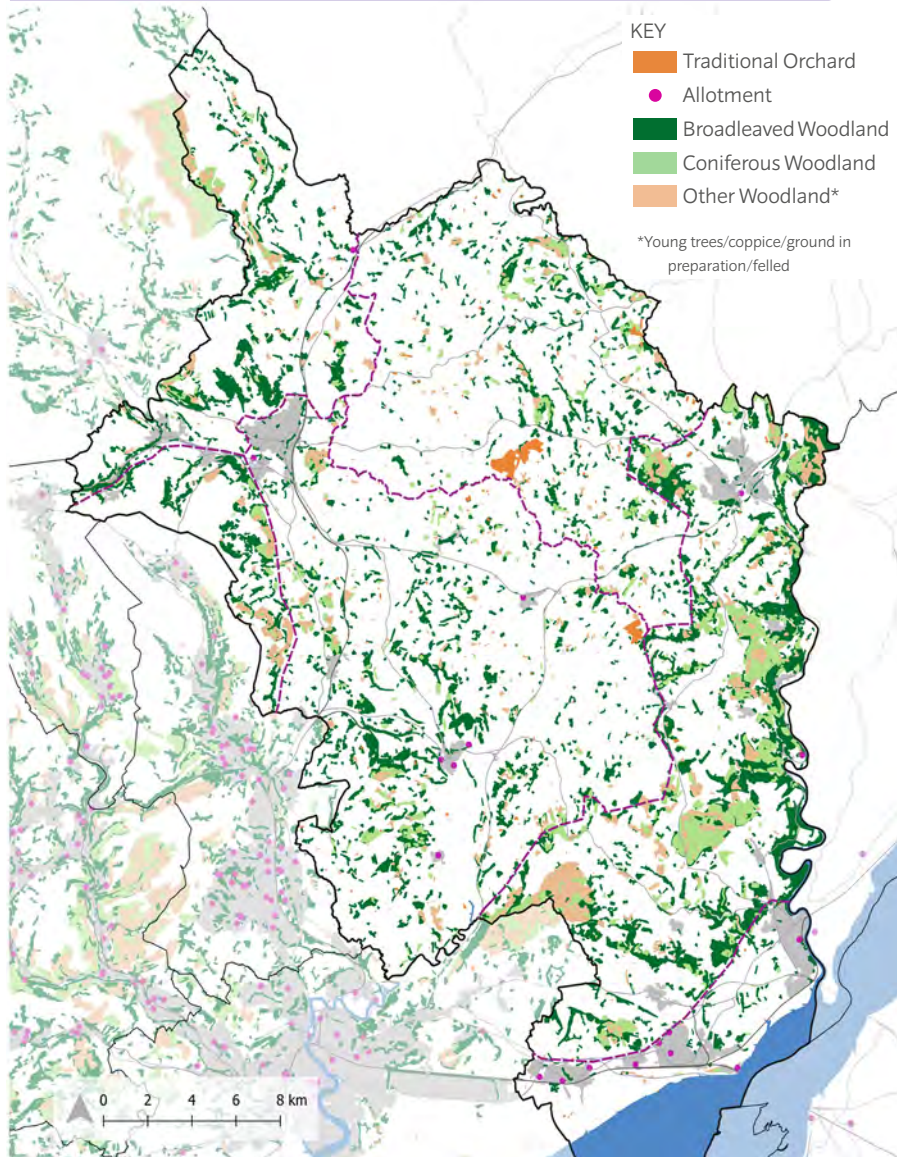




DIAGRAM D1.6 Productive Landscapes - Woodland & Allotments



Monmouthshire is a heavily wooded county (see **Diagram D1.6**), particularly through the Wye Valley and in the south of the Usk Catchment. Large areas of this woodland in the county are also accessible, such as in the Wye Valley and Wentwood, where 3,384 Ha of a total 6,540 Ha are accessible.

Historically, orchards were a distinctive feature of the landscape found alongside farms, and in the south, orchards on the Gwent Levels produced their own specific apple and pear varieties. However, the end of cider making locally resulted in the loss of orchards, and in the Monmouthshire area of the Levels they are now limited to a few sites in the vicinity of Magor on the Caldicot Level. Elsewhere in the county, there are small scattered areas of traditional orchard remaining, with larger areas to the southeast of Llantilio Crosenny and southeast of Raglan. There are some small areas of allotments around the larger settlements.

| Zone                                    | Woodland (% of Zone)   | NRW Public Forest (Accessible) | Allotments |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| A: Gwent Levels                         | 199 Ha (3%)            | 25 Ha                          | 9          |
| B: Wye Valley & Wentwood                | 6,540 Ha (32%)         | 3,384 Ha                       | 2          |
| C: Central Monmouthshire - South        | 2,695 Ha (10%)         | 85 Ha                          | 6          |
| D: Central Monmouthshire – North        | 1,640 Ha (9%)          | 12 Ha                          | 0          |
| E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains | 1,623 Ha (15%)         | 308 Ha                         | 1          |
| F: Eastern South Wales Valleys          | 770 Ha (21%)           | 160 Ha                         | 0          |
| <b>Monmouthshire</b>                    | <b>13,467 Ha (15%)</b> | <b>3,974 Ha</b>                | <b>18</b>  |

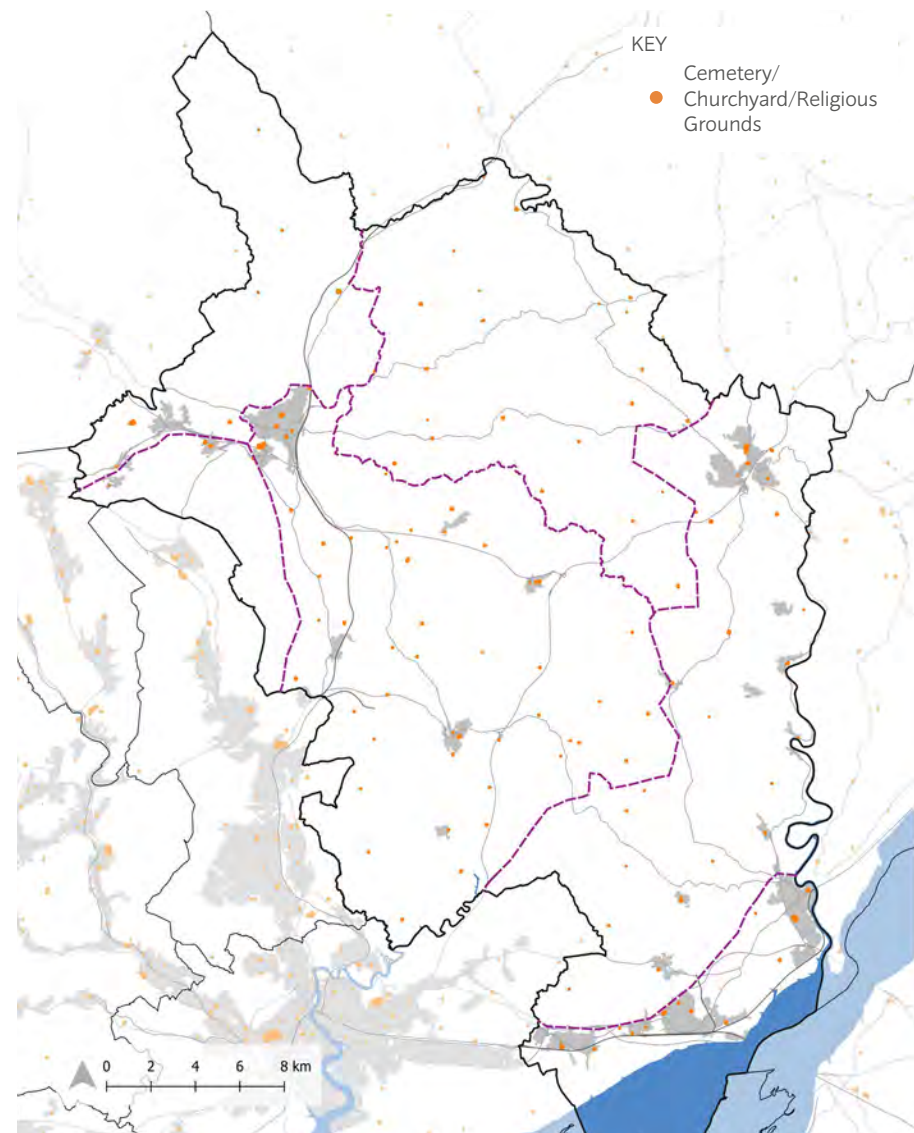
### Cemeteries and churchyards

In addition to providing important habitats for wildlife, cemeteries and churchyards (see **Diagram D1.7**) can also provide opportunities for quiet reflection and spiritual enrichment that contribute to people’s well-being. Examples in Monmouthshire include urban cemeteries (such as Osbaston Cemetery in Monmouth), churchyards associated with small rural parish churches (such as St Teilo’s Church, Llanarth, and St. Nicholas Church, Trellech) and cemeteries and churchyards on the edge of urban areas, such as Dewstow Road Cemetery on the northern side of Caldicot.

| Zone                                    | Religious Grounds and Cemeteries* |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| A: Gwent Levels                         | 14                                |
| B: Wye Valley & Wentwood                | 28                                |
| C: Central Monmouthshire - South        | 53                                |
| D: Central Monmouthshire – North        | 25                                |
| E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains | 10                                |
| F: Eastern South Wales Valleys          | 4                                 |
| <b>Monmouthshire</b>                    | <b>134</b>                        |

\*Nb - numbers taken from Ordnance Survey Greenspace data. Diagram D1.7 includes both Ordnance Survey Greenspace data, and data from the Monmouthshire Open Space Study, 2008

DIAGRAM D1.7 Cemeteries and Churchyards



**Parks and gardens**

Public parks and gardens (see **Diagram D1.8**) provide opportunities for informal recreation that can contribute to people’s health and well-being, and also provide habitats for wildlife. There are few urban parks in the county, including Bailey Park in Abergavenny, and larger Country Parks include Caldicot Castle Country Park and Clytha Park near Abergavenny.

| Zone                                    | Parks and Gardens |
|---|-------------------|
| A: Gwent Levels                         | 2                 |
| B: Wye Valley & Wentwood                | 4                 |
| C: Central Monmouthshire - South        | 7                 |
| D: Central Monmouthshire – North        | 0                 |
| E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains | 1                 |
| F: Eastern South Wales Valleys          | 0                 |
| <b>Monmouthshire</b>                    | <b>14</b>         |

\*Nb - numbers taken from Ordnance Survey Greenspace data. Diagram D1.8 includes both Ordnance Survey Greenspace data, and data from the Monmouthshire Open Space Study, 2008

**DIAGRAM D1.8 Parks and Gardens**





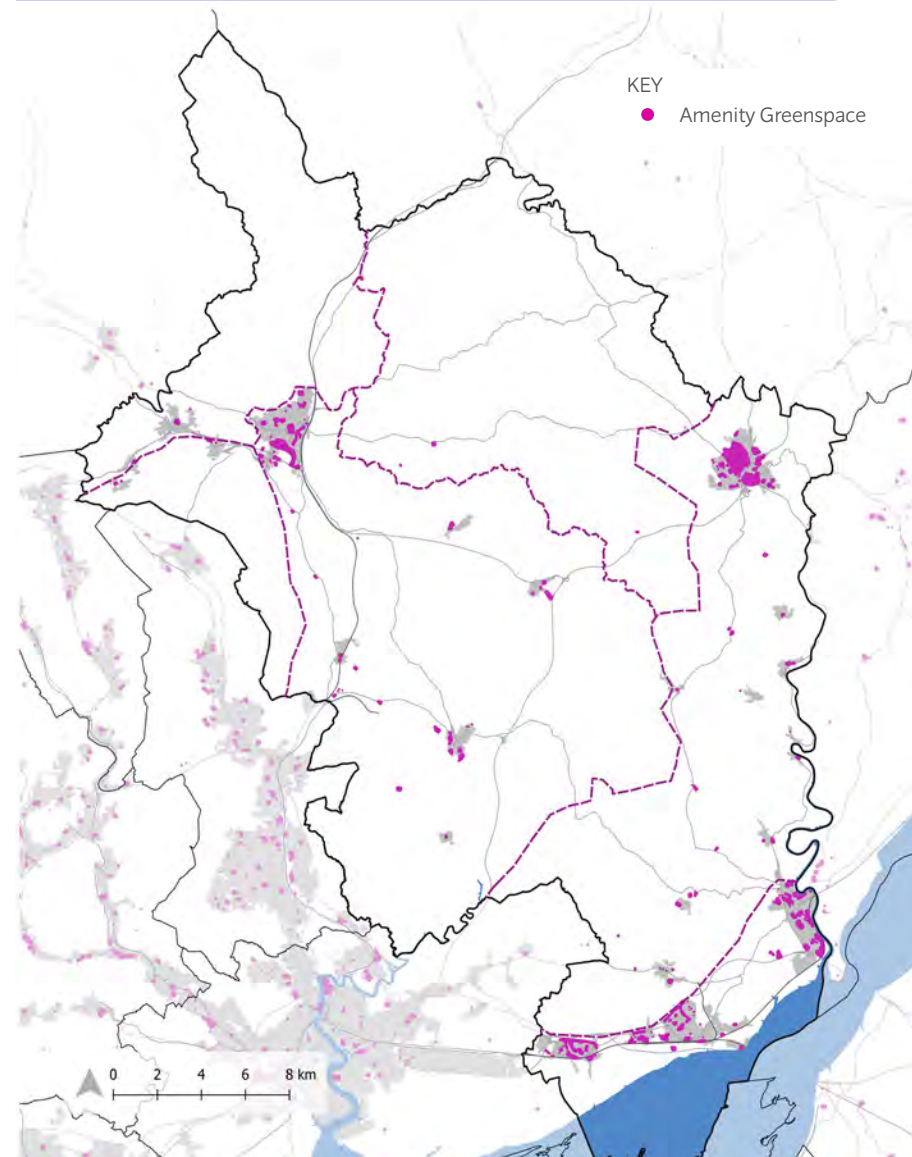
### Amenity greenspaces

Amenity greenspaces (see **Diagram D1.9**) predominantly provide opportunities for formal outdoor sports and recreation that contribute to people’s health and well-being. Examples within the study area include formal amenity greenspaces associated with sports facilities (such as The Island Recreation Ground in Usk), and a range of more informal amenity greenspaces and play spaces in urban areas such as Stuart Avenue Open Space in Chepstow, and Tudor Road Open Space in Monmouth.

| Zone                                    | Sports Playing Field* | Play Space* |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|
| A: Gwent Levels                         | 19                    | 49          |
| B: Wye Valley & Wentwood                | 15                    | 35          |
| C: Central Monmouthshire - South        | 19                    | 35          |
| D: Central Monmouthshire – North        | 2                     | 3           |
| E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains | 3                     | 4           |
| F: Eastern South Wales Valleys          | 2                     | 4           |
| <b>Monmouthshire</b>                    | <b>59</b>             | <b>130</b>  |

\*Nb - numbers taken from Ordnance Survey Greenspace data. Diagram D1.9 includes both Ordnance Survey Greenspace data, and data from the Monmouthshire Open Space Study, 2008

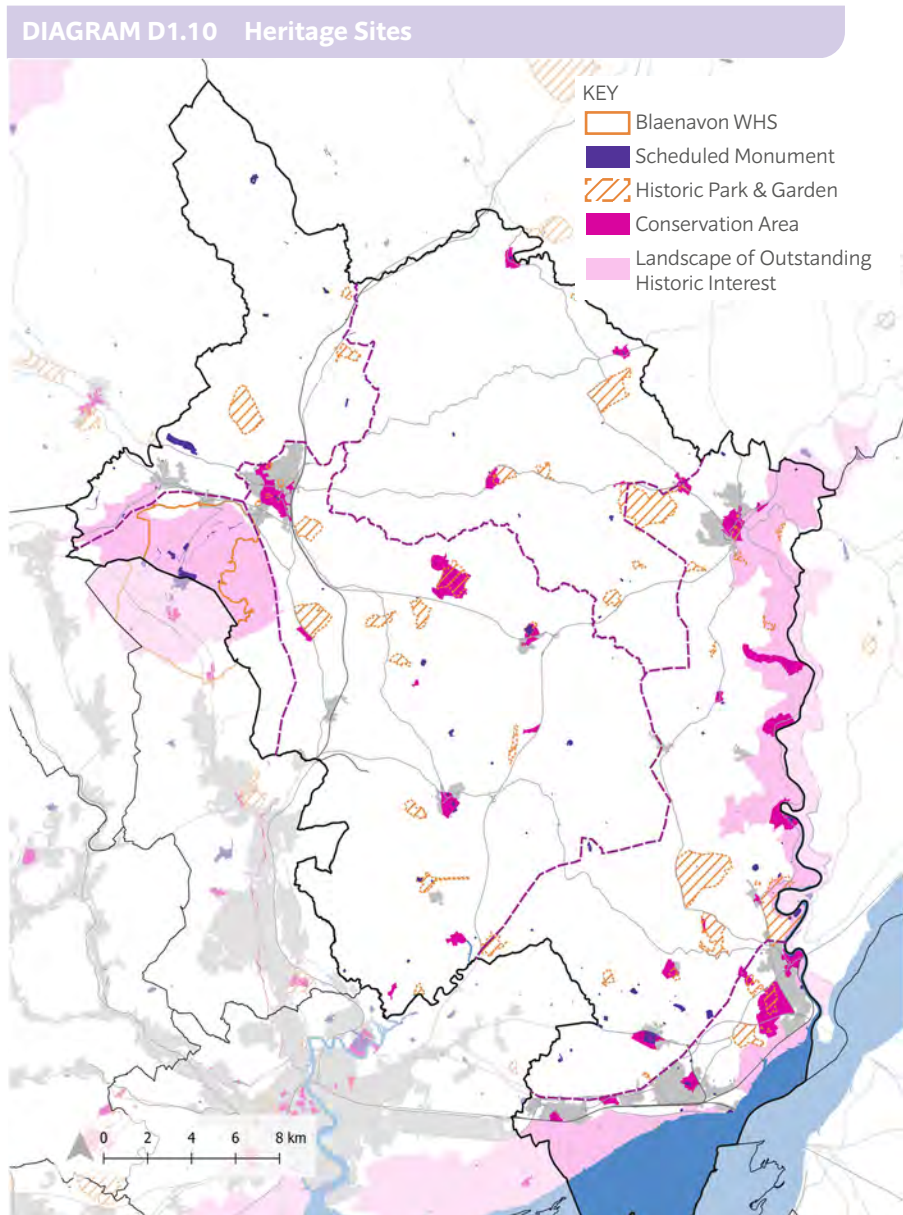
DIAGRAM D1.9 Amenity Greenspace



### Heritage Sites

Heritage sites (see **Diagram D1.10**) can provide opportunities for informal recreation and intellectual access to history that contributes to people’s health and well-being. Examples in Monmouthshire include scheduled monuments such as Caldicot Castle and Tintern Abbey, as well as historic landscapes associated with the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site, the Gwent Levels, and the Wye Valley.

| Zone                                    | Scheduled Monuments | Historic Parks & Gardens | Conservation Areas | Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest |
|---|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|--|
| A: Gwent Levels                         | 27                  | 6                        | 6                  | 3599 Ha                                    |
| B: Wye Valley & Wentwood                | 68                  | 18                       | 13                 | 3694 Ha                                    |
| C: Central Monmouthshire - South        | 44                  | 17                       | 10                 | 29 Ha                                      |
| D: Central Monmouthshire – North        | 24                  | 8                        | 5                  | 0 Ha                                       |
| E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains | 23                  | 3                        | -                  | 311 Ha                                     |
| F: Eastern South Wales Valleys          | 15                  | -                        | -                  | 2419 Ha                                    |
| <b>Monmouthshire</b>                    | <b>201</b>          | <b>52</b>                | <b>34</b>          | <b>10,053 Ha</b>                           |



**d2**

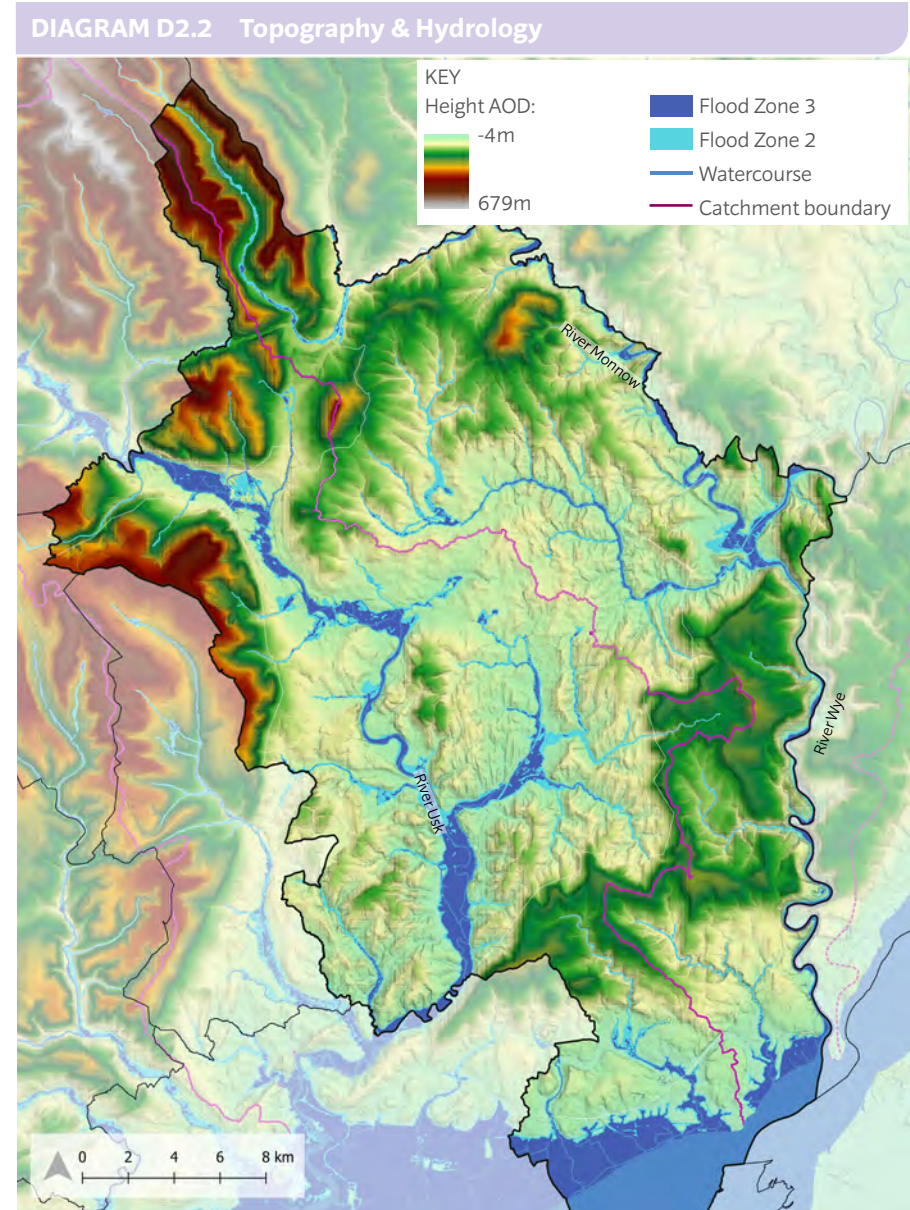
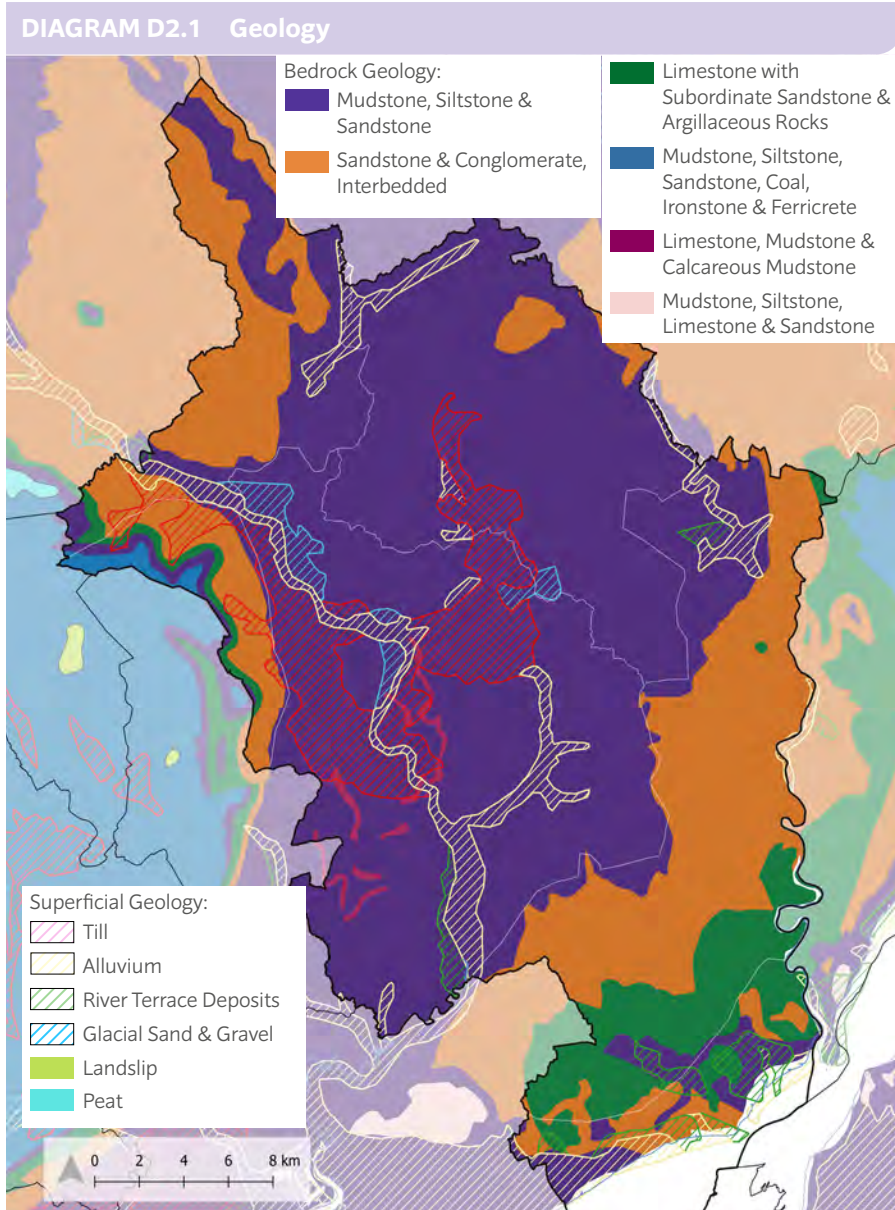
# **Ecosystem Services**



## General

The GI assets identified in **Appendix D1** provide a wide range of benefits to society derived from the functions or ecosystems services that they provide.

A summary of the ecosystem services provided by the GI assets in each zone within Monmouthshire is described below. These form the basis for identifying needs and opportunities for the GI Strategy.



## Zone A: Gwent Levels

### Supporting Services

Supporting services are those which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services. This includes the relationship between underlying geology and soil character, soil formation and the processes of plant growth, including pollination.

**Geology and soil character:** The northern edge of the Gwent Levels is marked by the boundary between the slightly higher ground in the north, underlain by sedimentary rocks mainly of Lower Old Red sandstone age, and the lower, flatter land on reclaimed estuarine alluvium to the south (see **Diagram D2.1**). The estuarine alluvium is mainly a bluegrey, silty mud up to 13 metres thick that gives rise to heavy textured, poorly drained clayey soils. There are also some localised areas of peaty soils, such as south of Magor. These most commonly occur as a layer of peat covered by clayey topsoil, but where the soft black peat extends to the surface these areas are particularly wet.

**Soil formation:** In the context of the Gwent Levels, supporting services relate to the exchange of silts and nutrients between the reed system and the agricultural land. This interchange relies heavily on the regulation of water management and cyclical ditch management. The supply and replenishment of nutrients maintains soils, primary production (including agricultural productivity), as well as providing the basis for supporting the nature conservation value of the Gwent Levels.

**Pollination:** by insects also provides a supporting service for primary production to support both agricultural production and nature conservation. However, the serious consequences of significant declines in insect pollinator populations, considered largely to result from the loss of flower-rich habitat, habitat fragmentation and the use of certain pesticides, has been recognised in the government's National Pollinator Strategy<sup>1</sup> and the creation of initiatives such as B-Lines<sup>2</sup> to promote landscape-scale habitat creation to try and reverse the decline in pollinating insects.

1 Defra (November 2014). The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England.

2 <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/b-lines-wales/>

With respect to Monmouthshire as a whole, the green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in SE Wales<sup>3</sup> identifies those areas where pollinators directly contribute to supporting human life and food, notably where there is the high demand in urban areas for pollinators for fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments. The action plan also points out that there is only a relatively small percentage of arable land that comprises crops such as oilseed rape which need pollinators, and this is concentrated in the lowland arable areas of Monmouthshire. Other areas such as, for example, nature reserves, have indirect requirements for pollinators.

The Action Plan provides a framework for identifying appropriate areas and types of land where interventions to support pollinators could be delivered, and provides a variety of recommendations and desired outcomes for measuring success. In terms of broad measures of success, the Action Plan reports a success rate of approximately 90% for the use of yellow rattle as a means of reducing the vigour of grass growth (thereby allowing a more floristically rich sward to develop) and it also identifies the inter-relationship between the County's 'cut and collect' grass mowing regime for maintaining grasslands (e.g. roadside verges), which is a key management tool in maintaining floral diversity, and the generation of biomass for energy production.

3 TACP (2015). Green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in South-east Wales. Report to Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils December 2015. TACP UK Ltd.

## Provisioning Services

Provisioning services relate to the supply of goods such as freshwater, food and fuel.

**Water availability:** The Gwent Levels is largely a rain-fed system, with relatively limited inputs from river discharge. Water availability therefore largely relies on the relationship between rainfall inputs and the active management of water levels through the control structures that moderate flows and discharges. The abundance of water is key to maintaining the character and function of the area. The main abstractions are for public water supply; other abstractions are for industry and agriculture.

**Food provision:** The area primarily produces beef, milk and other dairy products, with some sheep flocks and arable production. A small number of traditional orchards of apples and pears are present. The extent to which the Gwent Levels remains a productive landscape is variable and is influenced by farm size, landholdings purchased for non-farming reasons, diversification of business activities that may include wind and solar power generation, holiday lets or similar and the separation between pasture on the Levels and the holdings that operate them.

All of these factors influence productivity and, importantly, how separate land parcels are managed in a landscape that requires a coherent approach to, for example, land drainage.

**Fuel and fibre:** There is limited potential for some biomass production from willow pollards, which has a longstanding tradition throughout the area. However, the volume of biomass that could realistically be harvested may restrict the size of any associated power plant. As an alternative the biomass could form one stream of supply to an existing plant, but the value of this would need to be considered in relation to the embedded energy costs associated with transportation. Other sources of renewable energy generation on the Gwent Levels include wind turbines and solar arrays. However, both these sources

of power give rise to other considerations that include land take, drainage management and visual impacts associated with the introduction of prominent structures into the landscape.

The Renewable Energy Community Scheme (RECS)<sup>4</sup> completed a feasibility study in 2017 to consider the inter-relationship between small-scale 'green' energy generation and natural floodplain management to control surface water flooding. The feasibility study has been undertaken around Monmouth, but its key findings are intended to be applicable county-wide. The aims of the project were to:

- Identify acreage suitable for woodland planting which, with sustainable management provide fuel for community heating schemes, the contribution these plantings would make to the reduction of surface water run-off, any land management that would assist in additional reduction of surface water run-off;
- Advise on the contribution to the reduction of surface water run-off from community orchards; and,
- Identify suitable watercourses for the installation of micro hydro schemes with the direct benefit of providing power for local community use.

The Feasibility Study has also created a RECS 'Effectiveness Calculator', which estimates the reduction in run-off and flashiness of a run-off event that could result from a particular action or intervention, based on a suite of site specific data.

<sup>4</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects/projects/recs-renewable-energy-community-schemes>



## Regulating Services

Regulating services maintain natural systems that include water quality flooding, soil erosion and coastal processes.

**Climate regulation:** There is limited carbon storage in the Gwent Levels predominantly due to the limited areas of peat soils. The majority of the Levels comprise loams derived from reclaimed estuarine alluvium.

**Regulating water quality:** The Gwent Levels, and the rivers that drain through it, fall within the Severn River Basin District. The 2022 River Basin Management Plan<sup>5</sup> identifies a range of factors that are detrimental to water quality in the River Basin District, such as over-abstraction, chemical inputs, plastics, pollution from agriculture and rural areas, pollution from towns, cities and transport, physical modifications, and invasive non-native species (eg. Japanese knotweed can increase riverbank erosion and may reduce the capacity of river channels, possibly leading to increased flooding).

Point source pollution from development and industry is also an influence on water quality. The water quality within the ditch and reen system of the Gwent Levels is considered to reflect the low flow and significant organic loading associated with the setting. During the summer months, natural organic degradation results in significant nutrient enrichment. The high productivity and low/absent flow also result in low levels of dissolved oxygen and elevated Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) compared with other rivers. The regulation of water quality on the Levels is therefore largely determined by the control of urban and agricultural diffuse pollution and the management of the reen system.

**Regulating water (flooding):** The Gwent Levels are largely a rain fed system and although the rivers have been artificially modified to increase flows to the sea, they have only a limited influence on water levels (see **Diagram D2.2**). Nevertheless, Local Plan<sup>6</sup> policies (e.g. Policy SD3) provide specific requirements

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales>

<sup>6</sup> Monmouthshire County Council Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2021 (Adopted February 2014)

for surface water drainage relating to the management of surface water runoff from development, to manage flood risk from the landward side. The seawall, in combination with the maintenance of the ditch and reen network, is the primary means for regulating flows and preventing flooding to communities including Caldicot, Magor & Undy, Rogiet and Mathern, maintaining agricultural productivity and protecting the ecological interest of the Gwent Levels.

**Regulating soil erosion and quality:** Intensive and repeated cultivation and arable cropping increase the stress placed upon soils, and may lead to a reduction in soil quality and condition. Similarly, inappropriate livestock management can lead to poaching and erosion of surface vegetation and soils. Consequently, some areas suffer from damaged soil structure, notably compaction and impeded drainage which accelerates run-off or prolongs periods of standing water, which can impact vegetation and lead to soil exposures, which can increase sedimentation of watercourses.

**Regulating coastal processes:** The Gwent Levels within Monmouthshire comprise c.17.75km<sup>2</sup> of reclaimed estuarine alluvium, forming a coastal plain up to 3.7km wide, fringing the northern side of the Severn Estuary. The Levels have been totally hand-crafted by humans, created through the enclosing and draining of tidal saltmarshes, and are still dominated today by the need to manage water. Without the sea wall, the Gwent Levels would be frequently inundated by the sea. The alignment of the sea defences is dynamic and has historically moved since Roman times. Climate change is likely to increase tidal flood risk; this will be exacerbated in low-lying areas where increased sea levels inhibit pumped land drainage. Tidal inundation within coastal areas could result in saline intrusion (although this is currently not an issue) into freshwater bodies, most of which are recognised for their nature conservation interest in SSSI designations and depend on fresh water. Coastal processes throughout the estuary are dynamic and of considerable importance, both within the estuary and to the low-lying adjacent land. The current policy for flood defences along the coast bordering the Gwent Levels is to 'hold the line'<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> The Shoreline Management Plan: Part B (Main Report) – Policy Statements. Report prepared by Atkins on behalf of Severn Estuary Coastal Group (2017)



## Cultural Services

Cultural services provide direct, non-material, benefits to human society, addressing a range of social and cultural needs that encompass a sense of place and inspiration, a sense of history, tranquillity and recreation.

**Sense of place and inspiration:** The Gwent Levels landscape is perceived by different people in different ways. Some can find it featureless and intimidating, whereas others find it exhilarating and inspiring, valuing its strong sense of tranquillity and history, distinctive lifestyles and opportunities for recreation. The key qualities identified by the Landscape Character Assessment that give the Gwent Levels its unique sense of place are:

- The low horizon, level topography and broad skies, often augmented by dramatic cloudscapes, sunsets and sunrises.
- Strong linearity and distinctive geometric pattern of enclosure, drainage, watercourses, lanes and historic route-ways.
- Distinctive drainage pattern of canalised rivers, drains, reens and ditches, accentuated by lines of pollard willows.
- The sea wall, and banks carrying roads/droeways between farmsteads and villages, often form the only upstanding landscape features in some places.
- The large assemblages of waterfowl and waders that visit the coastal mudflats and wetlands, and the vast flocks -murmurations - of starlings gathering on the Levels in autumn and winter forming mesmeric and dramatic aerial displays.
- A sparse settlement pattern related to subtle topographical variations, the simple and utilitarian style of buildings often reflecting the functional nature of the landscape.

- In summer, a verdant and fertile landscape with lush vegetation across meadows and along watercourses; this contrasts with the often wild, bleak and sense of remoteness experienced on the Levels in winter.
- Vibrant cities and towns around the edge of the Levels reinforce its strong sense of tranquillity, remoteness and wildness away from human occupation in many places.

**Sense of history:** The Gwent Levels is a Historic Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest. It is a landscape of extraordinarily diverse environmental and archaeological potential. Although they are an important wetland resource in their own right, archaeologically the area contains a variety of landscapes of different dates, and nowhere else is it possible to make the period distinctions so easily. Having been reclaimed from the sea at various times during the historic period, the present land surface is a supreme example of a 'hand-crafted' landscape, artificially created and entirely the work of humans, preserving clear evidence of distinctive patterns of settlement, enclosure and drainage systems. However, because of recurrent phases of inundation and alluviation, there is also a proven, and quite possibly vast, potential for extensive, buried, waterlogged, archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits belonging to the earlier landscapes, which extend beyond the seawalls and banks into the intertidal mudflats. The Levels are therefore a uniquely rich archaeological and historical resource in Wales, and certainly of international importance and significance.

**Leisure and Recreation:** The Gwent Levels landscape provides a range of outdoor leisure and recreation activities for local communities and visitors, in particular walking, cycling and bird-watching. Facilities and destinations include promoted recreational routes such as the Wales Coast Path; country parks (for example Caldicot Castle); nature reserves including Magor Marsh and Great Traston Meadows as well as a number of villages including Magor/Undy. Angling, particularly off the seawall, is a common activity. Wildfowling is also active on the Levels.

