

SIR FYNWY

MONMOUTHSHIRE



# Monmouthshire

## Public Service Board

### Well-being Assessment: Summary



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# Version Control

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Title	Well-being Assessment: Summary
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This document is a summary of the full Well-being Assessment. To see further references, data and analysis, please refer to the full document at [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire)

We're interested to know if we have reflected the main issues facing current and future generations and welcome comments and feedback. Responses should be received by Monday 27<sup>th</sup> February 2017. You can complete the questionnaire at [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire) or get involved on twitter using the hashtag #OurMonmouthshire. You can also share your thoughts on [Monmouthshire Made Open](#).

Alternatively, written comments can be sent to:

Policy and Performance Team, Monmouthshire County Council, County Hall, The Rhadyr, Usk, Monmouthshire, NP15 1GA

or e-mailed to [improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:improvement@monmouthshire.gov.uk)

# Introduction

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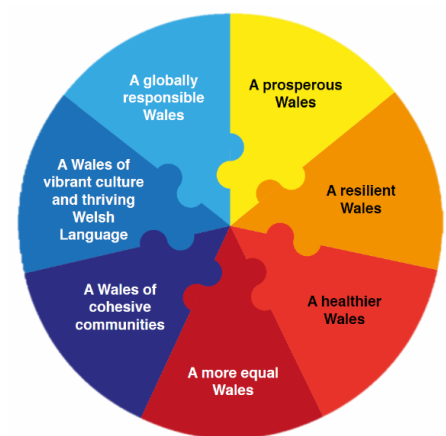
Monmouthshire faces a number of challenges now and in the future. These include climate change, income and health inequalities and access to housing and transport. These are really complex things and we cannot pretend that we have all of the answers. To tackle them we need to work together as public services and as communities and to think far more about some of the solutions and the long-term impact of the decisions we make.

## The Well-Being of Future Generations Act

In April 2016 Welsh Government introduced The Well-being of Future Generations Act. This ground breaking piece of legislation is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of our nation, our county and the communities that make it what it is.

To make sure that public services are all working towards the same vision, the Act puts in place seven well-being goals which you can see in the diagram on the right.

The Act also sets out how public services in Wales need to 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. Public bodies must come together as a public service board.



## Monmouthshire Public Service Board

The four statutory members of the Public Service Board, or PSB, are the Local Authority, Local Health Board, Fire and Rescue Authority and Natural Resources Wales. Other organisations are also invited, in Monmouthshire this includes Gwent Police, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Melin Homes and voluntary organisations represented through the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations.

## The Communities of Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire is a large and semi-rural county. It is often perceived as leafy and this can sometimes mask differences within and between communities. This assessment is based around five clusters: Abergavenny and surrounding area; Monmouth and surrounding area; the heart of Monmouthshire which includes Usk and Raglan; Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley and Severnside which includes Caldicot and Magor. These can be seen on the diagram to the right. You will find area profiles towards the end of this document. These local profiles highlight the importance of place when considering responses to societal challenges.



## The Well-being Assessment

The PSB must prepare and publish an assessment of the state of economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being in the area and then agree priorities to address these. This assessment is built from an extensive range of sources including census and statistical data, future trends, qualitative evidence which captures people's opinions and perceptions as well as giving context to quantitative data and academic research. Over the next few pages you can read an overview of the assessment.

### Approach to community engagement

Between August and December 2016 staff from public services in Monmouthshire attended over 80 events, speaking to more than a thousand people. This has helped us understand the issues that matter most to people in Monmouthshire. We called this engagement process *Our Monmouthshire*.

We asked two questions: 'What is good about where you live?' and 'What could make it even better?' Maps of each of the 5 areas were produced, together with fact cards which gave some short social, economic, environmental and cultural facts about the area and future trends to frame the conversations stimulating discussion and ideas.



People were encouraged to respond by completing postcards, via Facebook and Twitter using the #OurMonmouthshire hashtag. There was an online questionnaire for people to complete, and they could get involved and have their say using Monmouthshire Made Open, our digital engagement platform.

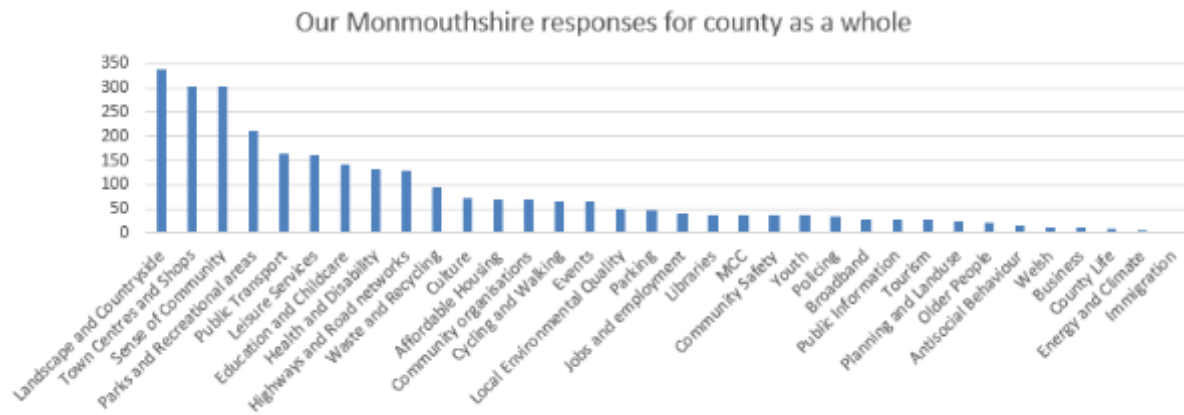
Efforts were made to ensure that we involved young and old and people with protected characteristics as set out in the Equality Act 2010. We also wanted to reach people where they were already at, rather than expecting people to come to us, so we went to a large number of venues and groups to speak to people.

### What have people talked about as part of *Our Monmouthshire*?

The theme that generated by far the most comments was landscape and countryside, with these comments being overwhelmingly positive about how the beautiful area and landscape benefit both residents and visitors. The next largest category of comments was about town centres and shops. These comments vary to some extent on where people come from. Some people are happy with their town centres and shopping provision, others are unhappy about empty shops and supermarkets having a negative effect on town centres. Also attracting a large number of comments were responses on the strong sense of community where they live and friendly

people. Other themes that generated many comments include parks and recreation, public transport, leisure services, education and childcare, health and disability and highways and roads.

The following chart shows the number of comments by theme for the county as a whole:



### What will happen next?

We have used the things people have told us through *Our Monmouthshire*, combined with data, statistics and research, to produce this well-being assessment. This will help us prioritise the things that public services should do to maximise the well-being of current and future generations.

