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Tuesday, 11 November 2025

Notice of Reports Received following Publication of Agenda.

Cabinet

Wednesday, 19th November, 2025 at 4.30 pm,
Steve Greenslade Room, County Hall, Usk

Attached are reports that the committee will consider as part of the original agenda but were submitted to democratic services following publication of the agenda.

Item No	Item	Pages
9.	<p>MONMOUTHSHIRE'S DRAFT DESTINATION MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-30</p> <p><u>Division/Wards Affected:</u> All</p> <p><u>Purpose:</u> To seek approval of Monmouthshire's Draft Destination Management Plan 2025-2030 and proposed Destination Management Partnership arrangements.</p> <p><u>Author:</u> Nicola Edwards, J/S Destination Manager</p> <p><u>Contact Details:</u> nicolaedwards@monmouthshire.gov.uk</p>	1 - 38

Paul Matthews
Chief Executive

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*Her east-west flanks, one dark, one sunlit,
her vernacular of borders.*

*Her weight, the unspoken words
of an unlearned tongue.*

Owen Sheers — Skirrid Fawr, 2005

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View of the Skirrid.
Molyneux Associates Photography.

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Cover:
Campfire at Hidden Valley Yurts.
Callum Baker.

Design by:
Height Studio

natural adventure

Our outstanding natural environment is made for accessible adventures: a place to chase the Wye and Usk by foot and by water. A launch-point for hiking Bannau Brycheiniog, wild swimming in ponds and lakes, twitching on the Gwent Levels, and SUPing Llandegfedd Lake. It's vital that we promote it – to protect it.

Keeper's Pond.
Shutterstock.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Monmouthshire’s Destination Management Plan is based on in-depth research and has been produced in collaboration with a wide range of local and national partners. It sets out a clear direction for the future, as well as an ambition and roadmap for developing the visitor economy within the county to 2030.

Monmouthshire is the birthplace of British tourism, and now we want to shape its future. Our guiding purpose: to become a blueprint for a new generation of regenerative rural destinations. And the most inspiring, connected and welcoming place in Wales to stay, invest and live.

We want to deliver three strategic priorities to help make that a reality. They all support Monmouthshire County Council’s broader socio-economic aims and align with Welsh Government’s tourism and future generation goals. Through this Plan we seek to:

- Page 4

1

Revitalise the county’s characterful towns and villages through high-quality tourism.
- 2

Reignite our natural landscapes with activity and adventure, in ways that are sensitive and creative.
- 3

Develop imaginative experiences with a distinctive sense of place that enrich our quality of life.

All driving a more vibrant and youthful place brand.

Delivered as part of a wider regeneration and placemaking agenda and through widespread collaboration, proactive innovation and careful management we hope that the Plan redefines and rejuvenates this ancient corner of Wales for the future.

Bringing fresh inspiration to a new generation.

Opposite:
Severn Bridge.
Kiran Ridley.

LET’S REJUVENATE
THIS ANCIENT CORNER
OF WALES FOR THE
FUTURE.

A MONMOUTHSHIRE FOR
FUTURE GENERATIONS

This Destination Management Plan has been designed to support Monmouthshire County Council’s vision of ensuring that our ‘communities are socially and economically sustainable by attracting and retaining younger people to rebalance our ageing demographic.’ This has driven the Destination Management Plan’s focus on revitalising our towns and landscapes; on developing more dynamic experiences for new generations; and on gradually evolving the destination or place brand so that it firmly positions Monmouthshire as an inspiring and relevant place to stay, invest and live.



View from Eagle's Nest in the Wye Valley.
James Harries Multimedia.

PLAN ON A PAGE

Here's a one-page summary of the detailed Plan that follows:

Purpose

Monmouthshire is the birthplace of British tourism and now we’re shaping its future.
Our guiding purpose: to become a blueprint for next generation regenerative rural destinations.
The most inspiring, connected and welcoming place in Wales to stay, invest and live.

Ambition 2030

By 2030 we want to be Wales’s stand-out rural destination. A place of imaginative experiences and characterful places to eat, drink, and stay – rich in sense of place. We’ll celebrate Monmouthshire’s creative energy: encouraging the next generation to get inspired, get involved, and shape the future.

Aim

We’ll bring vibrancy to our high streets, adventure to our landscapes, and confidence to our communities through more and better tourism that celebrates and enriches our quality of life.

Objectives

Economic growth	Improved infrastructure	Vibrant culture	Enhanced experiences	Environmental protection
Economic growth. More private sector investment.	Sense of arrival. Better basics.	Community participation. Improved civic pride.	Signature experiences. Keynote places to stay.	Improved visitor awareness & behaviour. Public transport use.

Visitor, business and resident satisfaction with tourism.

Future Growth Markets: Wider UK and International Markets

Local residents, including families and young people.	Independent Explorers from within 2hrs – encouraging longer-stays.	New visitor markets from across the UK and beyond, including younger cohorts.
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Special interest markets:
Outdoor Activities; Equestrian; Gardens; Weddings; Corporate.

Proposition

Monmouthshire-made experiences that are uniquely local, distinctively Welsh and international in quality.

Vibrant communities	Natural adventure	Inspiring culture
Creative spirit – a place of inspiration.		

Drivers

Stand out	Stay	Sense of Place
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Priorities

Vibrant Places Integrated placemaking. Better basics – including connectivity. Living Welsh culture and language.	Active Landscapes for healthy lifestyles A walking and cycling county. A boosted activity sector. Promoting responsible tourism.	Enriching Experiences Monmouthshire-made experiences and events. High-quality accommodation. Showcasing local produce.
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Enablers

Brand marketing	Strong support structures	Sustainable and inclusive delivery
Creativity and originality		

inspiring culture

This is the county that inspired the Welsh costume, the world's greatest romantic poets and artists, global rock stars, and the stars of Netflix drama, Sex Education. That creative spirit brings a spark to our communities, and to our experiences.