## Zone B: Wye Valley and Wentwood

### Supporting Services

Supporting services are those which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services. This includes the relationship between underlying geology and soil character, soil formation and the processes of plant growth, including pollination.

**Geology and soil character:** The bedrock geology of the Wye Valley and Wentwood GI Zone is dominated by rocks ranging from Lower Devonian to Lower Carboniferous and record sedimentation in both terrestrial and marine environments (see **Diagram D2.1**). The Carboniferous sequence comprises a range of different lithologies including shale, sandstone, oolitic limestone and dolomite. Between Monmouth and Chepstow, the modern River Wye occupies a spectacular, deeply-incised meandering gorge. A remarkable feature of the reach is that although the gorge is entrenched to a depth of up to 200m, its meandering course displays no relationship to the geological structure, although it is likely that incision was enhanced by joint systems in the Palaeozoic bedrock<sup>8</sup>.

**Soil formation:** The agricultural land of the Wye Valley and Wentwood GI Zone overlies relatively well draining brown earth soils and, as a consequence, there is a noticeable scarcity of marshy grassland/rush pasture<sup>7</sup>.

**Pollination:** by insects also provides a supporting service for primary production to support both agricultural production and nature conservation. However, the serious consequences of significant declines in insect pollinator populations, considered largely to result from the loss of flower-rich habitat, habitat fragmentation and the use of certain pesticides, has been recognised in the government's National Pollinator Strategy<sup>9</sup> and the creation of initiatives such as B-Lines<sup>10</sup> to promote landscape-scale habitat creation to try and reverse the decline in pollinating insects.

<sup>8</sup> NRW (2014) Wye Valley and Wentwood NLCA (NLCA 32)

<sup>9</sup> Defra (November 2014). The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England.

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/b-lines-wales/>

With respect to Monmouthshire as a whole, the green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in SE Wales<sup>11</sup> identifies those areas where pollinators directly contribute to supporting human life and food, notably where there is the high demand in urban areas for pollinators for fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments. The action plan also points out that there is only a relatively small percentage of arable land that comprises crops such as oilseed rape which need pollinators, and this is concentrated in the lowland arable areas of Monmouthshire. Other areas such as, for example, nature reserves, have indirect requirements for pollinators.

The Action Plan provides a framework for identifying appropriate areas and types of land where interventions to support pollinators could be delivered, and provides a variety of recommendations and desired outcomes for measuring success. In terms of broad measures of success, the Action Plan reports a success rate of approximately 90% for the use of yellow rattle as a means of reducing the vigour of grass growth (thereby allowing a more floristically rich sward to develop) and it also identifies the inter-relationship between the County's 'cut and collect' grass mowing regime for maintaining grasslands (e.g. roadside verges), which is a key management tool in maintaining floral diversity, and the generation of biomass for energy production. With specific reference to the Wye Valley and Wentwood GI Zone, the Action Plan broadly identifies high grassland species diversity along the Wye Valley and urban areas, with lower diversity in the uplands and in the intensive agricultural areas.

<sup>11</sup> TACP (2015). Green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in South-east Wales. Report to Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils December 2015. TACP UK Ltd.

## Provisioning Services

Provisioning services relate to the supply of goods such as freshwater, food and fuel.

**Water availability:** The Wye catchment area comprises the River Wye and a number of substantial tributaries, including the Monnow which runs along the northern boundary of the county. The River Wye is the sixth largest river in the UK, with a total catchment area of 4,171km<sup>2</sup> spanning both England and Wales; approximately 10% of the catchment falls within Monmouthshire. The river is tidal for approximately 23km (14 miles) from the tidal limit at Bigsweir Bridge to Chepstow where it flows into the Severn Estuary. The annual average rainfall across the area varies between 2,200mm in the mountainous headwaters (outside Monmouthshire), to 700mm in the lower catchment. The lower Wye catchment, including Monmouthshire, has slightly permeable geology with groundwater providing a contribution to river flow. The River Wye is known as a 'regulated river'. Water is released from the Elan Valley Reservoirs in Mid-Wales to support public water supply and other abstractions in the lower reaches of the Wye, when flows fall below a certain threshold.

**Food provision:** Away from the Wye gorge, the area is characterised by low-lying, gently rolling farmland with much of the land being dominated by agriculturally improved, livestock grassland together with a significant element of arable farming on more fertile soils.

**Fuel & fibre:** In some parts of the county there is limited potential for some biomass production from willow pollards, particularly along main river courses and within the floodplains. More generally, the wooded character of Monmouthshire in general, and the Wye Valley in particular, also provide opportunities for wood fuel production either through the use of its extensive plantation forestry or as a by-product of other forest industry. However, the volume of biomass that could realistically be harvested may restrict the size of any associated power plant. As an alternative the biomass could form one stream of supply to an existing plant, but the value of this would

need to be considered in relation to the embedded energy costs associated with transportation. Other sources of renewable energy generation in Monmouthshire generally include wind turbines and solar arrays. However, both these sources of power give rise to other considerations that include land take, drainage management and visual impacts associated with the introduction of prominent structures into the landscape.

The Renewable Energy Community Scheme<sup>12</sup> (RECS) completed a feasibility study in 2017 to consider the inter-relationship between small-scale 'green' energy generation and natural floodplain management to control surface water flooding. The feasibility study has been undertaken around Monmouth, but its key findings are intended to be applicable county-wide. The aims of the project were to:

- Identify acreage suitable for woodland planting which, with sustainable management provide fuel for community heating schemes, the contribution these plantings would make to the reduction of surface water run-off, any land management that would assist in additional reduction of surface water run-off;
- Advise on the contribution to the reduction of surface water run-off from community orchards; and,
- Identify suitable watercourses for the installation of micro hydro schemes with the direct benefit of providing power for local community use.

The Feasibility Study has also created a RECS 'Effectiveness Calculator', which estimates the reduction in run-off and flashiness of a run-off event that could result from a particular action or intervention, based on a suite of site specific data.

<sup>12</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects/projects/recs-renewable-energy-community-schemes>

## Regulating Services

Regulating services maintain natural systems that include water quality, flooding, soil erosion and coastal processes.

**Climate regulation:** Climate change is predicted to affect the amount and distribution of rainfall; this has an impact on flows and water levels, drought and flood events. Work carried out in 2002 showed that by 2050 river flows in winter may rise by 10-15% but in the summer and early autumn could reduce by over 50% and as much as 80% in some places. As a consequence, droughts and flood events may become more common. Climate change may affect groundwater recharge. By 2025 it is likely that groundwater recharge will decrease, resulting in decreased dry weather river flows and a general lowering of groundwater levels. This may have impacts on base-flow to rivers and wetlands in dry periods and affect small domestic and agricultural water supplies. Further evidence has identified risks to aquifers and habitats from salt water intrusion<sup>13</sup>.

**Regulating water quality:** The River is predominantly rural in nature; agriculture dominates with arable, dairy and sheep farms on generally sandy silty soils prone to erosion, particularly within its upper reaches.

The 2022 Severn River Basin Management Plan<sup>14</sup> identifies a range of factors that are detrimental to water quality in the River Basin District, such as over-abstraction, chemical inputs, plastics, pollution from agriculture and rural areas, pollution from towns, cities and transport, physical modifications, and invasive non-native species (eg. Japanese knotweed can increase riverbank erosion and may reduce the capacity of river channels, possibly leading to increased flooding).

A variety of management initiatives have been identified to maintain and improve water quality, including:

- Changes to water levels and flows - Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency work together to manage water levels and flows, including working together to licence new and previously exempt surface water and groundwater abstractions, ensuring the demand for water is more sustainable for the future.

<sup>13</sup> The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR): Assessment of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. Technical Report. Natural Resources Wales.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales>

- Invasive non-native species - The Wye and Usk Foundation and Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency are working in partnership to eradicate invasive non-native species on the River Wye. The work also needs to be extended to other cross border catchments, for example the River Monnow. They are also looking to develop joint protocols that reduce the risk of an accidental transfer of invasive non-native species during work on cross border rivers, for example whilst restocking eels.
- Physical modifications - Natural Resources Wales is developing an integrated River Restoration Programme to bring together related work across Wales. The aim is to take a nature-based approach to restore characteristic river habitat for the benefit of hydromorphology, water quality, biodiversity, fisheries and flood regulation.
- Pollution from agriculture and rural areas - Natural Resources Wales and the Environment Agency, with a range of stakeholders and partners, are addressing issues associated with how land and livestock are managed and exercising their pollution control powers to address diffuse pollution.
- Pollution from water industry waste water - Water quality modelling has been carried out for the next period of water company investment by Severn Trent Water and Welsh Water/Dŵr Cymru with input from the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales. Further work is being undertaken to finalise schemes in order to maximise benefits within catchments and further improve discharges from sewage treatment works and combined sewer overflows.

**Regulating water (flooding):** The Wye catchment has a wide variation of fluvial flooding issues ranging from extended periods of elevated levels within the River Wye Valley that affect many communities, flooding from tributaries of the River Wye, flooding from quickly responding catchments and tidal flooding from the Severn Estuary (see **Diagram D2.2**). In addition climate change is likely to increase the pressure on existing locations where surface water/sewer flooding occurs. The greatest threat to the lower catchment is from sea level rise which could increase flood risk significantly in low-lying areas.

Environmental Objectives for the management of flood risk include:

- Restoration of sustainable natural storage of floodwater in the upstream area, in order to offset increasing flood risk from trends including climate change;
- Improving the water environment through flood risk management activities;
- Improving the hydro-morphology of rivers;
- Minimising impacts of flooding on designated sites or areas of environmental interest; and,
- Habitat creation through flood risk management activities.

**Regulating soil erosion and quality:** The soils of best quality and most productive agricultural land are a scarce and finite resource in Wales; accounting for less than 7% of land area. Soil quality has deteriorated across all habitats apart from woodlands where there has been some improvement. The severity and spatial extent of soil erosion has not been directly quantified in Wales. Around 10-15% of grassland fields in (England and) Wales are thought to be affected by severe soil compaction and 50-60% are in moderate condition. No data exists on compaction in grassland and arable land across Wales specifically. Topsoil carbon concentrations are generally stable and there is ongoing recovery from soil acidification. Although a significant decline in soil phosphorus levels has been seen for Improved Land, it remains above the optimum levels in many (44%) agricultural fields. Soil invertebrate (mesofauna) numbers indicate no overall trend. There has been little or no decline in elevated levels of soil contaminants from industry and transport. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 Evidence Report<sup>15</sup> has identified risks to soils from increased seasonal aridity and wetness. Climate change related risks are threatening the many services that soils provide, notably those that relate to soil biota, soil organic matter, and soil erosion and compaction.

**Regulating coastal processes:** The role the River Wye plays in regulating coastal process is addressed in relation to The Gwent Levels.

<sup>15</sup> HM Government UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2022>

## Cultural Services

Cultural services provide direct, non-material, benefits to human society, addressing a range of social and cultural needs that encompass a sense of place and inspiration, a sense of history, tranquillity and recreation.

**Sense of place and inspiration:** In the Wye Valley special qualities identified include 'picturesque, extensive and dramatic views' and 'overall sense of tranquillity, sense of remoteness and naturalness/wildness'. This is an enclosed landscape, covered by the wooded high ground where, in its southern reaches, the River Wye is hidden by high cliffs. The only large settlement within this zone is the town of Monmouth, with its rich historical and cultural associations.

**Sense of history:** The Wye Valley is acknowledged to be one of the most scenically attractive lowland landscapes in Britain, and one of the few lowland Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It is also one of the few remaining areas with comparatively large tracts of ancient broadleaved woodlands, whilst the pastures, hay meadows, hedges and copses of the farmed landscape in and around the valley are also rich natural habitats with historical significance. In 1770, the scenic qualities of the valley inspired the Reverend William Gilpin to write his important treatise on the notion and depiction of landscape as the Picturesque. Along with its artistic associations, the valley also has a rich archaeological legacy, from the prehistoric to the recent past, reflecting its importance as a communication route, a natural and political boundary, and a centre of religious life and of several early industries.

**Leisure and recreation:** The Wye valley is a scenic leisure destination, from Tintern Abbey and the village of Tintern Parva, to Monmouth, including its unique Monnow Bridge. Tintern and Monmouth offer good access to the river. More generally, however, the geology of the Wye Valley and the River Wye itself provide opportunities for leisure activities that include: canoeing, climbing, caving, as well as walking, cycling and horse riding through the area's extensive woodlands, whilst the Wye Valley River Festival provides a focus for the arts and culture. The annual Monmouth Festival provides a focus for the arts and culture.



## Zone C: Central Monmouthshire - South

### Supporting Services

Supporting services are those which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services. This includes the relationship between underlying geology and soil character, soil formation and the processes of plant growth, including pollination.

**Geology and soil character:** The central area between the River Usk and Monmouth is Silurian mudstones and shales surrounded by a large band of earlier, Devonian Old Red Sandstone (see **Diagram D2.1**). Morainic drift and boulder clay give rise to the fertile alluvial deposits that are key to the agricultural productivity in this rural area.

**Soil formation:** Geology has produced mainly well-drained, coarse loamy and sandy soils surrounded by finer silty soils over the shales, silts and sandstones<sup>16</sup>.

**Pollination:** by insects also provides a supporting service for primary production to support both agricultural production and nature conservation. However, the serious consequences of significant declines in insect pollinator populations, considered largely to result from the loss of flower-rich habitat, habitat fragmentation and the use of certain pesticides, has been recognised in the government's National Pollinator Strategy and the creation of initiatives such as B-Lines to promote landscape-scale habitat creation to try and reverse the decline in pollinating insects.

With respect to Monmouthshire as a whole, the green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in SE Wales<sup>17</sup> identifies those areas where pollinators directly contribute to supporting human life and food, notably where there is the high demand in urban areas for pollinators for fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments. The action plan also points out that there is only a relatively small percentage of arable land that comprises crops such as oilseed rape which need pollinators, and this is concentrated in the lowland arable areas of

Monmouthshire. Other areas such as, for example, nature reserves, have indirect requirements for pollinators.

The Action Plan provides a framework for identifying appropriate areas and types of land where interventions to support pollinators could be delivered, and provides a variety of recommendations and desired outcomes for measuring success. In terms of broad measures of success, the Action Plan reports a success rate of approximately 90% for the use of yellow rattle as a means of reducing the vigour of grass growth (thereby allowing a more floristically rich sward to develop) and it also identifies the inter-relationship between the County's 'cut and collect' grass mowing regime for maintaining grasslands (e.g. roadside verges), which is a key management tool in maintaining floral diversity, and the generation of biomass for energy production. With specific reference to the Usk catchment, the Action Plan broadly identifies high grassland species diversity along parts of the Usk floodplain and urban areas, with lower diversity in the uplands and in the intensive agricultural areas. There are also currently bee walk transects in Usk.

<sup>16</sup> NRW (2015) Central Monmouthshire NLCA (NLCA 31)

<sup>17</sup> TACP (2015). Green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in South-east Wales. Report to Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils December 2015. TACP UK Ltd.

## Provisioning Services

Provisioning services relate to the supply of goods such as freshwater, food and fuel.

**Water availability:** The Usk area extends outside the county from the Bannau Brycheiniog in the north to the low-lying agricultural land in the south. It includes the River Usk and its tributaries. The River Usk is approximately 121 km long and the total catchment size 1,169km<sup>2</sup>, with approximately 30% of the catchment falling within Monmouthshire. The climate is mild and wet, receiving an annual average rainfall of 1,700mm in the uplands and 1,100mm in the lowlands (compared with 1,310mm for Wales as a whole). The headwaters and some of its tributaries are modified by dams to create the Usk, Crai, Talybont and Grwyne Fawr reservoirs. At Brecon some of the river's flow is diverted to feed the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal and water from the lower River Usk is pumped to Llandegvedd water storage reservoir <sup>18</sup>.

**Food provision:** Much of the central and southern parts of Monmouthshire are utilised for sheep grazing and dairy farming, with some smaller areas of arable farming on the fertile floodplain where good drainage allows. A small number of traditional orchards are present. In the northwest of the county, higher land, much of which are commons, tends to be sheep grazed, with small scale enclosed sheep and dairy pasture on the lower slopes and valleys. Some localised areas of farmland have been turned over to other uses, including diversification of business activities such as solar or wind power generation. These diversifying factors can influence productivity and, importantly, how separate land parcels are managed in a landscape that requires a coherent approach to, for example, land drainage. Abergavenny maintains a livestock market.

**Fuel & fibre:** In some parts of the county there is limited potential for some biomass production from willow pollards, particularly along main river courses and within the floodplains. The wooded character of Monmouthshire in general may also provide opportunities for wood fuel production as a by-product of

<sup>18</sup> Environment Agency (December 2015). Part 1: Severn River Basin District River Basin Management Plan. On behalf of Defra, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales and Environment Agency.

other forest industry. However, the volume of biomass that could realistically be harvested may restrict the size of any associated power plant. As an alternative the biomass could form one stream of supply to an existing plant, but the value of this would need to be considered in relation to the embedded energy costs associated with transportation. Other sources of renewable energy generation in Monmouthshire include wind turbines and solar arrays (e.g. the solar farm development at Llancayo in the Usk Valley). However, both these sources of power give rise to other considerations that include land take, drainage management and visual impacts associated with the introduction of prominent structures into the landscape.

The Renewable Energy Community Scheme<sup>19</sup> (RECS) completed a feasibility study in 2017 to consider the inter-relationship between small-scale 'green' energy generation and natural floodplain management to control surface water flooding. The feasibility study has been undertaken around Monmouth, but its key findings are intended to be applicable county-wide. The aims of the project were to:

- Identify acreage suitable for woodland planting which, with sustainable management provide fuel for community heating schemes, the contribution these plantings would make to the reduction of surface water run-off, any land management that would assist in additional reduction of surface water run-off;
- Advise on the contribution to the reduction of surface water run-off from community orchards; and,
- Identify suitable watercourses for the installation of micro hydro schemes with the direct benefit of providing power for local community use.

The Feasibility Study has also created a RECS 'Effectiveness Calculator', which estimates the reduction in run-off and flashiness of a run-off event that could result from a particular action or intervention, based on a suite of site specific data.

<sup>19</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects/projects/recs-renewable-energy-community-schemes>

## Regulating Services

Regulating services maintain natural systems that include water quality, flooding, soil erosion and coastal processes.

**Climate regulation:** Climate change is predicted to affect the amount and distribution of rainfall; this has an impact on flows and water levels, drought and flood events. Work carried out in 2002 showed that by 2050 river flows in winter may rise by 10-15% but in the summer and early autumn could reduce by over 50% and as much as 80% in some places. As a consequence, droughts and flood events may become more common. Climate change may affect groundwater recharge. By 2025 it is likely that groundwater recharge will decrease, resulting in decreased dry weather river flows and a general lowering of groundwater levels. This may have impacts on base-flow to rivers and wetlands in dry periods and affect small domestic and agricultural water supplies. Further evidence has identified risks to aquifers and habitats from salt water intrusion.

**Regulating water quality:** Land is predominantly used for agriculture, with sheep farming in the northern and western uplands, and beef, dairy, mixed and arable farming in the lowlands of the south and east. As a result, pollution from rural sources is considered a major threat to the ecological quality of the water environment. There is some limited industry in the major towns. Pollution from sewage and contaminated run-off is a pressure in the urban areas. The 2022 Severn River Basin Management Plan<sup>20</sup> identifies a range of factors that are detrimental to water quality in the River Basin District, such as over-abstraction, chemical inputs, plastics, pollution from agriculture and rural areas, pollution from towns, cities and transport, physical modifications, and invasive non-native species (eg. Japanese knotweed can increase riverbank erosion and may reduce the capacity of river channels, possibly leading to increased flooding).

Local measures<sup>21</sup> include implementing changes to land drainage regimes and structures to restore water levels, removing or modify barriers to fish passage, reducing impacts of regulated flows and abstractions and restoring more natural

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales>

<sup>21</sup> <https://naturalresources.wales/media/3214/usk-management-catchment.pdf>

flow regimes, eradication and/or management of invasive non-native species including biosecurity good practice, such as "CHECKCLEAN-DRY" and Be Plant Wise; and implementing measures such as correct management of slurry, silage, fuel oil, and agricultural chemicals; clean and dirty water separation; nutrient management planning; buffer strips and riparian fencing; cover crops and soil management.

**Regulating water (flooding):** The upper part of the Usk catchment, into the Bannau Brycheiniog, demonstrates a flow regime with rapid rainfall runoff, caused by the steep sided narrow valleys and thin soils underlain by mainly impermeable rock; resulting in the lower reach floodplains becoming inundated during periods of heavy rainfall (see **Diagram D2.2**). The lower Usk tends to be less responsive to rainfall due to the larger catchment area and lowland relief. Objectives to reduce flooding set out in Monmouthshire's Flood Risk Management Plan which relate to the Usk catchment, include:

- Sustainable and Strategic Development Planning requiring proposals to demonstrate that they can be both protected from, and not exacerbate, flood events;
- Improved soils, reduction in soil wash off land and increased soil permeability.
- Water Cycle Strategy to facilitate sustainable development;
- The expectation that future development will incorporate Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDs) into their design to reduce surface water run-off and minimise its contribution to flood risk elsewhere;
- Encouraging sustainable land management practice to reduce surface water runoff and contamination, as well as the adoption of soil management plans to reduce runoff and improve soil permeability;
- Site restoration that focuses on soft, rather than hard, engineering solutions to create semi-natural environments;
- Environmental enhancements and habitat creation initiatives.

**Regulating soil erosion and quality:** The soils of best quality and most productive agricultural land are a scarce and finite resource in Wales; accounting for less than 7% of land area. Soil quality has deteriorated across all habitats apart from woodlands where there has been some improvement. The severity and spatial extent of soil erosion has not been directly quantified in Wales. Around 10-15% of grassland fields in (England and) Wales are thought to be affected by severe soil compaction and 50-60% are in moderate condition. No data exists on compaction in grassland and arable land across Wales specifically. Topsoil carbon concentrations are generally stable and there is ongoing recovery from soil acidification. Although a significant decline in soil phosphorus levels has been seen for Improved Land, it remains above the optimum levels in many (44%) agricultural fields. Soil invertebrate (mesofauna) numbers indicate no overall trend. There has been little or no decline in elevated levels of soil contaminants from industry and transport. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 Evidence Report<sup>22</sup> has identified risks to soils from increased seasonal aridity and wetness. Climate change related risks are threatening the many services that soils provide, notably those that relate to soil biota, soil organic matter, and soil erosion and compaction.

<sup>22</sup> HM Government UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2022>

## Cultural Services

Cultural services provide direct, non-material, benefits to human society, addressing a range of social and cultural needs that encompass a sense of place and inspiration, a sense of history, tranquillity and recreation.

**Sense of place and inspiration:** The Usk catchment, as it winds its way between the foothills of the Bannau Brycheiniog and Newport and the Severn estuary, passes through wooded rolling countryside comprising predominantly pastoral farmland and small village settlements. Overall, this part of Monmouthshire is fairly tranquil, with large areas categorised in the 2009 tranquil areas assessment as 'undisturbed' (countryside usually free of any substantial disturbance in daytime). The only large settlements within this zone are the towns of Abergavenny and Usk, with their rich historical and cultural associations.

**Sense of history:** This large area has a varied distribution of archaeological sites and monuments dating back to the prehistoric period. Strategically located Iron Age hillforts on summit tops overlook the Usk valley and accentuate the topography. The richness of the agricultural land led to successive 'colonisations' by a sequence of Roman, Early Christian, Norman and Marcher Lordship societies. The area is rich in mediaeval castles and fortified manors and Medieval churches with distinctive stone crosses<sup>23</sup>.

**Leisure and recreation:** The Usk catchment within Monmouthshire offers opportunities for walking and cycling. The River Usk and its tributaries are noted for their fishing. This area of the County also offers many historical sites and towns to visit. Llandegfedd reservoir offers a variety of water sports and outdoor activities including canoeing, sailing and windsurfing, as well as opportunities for fishing, walking and bird watching. The Raglan music festival is staged annually.

<sup>23</sup> NRW (2015) Central Monmouthshire NLCA (NLCA 31)

## Zone D: Central Monmouthshire - North

### Supporting Services

Supporting services are those which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services. This includes the relationship between underlying geology and soil character, soil formation and the processes of plant growth, including pollination.

**Geology and soil character:** Fault-aligned vales and glacial deposits give rise to the fertile alluvial deposits that are key to the prosperity of this rural, farmed area. The underlying geology of this area largely comprises Silurian argillaceous mudstones and shales surrounded by Old Red Sandstone from the earlier, Lower Devonian period (see **Diagram D2.1**). These rocks were later folded during the Carboniferous period, and subsequently much faulted as, for example, along the northern margin of the area, where the course of the Monnow valley between Alltynyns and Monmouth Cap is strongly controlled by the east north east-striking Neath Disturbance, a large fault zone which probably lies above a major fracture in basement rocks deep below<sup>24</sup>.

**Soil formation:** Geology has produced mainly well-drained, coarse loamy and sandy soils surrounded by finer silty soils over the shales, silts and sandstones.

**Pollination:** by insects also provides a supporting service for primary production to support both agricultural production and nature conservation. However, the serious consequences of significant declines in insect pollinator populations, considered largely to result from the loss of flower-rich habitat, habitat fragmentation and the use of certain pesticides, has been recognised in the government's National Pollinator Strategy<sup>25</sup> and the creation of initiatives such as B-Lines<sup>26</sup> to promote landscape-scale habitat creation to try and reverse the decline in pollinating insects.

<sup>24</sup> NRW (2015) Central Monmouthshire NLCA (NLCA 31)

<sup>25</sup> Defra (November 2014). The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/b-lines-wales/>

With respect to Monmouthshire as a whole, the green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in SE Wales<sup>27</sup> identifies those areas where pollinators directly contribute to supporting human life and food, notably where there is the high demand in urban areas for pollinators for fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments. The action plan also points out that there is only a relatively small percentage of arable land that comprises crops such as oilseed rape which need pollinators, and this is concentrated in the lowland arable areas of Monmouthshire. Other areas such as, for example, nature reserves, have indirect requirements for pollinators.

The Action Plan provides a framework for identifying appropriate areas and types of land where interventions to support pollinators could be delivered, and provides a variety of recommendations and desired outcomes for measuring success. In terms of broad measures of success, the Action Plan reports a success rate of approximately 90% for the use of yellow rattle as a means of reducing the vigour of grass growth (thereby allowing a more floristically rich sward to develop) and it also identifies the inter-relationship between the County's 'cut and collect' grass mowing regime for maintaining grasslands (e.g. roadside verges), which is a key management tool in maintaining floral diversity, and the generation of biomass for energy production.

<sup>27</sup> TACP (2015). Green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in South-east Wales. Report to Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils December 2015. TACP UK Ltd



## Provisioning Services

Provisioning services relate to the supply of goods such as freshwater, food and fuel.

**Water availability:** The Wye catchment area comprises the River Wye and a number of substantial tributaries, including the Monnow which runs along the northern boundary of the county. The River Wye is the sixth largest river in the UK, with a total catchment area of 4,171 km<sup>2</sup> spanning both England and Wales; approximately 10% of the catchment falls within Monmouthshire. The river is tidal for approximately 23 km (14 miles) from the tidal limit at Bigsweir Bridge to Chepstow where it flows into the Severn Estuary. The annual average rainfall across the area varies between 2,200 mm in the mountainous headwaters (outside Monmouthshire), to 700 mm in the lower catchment. The lower Wye catchment, including Monmouthshire, has slightly permeable geology with groundwater providing a contribution to river flow. The River Wye is known as a 'regulated river'. Water is released from the Elan Valley Reservoirs in Mid-Wales to support public water supply and other abstractions in the lower reaches of the Wye, when flows fall below a certain threshold.

**Food provision:** Much of the central and southern parts of Monmouthshire are utilised for sheep grazing and dairy farming, with some smaller areas of arable farming on the fertile floodplain where good drainage allows. A small number of traditional orchards are present. In the northwest of the county, higher land, much of which are commons, tends to be sheep grazed, with small scale enclosed sheep and dairy pasture on the lower slopes and valleys. Some localised areas of farmland have been turned over to other uses, including diversification of business activities such as solar or wind power generation. These diversifying factors can influence productivity and, importantly, how separate land parcels are managed in a landscape that requires a coherent approach to, for example, land drainage.

**Fuel & fibre:** In some parts of the county there is limited potential for some biomass production from willow pollards, particularly along main river courses and within the floodplains. The wooded character of Monmouthshire generally

may also provide opportunities for wood fuel production as a by-product of other forest industry. However, the volume of biomass that could realistically be harvested may restrict the size of any associated power plant. As an alternative the biomass could form one stream of supply to an existing plant, but the value of this would need to be considered in relation to the embedded energy costs associated with transportation. Other sources of renewable energy generation in Monmouthshire include wind turbines and solar arrays. However, both these sources of power give rise to other considerations that include land take, drainage management and visual impacts associated with the introduction of prominent structures into the landscape.

The Renewable Energy Community Scheme <sup>28</sup> (RECS) completed a feasibility study in 2017 to consider the inter-relationship between small-scale 'green' energy generation and natural floodplain management to control surface water flooding. The feasibility study has been undertaken around Monmouth, but its key findings are intended to be applicable county-wide. The aims of the project were to:

- Identify acreage suitable for woodland planting which, with sustainable management provide fuel for community heating schemes, the contribution these plantings would make to the reduction of surface water run-off, any land management that would assist in additional reduction of surface water run-off;
- Advise on the contribution to the reduction of surface water run-off from community orchards; and,
- Identify suitable watercourses for the installation of micro hydro schemes with the direct benefit of providing power for local community use.

The Feasibility Study has also created a RECS 'Effectiveness Calculator', which estimates the reduction in run-off and flashiness of a run-off event that could result from a particular action or intervention, based on a suite of site specific data.

<sup>28</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects/projects/recs-renewable-energy-community-schemes>

## Regulating Services

Regulating services maintain natural systems that include water quality, flooding, soil erosion and coastal processes.

**Climate regulation:** Climate change is predicted to affect the amount and distribution of rainfall; this has an impact on flows and water levels, drought and flood events. Work carried out in 2002 showed that by 2050 river flows in winter may rise by 10-15% but in the summer and early autumn could reduce by over 50% and as much as 80% in some places. As a consequence, droughts and flood events may become more common. Climate change may affect groundwater recharge. By 2025 it is likely that groundwater recharge will decrease, resulting in decreased dry weather river flows and a general lowering of groundwater levels. This may have impacts on base-flow to rivers and wetlands in dry periods and affect small domestic and agricultural water supplies. Further evidence has identified risks to aquifers and habitats from salt water intrusion <sup>29</sup>.

**Regulating water quality:** The 2022 Severn River Basin Management Plan<sup>30</sup> identifies a range of factors that are detrimental to water quality in the River Basin District, such as over-abstraction, chemical inputs, plastics, pollution from agriculture and rural areas, pollution from towns, cities and transport, physical modifications, and invasive non-native species (eg. Japanese knotweed can increase riverbank erosion and may reduce the capacity of river channels, possibly leading to increased flooding). Challenges are likely to result from the largely rural nature of the watershed where agriculture dominates with arable, dairy and sheep farms on generally sandy silty soils prone to erosion, particularly within its upper reaches.

A variety of management initiatives have been identified to maintain and improve water quality, including:

- The use of buffer strips to control and regulate the deposition of silt into

<sup>29</sup> The State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR): Assessment of the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. Technical Report. Natural Resources Wales.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales/severn-river-basin-management-plan-summary-and-cross-border-catchments-england-and-wales>

watercourses and control erosion;

- Improvements to water treatment and restrictions on groundwater abstraction;
- Increases in winter storage reservoirs;
- Use of SuDS and river buffer zones to reduce flooding, soil and nutrient loss;
- Provision of habitat such as buffer strips, fish passes, improvements to riverbank condition;
- Improvements in water quality to support recreation and tourism;
- Reduction in the use of fertilizers to no more than is needed, to protect groundwater aquifers.

**Regulating water (flooding):** The Wye catchment has a wide variation of fluvial flooding issues ranging from extended periods of elevated levels within the River Wye Valley that affect many communities, flooding from tributaries of the River Wye, flooding from quickly responding catchments and tidal flooding from the Severn Estuary (see **Diagram D2.2**). In addition climate change is likely to increase the pressure on existing locations where surface water/sewer flooding occurs. The greatest threat to the lower catchment is from sea level rise which could increase flood risk significantly in Chepstow and surrounding low-lying areas. Environmental Objectives for the management of flood risk include:

- Restoration of sustainable natural storage of floodwater in the upstream area, in order to offset increasing flood risk from trends including climate change;
- Improving the water environment through flood risk management activities;
- Improving the hydro-morphology of rivers;
- Minimising impacts of flooding on designated sites or areas of environmental interest; and,
- Habitat creation through flood risk management activities.

**Regulating soil erosion and quality:** The soils of best quality and most productive agricultural land are a scarce and finite resource in Wales; accounting for less than 7% of land area. Soil quality has deteriorated across all habitats apart from woodlands where there has been some improvement. The severity and spatial extent of soil erosion has not been directly quantified in Wales. Around 10-15% of grassland fields in (England and) Wales are thought to be affected by severe soil compaction and 50-60% are in moderate condition. No data exists on compaction in grassland and arable land across Wales specifically. Topsoil carbon concentrations are generally stable and there is ongoing recovery from soil acidification. Although a significant decline in soil phosphorus levels has been seen for Improved Land, it remains above the optimum levels in many (44%) agricultural fields. Soil invertebrate (mesofauna) numbers indicate no overall trend. There has been little or no decline in elevated levels of soil contaminants from industry and transport. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 Evidence Report<sup>31</sup> has identified risks to soils from increased seasonal aridity and wetness. Climate change related risks are threatening the many services that soils provide, notably those that relate to soil biota, soil organic matter, and soil erosion and compaction<sup>10</sup>.

**Regulating coastal processes:** The role the River Wye plays in regulating coastal process is addressed in relation to The Gwent Levels.

<sup>31</sup> HM Government UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-climate-change-risk-assessment-2022>

## Cultural Services

Cultural services provide direct, non-material, benefits to human society, addressing a range of social and cultural needs that encompass a sense of place and inspiration, a sense of history, tranquillity and recreation.

**Sense of place and inspiration:** The Wye catchment, as it winds its way between the foothills of the Bannau Brycheiniog and the Wye Valley National Landscape, passes through wooded rolling countryside comprising predominantly pastoral farmland and small village settlements. Overall, this part of Monmouthshire is fairly tranquil, with large areas categorised in the 2009 tranquil areas assessment as 'undisturbed' (countryside usually free of any substantial disturbance in daytime).

**Sense of history:** This large area has a varied distribution of archaeological sites and monuments dating back to the prehistoric period. Strategically located Iron Age hillforts on summit tops overlook the Wye valley and accentuate the topography. The richness of the agricultural land led to successive 'colonisations' by a sequence of Roman, Early Christian, Norman and Marcher Lordship societies. The area is rich in mediaeval castles and fortified manors and Medieval churches with distinctive stone crosses.<sup>32</sup>

**Leisure and recreation:** The Wye catchment within Monmouthshire offers opportunities for walking and cycling. The River Wye and its tributaries are noted for their fishing. This area of the County also offers many historical sites to visit.

<sup>32</sup> NRW (2015) Central Monmouthshire NLCA (NLCA 31)

## Zone E: Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains

### Supporting Services

Supporting services are those which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services. This includes the relationship between underlying geology and soil character, soil formation and the processes of plant growth, including pollination.

**Geology and soil character:** The parts of the Bannau Brycheiniog that fall within the county are predominantly Devonian Old Red Sandstone (see **Diagram D2.1**). Generally, Monmouthshire's localised areas of poor to very poor quality soils occur mostly within the Bannau Brycheiniog over the higher ground.

**Soil formation:** Agriculture relies on soil formation, nutrients, water flow and pollination. The uplands play a significant role in water storage, quality and release, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood. As long as they are free from the effects of heavy grazing, upland peat bogs store carbon and combat atmospheric pollution. They capture atmospheric carbon which helps mitigate the effects of climate change<sup>33</sup>.

**Pollination:** by insects also provides a supporting service for primary production to support both agricultural production and nature conservation. However, the serious consequences of significant declines in insect pollinator populations, considered largely to result from the loss of flower-rich habitat, habitat fragmentation and the use of certain pesticides, has been recognised in the government's National Pollinator Strategy<sup>34</sup> and the creation of initiatives such as B-Lines<sup>35</sup> to promote landscape-scale habitat creation to try and reverse the decline in pollinating insects.

<sup>33</sup> The Management Plan For Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 2023-2028

<sup>34</sup> Defra (November 2014). The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England.

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.bugliffe.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/b-lines-wales/>

With respect to Monmouthshire as a whole, the green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in SE Wales<sup>36</sup> identifies those areas where pollinators directly contribute to supporting human life and food, notably where there is the high demand in urban areas for pollinators for fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments. The action plan also points out that there is only a relatively small percentage of arable land that comprises crops such as oilseed rape which need pollinators, and this is concentrated in the lowland arable areas of Monmouthshire. Other areas such as, for example, nature reserves, have indirect requirements for pollinators.

The Action Plan provides a framework for identifying appropriate areas and types of land where interventions to support pollinators could be delivered, and provides a variety of recommendations and desired outcomes for measuring success. In terms of broad measures of success, the Action Plan reports a success rate of approximately 90% for the use of yellow rattle as a means of reducing the vigour of grass growth (thereby allowing a more floristically rich sward to develop) and it also identifies the inter-relationship between the County's 'cut and collect' grass mowing regime for maintaining grasslands (e.g. roadside verges), which is a key management tool in maintaining floral diversity, and the generation of biomass for energy production.

<sup>36</sup> TACP (2015). Green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in South-east Wales. Report to Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils December 2015. TACP UK Ltd.

## Provisioning Services

Provisioning services relate to the supply of goods such as freshwater, food and fuel.

**Water availability:** The uplands play a significant role in water storage, quality and release by virtue of their peat-forming and water storing wetlands, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood. There are a number of drinking water sources in the National Park including reservoirs, rivers, springs and boreholes. Some of Cardiff's drinking water is sourced directly from the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park area.

**Food provision:** Much of the central and southern parts of Monmouthshire are utilised for sheep grazing and dairy farming, with some smaller areas of arable farming on the fertile floodplain where good drainage allows. A small number of traditional orchards are present. In the northwest of the county, higher land, much of which are commons, tends to be sheep grazed, with small scale enclosed sheep and dairy pasture on the lower slopes and valleys. Some localised areas of farmland have been turned over to other uses, including diversification of business activities such as solar or wind power generation (eg. the solar farm development at Llancayo in the Usk Valley). These diversifying factors can influence productivity and, importantly, how separate land parcels are managed in a landscape that requires a coherent approach to, for example, land drainage.