The draft well-being assessment will be available for consultation for six weeks between January – February 2017 when people can comment on the document and let us know if you think we are identifying the things that matter most.

The well-being assessment will be agreed by the Public Service Board at the end of March and published in May 2017. The Public Service Board will then be looking closely at the findings of the assessment to help them decide on priorities to focus on in the well-being plan which will need to be produced by May 2018.



# Economy

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The strength of the local economy is an important measure of well-being. Monmouthshire is often perceived as affluent. A higher proportion of people of working-age are economically active than most other parts of Wales with less people claiming out-of-work benefits. With an average salary of £32,557 per year residents earn well above the British average. The county also performs well in terms of gross value added and business start-ups with more than 4,000 active enterprises in the county – per head of population this is higher than all UK regions outside London and the South East.

These headline measures mask some clear disparities. The wages on offer in Monmouthshire are some 10% below the UK average and only marginally above the average for Wales. Some 34% of our working population commute out of the county to earn a living. The largest employment sectors inside our borders include health and social work, wholesale and retail, manufacturing, tourism and food. These are all sectors that tend to suffer from low pay.

The ten nation Agri-Urban project in Abergevan is one way in which the agricultural sector is planning to develop increasing competitiveness and create more jobs in the food sector. Tourism is a major contributor to the local economy with visitors spending £186.64M in 2015 which supported 2,744 full-time jobs.

Feedback from residents highlights a number of concerns about employment. This is closely related to concerns about the affordability of housing. At an average of £218,000 Monmouthshire house prices are amongst the highest in Wales and also above the UK level. This creates challenges for people who live and work locally and in turn could impact on the long-term viability of some communities which could become dormitory villages for commuters.

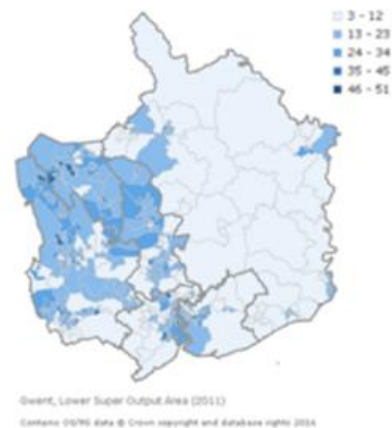
Transport has a significant impact on economic prosperity. Limited public transport means that many people are dependent on private cars to get to work. This presents challenges for young people who often face higher insurance costs. Severn Bridge tolls also impact disproportionately on residents in the south of the county as it can restrict access to the job market in Bristol and the South West. Economic well-being needs to be recognised not only in the context of the Cardiff Capital Region but also Bristol and the south west.

Superfast broadband has become a standard requirement for businesses operating in the digital age. Poor internet connectivity can be a key barrier to economic growth in rural areas. Once a barrier, over the past three years superfast wireless broadband services have been made available to 94% of the county's former broadband “not spots” allowing them to exploit the potential afforded by the city region.

Rural communities can be more prone to poverty than urban areas. The prevalence of low paid and fragile employment contributes to the risk of in-work poverty. A lack of affordable and available childcare in rural areas and limited access to the internet are also seen as barriers to employment.

14.2% of children in Monmouthshire live in low income households. This is less than neighbouring areas which is also true of the percentage of the population in income generation as shown in the map of Gwent on this page. However where poverty exists in the county it can be all the more stark where it features alongside significant affluence. Research has shown a strong correlation between things such as life expectancy, mental health and crime levels and how equal a society is with more equal countries having much better outcomes. Monmouthshire has a significant difference in earnings between men and women with the latter having a median wage some £126 below male workers in 2014-15 which is far worse than in other local authority areas.

Figure 3: % Population in Income Deprivation, 2013-2015



Pupils at Monmouthshire’s state schools perform well above the Wales average at foundation phase and key stage 2. This is broadly in line with where they would expect to be when the socio-economic factors are taken into account. There is a tailing off of performance at key stage 3. Key stage 4 attainment is above the Wales average with 66.8% of pupils achieving the level 2 threshold of 5 good GCSEs including English or Welsh and Mathematics. The challenge is to identify how good performance in primary schools can be maintained through key stage 3 and key stage 4. There is also a significant gap in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are not eligible. The educational attainment of those known to social services is significantly lower than the all pupils figure with 26% of this group achieving the level 2 threshold which is much lower than the 66.8% level for the year group as a whole. As things stand this group will find it harder to succeed in the employment market further impacting on their life chances.

The numbers of young people claiming out of work benefits is considerably lower than the Wales average. However some young people report a lack of employment opportunities locally, which leads many people to talk of a brain drain with young people leaving the county to attend university and not returning. There are also concerns about whether young people are being equipped with the skills needed in a changing job market.

The economy is of course about more than the younger generation. The contribution that older generations make to the local economy cannot be under-estimated. Data for Monmouthshire shows that there does not appear to be a significant problem of unemployment amongst older people with 41.3% of working age people aged 50 and above in employment compared to 37.7% for Wales as a whole.

## Society

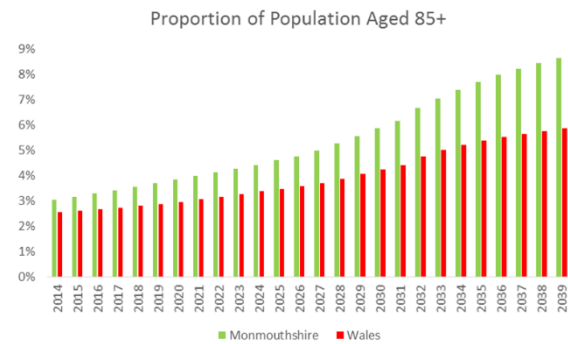
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Life expectancy for people in Monmouthshire is the highest in Wales, although there are variations with those living in the least deprived areas of the county expected to live longer than those in the most deprived areas. As a whole the county appears to fare well compared to the



rest of Wales when considering general deprivation with no areas in the most deprived 20%. However, social deprivation and in particular poor access to services is widespread across much of rural areas of Wales, including Monmouthshire.

An ageing population is a feature of the UK and Wales but particularly of Monmouthshire. By 2039 the population aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 61% and, more significantly, the number of people aged 85 and over by 185%.



80% of people in Monmouthshire consider their general health to be good or very good. On the whole, lifestyles in Monmouthshire appear healthier than in other parts of Gwent, however, alcohol consumption is higher than in other areas of Wales. The effects of alcohol pose a threat to the health and well-being of the drinker, but can also cause harm to family, friends and communities.

Just over a fifth of reception class children and over half of adults in Monmouthshire are overweight or obese and people’s lives are increasingly sedentary. Harms to well-being from obesity, physical inactivity and poor diet are felt across the life course and are intergenerational. Obesity is the most potent risk factor for Type 2 diabetes which is increasing in prevalence.

