



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

April 2024

Volume 2 **Delivery Plan**



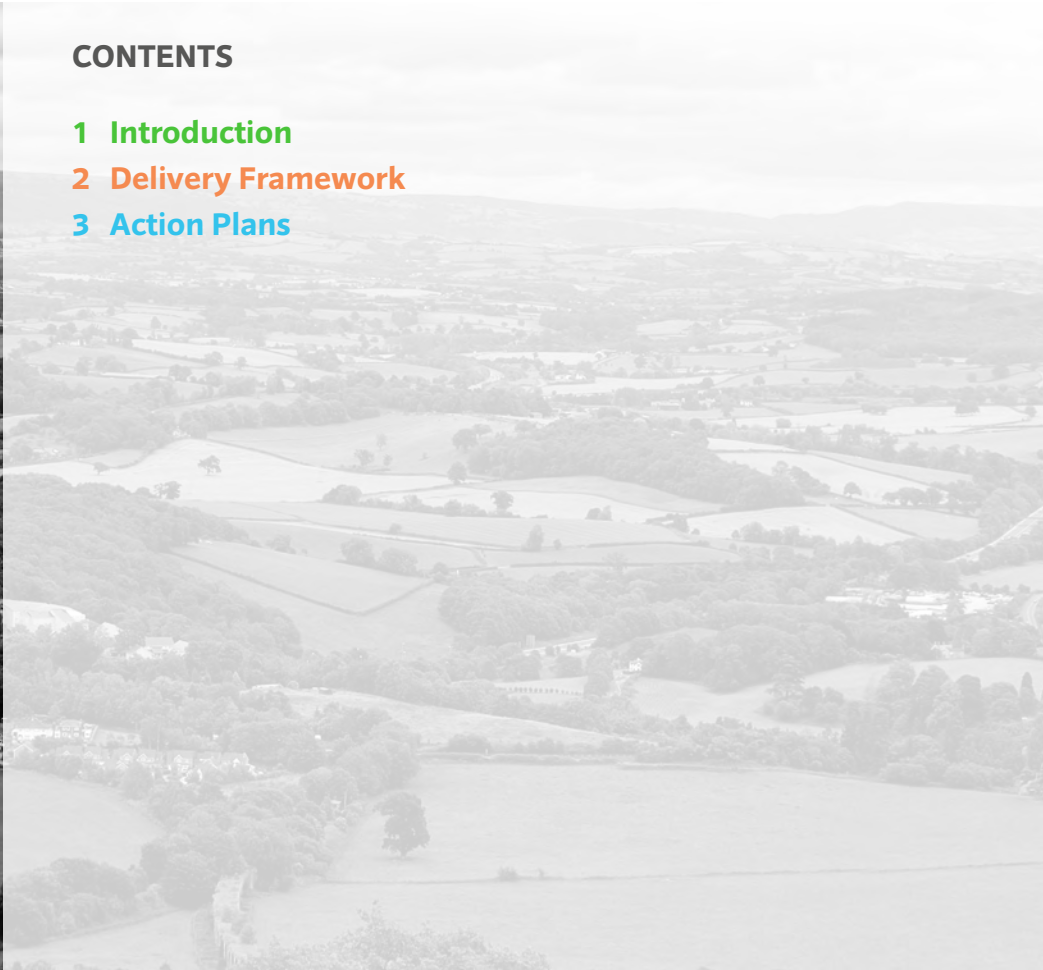
Monmouth

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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 (**Box 2.1**).

2.1.5 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.

2.1.6 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 2.2**).

BOX 2.1 The Gwent Green Grid Partnership

The Partnership is a collaboration of the five local authorities of Gwent, (Monmouthshire County Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Newport City Council, Caerphilly County Borough Council and Blaenau-Gwent County Borough Council) working with Natural Resources Wales and other partners and stakeholders, and has been active since 2020.

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.

<https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/gwent-green-grid-partnership/>



BOX 2.2 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 km² 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