**Fuel & fibre:** The Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains offer a variety of landscapes capable of providing sources of clean, sustainable energy. The National Park Authority provides guidance on the provision of: standalone wind turbine power generation; heat pumps; woodfuel and biomass heating systems and micro and small-scale hydro power systems. With respect to the volume of biomass that could realistically be harvested, however, there may be restrictions on the size of any associated power plant. As an alternative the biomass could form one stream of supply to an existing plant, but the value of this would need to be considered in relation to the embedded energy costs associated with transportation.

The Renewable Energy Community Scheme<sup>37</sup> (RECS) completed a feasibility study in 2017 to consider the inter-relationship between small-scale 'green' energy generation and natural floodplain management to control surface water flooding. The feasibility study has been undertaken around Monmouth, but its key findings are intended to be applicable county-wide. The aims of the project were to:

- Identify acreage suitable for woodland planting which, with sustainable management provide fuel for community heating schemes, the contribution these plantings would make to the reduction of surface water run-off, any land management that would assist in additional reduction of surface water run-off;
- Advise on the contribution to the reduction of surface water run-off from community orchards; and,
- Identify suitable watercourses for the installation of micro hydro schemes with the direct benefit of providing power for local community use.

The Feasibility Study has also created a RECS 'Effectiveness Calculator', which estimates the reduction in run-off and flashiness of a run-off event that could result from a particular action or intervention, based on a suite of site specific data.

<sup>37</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects/projects/recs-renewable-energy-community-schemes>



## Regulating Services

Regulating services maintain natural systems that include water quality, flooding, soil erosion and coastal processes.

**Climate regulation:** Eroding peat bog is a particular feature of the National Park with the largest concentration of this degraded habitat in Wales. Reversing this is an important contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change through land management. The range of likely climatic responses from west to east requiring differing responses in one unified area highlights the strategic role that the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park can play, as a barometer of change. The range of likely changes includes:

- Average summer temperatures in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park: - in the west of the Park increases are very likely to be between 1-2oC and 5-6oC warmer; in the east of the Park increases are very likely to be between 2-3oC and 6-7oC warmer.
- Average summer precipitation in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park: - summer precipitation is very likely to decline by 40-50% and very unlikely to increase by 0-10%, i.e., the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park may experience between 10% more and 50% less rainfall in the summer months.
- Average winter precipitation in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park: - increases in winter precipitation are very likely to be up to 60-70% in the west and 40-60% in the east.

Without intervention through catchment management, these precipitation changes represent a significant risk to water supplies to south Wales; less rainfall in the summer and more in the winter amounts to a net loss overall because the excess water falling during the winter months will exceed storage capacity and will therefore run off the land into the rivers, exacerbating flood risks.

**Regulating water quality:** Within the National Park there are large areas of severely degraded blanket bog and wet heath, the degree of erosion and oxidation of which is adversely affecting water quality and natural water storage, in a part of Wales where water quality and supply are critical to a large section of the population<sup>38</sup>. Additionally, The declining numbers of livestock on the upland commons within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park increase the risk of uncontrolled fires on large areas of dry Molinia-dominated moorland, which would further undermine the water quality and water conservation of this strategically important area. Conversely, there are also signs that the peat-forming and water-holding Sphagnum mosses are recovering in places where grazing pressure and trampling is reduced, which is also due to improvements in air quality.

The water quality within the River Usk SAC and its floodplain is heavily influenced by the surrounding land use and by the poor ecological condition of its upland catchments, which feed the main river and its SAC tributaries. For example, it has been demonstrated that the levels of sedimentation within the River Usk are directly affected by the extent of eroding river banks for 500m upstream and the lack of floodplain woodland. It has also been demonstrated that as the extent of woodland and rough grazing declined, the ecological richness of the river declined too.

**Regulating water (flooding):** The upper part of the Usk catchment into the Bannau Brycheiniog demonstrates a flow regime with rapid rainfall runoff, caused by the steep sided narrow valleys and thin soils underlain by mainly impermeable rock; resulting in the lower reach flood plains becoming inundated during periods of heavy rainfall (see **Diagram D2.2**). The lower Usk tends to be less responsive to rainfall due to the larger catchment area and lowland relief.

**Regulating soil erosion and quality:** The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park includes areas of deep peat and degraded bog which without buffering, is likely to lead to the degradation and loss of peat and soils with attendant impacts on water quality and downstream flooding risk.

<sup>38</sup> BBNP (July 2009). Brecon Beacons National Park: a good place for Glastir Sustainable Land Management Scheme

## Cultural Services

Cultural services provide direct, non-material, benefits to human society, addressing a range of social and cultural needs that encompass a sense of place and inspiration, a sense of history, tranquillity and recreation.

**Sense of place and inspiration:** Monmouthshire presents a unique blend of Welsh and English cultures typical of this historically contested borderland at the entrance to Wales. In the Bannau Brycheiniog, a special quality identified is “the Park’s sweeping grandeur and outstanding natural beauty observed across a variety of harmoniously connected landscapes, including marvellous gorges and waterfalls, classic karst geology with caves and sink holes, contrasting glacial landforms such as cliffs and broad valleys carved from old red sandstone and prominent hilltops with extensive views in all directions.”

The key qualities identified by the The Management Plan For Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 2023-2028 are:

- Sweeping grandeur & outstanding natural beauty - The National Park’s sweeping grandeur and outstanding natural beauty observed across a variety of harmoniously connected landscapes, including marvelous gorges and waterfalls, classic karst geology with limestone pavement, caves and sink holes, contrasting glacial landforms such as cliffs and broad valleys carved from old red sandstone and prominent hilltops with extensive views in all directions. A landscape that provides a sense of time depth and timelessness.
- Contrasting patterns, colours & textures - A working, living “patchwork” of contrasting patterns, colours and textures comprising well-maintained farmed landscapes, open uplands, lakes and meandering rivers, punctuated by small-scale woodlands, country lanes, hedgerows and stone walls and scattered settlements. grouped around landscape, community, experiences and wildlife.
- A sense of place & cultural identity - “Welshness” - characterised by the indigenous Welsh language, religious and spiritual connections, unique customs and events, traditional foods and crafts, relatively unspoilt historic towns and villages, family farms and continued practices of traditional skills developed by local inhabitants to live and earn a living here, such as common land practices and grazing.
- An intimate sense of community - An intimate sense of community where small, pastoral towns and villages are comparatively safe, friendly, welcoming and retain a spirit of cooperation.
- Enjoyable & accessible - Enjoyable and accessible countryside with extensive, widespread and varied opportunities to pursue walking, cycling, fishing, waterbased activities and other forms of sustainable recreation or relaxation.
- Sounds, sights, smells & tastes - A feeling of vitality and wellbeing that comes from enjoying the National Park’s fresh air, clean water, rural setting, open land, and locally produced foods.
- Sense of discovery - A sense of discovery where people explore the National Park’s hidden secrets and stories such as genealogical histories, prehistoric ritual sites, relic medieval rural settlements, early industrial sites, local myths and legends and geological treasures from time immemorial.
- Peace, tranquility & darkness - A National Park offering, dark, nighttime skies, peace and tranquility with opportunities for quiet enjoyment, inspiration, relaxation and spiritual renewal.
- Mosaic of diversity - The geology and climate vary greatly across the Park, creating an elaborate patchwork landscape rich in biodiversity. The Park hosts heathlands, grasslands and woodlands, with uplands and lowlands, natural lakes and riparian habitats. The Park contains limestone pavement and blanket bogs of international and national importance. Several endangered

species survive in the Park, including some for which the Park is their furthest extent of their natural range.

- Living landscape - An abundance of wildlife thrives in semi-natural habitats that have been lived in and shaped by human settlement for millennia. The landscape is interlaced with ancient hedgerows bustling with life, enclosing wildlife-rich hay meadows, and primeval woodlands that cloak some steep-sided valleys. Veteran trees adorn the landscape, carrying the scars of centuries of changing dependency on their resources. Heather-dominated uplands maintained through grazing by horses, sheep and cattle are a testament to the intimate relationship between biodiversity and farming.

Sense of history: The Bannau Brecheiniog exhibit the results of glacial activity as the ice sheet retreated. The hills and particularly the northern scarp was incised by glaciers, there are also some well-preserved glacial screes and moraines. Humans have been active in this landscape since the end of the last ice age and traces of human habitation in the form of prehistoric stone circles and burial chambers, Iron Age hillforts and Roman camps.

The Bannau Brecheiniog are also home to a large number of castles built by the Normans, and other examples of built heritage include priories and medieval farmhouses. Land use encompassed the provision of firewood, turf, peat and gravel, and as grazing for sheep, cattle and pigs. The landscape is also crossed by many trackways which were used over the centuries by drovers to take their livestock to market.

The Industrial Revolution saw significant change with limestone, silica sand and ironstone were quarried on the fringes of the Park to feed demand from the furnaces of the South Wales Valleys. Associated infrastructure included the construction and operation of the Monmouthshire canal which connected with a network of tramroads and railways and became important transport corridors for the movement of goods and materials. As well as industrial structures, the Georgian and Victorian age brought some fine urban and rural buildings to the area, some of which still retain their original features.

The Bannau Brecheiniog also has a long history of links with the military from its use as a cavalry base by the Romans to modern day training<sup>39</sup>.

**Leisure and recreation:** Tourism and leisure form key mainstays of the local economy. People regularly come here for the special landscape, for outdoor activities and for the superb food and drink available locally. Walking is by far the most popular of the more active pursuits, but cycling, mountain biking, horse riding and fishing are all enjoyed on a wide scale. More specialist activities you can take part in are caving, canoeing, sailing, hang-gliding and parascending<sup>41</sup>.

The Bannau Brycheiniog have also been declared an International Dark Sky Reserve due to its sky views at night and little light pollution, this is a highly acclaimed stargazing location.

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.breconbeacons.org/history>

## Zone F: Eastern South Wales Valleys

### Supporting Services

Supporting services are those which are essential to the functioning of ecosystems and indirectly responsible for all other services. This includes the relationship between underlying geology and soil character, soil formation and the processes of plant growth, including pollination.

**Geology and soil character:** The Eastern South Wales Valleys have predominantly Lower Devonian sandstone & conglomerate interbedded bedrock geology (see **Diagram D2.1**). The area also has limestone with subordinate sandstone & argillaceous rocks as well as mudstone, siltstone, sandstone, coal, ironstone & ferricrete. Similar to the uplands of the Bannau Brycheiniog and Black Mountains, this area also has poor to very poor quality soils

**Soil formation:** Agriculture relies on soil formation, nutrients, water flow and pollination. The uplands play a significant role in water storage, quality and release, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood. As long as they are free from the effects of heavy grazing, upland peat bogs store carbon and combat atmospheric pollution. They capture atmospheric carbon which helps mitigate the effects of climate change<sup>1</sup>.

**Pollination:** by insects also provides a supporting service for primary production to support both agricultural production and nature conservation. However, the serious consequences of significant declines in insect pollinator populations, considered largely to result from the loss of flower-rich habitat, habitat fragmentation and the use of certain pesticides, has been recognised in the government's National Pollinator Strategy<sup>2</sup> and the creation of initiatives such as B-Lines<sup>3</sup> to promote landscape-scale habitat creation to try and reverse the decline in pollinating insects.

1 The Management Plan For Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 2023-2028

2 Defra (November 2014). The National Pollinator Strategy: for bees and other pollinators in England.

3 <https://www.buglife.org.uk/our-work/b-lines/b-lines-wales/>

With respect to Monmouthshire as a whole, the green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in SE Wales<sup>4</sup> identifies those areas where pollinators directly contribute to supporting human life and food, notably where there is the high demand in urban areas for pollinators for fruit and vegetables in gardens and allotments. The action plan also points out that there is only a relatively small percentage of arable land that comprises crops such as oilseed rape which need pollinators, and this is concentrated in the lowland arable areas of Monmouthshire. Other areas such as, for example, nature reserves, have indirect requirements for pollinators.

The Action Plan provides a framework for identifying appropriate areas and types of land where interventions to support pollinators could be delivered, and provides a variety of recommendations and desired outcomes for measuring success. In terms of broad measures of success, the Action Plan reports a success rate of approximately 90% for the use of yellow rattle as a means of reducing the vigour of grass growth (thereby allowing a more floristically rich sward to develop) and it also identifies the inter-relationship between the County's 'cut and collect' grass mowing regime for maintaining grasslands (e.g. roadside verges), which is a key management tool in maintaining floral diversity, and the generation of biomass for energy production.

4 TACP (2015). Green infrastructure action plan for pollinators in South-east Wales. Report to Monmouthshire County Council on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council and Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly and Torfaen County Borough Councils December 2015. TACP UK Ltd.

## Provisioning Services

Provisioning services relate to the supply of goods such as freshwater, food and fuel.

**Water availability:** The uplands play a significant role in water storage, quality and release by virtue of their peat-forming and water storing wetlands, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood.

**Food provision:** The lower lying land on the lower slopes and valleys is utilised for sheep grazing and dairy farming, with some smaller areas of arable farming where good drainage allows. Higher land, much of which are commons, tends to be sheep grazed. Some localised areas of farmland have been turned over to other uses, including diversification of business activities such as solar or wind power generation. These diversifying factors can influence productivity and, importantly, how separate land parcels are managed in a landscape that requires a coherent approach to, for example, land drainage.

**Fuel & fibre:** The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park offers a variety of landscapes capable of providing sources of clean, sustainable energy. The National Park Authority provides guidance on the provision of: standalone wind turbine power generation; heat pumps; woodfuel and biomass heating systems and micro and small-scale hydro power systems. With respect to the volume of biomass that could realistically be harvested, however, there may be restrictions on the size of any associated power plant. As an alternative the biomass could form one stream of supply to an existing plant, but the value of this would need to be considered in relation to the embedded energy costs associated with transportation.

The Renewable Energy Community Scheme<sup>1</sup> (RECS) completed a feasibility study in 2017 to consider the inter-relationship between small-scale 'green' energy generation and natural floodplain management to control surface water flooding. The feasibility study has been undertaken around Monmouth, but its key findings are intended to be applicable county-wide. The aims of the project

<sup>1</sup> <https://businesswales.gov.wales/walesruralnetwork/local-action-groups-and-projects/projects/recs-renewable-energy-community-schemes>

were to:

- Identify acreage suitable for woodland planting which, with sustainable management provide fuel for community heating schemes, the contribution these plantings would make to the reduction of surface water run-off, any land management that would assist in additional reduction of surface water run-off;
- Advise on the contribution to the reduction of surface water run-off from community orchards; and,
- Identify suitable watercourses for the installation of micro hydro schemes with the direct benefit of providing power for local community use.

The Feasibility Study has also created a RECS 'Effectiveness Calculator', which estimates the reduction in run-off and flashiness of a run-off event that could result from a particular action or intervention, based on a suite of site specific data.



## Regulating Services

Regulating services maintain natural systems that include water quality, flooding, soil erosion and coastal processes.

**Climate regulation:** Eroding peat bog is a particular feature of the National Park with the largest concentration of this degraded habitat in Wales. Reversing this is an important contribution to mitigating the effects of climate change through land management. The range of likely climatic responses from west to east requiring differing responses in one unified area highlights the strategic role that the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park can play, as a barometer of change. The range of likely changes includes:

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- Average summer precipitation in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park: - summer precipitation is very likely to decline by 40-50% and very unlikely to increase by 0-10%, i.e., the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park may experience between 10% more and 50% less rainfall in the summer months.
- Average winter precipitation in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park: - increases in winter precipitation are very likely to be up to 60-70% in the west and 40-60% in the east.

Without intervention through catchment management, these precipitation changes represent a significant risk to water supplies to south Wales; less rainfall in the summer and more in the winter amounts to a net loss overall because the excess water falling during the winter months will exceed storage capacity and will therefore run off the land into the rivers, exacerbating flood risks.

**Regulating water quality:** Within the National Park there are large areas of severely degraded blanket bog and wet heath, the degree of erosion and oxidation of which is adversely affecting water quality and natural water storage, in a part of Wales where water quality and supply are critical to a large section of the population <sup>1</sup>. Additionally, The declining numbers of livestock on the upland commons within the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park increase the risk of uncontrolled fires on large areas of dry Molinia-dominated moorland, which would further undermine the water quality and water conservation of this strategically important area. Conversely, there are also signs that the peat-forming and water-holding Sphagnum mosses are recovering in places where grazing pressure and trampling is reduced, which is also due to improvements in air quality.

**Regulating water (flooding):** The upper part of the Usk catchment into the Bannau Brycheiniog demonstrates a flow regime with rapid rainfall runoff, caused by the steep sided narrow valleys and thin soils underlain by mainly impermeable rock; resulting in the lower reach flood plains becoming inundated during periods of heavy rainfall (see **Diagram D2.2**).

**Regulating soil erosion and quality:** The Bannau Brycheiniog National Park includes areas of deep peat and degraded bog which without buffering, is likely to lead to the degradation and loss of peat and soils with attendant impacts on water quality and downstream flooding risk.

<sup>1</sup> BBNP (July 2009). Brecon Beacons National Park: a good place for Glastir Sustainable Land Management Scheme

## Cultural Services

Cultural services provide direct, non-material, benefits to human society, addressing a range of social and cultural needs that encompass a sense of place and inspiration, a sense of history, tranquillity and recreation.

**Sense of place and inspiration:** The Eastern South Wales Valleys are categorised by an extensive wild and wind-swept plateau with intervening deep valleys<sup>1</sup>. The high ground is often scenic and tranquil with extensive views, for example at Blorenge ridge. The landscape is well known for its extensive industrial coal and ironworking heritage.

**Sense of history:** The Industrial Revolution saw significant change with limestone, silica sand and ironstone quarried on the fringes of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park to feed demand from the furnaces of the South Wales Valleys. Associated infrastructure included the construction and operation of the Monmouthshire and Brecon canal which passes through Govilon. The canal connected with a network of tramroads and railways and became important transport corridors for the movement of goods and material. The Blaenavon World Heritage Site is one of the best surviving examples in the region of a valley head industrial community, with features from the C18th iron industry as well as the extensive coal mining activity that took place in the 19th Century.

**Leisure and recreation:** The Blaenavon World Heritage Site is a registered Landscape of Outstanding Historic Interest which attracts visitors interested in the industrial history of the area. The Eastern South Wales Valleys is a popular area for outdoor activities including mountain biking and hiking. The Valleys Regional Park has a network of uplands, woodlands, nature reserves, country parks, rivers, reservoirs, canals, heritage sites and attractions, all interlinked with towns and villages<sup>2</sup>. The high level of accessible natural greenspace provides opportunities for leisure and recreation in the area through walking trails and cycle networks.

1 <https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/what-we-do/strategies-and-plans/area-statements/south-east-wales-area-statement/introduction-to-south-east-area-statement/?lang=en>

2 <https://valleysregionalpark.wales/>



# Green Infrastructure Needs and Opportunities

## Zone A: Gwent Levels

This section explores opportunities for improving GI within Zone A: Gwent Levels. The opportunities have been identified through analysis of existing studies, the ecosystem services described in **Appendix D2**, and stakeholder consultation workshops - see **Appendix C**. Where appropriate, these are aligned with the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

There is a need to improve access and recreation facilities for local communities and visitors to the Gwent Levels. There is growing evidence that access to, and enjoyment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces enhances people's health and well-being, particularly in areas of social deprivation. Engagement with the natural and cultural heritage of the Gwent Levels is key to the conservation of this remarkable landscape for future generations.

The GI opportunities outlined in this section were informed by the Gwent Levels GI Strategy, which should be referenced for further details.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of GI in the Gwent Levels sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Supporting responsible public access to the countryside for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing and connecting with the Gwent Levels landscape and heritage for local and wider communities, while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians by exploring opportunities for enhancing existing routes (such as the Wales Coast Path) and creating new ones where appropriate

- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Supporting responsible public access to watercourses/waterbodies for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing water environments, while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Urban Green Grids: Developing targeted programmes of accessible green space improvements and new provision for the Chepstow and the Severnside Settlements (Magor-Caldicot) to address inequalities for communities experiencing high levels of health deprivation

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and well-being needs within the Gwent Levels GI Zone could include:

- Focusing investment on improving/enhancing distinctive places, gateways and access routes within the study area that have a role to play in helping people to engage with, appreciate and enjoy the key landscape themes and attributes that make the Gwent Levels special.
- Maximising opportunities presented by a level landscape for cycling and encouraging healthier lifestyles by providing traffic free cycle routes that cater for all abilities and provide a low impact form of access to ecologically sensitive sites for local people and visitors.
- Reviewing 'gaps' in the route of the Wales Coast Path (as part of the review of the Appropriate Assessment under the Habitat Regulations) to consider again the re-alignment of the path where it diverges from the sea wall such as: south of Caldicot.
- Enhancing connectivity between the Levels and local communities/greenspaces in the Monmouthshire Severnside Settlements.
- Considering opportunities to enhance intellectual access to and understanding of the Gwent Levels' unique landscape, history and wildlife, such as through the promotion of 'citizens science' projects via outreach programmes for researching, identifying and recording the ecological and historical interest of the Gwent Levels.

- Considering opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocations at Moun-ton Road Chepstow and Caldicot East, such as provision of pedestrian/cycle links and greenspaces for people.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience**

A sustainable approach is critical for supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The biodiversity value of the extensive network of field drainage ditches and reens is vulnerable to neglect through lack of appropriate maintenance, changes in drainage and land use. This is essential to increase the range and extent of habitats and species and their resilience.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience benefits of GI in the Gwent Levels sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners to identify landscape-scale projects to improve habitat condition, connectivity and diversity (such as wetlands, grasslands and intertidal habitats), and support net biodiversity gain; providing habitats along green spaces and corridors for pollinator insects; and promoting biosecurity good practice measures for controlling invasive plant species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Managing abstraction to ensure adequate flow and active river processes; improving the management of ditches/reens; preventing deterioration in Water Framework Directive water body status with the aim of achieving good overall status for surface and ground waters; developing a nutrient management plan; and developing river restoration plans and natural flood management plans for restoring rivers back to good ecological condition and to build resilience against future changes.
- Urban Green Grids: Developing programmes for delivering wildlife site management improvements and habitat creation for the Chepstow and Severnside Settlements (Magor-Caldicot) Urban Green Grids to support urban nature recovery

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Gwent Levels GI Zone could include:

- Restoring over-drained or damaged wet grasslands, and reinstating traditional water management techniques and groundwater levels, where appropriate.
- Working through co-ordinated and collaborative management with existing projects, and specifically across the suite of nature reserves, as well as through emerging initiatives, to deliver enhanced land and water management and habitat connectivity, as well as informed and continuing engagement with local communities and user groups.
- Encouraging the diversification of habitats to include the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects.
- Identifying inter-tidal habitat creation opportunities in partnership with NRW on land under their ownership, particularly where it occurs near the seawall.
- Enhancing the biodiversity value of saltmarsh beyond the sea wall by managing overgrazing (and fly grazing) and under-grazing of this important inter-tidal habitat to reduce negative effects on the botanical and ecological interest.
- Diversifying the grassland sward on the seawall banks, without compromising its integrity or the ability to inspect the condition/integrity of the sea defences, should be considered. Increasing floristic diversity and implementing a sympathetic mowing regime has the potential for the creation of a grassland habitat corridor for the support of pollinators.
- Raising awareness of the importance of the roosting and feeding areas for birds around the coast and estuaries and the relationship to the inland wetlands of the Gwent Levels, ensuring that they are adequately protected, managed and enhanced.



- Identifying opportunities along the larger watercourses where river banks could potentially be set back to increase riparian habitats.
- Considering opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocations at Mounton Road Chepstow and Caldicot East, such as enhancing ecological connections for wildlife.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**

The extensive network of field drainage ditches and reens are one of the most distinctive landscape features of the Gwent Levels, which is a unique hand-crafted cultural landscape. There is a need to maintain and restore these, along with other historic landscape features, where appropriate.

Opportunities for addressing these needs within the Gwent Levels GI Zone could include:

- Encouraging the reinstatement of historic drainage features to maintain the drainage system as a distinctive landscape feature of the Gwent Levels by giving consideration to reinstating lost field ditches and grips; and managing riparian vegetation to reduce the dominance of double-hedged ditches and reens in order to restore their traditional open character.
- Maintaining water levels to protect as yet undiscovered buried archaeology associated with the Gwent Levels' unique landscape history.
- Discouraging field enlargement and/or the infilling of field ditches that would result in the loss of watercourses, leading to the erosion of the strong geometric pattern in the landscape, and the abandonment of traditional channel management practices.
- Promoting the restoration and/or continued management of pollard willows along drains, ditches, reens, roadsides and tracks, to reinforce traditional landscape character and enhance habitat connectivity, and providing small-scale, localised sources of wood fuel.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience**

In the context of the challenges presented by climate change and rising sea levels, there is a need to continue working with and adapting to the natural estuarine processes related to the Severn Estuary and the associated river estuaries. There is also a fundamental need to manage water and the network of watercourses within the Gwent Levels. This is essential for maximising GI benefits such as improved flood management, water and soil quality.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the climate change resilience and adaptation benefits of GI in the Gwent Levels sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- **Strategic Green Space:** Working with a range of partners to implement sustainable farming practices for improving the ability of soil to store carbon, and identify landscape-scale habitat restoration and tree planting projects to maximise carbon sequestration in existing ecosystems
- **Strategic Green Corridors:** Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians to support decarbonisation by reducing use of fossil fuel powered transport and carbon emissions.
- **Strategic Blue Space & Corridors:** Working with a range of partners as part of a catchment-based approach to identifying landscape-scale projects for implementing natural flood management measures to reduce surface water run-off and slow the flow, limiting flooding downstream; and reducing the risk of flooding through maintenance of existing flood defences and implementation of managed coastal sea defence realignment projects where appropriate
- **Urban Green Grids:** Developing programmes to increase urban green cover and the tree canopy within green spaces, along streets and on buildings/ structures for the Chepstow and Severnside Settlements (Magor-Caldicot) Urban Green Grids to make urban communities more resilient and adaptable to climate change

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Gwent Levels GI Zone could include:

- Developing a landscape-scale approach to wetland management in general and in particular, maintaining and restoring a functioning ditch and reen system. Multiple benefits that may accrue through a landscape-scale approach include: managing aquatic and marginal vegetation to maintain the function and conservation interest of ditches and reens in appropriate locations compatible with flood risk management objectives; the maintenance of a healthy, productive, farmland landscape; and the control and management of flood risk.
- Maintaining and restoring water management infrastructure – pumps, sluices and other control mechanisms, ditches, reens, drains and grips, as well as the sea wall – to minimise the impact of flooding on people and property.
- Researching and exploring innovative approaches and options to address water management that potentially benefit both the natural environment and agriculture. Also, exploring mechanisms that release land to make space for more water storage and gravity drainage, including land purchase, land swaps, payment for ecosystem services schemes and farmer early retirement schemes.
- Encouraging participation in the delivery of objectives identified in relevant River Basin Management Plans. These include: initiatives to manage diffuse pollution arising from urban areas, new development, agriculture and rural land management; control of invasive non-native species; management of potential conflicts between different user groups; management of adequate water levels and active river processes; mechanisms for reducing pressure from abstraction and the restoration of aquatic habitats and species, as identified for the River Usk.
- Applying policy and good practice guidance to ensure the incorporation of sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) into all new development, in order to minimise uncontrolled surface water flows onto the Gwent Levels.
- Undertaking studies to determine the extent to which upland watersheds influence both the quantity and quality of water on the Gwent Levels. In particular, the influence of changes in agricultural practices, commercial forestry and long-term landscape change resulting from significant tree loss through disease, may all influence the future water resources of the Levels.
- Aiming to develop a more diverse range of habitats, vegetation types and structures within holdings, enabling habitats and species to respond to the effects of climate change, while maintaining viable farming businesses, cultural associations and traditions and the overall character of the area.
- Ensuring that the Seven Estuary Shoreline Management Plan continues to recognise the outstanding historic landscape significance and high nature conservation value of the Gwent Levels, and the fundamental role that the sea defences plays in sustaining these interests. Working in partnership with all those with a stake in the long-term sustainability of the area is critical to develop consensus around approaches to addressing the challenges of climate change, and its environmental and economic consequences.
- Incorporating coastal heritage sites into climate change adaptation plans, wherever possible, recording, promoting, understanding and recognising their historical significance and their contribution to local culture and coastal landscape character.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

There is a need to manage the landscape of the Gwent Levels sustainably. This includes a sustainable approach to farming, which is critical for supporting the protection of soils and water, biodiversity and locally distinctive landscapes in particular.

Opportunities for addressing these needs within the Gwent Levels GI Zone could include:

- Supporting the local farming community, where possible through agri-environment grants (Glastir or its post-Brexit successor scheme), encouraging flexibility in land management, where appropriate maintaining the existing mixed farming systems, conserving soils and increasing the floristic diversity of wet meadows.
- Advising landowners on the re-creation, where feasible, of habitats such as wet grassland, reedbeds and fens, in the context of maintaining commercially viable agricultural activity within the area. Where specific landholdings may no longer be commercially viable, consider opportunities for the diversification of land-use to encompass the creation or restoration of semi-natural habitats.
- Encouraging more extensive and sustainable land management (by means of appropriate stocking densities and the use of hardy traditional cattle breeds), reducing the risk of soil compaction and poaching, increasing opportunities for floristic diversity, promoting the sensitive uses of pesticide and fertiliser, and implementing manure management plans, reducing nutrient enrichment of watercourses and improving overall water quality.
- Promoting best practice in soil management, use of low-pressure machinery, and careful management of livestock near watercourses and bank sides, using grassland buffer strips and semi-natural habitats to enhance infiltration and protect watercourses from nutrient and sediment input.
- Identifying opportunities for farm business diversification through mechanisms such as premium brand marketing, use of traditional premium value hardy breeds, payment for ecosystem services, and linking the management of the Gwent Levels to upstream watersheds where relevant.
- Working in collaboration with landowners to realise the potential for landscape-scale restoration schemes in suitable areas where recutting of former ditches, removal of hedgerows and reseeded of grassland could be considered.
- There is an opportunity to support the Monmouthshire Destination Development Plan, where access to the countryside is a key part of Monmouthshire's offer.



## Zone B: Wye Valley & Wentwood

This section explores opportunities for improving GI within Zone B: Wye Valley & Wentwood. The opportunities have been identified through analysis of existing studies, the ecosystem services described in **Appendix D2**, and stakeholder consultation workshops - see **Appendix C**. Where appropriate, these are aligned with the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy. This section should be read in conjunction with the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

There is a need to maintain, and where appropriate, improve access and recreation facilities for local communities and visitors to the Wye Valley. There is growing evidence that access to, and enjoyment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces enhances people's health and well-being, particularly in areas of social deprivation. There is a need for people to continue to enjoy active recreation in the Wye Valley that does not detract from the natural beauty of the area. Engagement with the natural and cultural heritage of the Wye Valley is key to the conservation of this remarkable landscape for future generations.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of GI in the Wye Valley & Wentwood sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Supporting responsible public access to the countryside for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing areas (such as Chepstow Park Wood and Wyewood Common Nature Reserve), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians by exploring opportunities for enhancing existing routes (such as the Wye Valley Walk) and creating new ones where appropriate

- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Supporting responsible public access to watercourses/waterbodies for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing water environments (such as the River Wye), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Urban Green Grids: Developing a targeted programme of accessible green space improvements and new provision for the Monmouth Urban Green Grid to address inequalities for communities experiencing high levels of health deprivation

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and wellbeing needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

- Promoting the understanding and enjoyment of the cultural heritage and historic environment
- Increasing understanding, awareness and enjoyment of trees and the special nature of the Wye Valley woodlands and promote them as a resource for appropriate educational, community, recreational and health opportunities
- Encouraging community led initiatives that maintain the diversity, sustainability and quality of rural community life and/or that stimulate investment, local employment and retain or improve facilities and services for local people,
- Encouraging and promoting recreational pursuits and responsible access compatible with the National Landscape purposes, particularly linking sustainable transport and town and village facilities.
- Supporting appropriate levels of sustainable design, repair, signage and maintenance on public rights of way, recreational trails and sites, using materials in keeping, in order to conserve or enhance the character and natural beauty of the Wye Valley.



- Assisting in identifying gaps in access and recreational provision, including for under-represented and minority groups, and work with appropriate bodies and stakeholders to support and promote access enhancements and improved access for all, where this does not conflict with the Special Qualities of the National Landscape and the SACs
- Considering opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Monmouth Leasbrook, such as provision of pedestrian/cycle links and greenspaces for people.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience**

A sustainable approach is critical for supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone is particularly rich in wildlife and has a high concentration of designated sites. The quality of the river and riverine habitat, with migratory fish and otters, are of European importance. Similarly the near continuous woodlands interspersed with species rich grassland make a high quality connected landscape. Managing this range of habitats appropriately is essential to maintain and increase the range and extent of habitats and species and their resilience. There is a need to conserve, and where appropriate enhance and restore, the biodiversity of the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone in robust ecological networks.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience benefits of GI in the Wye Valley & Wentwood sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners to identify landscape-scale projects to improve habitat condition, connectivity and diversity (such as native woodlands and ancient hedgerows), and support net biodiversity gain; providing habitats along green spaces and corridors

for pollinator insects; and promoting biosecurity good practice measures for controlling invasive plant species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)

- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Managing abstraction to ensure adequate flow and active river processes; creating a joined-up approach to removing or modifying barriers to fish migration; preventing deterioration in Water Framework Directive water body status with the aim of achieving good overall status for surface and ground waters; developing a River Wye nutrient management plan; and developing river restoration plans and natural flood management plans for restoring rivers back to good ecological condition and to build resilience against future changes.
- Urban Green Grids: Developing programmes for delivering wildlife site management improvements and habitat creation for the Monmouth Urban Green Grid to support urban nature recovery

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

- Contributing to the delivery of national, regional and local Biodiversity targets and priorities for key habitats and species relevant to the Wye Valley, in partnership with relevant organisations.
- Encouraging and supporting measures that contribute to the management of all statutory designated sites and County local/key wildlife sites so that they are in favourable condition and within robust ecological networks.
- Promoting the adoption of schemes and initiatives that sustain, enhance and/or restore the characteristic biodiversity of the Wye Valley, and that enable ecological systems and natural processes to accommodate and adapt to climate and other environmental change, including through landscape scale habitat connectivity.



- Identifying species and diseases considered to be detrimental to the biodiversity value of the Wye Valley and encourage their monitoring, management and, where appropriate, their control.
- Supporting the identification and monitoring of key indicator species and priority species and habitats, in partnership with conservation organisations, relevant individuals and the Local Biological Record Centres.
- Promoting awareness, sources of advice and involvement in biodiversity conservation by landowners, land managers, businesses, local communities, schools and the public including of impacts from outside the Wye Valley.
- Providing best practice advice to woodland owners and managers on sustainable multipurpose management of the Wye Valley woodlands, including sensitive PAWS restoration, encouraging 'the right tree in the right place' and the ecosystems approach.
- Supporting the monitoring, management and where appropriate, control of diseases, pests and other threats, which may cause substantial mortality in tree species and woodland habitats and seek to mitigate the landscape impact of any loss.
- Encouraging the diversification of habitats to include the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects as part of the B-Lines initiative.
- Considering opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Monmouth Leasbrook, such as enhancing ecological connections for wildlife.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**

There is a need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the Wye Valley with its natural and cultural features and processes, and the special qualities and features of the landscape (including the pattern of woodlands, many of which are ancient; the strong network of thick hedges,

hedge banks, drystone walls and tree lines; and the distinct sense of place from the relationship of the woodland, pasture and settlement). There is also a need to ensure woodlands and trees throughout the Wye Valley are managed sustainably in a way that protects and enhances the outstanding ancient woodland character of the area, and provides environmental, social and economic benefits.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing landscape character and distinctiveness needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

- Promoting and develop policies and initiatives to conserve, enhance, restore or create the features and elements that maintain the Special Qualities, landscape character and natural beauty of the National Landscape. Ensure their sustainable management and mitigate, reduce or remove detrimental features.
- Supporting measures which increase public awareness and appreciation of the natural beauty and importance of the Wye Valley.
- Seeking to mitigate and/or reduce, or as a last resort remove, agricultural activity which significantly diminishes or destroys the Special Qualities, natural beauty and landscape character of the National Landscape.
- Developing and supporting tree, woodland and forestry initiatives and policy that conserve, restore and/or enhance the Special Qualities, biodiversity and natural beauty of the area, ensuring no net loss of semi-natural woodland cover unless there are overriding nature or heritage conservation benefits.
- Encouraging and supporting high standards of design, materials, energy efficiency, drainage and landscaping in all developments, including Permitted Development, to ensure greater sustainability and that they complement and enhance the local landscape character and distinctiveness including scale and setting and minimise the impact on the natural environment.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience

In the context of the challenges presented by climate change, which threaten to degrade distinctive landscape features and wildlife habitats; there is a need to adapt and arrest destructive change in places. Species diversification is very much at the core of woodland adaptation and ensuring resilience in the future. There is also a fundamental need to manage water appropriately. This is essential for maximising GI benefits such as improved flood management, water and soil quality.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the climate change resilience and adaptation benefits of GI in the Wye Valley & Wentwood sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Working with a range of partners to implement sustainable farming practices for improving the ability of soil to store carbon, and identify landscape-scale habitat restoration and tree planting projects to maximise carbon sequestration in existing ecosystems
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians to support decarbonisation by reducing use of fossil fuel powered transport and carbon emissions.
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners as part of a catchment-based approach to identifying landscape-scale projects for implementing natural flood management measures to reduce surface water run-off and slow the flow, limiting flooding downstream.
- Urban Green Grids: Developing a programme to increase urban green cover and the tree canopy within green spaces, along streets and on buildings/ structures for the Monmouth Urban Green Grid to make urban communities more resilient and adaptable to climate change

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

- Supporting and promoting the development of renewable forms of energy generation that do not impact negatively on the landscape features and Special Qualities of the National Landscape
- Promoting ecological connectivity and robust habitats in order to sustain diversity.
- Restoring habitats e.g. woodlands/vegetation, to help reduce flooding and offset air pollution whilst also conserving the key features and characteristics which have led to the National Landscape designation that make it so attractive to locals and visitors today.
- Providing sustainable urban drainage to absorb excess rainfall and ensuring the character of the river is not degraded.
- Contributing space to grow foods using sustainable methods thus promoting healthy diets for local communities but also enhancing biodiversity, providing jobs and educational benefits.
- Safeguarding accessible green space which helps reduce the effects of urban heat islands and also contributes to people's sense of health and well-being as well as having economic benefits relating to tourism.
- Reducing carbon emissions through encouraging alternative modes of transport by walking and cycling whilst also supporting health, well-being and tourism.
- Developing and co-ordinating the acquisition and analysis of data across the National Landscape, to inform priority setting, planning, implementation and monitoring of change affecting the natural beauty, including developing a better understanding of the likely impacts of climate change on the landscape of the Wye Valley National Landscape and supporting mitigation and adaptation actions.

## GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

There is a need to manage and develop the landscape of the Wye Valley sustainably. This includes a sustainable approach to development and management of environmental impacts in more built-up areas; and to farming, which is critical for supporting the protection of soils and water, biodiversity and locally distinctive landscapes in particular. Amongst the purposes of the National Landscape is that 'particular regard should be paid to promoting sustainable forms of social and economic development that in themselves conserve and enhance the environment'. There is a need for this to include fostering viable farming enterprises that manage the land in ways that conserve and enhance the natural resources and local distinctiveness of the National Landscape.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing sustainable economic development needs within the Wye Valley & Wentwood GI Zone could include:

- Encouraging farmers and landowners to develop and adopt sustainable management practices that conserve or enhance the features, Special Qualities and natural beauty of the Wye Valley National Landscape.
- Encouraging the maximum uptake of, agri-environment and other appropriate schemes, including support for small-holders, where they progress the conservation or enhancement of the natural beauty, biodiversity, historic environment and Special Qualities of the National Landscape, particularly through Catchment Sensitive Farming and mixed farming systems.
- Supporting the development of and funding for new skills, farming practices and farm-based activities that are compatible with the aims of National Landscape designation, and encourage and support traditional skills such as hay making, hedge laying, dry stone walling, woodland and coppice

management, riparian tree works etc. that contribute to the maintenance of the Special Qualities of the National Landscape.

- Promoting a wider understanding of the value of farming to the landscape and economy.
- Supporting all appropriate measures to control diseases of agricultural crops, trees and livestock, which threaten the commercial viability of farming systems that conserve the landscape character, ensuring that the measures remain compatible with the conservation and enjoyment of natural beauty.
- Encouraging and support local producers to supply local food and promote and encourage the use of local produce by public bodies, consumers, accommodation providers and local food outlets.
- Supporting the development of employment and skills and markets for local timber and woodland produce.



## Zone C: Central Monmouthshire – South

This section explores opportunities for improving GI within Zone C: Central Monmouthshire – South. The opportunities have been identified through analysis of existing studies, the ecosystem services described in **Appendix D2**, and stakeholder consultation workshops - see **Appendix C**. Where appropriate, these are aligned with the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

There is potential to expand access and recreation facilities for local communities and visitors to the Central Monmouthshire – South Zone. There is growing evidence that access to, and enjoyment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces enhances people's health and well-being, particularly in areas of social deprivation.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of GI in the Central Monmouthshire sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Supporting responsible public access to the countryside for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing areas (such as Clytha Park Country Park), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians by exploring opportunities for enhancing existing routes (such as the Usk Valley Walk) and creating new ones where appropriate

- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Supporting responsible public access to watercourses/waterbodies for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing water environments (such as the Llandegfedd Reservoir and the River Usk), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Urban Green Grids: Developing a targeted programme of accessible green space improvements and new provision for the Abergavenny and Usk Urban Green Grids to address inequalities for communities experiencing high levels of health deprivation

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and wellbeing needs within the Central Monmouthshire – South GI Zone could include:

- Providing interpretation for existing pedestrian/cycle paths, rights of way and walking routes connecting settlement such as Usk and the Usk Valley via existing PRoW (for example, the Usk Valley Walk) and cycle routes.
- Strengthening cycle route links along river valleys, links into national and regional cycle networks.
- Linking to healthy walking schemes and groups, as well as 'Health Walks', which can be prescribed by GPs.
- Expanding provision of pedestrian paths, rights of way and cycling routes to connect development via existing woodlands, open and green spaces to the wider countryside and key destinations including the Monmouth/Brecon canal and the River Usk.
- Enhancing existing green spaces and integration of green infrastructure into refurbishment or development of community assets such as local primary schools and publically owned or managed sites.



- Expanding allotment provision where appropriate around settlements.
- Improving access to currently inaccessible green spaces, such as areas of privately or estate run woodland, and less accessible common land.
- Considering opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Abergavenny East, such as provision of pedestrian/cycle links and greenspaces for people.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience**

A sustainable approach is critical for supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The biodiversity value of the network of watercourses and woodlands is vulnerable to neglect through lack of appropriate maintenance, changes in drainage and land use. This is essential to increase the range and extent of habitats and species and their resilience.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience benefits of GI in the Central Monmouthshire sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- **Strategic Green Space & Corridors:** Working with a range of partners to identify landscape-scale projects to improve habitat condition, connectivity and diversity (such as restoration of floodplain meadows), and support net biodiversity gain; providing habitats along green spaces and corridors for pollinator insects; and promoting biosecurity good practice measures for controlling invasive plant species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)
- **Strategic Blue Space & Corridors:** Managing abstraction to ensure adequate flow and active river processes; creating a joined-up approach to removing or modifying barriers to fish migration (such as on the River Gavenny and the Honddu); preventing deterioration in Water Framework Directive water body status with the aim of achieving good overall status for surface and

ground waters; developing a River Usk Special Area of Conservation nutrient management plan; and developing river restoration plans and natural flood management plans for restoring rivers back to good ecological condition and to build resilience against future changes.

- **Urban Green Grids:** Developing programmes for delivering wildlife site management improvements and habitat creation for the Abergavenny and Usk Urban Green Grids to support urban nature recovery

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Central Monmouthshire – South GI Zone could include:

- Eradicating and/or management of invasive non-native species in line with current national invasive species action plans, including Giant Hogweed.
- Reducing the impact of physical modifications to water courses, improving connectivity, habitat and morphology through soft engineering and restoration techniques. Improving habitats for fish, removing or modifying barriers to passage upstream.
- Reducing the impact of flood defence structures and operations - improve connectivity, habitat, and morphology by implementing options through measures such as soft engineering, opening culverts, upgrading tidal flaps, changing dredging and vegetation management.
- Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats to enhance existing green spaces, including restoration of semi-improved pasture and restoration of woodland.
- Encouraging the diversification of habitats to include the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects.
- Considering opportunities to incorporate GI into the Preferred Strategic Site Allocation at Abergavenny East, such as enhancing ecological connections for wildlife



### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**

The extensive network of woodland (covering approximately 10% of the zone) is one of the most distinctive landscape features of the Wye Catchment. There is a need to maintain and enhance these green links, along with other historic landscape features, where appropriate.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing landscape character and distinctiveness needs within the Central Monmouthshire – South GI Zone could include:

- Enhancing green links within development to strengthen existing settlement character, including key views into and out of settlements and reinforcing sense of place.
- Strengthening settlement edge treatments, reinforcing character, vernacular styles and boundary treatments.
- Researching, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and conserving archaeology.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience**

In the context of the challenges presented by climate change, there is a fundamental need to manage water appropriately. This is essential for maximising GI benefits such as improved flood management, water and soil quality.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Central Monmouthshire – South GI Zone could include:

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the climate change resilience and adaptation benefits of GI in the Central Monmouthshire sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Working with a range of partners to implement sustainable farming practices for improving the ability of soil to store carbon, and identify landscape-scale habitat restoration projects to maximise carbon sequestration in existing ecosystems
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians to support decarbonisation by reducing use of fossil fuel powered transport and carbon emissions.
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners as part of a catchment-based approach to identifying landscape-scale projects for implementing natural flood management measures to reduce surface water run-off and slow the flow, limiting flooding downstream (such as extending and connecting floodplain woodlands).
- Urban Green Grids: Developing programmes to increase urban green cover and the tree canopy within green spaces, along streets and on buildings/ structures for the Abergavenny and Usk Urban Green Grids to make urban communities more resilient and adaptable to climate change

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Central Monmouthshire – South GI Zone could include:

- Improving water levels and flows, reducing impacts of more regulated flows and abstractions, restoring more natural flow regimes and implementing options to improve water levels, such as water efficiency and recycling measures, alternative sources and supplies.

## GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

There is a need to manage the landscape of the Usk Catchment sustainably. This includes a sustainable approach to development and management of environmental impacts in more urban areas; and to farming, which is critical for supporting the protection of soils and water, biodiversity and locally distinctive landscapes in particular.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing sustainable economic development needs within the Central Monmouthshire – South GI Zone could include:

- Identifying and implementing changes to land drainage regimes and structures to restore water levels.
- Reducing pollution from waste water discharges at point sources. Investigate and implement basic pollution prevention measures, including provision of up to date advice and guidance, such as correct handling and storage of chemicals and waste, management of trade effluent, and regulation.
- Supporting implementation of sustainable agricultural practices, including the implementation of measures such as correct management of slurry, silage, fuel oil, and agricultural chemicals; clean and dirty water separation; nutrient management planning; buffer strips and riparian fencing; cover crops and soil management.
- Supporting sustainable woodland and forestry management, restoring the riparian zone, disconnecting forest drains and using forestry and woodland to reduce diffuse pollution.
- Investigating opportunities to solve misconceptions to surface water drains (at residential and commercial properties) and implement sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS) to reduce diffuse pollution.
- Supporting water management; careful management of the various users—Llandegfedd Reservoir: Recreation and Conservation Management Plan, consultation with the Llandegfedd Reservoir User Liaison Group
- Supporting the local farming community, where possible through agri-environment grants (Glastir or its post-Brexit successor scheme), encouraging flexibility in land management, where appropriate maintaining the existing mixed farming systems, and conserving soils.



## Zone D: Central Monmouthshire – North

This section explores opportunities for improving GI within Zone D: Central Monmouthshire – North. The opportunities have been identified through analysis of existing studies, the ecosystem services described in **Appendix D2**, and stakeholder consultation workshops - see **Appendix C**. Where appropriate, these are aligned with the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

There is potential to expand access and recreation facilities for local communities and visitors to the Central Monmouthshire – North Zone. There is growing evidence that access to, and enjoyment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces enhances people's health and well-being, particularly in areas of social deprivation.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and well-being needs within the Central Monmouthshire – North GI Zone could include:

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the health and well-being benefits of GI in the Central Monmouthshire sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Supporting responsible public access to the countryside for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing areas, while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians by exploring opportunities for enhancing existing routes (such as the Offa's Dyke Path) and creating new ones where appropriate

- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Supporting responsible public access to watercourses/waterbodies for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing water environments (such as the the River Monnow), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and well-being needs within the Central Monmouthshire – North GI Zone could include:

- Expanding provision of pedestrian paths, rights of way and creation or linking of circular walking routes (for example, the Three Castles Walk) to connect settlements via existing PROW and accessible green space. Connections between the core area where people live and work would also be beneficial. Opportunities also exist to improve access for horse riding with new bridleways/multi-use paths, and to create new cycle route links, connecting to local networks and to the Wye Valley beyond.
- Improving promotion and provision of interpretation for existing pedestrian/cycle paths, rights of way and walking routes.
- Linking to healthy walking schemes and groups, as well as 'Health Walks', which can be prescribed by GPs.
- Increasing allotment provision around smaller settlements.
- Facilitating new or enhanced green space provision; community spaces and play areas.
- Improving the condition of riverbanks, and the creation of fish passes will result in improved habitat for wildlife, and increase the sustainability of fish populations. Benefits to society will include an increase in angling opportunities and general enjoyment of spending time by the river.

- Enhancing existing green spaces and integration of green infrastructure into refurbishment/development of local community assets such as primary schools, and publically owned/managed sites
- Within settlements, linking green spaces between housing.
- Improving riverside access.
- Facilitating access to green spaces close to home rather than travelling to facilities further afield.
- Encouraging local people to become part of PRow maintenance groups, and to expand this beyond the current demographic.

#### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience**

A sustainable approach is critical for supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The biodiversity value of the network of watercourses and woodlands is vulnerable to neglect through lack of appropriate maintenance, changes in drainage and land use. This is essential to increase the range and extent of habitats and species and their resilience.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience benefits of GI in the Central Monmouthshire sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners to identify landscape-scale projects to improve habitat condition, connectivity and diversity (such as restoration of floodplain meadows), and support net biodiversity gain; providing habitats along green spaces and corridors for pollinator insects; and promoting biosecurity good practice measures for controlling invasive plant species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)
  - Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Managing abstraction to ensure adequate flow and active river processes; creating a joined-up approach to removing or modifying barriers to fish migration (such as on the River Monnow); preventing deterioration in Water Framework Directive water body status with the aim of achieving good overall status for surface and ground waters; and developing river restoration plans and natural flood management plans for restoring rivers back to good ecological condition and to build resilience against future changes.
- Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Central Monmouthshire – North GI Zone could include:
- Improving modified habitats in watercourses, including the removal of barriers to fish migration; improvement to the condition of river channels/beds and/or banks/shoreline; improvement to condition of riparian zone and /or wetland habitats and through vegetation management. Buffer strips and improvements to the condition of riverbanks will help to protect soils, limiting the amount washed away when it rains.
  - Managing invasive non-native species, building awareness and understanding (to slow the spread); and using mitigation, control and eradication to reduce extents.
  - Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats providing additional/ expansion plantings and habitat to enhance existing green spaces, River Monnow, riverside habitats, managing existing habitats for protected species and maintaining/enabling sensitive public access.
  - Improving forestry management, including, where appropriate, replacing with mixed native species and the opportunity to manage forest clearance areas.
  - Encouraging the diversification of habitats to include the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**

The extensive network of woodland (covering approximately 10% of the zone) is one of the most distinctive landscape features of the Wye Catchment. There is a need to maintain and enhance these green links, along with other historic landscape features, where appropriate.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing landscape character and distinctiveness needs within the Central Monmouthshire – North GI Zone could include:

- Reinforcing landscape character by creating a multi-use, permeable green edge to settlements, that better integrates with surrounding vegetation pattern
- Improving and enhancing green links within new and proposed development to enhance existing settlement character, reinforce sense of place and improve links to the wider area
- Researching, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and conserving archaeology.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience**

In the context of the challenges presented by climate change, there is a fundamental need to manage water appropriately. This is essential for maximising GI benefits such as improved flood management, water and soil quality.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the climate change resilience and adaptation benefits of GI in the Central Monmouthshire sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Working with a range of partners to implement sustainable farming practices for improving the ability of soil to store carbon, and identify landscape-scale habitat restoration projects to maximise carbon sequestration in existing ecosystems

- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians to support decarbonisation by reducing use of fossil fuel powered transport and carbon emissions.
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners as part of a catchment-based approach to identifying landscape-scale projects for implementing natural flood management measures to reduce surface water run-off and slow the flow, limiting flooding downstream (such as extending and connecting floodplain woodlands).

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Central Monmouthshire – North GI Zone could include:

- Improving natural flows and water levels, using alternative sources and relocating abstraction or discharge points. Improvements to water treatment and restrictions on groundwater abstraction should improve river flows and will increase the enjoyment of the water environment for local communities and improve habitats for wildlife. The farming community will also benefit from an increase in surface water availability.
- Increasing use of SUDS and river buffer zones, helping to hold water back in the catchment and therefore helping to reduce runoff and flood risk.
- Considering the need for more winter storage reservoirs, as rainfall may change in amount and distribution through the year.



## GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

There is a need to manage the landscape of the Wye Catchment sustainably. This includes a sustainable approach to development and management of environmental impacts in more urban areas; and to farming, which is critical for supporting the protection of soils and water, biodiversity and locally distinctive landscapes in particular.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing sustainable economic development needs within the Central Monmouthshire – North GI Zone could include:

- Managing pollution from towns and transport by reducing diffuse pollution at source (particularly in relation to Monmouth).
- Managing pollution in rural areas (including from agriculture), reducing diffuse pollution at source, reduce diffuse pollution pathways (i.e. controlling entry to the water environment); and mitigating or remediating diffuse pollution impacts.
- Managing pollution from waste water through mitigating or remediating point source impacts on watercourses.
- Developing a coherent approach to managing a landscape which is diversifying in land use – to include a range of agricultural uses, solar and wind energy generation.
- Developing biomass and wood fuel production.
- Supporting the local farming community, where possible through agri-environment grants (Glastir or its post-Brexit successor scheme), encouraging flexibility in land management, where appropriate maintaining the existing mixed farming systems, and conserving soils.





## Zone E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains

This section explores opportunities for improving GI within Zone E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains. The opportunities have been identified through analysis of existing studies, the ecosystem services described in **Appendix D2**, and stakeholder consultation workshops - see **Appendix C**. Where appropriate, these are aligned with the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy. This section should be read in conjunction with the Management Plan For Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 2023-2028

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

There is growing evidence that access to, and enjoyment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces enhances people's health and well-being, particularly in areas of social deprivation. Opportunities for outdoor access and recreation are one of the key purposes of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, so there is a need to provide these. The National Park contributes directly to the health and well-being of the nation, not only through its inspirational beauty, but also from the wide range of activities the unique landscape enables. There is a need to carefully manage activities for outdoor access and recreation to ensure that the Park's special qualities are preserved and enhanced.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of GI in the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Supporting responsible public access to the countryside for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing areas (such as the Black Mountains, Sugar Loaf and Skirrid), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising

- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians by exploring opportunities for enhancing existing routes (such as the Cambrian Way and Beacons Way), and creating new ones where appropriate
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Supporting responsible public access to watercourses/waterbodies for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing water environments (such as the River Usk), while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising.

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and well-being needs within the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains GI Zone could include:

- Implementing a variety of education, information and interpretation strategies, and to deliver an environmental education programme.
- Enhancing the visitor experience of wildlife, farming, landscape and environment.
- Increasing awareness of and provision for people with disabilities and easier access requirements through the implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Providing access information in a variety of formats, including communicating information on safety and ecosystems. Develop a coordinated approach for providing information and interpretation to visitors and residents.
- Increasing access by linking promoted routes and public transport.
- Increasing the health and well-being benefit to excluded groups. Develop innovative ways of engaging and interacting with visitors and residents including those excluded by actual or perceived barriers.

- Developing and maintaining access on Wildlife Trust-owned reserves.
- Increasing the ease of use of the Public Rights of Way network (management plan targets 65% or above easy to use).
- Supporting the development of allotments, where appropriate.
- Exploring opportunities to improve provision of pedestrian paths, rights of way and further circular walking routes to connect existing National and regional trails, sites of interest and settlements via accessible green space. There are potential opportunities for numerous shorter trails to links into existing settlements although provision in the area is already good.
- Providing PRoW improvements and enhancements and ongoing maintenance, including improving or maintaining signage and access, and maintaining or upgrading interpretation as appropriate.
- Improving accessibility, including permissive paths to privately owned woodlands, and to habitats of conservation interest or heritage sites near to PRoW access
- Improving access for horse riding where appropriate, to include bridleways and multi-use paths.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience**

A sustainable approach is critical for supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The biodiversity value of the heathlands, grasslands, woodlands and watercourses are of importance to the National Park. Maintaining and enhancing this network of habitats is important as it is vulnerable to neglect through lack of appropriate maintenance, changes in drainage and land use. This sustainable approach is essential to increase the range and extent of habitats and species and their resilience.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience benefits of GI in the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- **Strategic Green Space & Corridors:** Working with a range of partners to identify landscape-scale projects to improve habitat condition, connectivity and diversity, and support net biodiversity gain; providing habitats along green corridors for pollinator insects; and promoting biosecurity good practice measures for controlling invasive plant species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)
- **Strategic Blue Space & Corridors:** Managing abstraction to ensure adequate flow and active river processes; creating a joined-up approach to removing or modifying barriers to fish migration; and preventing deterioration in Water Framework Directive water body status with the aim of achieving good overall status for surface and ground waters

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains GI Zone could include:

- Promoting benefits of high nature value farming.
- Expanding native woodlands and maintain forests, and to practice continuous forestry cover techniques.
- Restoring internationally recognised habitats, and restoring and enhancing habitat connectivity along river valleys.
- Developing monitoring of key habitats, soils and water, and to develop research partnerships.
- Implementing a living landscapes approach to landscape, habitat and wildlife management.

- Prioritising understanding of water and carbon resources management.
- Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats, providing management recommendation/support where land is not in public ownership. This should include improving biodiversity value for protected species
- Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats providing management recommendations or support where habitats have been degraded.
- Encouraging the diversification of habitats to include the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects.

#### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**

The Bannau Brycheiniog Uplands is a diverse and distinctive landscape, where sweeping uplands contrast with green valleys, dramatic waterfalls, ancient woodland, archaeological sites, caves, forests, reservoirs and vibrant communities. There is a need to conserve and enhance this character.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing landscape character and distinctiveness needs within the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains GI Zone could include:

- Researching, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and conserving archaeology.
- Implementing an area-based land management project.

#### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience**

The Bannau Brycheiniog Uplands play a significant role in water storage, quality and release, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood. As long as they are free from the effects of heavy grazing, upland peat bogs store carbon and combat atmospheric pollution and illegal fires. They capture atmospheric carbon which helps mitigate the effects of climate change. There is a need to manage the uplands appropriately to sustain these functions.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the climate change resilience and adaptation benefits of GI in the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Working with a range of partners to implement sustainable farming practices for improving the ability of soil to store carbon, and identify landscape-scale habitat restoration projects, especially peatland restoration in the uplands, to maximise carbon sequestration in existing ecosystems
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of regional green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians to support decarbonisation by reducing use of fossil fuel powered transport and carbon emissions.
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners as part of a catchment-based approach to identifying landscape-scale projects for implementing natural flood management measures such as afforestation, particularly in the uplands, to help to reduce surface water run-off and slow the flow, limiting flooding downstream.

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains GI Zone could include:

- Encouraging and supporting community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions and assure the well-being of communities in the future.
- Implementing measures to limit further erosion, and reverse the current erosion of peat bog.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development**

The National Park designation should benefit the local economy and local communities in ways that are sustainable and which work to conserve and enhance the Park's special qualities. The need for sensitive land management by and for the local farming community must be a priority, as is the requirement to establish new links and roles with local communities to foster sustainable economic development.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing sustainable economic development needs within the Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains GI Zone could include:

- Providing public benefits in the countryside through farming, working with farmers to capitalise on the National Park's status and to support them in changes to farm practices.
- Researching and supporting options for local food/produce marketing, and to promote the use of local food to businesses and visitors.
- Identifying on-farm, sustainable energy projects.
- Supporting the local farming community, where possible through agri-environment grants (Glastir or its post-Brexit successor scheme), encouraging flexibility in land management, where appropriate maintaining the existing mixed farming systems, and conserving soils.



## Zone F: Eastern South Wales Valleys

This section explores opportunities for improving GI within Zone F: Eastern South Wales Valleys. The opportunities have been identified through analysis of existing studies, the ecosystem services described in **Appendix D2**, and stakeholder consultation workshops - see **Appendix C**. Where appropriate, these are aligned with the Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy. This section should be read in conjunction with the Management Plan For Bannau Brycheiniog National Park 2023-2028

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Improving Health & Wellbeing

There is growing evidence that access to, and enjoyment of natural and semi-natural greenspaces enhances people's health and well-being, particularly in areas of social deprivation. Opportunities for outdoor access and recreation are one of the key purposes of the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, so there is a need to provide these. The National Park contributes directly to the health and well-being of the nation, not only through its inspirational beauty, but also from the wide range of activities the unique landscape enables. There is a need to carefully manage activities for outdoor access and recreation to ensure that the Park's special qualities are preserved and enhanced.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the health and wellbeing benefits of GI in the Eastern South Wales Valleys sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Supporting responsible public access to urban green spaces and the wider countryside for outdoor recreation and urban food growing to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing these areas, while managing impacts of recreation activity and landscape crime on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising; and working with partners to develop and enhance strategic sites such as country parks and nature reserves as "Discovery Gateways" (such as the Blaenavon World Heritage Centre).

- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians by exploring opportunities for enhancing existing routes, and creating new ones where appropriate; and working with partners to identify opportunities to better connect active travel routes, walking trails, cycle networks, outdoor recreation destinations and access to urban community woodlands.
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Supporting responsible public access to watercourses/waterbodies for outdoor recreation to maximise the health and well-being benefits of experiencing water environments, while managing impacts of recreation activity on natural and cultural heritage assets by engaging with outdoor activity providers and a public programme of awareness raising

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing health and well-being needs within the Eastern South Wales Valleys GI Zone could include:

- Implementing a variety of education, information and interpretation strategies, and to deliver an environmental education programme.
- Enhancing the visitor experience of wildlife, farming, landscape and environment.
- Increasing awareness of and provision for people with disabilities and easier access requirements through the implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Providing access information in a variety of formats, including communicating information on safety and ecosystems. Develop a coordinated approach for providing information and interpretation to visitors and residents.
- Increasing access by linking promoted routes and public transport.



- Increasing the health and well-being benefit to excluded groups. Develop innovative ways of engaging and interacting with visitors and residents including those excluded by actual or perceived barriers.
- Developing and maintaining access on Wildlife Trust-owned reserves.
- Increasing the ease of use of the Public Rights of Way network (management plan targets 65% or above easy to use).
- Supporting the development of allotments, where appropriate.
- Exploring opportunities to improve provision of pedestrian paths, rights of way and further circular walking routes to connect existing National and regional trails, sites of interest and settlements via accessible green space. There are potential opportunities for numerous shorter trails to links into existing settlements although provision in the area is already good.
- Providing PRow improvements and enhancements and ongoing maintenance, including improving or maintaining signage and access, and maintaining or upgrading interpretation as appropriate.
- Improving accessibility, including permissive paths to privately owned woodlands, and to habitats of conservation interest or heritage sites near to PRow access
- Improving access for horse riding where appropriate, to include bridleways and multi-use paths.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Enhancing Biodiversity & Increasing Ecosystem Resilience**

A sustainable approach is critical for supporting the protection of biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. The biodiversity value of the heathlands, grasslands, woodlands and watercourses are of importance to the National Park.

Maintaining and enhancing this network of habitats is important as it is vulnerable to neglect through lack of appropriate maintenance, changes in drainage and land use. This sustainable approach is essential to increase the range and extent of habitats and species and their resilience.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the biodiversity and ecosystem resilience benefits of GI in the Eastern South Wales Valleys sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners, including commoners and landowners, to identify landscape-scale projects to improve habitat condition, connectivity and diversity (such as the Blorenge SSSI), and support net biodiversity gain; providing habitats along green spaces and corridors for pollinator insects; and promoting biosecurity good practice measures for controlling invasive plant species (e.g. Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam)
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Managing abstraction to ensure adequate flow and active river processes; preventing deterioration in Water Framework Directive water body status with the aim of achieving good overall status for surface and ground waters; developing a nutrient management plan; and developing river restoration plans and natural flood management plans for restoring rivers back to good ecological condition and to build resilience against future changes.

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing biodiversity and ecosystem resilience needs within the Eastern South Wales Valleys GI Zone could include:

- Promoting benefits of high nature value farming.
- Expanding native woodlands and maintain forests, and to practice continuous forestry cover techniques.
- Restoring internationally recognised habitats, and restoring and enhancing habitat connectivity along river valleys.
- Developing monitoring of key habitats, soils and water, and to develop research partnerships.
- Implementing a living landscapes approach to landscape, habitat and wildlife management.
- Prioritising understanding of water and carbon resources management.
- Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats, providing management recommendation/support where land is not in public ownership. This should include improving biodiversity value for protected species
- Restoring or enhancing existing assets and habitats providing management recommendations or support where habitats have been degraded.
- Encouraging the diversification of habitats to include the creation, restoration and connectivity of flower-rich habitats to support and sustain pollinating insects.

### **GI Needs & Opportunities for Strengthening Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**

The Bannau Brycheiniog Uplands is a diverse and distinctive landscape, where sweeping uplands contrast with green valleys, dramatic waterfalls, ancient woodland, archaeological sites, caves, forests, reservoirs and vibrant communities. There is a need to conserve and enhance this character.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing landscape character and distinctiveness needs within the Eastern South Wales Valleys GI Zone could include:

- Researching, conserving and enhancing the historic environment and conserving archaeology.
- Implementing an area-based land management project.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Increasing Climate Change Resilience

The Brecon Beacons Uplands play a significant role in water storage, quality and release, providing a natural defence against both drought and flood. As long as they are free from the effects of heavy grazing, upland peat bogs store carbon and combat atmospheric pollution and illegal fires. They capture atmospheric carbon which helps mitigate the effects of climate change. There is a need to manage the uplands appropriately to sustain these functions.

Strategic priorities and opportunities for optimising the climate change resilience and adaptation benefits of GI in the Eastern South Wales Valleys sub-area identified in the Gwent Green Grid Regional GI Strategy include:

- Strategic Green Space: Working with a range of partners to develop landscape-scale habitat restoration projects (such as peatland restoration in the uplands) to maximise carbon sequestration in existing ecosystems
- Strategic Green Corridors: Providing a coherent and joined up network of green corridors providing high quality, traffic-free active travel routes for cyclists, walkers and equestrians to support decarbonisation by reducing use of fossil fuel powered transport and carbon emissions.
- Strategic Blue Space & Corridors: Working with a range of partners as part of a catchment-based approach to identifying landscape-scale projects for implementing natural flood management measures to reduce surface water run-off and slow the flow, limiting flooding downstream.

Within this context, local opportunities for GI to help in addressing climate change resilience and adaptation needs within the Eastern South Wales Valleys GI Zone could include:

- Encouraging and supporting community-led initiatives that build awareness of and resilience to climate change, fossil fuel depletion and carbon emissions and assure the well-being of communities in the future.
- Implementing measures to limit further erosion, and reverse the current erosion of peat bog.

### GI Needs & Opportunities for Supporting Sustainable Economic Development

The National Park designation should benefit the local economy and local communities in ways that are sustainable and which work to conserve and enhance the Park's special qualities. The need for sensitive land management by and for the local farming community must be a priority, as is the requirement to establish new links and roles with local communities to foster sustainable economic development.

Opportunities for GI to help in addressing sustainable economic development needs within the Eastern South Wales Valleys GI Zone could include:

- Providing public benefits in the countryside through farming, working with farmers to capitalise on the National Park's status and to support them in changes to farm practices.
- Researching and supporting options for local food/produce marketing, and to promote the use of local food to businesses and visitors.
- Identifying on-farm, sustainable energy projects.
- Supporting the local farming community, where possible through agri-environment grants (Glastir or its post-Brexit successor scheme), encouraging flexibility in land management, where appropriate maintaining the existing mixed farming systems, and conserving soils.


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**Planning Policy Wales 12 Extract -  
Chapter 6: Distinctive & Natural Places  
Green Infrastructure Policy**




## 6.2 Green Infrastructure

6.2.1 Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places. Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels. At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands. At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems. At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.

6.2.2  The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, provides a context for the delivery of multi-functional green infrastructure. Its protection and provision can make a significant contribution to the sustainable management of natural resources, and in particular to protecting, maintaining and enhancing biodiversity and the resilience of ecosystems in terms of the diversity within and connections between ecosystems and the extent and condition

of these ecosystems, so that they are better able to resist, recover from and adapt to pressures. This means that the development of green infrastructure is an important way for local authorities to deliver their Section 6 duty<sup>114</sup>.


6.2.3  Green infrastructure is capable of providing several functions at the same time and as a result offers multiple benefits, for social, economic and cultural as well as environmental resilience. The components of green infrastructure, by improving the resilience of ecosystems, can result in positive benefits to well-being including flood management, water purification, improved air quality, reduced noise pollution and local climate moderation, climate change mitigation and food production. These benefits are important in urban environments where they can facilitate health and well-being related benefits of open space, clean air and improved tranquility, for example, as well as creating a sense of place and improved social cohesion. In addition, green infrastructure has a role in protecting local distinctiveness, providing economic benefits and social and community opportunities.

### Taking a proactive approach to Green Infrastructure


6.2.4 Green infrastructure plays a fundamental role in shaping places and our sense of well-being, and is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces we live, work and play in. The planning system must maximise its contribution to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets and networks as part of meeting society's wider social and economic objectives and the needs of local communities. Taking a proactive and spatial approach, which links to wider activity being taken by local authorities to protect and provide green infrastructure, will help provide clarity around the contribution which the planning system

can make. This means considering how it complements existing and future maintenance and management regimes within urban areas and contributes towards wider land management activities in rural areas to aid nature recovery, and its underpinning natural resources<sup>115</sup>. This will require effective joint working and collaboration across various sectors and activities, including administrative boundaries. Establishing arrangements to promote collaboration across local authority borders will be necessary, especially where the provision of off-site compensatory land to address biodiversity loss and provide enhancement will have the greatest benefit for biodiversity and resilient ecological networks.

### Green Infrastructure Assessments

6.2.5  Planning authorities must, as part of adopting a strategic and proactive approach to green infrastructure, biodiversity and ecosystems resilience, produce up to date inventories and maps of existing green infrastructure and ecological assets and networks. Local authorities may already be undertaking such assessments and/or preparing such information to underpin local authority wide green infrastructure strategies and where this is the case planning authorities should both contribute to this process and use the inventories and mapping to underpin a spatial approach in their development plans. Green Infrastructure Assessments provide key evidence to support the preparation of development plans and where authorities are not already actively undertaking assessments, they should be undertaken as part of development plan preparation. Such Green Infrastructure Assessments should use existing datasets, and the best available information, to develop an integrated map-based evidence resource for biodiversity, ecosystem resilience

and ecosystem service provision. Doing so will facilitate a proactive approach and enable contributions towards the well-being goals to be maximised.

6.2.6  Green Infrastructure Assessments should also draw from the evidence base provided by NRW's Area Statements and Nature Network Maps, Well-being Assessments and locally and regionally collected green infrastructure data and mapping already underpinning local authority approaches to green infrastructure. Its outcomes should be integrated into development plans to ensure the early and co-ordinated consideration of opportunities to inform the development, design and land related strategies of the development plan. The Green Infrastructure Assessment and outcomes should also be given early consideration in development proposals, and inform the design and implementation of projects.

6.2.7 Considering how significant benefits can be delivered through green infrastructure will be a key aim of the assessment and will require collaboration with other stakeholders, including those across administrative boundaries. Planning authorities should develop a multi-functional, coherent and spatial framework of green infrastructure to improve the overall well-being and health of communities and the environment. The assessment should be used to develop a robust approach to maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, increasing ecosystem resilience and the multiple benefits obtained from nature, and should identify key strategic opportunities where the protection, retention, restoration, creation and connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits. Outputs from the green infrastructure assessment must address:





- The identifying of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity, and historic and cultural features in which green infrastructure plays a part, which are already being safeguarded as part of multi-functioning urban and rural landscapes;
  - The nature emergency identifying and demonstrating how a net benefit for biodiversity will be secured and the attributes of ecosystem resilience enhanced, making the links to other land management activity, such as local nature recovery plans, and identifying land which may be required for the protection, retention and restoration and recovery of nature (and in providing a net benefit for biodiversity). This includes recognising the value of designated sites, and natural resources such as peatlands, as part of resilient ecological networks. In urban areas, the protection and provision of green infrastructure should be considered alongside the needs of wider maintenance regimes and any role development may have in making an effective contribution. The assessments may assist in identifying how the impact of INNS and the risk of introducing or spreading INNS will be managed;
  - The reduction of pollution, as far as possible, by identifying green infrastructure/nature based solutions which form part of, or complement, wider activity at a catchment scale to address pollution and improve the restoration of riverine and other habitats;
  - The climate emergency by ensuring the multi-functional benefits provided by trees and woodlands are identified; for example, by increasing tree canopy cover in urban areas to ensure shading against increased temperatures, and by requiring effective natural flood management and sustainable drainage schemes. Such measures may also help maintain good air quality and appropriate soundscapes;
  - The health and well-being of communities by ensuring they have accessible natural green spaces of various sizes and scales within reasonable walking and cycling distances; and
  - How the planning system should secure the implementation and management of green infrastructure, recognising its dynamic nature, over the long term.
- 6.2.8 The need for ecosystems, habitats and species to adapt to climate change and other pressures should be considered as part of the Green Infrastructure Assessment. This must include identifying ways to avoid or reverse the fragmentation of habitats, and to improve habitat connectivity where appropriate, through the promotion of wildlife corridors, protection of riverine corridors and identifying opportunities for land rehabilitation, reducing pollution, landscape management and habitat restoration, creation and nature recovery. The role of development as part of a spatial approach will be two fold. Planning authorities firstly must ensure that development avoids and then minimises impact on biodiversity and ecosystems and secondly that it provides opportunities for enhancement within areas identified as important for the ability of species to adapt and/or to move to more suitable habitats.
- 6.2.9 Planning authorities must encourage the appropriate management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna in order to complement and improve the ecological coherence of the National Site Network, formally known as the Natura 2000 network<sup>116</sup> well as SSSIs and other statutory and non-statutory designated sites. The features concerned are those

which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as 'stepping stones' or 'wildlife corridors', are essential for migration, dispersal or genetic exchange. The protection and creation of networks of statutory and non-statutory sites and of the landscape features which provide links from one habitat to another can make an important contribution to developing resilient ecological networks and securing a net benefit for biodiversity and in doing so improve the quality of the local place and its ability to adapt to climate change.

- 6.2.10 Green Infrastructure Assessments and their data and mapped outputs must be regularly reviewed to ensure that information on habitats, species and other green features and resources is kept up-to-date. This will ensure development management decisions are informed by appropriate spatial information about the potential effects of development on biodiversity and green infrastructure functions and help identify where different types of green infrastructure benefits/ ecosystems services can be secured. Planning authorities should use the best available data to establish and monitor a set of key indicators and incorporate these indicators into both their Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs) and, where appropriate, into the appropriate Section 6 Plan and Report. Such indicators will be place-specific and may cover information on key species and habitats, opportunities for the protection, retention, restoration and recovery of nature (to secure a net benefit for biodiversity) and benefits/ecosystem services which contribute to the health and well-being of communities. The monitoring of the success and delivery of net benefits for biodiversity secured through conditions and obligations would usefully feed into this process in addition to any agreed management plan for the site. At the end of each reporting period planning authorities should use this data to indicate whether there has been a net

benefit or loss of biodiversity; whether progress is being made on securing mitigation and enhancement measures; and they should use the trends identified to determine future priorities for planning and decision making, with the aim of furthering the goals of the Section 6 Duty.