Rural areas are more deprived in terms of access to services than urban areas. Given the rural nature of Monmouthshire, there is a reliance on transport to reach many key services such as GPs, schools and leisure centres. Travel times on public transport are often considerably longer than in other parts of Wales as shown by the chart below. The need for improvements to public transport was a key theme in the *Our Monmouthshire* engagement work highlighted by people of all ages.

Average public travel time to Services	Mon	Gwent	Wales
Average public travel time to food shop (minutes)	27	13	19
Average public travel time to GP surgery (minutes)	35	19	27
Average public travel time to primary school (minutes)	26	15	16
Average public travel time to secondary school (minutes)	48	30	35
Average public travel time to post office (minutes)	33	17	20
Average public travel time to public library (minutes)	49	28	35
Average public travel time to pharmacy (minutes)	40	21	27
Average public travel time to leisure centre (minutes)	60	37	41

Rural areas have a unique set of circumstances that can exacerbate social isolation which can in turn lead to poor health, loss of independence and lower quality of life. Monmouthshire’s ageing population and the significant number of older people living alone are most likely to feel the effects of rural isolation. Decreasing availability of rural public transport, greater reliance on car

ownership, rises in the costs of fuel and a lack of local village shops and services all impact on rural isolation.

Warm, dry and secure homes are associated with better health. 45% of accidents occur in the home and cold homes are linked to an increased risk of a number of illnesses and diseases. The elderly are particularly at risk of health problems relating to accidents and excess cold in the home. People in rural areas spend more, on average, on heating fuel than their urban counterparts and pockets of fuel poverty exist within Monmouthshire.

The majority of households are connected to the internet, however, internet access varies depending on household composition and is notably lower in households with one adult aged 65 or over. Significant numbers of older people are currently digitally excluded.

Crime in Monmouthshire is low compared to Wales as a whole and the five other local authority areas covered by the Gwent force, accounting for 11% of all crimes in the Gwent area.

Monmouthshire saw a 19% increase in domestic violence in the year to April 2016, although there is a concern that domestic abuse – elder abuse in particular – is likely to be under-reported.

Anti-Social Behaviour or ASB can be anything from cold calling and poor parking to vandalism and nuisance neighbours. Incidents across Monmouthshire have decreased by 16% in the past year. The Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent has recently consulted on a set of priorities. 80% of Monmouthshire residents who responded to the survey agreed that ASB should be a priority. During the *Our Monmouthshire* engagement a number of responses suggested that the police were not always perceived as visible on the streets. However one of the biggest future issues for the police is cybercrime which requires a different approach.

South Wales Fire and Rescue attended a decreasing number of fires but an increasing number of road traffic incidents in Monmouthshire during 2015/16. Over the last five years the rate of road traffic incidents attended is consistently higher in Monmouthshire than South Wales.

The first thousand days of a child's life from conception to their second birthday has a significant impact their outcomes and those of future generations. Monmouthshire has a higher than average number of low birth weight babies, particularly in the area of North Abergavenny.

The Monmouthshire Flying Start service is available to families in defined areas of Abergavenny, Monmouth, Chepstow and Caldicot. The programme's aim is to improve the life chances of our youngest and most disadvantaged young children. The vast majority of children on the Flying Start scheme reach their developmental targets at 2 and 3 years old.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are chronic stressful experiences in childhood that can directly hurt a child (such as abuse or neglect) or affect them through the environment in which they live. This includes growing up in a house with domestic violence or with individuals with alcohol and other substance use problems. Almost half of adults in Wales has suffered at least one ACE during their childhood.

Exposure to ACEs can alter how children's brains develop and they are more likely to adopt health-harming behaviours. This can lead to increased risk of non-communicable diseases such as mental health illnesses, cancer, heart disease and diabetes later in life.

ACEs can also lead to individuals developing anti-social behaviours, impact their ability to gain qualifications and ultimately their contribution to the economy. ACEs tend to be 'passed down' through families and lock successive generations of families into poor health and anti-social behaviour.

Nearly a quarter of diseases in the UK can be attributed to mental health problems. More deprived communities often have the poorest mental health and well-being. Problems can often be passed on through generations and may perpetuate cycles of inequality. The Mental Component Summary (MCS) score indicates better mental health in Monmouthshire than the rest of the Gwent area and Wales.

The suicide rate in Monmouthshire was slightly higher than the rate in Wales between 2013 and 2015. Suicide rates tend to be higher in males than females. Conversely, self-harm is most prevalent in young women aged 15-19.

Depression is the most common mental health disorder in Britain. Evidence seems to suggest that mental health is probably better in rural areas. However, there are a number of factors specific to rural areas such as demography, access to services, social exclusion and deprivation that may contribute to stress, anxiety and depression.

The increasingly ageing population of Monmouthshire has been mentioned, but the contribution of older people to their communities is often undervalued. The Older People's Commissioner has highlighted that older people are a significant asset to Wales, worth over £1bn to the Welsh economy annually. There is often a strong community spirit in rural communities at the heart of which are many older volunteers.

As the population ages, so too does the number of unpaid carers. The growth in number of carers is most pronounced in older generations, sometimes themselves in poor health. Monmouthshire County Council's survey of carers for adults reports that just one third of carers feel they can do the things that are important to them but 40% feel part of their community suggesting the responsibility can also lead to isolation. More people will be taking on caring responsibilities and a new carer's strategy is in place to ensure that carers are identified and offered support.

Falls are the most common cause of serious injury in older people and the most frequently found reason for hospital attendance. Monmouthshire's integrated health and social care teams have a mix of skill sets which aim to provide people with the most appropriate professional when needed. Hospital discharge workers aim to arrange care at home so that hospital patients are able to return home as soon as they are medically able. Reablement is delivered by the integrated

teams over a six week period which aims to restore people back to independence at home after a fall or other crisis event.

During 2015, dementia overtook heart disease as the leading cause of death in England and Wales. Dementia and Alzheimer disease mainly affect people aged over 65 and an 87% increase in Monmouthshire's population aged 65 and over with dementia is predicted by 2035.

While it becomes even more important to remain active in older age in order to stay healthy and remain independent, over half of those aged 65 and over in Wales report doing no frequent physical activity.

As part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, a population needs assessment has been completed at a regional (Gwent) level. It identified that social services in Monmouthshire are facing challenges associated with an ageing population. A growth in the number of older people brings huge benefits but also places increased pressure on services as people require care and support later in life.

The local authority has invested in the support and training of the adult social care workforce to support people with dementia to live well. Similarly there will be a need to develop increased understanding and awareness of mental health in the community and to develop a primary mental health care pathway for young people.