Sex Education Season 3.
Sam Taylor/Netflix.

PART 1:

SETTING THE SCENE

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The Kymin, Monmouth.
© Crown Copyright.

CONTINUAL
REINVENTION
WILL MAKE US MORE
COMPETITIVE AND
MORE RELEVANT.



INTRODUCTION

In the eighteenth century, the Wye Tour became the first organised tour in Britain. A boat tour down-river, from Ross-on-Wye to Chepstow, provided ‘tourists’ with visits to scenic viewpoints, river-side ruins, and quality dining. The experience attracted some of the world’s leading poets and painters to create the cutting-edge art of their time: and the area continues to inspire the rock stars and screenwriters of today. The home of Tintern Abbey is also home to Otis and Eric from Sex Education, one of the biggest hits on Netflix.

Monmouthshire has been described as the birthplace of British tourism. And in the twenty-first century, the Wye Tour offers us a blueprint for a new kind of rural Welsh tourism for the future. Monmouthshire is a mature tourism destination: its rivers weave through some of Wales’s leading designated landscapes; centuries of heritage; and a distinct cultural borderland.

But with maturity comes risk of complacency, when Monmouthshire, like everywhere else, must continually reinvent itself to remain competitive in a globalised market. More importantly, perhaps, there is a need for this ageing county to ensure that it feels vibrant and relevant to its own young people.

This Destination Management Plan therefore seeks to bring new life to Monmouthshire’s inherent strengths as a destination. And build a regenerative approach to tourism, based on authentic experiences, rooted in our towns and villages and the landscapes that surround them. Monmouthshire-made experiences: that reawaken communities and inspire creativity and opportunity for a new generation.



biggest days



We're home to stunning venues for the biggest day of your life: castles, gardens and bespoke venues with a saintly touch – like Sant Ffraed House and St Tewdrics House.

Sant Ffraed House.
Marc Smith Photography.

BACKGROUND

Tourism plays a vital role in Monmouthshire’s economy and way of life. Over the past decade, it has grown steadily, outperforming neighbouring destinations. 2024 and the start of 2025 look to have been more challenging, but there is clear capacity for ongoing growth.

Research confirms the area’s core strengths: stunning landscapes, rich heritage, vibrant market towns, and outstanding local produce. Monmouthshire is highly accessible to the UK overnight visitor market. Visit Wales’s Market Demand Studies shows strong interest in experiences the county already excels at — hiking, culture, and cuisine.

Monmouthshire has a mature tourism industry, latent potential, and genuine market appeal.

Local residents agree. Communities here are welcoming and optimistic about tourism’s role in enhancing the environment, towns, and quality of life.

The county is well placed to champion a balanced, forward-thinking approach to tourism – one that delivers immediate economic benefits, boosts adjacent sectors, supports essential infrastructure, enriches everyday life and fosters local pride.

Achieving all this will require clear leadership and coordination to manage potential negative risks and impacts, and to make as positive and regenerative a contribution as possible to the local area.

Tourism pressure on certain hotspots in recent years must be better understood, mapped, and addressed through the new Plan. With ongoing concerns around river quality of the Wye and Usk, the environmental impacts of tourism must be closely monitored. Pressure on sensitive sites should be reduced, and benefits distributed more evenly across the county. The sector’s social impact on housing availability, local services, and infrastructure should be reviewed and addressed through transparent, structured policies. Crucially, local communities must continue to feel a sense of ownership and control over tourism and its influence.

This Plan provides a clear, confident framework to develop, and carefully manage, the visitor economy, ensuring it delivers lasting value to our people, places and way of life.

Opposite:
Abseiling in the Wye Valley.
Monmouthshire County Council.



WHO IS THIS PLAN FOR?

This Plan has been commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council but is designed to provide a common direction for all public, private and third-sector organisations with an interest in nurturing tourism to bring positive benefits to our communities.

The Plan has been produced in the context of an exceptionally challenging economic climate. So while it's unashamedly ambitious, it also includes a number of quick win projects. Like all Destination Management Plans, it outlines both funded activities and unfunded proposals. Not everything will be delivered at once, but the Plan allows us to prioritise future initiatives and investments.

The Council will support the Plan in two ways:

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Monmouthshire County Council's small but dedicated tourism team will coordinate and oversee the delivery of the Plan through the Destination Management Partnership. They will focus on forging transformative relationships with the private, public and third-sectors, creating a growth-friendly environment, and leading destination marketing.

2

Monmouthshire County Council will also take a cross-authority approach to delivering the Plan's key priorities, purposefully harnessing all the levers available to it, from policy to planning and placemaking, to achieve the Plan's objectives. Delivering change will require collaboration across departments, with the Council's expert tourism team leading the charge.

The Destination Management Plan aligns with key Monmouthshire County Council policies including the Community and Corporate Plan, the Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 and Monmouthshire's Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy. Various placemaking plans have also been taken into account.

But the Council's role is one of facilitator and enabler. The Plan ultimately relies on the private and third sector to make it a reality. It's a Plan for all of us.

This Plan is built on purposeful collaboration. To stand out and compete in an ever-changing marketplace, we need to work together like never before to deliver impactful experiences that inspire both visitors and locals.

Opposite:
The Big Banquet at Caldicot Castle.
Huw John Photography Cardiff.



●

VISITOR LEVY

The possible introduction of a visitor levy from 2027 onwards could potentially support the delivery of this Plan. However there are a wide range of considerations and a full consultation with key stakeholders will be carried out as part of the decision making process.