#### Integrating Green Infrastructure and Development




- 6.2.11 The quality of the built environment should be enhanced by integrating green infrastructure into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design. With careful planning and design, informed by an appropriate level of assessment, green infrastructure can embed the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services into new development and places, help to overcome the potential for conflicting objectives, and contribute to health and well-being outcomes.
- 6.2.12 A green infrastructure statement should be submitted with all planning applications. This will be proportionate to the scale and nature of the development proposed and will describe how green infrastructure has been incorporated into the proposal. In the case of minor development this will be a short description and should not be an onerous requirement for applicants. The green infrastructure statement will be an effective way of demonstrating positive multi-functional outcomes which are appropriate to the site in question and must be used for demonstrating how the step-wise approach (Paragraph 6.4.15) has been applied.
- 6.2.13 There are multiple ways of incorporating green infrastructure, depending on the needs and opportunities a site presents, and the green infrastructure assessment should be referred to, as appropriate, in order to ascertain local priorities. Landscaping, green roofs, grass verges, sustainable drainage and gardens are examples of individual design measures that can have wider cumulative benefits, particularly in relation to biodiversity and

<sup>116</sup> Section 41 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 [www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2017/1012/contents/made)



the resilience of ecosystems as well as in securing the other desired environmental qualities of places. Wider landscape measures, such as the creation of species rich meadows, woodlands and the improvement of linkages between areas of biodiversity value should be considered for larger scale development. In most cases the green infrastructure statement should highlight any baseline data considered and surveys and assessments undertaken, including but not limited to, habitats and species surveys, arboricultural surveys and assessments, sustainable drainage statements, landscape and ecological management plans, open space assessments and green space provision and active travel links.

6.2.14  Development proposals should be informed by the priorities identified in green infrastructure assessments and locally based planning guidance. The Building with Nature standards represent good practice and are an effective prompt for developers to improve the quality of their schemes and demonstrate the sustainable management of natural resources. Using these standards in a way which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the development proposed will be a useful way of ensuring appropriate consideration in circumstances where there is an absence of a green infrastructure assessment and planned approach or relevant local or Supplementary Planning Guidance. The standards are underpinned by an accreditation system and whenever possible, accreditation under these standards should be pursued.



# Monmouthshire Wellbeing Plan Extract - Objective 3

SIR FYNWY

MONMOUTHSHIRE



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# Monmouthshire Public Service Board Well-being Plan



**Well-being Objective - Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change**

## Discover - Situation analysis

The Well-being Assessment highlighted the key challenges and issues for Monmouthshire, those that are directly impacted by this objectives are:

- Limited public transport, particularly in rural areas, makes it harder for people to access jobs, services and facilities. This could be exacerbated by rising fuel prices but there are also future opportunities for investment in public transport through the City Deal and advances in technology such as automated vehicles.
- Air pollution causes significant problems for people's health and is a major contributor to premature deaths in Wales. In Monmouthshire, the greatest problems are caused by vehicle emissions and this is particularly apparent in Usk and Chepstow.
- Water pollution is a concern, from a number of sources, including changing agricultural practices
- Reducing levels of physical activity along with dietary changes are leading to growing levels of obesity. This is likely to lead to an increase in long-term conditions associated with it such as type 2 diabetes
- Development, climate change and pollution all present risks to the natural and built environment. These are central to our well-being and need to be protected and preserved for future generations.
- Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding, as well as many other risks, so mitigating climate change and building resilience will be crucial for communities

## Define - Response analysis

Natural resources, such as air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil, provide our most basic needs, including food, energy and security. Our ecosystems need to be in good condition and resilient in order to keep us healthy, contribute to the physical and psychological well-being and provide vital contributions to the economy through tourism, agriculture, forestry and more. Because these natural resources are key to so many aspects of well-being, they can't be considered in isolation.

The challenges facing our natural environment are many – climate change, development and changing land management practices are all potential threats to our natural resources and ecosystems. This has resulted in a consequent decline in biodiversity which is a threat to how ecosystems function. Tackling these challenges demands integrated and joined up solutions which are developed and delivered by the public, private and voluntary sectors working together. We need to look at adapting to climate change and well as reducing our contribution to it. The Environment (Wales) Act, with subsequent area plans, works alongside the Well-being of Future Generations Act to address these issues.

The public sector in Wales has huge potential to use its collective purchasing power to support the local economy by specifying and buying food, energy, goods and services locally. Procurement can also have significant global impacts and thought needs to be given to being globally responsible. With Brexit on the horizon, there may be potential for public services to have more flexibility in their purchasing decisions, creating regional jobs and business growth

whilst reducing transport and pollution. Brexit also adds uncertainty for a number of sectors, including agriculture which is an important sector in Monmouthshire.

Monmouthshire has great potential to generate renewable energy locally. Several renewable energy community interest companies already exist in the county and developing more localised business models for renewable energy and heat generation, storage and distribution will increase energy resilience as well as reducing carbon emissions.

In order for air pollution to be within safe limits for all Monmouthshire residents, transport sources have the potential to be addressed by developing the infrastructure needed for alternative vehicle use, such as electric vehicle charging, which during 2017 has just started being developed in Monmouthshire, and the forthcoming trial in the county of the Rasa hydrogen-powered vehicle. Alongside this, developing public transport solutions is essential to address rural isolation and access to jobs and services.











Promoting active travel (walking and cycling) in both rural and urban areas, and using opportunities offered by the Active Travel Act will help to reduce air pollution but will also have significant health benefits for all ages. Careful planning and design, including using a Green Infrastructure approach, is needed to develop safe, healthy and vibrant communities which have good access to safe and accessible routes and green spaces.

In order to build species and ecosystem resilience in the face of the likely trend of hotter, drier summers and warmer, wetter winters, or other pressures on our natural environment, landscape-scale biodiversity action is needed. Habitats need to be well connected in order to be resilient. Successful partnerships already exist, such as the Wye and Usk Foundation and the Living Levels project, and these partnerships need to be supported and replicated. Acting at a landscape scale also has the potential to provide significant natural flood risk management, and reducing the risk of flooding has economic, social and health benefits.

In all of these areas, working with young people who will be the decision makers of the future is essential. Through schools, youth work and community groups, young people need to understand what sustainable development is, know why it is important, be inspired to make a difference and empowered to become innovative, creative, caring citizens of the future.

| Well-being goals contributed to |                     |                     |                      |                                   |   |                                |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Prosperous Wales (1)            | Resilient Wales (2) | Healthier Wales (3) | More equal Wales (4) | Wales of cohesive communities (5) | Vibrant culture & thriving Welsh language (6) | Globally responsible Wales (7) |

As well as being key to environmental well-being, a Resilient environment is essential to the local economy, to physical and mental health and building Cohesive Communities. To be Globally Responsible, we need to work together to reduce the carbon and pollution we emit by tackling sustainable transport and our energy use and generation. Key to this objective is working with children and young people to help them understand their role in looking after our environment, reducing our environmental impact and recognising the importance of “thinking globally and acting locally”.

| Delivering the Solution  |   |                     |        |
|--|---|---------------------|--------|
| The PSB will focus on:   | Objective links   | Goals               | Impact |
| Improving the resilience of ecosystems by working at a larger scale (landscape) to manage biodiversity and maximise benefits such as natural flood risk management               |    | 1, 2, 3             | Long   |
| Ensuring design and planning policy supports strong, vibrant and healthy communities that are good for people and the environment.   |    | 1, 2, 3, 5, 7       | Long   |
| Enabling renewable energy schemes, especially community-owned schemes, and developing new solutions including storage, smart energy, heat and local supply.                      |     | 1, 5, 7             | Short  |
| Enabling active travel and sustainable transport to improve air quality and give other health benefits.  |    | 1, 5, 6, 7          | Med    |
| Working with children and young people to improve their awareness, understanding and action for sustainable development and make them responsible global citizens of the future. |    | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 | Long   |





# Sources of Advice

## Sources of Advice

### **Monmouthshire County Council**

Development Management Department  
County Hall, Rhadyr,  
Usk, NP15 1GA  
01633 644831  
planning@monmouthshire.gov.uk

### **Monmouthshire County Council**

Monlife  
County Hall, Rhadyr,  
Usk, NP15 1GA  
01633 644850  
countryside@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
rightsofway@monmouthshire.gov.uk  
greenInfrastructure@monmouthshire.gov.uk

### **Monmouthshire County Council Highways Department**

County Hall, Rhadyr,  
Usk, NP15 1GA  
01633 644644  
highways@monmouthshire.gov.uk

### **Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority**

Plas y Ffynnon, Cambrian Way Brecon,  
Powys, LD3 7HP  
01874 624437  
strategy@beacons-mpa.gov.uk  
Management Plan (2023-2028) available from: [https://future.bannau.wales/  
introducing-the-management-plan/](https://future.bannau.wales/introducing-the-management-plan/)

### **Wye Valley National Landscape Unit**

Hadnock Road,  
Monmouth, NP25 3NG  
01600 713977  
aonb.officer@wyevalleyaonb.org.uk  
Management Plan (2021-2026) available from: <https://www.wyevalleyaonb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Wye-Valley-AONB-Management-Plan-2021-26-finalised.pdf>

### **Natural Resources Wales**

Ty Cambria, 29 Newport Road,  
Cardiff, CF24 0TP  
0300 065 3000  
enquiries@naturalresourceswales.gov.uk

### **Cadw**

Welsh Government, Ty Afon,  
Coed Bedwas Road, Caerphilly, CF83 8WT  
0300 0256000  
Cadw@gov.wales

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# **Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan Objectives**

## Monmouthshire Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan Objectives

1. **Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels** - High level decision making such as policy and plan adoption and future spatial planning including the development plan process are key areas where embedding biodiversity will be vital to meet the Section 6 duty. Objective 1 will particularly apply to all types of consents that Monmouthshire County Council issues including planning permission and other consents that may not currently consider biodiversity. It will also apply to decisions taken in relation to procurement, contracts, licences, asset management and wider land management policies such as road verge management. The objective will be achieved by embedding biodiversity and resilience of ecosystems into business planning by service area. This will require service areas to understand what potential impacts work streams can have on biodiversity and development of a programme of delivery. Internal awareness raising and training will have an important role in meeting the objective.
2. **Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action** - An improved understanding and awareness of biodiversity and ecosystems leads to behavioural change and encourages everyone to act. Environmental education has developed over several decades and it is now threatened by funding cuts however, to make real progress towards better understanding and appreciation of the value of biodiversity and ecosystems, it is vital to maintain actions to meet this objective. Environmental education provision by Monmouthshire County Council as the Local Education Authority and through service areas such as Countryside & Green Infrastructure, Waste & Recycling, Outdoor Education, Monmouthshire Youth Service and the role of the Rural Development Programme can deliver this objective which will require sufficient resource to be put in place. Alignment with the work of external partners will be vital and the use of networks such as the Outdoor Learning Wales: Monmouthshire Cluster Group can facilitate this. Key external partners include Keep Wales Tidy, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Welsh Water, Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Unit, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, RSPB and others. Volunteers, including those at Monmouthshire County Council, also provide vital support in this delivery. There are opportunities to engage staff at Monmouthshire County Council with the use of resources such as the Incredible Edible pollinator garden at County Hall Usk and Caldicot Castle Country Park. The connection between benefits to the environment and well-being benefits of people is an important target area for many partner organisations. As well as encouraging action, this work shall contribute to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of those involved.
3. **Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience** - The rationale for land management methods by Monmouthshire County Council shall be reviewed to identify opportunities to improve sites for Biodiversity so long as is consistent with commitments under other legislation such as those relating to Health and Safety and Heritage. A Green Infrastructure approach to this management shall ensure multiple benefits for communities. Changes shall be made with the aim of restoring habitats to a natural and resilient state and in particular to safeguard Section 7 habitats and species. To achieve this objective Monmouthshire County Council will need to have a better understanding of where and how we influence these habitats and species. Conservation management skills, machinery and processes may need to be developed to enable a shift from a 'neat and tidy' rationale to a management of habitats approach. Reviewing pesticide use and other practices will deliver more benefits. Working in partnership with other organisations and volunteers such as Keep Wales Tidy and Friend's Groups will increase the specialist expertise available and establish 'buy-in' of local communities. Tools such as the Green Infrastructure Action Plan for Pollinators in South Wales can provide framework for delivery. Monmouthshire County Council has a close connection to the Bee Friendly Initiative is working to achieve a Bee Friendly status which shall aid in meeting this objective. Monmouthshire County Council shall seek to enhance the capacity of natural resources on sites it owns to provide essential ecosystem services such as water management, climate regulation and crop pollination as well as enhancing the environment.
4. **Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience** - Positively influencing management undertaken by others can increase the impact Monmouthshire County Council has on improving ecosystem resilience across the region and beyond. Continuing to work with external partners and supporting landscape scale projects such as Living Levels, Wye Catchment Partnership and the Long Forest project can increase the scale of the impact. Development Management shall continue to deliver this through promoting a Green Infrastructure approach to design, development and subsequent management of sites. The Rural Development Programme shall do this through projects such as those promoting action for pollinating insects. There is also scope for land owned by Monmouthshire County Council which is subject to tenancies and licences to be influenced by using clauses and conditions which will reduce negative impacts and promote positive actions e.g. protecting high value sites, tree planting or hedgerow management. There are opportunities to play an important role in tackling climate change and its negative effects. Monmouthshire County Council shall continue to be an exemplar of best practice for management and encourage other Public Authorities to make changes.

5. **Tackle key pressures on species and habitats** - Pollution, invasive non-native species (INNS), and inappropriate land management are pressures on species and habitats that need to be tackled. Monmouthshire County Council has statutory duties relating to pollution and INNS under other relevant legislation however, by working in partnerships with other organisations for example Living Levels and Wye Catchment Partnership, Keep Wales Tidy and The Deer Initiative, more significant impacts can be achieved. By adopting a Green Infrastructure approach to site management and in using nature based solutions to make improvements e.g. to improve water quality, we can take steps towards achieving the objective. A Green Infrastructure approach to development management can reduce the impacts of development on biodiversity and conserve, integrate and improve ecosystem services to deliver multifunctional benefits.
6. **Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery** - Monmouthshire County Council's continued role in supporting and contributing to landscape scale projects is important to maximise delivery for biodiversity and ecosystems. Key projects for Monmouthshire County Council will be Living Levels, Wye Valley Catchment Partnership and any forthcoming Sustainable Management Schemes or HLF projects where Monmouthshire County Council has a remit particularly in the National Park and Wye Valley AONB. These projects often require cross-boundary working to take place with neighbouring authorities and organisations. The role of the Environment Partnership Board in steering this work shall continue to bring together key organisations and provide direction for the Local Authority in delivery of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 and Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. As identified through consultation with external partners, there is a need for a Local Nature Partnership on a Monmouthshire level to provide an information sharing network and identify opportunities for collaborative works with partners, community groups and volunteers.
7. **Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review** - Action carried out by Monmouthshire County Council shall be monitored to establish its effectiveness. Individual service areas shall undertake monitoring. Partnership working including working with volunteers will be vital to establish the effectiveness of action such as the Rural Development Programme. It is a requirement that the plan is reported on to Welsh Government in 2019 and every three years subsequently. Monmouthshire County Council commits to this and to learning from the results of monitoring. The forward plan and service area action plans shall be reviewed accordingly.

Monmouthshire Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan (MCC, March 2017)



Prepared by



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# GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

March 2024

Volume 2 **Delivery Plan**

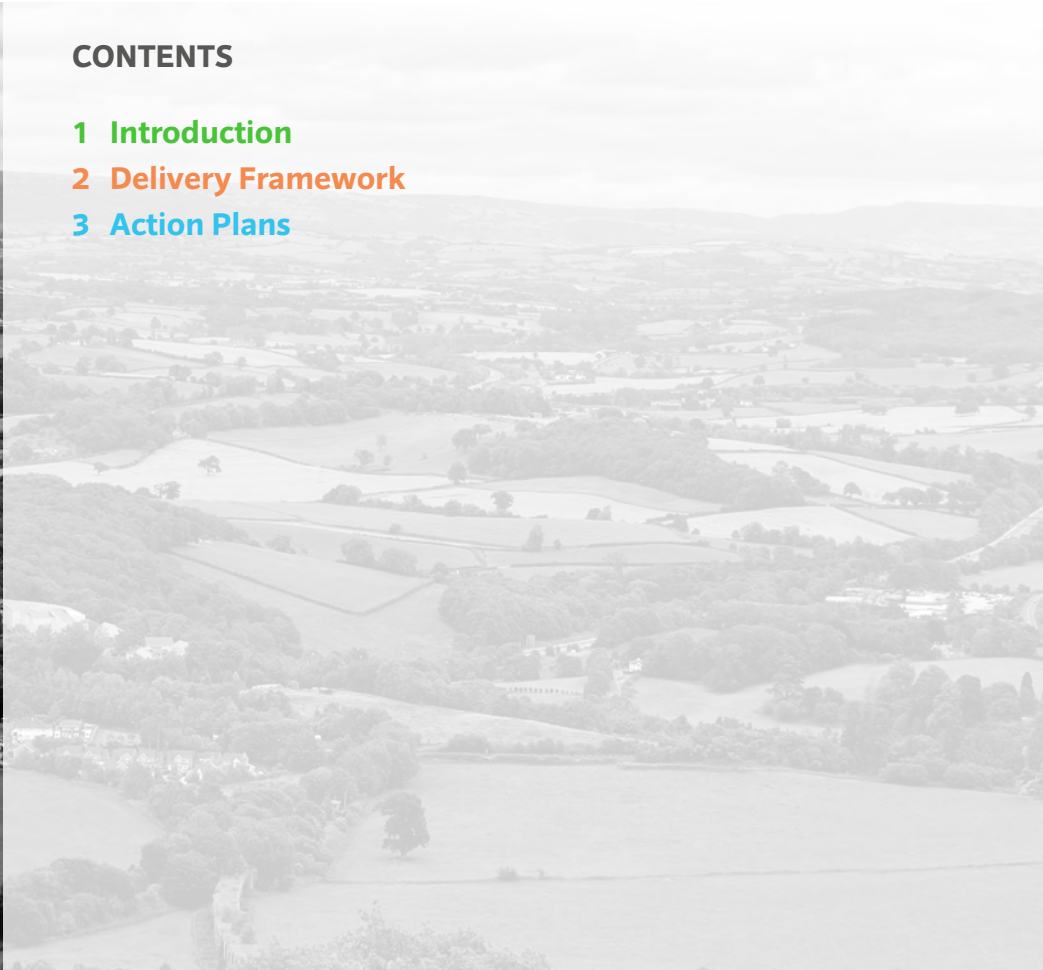






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- 1 Introduction
- 2 Delivery Framework
- 3 Action Plans





# 1

## Introduction





## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy

1.1.1 The Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience in line with the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, and improving health and wellbeing outcomes in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

1.1.2 The Strategy was prepared by CBA on behalf of the Council.

#### Volume 1 – Strategic Framework

1.1.3 Volume 1 of the Strategy sets out the Council's strategic framework for GI provision in Monmouthshire. It identifies key priorities and strategic opportunities where the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits, both on a county-wide basis and for key settlements where growth is planned in the adopted Local Development Plan (2011-2021).

1.1.4 An Executive Summary of the Green Infrastructure Strategy is also set out in a separate document.

#### Volume 2 – Delivery Plan (this document)

1.1.5 Volume 2 of the Strategy provides the Council's delivery plan for GI in Monmouthshire. Provided as a separate document, the Delivery Plan includes prioritised action plans for delivery of strategic/landscape-scale GI projects, and local GI projects to support development at the key growth locations and rural secondary settlements. The action plans are designed to support funding bids by the Council and its delivery partners.

#### GIS Database of GI Assets

1.1.6 A comprehensive and user-friendly GIS Database of GI assets and related information is held by the Council, which provides a tool for informing land use planning and land management decision-making with regards to GI.

1.1.7 The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be kept under review by the Council and updated as necessary to have regard to changing circumstances.



2

**Delivery Framework**





## 2.0 DELIVERY FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Approach

2.1.1 The framework for delivery of the GI Strategy is outlined below broadly based around the “ways of working” approach that public bodies are required to adopt by the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

#### Integrated and Joined Up Approach

2.1.2 The GI Strategy promotes an integrated and joined up approach to delivering GI that takes into account the needs of Monmouthshire’s communities, environment and economy. An important overarching principle underpinning the Strategy is the need to recognise the multi-functionality of GI assets and to maximise the benefits different assets can deliver through an integrated approach. For example, greenspaces can be used for sustainable food production, contribute to flood management and provide access to nature for informal recreation. It is essential that the inter-relationship and connections between the individual GI projects outlined in this Delivery Plan are considered in the round to ensure that opportunities for shared outcomes and mutual benefits are maximised.

#### Long-Term Thinking and Prevention

2.1.3 The GI Strategy promotes long-term thinking by aiming to balance current and long-term GI needs for Monmouthshire. It also encourages taking action now to prevent problems in the future through targeted investment in the delivery of new and enhanced GI where it is most needed. This is reflected in the range and nature of the GI projects included in the Action Plan.

#### Stakeholder Collaboration and Community Involvement

2.1.4 As reflected in the Action Plan, the GI Strategy promotes a collaborative approach to working with a range of stakeholders and partners to help meet its aims and objectives. The benefits of collaboration by public bodies in GI delivery are being championed by the Gwent Green Grid partnership. The partnership includes the five local authorities in South East Wales (Monmouthshire County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Newport City Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Blaenau-Gwent County Borough Council) and Natural Resources Wales, NHS Wales and Welsh Government.

2.1.5 The Gwent Green Grid Partnership aims to bring together existing partnerships/projects to achieve greater strategic and local impact by providing a framework for connecting other initiatives and strategies; pooling funding; sharing resources and learning around ecosystem resilience, healthy living and climate adaptation; making landscape-scale biodiversity enhancements; and involving partners on a wider footprint.

2.1.6 Importantly, the GI Strategy also seeks to directly involve and engage local communities in the delivery of the GI projects included in the Action Plan.

2.1.7 The benefits of a collaborative partnership approach to delivery of GI projects are illustrated by the Living Levels Landscape Partnership in the Gwent Levels (see **Box 2.1**).

**BOX 2.1 The Living Levels Landscape Partnership**

The Living Levels Landscape Partnership has come together to deliver a programme of work which will promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and wild beauty of the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels.

The Scheme covers an area of 225 km<sup>2</sup> extending from Cardiff and the River Rhymney in the west to Chepstow on the River Wye in Monmouthshire to the east.

The Partnership comprises the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Natural Resources Wales, Monmouthshire County Council, Newport City Council, Cardiff City Council, Cardiff Story Museum, Sustrans, The National Trust, Bumblebee Conservation Trust and Buglife.

Involving a work programme of 24 inter-related projects, the Scheme seeks to work with landowners, farmers and the local community to conserve and restore the important natural heritage features of the area, develop a far greater appreciation of the value of the landscape and to inspire people to learn about and participate in the heritage of the Gwent Levels. A £2.5 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund is helping to lever in further funding and deliver a £4 million scheme between 2018 and 2021.

The Partnership is leading on the delivery of the Gwent Levels GI Strategy, which aims to protect and enhance the area's GI assets, address the challenges of climate change and help underpin economic stability and growth that meets the needs of local communities and businesses.

[www.livinglevels.org.uk](http://www.livinglevels.org.uk)

**2.2 Delivery Principles**

2.2.1 To maximise the successful implementation of the GI Strategy, the Council will work with its partners to:

- Champion the benefits of GI across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
- Influence and enable delivery of GI.
- Provide advocacy to market and promote GI.
- Identify opportunities for funding GI projects.
- Establish partnerships for pooling funding, coordinating delivery and long-term management of specific GI projects.
- Liaise with partners in neighbouring areas to co-ordinate cross-boundary delivery of GI projects at the regional scale.
- Monitor progress in delivery of the Action Plan and evaluate project impact in relation to the GI Strategy's objectives.
- Promote adoption of best practice with regards to implementation and long-term maintenance of GI.
- Provide assistance/advice on integration of the GI Strategy into other plans, policies and programmes.
- As the local planning authority, seek to promote best practice by promoting principles for embedding GI into development outlined in the adopted Green Infrastructure SPG.



## 2.3 Integrating Green Infrastructure and Development

2.3.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Section 6.3), opportunities to enhance the quality of the built environment by integrating GI into development through appropriate site selection and use of creative design should be considered.

2.3.2 Planning Policy Wales requires that Building with Nature Standards should be applied to development as a GI design quality checklist for place-making and place-keeping, in a way which is proportionate to the nature and scale of the development proposed. The Building with Nature Standards represent a default benchmark for ensuring appropriate consideration of GI, and whenever possible accreditation under these standards should be pursued.

2.3.3 Planning Policy Wales also requires applicants to submit a Green Infrastructure Statement with all planning applications, proportionate to the scale and nature of the development. Green Infrastructure Statements should demonstrate how well-being, nature and climate priorities identified in the Monmouthshire GI Strategy have been addressed in the development proposal.

## 2.4 Potential Funding Streams

2.4.1 The Council will continue to be proactive in seeking funding opportunities for delivery of GI in line with the objectives and priorities set out in this GI Strategy. Potential funding streams that may support delivery of GI projects include:

- **Welsh Government:** such as that allocated in the Infrastructure Investment Strategy, and Transforming Towns funding can provide support for delivery of cross-sector, collaborative GI projects.
- **Developer contributions:** can provide funding for delivery of GI projects secured in line with the Council's LDP policy.
- **Landfill Disposal Tax Communities Scheme:** distributes grants to community-based environmental projects to help mitigate effects of landfill on local communities.
- **Community grants:** community benefit schemes, investment programmes and small-scale grants can provide funding for community-based environmental projects in support of GI objectives.
- **Public/private sector funding:** can play a key role in securing the future of community green space and other GI assets as part of meeting corporate social responsibility objectives including trust funds.
- **National Lottery funding:** Also has a key role to play in providing funding for delivery of GI projects, such as the National Lottery Heritage Nature Networks Fund in Wales.

## 2.5 Green Infrastructure Management and Maintenance

2.5.1 Monmouthshire County Council will support the long-term management and appropriate maintenance of GI assets on land within its ownership, and is committed to sharing good practice in this regard.

2.5.2 The Council will also encourage other landowners and land managers of GI assets on public or private land to put in place appropriate management and maintenance practices.

2.5.3 Landowners and land managers are encouraged to follow the Council's Guidance Note on Green Infrastructure Management Plans.

2.5.4 Landowners and land managers of public land are also encouraged to support the delivery of the GI Action Plan for Pollinators in South East Wales.

2.5.5 An example of best practice in preparing Green Infrastructure Management Plans is illustrated by the case study in **Box 2.2**.

## 2.6 Updating the Evidence Base

2.6.1 In order to ensure a robust evidence base in respect of the provision, quality/condition and accessibility/connectivity of Monmouthshire's different types of GI assets to inform the Local Development Plan revision process, the following key studies (and their underlying datasets) will be updated:

- Open Space Study (2008)
- Greenspace Study (2010)
- Ecological Connectivity Assessment (2010)

### BOX 2.2 Caldicot Country Park Green Infrastructure Management Plan: Case Study

Caldicot Country Park is one of a number of countryside sites owned and managed by Monmouthshire County Council. In 2017, the Council developed a long-term green infrastructure management plan for the Country Park, which included a public consultation to encourage the community to help plan and shape the future of the park. The aim of the plan is to safeguard the park's connected green spaces, while reflecting its heritage and natural environment to enhance the quality of life and community identity.

## 2.7 Monitoring Delivery

2.7.1 The Council will monitor the outcomes of GI delivery against the strategic objectives and priorities identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The approach to monitoring will be based on the following outline monitoring framework.

| Strategic GI Objectives                                 | Strategic GI Priorities | Indicators to be Monitored  | Outputs to be Measured   |
|---|-------------------------|---|--|
| 1: Improve Health & Wellbeing                           | See Vol 1 - para 3.3.7  | Increase/ decrease in people being physically active using GI     | Numbers of people using green spaces and routes<br>Length of green routes improved<br>Length of new green routes created           |
|   |                         | Increase/ decrease in people engaging with nature                 | Volunteers involved in GI project delivery/ stewardship<br>People benefitting from GI projects                                     |
| 2: Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience | See Vol 1 - para 3.3.12 | Increase/ decrease of species and habitats                        | Numbers of priority species/area of priority habitats<br>Condition of designated habitats<br>Number of sites with management plans |
|   |                         | Delivery of net benefits for biodiversity through development     | Number of net benefits for biodiversity secured through planning conditions/obligations  |
| 3: Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness     | See Vol 1 - para 3.3.17 | Strengthening/ weakening of distinctive landscape characteristics | Length/area of key landscape features (e.g. field boundaries, woodland, water bodies. etc)   |
| 4: Increase Climate Change Resilience                   | See Vol 1 - para 3.3.21 | Increase in use of nature-based solutions                         | Number of nature-based solutions (e.g. natural flood management schemes, green roofs, SuDS, etc.)                                  |
| 5: Support Sustainable Economic Development             | See Vol 1 - para 3.3.26 | Increase/ decrease in green jobs                                  | Numbers of jobs created in GI management and maintenance   |



3

Action Plans







## 3.0 ACTION PLANS

### 3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The original Action Plan developed in support of the 2019 Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy has been updated to reflect progress in delivery of GI projects and to include new GI projects for delivery in the future.

3.1.2 Informed by the needs and opportunities for strengthening Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network identified in Volume 1, Section 3.4/ Appendix D3, the Action Plans set out existing and potential strategic/ landscape-scale GI projects that extend across one or more of the GI Zones.

3.1.3 The Action Plans also set out existing and potential local GI projects focussed around the key growth locations and rural secondary settlements in the adopted LDP, which were identified from the assessment of local needs and opportunities for GI provision in Volume 1, Section 4.0.

3.1.4 The projects have been selected based on their potential to make a contribution to the GI Strategy's objectives and associated priorities for guiding the planning, management and delivery of GI in Monmouthshire (see Volume 1, Section 3.3). The projects were confirmed by the Council in consultation with stakeholders.

3.1.5 The Council will review the Action Plans and update them as necessary to reflect progress or changing circumstances.

### 3.2 Action Plans User Guide

3.2.1 The Action Plans are available as an updateable Excel Database held by MCC. Contact Colette Bosley (01633 644852/colettebosley@monmouthshire.gov.uk) to request access to the Action Plans database.

3.2.2 The database is structured as follows:

**Ref No** – the unique reference number for the project.

---

**Project Name** – existing project name or suggested name for a potential project.

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**Project Scope** – summary of the project's aims, location or spatial extent.

---

**Status:**

- Concept/Aspirational Stage
  - Feasibility Stage
  - Business Case Established and Ready for Funding
  - Existing/Funded
- 

**Strategic/Landscape-Scale or Local/Place-Specific GI Project**

---

**GI Zone Name:**

- A: Gwent Levels
- B: Wye Valley & Wentwood
- C: Central Monmouthshire – South
- D: Central Monmouthshire – North
- E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains
- F: Eastern South Wales Valleys
- Multiple Zones

**Settlement Name:**

- Abergavenny & Llanfoist
- Monmouth
- Chepstow
- Severnside Settlements: Magor & Undy
- Severnside Settlements: Rogiet
- Severnside Settlements: Caldicot
- Severnside Settlements: Portskewett & Sudbrook
- Severnside Settlements: Caerwent
- Usk
- Raglan
- Penperlleni

**Contribution to GI Strategy Objectives:**

- 1: Improve Health & Wellbeing
- 2: Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience
- 3: Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness
- 4: Increase Climate Change Resilience
- 5: Support Sustainable Economic Development

**Contribution to National Well-being Goals:**

- 1: A Prosperous Wales
- 2: A Resilient Wales
- 3: A Healthier Wales
- 4: A More Equal Wales
- 5: A Wales of Cohesive Communities
- 6: A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language
- 7: A Globally Responsive Wales

**Contribution to Monmouthshire Well-being Objectives:**

- 1: Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life
- 2: Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change
- 3: Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change
- 4: Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county

**Contribution to Monmouthshire Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Plan Objectives:**

- 1: Embed biodiversity throughout decision making at all levels
- 2: Provide environmental education to raise awareness and encourage action
- 3: Undertake land management for biodiversity and promote ecosystem resilience
- 4: Influence land management to improve ecosystem resilience
- 5: Tackle key pressures on species and habitats
- 6: Support landscape scale projects and partnerships to maximise delivery
- 7: Monitor the effectiveness of the plan and review

**Priority – the indicative timescale for project delivery:**

- Short-term (1 year)
- Medium-term (2-5 years)
- Longer-term (5+ years)

**Indicative Cost:**

- Low: <£10k
- Medium: £10k-£100k
- High: £100k-£1M
- Major: >£1M

## Delivery Lead

---

## Delivery Partners

---

**Outcomes/Indicators** – for monitoring progress in delivery of action/evaluating project impact.

---

## Abbreviations

- Blaenau-Gwent County Borough Council (BCBC)
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority (BBNPA)
- Blaenavon WHS Partnership (BWHSP)
- Blaenavon World Heritage Environment Group (BWHEG)
- Cadw (Welsh Government Heritage Service) (Cadw)
- Canal & River Trust (CRT)
- Cardiff City Council (CCC)
- Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT)
- Living Levels Landscape Partnership (LLLLP)
- Monmouthshire, Brecon and Abergavenny Canals Trust (MBACT)
- Monmouthshire County Council (MCC)
- Monmouthshire Housing Association (MHA)
- Natural England (NE)
- Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
- Newport City Council (NCC)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

- Torfaen County Borough Council (TCBC)
- Visit Wales (VW)
- Welsh Government (WG)
- Welsh Water (WW)
- Wye Valley AONB Unit
- Wye & Usk Foundation (WUF)

## Search Function

3.2.3 The Excel Database includes a search function; using the drop down grey filter arrows in the column headings, the projects can be searched by the following:

- Status
- Strategic/Landscape-Scale or Local/Place-Specific GI Project
- GI Zone Name
- Settlement Name
- GI Strategy Objective
- National Well-being Goals
- Monmouthshire Well-being Objective
- Monmouthshire Biodiversity & Ecosystem Resilience Plan Objective
- Priority
- Indicative Cost
- Delivery Lead

3.2.4 The Excel Database also includes a function to find specific text (e.g. a specific project title).

Prepared by



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|                                 |                                  |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>SUBJECT:</b>                 | <b>DRAFT LOCAL FOOD STRATEGY</b> |
| <b>MEETING:</b>                 | <b>PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>  |
| <b>DATE:</b>                    | <b>10 APRIL 2024</b>             |
| <b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b> | <b>ALL</b>                       |

## 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To present the Draft Local Food Strategy and associated Delivery prior to consideration for approval by Cabinet on 15 May 2024.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 To scrutinise the Draft Local Food Strategy and Delivery Plan (Appendices One and Two) and consider how it seeks to address its purpose i.e. to set the Council's direction towards *a long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents*'.

## 3. KEY ISSUES

### 3.1 Why a Local Food Strategy?

Firstly, some facts:

- Monmouthshire is known as a food destination and the 'Food capital of Wales'.
- 80% of Monmouthshire's land is laid over to grassland for livestock, which is predominantly beef, lamb and dairy with some growth over the last 10 years in poultry, pigs and goats.
- 16% of Monmouthshire's land is currently being cultivated for crops, which include barley, wheat, maize (for feed and biofuel), stock feed and other cereals.
- The Council owns 24 farm holdings and 40 areas of bare land amounting to 1,122 hectares (2,773 acres) in total, primarily located in the south of the county and in the Severnside area. Most of this land is tenanted or leased to graziers. Many of the holdings are mixed livestock farms, with few remaining dairy units. There are three market gardens. The Council also owns the Monmouthshire Livestock Market at Raglan.
- Demand for allotments and growing space is high, with supply and demand often unbalanced across the county.
- From primary production through manufacturing, retail, and hospitality, the food sector accounts for approximately 5,000 jobs in Monmouthshire – with many more jobs in secondary industries connected to food (vets, machinery, logistics, etc.).
- One of the Council's main interventions in the food economy is in purchasing food for school meals and the county's meals-on-wheels service ('public-sector procurement'). Traditional procurement models have excluded small and local suppliers but there has been recent progress towards a more socially responsible procurement strategy that focuses on local wealth creation, taking a more enabling approach to engage with small suppliers.
- The roll-out of Welsh Government's Universal Free School Meals policy is complete across all Monmouthshire's Infants and Juniors, though uptake is patchy

and often lowest in areas with highest eligibility. School-meal budget and lunchtime food waste are areas of concern.

3.2 In considering the facts above, the Council has been developing an approach to local and community growing, procurement of food and working with local suppliers. Every primary school has a kitchen where freshly cooked, nutrition-rich meals are produced five days a week. Like most other councils in Wales, we also support a countywide Food Partnership. These initiatives are appreciated and do show impact. But the Council can do more to enable a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on sustaining the impacts of our interventions, the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.

3.3 Hence, the draft Local Food Strategy which:

- a) is driven by evidence which enables us to target areas and populations of need;
- b) positions us to maximise resources and inward investments – identifying potential areas of development and pathways to capitalise on development opportunities through attracting more strategic funding and investments;
- c) aligns our work on the local food system with the Council’s Community and Corporate Plan objectives and sector policies – optimising the impact of food- and farming-based interventions through how we procure, manage our assets, support our local economy, encourage learning and skills acquisition and protect our environment;
- d) is focused on long-term change – helping us achieve short-term impacts that set the foundation for achieving long-term goals.

The purpose of the Strategy will be achieved through the delivery of actions that enable, influence and advocate for a local food system that:

- ensures everyone is well nourished,
- supports sustainable food and farming businesses to prosper, and
- allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

### 3.4 The Approach

Our approach is founded on:

- *collaborative working;*
- *adaptive and opportunistic approaches* – adapting to the changing dynamics in food and farming policy and practice;
- *taking advantage of opportunities arising* (e.g. for new partners or funding);
- while always focusing on *impact and outcomes*.

### 3.5 The Guiding Principles

The Local Food Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles are *tackling inequality, addressing the nature and climate crises, and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices*.

### 3.6 Three Core Themes

Three interlinked core themes have been identified, which have been scoped to ensure alignment with other Council strategies, are based on evidence, and have the likelihood to drive system change. These are:

- *Improving local and ethical supply chains,*
- *Developing food as an economic sector, and*

- *Community food: access, education, participation.*

An Influence Mapping exercise has been carried out to identify areas of greatest impact. These are *the food we buy, the land we own, and the conversations we convene*. Using this framework, activities have been developed under each of the core themes; these have been detailed in the Delivery Plan at the end of the Strategy (Appendix One), and actions will be taken by the Council and in partnership. The Delivery Plan also details timeframes, responsible departments, and an explanation of the how the team will define success and track benefits through the reporting and monitoring framework.