Monmouthshire has low numbers of people in local authority funded residential care and a lower than average proportion of people requiring long-term care packages, in part because of the success of integrated working with health and reablement services, in place since 2008. The approach to care at home is based upon strong and trusted relationships rather than time and task based transactions and the council is working with private sector care providers to see if this approach could work in a commercial environment.

Monmouthshire has seen an increase in the number of children who are looked after in recent years. There are some preventative solutions in place such as the Team Around the Family (TAF) that, over time, should reduce the number of young people who enter the care system. The most important thing is to ensure the best possible outcomes for all young people irrespective of the start they have had in life.

Work is ongoing to develop a placed based approach, supporting individuals and communities by working together, to understand the needs and desires of the specific places we live and work in. Support is focused upon what matters most, helping people to live the lives they want to lead.

## Environment

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Natural resources, such as air, land, water, wildlife, plants and soil, provide our most basic needs, including food, energy and security. They help to keep us healthy and help people and the economy to thrive. They also help us to reduce flooding, improve air quality and supply

materials for construction. Green Infrastructure provides a home for wildlife, gives us iconic landscapes to enjoy and boosts the economy through tourism. Managing our natural resources responsibly is essential to ensure our long term social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being.

One of Monmouthshire's greatest assets is undoubtedly the landscape and natural environment. When we asked people in Monmouthshire what was good about where they lived, the most popular response was the countryside and beautiful landscape on their doorstep. Monmouthshire is recognised for its rich and diverse landscapes which contribute to social well-being and an important tourism sector in the county. Agriculture and forestry are both important parts of the Monmouthshire landscape and economy which are both shaped by and shape the natural environment.

Monmouthshire has large numbers of sites with local, national, European and international protection designations for their value for wildlife and biodiversity. In addition there are also protected landscapes such as the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, part of the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Blaenavon World Heritage Site.

Although the natural environment is seen as a strength and asset to the county, reflected by the large number of positive comments in the *Our Monmouthshire* engagement work, it is important that we act carefully to keep it that way. Threats to our natural environment include pressure from development, intensification of agriculture, diseases and invasive non-native species, pollution and climate change. Many of Monmouthshire's wildlife sites are not resilient because they are isolated, so that species cannot move to other areas.

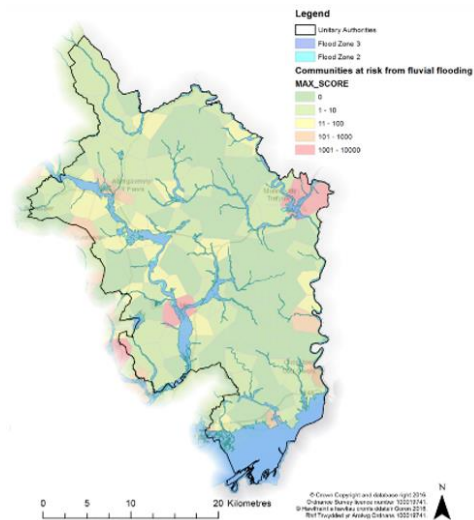
Monmouthshire has many public rights of way, including long distance trails such as the Wye Valley Walk and the Wales Coastal Path. However, many rural areas do not have easily accessible natural or semi-natural green space or easy access to amenity green spaces such as sports pitches.

Air quality is important because it has a significant impact on human health. Some areas of Monmouthshire have poor air quality because of pollution from vehicles, in particular in Usk and Chepstow. These are being tackled with Air Quality Management Plans.

Rivers are important to the landscape of and are important for wildlife and tourism. Rivers vary from Poor quality to Good quality, with some issues of pollution from agriculture and sewage misconnections. The public water supply comes mainly from reservoirs and rivers, which are vulnerable to drought and low rainfall, which may increase with climate change.

Carbon dioxide emissions in Monmouthshire are high, mainly due to transport issues associated with the rural nature of the county and limited public transport. Older housing in rural areas, dependent on oil for heating, also contribute. However, over time carbon emissions are going down. Uptake of renewable energy in Monmouthshire is good, particularly solar photovoltaic panels.

Parts of the county are at high risk of flooding, as shown on the map to the right, both from river and coastal flooding and surface water flooding, in particular Usk and Monmouth, but also Abergavenny, Chepstow and Caldicot. Flooding is likely to increase with climate change.



Recycling rates in Monmouthshire are high with good levels of participation, although overall amount of municipal waste collected increases year on year. Flytipping is decreasing, and most highways are of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness, although despite this there is still negative public perception on litter and fly tipping levels.

Monmouthshire has a very active voluntary sector and there are many third sector groups working in the environment and sustainability field, which include many retired volunteers.

## Culture

A range of factors influence culture and an individual's perspective on what cultural well-being entails for them. There are strong connections and interactions between cultural well-being and social, economic and environmental well-being.

In Monmouthshire 62.5% of residents are Christian. Other religions; Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh were each less than 1% of the population. Census figures on ethnicity show 98% of Monmouthshire's population are of white ethnicity. 1.35% of Monmouthshire's population have an alternative other than English/Welsh as their main language.

Monmouthshire saw a rise in Welsh language speakers between 2001 to 2011 from 9.7% to 9.9% and was one of only two areas in Wales to see a rise. A major contributing factor to this rise is the growth of the two Welsh medium primary schools, based at either end of the county. There is currently no in-county Welsh medium provision at secondary school level with pupils having to travel to Pontypool or Newport. This lack of local provision is a barrier for some parents in sending their children to Welsh medium schools, as reflected in the engagement responses.

Monmouthshire has a distinctive identity arising from its location in the borderlands between England and South Wales and geography of historic market towns and villages and their relationship with the surrounding rural areas. The varied landscape of the county is both the product of natural and human influences over thousands of years and is a significant factor in the County's identity locally but also, nationally and internationally. Many residents stressed the importance of promoting and protecting this landscape for future generations, not only for its importance to Monmouthshire's heritage, but for its recognised contributions to the economy, environment and health and well-being.

Many people have a strong sense of belonging to their local area and highlighted the friendliness and sense of community that exists in the county. Monmouthshire has a long and healthy history of volunteering and local social action. Volunteering has been shown to have a positive impact on social networks and inclusion within communities. It was estimated by the Wales Council for Voluntary Action that 63.3% of adults volunteered formally in Monmouthshire, the highest in Wales and 77.4% were estimated to volunteer informally, the second highest in Wales.

Monmouthshire offers a wide range of arts and cultural attractions, including museums, theatres and libraries. The county hosts many long established, as well as new and expanding events, and festivals, including agricultural shows, food festivals, music festivals and cycling races. There is limited data to fully assess the situation of arts and events and its subsequent link to well-being in Monmouthshire.