A Policy Impact Review to understand the impact of a wide range of policies of relevance to the sector will be carried-out as part of this process.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

There has been strong and sustained growth in tourism in Monmouthshire over the last ten years. 2024 and the start of 2025 have been more challenging for the sector across the UK but growth has been sustained in Monmouthshire in 2024 albeit at a reduced rate. As an established, accessible and high-quality destination, there's scope to be optimistic, while also being pragmatic about the future.

1

In 2024, Monmouthshire welcomed **2.28m visitors** including **0.61m** overnight visitors: **78% of the economic value of tourism in the county comes from overnight tourists**.

2

The sector contributed **£352m to the area's economy in 2024**. Since 2015 growth has been driven by a surge in non-serviced accommodation, including a **12% increase in self-catering provision**. In 2024, recovery of Monmouthshire's serviced sector helped maintain economic growth. Most of the direct economic impact comes from accommodation, followed by food and drink.

3

There has been a **28% real terms increase in the value of tourism since 2015**. Monmouthshire recovered faster from the Pandemic than other parts of the South East Wales region and has significantly outperformed region-wide growth levels in that same period.

4

The industry supports **15% of jobs in Monmouthshire** – more if public sector roles are excluded – making it a key employment sector.

5

Strong seasonal patterns still exist in tourism demand. **Occupancy levels range from 62%-85% for serviced provision**. The average occupancy in the self-catering sector was as low as **51%** in 2024.

6

While Monmouthshire has experienced consistent growth in the value of tourism over the past decade **there is still significant potential for further growth**, particularly outside the main peak seasons as previously noted.

7

Visitor satisfaction with the area is high at 8.79/10. 91.5% are 'very likely' to return in the next few years: visitors, residents and businesses are also very satisfied with the quality of the area's inherent product offer – its towns and villages, landscapes etc.

8

Local communities are positive about tourism's potential contribution to the area's environment, society and culture.

The focus:

MORE TOURISM.
BETTER TOURISM.
YEAR-ROUND STAYING
VISITORS.

£352M
ECONOMIC
IMPACT

28%
GROWTH
SINCE 2015

78%
OF ECONOMIC
IMPACT COMES
FROM STAYING
VISITORS

Sources: STEAM, Visitor & Community Surveys.

iechyd da

SILVER CIRCLE

Monmouthshire's the food and drink capital of Wales. Home to its most iconic food festival; Michelin restaurants; and the 'best foodie hotel in the UK', the Angel Hotel. And raise a glass to local producers at wine, gin, beer and mead tastings at vineyards and distilleries and taprooms like White Castle Vineyard, Silver Circle Distillery and Hive Mind Mead & Brew Co.

Silver Circle Distillery.

OUR PRODUCT OFFER

Tourism’s contribution to the Monmouthshire economy has grown significantly since 2015. While there have been targeted investments, particularly in and around Abergavenny, much of the growth has been driven by a notable increase in non-serviced accommodation, especially in small-scale self-catering options. As a result, the overall narrative of the destination offering has remained relatively static. Ensuring that the product offer stays relevant to the identified target audiences is essential for the area’s future competitiveness. Considerations about the current product offer:

Characterful market towns and colourful villages

There is real pride in the area's market towns; and each town offers significant, and sometimes untapped, tourism potential. They have rich histories and an inherent character, and some iconic heritage attractions. Turning towns into vibrant 'hubs', distinct but interconnected, has the potential to drive visitor spend and benefit residents. Our communities have a rich and distinctive sense of borderland identity, acting as gateways to a Welsh way of life, our culture and the Welsh language.

The great outdoors

Most visitors are looking for accessible ways to experience the environment, and the area is well placed to appeal to this large audience. Walking is by far and away the main activity visitors enjoy when in the area, but there's a need for continued investment and innovation, celebrating, sustaining and building on Monmouthshire's existing network of iconic routes and trails. There's an opportunity too to re-engage with activity providers to strengthen the links between market-towns and surrounding landscapes via readily bookable experiences, including along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal. Finally, the area lacks new and innovative adventure and adrenaline products, which – if delivered in ways that are sympathetic to the natural environment – stand to strengthen the area's offer for younger markets, including families.

Destination-defining accommodation

There are 553 accommodation establishments in the area. 59% are self-catering establishments; and a third of all beds are in the touring caravans and camping sub-sector, which is highly seasonal. There hasn't been a significant increase in beds in the serviced accommodation sector for over ten years. Securing investment in serviced accommodation is key. This should include keystone town centre inns and authentic, boutique hospitality businesses that will enhance the year-round offer for local residents and literally bring more value to the heart of our communities, creating vibrancy and regeneration.



Abergavenny Food Festival. Kiran Ridley.
Relaxing on the Sugar Loaf. Monmouthshire County Council.
Michelin Star dining at The Whitebrook.

Signature and year-round events

Abergavenny Food Festival is a flag-carrier for the town, and for the county; the Wye Valley River Festival is a great model for a new type of community-centric distributed cultural event; and Castell Roc is an authentic community-run event. They all provide potential benchmarks for introducing similar ‘signature’ events in key market towns or iconic venues, to shine a spotlight on each place’s unique USP. These should be vibrant and include a strong appeal to families and younger audiences – to bring dynamism to the area’s brand and offer. There are several medium-sized event venues in the county that could be brought together into a dynamic year-round programme for visitors and resident audiences.

Food and drink

The local food and drink offer is defining for the area but gastronomy tourism is very competitive. The offer is especially strong in Abergavenny, with quality at all price points. There are also exciting recent developments that could be better celebrated: local vineyards and award-winning wine; breweries and gin making; a new wave of farm restaurants; wild foraging and bee-keeping experiences; and an abundance of high-quality, well branded local food and drink produce. There’s opportunity to continue to build on the last Destination Management Plan’s ambition to celebrate this story with confident, joined-up experiences and promotion, potentially delivered by the private sector, with public sector backing.