### **3.7 The Consultation Process to date**

In drafting the Strategy, the following consultation activities have taken place:

- A reference Group of experts and partners has been established in the capacity of ‘critical friends’ who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making the system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.
- Two stakeholder consultations were held in March – one in Abergavenny and one in Chepstow – where discussions regarding the draft Strategy took place.
- An all-Member’s Seminar was held on the 15 March.
- A Cross Member’s working group has also been established to monitor progress of the Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan.

All these activities have shaped the draft Local Food Strategy appended to this report.

## **4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)**

4.1 An integrated impact assessment has been carried out and attached to this report as Appendix Two.

The positive impacts of this draft Strategy are that:

- It enables a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on sustaining the impacts of our interventions, the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.
- It sets our direction of travel, towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.
- The approach of the Strategy is founded on collaborative working, maximising adaptive and opportunistic approaches, whilst taking advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding); while always being focused on impact and outcomes.
- The Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles are tackling inequality, addressing the nature and climate crises, and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices.
- There are three interlinked core themes which are likely to drive system change. These are improving local and ethical supply chains, developing food as an economic sector, and community food: access, education, participation.
- The actions associated with these three core themes will enable, influence and advocate for a local food system that ensures everyone is well nourished; supports sustainable food and farming businesses to prosper and allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

No negative impacts have been identified.

## 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

| Option   | Benefit                          | Risk   | Comment   |
|--|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Place Scrutiny Committee to consider and comment on the draft Local Food Strategy. | Member's views to be considered. | If the Strategy is not scrutinised, a strategic consultation opportunity will be lost. | Preferred option to enable full scrutiny of the Strategy prior to consideration for Cabinet approval. |

## 6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Once approved the success of the Strategy will be monitored and quarterly progress reported against the Delivery Plan and the associated monitoring and evaluation framework including those set by funders including the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and WLGA. Updates will be provided to Place Scrutiny Committee as requested.

## 7. REASONS

- 7.1 Whilst the Council does not have a statutory responsibility to produce a Local Food Strategy, this draft Strategy demonstrates the Council's recognition of Monmouthshire as the 'Food Capital of Wales'. This Strategy will enable a whole-authority approach focussed on the long-term sustainability of the County's land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.
- 7.2 The Strategy aligns with the Council's Community and Corporate Plan and its associated enabling strategies including the Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy, the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy, the Asset Management Strategy, the Climate and Nature Strategy and associated Action Plans, and the Replacement Local Development Plan. It has also been authored to reflect key regional, national and UK Strategies such as 'Dyfodol Y Bannau The Future' (Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Management Plan, 2023–28), Gwent Public Services Board Wellbeing Assessment and Plan, Food and Drink Wales Vision and Strategy, 'National Food Strategy' (Dimpleby Report) and the Sustainable Food Places Framework.

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Council's Sustainable Food Team is currently funded via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the WLGA Food Partnership Development Fund, and the WLGA Direct Food Support Fund.
- 8.2 As many activities will involve our partners, support will also be provided by, among others, Natural Resources Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Public Health Team, Food Partnerships, Trussel Trust, local Community Fridges, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Social Farms and Gardens, Farming Connect, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Wye and Usk Foundation, Land Workers Alliance, farming unions, farmers and food businesses, our community groups and voices.

## 9. CONSULTEES

- Council Leader
- Chief Officer for Communities and Place
- Informal Cabinet (9<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024)

- Strategic Leadership Team
- All Members
- The Marches Forward Partnership
- Stakeholder Consultation Events (11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> March) with local food businesses and sector representatives.
- Head of Enterprise and Community Animation
- Communities and Place DMT
- MCC Landlord Services Team
- MCC Economy, Employment and Skills Team
- MCC Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure Team
- MCC Catering Team

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix One: Draft Local Food Strategy and Delivery Plan  
Appendix Two: EQIA

## **11. AUTHOR**

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## Foreword - Councillor, Mary Ann Brocklesby, Council Leader

**Food matters for us in Monmouthshire: the food we eat, the food we produce, process and sell. Our land depends on it and our identity as a county is bound up with food and farming in our everyday lives, in our economy, tourism and in our hospitality sector. We have so much to celebrate and also to protect so that everyone can benefit from affordable good-quality food produced without compromising nature or degrading our beautiful environment.**

Monmouthshire County Council has a long history of supporting our whole food economy, buying local produce to feed our children and supply our care homes, encouraging community growing and allotments, and working with food producers to promote their projects. Our strategy builds on these strong foundations and sets out the steps we will take towards our long term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.

This is not a county-wide food strategy. It concentrates on what we as a local authority can do to make a difference when we stay true to our values of always working in partnership and seeking to empower our local communities to find their own local solutions. Our aim is to have the

the greatest impact on our local food system either through the Council's own interventions or by enabling others to act. I am proud that our strategy has been developed together with so many people – farmers, community growers, food businesses, local communities, and food and farming policy-makers to name a few. I am grateful and thank them for their generosity in contributing their time and expertise to developing our strategy.

Sustainability lies at the very heart of this strategy. The nature and climate crises demand our attention, and our duty to future generations requires that we act now and embed sustainability in all our decision-making. When we talk about food or local food we always mean sustainable food – sustainable environmentally, and also socially and economically. That means good-quality food for everyone, not just a few, and supporting the circular and foundational economies. True sustainability means working in all three areas.

And food itself? The very word conjures up different meanings for us all. For us as a Council our priority is safe, healthy, and nutritious food that meets the UN Human Rights Standards. Food should be available from natural resources (now

and for future generations), accessible both financially and physically, and adequate to nourish the person and sustain body and mind. This is what we strive to provide for the people we feed, in schools, care homes and domiciliary care. But we are not about to dictate to residents and visitors about what to eat. Food should be pleasurable and sociable, from everyday meals to treats and beyond. Many of our local businesses specialise in luxury goods, such as alcohol, chocolate, or ice cream, and they too deserve our support as part of the rich tapestry of Monmouthshire's local food system.

The Delivery Plan that accompanies our Strategy sets out how we will act internally and with partners to achieve our objectives. I look forward to seeing those activities take shape, and to witnessing the difference those activities will make in our precious county and to the talented, dedicated, community-minded people who help make it such a special place to live, work, and visit.



Councillor  
Mary Ann Brocklesby



# 1. OUR PURPOSE: Why a Local Food Strategy?

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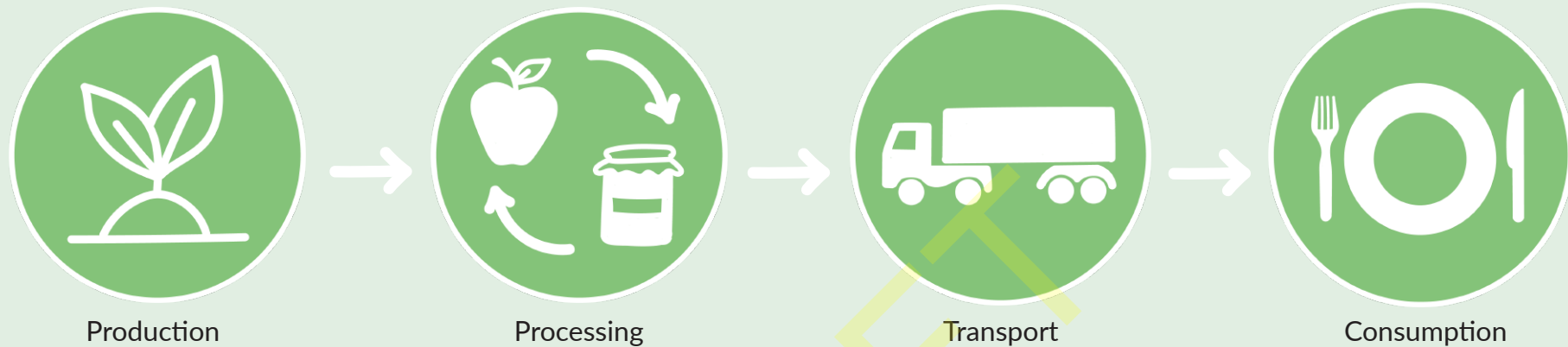
## 1. Our Purpose: Why a Local Food Strategy?

Monmouthshire stands out among UK counties for the commitment its local authority has made to supporting a sustainable, ethical, equitable local food system. This Local Food Strategy is the expression of that commitment, setting out a clear and ambitious goal, a practical approach, and a reasonable assessment of where MCC can have most impact given the limited resources at its disposal and the complexity of the food system itself.

The Strategy sets the trajectory towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents. This goal aligns with our wider commitment to become a prosperous zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health, and dignity for everyone at every stage of life.



## 1.1 What is the Food System?



The food system is extensive and complex. It covers a wide range of activities, affects every one of us every day, and connects with some of society's most pressing and difficult issues. According to Oxford University's Future of Food Programme:

*The food system is a complex web of activities involving production, processing, transport, and consumption. Issues concerning the food system include the governance and economics of food production, its sustainability, the degree to which we waste food, how food production affects the natural environment and the impact of food on individual and population health.*

*(Oxford Martin Programme, no date)*

Although a local authority cannot influence all aspects of the food system as described above, we do touch on many of them. By doing so in a strategic manner we can deliver environmental, social, economic, and cultural benefits for our county and the wider world in line with the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

## 1.2 Why a Local Food Strategy?

Increasingly, politicians, campaigners, and communities across Wales are recognising that the food system is a powerful driver for change: by thinking strategically and joining up with partners, we can make this vast and complex system a force for good. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales recognised this in his 2023 strategy document, *Cymru Can*, which makes food a key 'area of focus' and sets out the responsibilities of other public service bodies in this area:

*From farm to fork, food is critical to achieving Wales's well-being goals for the health of our people and our planet ... Public services must use their levers for change, for example, doing more to facilitate community growing and sustainable land use, considering the wider implications of planning decisions on communities and nature, providing the framework of farming subsidies and grants and understanding the local and global impact of food spending.*

*(Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 2023)*

Historically, Monmouthshire County Council has been ahead of the curve: in 2013 we passed a motion to support the Incredible Edible community growing movement on Council land; in 2015 we adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance on Green Infrastructure, which includes provision for food growing; and in 2020 the Council made a commitment to the delivery of a Food Development Action Plan. More recently the Council has explored new approaches to procurement and working with local suppliers, and embraced the roll-out of Universal Free School Meals to all Infants and Juniors, cooking meals from scratch in the purpose-built kitchens that are a feature of every one of our primary schools.

This Strategy now draws on that long track record and sets a vision for the future, providing an evidence-based, whole-Authority approach that will ensure we use our resources wisely and to maximum effect for Monmouthshire's communities, businesses, and natural environment.



### 1.3 What is Local?

'Local food' is difficult to define geographically, particularly as Monmouthshire is a border county with neighbours in both Wales and England. This Strategy aligns with the Council's Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy (2023) in recognising the economic, social, environmental and cultural value that can be generated by spending public money with local businesses (in particular small and micro enterprises), and acknowledging that 'dependent on the particular requirement, local can be Monmouthshire, Gwent, English Border Counties, Cardiff Capital Region or Wales'.

#### What sort of food are we talking about?

For us as a Council, our priority is **safe, healthy, and nutritious food** that meets the UN Human Rights Standards:

**Availability:** Food should be obtainable from natural resources, and on sale in markets and shops.

**Availability:** Food should be obtainable from natural resources, and on sale in markets and shops.

**Accessibility:** Food must be affordable. Individuals should be able to have an adequate diet without compromising on other basic needs [...] Food should be accessible to the physically vulnerable, including children, sick people, people with disabilities and the elderly. Food must also be available to people in remote areas, to victims of armed conflicts or natural disasters, and to prisoners.

**Adequacy:** Food must satisfy dietary needs, taking into account a person's age, living conditions, health, occupation, sex, etc. Food should be safe for human consumption and free from adverse substances.

*(UN Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, 2024)*

But we also believe that food should be pleasurable and sociable, and that our local businesses producing luxury goods and treats are also a vital part of our local food system and economy.





# 2. THE CONTEXT

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## 2. The Context

The food system impacts many areas of county life, from how land is managed, to how our economy functions, to the health of our residents and how communities come together.

### 2.1 Current Land Use

- 80% of Monmouthshire's land is farmed. The great majority is laid over to grassland for livestock, which is predominantly beef, lamb and dairy with some growth over the last 10 years in poultry, pigs and goats. Livestock is and probably always will be the mainstay of our agricultural land use and farming communities.
- 16% of Monmouthshire's land is currently being cultivated for crops, which include barley, wheat, maize (for feed and biofuel), stock feed and other cereals.
- There are currently at least fifteen primary vegetable and fruit producing businesses across Monmouthshire; those selling direct to the public are small, the largest being 6 hectares (15 acres).
- Monmouthshire County Council owns 24 farm holdings and 40 areas of bare land amounting to 1,122 hectares (2,773 acres) in total, primarily located in the south of the county and in the Severnside area. Most of this land is tenanted or leased to graziers. The majority of the holdings are mixed livestock farms, with few remaining dairy units. There are three market gardens. The Council also owns the Monmouthshire Livestock Market at Raglan.
- The county's rivers are in an unfavourable condition, partly due to agricultural pollution from within and outside the county. Steps are being taken to address the issues, but the problems remain.
- In future, food production will probably need to be balanced with a greater emphasis on other ecosystem services (such as atmospheric regulation, water quality regulation, water storage, and cultural services).
- The agricultural industry is experiencing challenging times as Government subsidy, trade deals and immigration policy change post-Brexit, and pressure to reduce the environmental impact of farming grows through Government policy, the supply chain, media, and public opinion.

## 2.2 Enterprise and Economy

- From primary production through manufacturing, retail, and hospitality, the food sector accounts for approximately 5,000 jobs in Monmouthshire – with many more jobs in secondary industries connected to food (vets, machinery, logistics, etc.). Monmouthshire is known as a food destination and the ‘food capital of Wales’.
- Broadly, the sector’s significance in GVA is forecast to increase between 2024 and 2042, though more granular data reveals nuances within the macro-forecasting in terms of job gains or losses in different parts of the supply chain, and GVA per job.
- Monmouthshire has around 700 food-related businesses. Over 90% are micro-businesses (0–9 employees), though there are also successful SMEs and larger businesses operating in the county’s food industry. These businesses contribute significantly to Monmouthshire’s sense of place for residents and visitors and are central to our local food economy.
- Food and drink businesses sometimes struggle to find suitable premises (and/or secure planning permission) to allow them to move into the county or scale-up within it, potentially limiting growth. Housing costs and availability present another pinch-point, limiting entrepreneurs’ ability to start up in the county.
- Supply-chain gaps and precarities limit the viability and/or long-term resilience of local supply chains (e.g. slaughtering facilities for livestock; processing and logistics for grains and horticultural crops).
- Staffing and skills are concerns in many areas of the food industry locally, from primary production through manufacture and retail. These concerns are often linked to the availability and cost of housing and transport.
- One of Monmouthshire County Council’s main interventions in the food economy is in purchasing food for school meals and the county’s meals-on-wheels service (‘public-sector procurement’). Traditional procurement models have excluded small and local suppliers but there has been recent progress towards a more socially responsible procurement strategy that focuses on local wealth creation, taking a more enabling approach to engage with small suppliers.

## 2.3 Community and Health

- Just under 20% of pupils aged 5–15 are eligible for free school meals or transitionally protected (2021–22 data), and just over 25% of children are living in poverty, after housing costs (2020/21 data).
- The roll-out of Welsh Government’s Universal Free School Meals policy is complete across all Monmouthshire’s Infants and Juniors. Uptake is generally high, but areas of lowest uptake are often those with highest eligibility. School-meal budget and lunchtime food waste are areas of concern.

Healthy Start uptake varies month by month, usually between 60% and 80%.

- Out of 40 pre-school settings, 32 have completed the nutrition and oral health element of the Healthy and Sustainable Pre-School Scheme, and 30 have achieved the Gold Standard Healthy Snack Award.
- Five schools in Monmouthshire have achieved National Quality Award including focus on food and nutrition.
- Yet, approximately 20% of 4–5-year-olds and over 50% of adults aged 16+ are obese.





- Trussel Trust food banks gave out approximately 4,000 food parcels in 2021/22. Additional free or low-cost food parcels or meals are provided by other community initiatives across the county, including independent food banks, community fridges, food clubs, lunch clubs, soup kitchens, etc., all of whom report rising demand. These initiatives are a vital and vibrant part of our local food system providing invaluable direct and wrap-around support to our residents.
- Demand for allotments and growing space is high, with supply and demand often unbalanced across the county. Many communities and schools have communal growing initiatives, providing a source of fresh fruit and vegetables and opportunities for outdoor learning, exercise, and social interaction.
- Public health practitioners and campaigners are increasingly reporting that traditional health messaging, which seeks to influence individual decisions, is inadequate; they are turning instead to different approaches that attempt to shift the wider context in which individuals make their choices. These approaches often involve working in partnership through cross-sector networks.

\* \* \*

Awareness of the context in which we work has shaped our Strategy and the broader Council strategies it supports. Within the county-wide context, delivery against this Strategy will consider more granular local data when selecting priority areas and interventions.





# 3. DEVELOPING THE STRATEGY





### 3. Developing the Strategy: Process and Evidence

This Strategy has developed out of conversations and discussions within the Council, with colleagues across many organisations, and with individuals who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making that system fairer, more ethical and more locally based. We have also drawn on a wealth of evidence and stakeholder engagement about our local food and farming context and what works in contributing to a healthier, more sustainable system. Many of our partners have shared data with us, and we have a library of commissioned studies and active research undertaken through the Rural Development Programme, Community Renewal Fund and others.

We also ran an internal influence mapping exercise to help shape our delivery plan. The outcomes of this exercise are described in Section 9. In drafting the Strategy, the following consultation activities took place:

- A reference group of experts and partners was established in the capacity of 'critical friends' who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making the system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.
- The outline strategy proposal was presented and discussed at the regular Monmouthshire Food Partnership Steering Group meeting on 28 February 2024.
- Two stakeholder consultations were held in March 2024, one in Abergavenny and one in Chepstow, where discussions regarding the m draft Strategy took place.
- Eight written responses were received from external stakeholders.
- An all-Member's Seminar was held on the 15 March 2024.
- A cross-party Member's working group has also been established to monitor progress of the Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan.
- The draft Strategy was scrutinised at Place Scrutiny Committee on 10 April 2024.

All these activities have shaped the Local Food Strategy and Delivery Plan.

# 4. STRATEGIC CONTEXT AND SCOPE

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## 4. Strategic Context and Scope

### 4.1 Strategic Context

In addition to the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, there are legislative and policy requirements that inform and influence the Council's activity within the local food system. Crucially, the context we work in is framed by law and policy on agriculture, trade, immigration, commerce and procurement as set by the Welsh and/or UK Governments. Though these do not always align comfortably with our local objectives, in many cases there are synergies. Some of the most relevant adopted and emerging strategies are set out in below. In particular this Strategy should be read alongside the strategies listed in the Local column, and provide more detailed data and contextual information, and set the wider organisational aspirations.

| Local   | Regional   | National   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy</li> <li>• Asset Management Strategy</li> <li>• Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy</li> <li>• Climate &amp; Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plans*</li> <li>• Green Infrastructure Strategy</li> <li>• Replacement Local Development Plan</li> <li>• Food Partnership Charter</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Natural Resources Wales South -East Area Statement</li> <li>• Gwent Wildlife Trust Landscape Profiles</li> <li>• Gwent Public Services Board Wellbeing Assessment &amp; Plan</li> <li>• 'Dyfodol Y Bannau The Future' (Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Management Plan, 2023–28)</li> <li>• South-East Wales Corporate Joint Committee Strategic Development Plan</li> <li>• Food Strategies from neighbouring counties</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wellbeing of Future Generations Act</li> <li>• Social Partnerships and Procurement Act</li> <li>• Food and Drink Wales Vision and Strategy</li> <li>• Welsh Government Sustainable Farming Scheme</li> <li>• Welsh Government Community Food Strategy</li> <li>• Welsh Government Healthy Weight Healthy Wales Strategy</li> <li>• Future Generations Commissioner for Wales, 'Cymru Can'</li> <li>• 'National Food Strategy' (Dimpleby Report)</li> <li>• Sustainable Food Places framework</li> <li>• Future Wales: The National Plan 2040</li> </ul> |

\* The action plans (APs) that sit under the Climate and Nature Strategy are: (1) Internal 2030 Decarbonisation AP; (2) Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Section 6 Forward Plan & Nature Recovery AP; (3) Rivers and Oceans AP; (4) Community Climate AP.

## 4.2 Scope

We recognise that it is neither possible nor appropriate for a local authority to influence all aspects of the food system. Our direct influence is limited to our own asset portfolio and our statutory and voluntary functions; though we can work collaboratively to widen our influence, there are still many areas that come down to personal choice – be that the commercial choice of a business or land owner, or the personal choice of individual shoppers. The scope of this Strategy is therefore restricted to those areas where MCC has direct or significant indirect influence (see further Section 9); it does not attempt a comprehensive picture of all food-system work undertaken in the county across the private, public, and third sectors.

Nor does the Strategy reflect all the ways the Council touches on the local food system. Much relevant activity is already being reported elsewhere. The primary purpose of this Strategy is to highlight areas of maximum impact, where the Council can most effectively deploy its voluntary functions (and the funding associated with them) to assist in meeting wider organisational objectives delivered through statutory operational teams.





# 5. OUR GOAL AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

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## 5.1 Our Goal

This Strategy sets the trajectory towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents. It also recognises the changes we want to see in our local food system will: a) take longer than one Council term; b) cannot happen unless we work collaboratively with farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers and communities; and c) depend on Welsh and UK farming, food and procurement investments and policies.

We will achieve our purpose through actions that enable, influence, and advocate for a local food system that:

- ensures everyone is well nourished,
- brings prosperity to sustainable food and farming businesses, and
- allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

This purpose springs from the over-arching objective of MCC's Community and Corporate Plan: to see Monmouthshire become 'a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life'.



## 5.2 Our Guiding Principles

Our Local Food Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources.

These principles, which are shared with the Council's Community and Corporate Plan, are:

**Tackling  
inequality**



**Addressing the nature  
and climate crises**



**Supporting sustainable  
and innovative  
economic activity**



The principles are all directly relevant to the local food system and the Council's place within it. Table 1 shows how elements of the food system connect with each principle.

Table 1: MCC's Guiding Principles Applied to the Food System

| <b>Tackling inequality</b>  | <b>Addressing the nature and climate crises</b>        | <b>Supporting sustainable and innovative economic activity</b> |
|---|--|--|
| Access: to appropriate and affordable food; to land               | Agricultural and land management practices             | Alternative enterprise models and social enterprise            |
| The socio-economic distribution of dietary ill health and obesity | Food waste, packaging and recycling                    | Collaboration and clustering                                   |
| The ethics of global and local supply chains                      | Diversity and resilience in the local food economy     | Infrastructure and investment                                  |
| Links between food and the root causes of inequality              | Visibility and public understanding of food production | Higher education, technology, R&D                              |



# 6. OUR APPROACH

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## 6. Our Approach

Our approach is founded on three principles:

- **collaborative working** – we will always work in partnership where appropriate;
- **adaptive and opportunistic responses** – we will adapt to the changing dynamics in food and farming policy and practice, taking advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding);
- **focus on impact and outcomes** – we will take time to learn from past experience and new research (our own and others'), and to understand 'what good looks like' and how to measure progress towards it.

This approach will deliver a strategy that:

- a) **is evidence-based**, enabling us to target areas and populations of need;
- b) **positions us to maximise resources and inward investments**, identifying potential areas of development and pathways to capitalise on development opportunities through attracting more strategic funding and investments;
- c) **aligns our work on the local food system with our Community and Corporate Plan objectives and sector policies**, optimising the impact of food- and farming-based interventions through how we procure, manage our assets, support our local economy, encourage learning and skills acquisition and protect our environment;
- d) **is focused on long-term change**, helping us achieve short-term impacts that set the foundation for achieving long-term goals.

### Sustainability

Sustainability lies at the very heart of this strategy. When we talk about food or local food we always mean sustainable food – sustainable environmentally, and also socially and economically. That means good-quality food for everyone, not just a few, and supporting the circular and foundational economies. True sustainability means working in all three areas, for present and future generations.





## Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire

**Talk Farm Regen (TFR) Monmouthshire is an example of using our approach to put our guiding principles into action.** TFR Monmouthshire is a farmer-led discussion group supported by the Council through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. It is open to anyone who is farming in the Usk and Wye catchments and interested in regenerative farming. Regenerative farming has five core principles:

- minimise soil disturbance
- keep living roots in the soil
- keep the soil covered
- grow a wide variety of crops
- practise mixed farming (crops and livestock)

The approach is well established and backed by evidence of the benefits for soil health, water quality and flood risk, biodiversity, yields, and business performance. It therefore aligns with our guiding principles of addressing the nature and climate crises and supporting sustainable economic activity and the objectives of the Community and Corporate Plan. The group provides an informal setting where farmers can give and get advice from others trying similar things in the same locality.

By raising awareness and spreading knowledge locally through talks, workshops and farm visits, the group positions farmers to enter future agricultural subsidy schemes and emerging private markets that look to balance food production with broader ecosystem services – allowing farm businesses to maximise resources and inward investment.

Equally important is the group's social aspect: farming can be an isolating profession, involving hard labour, low returns, and long hours worked alone. The group's in-person events provide an opportunity for our farming community to come together and socialise in a way often taken for granted by those in other occupations, contributing to our objective of tackling inequality in all its forms.

Alongside the discussion group the Council has supported a mentoring scheme to give three farms a year's more focussed support to plan a transition to regenerative practices. Since we recognise that farming systems cannot be changed overnight, this scheme is focused on long-term change rather than short-term targets: the year of mentoring will provide farms with a tailored route map for change over years to come. This project is also a shining example of partnership working between the Council, Food Partnership, Wye Valley National Landscape, private consultancy, the farming community, and Size of Wales and ACE Monmouth – the third-sector and community organisations who conceived the project and lead delivery.





# 7. PARTNERS AND PARTNERSHIPS

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## 7. Partners and Partnerships

Partnership working is at the heart of our approach, in line with the collaboration, integration and involvement 'ways of working' under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. We have partners at national, regional and local levels, and this Strategy is nested in the wider framework set by those partnerships as outlined in Section 4.1 above.

### 7.1 Regional Strategic Economic Partnerships

Monmouthshire is a border county in a strategic location. Our county benefits from membership of regional economic partnerships including the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCR), the Western Gateway and Marches Forward. Through the CCR, Monmouthshire assists in delivering the Sustainable Food Challenge Fund. Monmouthshire also leads the Food, Rural Development and Economy subgroup of the Marches Forward Partnership. These regional strategic economic partnerships also set a context of local-authority collaboration and joint working in many other fields too.



### 7.2 Multi-Agency Working

More locally we work closely with a wide range of partners to address specific issues and/or push for long-term change. Among our valued partners are: Gwent Public Services Board, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Public Health Team, Natural Resources Wales, Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, Registered Social Landlords, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Food Sense Wales and Food Partnerships, Social Farms and Gardens, Trussell Trust, Food Farming and Countryside Commission, Farming Connect, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership, Wye and Usk Foundation, river catchment partnerships, Wye Valley National Landscape, Land Workers Alliance, Transition Towns, education providers, farming unions, farmers and food businesses, and our community voices.

### 7.3 Local Insights

We rely on direct connections with Monmouthshire residents, community groups and businesses to understand our County's needs and aspirations. Elected Members represent their constituents and ensure these vital voices are heard. In addition, the Council convenes specific food-system networks and groups, including Monmouthshire Food & Drink Business Network, Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire, and Monmouthshire Food Partnership.





# Monmouthshire Food Partnership

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**Monmouthshire Food Partnership is a county-wide collaboration of people and organisations from all walks of life who think food is worth taking seriously. The Partnership is hosted by Monmouthshire County Council and coordinated by the Sustainable Food Team. It is part of a UK-wide network of Food Partnerships who are all working together to champion good food and create sustainable local food systems that everyone can access and enjoy.**

**Monmouthshire Food Partnership's bilingual website is at [foodmonmouthshire.co.uk](http://foodmonmouthshire.co.uk)**



Or use the QR code to access

The Partnership works to the nationally acclaimed Sustainable Food Places framework, which covers six key issues:

- Governance and Strategy
- Healthy Food for All
- Food for the Planet
- Good Food Movement
- Sustainable Food Economy
- Catering and Procurement

This framework has been endorsed by Welsh Government, which has so far funded food partnerships across Wales in 2022–24.

Through its cross-sector Steering Group and wide network of over 500 members and supporters, Monmouthshire Food Partnership aims to:

- connect people, projects and partners trying to create a sustainable local food system,
- take collective action to shape the local food system, and
- be a collective voice for food that positively shapes policy and shares best practice.

Since convening in its current form in 2022 the Partnership has issued over £14,000 in grants to support community food projects and growing spaces. It has supported FOOD Clubs, community fridges, and secondary-school breakfast clubs, and run training sessions in cookery and food growing. There have been two community 'Cook and Share' days, and 70 people were introduced to pumpkin soup in a waste-busting campaign ahead of Hallowe'en 2023. Businesses have benefited from a Meet the Buyer event, peer-to-peer networking, and support to trade at the world-famous Abergavenny Food Festival. Three farm businesses have received a year of 1:1 mentoring in transitioning to regenerative farming practices from a leading expert in the field. The Partnership is also crucial to the Welsh Veg for Schools supply chain investment pilot, showcased in the next case study.



# 8. OUR CORE THEMES

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## Our Core Themes

We have a clear purpose for this Strategy, which is:

to set the trajectory towards fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.

To reach our goal we have set three interlinked core themes, which we will address by working collaboratively across Council Directorates, with elected Members, our partners and trusted experts.

These core themes are:

- improving local and ethical supply chains
- developing food as an economic sector
- community food: access, education, participation

Broad objectives have been identified for each theme, and alignment with other key strategies identified (Table 2). Many of these objectives and their related actions are captured and monitored in the strategies cross-referenced.



Table 2 Core Themes and Linked Objectives\*

| Improving local and ethical supply chains  | Developing food as an economic sector  | Community food: access, education, participation  |
|--|--|---|
| <p>Increasing the use of local and seasonal produce in schools (primary and where possible secondary) and care homes.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>   | <p>Showcasing local food and drink producers and promoting Monmouthshire as a food and drink destination.</p> <p><i>DMP, EESS</i></p>  | <p>Providing and promoting access to land through allotments and community gardens for growing food.</p> <p><i>NRAP</i></p>   |
| <p>Working across the supply chain (incl. suppliers, processors and logistics) to support the development of the local food economy in private and public sectors and reduce our reliance on imported food.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>                                     | <p>Supporting entrepreneurs, start-ups, and established food and drink businesses to be environmentally, socially, and financially sustainable – encourage innovation and clustering.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p> | <p>Working in schools to increase ‘food literacy’ from soil to plate and encourage a positive food culture.</p> <p><i>NRAP</i></p>  |
| <p>Working with procurement colleagues to maximise the social value and minimise the environmental impact of public-sector food contracts (e.g. using Fairtrade and Deforestation Free options where possible, minimising packaging and waste).</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p> | <p>Promoting learning pathways to develop skills and career opportunities in food, farming, and associated industries.</p> <p><i>EESS, NRAP</i></p>  | <p>Supporting accessible food projects in community settings (e.g. community fridges, lunch clubs), with a focus on environmental sustainability and nutritional quality</p> <p><i>CCAP, NRAP</i></p> |
| <p>Promoting regenerative agriculture, nature-friendly farming and horticulture on the MCC farm estate and beyond.</p> <p><i>EESS, NRAP</i></p>  | <p>Exploring options for investment in infrastructure and taking a long view on supply-chain resilience.</p> <p><i>EESS</i></p>  | <p>Facilitating Monmouthshire Food Partnership as a driver of food citizenship and cross-sector insight.</p> <p><i>NRAP</i></p>   |

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\* Letters in italic indicate strategic alignment: CCAP = Community Climate Change Action Plan; DMP = Destination Management Plan; EESS = Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy; NRAP = Nature Recovery Action Plan





## Welsh Veg in Schools

Since 2023 Monmouthshire has been participating in a pilot to develop new local agroecological supply chains into schools – specifically focusing on vegetables. The Welsh Veg in Schools pilot is a collaboration between Local Authorities and Health Boards covering Cardiff, Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire, the counties' Food Partnerships, the wholesaler Castell Howell Foods, a number of vegetable growers, and Farming Connect Horticulture. It is led by Food Sense Wales and supported by Welsh Government Foundational Economy funding. This 'action research' pilot brings together all this Strategy's core themes into one multi-pronged project.

In essence the project is about improving local and ethical supply chains: the partners worked together to open conventional wholesale supply chains to Welsh vegetable growers focused on producing high-quality food with minimal environmental impacts. Through the Autumn Term of 2023, ten Monmouthshire primary schools received fresh agroecological Welsh vegetables through the project to use in school lunches. More broadly, the collaboration is an example of developing food as an economic sector: the growers have invested and adapted their practices to meet the requirements of public-sector supply chains, and new quality assurance standards have been developed to suit such small-scale mixed enterprises.

Nutritional analyses of the produce have been undertaken, and options trialled to extend the harvest's shelf life and preserve summer gluts for future use (e.g. by converting fresh tomatoes into a jarred base sauce fortified with spinach and/or kale).

Finally, the project addressed wider issues around access, education and participation. By investing in the supply chain through school meals, high-quality local vegetables were made available to all children regardless of their socio-economic status, going some way to 'bridging the gap' between the sustainability and food access movements. Children from participating schools were also taken on farm visits to meet the people who grew their vegetables and get hands on planting onions and harvesting carrots. There was also a series of classroom activities for children to explore less familiar vegetables through touch, smell, and taste, increasing 'food literacy' from soil to plate and encouraging a positive and enquiring food culture.



The project is ongoing in 2024 and at the time of writing the growing season is already in progress and looking ahead to the next harvest.



# 9. INFLUENCE MAPPING



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## 9. Influence Mapping

The core themes and objectives identified above are broad and cross-cutting. Given our evidence-based approach and the strict scope of this Strategy, a further influence mapping exercise was carried out to identify areas of maximum impact, where the Council can most effectively concentrate its limited resources. This exercise identified three areas of focus that draw multiple workstreams together and unite them to drive change against our Core Themes and in line with our Guiding Principles.

These are:

**The food  
we buy**



**The land  
we own**



**The conversations we  
convene**





## 9.1 The Food We Buy

In the 2023/24 financial year, the Council spent approximately £1.3 million on food for school meals, care homes and domiciliary support ('meals on wheels'). School meals are one of our most powerful levers for addressing inequality and the nature and climate crises. We feed 4,200 children every day, providing a nourishing hot lunch to sustain them as they grow and learn. Increasing uptake of universal free school meals (UFSM) is one way in which we can strike at the root causes of inequality, in particular child hunger, dietary ill-health and the socio-economic attainment gap. By procuring wisely, choosing British seasonal ingredients that are ethically and sustainably produced, we can support our domestic economy in confidence that the ingredients have been produced to UK standards without unacceptable exploitation of human and natural resources. Where budgets allow and the evidence is robust, we can potentially go further by committing to certifications such as Fairtrade for chocolate, coffee, sugar, bananas and more, RSPO for palm oil, MSC for fish, higher-welfare meat, or organic fruit and vegetables.

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However, the school catering team faces barriers. A return to seasonal eating means embracing ingredients that are unfamiliar in many households, such as kale, beetroot, and spinach. Raising standards in some areas may mean economising in others, for instance by using beans and lentils sometimes to free up budget for sustainable meat and fish on other days. Above all, children's palates are increasingly accustomed to the flavours and textures of ultra-processed foods. Before committing to menu change, our menu planners therefore need assurance that the changes will be accepted by children and their families; otherwise the food will be wasted and the learners go hungry. To overcome these barriers we need to work in concert with our communities, using our direct and indirect influence through community food projects and school outreach to further our ambitions for healthy children with a positive food culture that spreads from school to home and back again, and will serve them for life.



For our more elderly residents, our Monmouthshire Meals domiciliary service and care-home staff grapple with the increasingly complex dietary needs. Again, service innovation is required if we are to meet those needs and ensure the older generation is likewise provided with the appropriate, accessible, and affordable food we all deserve by right. Here the challenge is less to do with changing tastes, and more to do with recruiting and training staff with the right skill set for care catering, and exploiting new technology to provide economies of scale and a mobile service that is fit for purpose in the modern era.

In our heritage and leisure outlets the opportunities are different. Here (within legislative boundaries), we have the opportunity to support and showcase small artisan businesses selling added-value products. These businesses contribute greatly to Monmouthshire's local economy and appeal as visitor destination, and their produce could, in turn, enhance our visitor attractions and so drive revenue opportunities for the Council and the businesses themselves.





## 9.2 The Land We Own

Land management and its associations with water and air quality, soil health, biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, and flood risk are key issues for any rural Council. Through our various partnerships and outreach work MCC seeks to influence land management practices in our County and catchments and promote sustainable, nature-friendly, regenerative farming practices. More immediately, the Council is also a land-owner in its own right, in possession of tenanted county farms, bare land let to graziers, statutory allotment sites, parks and play areas, and other small parcels in urban and rural settings that may be suitable for community food-growing. Here we can intervene more directly to achieve our ambitions. For example, when farms are relet Landlord Services can and do consider factors such as environmental sustainability, food production, and community engagement when selecting successful bidders. If a community expresses interest in managing a site for a shared garden, the Council will in principle support their ambition provided the site is suitable and legal obligations met on both sides.

However, there is more we can do. Many farms are on historical tenancies that leave the landlord with little influence over how the land is managed. But we can seek to build closer relationships with our tenants to understand more fully what is happening on our estate, what is needed from us as landlords, and how we and our tenants can work together to ensure our collective land management is the best it can be on each farm and sets a model of good practice when we advocate change to others. There is no universal model, and our approaches will need to reflect the particular needs of the different businesses involved. At the community level, we can improve our processes to provide a smoother pathway to community growing along with robust and transparent decision-making and clear guidelines on how we wish to see the land managed (e.g. no dig approaches to minimise soil disturbance, and holistic pest management that uses chemicals only as a last resort).