It is clear from engagement responses that arts and events contribute greatly to residents' and visitors' cultural and social experience in Monmouthshire. Recent data suggests around half of residents visited museums and theatres (53% and 58% respectively) and only around a third visited art galleries (31%). Cardiff and London were the most popular areas to visit, with in county visits lower but more popular in areas with local provision.

Libraries in Monmouthshire are well used with visitor numbers to libraries in Monmouthshire being the highest of any local authority in Wales. In recent years there has been a continuing increase use of online services and this accounts for just over a quarter of visits to libraries. The increasing digitisation of services presents an opportunity and challenge for communities in Monmouthshire. Museums play an important part in preserving the history of the area for communities and visitors. How to reach out and make arts, culture and heritage accessible to all generations is a continuing challenge.

There is considerable evidence which supports the health and well-being benefits of healthy and active lifestyles for both adults and children. Monmouthshire is a county with a range of Green Infrastructure, including open space areas, cycle paths and walking routes as well as a range of indoor and outdoor activities, sports clubs, societies and community facilities. The latest data shows only 30% of adults in Monmouthshire reported meeting physical activity guidelines in the past week, which is below the average for Wales. Research by Sport Wales shows 30.4% of adults in Monmouthshire do not participate in any frequent activity. While 48.8% of pupils across Years 3 to 11 take part in sport on three or more occasions per week and 27.3% take part in no frequent activity.





The Abergavenny area has an extremely vibrant and varied voluntary sector working in the environmental and sustainability field, which is a great asset.

Abergavenny is steeped in history with regards to the Welsh language and the area has hosted the National Eisteddfod twice, most recently in 2016 and is also the home of Cymreigyddion y Fenni – the Abergavenny Welsh Society and Welsh primary school, Ysgol Gymraeg y Fenni. The area is also the most diverse in terms of ethnicity, although people of white ethnicity make up the vast majority of the population, proportions of mixed race and Asian ethnicities are the highest in Monmouthshire.

*Our Monmouthshire* engagement responses demonstrate the importance of the landscape and countryside to people's lifestyle, along with the area having a strong sense of community and many festivals and events including cycling and a food festival.

Abergavenny and the surrounding areas have the highest proportion of residents aged 65 and over (26.2%) and aged 85 and over (3.7%) in Monmouthshire. The area also has a number of parts that suffer from deprivation. 6 of the 11 top 20% most deprived areas in Monmouthshire are in the area. The most significant deprivation factors vary in different areas and include community safety, employment and education. Access to services is a particular issue for some parts of the area, for example Crucorney is amongst the top 50 most deprived areas in terms of access to services in Wales.

The area has the lowest proportion of working age people in Monmouthshire who are economically active. It has the highest proportion of people in receipt of employment related benefits at 10.3%, however this is still below the Welsh average. Even within small areas there can be significant variations, for example the proportion of people in income deprivation is above the county average but ranges from 6% in Crucorney to 28% in Cantref.

The Flying Start scheme is available to parents with children aged 0-4 in parts of Lansdown, Croesonen and Cantref in North Abergavenny.

At the headline level educational attainment is good. However, as with other parts of the county there are differences linked to socio-economic background with those eligible for free school meals not performing as well as the all pupils group. There are also differences in attainment depending on where people live with key stage 4 level 2 inclusive ranging from 33.96% to 84.66%.

Abergavenny has the fewest residents of the five areas in Monmouthshire who report their health is very good or good (77%), the other areas have over 80% of people who are positive about their health. Some areas in Abergavenny have comparatively higher rates of people living with a long term limiting illness and cancer incidences. These areas tend to be amongst the more deprived areas, for example Croesonen is the fourth most deprived area in Monmouthshire, particularly for education and is also amongst the areas with the lowest proportion of people who felt their health was very good or good (75%) and has a higher rate of people living with a long term limiting illness.

Abergavenny has the highest volume of recorded crime in 2015/16 in Monmouthshire, despite a 13% decrease in crimes between 2014/15 – 2015/16. A total of 1,376 crimes were recorded which was 33.4% of the total crimes in Monmouthshire in 2015/16. The area also had the highest number of ASB incidents (661 incidents), despite a large reduction by 24.7%, and accounted for 3 in 10 of all Monmouthshire’s ASB incidents. Some wards in the area, Llanover and Llanelly Hill, had amongst the highest number of fires attended in Monmouthshire. Over the same period, the second highest number of road traffic collisions in Monmouthshire attended by South Wales Fire and Rescue were in Llanover.

The town centre is vibrant with a strong and thriving market. The issue of the development of a supermarket on the former livestock market site continues to divide opinion.

Overall retail vacancy rates in Abergavenny town centre have risen since the low level recorded in 2005, 4.1%. However, in the most recent surveys 2014 (5.1%) and 2015 (5.8%) the vacancy rate has been lower than at any point in the last 15 years, apart from 2005. The average pedestrian flow has shown a steady decline over the past 15 years.

## Monmouth and Surrounding Communities

This area focuses around the historic town of Monmouth, located where the Rivers Monnow, Trothy and Wye meet, and includes the south western quarter of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There is almost continuous tree cover from Monmouth down the Wye Valley towards Chepstow, and flower rich neutral meadows on the plateaux above the Wye. To the north and west of Monmouth, the area is very rural, agricultural and sparsely populated.

The area is important for tourism, as well as employment in agriculture and forestry. As elsewhere in Monmouthshire, tourism is particularly reliant on maintaining the natural beauty and diverse wildlife in the area, which includes the River Wye and Wye Valley Woodlands which have European protection, as well as woodlands of UK importance and many nationally and locally important wildlife sites. Tree diseases are a particularly threat to the future of the woodlands of the Wye Valley.

The area has many public rights of way, but although Monmouth is well served with accessible green space, like other areas the rural areas have little or no accessible green space or outdoor sport provision. Urban tree cover is higher than the national average, with benefits to health and well-being, biodiversity and reduction in air pollution and surface water run-off.



Monmouth has a high flood risk, although flood defences offer the town some protection. Some residents have expressed concern about new housing developments putting pressure on services and infrastructure, and it will be important to ensure that measures are put in place to ensure that flood risk is not increased by developments. Transition Monmouth are working with partners to try and reduce flood risk through tree planting.

Water quality ranges from good to moderate in the area, there are two small Nitrate Vulnerable Zones and 5 Groundwater Source Protection Zones. Air pollution from traffic is a concern on the A40 in Monmouth and is being monitored.

The Monmouth area has the equal highest proportion of population with no skills in Welsh. The area also has significant journey times to a Welsh education primary school and Welsh medium secondary school.

*Our Monmouthshire* engagement responses show residents feel the area has a strong sense of community and the landscape and countryside is important to people's lifestyle in their area. The area also has many buildings and artefacts of historical importance and a thriving arts, festivals and events scene. Some responses reflected concerns over the range and availability of current leisure facilities including the future of a swimming pool at Monmouth leisure centre and accessibility of facilities for children to play safely. Average travel times to leisure centres and libraries, particularly on public transport, are longer than the average for Wales.