Boutique and unique experiences

Similarly, the area is also home to a small number of distinctive and on-trend boutique and bookable experiences, many of them linking place to tangible produce, like Wales Perfumery and our gin distilleries and vineyards. These provide a model for the kind of experiences required in future, especially where they join-up and work together.

Better basics

As previously outlined, recent surveys of visitors, businesses and residents show that they are very satisfied with Monmouthshire’s inherent or core product offer. But there’s a continual need to invest in the supporting infrastructure, signage, wayfinding, public transport, car parking, toilets, because visitor expectations are high, especially as more and more of us travel globally.

Creative industries – and inspiration

Monmouthshire has inspired all kinds of creativity: Medieval poet Dafydd Llwyd praised the incredible fortress-palace at Raglan Castle, with its ‘hundred rooms filled with festive fare, its hundred chimneys for men of high degree’; at the turn of the eighteenth century, the Wye Valley famously inspired world-leading artists such as Wordsworth and Turner; and around the same time, Baroness Llanover creatively elevated the Welsh costume to national status. In the 1960s, Allen Ginsberg, one of the prominent poets of the beat generation, was influenced by the landscapes around him – and a little LSD – to pen an ode to Wales and the county for The New Yorker. More recently, the area has inspired Welsh poets, like Owen Sheers; global and UK music legends, from Queen to Oasis to Catatonia, who have produced tracks at Monmouthshire-based studios; and the television producers of Sex Education and Young Sherlock. It adds up to something special. Bringing these experiences to life to visitors tactically (through VisitBritain’s current ‘Starring Great Britain’ campaign, for example) and through creative experiences is a direct and immediate tourism opportunity. However, bridging strategically with the creative industries sector in the region to put in place a holistic growth plan across these important strands of the experience economy could bring transformative benefits.



National Road Championship. Huw Evans.
His Dark Materials at Dewstow Gardens. Bad Wolf / BBC / HBO.
Campfire at Hidden Valley Yurts. Callum Baker.
Cocktails at the Angel Hotel. Monmouthshire County Council.





celebrations

We gather together at racecourse meets and castle-based concerts; or at celebrations of our cross-border way of life – like the Wye Valley River Festival and Devauden Festival. These events bring vibrancy and soul to our town centres and landscapes, and we need more of them.

Wye Valley River Festival at Llandogo.
Cam Adams.

CURRENT VISITOR MARKETS

It’s important to understand who our current visitors are, to shape the future.

- 90% of visitors to Wales are from Great Britain.
- While this market has been under pressure, 80% intend to take an overnight domestic trip within the next 12 months.
- With over 30m people living within 3-4 hours of our county, and most visitors saying that they want to visit heritage towns, cultural and outdoor attractions and try local food and drink, we’re in a strong place to compete.
- We’re already attracting more international visitors than most parts of Wales, and high-quality accommodation and cultural heritage experiences have the potential to make us stand out.
- Finally, Monmouthshire offers a rich portfolio of experiences for special interest travellers or visitors. These include:
 - High-quality walking, cycling, watersports and fishing.
 - A distinctive equestrian, horse racing and showjumping tradition, including a 100-year old racecourse in Chepstow.
 - Beautiful gardens that are well known to gardening enthusiasts.
 - Innovative and diverse wedding venues, providing a fantastic platform for promoting return visits or longer stays.
 - Boutique venues and experiences for a corporate and incentives market in growth again post-Covid. There's also scope to make more of our proximity to ICC Wales.

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Involving local residents, including families and young people, will be key to regenerative growth. They are positive about tourism.

Sources: Domestic GB tourism statistics (overnight trips in Wales): 2024; Great Britain Tourism Survey 2023; GB Domestic Sentiment Tracker Report Insights – April 2025, VisitBritain; Destination Monmouthshire Residents’ Survey, 2024.



Tintern Abbey.
© Crown Copyright.

“Today’s tourists don’t want to be insulated from the places they visit inside a cultural bubble. They want to engage with and participate in the local culture. From enjoying local cuisine to celebrating regional festivals and holidays, local experiences are set to become some of the top tourist trends to watch.”

Revfine’s Tourism Trends: 25 Opportunities for The Tourism Industry in 2025.



GLOBAL TOURISM IS CHANGING.

Here are some of the trends that are shaping the industry and that should influence our future developments.

Experience economy

The share of total sales attributed to global tourism spending on experiences is 12% as of March 2024, according to Mastercard Spending Pulse Destinations — higher than ever before. There are opportunities to build hybrid, innovative connections with the region’s creative and cultural sectors to develop high impact experiences of the future. Monmouthshire will need to be original to maintain relevance.

Tech for good

There’s increased focus on immersive, personal experiences brought to life through tech. TikTok recently reported that 71% of its European users were booking holidays using recommendations from the platform. SMART technologies and AI are transforming destination management and marketing, as well as the productivity and success of individual businesses.

A new paradigm

A paradigm shift is taking place in tourism, based on a recalibration of the real value the sector can bring. This is leading to new approaches to tourism innovation and ‘hybrid’ collaborations between established industry ‘players’, local characters and new actors from other sectors. Non-hospitality experts are investing in the sector, driving growth in less traditional ‘tourism’ products.

Quality of life ‘vibe’

There’s a shift from classic western tangible ‘attractions’ to more nuanced experiences for all audiences. A lifestyle ‘vibe’ is as important as individual attractions, but these can become totemic of that ‘vibe’ too, as the zip lines illustrate in North Wales. People are looking to visit places offering a rich quality of life, and this means that tourism serves to underpin a place’s wider brand.