We know that many allotment sites have long waiting lists. The issue is complex as new sites are not easily found and resources for their management are very limited. We can however continue to work with Allotment Associations to revive disused plots and create new ones through the Allotment Support Grants provided by Welsh Government, and consider ways of managing waiting lists more effectively to ensure plots are allocated in line with our core ambition to tackle inequality. We will also continue to promote communal community gardening as a more sustainable and equitable alternative to single-occupancy allotments, as communal growing makes better use of the limited space available and facilitates more even distribution of harvest gluts.

### 9.3 The Conversations We Convene

As a local authority Monmouthshire County Council is privileged to be able to take a long view. Many of the systemic imbalances upon which this Strategy touches are global and will take decades, perhaps generations, to redress. The ubiquity of ultra-processed foods, excessive consolidation of supply chains, exploitation of primary producers, and over-emphasis on agricultural yields at the expense of other ecosystem services are examples. Looking ahead, we can map other risks that are approaching and bring stakeholders together to identify mitigations, assess options, make the case for investment, and begin long-term change. The local food economy is a case in point, where supply-chain gaps and precarities limit the viability and long-term resilience of our supply chains. If we lose our small abattoirs, for example, the local meat supply chain will collapse. If we wish to increase horticultural production in line with national ambitions, we need the infrastructure, the expertise to enable farmers to diversify and the contracts to purchase the vegetables that are grown. If we wish to keep our rural communities together, we need young people to be aware of the career opportunities available in food, farming and their supporting rural industries. We may not know the answers, and we will not be able to afford the solutions, but we can bring together the people who might, to develop locally appropriate interventions and investment proposals and galvanise both public and private enterprise, innovation, and collaboration.

These are specific examples of where MCC can bring stakeholders together to address particular issues. The Council also has a more general convening role, providing a forum for knowledge exchange within and between sectors to share best practice, spark new ideas, or simply provide opportunities for social interaction to individuals working in a challenging and often isolating industry. Moreover, by acting strategically in our areas of strongest influence we can demonstrate good food citizenship and inspire it in others – both organisations and individuals – to make our local food system and the part we play within it truly a force for good.

\* \* \*

These three areas are where Monmouthshire County Council has most influence in the local food system, and where we will therefore target our efforts to meet the objectives set out in Table 3 above. The Delivery Plan that follows identifies the activities we will undertake.

# 10. OUR DELIVERY PLAN

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# Delivery Plan



The food we buy

| Target   | Relevant themes  | Actions we will take   | Who will do it?   | How will we measure progress?   | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Increase uptake of UFSM in target areas (i.e. areas with below-average uptake)                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community Food: access, education, participation</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather data to understand barriers to uptake</li> <li>Deliver awareness and familiarisation sessions in schools and community settings</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catering</li> <li>Sustainable Food</li> <li>with</li> <li>Community Focused Schools</li> <li>Healthy Schools</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Community Development</li> <li>Healthy Schools</li> </ul>   | Uptake of UFSM in target areas  | Medium                                 |
| Increase use of seasonal and/or local produce in schools, care homes, and domiciliary care; reduce use of UPFs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver awareness and familiarisation sessions in schools and community settings</li> <li>Gather data to support adoption of more seasonal ingredients</li> <li>Pursue supply-chain and service innovation and (where appropriate) investment to facilitate local and/or seasonal sourcing</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catering</li> <li>Sustainable Food</li> <li>with</li> <li>Procurement</li> <li>Community Focused Schools</li> <li>Healthy Schools</li> <li>Education</li> <li>Social Care</li> <li>Mon Life</li> <li>Community Development</li> <li>Healthy Schools</li> </ul> | Amount of local and/or seasonal produce used in schools, care homes, and domiciliary care<br>Amount of UPFs used in schools, care homes, and domiciliary care<br>Lessons learnt from supply-chain and service innovation activity | Medium-long                            |

# Delivery Plan

| Target   | Relevant themes   | Actions we will take  | Who will do it?   | How will we measure progress?  | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Integrate community food projects in the good food movement to enable and extend local and/or seasonal procurement           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver awareness and familiarisation sessions in community settings</li> <li>Include seasonality and support for local businesses in grant requirements</li> <li>Link local businesses with community settings</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food</li> <li>Community Development</li> </ul>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of joined up approach between schools and community work</li> <li>Evidence of local spend from community settings</li> </ul> | Short-medium                           |
| Identify ways to use heritage and cultural attractions to showcase local food & drink businesses                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> </ul>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore cooperative models and procurement options to facilitate purchasing from local suppliers</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food <i>with</i></li> <li>Mon Life</li> <li>Procurement</li> </ul> | Number of heritage and cultural attractions showcasing local food & drink businesses   | Short-medium                           |
| Understand potential for additional certifications on specific ingredients (e.g. Fairtrade, RSPO, MSC, pasture-fed, organic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with partners to explore the evidence for and practical feasibility of such commitments</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Catering</li> <li>Sustainable Food <i>with</i></li> <li>Procurement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relevant options analysis undertaken</li> <li>Commitments made where recommended by options analysis</li> </ul>                       | Medium-long                            |

# Delivery Plan



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| Target   | Relevant themes  | Actions we will take   | Who will do it?   | How will we measure progress?   | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Embed food production, environmental land management (ELM) and community engagement in decision-making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Include food production, ELM as a community engagement criteria when re-letting county farms and assessing bids</li> <li>Seek out examples of innovation and best practice elsewhere and apply learning to Monmouthshire</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlord Services <i>with</i></li> <li>Sustainable Food</li> </ul>   | Scoring criteria and weightings in tender assessments   | Short (in progress)                    |
| Further ELM best practice across county farm estate  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen relationships with existing tenants</li> <li>Gather data to build understanding of current practices</li> <li>Convene knowledge transfer and discussions to further</li> <li>ELM best practice among tenants</li> <li>Promote Farming Connect services to tenants</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlord Services <i>with</i></li> <li>Sustainable Food</li> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Green Infrastructure</li> <li>Natural Flood Management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tenant testimonies</li> <li>Proportion of tenants registered with Farming Connect</li> <li>No. of knowledge transfer events</li> </ul> | Medium-long                            |

# Delivery Plan

| Target   | Relevant themes  | Actions we will take   | Who will do it?   | How will we measure progress?   | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|--|--|--|---|---|--|
| Facilitate access to Council land for community food growing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and communicate clear process for establishing new community gardens</li> <li>Revise and re-affirm commitment to Incredible Edible movement</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food <i>with</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlord Services</li> <li>Legal</li> <li>Community Development</li> <li>Biodiversity</li> <li>Green Infrastructure</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment, communication and utilisation of clear process map</li> <li>New community garden(s) supported</li> </ul>                                | Short-medium                           |
| Maximise benefits from existing allotment space              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate Welsh Government Allotment Support Grant to bring more plots into use</li> <li>Consider new ways of managing waiting lists to tackle inequality</li> <li>Promote communal community gardening</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Landlord Services <i>with</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of sites benefiting from Allotment Support Grant</li> <li>New approaches to waiting lists considered and, if appropriate, acted upon</li> </ul> | Short-medium                           |

# Delivery Plan



The  
conversations  
we convene

| Target  | Relevant themes  | Actions we will take   | Who will do it?  | How will we measure progress?  | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| Secure the long-term viability of the local meat supply chain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene key stakeholders to map current situation, vulnerabilities, and opportunities</li> <li>Options analysis and recommendations</li> </ul>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food <i>with</i></li> <li>Economy, Employment &amp; Skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of options analysis and recommendations</li> <li>Evidence that preferred option is being pursued</li> <li>Ongoing viability of local meat supply chain</li> </ul> | Long                                   |
| Increase commercial horticultural production                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with partners to promote diversification into horticulture</li> <li>Identify existing and new routes to market for horticultural enterprises</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food <i>with</i></li> <li>Economy, Employment and Skills</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence of increased horticultural production</li> <li>New routes to market established</li> </ul>   | Long                                   |



# Delivery Plan

| Target   | Relevant themes  | Actions we will take  | Who will do it?  | How will we measure progress?   | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|--|--|---|--|---|--|
| Ensure young people are aware of career pathways in food, farming, and related rural industries                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>• Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborate with partners to develop a consistent message and resources across careers advice services in schools and colleges</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Food</li> <li>• Economy, Employment and Skills</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources and insight disseminated to and adopted by careers advisors</li> </ul>   | Medium-long                            |
| Facilitate knowledge exchange within and between sectors to share best practice, spark new ideas, and support mental wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>• Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>• Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate Monmouthshire Food Partnership as a driver of food citizenship and cross-sector insight</li> <li>• Facilitate Monmouthshire Food &amp; Drink Business Network</li> <li>• Facilitate Talk Farm Regen Monmouthshire discussion group</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Food</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of meetings and/or events held</li> <li>• Number of businesses engaged</li> <li>• Persistence of business engagement</li> </ul> | Short (in progress)                    |

# Delivery Plan

## Monitoring and Review

| Target   | Relevant themes  | Actions we will take   | Who will do it?  | How will we measure progress?                              | Timeframe (short, medium or long term) |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Quarterly internal monitoring via Service Business Plan                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update SBP quarterly</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food Projects Manager</li> </ul>                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul> | Short                                  |
| Establish cross-party Members Group to oversee progress against the Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold 6-monthly meetings of cross-party Members Group</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sustainable Food Projects Manager</li> <li>Cross-party Members Group</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul> | Short                                  |
| Assess need to review Strategy in 2027                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving local and ethical supply chains</li> <li>Developing food as an economic sector</li> <li>Community food: access, education, participation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider progress against the plan and wider changes in context and assess need to review the Strategy</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cross-party Members Group</li> <li>SLT</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As above</li> </ul> | Medium-long                            |



**Integrated Impact Assessment document**  
(incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty)

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Name of the Officer completing the evaluation</b><br/>Cath Fallon</p> <p><b>Phone no:</b> 07557 190969<br/><b>Email:</b> cathfallon@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p> | <p><b>Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal</b><br/>Presentation of the Draft Local Food Strategy and associated Delivery Plan, prior to consideration for approval by Cabinet on 8th May 2024.</p> |
| <p><b>Name of Service area</b><br/>Communities and Place</p>   | <p><b>Date</b><br/>27 March 2024</p>  |

1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

| Protected Characteristics | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic  | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| Age                       | This draft Strategy seeks to have a positive impact. Its purpose is to set the Council's direction towards a long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents. | None  | None  |
| Disability                | As above   | As above  | As above  |

| <b>Protected Characteristics</b> | <b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b> | <b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic</b> | <b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Gender reassignment              | As above   | As above   | As above   |
| Marriage or civil partnership    | As above   | As above   | As above   |
| Pregnancy or maternity           | As above   | As above   | As above   |
| Race                             | As above   | As above   | As above   |
| Religion or Belief               | As above   | As above   | As above   |
| Sex                              | As above   | As above   | As above   |
| Sexual Orientation               | As above   | As above   | As above   |

## 2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

|   | <b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage</b>   | <b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage.</b> | <b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b>               |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice</b> | Our draft local food strategy is based on three interlinked principles, fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles include tackling inequality. | There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.   | We will therefore consider amongst other things, how we will tackle the root causes of inequality in a local food context. |



**3. Policy making and the Welsh language.**

| <p><b>How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards:</b></p>  | <p><b>Describe the positive impacts of this proposal</b></p>  | <p><b>Describe the negative impacts of this proposal</b></p> | <p><b>What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts</b></p> |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Policy Making</b><br/>Effects on the use of the Welsh language,<br/>Promoting Welsh language<br/>Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably</p> | <p>Neutral impact</p> <p>Where possible, the Council will work with its partners to promote the Welsh language as part of the food partnership activities.</p> <p>We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.</p> | <p>None</p>  | <p>N/A</p>   |
| <p><b>Operational</b><br/>Recruitment &amp; Training of workforce</p>  | <p>Neutral impact.</p> <p>The draft strategy and delivery plan does not involve the appointment of staff.</p> <p>However, on a general basis, the Communities and Place Directorate encourages the appointment of Welsh Language speakers and offers staff Welsh Language training.</p>                                     | <p>None</p>  | <p>N/A</p>   |

|   |                       |             |  |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|--|
| <p><b>Service delivery.</b><br/>Use of Welsh language in service delivery<br/>Promoting use of the language</p> | <p>Neutral impact</p> | <p>None</p> | <p>We will ensure that any material produced by members of the partnership is compliant with the Welsh Language Standards applying to that organisation.</p> |
|---|-----------------------|-------------|--|

**4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below?** Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

| <p><b>Well Being Goal</b></p>  | <p><b>Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.</b></p>   | <p><b>What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b></p>     |
|--|--|---|
| <p><b>A prosperous Wales</b><br/>Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs</p> | <p><b>Positive:</b> The Strategy identifies three interlinked core themes which are likely to drive system change. These include Improving local and ethical supply chains and developing food as an economic sector.</p> <p>Activities will include working across the supply chain (incl. suppliers, processors and logistics) to support the development of the local food economy in private and public sectors; Supporting entrepreneurs, startups, and established food and drink businesses to be environmentally, socially, and financially sustainable – encouraging innovation and clustering; and promoting learning pathways to develop skills and career opportunities in food, farming, and associated industries.</p> | <p>It is an on-going priority for the Council to work collaboratively to maximise efficiency and capitalise on opportunities.</p> |


| Well Being Goal   | Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.   | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?   |
|---|--|---|
|   | <b>Negative:</b> None identified   |   |
| <b>A resilient Wales</b><br>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change) | <b>Positive:</b> The two other guiding principles of the Strategy include addressing the nature and climate crises and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices.<br><br><b>Negative:</b> None identified   | Consideration will therefore be given to agricultural and land management practices; Food waste and recycling; and diversity and resilience in the local food system along with the ethics of global and local supply chains. |
| <b>A healthier Wales</b><br>People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood                                  | <b>Positive:</b> The Strategy reflects the on-going work of the Sustainable Food Team in developing an approach to local and community growing, procurement of food and working with local suppliers. Recognising that in Monmouthshire, every primary school has a kitchen where freshly cooked, and nutrition rich meals are produced five days a week. The team also recognises the need to implement a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on the health and well-being of our communities.<br><br><b>Negative:</b> None identified | N/A   |
| <b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b><br>Communities are attractive, viable, safe and well connected   | <b>Positive:</b> The Sustainable Food Team will be working together with partners and the Council's Community Development Team, to support the development of sustainable communities, creating a social infrastructure  | N/A   |


| Well Being Goal   | Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.   | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|--|---|
|   | offer which realises the growth and sustainability of the rural economy.<br><b>Negative:</b> None identified   |   |
| <p><b>A globally responsible Wales</b><br/>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic and environmental wellbeing</p>                                | <p><b>Positive:</b> The Strategy recognises the need to work with partners to identify and collaborate on opportunities that are based around our high-quality natural environment, addressing current and future resilience challenges in relation to climate change and nature recovery.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified</p> | N/A.  |
| <p><b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b><br/>Culture, heritage and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art and recreation</p> | <p><b>Positive:</b> The Team will work with partners to showcase local food and drink producers, promoting Monmouthshire as a food and drink destination thereby supporting a coherent cultural and visitor economy offer.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified</p>   | N/A   |
| <p><b>A more equal Wales</b><br/>People can fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances</p>   | <p><b>Positive:</b> The Team have drawn on a wealth of evidence about our local food and farming context and what works in contributing to a healthier, more sustainable system. The team will be working with partners, to leverage joint intelligence and research expertise to improve the quality of life and</p>                  | N/A   |





| Well Being Goal | Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts.  | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|-----------------|---|---|
|                 | <p>increase the number of opportunities for the residents in our rural communities.</p> <p><b>Negative:</b> None identified</p> |   |


**5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?**

| Sustainable Development Principle   | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.   | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|
|  <p><b>Long Term</b><br/>future</p> <p>Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future</p> | <p>The purpose of the Strategy is to guide our work for the next five years and beyond. The Team recognises that the changes the Council wishes to see in the local food system will: a) take longer than one council term; b) cannot happen unless we work collaboratively with farmers, producers, wholesalers, retailers, consumers and communities; and c) depend on Welsh and UK farming, food and procurement investments and policies.</p> |   |

| Sustainable Development Principle   | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.  | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|--|---|
|  <p>Working together with other partners to deliver objectives</p> | <p>The purpose, approach, principles and thematic areas for the Strategy have been founded on collaborative working, identified through conversations and discussions within the Council, with colleagues across many organisations, and with individuals who work in the local food system and/or have an interest in making that system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.</p> | <p>N/A</p>  |

| Sustainable Development Principle   | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.   | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|
|  <p>Involving those with an interest and seeking their views</p> | <p>In drafting the Strategy, the following consultation activities have taken place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reference Group of experts and partners has been established in the capacity of ‘critical friends’ who work in our food system and/or have an interest in making the system fairer, more ethical and more locally based.</li> <li>• Two stakeholder consultations were held in March - one in Abergavenny and one in Chepstow - where discussions regarding the draft Strategy took place.</li> <li>• An All-Member’s Seminar was held on the 15th of March.</li> <li>• A Cross Member’s working group has also been established to monitor progress of the Strategy and the associated Delivery Plan, once approved.</li> </ul> <p>All these activities have shaped the draft Local Food Strategy appended to this report.</p> | <p>N/A</p>  |

| Sustainable Development Principle  | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.  | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|--|--|---|
|  <p><b>Prevention</b></p> <p>Putting</p> <p>resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse</p> | <p>The Strategy seeks to develop collaborative partnerships, working directly with local food businesses and farmers to identify adaptive and opportunistic approaches which will take advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding).</p> |   |

| Sustainable Development Principle   | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why.   | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|---|
|  <p><b>Integration</b></p> <p>Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies</p> | <p>In developing the Strategy we have identified the following types of partners, all of whom we will look to work with, when considering the impact of the Strategy Delivery Plan on the Council and their wellbeing goals :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strategic partners:</b> Welsh Government, Marches Forward Partnership, Cardiff Capital Region, Natural Resources Wales, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, Gwent Public Health Team, Gwent Public Services Board, Food Farming and Countryside Commission, Food Partnerships.</li> <li>• <b>Partners in tackling inequality:</b> Registered Social Landlords, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations, Social Farms and Gardens, Trussell Trust</li> <li>• <b>Partners in addressing climate and nature crises:</b> Farming Connect, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Wye and Usk Foundation, Land Workers Alliance, farming unions, farmers and food businesses, our community voices.</li> </ul> | N/A   |



**6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?**

|                     | <b>Describe any positive impacts your proposal has</b> | <b>Describe any negative impacts your proposal has</b> | <b>What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts?</b> |
|---------------------|--|--|---|
| Safeguarding        | N/A  | None.  | N/A   |
| Corporate Parenting | N/A  | None.  | N/A   |

**7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?**

The Strategy has been developed utilising evidence identified through conversations and discussions within the Council, with colleagues across many organisations, and with individuals who work in the local food system and/or have an interest in making that system fairer, more ethical and more locally based. The team have also drawn on a wealth of evidence about the local food and farming context and what works in contributing to a healthier, more sustainable system. This evidence is also strengthened through the key role the Monmouthshire Food Partnership play in the National Sustainable Food Partnership network.

**8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?**

*.This section should summarise the key issues arising from the evaluation. This summary must be included in the Committee report template*

**Positive -**

The positive impacts of this draft Strategy are that:

- It enables a whole-authority approach that is systems-based and focused on sustaining the impacts of our interventions, the long-term sustainability of our land and nature, and the health and well-being of our communities.

- It sets our direction of travel, towards our long-term goal of fairer, greener, healthier food and farming in a flourishing economy that benefits all our residents.
- The approach of the Strategy is founded on collaborative working, maximising adaptive and opportunistic approaches, whilst taking advantage of opportunities arising (e.g. for new partners or funding); while always being focused on impact and outcomes.
- The Strategy is based on three interlinked principles fundamental to how we will work and the decisions we will make about where to seek investment and/or focus our own resources. These guiding principles are tackling inequality, addressing the nature and climate crises, and supporting sustainable and innovative food and farming practices.
- There are three interlinked core themes which are likely to drive system change. These are improving local and ethical supply chains, developing food as an economic sector, and community food: access, education, participation.
- The actions associated with these three core themes will enable, influence and advocate for a local food system that ensures everyone is well nourished; supports sustainable food and farming businesses to prosper and allows nature and food production to thrive side by side.

**Negative**

None identified.

**9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.**

| <b>What are you going to do</b>   | <b>When are you going to do it?</b> | <b>Who is responsible</b>         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Present the Strategy for Scrutiny | 10 <sup>th</sup> April              | Sustainable Food Projects Manager |
| Present the Strategy for Approval | 8 <sup>th</sup> May                 | Leader of the Council             |
| Instigate the Delivery Plan       | On going                            | Sustainable Food Projects Manager |

**10. VERSION CONTROL:** The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built-in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

| <b>Version No.</b> | <b>Decision making stage</b> | <b>Date considered</b> | <b>Brief description of any amendments made following consideration</b>                 |
|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1.                 | SLT/Cabinet Members          | March 2024             | Consider the Strategy and Delivery Plan prior to scrutiny and presentation for approval |
| 2.                 | Cabinet Report               | May 2024               |   |

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2023-24

| Place Scrutiny Committee                           |   |  |  |                              |
|--|---|--|--|------------------------------|
| 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2024                        | <b>Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy 2024</b> | To scrutinise progress of the strategy prior to Cabinet decision.                                | Hazel Clatworthy<br>Cllr Maby                | Policy Development           |
|  | <b>Nature Recovery</b>                            | To scrutinise progress of the strategy prior to Cabinet decision.                                | Hazel Clatworthy<br>Cllr Maby                | Policy Development           |
|  | <b>Local Food Strategy</b>                        | To scrutinise progress of the strategy prior to Cabinet decision.                                | Cath Fallon<br>Marianne Elliott<br>Cllr Maby | Policy Development           |
| 23 <sup>rd</sup> May 2024                          | <b><i>*Replacement Local Development Plan</i></b> | <i>To scrutinise the RLDP Deposit Plan prior to Council endorsement for public consultation.</i> | <i>Craig O'Connor<br/>Cllr Griffiths</i>     | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2024                         | <b><i>*Replacement Local Development Plan</i></b> | <i>To scrutinise the RLDP Deposit Plan prior to Council endorsement for public consultation.</i> | <i>Craig O'Connor<br/>Cllr Griffiths</i>     | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2024                    | <b>Road Safety Strategy</b>                       | To scrutinise the Road Safety Strategy.  | Geraint Lewis<br>Paul Keeble<br>Cllr Maby    | Pre-decision Scrutiny        |
| <b>PUBLIC SERVICES<br/>14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER</b> | <b>Local Flood Strategy</b>                       | Pre-decision scrutiny of adoption of the Local Flood Strategy.                                   | Craig O'Connor<br>Cllr Maby                  | Pre-decision Scrutiny        |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> November 2024                      |   |  |  |                              |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> December 2024                      |   |  |  |                              |

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2023-24

| Place Scrutiny Committee                             |   |   |  |                              |
|--|---|---|--|------------------------------|
|  |   |   |  |                              |
| <b>To be confirmed</b>                               | <b>Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy</b> | <i>To scrutinise progress of the strategy prior to Cabinet decision.</i>                                      | <i>Deb Hill-Howells<br/>Ian Hoccom<br/>Cllr Maby</i>     | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| <b>To be confirmed<br/>(end 24/early 25)</b>         | <b>Abergavenny Placemaking Plan</b>       | <i>To conduct pre-decision scrutiny prior to adoption of Plan by Cabinet.</i>                                 | <i>Daniel Fordham<br/>Cllr Griffiths</i>                 | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| <b>To be confirmed<br/>(end 24/early 25)</b>         | <b>Monmouth Placemaking Plan</b>          | <i>To conduct pre-decision scrutiny.</i>  | <i>Daniel Fordham<br/>Cllr Griffiths</i>                 | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| <b>To be confirmed<br/>(end 24/early 25)</b>         | <b>Magor Placemaking Plan</b>             | <i>To conduct pre-decision scrutiny.</i>  | <i>Daniel Fordham<br/>Cllr Griffiths</i>                 | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| <b>To be confirmed</b>                               | <b>Pavement Café Policy</b>               | <i>To scrutinise the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences.</i> | <i>Paul Keeble<br/>Cllr Griffiths</i>                    | <i>Policy Development</i>    |
| <b>To be confirmed</b>                               | <b>Monlife Heritage Strategy</b>          |   | <i>Tracey Thomas</i>                                     |                              |
| <b>To be confirmed</b>                               | <b>Active Travel Plans</b>                | <i>Across Highways and MonLife</i>  |  |                              |
| <b>To be confirmed<br/>(2024, no clear date yet)</b> | <b>Destination management Plan</b>        | <i>To conduct pre-decision scrutiny.</i>  | <i>Matthew Lewis</i>                                     | <i>Pre-decision Scrutiny</i> |
| <b>To be confirmed<br/>(take with DM Plan)</b>       | <b>Scrutiny of STEAM</b>                  | <i>Scrutiny of Monmouthshire STEAM (tourism volume and value) figures.</i>                                    | <i>Nicola Edwards<br/>Matthew Lewis<br/>Cllr Sandles</i> | <i>Policy Development</i>    |



## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2023-24

| Place Scrutiny Committee |  |  |                       |                          |
|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------------|
|                          |  |  | <i>Cllr Griffiths</i> |                          |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Economic Development Strategy Update</b>    | <i>To consider progress ahead of Cabinet decision.</i> | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Local Transport Plan Update</b>             | <i>To consider progress ahead of Cabinet decision.</i> | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Affordable housing</b>                      |  | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Climate Change and Net Zero ready homes</b> |  | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Renewables</b>                              |  | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Retail</b>                                  |  | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Tourism</b>                                 |  | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |
| <b>Workshop</b>          | <b>Deposit Plan</b>                            |  | <i>Craig O'Connor</i> | <i>Scrutiny Workshop</i> |

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Other items in the Community and Corporate Plan which the Committee might want to scrutinise:

- Inclusive Cultural Strategy
- Increase the use of local produce in schools and care homes and new food strategies and policies approved by Cabinet (link to School Meals Procurement and Deforestation?)
- Nature Isn't Neat expansion

## Monmouthshire's Scrutiny Forward Work Programme 2023-24

- Development of Active Travel routes
- Development of a new station at Magor and improvements at Severn Tunnel Junction to improve access and usage
- Creating plans for a metro that links Monmouthshire to Bristol, Newport and Cardiff
- Develop a county-wide digital solution that matches those who need to travel with those who have car spaces
- RLDP submission for examination
- RLDP for adoption
- Find new ways to progress refurbishment of Caldicot Leisure Centre
- *Deforestation (and school meals procurement? - Food Strategy to P&O?)*

## Place Scrutiny Committee

### Action List

**14<sup>th</sup> March 2024**

| <b>Minute Item:</b> | <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Officer / Member</b>         | <b>Outcome</b>  |
|---------------------|--|---------------------------------|---|
| 4                   | To seek clarity from WG about issuing another survey, and any set guidance for it  | Dave Jones                      |   |
| 4                   | To ask Carl Touhig for the latest update about the A40 toilets, and to update members  | Dave Jones / Carl Touhig        |   |
| 4                   | Councillor Brown to provide suggestions for alternative wordings in the strategy   | Councillor Brown                | Sent to Dave Jones and members 14 <sup>th</sup> March.            |
| 4                   | Members to discuss forming a working group to look at the Toilets strategy   | Place Members                   |   |
| 4                   | Feed back that the Welsh in the National Toilet Map needs to be improved   | Dave Jones / Councillor Sandles |   |
| 4                   | Councillor Lucas to provide corrections relating to opening times etc. for the team to update  | Councillor Lucas / Dave Jones   | Corrections sent to Dave Jones and members 14 <sup>th</sup> March |
| 4                   | To check on the provision of a safe sharps box in Monmouth   | Councillor Lucas                |   |
| 4                   | To check that awareness of the radar key scheme is encouraged at various points within health and social care  | Jane Rodgers                    |   |
| 5                   | To contact Councillor Griffiths and the Head of Placemaking for clarity on timescales for work programme items, especially the RLDP Deposit Plan, noting the importance of any consultation not falling over school holidays | Councillor Dymock               |   |

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| Committee / Decision Maker | Meeting date / Decision due | Report Title                             | de                                   | Purpose   | Author                   | Date item added to the planner |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|---|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Council                    | 01-Jul-25                   | RLDP for Adoption                        | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | To adopt the RLDP following receipt of the Inspector's report, making it the County's Development Plan as defined by S38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004  | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis | 23-Aug-22                      |
| Council                    | 23-Jan-25                   | Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26     | Ben Callard - Resources              |   | Ruth Donovan             | 29-Jan-24                      |
| ICMD                       | 18-Dec-24                   | Council Tax Base 2025/26                 | Ben Callard - Resources              |   | Ruth Donovan             | 29-Jan-24                      |
| Cabinet                    | 06-Nov-24                   | Local Flood Risk Management Strateg      |                                      |   | Mark Hand                | 19-Feb-24                      |
| Cabinet                    | 06-Nov-24                   |  |                                      |   | Hannah Jones             | 4-Sep-23                       |
| Cabinet                    | 02-Oct-24                   | Adoption of Abergavenny Placemaking Plan | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | To adopt the Abergavenny Placemaking Plan, co-produced with Abergavenny Town Council, to inform future regeneration priorities and grant bids   | Mark Hand / Dan Fordham  | 3-Oct-22                       |
| Cabinet                    | 02-Oct-24                   | Adoption of Magor Placemaking Plan       | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy |   | Mark Hand / Dan Fordham  | 3-Oct-22                       |
| Cabinet                    | 02-Oct-24                   | Adoption of Monmouth Placemaking Plan    | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | To adopt the Monmouth Placemaking Plan, co-produced with Monmouth Town Council, to inform future regeneration priorities and grant bids   | Mark Hand / Dan Fordham  | 3-Oct-22                       |
| Cabinet                    | 02-Oct-24                   | Road Safety Strategy                     | Catrin Maby                          | To adopt the Road Safety Strategy   | Mark Hand / Paul Keeble  | 4-Oct-22                       |
| Council                    | 19-Sep-24                   | RLDP submission for examination          | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | To endorse the submission of the Deposit RLDP to the Welsh Government for examination by an independent Inspector. By agreeing, Council will be saying it wants this document to be the adopted RLDP for Monmouthshire. | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis | 23-Aug-22                      |



|         |           |   |                                      |   |  |           |
|---------|-----------|---|--------------------------------------|---|--|-----------|
| Cabinet | 04-Sep-24 | Pavement Café Policy                                    | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | To adopt the pavement café policy as the basis for making decisions on applications for licences  | Mark Hand / Paul Keeble                | 4-Oct-22  |
| Council | 20-Jun-24 | RLDP Deposit Plan endorsement for consultation          | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | To endorse the Deposit RLDP for public consultation and engagement.   | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis               | 5-Jan-23  |
| Council | 16-May-24 | Political Balance Report                                | Angela Sandles - Engagement          |   | James Williams                         |           |
|         | 16-May-24 | Appointments to Committees                              | Angela Sandles - Engagement          |   | James Williams                         |           |
| Council | 16-May-24 | Outside Bodies  | Angela Sandles - Engagement          |   | James Williams                         |           |
| Council | 16-May-24 | Financial Strategy                                      | Ben Callard - Resources              |   | Jon Davies                             |           |
| Cabinet | 15-May-24 | Local Housing Market Assessment                         | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy | The LHMA provides a review of the need for affordable and market housing across Monmouthshire and an overview of the current housing market.  | Sally Meyrick                          | 8-Jan-24  |
| Cabinet | 15-May-24 | Local Flood Strategy                                    | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy |   | Mark Hand                              | 9-Oct-23  |
| Cabinet | 15-May-24 | Local Transport Plan                                    | Catrin Maby                          | To adopt the Local Transport Plan   | Debra Hill-Howells / Christian Schmidt | 4-Oct-22  |
| Cabinet | 15-May-24 | Consultation on the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni |                                      | To receive feedback on the statutory consultation concerning the proposed relocation and increase in capacity of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni.   | Matthew Jones                          | 26-Feb-24 |
| Cabinet | 15-May-24 | Climate and Nature Emergency                            |                                      | To receive an update on progress made towards the Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and to agree the new overarching Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and action plan format | Hazel Clatworthy                       | 19-Oct-23 |

|         |           |   |  |  |                                |           |
|---------|-----------|---|--|--|--------------------------------|-----------|
| ICMD    | 27-Apr-24 | Welsh Church Fund   | Ben Callard - Resources                        |  | Dave Jarrett                   |           |
| Cabinet | 24-Apr-24 | Greenfingers Report   | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding      |  | Jane Rodgers                   | 26-Mar-24 |
| Cabinet | 24-Apr-24 |   | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding      |  | Jane Rodgers                   | 22-Mar-24 |
| Council | 18-Apr-24 | CJC Transition Arrangements   | Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy | To update the Council regarding transition arrangements from CJC to CCR  | Paul Matthews                  | 12-Jan-24 |
| Council | 18-Apr-24 | Placement Development Strategy  | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding      | To set out a strategy for the expansion and development of in-county residential and supported accommodation placements for children who are looked after. To make recommendations about i) changing the use of 3        | Jane Rodgers / Diane Corrister | 8-Jan-24  |
| ICMD    | 17-Apr-24 | ICMD Report - 20 moh Speed Limit Revocation Order                       | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment   |  | Graham Kinsella                | 22-Mar-24 |
| ICMD    | 17-Apr-24 | ICM report - Florence Jones DEFERRED                                    | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy           |  | Amy Longford                   | 11-Mar-24 |
| Cabinet | 10-Apr-24 | Public Spaces Protection Order Dog Controls                             | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy           |  | Huw Owen                       | 19-Feb-24 |
| Cabinet | 10-Apr-24 | Primary School catchment areas consultation feedback                    | Martyn Groucutt - Education                    | For Members to receive feedback on the consultation relating to a review of Primary School catchments areas and determine whether to implement proposals   | Matthew Jones                  | 20-Nov-23 |
| Cabinet | 10-Apr-24 | Sustainable Communities for Learning Strategic Outline Programme update | Martyn Groucutt - Education                    | To provide members with details of the revisions to the Strategic Outline Programme for the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme which will inform the development of projects within the rolling programme of | Debbie Graves                  | 12-Sep-23 |
| ICMD    | 27-Mar-24 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group   | Ben Callard - Resources                        |  | Dave Jarrett                   |           |

|         |           |   |  |  |                   |           |
|---------|-----------|---|--|--|-------------------|-----------|
| ICMD    | 27-Mar-24 | Experimental TRO Prohibition of driving except for access Goldwire Lane Monmouth                      | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment |  | Graham Kinsella   |           |
| ICMD    | 13-Mar-24 | Increase in building control charges  | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy         |  | Craig O'Connor    |           |
| Cabinet | 06-Mar-24 | To consider a Business Case for the acquisition of a property for use as a registered children's home | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding    |  | jane Rodgers      | 13-Feb-24 |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Agree the name of the new Welsh-medium Primary School in Monmouth                                     | Martyn Groucutt - Education                  | Agree the name of the new Welsh-medium Primary School in Monmouth  | Debbie Graves     | 15-Nov-23 |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Standards Committee Appointment   |  |  | James Williams    | 6-Feb-24  |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Strategic Equality Plan 2024  |  | To seek approval of a new Strategic Equality Plan for the period 2024-28, incorporating MCCs contribution to national action plans on race equality, LGBTQ and other protected characteristics | Matthew Gatehouse | 15-Nov-23 |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Appointment of Monmouthshire Local Access Forum   |  | To secure the appointment of members to the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum for its next 3 year period.   | Matthew Lewis     | 18-Jan-23 |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Final Budget Proposals  | Ben Callard - Resources                      |  | Jon Davies        |           |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Capital and Treasury Strategy   | Ben Callard - Resources                      |  | Jon Davies        |           |
| Council | 29-Feb-24 | Council Diary   | Angela Sandles - Engagement                  |  | John Pearson      |           |
| ICMD    | 28-Feb-24 | WCF/Trust Treasury Fund Investment  | Ben Callard - Resources                      |  |                   |           |

|         |           |   |  |  |               |           |
|---------|-----------|---|--|--|---------------|-----------|
| Cabinet | 28-Feb-24 | 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Month 9  | Ben Callard - Resources                        |  | Jon Davies    | 27-Apr-23 |
| Cabinet | 28-Feb-24 | 2023/24 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals  | Ben Callard - Resources                        |  | Jon Davies    |           |
| Cabinet | 07-Feb-24 | Economic Development Strategy   |  | REFRESHING THE MONMOUTHSHIRE BUSINESS GROWTH & ENTERPRISE STRATEGY and action plan in setting the economic ambition for the county and providing a strategic framework that guides future economic   | Hannah Jones  | 9-Jan-23  |
| ICMD    | 24-Jan-24 | Amendment to Street Naming and Numbering Policy regarding Replacement or additional Street nameplate signs for Existing Streets | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment   |  | Mark Hand     | 2-Jan-24  |
| ICMD    | 24-Jan-24 | Community Council & Police Precepts - Determination   | Ben Callard - Resources                        |  | Jon Davies    |           |
| Council | 18-Jan-24 | Introduction of Council Tax Premiums for Second homes from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024   | Ben Callard - Resources                        | Council to re affirm their decision on the Second Home Premium   | Ruth Donovan  | 5-Dec-23  |
| Council | 18-Jan-24 | Council Tax Reduction Scheme  | Ben Callard - Resources                        |  | Ruth Donovan  |           |
| Council | 18-Jan-24 | Asset Management Strategy   |  |  | Nick Keyse    | 28-Sep-23 |
| Cabinet | 17-Jan-24 | Community & Corporate Plan performance update   | Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy | To provide cabinet with the latest performance report of commitments in the Community and Corporate Plan   | Richard Jones | 5-Sep-23  |
| Cabinet | 17-Jan-24 | REPURPOSING OF ACCOMMODATION IN THE COUNTY FARMS PORTFOLIO TO SUPPORT HOMELESSNESS AND OTHER POLICY OBJECTIVES                  |  | To seek approval for the repurposing of vacant cottages held within the County Farms Portfolio to support policy objectives such as alleviating pressures with homelessness and to address the reliance on unsuitable temporary accommodation. | Nick Keyse    | 4-Dec-23  |
| Cabinet | 17-Jan-24 | consultation on the relocation of Ysgol Gymraeg Y Fenni   | Martyn Groucutt - Education                    |  | Matthew Jones | 23-Aug-23 |

|         |           |  |  |   |                          |           |
|---------|-----------|--|--|---|--------------------------|-----------|
| Cabinet | 17-Jan-24 | Approval of the revised MCC Counter Fraud, Corruption & Bribery Policy                             | Rachel Garrick - Resources                     |   | Jan Furtek               | 2-Nov-23  |
| Cabinet | 17-Jan-24 | Draft Budget Proposals   | Ben Callard - Resources                        |   | Jon Davies               | 29-Sep-23 |
| ICMD    | 03-Jan-24 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 3 held on 7th December 2023 <b>Meeting didn't happen</b> | Rachel Garrick - Resources                     |   | Dave Jarrett             | 30-Mar-23 |
| ICMD    | 20-Dec-23 | Community Council & Police Precepts - Proposed payment schedule                                    | Ben Callard - Resources                        |   | Jon Davies               |           |
| ICMD    | 20-Dec-23 | Additional resources for the Revenues and Benefits Shared Service'                                 | Ben Callard - Resources                        |   | Ruth Donovan             |           |
| ICMD    | 20-Dec-23 | Council Tax Base Report  | Ben Callard - Resources                        |   | Ruth Donovan             |           |
| ICMD    | 20-Dec-23 | LDP Annual Monitoring Report   | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy           | To endorse the LDP Annual Monitoring Report for submission to WG  | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis | 16-Jan-23 |
| Cabinet | 13-Dec-23 | King Henry VIII 3 – 19 School Funding Formula  | Martyn Groucutt - Education                    | To update Cabinet with the consultation feedback regarding the proposed fair funding formula for King Henry 3 – 19 School in Abergavenny.   | Nikki Wellington         | 23-Nov-23 |
| Cabinet | 13-Dec-23 | Children's Services: Foster Carer Recruitment and Retention – Foster Friendly Policy               | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding      | The purpose of the report is to outline a proposal to create a policy that supports MCC employees who are existing foster carers or wish to become foster carers through offering an appropriate leave entitlement. | Dr Charlotte Drury       | 9-Nov-23  |
| Cabinet | 13-Dec-23 | Primary catchment review   |  |   | Matthew Jones            | 23-Jun-23 |
| Cabinet | 13-Dec-23 | Whole Authority Strategic Risk Assessment  | Mary Ann Brocklesby - Whole Authority Strategy | To provide Cabinet with an overview of the current strategic risks facing the authority and to seek approval of the strategic risk assessment   | Richard Jones            | 5-Sep-23  |