Monmouth and the surrounding area has the smallest working age population, but the highest proportion of children of the five areas. One quarter of the population is aged 65 and over.

Part of Overmonnow is ranked as the second most deprived area in Monmouthshire, with education being the main cause of deprivation. Residents in some parts of Overmonnow are eligible for Flying Start for pre-school children. Access to services such as GP services and post offices is a key issue, Llantilio Crossenny, for example, is ranked as the 12<sup>th</sup> most deprived area in Wales in terms of access to services particularly when travelling by public transport.

Housing conditions that may impact health and well-being, Homes with no central heating are most evident in Llantilio Crossenny and parts of Drybridge. The highest proportion of the population living in overcrowded homes is found in part of Overmonnow.

The proportion of people who are economically active in this area is above the Welsh average and marginally above the average for Monmouthshire as a whole. 6.4% of people in Monmouth and the communities that surround it are in receipt of employment related benefits which is below both the county and Wales averages. This masks local variations with just 3% getting benefits in Mitchel Troy and Dixton with Osbaston rising to 16% in Overmonnow. 10.1% of the population are in income deprivation with similar local variations.

Headline rates of education attainment mask local differences. For example, the percentage of pupils the percentage of pupils getting 5 good GCSEs including English or Welsh and Maths differed greatly with this area ranging from 46.48% in Wyesham to 80.3% in parts of Drybridge.

80% of people in Monmouth and the surrounding communities report their health is good or very good, however, this varies considerably from 65% in the most deprived area Overmonnow to 86% in Trellech United.

Monmouth recorded the second highest number of crimes, but the lowest crime rate in Monmouthshire. The area has seen significant reductions in ASB incidents most notably in Llantilio Crossenny. In Monmouth and Surrounding Communities, Drybridge has the highest volume of crime and ASB incidents.

In Monmouth the rate of vacant shops has fluctuated in recent years, in 2015 Monmouth town had 15 vacant units, or 8% of outlets. The overall average pedestrian flow through the town has shown an increase since 2008.

## The Heart of Monmouthshire

This area is characterised by rolling hills, productive farmland and many patches of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, some of them of a significant size. The area also includes steep hillsides marking the edge of the uplands of Brecon Beacons National Park to the north west. The River Usk flows through the centre of the area and is a dominant feature, which is protected at European level for its clean and natural state and the important fish species it supports. The area is largely rural, with the small market town of Usk being the largest settlement, followed by the large village of Raglan. The area also has nationally and locally important wildlife sites.

Threats to habitats in this area include removing too much water from the River Usk for water supply, poor connectivity between woodland sites, habitat loss due to development and pollution from agriculture resulting in a large area designated as a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone in Raglan to protect groundwater.



Usk town has an Air Quality Management Plan to tackle air pollution from vehicle emissions. The town has an active voluntary sector, including Usk in Bloom and the Civic Society. The town is at high risk of flooding, although the town is protected by flood defences, but some rural roads are prone to flooding. This is likely to get worse with the impacts of climate change.

The Heart of Monmouthshire is another area where the built and physical landscape plays an important role in people's lives and culture and many people responding to the engagement also mentioned the area has a good community spirit and friendly places to live.

The Heart of Monmouthshire has Welsh medium educational provision. Although the area has the second highest proportion of people in Monmouthshire that can speak Welsh (10.2%), as well as those who can speak, read and write Welsh (7.4%). 66.7% of the population declare

themselves Christian, which is highest of all 5 areas in Monmouthshire and 1.3% of the population stated that they were of a religion other than Christian. This area has the highest proportion of population declaring themselves as of white ethnicity (98.7%).

Average travel time to a leisure centre and library are amongst the highest in the County, particularly for public transport and are well above the average for Wales.

The heart of Monmouthshire has a population of 10,370. Compared to the rest of Monmouthshire the area has the smallest proportion of the population who are children at 16.2% and the second highest proportion aged 65 and over at 26.1%.

None of the areas in the Heart of Monmouthshire appear in the top 20% most deprived areas in Monmouthshire, despite access to services being an issue, particularly outside the largest town of Usk.

The proportion of people who are economically active in this area is marginally below the average for the county and around four percentage points higher than the average for Wales as a whole. The rural centre of the county has the lowest proportion of people in receipt of income related benefits at 6.6% ranging from 5% in Usk to 11% in Goytre. These figures are below both the Monmouthshire and Wales averages. The area also has the lowest proportion of people claiming employment related benefits, although again the headline figure masks localised variations. Rural communities can be more prone to poverty than urban areas. The things that contribute to this include the poor access to employment opportunities, low pay, a lack of affordable housing and social isolation.

Headline rates of educational attainment can sometimes mask differences at a local level, for example the percentage of pupils attaining 5 good GCSEs including English or Welsh and maths differed by more than 25 percentage points in this area ranging from 54.7% in parts of Goytre Fawr to 80.75% in Llangybi Fawr.

In the area 81% of people report their health is good or very good, although there are some significant variances in the Heart of Monmouthshire. For example in the community of Usk, one area reports the lowest (73.4% in Usk 1) and another area the highest (85.7% in Usk 2). Goytre has a higher than Gwent average (586.6 per 100,000) rate of cancer incidence (656.1 per 100,000).

Police data on crime in the area is incorporated within the relevant data of the other four areas of Monmouthshire. South Wales Fire and Rescue attended 53 road traffic collisions in the ward of Llangybi Fawr between 2011/12 and 2015/16, which was the highest number in Monmouthshire. Raglan had the third highest number of collisions attended over the same period, 39.

The vacancy rate of units in Usk town centre has reduced in recent years and is currently 11.1%, although the rate is still higher than that experienced in the other town centres.

## Severnside

The area includes Caldicot, Rogiet, Magor and Undy, and has the mainline railway and the M4 motorway. The landscape along the coastal zone is primarily flat, with productive agricultural land, bounded by traditional drainage channels called reens to drain the low lying land, protected from coastal flooding by a flood bank. The land rises to the north to a series of low hills before rising further towards Wentwood.

Severnside has extensive environmental assets, some of which benefit from international protection, and habitats include marine, freshwater, species rich grassland and ancient woodland. The Severn Estuary is of international importance for wintering and passage waterfowl, saltmarshes, exposed sand banks, fish feeding areas and unusually large natural tidal range which influences the species that occur here. The Gwent Levels support many important species and the Living Levels project aims to preserve and protect them.

Wildlife in the area is threatened by housing and infrastructure development, and climate change increases the risk of coastal flooding should flood defences fail or be overtopped. Rising sea levels are also a threat to the saltmarshes and mudflats as they are squeezed against sea defences.