Local cultural experiences

From a tourism perspective, the experience economy is driven by demands for authenticity, integrity, real, people-based and multi-layered experiences delivered by the ‘local’ community. According to UN Tourism 40% of all global international arrivals are motivated by a desire for cultural experiences – in Wales, Welsh culture and the Welsh language hold strong appeal to cultural domestic and international markets.

Opposite:
Mari Lwyd at the Devauden Festival.
© Crown Copyright.

INTERNATIONAL BEST PRACTICE

Finally, the new Plan has also been shaped by insights from leading European destinations. In each of these areas, the public and private sectors have worked together in innovative ways to develop regenerative, experience-led approaches to tourism: that are good for visitors, and for communities.

Successful destinations:

- 1

Show that **small, rural areas in much more challenging positions than Monmouthshire** can innovate and succeed.
- 2

Place **cultural identity and creativity** at the heart of the vision.
- 3

Have **strong destination management structures**. But not 'one glove fits every hand'.
- 4

Work in **robust partnership** across sectors, organisations and borders.
- 5

Have **simple strategies** that are SMART and focused on iterative success.
- 6

Use **new ways to measure tourism success** beyond cold economic metrics.
- 7

Have **strong and coherent agreed propositions**, combining products that define the area's unique competitiveness.
- 8

Often **juxtapose tradition with contemporary creativity and design**.
- 9

Back their winners and proactively support **family-owned local businesses**, minimising economic leakage.
- 10

Identify and **embrace investors, innovators and original thinkers**.

Crucially, they recognise that strategies and plans are just one part of the process: what they consistently have in common is a collaborative culture that embraces the challenges and potential of tourism.

Opposite:
Piran, Istria — one of the destinations that has inspired this Plan.



PART 2: FUTURE PLAN

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Wye Valley River Festival at Llandogo.
Cam Adams.

LET'S BECOME A BLUEPRINT FOR NEXT GENERATION DESTINATIONS.

PURPOSE

Monmouthshire is the birthplace of British tourism and now we're shaping its future. Our guiding purpose: to become a blueprint for next generation regenerative rural destinations. The most inspiring, connected and welcoming place in Wales to stay, invest and live.

AMBITION 2030

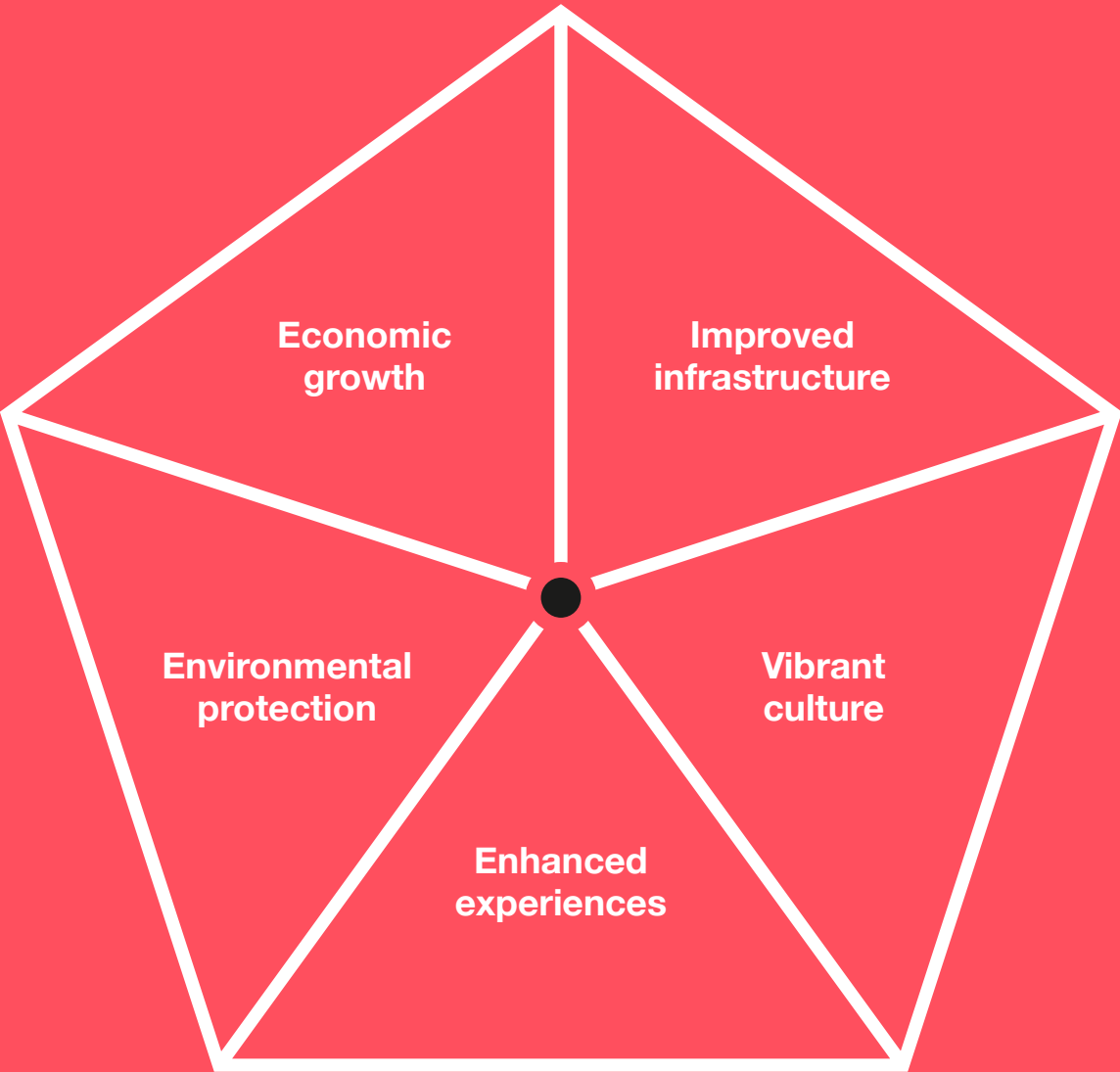
By 2030 we want to be Wales's stand-out rural destination: where guests and residents are enriched by experiences with a strong sense of place. We'll celebrate Monmouthshire's creative energy: encouraging the next generation to get inspired, get involved, and shape the future.