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| Cabinet | 13-Dec-23 | 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Month 6                            | Rachel Garrick - Resources                   |   | Jon Davies                     | 27-Apr-23 |
| Council | 07-Dec-23 | Relocation of PRS in South Monmouthshire                                    | Martyn Groucutt - Education                  | Relocation of South Monmouthshire PRS   | Morwenna Wagstaff              | 13-Nov-23 |
| Council | 07-Dec-23 | DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT  |  | to provide Council with an overview of SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH directorate with a focus on year 2022 – 2023. | Jane Rodgers                   | 31-Jul-23 |
| Council | 07-Dec-23 | SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL EVALUTION REPORT  |  | To provide Council with the annual self-evaluation of safeguarding from a whole authority perspective.      | Jane Rodgers / Diane Corrister | 31-Jul-23 |
| ICMD    | 29-Nov-23 | Whole Authority Safeguarding Policy   | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding    |   | Naomi Lovesay                  | 3-Nov-23  |
| ICMD    | 29-Nov-23 | Museums - Accredited  |  |   | Rachael Rogers                 | 12-Oct-23 |
| ICMD    | 29-Nov-23 | A013 Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order                             | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment |   | Mark Hand                      | 18-Sep-23 |
| ICMD    | 29-Nov-23 | A012 Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order                             | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | Speed limit changes at Caerwent Brook/Dewstow Road  | Mark Hand                      | 18-Sep-23 |
| ICMD    | 15-Nov-23 | Planning Annual Performance Report  | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy         | To endorse the Planning Department Annual Performance Report for submission to WG                           | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis       | 16-Jan-23 |
| ICMD    | 15-Nov-23 | A012 Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order<br><b>MOVED TO 29TH NOV</b> |  | Double yellows at Main Road, Portskewett, leading to S  | Mark Hand                      | 18-Sep-23 |
| ICMD    | 15-Nov-23 | A013 Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order<br><b>MOVED TO 29TH NOV</b> |  | Speed limit changes at Caerwent Brook/Dewstow Road  | Mark Hand                      | 18-Sep-23 |

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| Cabinet | 15-Nov-23 | DEVELOPING THE FUTURE MY DAY MY LIFE BASES  | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding | This report presents the findings of the final options appraisal for the proposed future My Day, My Life bases in Abergavenny, and to seek approval of the recommended base.  | Jane Rodgers                    | 7-Nov-23  |
| Cabinet | 15-Nov-23 | Budget Process and timetable  | Rachel Garrick - Resources                |   | Jon Davies                      |           |
| Cabinet | 08-Nov-23 | Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual letter 2022-23 to Monmouthshire County Council |   | The purpose is to fulfil the expectation of the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales that their report is brought to the attention of Cabinet.   | Annette Evans/Matthew Gatehouse | 17-Oct-23 |
| Cabinet | 08-Nov-23 | RIPA Review   |   | To review RIPA strategy and arrangements  | Geraint Edwards                 | 25-Sep-23 |
| Cabinet | 08-Nov-23 | 2023/24 Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Month 5  | Rachel Garrick - Resources                |   | Jon Davies                      |           |
| Council | 26-Oct-23 | Monmouthshire County Council Self- assessment 2022/23                                     |   | to seek Council approval of the Self-Assessment report 2022/23 in line with requirements outlined in the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 and to ensure that members have a clear and transparent assessment of the                      | Richard Jones                   | 4-Jul-23  |
| Council | 26-Oct-23 | RPB Area Plan   |   |   | Jane Rodgers                    | 4-Jul-23  |
| Council | 26-Oct-23 | RLDP Preferred Strategy consultation report   | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy      | To endorse the RLDP Preferred Strategy including any proposed changes arising from the public consultation.   | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis        | 3-Oct-22  |
| ICMD    | 25-Oct-23 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 2 held on 21st September 2023                   | Rachel Garrick - Resources                |   | Dave Jarrett                    | 30-Mar-23 |
| Cabinet | 11-Oct-23 | Disposal of Land at Natgavenny Lane   | Rachel Garrick - Resources                | To seek Cabinet approval for the disposal of a parcel of land adjacent to the Nantgavenny Lane Business Park, Mardy, Abergavenny  | Nick Keyse                      |           |
| Cabinet | 11-Oct-23 | Developing a base for My Day My Life in Monmouth and Abergavenny                          | Ian Chandler - Social Care & Safeguarding | Further to the recommendations from the Practice Solutions review, the report sets out the criteria and decision making in respect of which bases to develop for the My Day My Life in both Monmouth and Abergavenny, and makes a recommendation on the | Ceri York                       | 25-Sep-23 |

|         |           |   |  |  |   |                |
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| ICMD    | 11-Oct-23 | <b>MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING – TCBC AND MCC HERITAGE SERVICES IN RELATION TO MAMHILAD NYLON SPINNERS LISTED BUILDING.</b> | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy         | The purpose of this report is to propose that MCC join into an MoU in relation to the provision of Heritage Advice to consider the ongoing management of the Nylon Spinners listed building at Mamhilad.                     | Amy Longford  | 22-Sep-23      |
| Cabinet | 04-Oct-23 | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Consultation  |  |  | Cath Fallon   | 4-Sep-23       |
| ICMD    | 27-Sep-23 | Extending Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPOs) to tackle Anti Social Behaviour (ASB)                                      |  | To seek approval to extend three Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) in respect of Bailey Park, Abergavenny; Lower Abergavenny (including Castle Meadows) and Meermouth Town (including Chippingham                       | Andrew Mason  | 31-Aug-23      |
| Council | 21-Sep-23 | REPORT ON JOINT SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORPORATE JOINT COMMITTEES  |  |  | Hazel Ilett   | 4-Sep-23       |
| Council | 21-Sep-23 | Governance and Audit Committee Annual Report 2022/23  | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy         | To inform Council of the work and conclusions of the Governance and Audit Committee from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023   | Chair of Governance and Audit Committee, Andrew Blackmore | 27th July 2023 |
| Council | 21-Sep-23 | Standards Committee Annual Report   |  | This report is the first annual report from the Standards Committee to Council as required by the change in law set out in the Local Government and Elections Act 2021. It has to report on the discharge of the Committee's | Matt Phillips   | 10-Oct-22      |
| ICMD    | 13-Sep-23 | Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 12 MOVED TO 25TH OCTOBER 2023  | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | 'Agreement to make the traffic order - parking/waiting restrictions at Justins Hill and Wyesham Avenue, Wyesham; Main Road and Castle Way, Portskewett; lane leading to Sugarloaf Llanwenarth car park; and Wonastow         | Mark Hand   |                |
| ICMD    | 13-Sep-23 | Proposed Changes to the Membership of the School Budget Funding Forum   | Martyn Groucutt - Education                  |  | Nikki Wellington  |                |
| ICMD    | 13-Sep-23 | 'Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 12 <b>deferred to September 13th</b>   |  | Agreement to make the traffic order - parking/waiting restrictions at Justins Hill and Wyesham Avenue, Wyesham; Main Road and Castle Way, Portskewett; lane leading to Sugarloaf Llanwenarth car park; and Wonastow          | Mark Hand   | 24-May-23      |
| Cabinet | 06-Sep-23 | Respite review for people with learning disabilities  |  |  | Jane Rodgers  | 31-Jul-23      |
| Cabinet | 06-Sep-23 | Home to School Transport Policy 2024/25   |  | To consider the adoption of the proposed Home to School Transport Policy for the academic year 2024/25   | Deh Hill Howells  |                |

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|---------|-----------|---|---|---|------------------|-----------|
| Cabinet | 06-Sep-23 | Proposal to establish a Welsh medium seedling school in Monmouth              |   | Cabinet to consider objection report and make final determination on how to proceed.  | Debbie Graves    | 27-Mar-23 |
| ICMD    | 16-Aug-23 | Castle Wood Usk Low Cost Home Ownership Future Use                            | Sara Burch - Inclusive and Active Communities |   |                  |           |
| ICMD    | 16-Aug-23 | electric vehicle charging rate for public and staff at EV                     | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  |   | Deb Hill Howells | 20-Jul-23 |
| ICMD    | 16-Aug-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 11                                | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  | Agreement to make the traffic order - Exception Orders to identify those restricted roads that will remain 30mph in September 2023 instead of defaulting to 20mph | Mark Hand        |           |
| ICMD    | 16-Aug-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 10                                | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  | Agreement to make the traffic order - prohibition of driving Pwll Du, Llanelly Hill and Belmont Close/Belmont Road Abergavenny                                    | Mark Hand        |           |
| ICMD    | 02-Aug-23 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 1 held on 22nd June 2023            | Rachel Garrick - Resources                    |   | Dave Jarrett     |           |
| ICMD    | 02-Aug-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 10 <b>deferred to August 16th</b> | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  | Agreement to make the traffic order - Exception Orders to identify those restricted roads that will remain 30mph in September 2023 instead of defaulting to 20mph | Mark Hand        | 3-Oct-22  |
| Cabinet | 26-Jul-23 | Implementation of the My Day My Life review recommendations                   |   |   | Ceri York        |           |
| Cabinet | 26-Jul-23 | Gypsy and Traveller Site Identification                                       |   |   | Ian Bakewell     | 12-Jul-23 |
| Cabinet | 26-Jul-23 | •Review of the Respite Opportunities Service                                  |   |   | Ceri York        | 14-Mar-23 |
| Cabinet | 26-Jul-23 | 2023/24 Revenue budget progress – early update                                |   |   | Jon Davies       | 8-Jun-23  |

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| Cabinet | 26-Jul-23 | S016 Funding Castle Park and Arch Bishop Rowan Williams Schools.   |  |  | Cath Saunders    | 13-Jun-23 |
| Council | 20-Jul-23 | Gifts & Hospitality Report   |  |  | Matt Phillips    | 12-Jun-23 |
| Council | 20-Jul-23 | Freedom of the Borough Presentation  |  |  | Joe Skidmore     | 5-May-23  |
| Council | 20-Jul-23 | Recruitment of Local Access Forum  |  | To agree arrangements for the recruitment of the Monmouthshire Local Access Forum for the next 3 year period of appointment  | Matthew Lewis    | 21-Jun-23 |
| ICMD    | 12-Jul-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 10<br><b>DEFERRED TO 16TH AUG</b>  | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | Agreement to make the traffic order - prohibition of driving Pwl Du, Llanelly Hill   | Mark Hand        | 19-May-23 |
| ICMD    | 12-Jul-23 | transfer the school balances for both Deri View and King Henry VIII School to the new King Henry VIII 3 – 19 School. | Rachel Garrick - Resources                   | Both King Henry VIII School and Deri View Primary school are closing on 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2023 and the new King Henry VIII 3 – 19 School will open on 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2023, under a statutory closure of schools the financial balances transfer to the Local Authority, | Nikki Wellington | 4-Apr-23  |
|         | 05-Jul-23 | Reopen Monmouth Cemetery for new burials   |  |  | Rhian Jackson    |           |
| Cabinet | 05-Jul-23 | RESERVATION OF GRAVE PLOTS   |  | To seek cabinet approval to cease the provision of reserving grave spaces (not incl cremated remains plots) in Llanfoist Cemetery  | Rhian Jackson    | 7-Nov-22  |
| Cabinet | 05-Jul-23 | 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring - Outturn Report  | Rachel Garrick - Resources                   |  | Jon Davies       | 27-Apr-23 |
| ICMD    | 28-Jun-23 | Highway Traffic Regulation Order   | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | Agreement to make the traffic order - making permanent the part-time prohibition of driving on Cross Street and Market Street Abergavenny  | Mark Hand        | 6-Jun-23  |
| Council | 22-Jun-23 | Gwent Public Services Board Well-being plan  |  | To approve the Public Services Board's Well-being Plan that sets out the steps being taken collaboratively by public services to improve wellbeing in Gwent ahead of approval by the Gwent Public Services Board.  | Richard Jones    | 20-Jan-23 |



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| Council | 22-Jun-23 | Chief Officer Children and Young People's Report 2023                   |  |  | Will McLean             | 14-Feb-23 |
| Cabinet | 07-Jun-23 | Adoption of Transforming Chepstow Masterplan                            | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy         | To adopt the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan, co-produced with Chepstow Town Council, to inform future regeneration priorities and grant bids   | Mark Hand / Dan Fordham | 3-Oct-22  |
| Cabinet | 07-Jun-23 | Transforming Towns Strategic Grant regeneration priorities and LUF3 bid | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy         | To agree the priority projects for bids for WG Strategic grant funding to 24/25 and the submission for round 3 of Levelling Up Funding   | Mark Hand / Dan Fordham | 3-Oct-22  |
| Cabinet | 07-Jun-23 | Proposal to establish a Welsh medium seedling school in Monmouth        |  | Cabinet to consider the results of the consultation, recommendations and decide whether to publish statutory notices.  | Debbie Graves           | 27-Mar-23 |
| Cabinet | 07-Jun-23 | Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy                               | Rachel Garrick - Resources                   | To endorse the Socially Responsible Procurement Strategy   | Scott James             | 22-Aug-22 |
| ICMD    | 24-May-23 | Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 9                            | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | Agreement to make the traffic order - including Llantrisant 20mph village lane, 40mph through road, possibly Llantrisant (Usk to Wentwood) 50mph; 20mph Gilwern and surrounding villages                     | Mark Hand               | 14-Apr-23 |
| Council | 18-May-23 | Political Balance Report  |  | The Council is required to review at, or as soon as practicable after, the Council's annual meeting, the representation of different political groups on the bodies to which the Council makes appointments. | Matt Phillips           | 2-Feb-23  |
| Council | 18-May-23 | Outside Bodies Report   |  | To appoint representatives to serve on outside   | Matt Phillips           | 2-Feb-23  |
| Council | 18-May-23 | Appointments to Committees  |  | To appoint committees together with their membership and terms of reference in accordance with the Council's Constitution.   | Nicola Perry            | 2-Feb-23  |
| Council | 18-May-23 | Constitution update   |  | For the Monitoring Officer to bring proposed amendments and highlight changes made over the previous 12 months   | Matt Phillips           | 2-Feb-23  |
| Council | 18-May-23 | Corporate Parenting Strategy  |  |  | Diane Corrister         | 24-Aug-22 |

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| Cabinet | 17-May-23 | Review of Home to School Transport Policy 24/25.                   | Martyn Groucutt - Education                   | The purpose: Is to seek approval to commence consultation on proposed amendments to the Home to School Transport Policy for the academic year 2024/25.   | Deb Hill Howells                 | 12-Apr-23 |
| Cabinet | 17-May-23 | Monnow Street public realm improvements                            | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy          | To agree how we proceed with proposals for Monnow Street public realm following consultation   | Mark Hand / Dan Fordham          | 6-Mar-23  |
| ICMD    | 10-May-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 9<br>MOVED TO 24TH MAY | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  | Agreement to make the traffic order - including Llantrisant 20mph village lane, 40mph through road, possibly Llantrisant (Usk to Wentwood) 50mph; 20mph Gilwern and surrounding villages   | Mark Hand                        | 3-Oct-22  |
| Council | 20-Apr-23 | Motion for the Rivers and Oceans update                            |   | Deferred - new date to be advised  | Hazel Clatworthy                 | 10-Jan-23 |
| Council | 20-Apr-23 | Community and Corporate Plan                                       |   | To seek approval of a new Community and Corporate Plan that sets the direction for the council and county of Monmouthshire, articulating the authority's purpose and priorities alongside the steps we will take to deliver these, the | Matt Gatehouse                   | 6-Feb-23  |
| ICMD    | 12-Apr-23 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 4 held on 9th March 2023 | Rachel Garrick - Resources                    |  | Dave Jarrett                     |           |
| Cabinet | 05-Apr-23 | Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan                                    | Sara Burch - Inclusive and Active Communities | To agree a plan to transition the delivery of homelessness that minimises the use of and the time homeless applicants spend in temporary accommodation   | Rebecca Cresswell / Ian Bakewell | 24-Jan-23 |
| ICMD    | 22-Mar-23 | Non Domestic Rates application for Hardship Relief - RESTRICTED    | Rachel Garrick - Resources                    |  | Ruth Donovan                     |           |
| ICMD    | 22-Mar-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 8                      | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  | Agreement to make the traffic order - including Monmouth Road, Raglan no right turn onto A40; resi permit parking at Exmouth Place, Chepstow and Ross Road, Abergavenny; 3T weight restriction on Old Wye Bridge Chepstow; waiting     | Mark Hand                        |           |
| Council | 09-Mar-23 | Pay Policy   |   | To approve the publication of Monmouthshire County Council's Pay Policy, in compliance with the Localism Act."   | Sally Thomas                     | 1-Feb-23  |
| Council | 09-Mar-23 | Council Tax Premiums   |   |  | Peter Davies                     | 18-Jan-23 |

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| Council | 09-Mar-23 | Capital Strategy & Treasury Strategy  |  |  | Jon Davies      | 17-May-22 |
| Council | 09-Mar-23 | Youth Council   |  |  | Jade Atkins     | 7-Dec-22  |
| ICMD    | 08-Mar-23 | Proposed amendment to primary school catchment area – Llandenny Village             | Martyn Groucutt - Education                  |  | Debbie Graves   | 10-Jan-23 |
| ICMD    | 08-Mar-23 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 8 DEFERRED TO 22 MARCH                  | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | Agreement to make the traffic order - including Monmouth Road, Raglan no right turn onto A40; resi permit parking at Exmouth Place, Chepstow and Ross Road, Abergavenny; 3T weight restriction on Old Wye Bridge Chepstow; waiting | Mark Hand       |           |
| Council | 02-Mar-23 | Final Budget Sign Off including Council Tax Resolution                              |  |  | Jon Davies      |           |
| Cabinet | 01-Mar-23 | 2023/4 Final Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals                                   |  |  | Jon Davies      | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 01-Mar-23 | 2023/4 WCF/Trust Treasury Fund Investments  |  |  | Dave Jarrett    | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 01-Mar-23 | Month 9 budget monitoring report  |  |  | Jon Davies      | 6-Feb-23  |
| Cabinet | 01-Mar-23 | Monmouthshire ECO Flex 'Joint Statement of Intent' and Memorandum of Understanding" |  |  | Steve Griffiths | 16-Nov-22 |
| Cabinet | 01-Feb-23 | Tudor Street  |  |  |                 | 9-Jan-23  |
| ICMD    | 25-Jan-23 | Highway Traffic Regulation Amendment Order No 7                                     | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment | Agreement to make the traffic order  | Mark Hand       | 15-Dec-22 |

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| ICMD    | 25-Jan-23 | Community Council and Police Precepts - final                                   | Rachel Garrick - Resources |   | Jon Davies    | 17-May-22 |
| Council | 19-Jan-23 | To determine the name for the new 3-19 School in Abergavenny                    |                            | To determine the name for the new 3-19 School in Abergavenny  | Cath Saunders | 28-Nov-22 |
| Council | 19-Jan-23 | Council Diary   |                            | To confirm the Council Diary 23/24  | John Pearson  | 14-Dec-22 |
| Council | 19-Jan-23 | Appointments  |                            | A report for Council to appoint or ratify a number of appointments to bodies and positions  | Matt Phillips |           |
| Council | 19-Jan-23 | Community and Corporate Plan  |                            |   |               |           |
| Council | 19-Jan-23 | Tudor Road Call-In  |                            |   | Nicola Perry  | 3-Jan-23  |
| Council | 19-Jan-23 | Council Tax Reduction Scheme  |                            |   | Ruth Donovan  | 31-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 18-Jan-23 | Garden Waste  |                            |   | Carl Touhig   | 21-Dec-22 |
| Cabinet | 18-Jan-23 | Draft Revenue & Capital Proposals   |                            |   | Jon Davies    |           |
| Cabinet | 18-Jan-23 | Council Tax Premiums Consultation - Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes |                            |   | Ruth Donovan  |           |
| Cabinet | 18-Jan-23 | Proposal to establish a Welsh Medium Seedling school in Monmouth                |                            | To seek cabinet approval to commence statutory consultation processes to establish a Welsh Medium seedling provision in Monmouth. | Debbie Graves | 23-Sep-22 |

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| ICMD    | 11-Jan-23 | Clydach Ironworks Enhancement                                  | Sara Burch - Inclusive and Active Communities | To seek approval for the transfer of land associated with the Clydach Ironworks Enhancement Scheme  | Matthew Lewis            | 8-Dec-23  |
| ICMD    | 11-Jan-23 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group                                |   |   | Dave Jarrett             | 17-May-22 |
| ICMD    | 14-Dec-22 | Council Tax Base report  |   |   | Ruth Donovan             | 31-May-22 |
| ICMD    | 14-Dec-22 | 2023/4 Community Council & Police Precepts - draft             |   |   | Jon Davies               | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 07-Dec-22 | Regional Integration Fund                                      |   | To consider the financial liabilities and implications of the Regional Integration Fund and its tapered funding model.                                    | Jane Rodgers             | 21-Nov-22 |
| Cabinet | 07-Dec-22 | National Adoption Services and Foster Wales Joint Committee    |   |   | Jane Rodgers             | 9-Nov-22  |
| Cabinet | 07-Dec-22 | 2022/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - Month 6        |   |   | Jon Davies               | 17-May-22 |
| Council | 01-Dec-22 | Corporate Safeguarding Policy.                                 |   | For Council to endorse the revised Corporate Safeguarding Policy.   | Jane Rodgers             | 10-Nov-22 |
| Council | 01-Dec-22 | Governance & Audit Committee Annual Report 2021/22             |   |   | Andrew Wathan            | 18-Oct-22 |
| Council | 01-Dec-22 | RLDP Preferred Strategy  | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy          | To seek Council endorsement of the new Preferred Strategy for eight week consultation   | Mark Hand / Rachel Lewis | 25-Jul-22 |
| ICMD    | 30-Nov-22 | <b>TUDOR STREET</b>  |   | To seek a decision regarding the Council's forward use of the property located in Tudor Street ahead of the outcome of the wider review of Mr. Ben Maffei | Jane Rodgers             | 14-Nov-22 |
| ICMD    | 30-Nov-22 | Govilon Section 106 Funding for Recreation & Play              | Rachel Garrick - Resources                    |   | Mike Moran               | 8-Nov-22  |
| ICMD    | 30-Nov-22 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 5                  | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  |   | Mark Hand                | 3-Oct-22  |
| ICMD    | 30-Nov-22 | Planning Annual Performance Report (APR) Deferred to 30-Nov-22 | Paul Griffiths - Sustainable Economy          |   | Mark Hand Phil Thomas    | 3-Oct-22  |
| ICMD    | 30-Nov-22 | Highways Traffic Regulation Amendment Order 6                  | Catrin Maby - Climate Change and Environment  | Agreement to make the traffic order   | Mark Hand                | 23-Aug-22 |
| Cabinet | 09-Nov-22 | Implementing Sharepoint online                                 |   | To secure funding to implement the project  | Sian Hayward             | 13-Oct-22 |
| Cabinet | 09-Nov-22 | A County of Sanctuary  |   | To set out the reasons why an earlier decision is required due to time restrictions associated with TAN 47  | Matt Gatehouse           | 20-Sep-22 |



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|---------|-----------|--|--|---|--|-----------|
| Cabinet | 09-Nov-22 | SPF Update Report  |  |   | Hannah Jones                                   | 12-Sep-22 |
| Cabinet | 09-Nov-22 | Revenue & Capital MTFP update and process  |  |   | Jon Davies                                     | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 09-Nov-22 | MonLife Heritage Strategy (or ICMD)  |  | DEFERRED  | Matthew Lewis                                  | 10-Feb-22 |
| Council | 27-Oct-22 | RESPONSE TO URGENT NEED FOR HOUSING ACCOMMODATION                                |  | To present a proposal to enable Council to respond flexibly and promptly to the urgent need for housing accommodation, to address the | Cath Fallon                                    | 10-Oct-22 |
| Council | 27-Oct-22 | Community and Corporate Plan   |  | To seek endorsement of the new Community and Corporate Plan setting out the purpose, values   | Matt Gatehouse / Paul Matthews                 | 3-Oct-22  |
| Council | 27-Oct-22 | Outside Bodies Appointment   |  |   | John Pearson                                   | 3-Oct-22  |
| Council | 27-Oct-22 | Annual Safeguarding Report   |  |   | Kelly Turner                                   | 24-Aug-22 |
| Council | 27-Oct-22 | Social Care & Health: Directors Report 2021/22                                   |  |   | Jane Rodgers                                   | 6-Jul-22  |
| ICMD    | 26-Oct-22 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group  |  |   | Dave Jarrett                                   | 14/7/22   |
| Cabinet | 19-Oct-22 | PSOW annual letter   |  | Present the Public Services Ombudsman For Wales' annual report as required by the letter  | Matt Phillips                                  | 28-Sep-22 |
| Cabinet | 19-Oct-22 | Regional Partnership Board - Gwent Market Position Statement                     |  | To provide a Market Stability Report produced by the Regional Partnership Board setting out a high                                    | Phil Diamond Head of Regional Partnership Team | 22-Sep-22 |
| Cabinet | 19-Oct-22 | Community and Corporate Plan   |  | To seek endorsement of the new Community and Corporate Plan setting out the purpose, values   | Gatehouse / Paul Matt                          | 20-Sep-22 |
| Cabinet | 19-Oct-22 | 22/23 Revenue and Capital Monitoring report - Month 4                            |  |   | Jon Davies                                     | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 19-Oct-22 | Land adjacent to Caldicot Comprehensive School - Housing Development Opportunity |  | To seek approval of the disposal of land at Caldicot Comprehensive School for the   | Nick Keyse                                     |           |
| ICMD    | 12-Oct-22 | Local Development Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)                                 |  | <b>DEFERRED TO 26 OCT</b>   | Rachel Lewis/Cllr Paul Griffiths               | 23/08/22  |
| ICMD    | 12-Oct-22 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group  |  | <b>DEFERRED TO 26 OCT</b>   | Dave Jarrett                                   | 14/07/22  |
| ICMD    | 12-Oct-22 | Ending Library Fines   |  | enabling more people to enjoy reading without the worry of incurring a fine if they are unable to return                              | Cheryl Haskell/Fookes?                         | 20-Sep-22 |
| ICMD    | 28-Sep-22 | Transport Policy   |  |   | Deb Hill Howells - MG                          | 22-Aug-22 |
| ICMD    | 28-Sep-22 | B4245 speed limit  |  | DEFERRED TO 26 OCT  | Mark Hand                                      | 18-Jul-22 |
| Council | 27-Sep-22 |  |  |   | Nick John                                      | 24-Aug-22 |
| Council | 27-Sep-22 | RLDP Options Report  |  |   | Rachel Lewis                                   | 25-Jul-22 |
| Council | 27-Sep-22 | Rivers and Ocean   |  |   | Hazel Clatworthy                               | 9-Jun-22  |
| Council | 27-Sep-22 | Monmouthshire County Council self - assessment report 2021/2                     |  |   | Richard Jones                                  | 23-May-22 |

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| ICMD    | 14-Sep-22 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 2 held on 21st July 2022 (no meeting/no report -             |  |  | Dave Jarrett            | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 07-Sep-22 | Transport Policy Consultation Update.  |  |  | Deb Hill Howells        | 22-Aug-22 |
| Cabinet | 07-Sep-22 | Cost Of Living   |  |  | Matt Phillips           | 25-Jul-22 |
| ICMD    | 31-Aug-22 | MY DAY, MY LIFE SERVICE EVALUTATION  |  |  | Ceri York               | 15-Aug-22 |
| ICMD    | 31-Aug-22 | Homeseach Policy & Procedure - Amendments & Welsh Translation Requirement                              |  |  | Ian Bakewell            |           |
| ICMD    | 03-Aug-22 | Additional Resources in Educations Strategy  |  | Resources required to develop and maintain schools education systems and the implementatin | Sian Hayward            | 14-Jun-22 |
| ICMD    | 03-Aug-22 | Designation of Secondary Catchment Areas   |  |  | Matthew Jones           | 6-Jun-22  |
| ICMD    | 03-Aug-22 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 1 held on 23rd June 2022 - <b>Moved to ICMD 3rd Aug 2022</b> |  |  | Dave Jarrett            |           |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Wye Valley Villages Future Improvement Plan  |  |  | Mark Hand               | 1-Jul-22  |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Regen Three Year Programme   |  |  | Mark Hand               | 1-Jul-22  |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Review of Chepstow High Street closure   |  |  | Mark Hand               | 1-Jul-22  |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Home to School Transport Policy 2023-24.   |  |  | Deb Hill Howells        | 27-Jun-22 |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | MUCH (Magor & Undy Community Hall) report  |  |  | Nick Keys               | 9-Jun-22  |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Shared Prosperity Fund Local Investment Plan and Regional Lead Authority Arrangements                  |  |  | Hannah Jones            | 23-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Welsh Church Fund Working Group - meeting 1 held on 23rd June 2022 - <b>Moved to ICMD 3rd Aug 2022</b> |  |  | Dave Jarrett            | 17-May-22 |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | 2021/22 Revenue and Capital Monitoring outturn   |  |  | Peter Davies/Jon Davies | 17-Feb-22 |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Play Sufficiency Assessment and Action Plan 22/23  |  |  | Matthew Lewis           | 10-Feb-22 |
| Cabinet | 27-Jul-22 | Housing Support Programme Strategy (Homeless Strategy)   |  |  | Ian Bakewell            |           |
| Cabinet |           |  |  |  |                         |           |

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## Monmouthshire Select Committee Minutes

Meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, The Rhadyr USK on Thursday, 14th March, 2024 at 10.00 am

### Councillors Present

County Councillor Lisa Dymock (Chairman)

County Councillors: Louise Brown, Emma Bryn, Jane Lucas, Maria Stevens, Jackie Strong, Tudor Thomas and Angela Sandles

Also in attendance County Councillors:

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Tomos Davies and Laura Wright

### Officers in Attendance

Robert McGowan, Policy and Scrutiny Officer  
Jane Rodgers, Chief Officer for Social Care, Safeguarding and Health  
David Jones, Head of Public Protection

Note: the following minutes focus on the challenge from members – for the full discussion, the recording of the meeting is at

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wA6TC85Tin0&list=PLlmqn4nAaFJAaDA9m3C2P8ZdJsca-bkSU&index=13](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wA6TC85Tin0&list=PLlmqn4nAaFJAaDA9m3C2P8ZdJsca-bkSU&index=13)

#### 1. Declarations of Interest

None.

#### 2. Public Open Forum

None.

#### 3. Local Toilet Strategy

Cabinet Member Angela Sandles and David Jones introduced the report and answered the members' questions with Jane Rodgers.

#### Key points raised by Members:

- The last survey was in 2019, will we carry out another soon to keep the document relevant? – **ACTION: officers to seek clarity from WG about issuing another survey, and any set guidance for it**
- The Boys Need Bins rollout is very good to see, and toilets becoming Stoma-friendly – is there more detail as to when these measures will be achieved by? What will be the eventual costs?
- Could some of the grant of £17,200 mentioned in 15.3 be used for this implementation?
- Will the toilet facilities listed on the web indicate that there now will be bins available, some will be Stoma-friendly, etc.? – **ACTION: to get the latest update about the A40 toilets, and to update members**



- Noting the importance of the bilingual signs, are we letting down the English-speaking residents by not displaying them in the meantime? Can that form part of the Action Plan?
- Can 1.13 in the strategy be amended to say, 'single sex toilet toilets will always be provided' and 'unisex provision will be considered as and when alterations are made to existing facilities in full consultation with stakeholders'?
- There is an issue about safe spaces, and that bullet point could be misinterpreted to say that we're going to change all toilets to unisex facilities, and a number of people would feel uncomfortable going into toilets that had shared washing facilities that were enclosed – therefore, there also needs to be another bullet point which says 'unisex provision will also be a single lockable door to the ceiling with wash facilities enclosed opening out to open safe public spaces, either internally or externally.' – **ACTION: Councillor Brown to provide officers with alternative wording suggestions**
- Note that the National Toilet Map doesn't give any specific information on toilets in a given location e.g. Chepstow.
- Would members be open to forming a working group to look at the strategy, as was done previously? – **ACTION: members to discuss outside the meeting about the direction to take, and which members will be involved**
- Can we get feedback from our cleaners?
- Are Town Councils responsible for arranging Environmental Health inspections or do they go through the local authority? Do the inspections have to be financed by the Town Councils?
- A 5% response from Caldicot Town Council is very disappointing. Would an annual strategy for responses be a good idea?
- There's a lot to be learned from Abergavenny Town Council and the service surveys they carried out
- **ACTION: to feed back that the Welsh in the National Toilet Map needs to be improved**
- The matter of Welsh language signs is surprising: as we are in Wales and there is an important focus on pushing the language, we should be able to produce them in-house; hopefully that can be done.
- Regarding Changing Places toilets, there have been improvements but there is no provision in Abergavenny town for anyone with severe disabilities. There should be an aspiration for something to be provided, noting that there is potential for facilities at the Melville Centre, with it replacing Tudor Street.
- Whitehorse Lane is controversial, it would be very difficult to bring that back into service, particularly given Gwent Police's concerns about drug taking, antisocial behaviour and damage.
- Some corrections need to be made, e.g. p28, Priory Street is no longer open but the map shows it still is, and the Shire Hall opening times are wrong – **ACTION: Councillor Lucas to provide corrections for the team to update**
- A regular complaint at Monmouth Town Council is that opening and closing times vary considerably so that it's often closed when it should be open.
- Is it widely known that there's a free service for inspections?
- It's disappointing that there isn't more on Severnside, and the leisure centre in county court isn't quite up to Changing Places standards
- A changing place in Magor Hub would have been ideal for people on a day out, coming back from shopping, etc.

- I would like to reinforce the point about the safety of women and girls in public toilets.
- Can we have more detail about the problem of anti-social behaviour, drug taking and damage to toilets, and how it is managed?
- Regarding drug taking, in Monmouth a blue light was put in at great cost as apparently this prohibits seeing veins, and there was talk of providing a safe sharps box – this needs to be chased up – **ACTION: Councillor Lucas to check status**
- Are we able to engage more with the clinics for certain illnesses running out of Chepstow Hospital and Nevill Hall so they're aware that radar keys can be issued from Tourist Information Centres/Hubs? If that's correct?
- If we look to carry out another survey, monthly clinics for certain illnesses will be a very good opportunity to get people to participate in surveys – **ACTION: to check that awareness of the radar key scheme is encouraged at various points within health and social care**
- What is the timeline for Bins For Boys? When will we have an idea of what's required across the county?

#### **Chair's Summary:**

Thank you to the Cabinet Member and officers for this work, and for attending today. The Toilet Strategy is important and helps to support physical activity for people out and about, whether they're shopping, engaging in sport, etc. We've raised many questions and made many comments: we requested an update with regards to Stoma friendly status and asked about the Welsh Government grant of £17,200. There were concerns across the group with regards to Unisex toilets, wanting to ensure that single sex toilets will still be available, but we understand the concern around being too prescriptive in the wording of the strategy. It was suggested that we look to set up a working group as previously. There were questions around how to improve survey engagement – we can learn from Abergavenny Town Council and the service surveys they carried out; as part of that working group, we could ask them to come along and speak to us and show us what they did differently. The bilingual Stoma friendly stickers are currently outstanding, and members are keen to push ahead with getting them. There was some concern regarding the lack of changing spaces in Abergavenny town centre, and we've requested an update with regards to the Melville Centre. There were some discrepancies on the toilet map with regards to opening times, and there was a suggestion about sharp boxes and blue lights in toilets. Concerns about the lack of changing places in Severnside were raised, and how Caldicot Leisure Centre doesn't meet the requirements. We also wanted to understand a little bit more about the antisocial behaviour and vandalism of our public toilets – we need to re-engage with Gwent Police.

We want to thank the team that maintains our public toilets across the county: they work exceptionally hard, and having clean toilets is vitally important for visitors and our residents.

#### **4. Place Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and Action List**

Councillor Brown noted that the RLDP Deposit Plan has been deferred previously, and expressed concern that the opportunity for it to come to the committee could be missed, and that the consultation could fall in the school holidays, which will not be an effective

time. Officers assured members that they are in discussions about the finalised timescales, and it will come to the May, July or September meeting depending on when the date for Council is set. – **ACTION: Chair to contact Councillor Griffiths and the Head of Placemaking for clarity on timescales**

5. **Council and Cabinet Work Planner**

6. **Minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2024**

The minutes were agreed, approved by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Lucas.

7. **Next Meeting: 10th April 2024**

The meeting ended at **11.25 am**.