There are limited accessible green spaces in the area, and urban tree cover and the benefits that brings, is very low. There are a few small voluntary groups working to improve local environmental quality in Caldicot.

Severnside has the second highest proportion of the population declaring themselves as Christian (62.2%) as well as the lowest proportion of those stating they are of a religion other than Christian (1.1%). Figures show that 98.5% of the population is of white ethnicity.

Severnside is one of two areas with Welsh medium education, with Ysgol Gymraeg y Ffin located in Caldicot. This could be one of the reasons why the figures for Welsh language within Monmouthshire are the highest, 11.2% of the population of Severnside stated that they were able to speak Welsh as well as 8.3% saying they could speak, read and write in Welsh.

When we spoke to people about well-being for this assessment parks and recreation and leisure services were one of the most commonly mentioned topics with some feeling the leisure services and parks are good while others feel the area could be improved if there was more choice and better equipment in parks and leisure/ sport facilities in the area.

Severnside has the largest proportion of working age residents and the lowest proportion of people aged 65.

Three of the 11 most deprived areas in Monmouthshire are located within Severnside, they are West End, part of Severn and part of Dewstow and Green Lane. The main category of deprivation for each is the physical environment which covers air quality and emissions, proximity to waste disposal and industrial sites and flood risk. Flying Start is available to some families in West End. On average, travel times to a number of services are shorter when compared to other areas in Monmouthshire and are more in line with the Wales average.

Severnside has a low proportion of people in receipt of income related benefits and in income deprivation when compared with the Monmouthshire and Wales averages. However even within these areas this can mask particular pockets. For example the proportion of people experiencing income deprivation ranges from just 3% in The Elms to 18% in West End and Dewstow.

Headline rates of educational attainment at a school level also mask differences that become apparent when shown as the very local level, for example the percentage of pupils getting 5 good GCSEs including English or Welsh and Maths differed by more than 30 percentage points within the Severnside area ranging from 48.6% in Dewstow to 81.05% for the Elms. These highlight the importance of place when considering responses to societal challenges.

81% of people in Severnside report good or very good health but again variations are notable, ranging from 75% in Dewstow to 89% in The Elms. Parts of Dewstow & Green Lane have the highest rates of people living with long term limiting illness in Severnside. Dewstow also sees the highest rates of cancer incidence in the Severnside area.

There was a significant increase in recorded crime in Caldicot during 2015/16, Severn ward in particular saw an increase of 91%. Green Lane had the highest number ASB incidents in the Severnside area during 2015/16. An increase in ASB was noted in Portskewett but a decrease in Dewstow.

The overall vacancy rate of shopping outlets had declined steadily between the 2000 and 2007, however since then there has been an increase, with the rate at 7.6% in 2015. The total average pedestrian flow in Caldicot had remained fairly constant up until 2012 however since then there has been a decline in the average flow. During our engagement with residents of Severnside many felt improvements were needed in the town centre.

## Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley

This area is centred around the town of Chepstow, and the south western quarter of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The River Wye forms the border and there is almost continuous, well connected tree cover north of Chepstow, with other areas of flower rich neutral and calcareous meadows. The Severn Estuary is of international importance for wetland birds and is protected by international and European legislation. The area also has woodland, meadow, bat and geological sites and locally important wildlife sites.

Tourism is very important in the Wye Valley due to the landscape, with several long distance walks starting at Chepstow. The town has some accessible green spaces, but overall there is a deficit, as there is in rural areas.

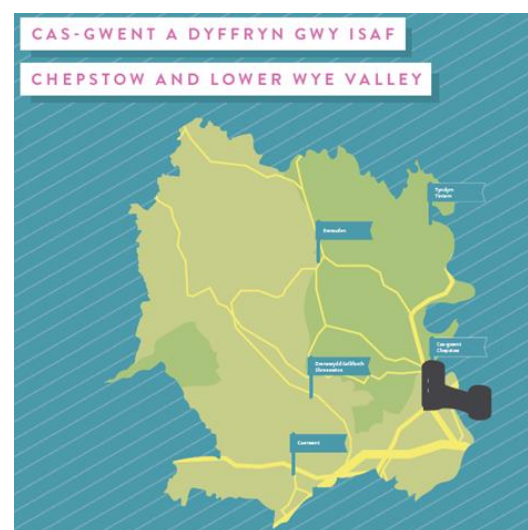
Air quality is a concern on the A48 in Chepstow, where pollution from cars and lorries means the area now has an Air Quality Action Plan to try and tackle the problem. Water quality in the area is generally good, with the River Wye and tributaries supporting many important species including atlantic salmon and otters. The Nedern brook experiences pollution from sewage misconnections. There are 3 Groundwater Source Protection Zones.

Some areas of Chepstow are at risk of flooding, and there are risks to important infrastructure such as the Severnside rail line and industrial units. Parts of Tintern also flood regularly at high tide. The Gwent Levels extend as far as Chepstow and the combination of reens, wetlands, grasslands and saltmarsh are of vital importance for wildlife, and are protected by flood defences. The area also has some good quality agricultural land. There are a reasonable number of environmental and sustainability groups working in the Chepstow area.

The area has the lowest level of Welsh skills in the County (87.7% stated they have no Welsh skills). Additionally the proportion of people who stated they could speak Welsh (8.8%) and speak, read and write Welsh (6.2%) was the lowest in Monmouthshire. 30% of the population stated they had no religion in the 2011 Census, the highest figure in Monmouthshire.

Landscape plays an important role in what residents and visitors feel is good about the area along with a good community. Travel time to a library and leisure centre in the area is above the average in Wales although these are generally not as long as areas in the north or Heart of the county.

The population of Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley is similar in profile to Severnside. The area has the second highest working age proportion of the population and second lowest proportion aged 65 or older after Severnside.





Part of Thornwell is ranked the third most deprived area in Monmouthshire, access to services being the most prominent type of deprivation. Some other areas, for example Devauden and St. Arvans, are in the top 150 most deprived areas in Wales for access to services. Average travel times for key services, particularly by public transport, are longer than the average time for Wales. 9% of people in parts of Thornwell live in overcrowded homes, the second highest proportion in the county. Parts of Severn ward have a higher than average percentage of low weight babies. Pre-school children residing in parts of Thornwell and Severn are eligible for Flying Start.

Chepstow and the Lower Wye has a low proportion of people in receipt of income related benefits and in income deprivation compared with the Monmouthshire and Wales averages. However this can mask particular pockets. For example the proportion of people experiencing income deprivation ranges from 3% in St. Kingsmark to 26% in Thornwell.