AIM

We'll bring vibrancy to our high streets, adventure to our landscapes, and confidence to our communities through more and better tourism that celebrates and enriches our quality of life.

OBJECTIVES

Our objectives are to deliver economic and wellbeing benefits to Monmouthshire through tourism. Together we want to promote and support:



Our economy With tourism that drives economic growth for local businesses that are embedded in our communities. — 25% growth in economic value and jobs – including within towns and villages. — YoY increase in investment in the sector from the private sector.
Our infrastructure With tourism that helps to sustain and support infrastructure that is good for residents, and guests. — Improved sense of arrival in all key towns and destination hubs. — Improved basic visitor infrastructure – car parking, toilets, signage.
Our culture & society With tourism that celebrates our creativity, bringing vibrancy and building confidence. — More cultural opportunities for local residents, including families and young people. — Improved civic pride.
Our experiences With contemporary Monmouthshire-made experiences that enrich our quality of life. — Measurably more high-quality experiences and events for visitors and locals, including families and young people, that align with our proposition and have a strong sense of place. — 20% increase in serviced bed spaces, 4-5* – with a focus on town centres.
Our environment To start to drive us on a Zero Carbon tourism pathway with sustainable approaches. — Boosted visitor awareness of environmental issues, inspiring positive behavioural changes. — An increase in visitors travelling to and within the destination by public transport and active travel networks.
Our overarching offer Growing visitor, business and resident satisfaction with tourism that works for everyone.

The baseline for evaluating growth against each of these objectives will be set, alongside realistic growth targets to 2030, at the outset of the Plan. The Destination Management Partnership will track performance on an ongoing basis.

GROWTH MARKETS

We'll focus on developing a stand-out proposition, as well as experiences and marketing aimed at the following core growth markets. We'll place an emphasis on value over volume; and on protecting and promoting place over driving day visitor numbers.

Local Market: Residents <ul style="list-style-type: none">— Involving local residents will be key.— Monmouthshire is home to over 90,000 people, almost 50% of whom are over 50 years old. Most local people are in very good or good health, and salary levels are above the national average. Residents see tourism as a positive influence.— <i>We want to cater for this audience, while gradually creating more reasons for families and young people to get involved.</i>	Core Visitor Market: GB Visitors within 2 hours <ul style="list-style-type: none">— A third of tourists in Wales are Welsh. Half the Welsh population live in urban or post-industrial areas in South East Wales. Monmouthshire provides a contrast to everyday life. This is the most diverse market in Wales.— Millions of potential visitors live within a 2-hours drive time of the county, across the English border, including in Bristol.— <i>We want to give these vital core audiences more reasons to stay and spend in our communities.</i>	Future Growth Markets: Wider UK and International Markets <ul style="list-style-type: none">— South East England and the West Midlands are potential growth markets, offering easy transport access, via car and train, direct to the heart of our communities and landscapes.— There's scope to draw in experience-led international markets keen to explore new parts of the UK. We'll target visitors already in the UK and the small, luxury group travel operators.— Again, the aim is to stand out as a UK-leading short-break destination.
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Special interest markets:
Outdoor Activities / Equestrian / Gardens / Weddings / Corporate.

We'll grow success from the inside-out, with Monmouthshire-made experiences that are uniquely local, but international in quality.



market towns

Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow, Monmouth, Usk. We're home to some of Wales's most iconic market-towns: full of rich heritage, contemporary character, and future potential.

Abergavenny Food Festival.
Drabble & Co.

PROPOSITION

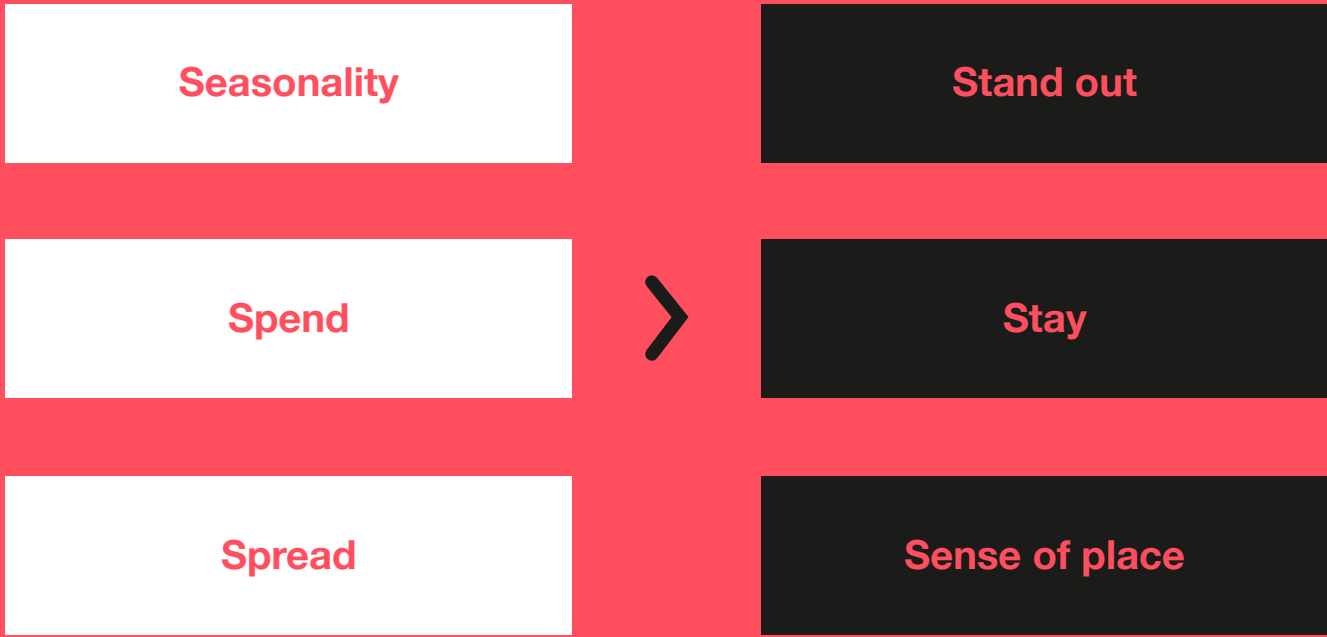
The focus of the Destination Management Plan is on three themes with growth potential for Monmouthshire. These will inform our future product and marketing priorities. They align with Visit Wales's core product themes for Wales – Outstanding Natural Landscapes; Creative Culture & Epic Adventure.