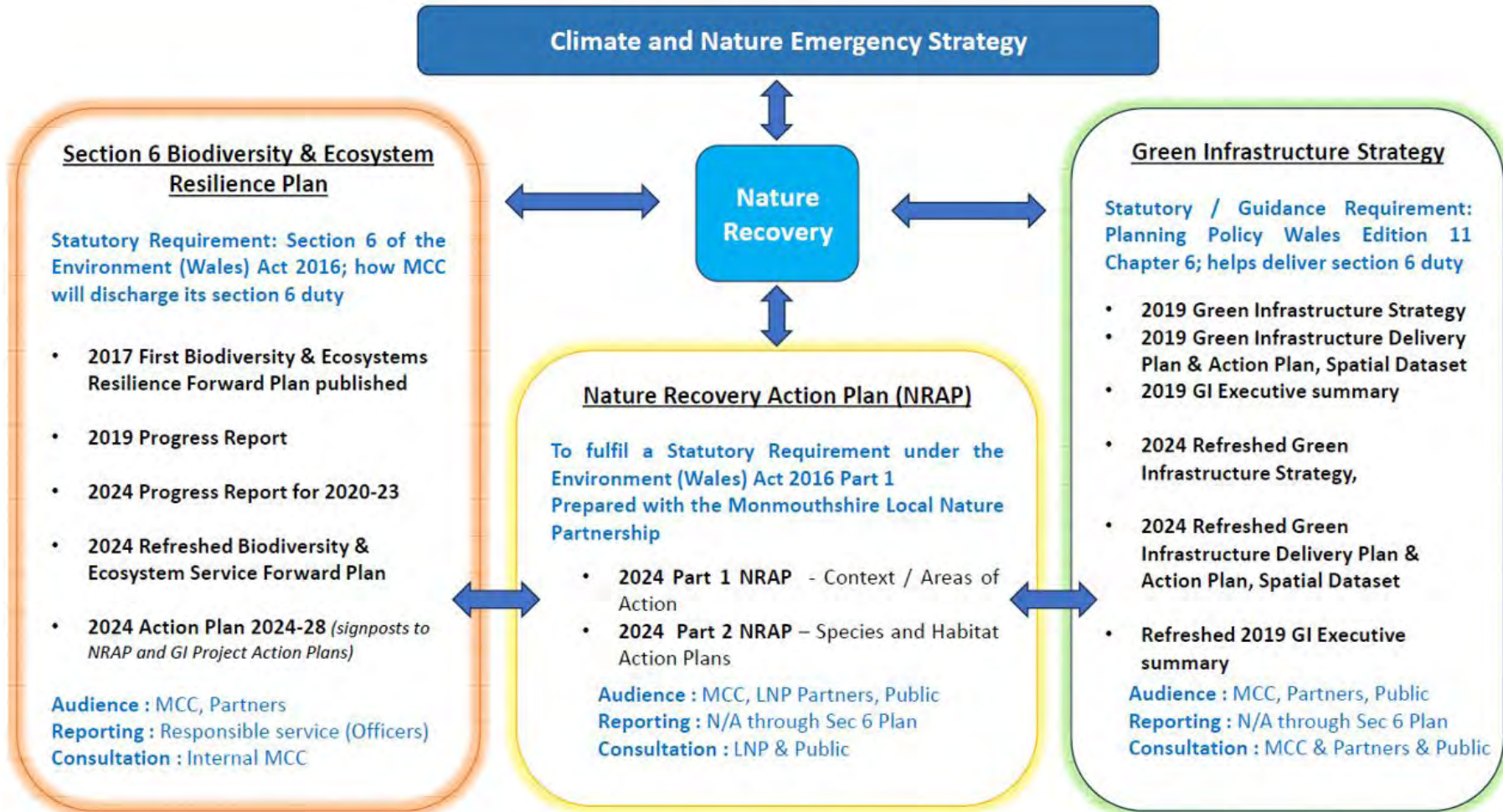


2.2 Delivery Principles

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.
- As the local planning authority, utilise the step-wise approach advocated by Planning Policy Wales 12, guiding decision makers in securing a net benefit for biodiversity.

2.2.2 The GI Strategy is part of Monmouthshire County Council's 3 part delivery plan for nature recovery:



2.3 Integrating Green Infrastructure and Development

2.3.1 In accordance with Planning Policy Wales (Section 6.2), 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.

2.3.4 The Green Infrastructure Statement should provide evidence that the step-wise approach advocated by Planning Policy Wales has been followed, demonstrating that a scheme of enhancements will be provided to ensure a net benefit for biodiversity.

2.3.5 As described in Planning Policy Wales, the step-wise approach aims to maintain and enhance biodiversity, build resilient ecological networks and deliver net benefits for biodiversity by ensuring that any adverse environmental effects are firstly avoided, then minimized, mitigated, and as a last resort compensated for. Enhancement must be secured by delivering a biodiversity benefit primarily on site or immediately adjacent to the site, over and above that required to mitigate or compensate for any negative impact (in future this may include purchasing biodiversity credits).

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.
- **UK Funding:** such as the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, part of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda, which includes funding to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK, investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.
- **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 Monmouthshire is a partner in the Nature isn't Neat project, which is establishing joined-up green space management to create wildflower-rich pollinator habitats across Gwent local authority areas as part of the Gwent Green Grid Partnership. This approach encourages change in the way grassland is managed - on our verges, open spaces and parks - to benefit nature. The project also provides [training and resources](#) to support project implementation.

2.5.4 Landowners and land managers are encouraged to follow the Council's Guidance Note on Green Infrastructure Management Plans.

2.5.5 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.

2.5.6 An example of best practice in preparing Green Infrastructure Management Plans is illustrated by the case study in **Box 2.3**.

BOX 2.3 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.

2.6 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/superseded:

- Open Space Study
- Ecological Connectivity Assessment - to be superseded by the Nature Networks Ecological Opportunity Mapping for Gwent

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 Length of green routes improved Length of new green routes created
		Increase/decrease in people engaging with nature	Volunteers involved in GI project delivery/stewardship 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 Condition of designated habitats 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: Increase Climate Change & Nature 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.)
4: 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)
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.

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: Increase Climate Change & Nature Resilience
 - 4: Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness
 - 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)
- Bannau Brycheiniog 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)
- Dŵr Cymru (DC)
- 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)
- 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).

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