Headline rates of educational attainment at a school level also mask differences that become apparent when shown as the very local level, for example the percentage of pupils getting 5 good GCSEs including English or Welsh and Maths differed by more than 40 percentage within the Chepstow and Lower Wye area ranging from 37.25% in Thornwell to 78.65% in Caerwent.

The health of 83% of people in Chepstow and the Lower Wye Valley is reported as good or very good which is the highest of the five areas. This is highest in parts of St. Kingsmark and lowest in St. Mary's. In the Chepstow area, more people live with long term limiting illness and suffer from cancer in parts of Thornwell than other areas.

Recorded crime increased in Chepstow during 2015/16, the crime rate is second highest after Abergavenny. St Mary's ranks in the top 5% in Wales in terms of community safety deprivation and is the third ranked ward in Gwent in terms of violent crime rate. St Christopher's saw an 81% increase in crime between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Chepstow has seen significant reductions in anti-social behaviour or ASB, although it remains the highest with 32.5 incidents per 1000 population. St Mary's has seen a reduction in ASB incidents, despite this, St Mary's and Thornwell had the highest number of incidents during 2015/16. Increases were noted in Devauden and Shirenewton. Shirenewton was amongst the areas with the highest number of fires attended by South Wales Fire and Rescue.

The overall rate of vacant shops in Chepstow declined steadily up to 2007, but has since increased to 10% in 2015. Since 2000 there has been a steady increase in the overall pedestrian flow through the town.

# Future Trends

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## Population and Migration

The population of Monmouthshire is forecast to increase by less than one percent over the next twenty years. Of far greater significance is the changing age profile of the county with the number of over 85 year olds increasing by 185% by 2039 while the number of people under 18 will decline by 14%. Deaths are forecast to exceed births with the difference being made up of inward migration – mainly from other parts of the UK rather than overseas. The number of households is projected to increase while the average household size is projected to decrease with the largest growth in single person households.

## Economy

There is currently uncertainty about the future of the UK economy. GDP has been growing slowly since the 2008 recession. Wales' economy grew by a total of 12.9% between 2008 and 2015, the highest of any region apart from London and the South East. However growth in Monmouthshire was below the UK average. Wales presently appears to have a productivity problem with one of the lowest unemployment rates in the UK but also a lower Gross Value Added. If productivity does not increase then growth will be slower reducing household incomes and the tax revenue available to fund public services.

Changes in the global economy are likely to severely disrupt the job market as we know it. In future we could see robotics, smart algorithms and artificial intelligence take up to 35% of existing jobs in the UK. Unlike mechanisation of the past this is also likely to impact on traditional white collar professions such as accountancy and law. There is uncertainty about what Brexit will mean for the Welsh and UK economies. This will depend on the nature of the arrangements put in place following the cessation of the UK's membership.

## Environment

Climate change modelling anticipates that by 2050 Wales will see hotter, drier summers, warmer, wetter winters, more extreme weather events and sea level rise. This could result in increased flooding risk and impact on ecosystems, soil and biodiversity. This will have damaging implications for food, timber, fibre, clean water, carbon storage and the cultural benefits from landscape. There is likely to be greater pressure on water supplies in summer for public consumption, agriculture, energy generation and industry. There could also be a decline in air quality leading to health problems.

Many species and habitats in Wales are in decline due to a wide range of threats and pressures. In Monmouthshire, pressures and threats to biodiversity include: housing development, reducing the size and connectivity of habitats; the intensification of agriculture; infrastructure development; invasive non-native species and diseases such as Ash Dieback.

A wide range of issues which are difficult to manage or regulate are contributing to reducing the resilience of Wales' ecosystems, which affects the delivery of ecosystem benefits and impacts on people's wellbeing, as well as lowering our and future generations' quality of life

Much of the Forest of Dean is earmarked for licensing for fracking. The area to the east of the River Wye from Tintern up to Monmouth is all part of the zone with the potential to be licensed. While Welsh Government has put a moratorium on all fracking activity in Wales for now, as have Monmouthshire County Council, there is still uncertainty regarding the future of fracking in Wales. Concerns include water quality issues, biodiversity impacts and increased carbon emissions.

### **Health and Well-being**

Increasing life expectancy will place pressure on health and social services during the population's additional years of life, since it is during older age that the likelihood of developing a chronic condition increases. One example is dementia which is predicted to increase by over 30% in the next 10 years.

Whilst projections suggest that there will continue to be a decline in smoking and improvements in low birth weight babies, other health issues are on the increase. Increasingly sedentary lifestyles mean that obesity has risen, and this is likely to rise, with subsequent increases in conditions such as heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

### **Welsh Language**

Despite an overall decline in Welsh speakers across Wales, Monmouthshire was one of only two local authorities in Wales to see a rise in the Welsh language from 2001 to 2011. There is growing demand for Welsh medium education. With the introduction of the Welsh Language Standards there will be more opportunities locally for young people leaving Welsh medium education to be able continue to use the language in their employment and retain their language skills.

# Conclusions

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This assessment has been developed from a wide-range of evidence. It highlights a number of strengths on which we can build a future for the people and communities of Monmouthshire and also a number of problems and challenges that need to be addressed.

The issues below are those that have emerged most clearly from the evidence we have assessed, this includes responses from individuals through extensive involvement, data, future trends, academic research and policy papers. This paper does not attempt to prioritise these in any way, it merely highlights the evidence that public service partners can use to undertake the next phase of their work in developing a well-being plan for the area.

During the consultation phase between January and February 2017 we are particularly interested to hear whether you feel we have identified the right issues based on the evidence presented as part of the assessment. Details of how to respond are given at the start of this document.

## **Challenges and Opportunities Facing Public Services in Monmouthshire**

- There is inequality between communities and within communities.
- Wage levels available locally are low, coupled with high property prices, making it difficult for young people and future generations to live and work locally
- With an increasingly globalised economy and technological advances tomorrow's workforce will need a very different skillset to those of today's school leavers
- 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 from things like automated vehicles.
- Adverse childhood experiences have a negative impact on people's long term health and economic prospects and can be perpetuated through the generations
- There is a need to increase healthy behaviours with a particular focus on the first thousand days of a child's life
- Reducing levels of physical activity which 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
- An ageing population brings many opportunities, however there are also challenges for service provision and increases in the number of people living with long term conditions.
- The natural and built environment needs to be protected and preserved for future generations, due to risks from development, climate change and pollution
- There are human health impacts of air pollution, especially in Usk and Chepstow
- Water pollution is a concern, especially from changing agricultural practices
- Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding, as well as many other risks, so mitigating climate change and building resilience is crucial
- There is a need to increase accessibility of arts, culture and heritage and to ensure adequate provision of Welsh medium education
- Monmouthshire has high levels of social capital and volunteering. By taking an asset and placed based approach there is an opportunity to improving well-being.