Monmouthshire-made experiences that are uniquely local, distinctively Welsh and international in quality.		
Vibrant Communities We'll celebrate the colourful character of our communities and put the distinctiveness of our market towns and villages at the heart of every visitor's journey. They will act as gateways to Wales, Welsh culture, and the Welsh language.	Natural Adventure We'll be a place of striking and accessible adventures, that offer deep wellbeing and connect all of us to the world around us: walks, hikes, cycle rides, SUP trips through culture and nature.	Inspiring Culture We'll celebrate all the creativity that has been inspired by our landscapes – bringing our heritage to life with innovation; and providing year-round opportunities to experience arts, craft, and food and drink shaped by nature via tastings, walks, workshops etc.
Creative spirit: we'll celebrate Monmouthshire's creative energy, delivering with cultural confidence and imagination.		

DRIVERS

The Welsh Government’s ‘Welcome to Wales’ strategy highlights three key drivers for growing tourism: **Spend, Seasonality, and Spread**. In Monmouthshire, we’re adding three more ‘S’s to guide our focus:

Stand-out As the 'birthplace of British tourism', we must continually refresh and reimagine our experiences to stay competitive in the market and relevant at home.
Stay Encouraging repeat and new visitors to stay longer in our communities is essential for driving truly regenerative growth.
Sense of place This includes being confident about our borderland and Welsh culture, and the Welsh language.



1

Revitalise the county’s characterful towns and villages through high quality tourism.

Three key priorities have been identified as the core of the future approach.
Together, through this Plan, we’ll:

2

Reignite our natural landscapes with activity and adventure, in ways that are sensitive and creative.

3

Develop imaginative experiences with a distinctive sense of place, that enrich our quality of life.

Veddw House Garden.
Callum Baker.

Central to the future approach is the idea that our main county towns, and market towns in particular, will be totemic of the future visitor experience in the county. There will be a particular emphasis on bringing youthfulness and vibrancy to the offer, and on bringing jobs to the heart of communities. This aligns with the vision outlined in Monmouthshire's Economy, Employment and Skills Strategy and its Replacement Local Development Plan. Many of Monmouthshire's towns and villages have a strong heritage-rich offer, and there is market demand for heritage town experiences.

We'll deliver Vibrant Places through:

1

Integrated placemaking

- **Collaborative, community-led placemaking rooted in purpose** — We'll work with town councils, chambers of commerce, and community groups to align tourism with local placemaking priorities. Each key visitor town or hub will have a distinctive identity but we'll also look to build cohesion across the county, for the benefit of the umbrella destination brand.
- **Distinctive, competitive town centres** — Work with industry partners to reimagine our heritage-rich towns to stand out on the UK stage through product innovation, business support, bold marketing, and rooted community involvement.
- **Confident cultural identity** — Work with cultural and placemaking partners to embed public art, creativity, and storytelling into the public realm to promote a strong, authentic sense of place and showcase the unique character of each town.
- **Cohesive heritage offer** — Create an integrated heritage experience that connects community stories and assets in our towns and villages.
- **Smart, experience-driven innovation** — Use data and digital tools to enhance the visitor experience and support smarter decision-making across placemaking and tourism delivery.
- **Vibrant town life & strategic investment** — Animate town centres with thriving markets and signature annual events, while actively identifying opportunities for quality keynote hospitality investment in town centres lacking in provision, especially boutique and high-end serviced accommodation. We'll also explore cross-county collaborations like a 'Market Towns of Wales' brand with Bannau Brycheiniog, Powys, and Carmarthenshire.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council to facilitate through the placemaking programme and process, collaborating with a wide range of local and national partners and funders.

2

Better basics

- **Improved public transport connectivity** — We will work through the Local Transport Plan to improve the frequency, quality, and visibility of transport links to Monmouthshire, including enhanced rail access to Chepstow, Abergavenny, and signposting from Pontypool.
- Ensure towns and key destinations within Monmouthshire are also well-linked with improving public transport and active travel trails and routes, and better promote easy 'day out' packages for visitors and locals.
- Explore using technology to monitor movement patterns and deliver user-friendly bus services. We'll also look to support community-led EV transport solutions, such as local shuttles from train stations to attractions like trails and vineyards.
- Apply creative placemaking to enhance stations and interchanges and ensure that transport hubs support active travel and cycling with walking/cycling changing facilities, bike storage etc. as is planned in Abergavenny.
- Work with transport providers and businesses to offer bookable packages and experiences, including novel ideas like a 'food train' from Bristol, Cardiff, and Newport.
- **A positive first impression** — Work as 'one Council' to audit (formally and annually) the sense of arrival we provide visitors travelling by road, rail, foot/bike to the county in general, and to each of our key destination hubs.
- **High-quality signposting and wayfinding** — Audit and improve signposting and wayfinding information in key visitor destinations, ensuring that all new signage is distinctive and has a sense of place, building on our recent work in Tintern. We'll incorporate digital signage at key visitor hubs.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Transport bodies, through coordinated delivery.



The Kitchen at The Chapel, Abergavenny.
Wye Valley River Festival parade in Monmouth. Gemma Kate Wood.

3

Living cultural heritage

- **Protected and promoted heritage assets** — We'll use thoughtful and creative placemaking to preserve and showcase the heritage-rich fabric of our communities, ensuring it remains a central part of the visitor experience.
- **Vibrant community-led heritage initiatives** — Partner with local organisations to secure funding for key heritage projects, such as the Gunter Mansion initiative in Abergavenny, which resonate with both residents and visitors.
- **Innovative collaborations to bring our heritage to life** — Engage with heritage organisations, private sector operators and cultural partners to explore innovative, collaborative opportunities for events and activities, like castle escape adventures, or wine-tasting experiences; including looking for ways to celebrate our Welsh identity and the Welsh language.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council in partnership with cultural heritage bodies, such as Cadw.

Chepstow Castle. © Crown Copyright.



While we want to place a real emphasis on enhancing the centre of our communities through the Plan, Monmouthshire is also shaped by its landscape, which have provided inspiration to walkers and writers; anglers and artists for centuries. People will want to stay longer in our towns and villages because they are launchpads to beautiful places to hike, cycle, canoe; and to taste and experience local produce. These landscapes also provide opportunities for local people to enjoy healthier ways of life. And we want to open-up our countryside with care and sensitivity in ways that also serve to promote and protect our natural habitats.

1

A walking and cycling county

- **Contemporary active travel along centuries-old trails** — We'll explore opportunities to enhance active travel opportunities along the historic routes and trails between our key towns and villages, such as the Drovers' Routes. There is also scope to create more product experiences along the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal.
- **Becoming the hub for national walking and cycling routes** — Continue to prioritise investment in the area's hero or 'national' strategic walking and cycling trails and the existing offer: including Offa's Dyke Path, the Wales Coast Path, the Wye Valley Walk; and do more in the towns and villages that are on these trails to showcase the trails via branding and signage and to encourage more walkers and cyclists to stay overnight in our communities.
- **More and safer road cycling** — Monitor road cycling conditions in-line with the Local Transport Plan, to ensure that the road network is in a good and safe condition for cyclists, while encouraging more cyclists to stop and stay overnight through targeted marketing efforts.
- **Localised walking and cycling** — Work through the Local Transport Plan, to enhance and promote walking, cycling, and wheeling routes in all of our towns.
- **Improved mapping and interpretation**
 - Work with partners, including Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and the Wye Valley National Landscape to continually review and improve local walking and cycling trail maps and interpretation – aiming to launch one enhanced walking/cycling trail experience a year on the destination website, potentially working with leading local walking/cycling writers and authors. We'll also explore developing 'resort-style' interpretation maps for our key visitor towns and hubs – promoting the variety of activities within the community, as well as in the surrounding landscapes.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council in partnership
with Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and the
Wye Valley National Landscape.

2

A boosted activity sector

- **Establish an Activity Sector Cluster**
 - We'll collaborate with local businesses to create an Activity Sector Cluster, fostering the growth of regenerative, community-based adventure and activity tourism, reflecting the 'special interests' prioritised for Monmouthshire in particular.
- **Review and benchmark the sector**
 - Work with the Cluster to assess the activity sector in Monmouthshire, comparing its scale and performance to similar UK destinations and neighbouring counties, and put in place a plan to grow the sector.
- **Original adventure experiences**
 - Celebrate existing activity and adventure destinations and operators, such as Llandegfedd Lake. We'll also identify opportunities to create a new, trend-setting activity or adventure experience that aligns with Monmouthshire's brand and revitalises its tourism offering, with a specific focus on family and younger markets.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council in partnership with the Activity sector.

3

Promoting responsible access to nature

- **Promote safe and responsible tourism**
- We'll collaborate with the industry to guide visitors on how to responsibly enjoy Monmouthshire's natural environment, reflecting the principles of the Monmouthshire County Council Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy.
- **Highlight natural habitats** — Actively raise the profile of local natural habitats, especially the Gwent Levels, through marketing and communications efforts.
- **Support river and coast initiatives**
- Support the delivery of Monmouthshire's Rivers and Oceans Action Plan by raising awareness of the importance of our rivers and coasts – working with the Activity Sector Cluster to mainstream important key messages into their water-based experiences; sharing awareness-raising messaging with the local visitor industry; and incorporating relevant messaging within our destination content marketing.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council with environmental organisations and groups locally.

Stand-Up Paddleboarding at Llandegfedd Lake.
© Crown Copyright.



Key to success is the delivery of stand-out experiences and events, which align with the area's core proposition and bring our story to life, and that get visitors and residents excited and involved. The area's inherent offer is felt to be of a high quality but it needs to be continually reinvigorated and brought to life in new ways – for future audiences.

1

Monmouthshire-made experiences

— Foster networking and collaboration

— We'll facilitate opportunities for businesses to network, share knowledge, and collaborate on joint products and experiences, enhancing the local economy.

— **Forge cross-sector partnerships** — Bring tourism businesses together with food producers, artists, craft-makers, and creative industry partners to inject more dynamism into the local experience economy.

— **Promote existing experiences** — Encourage businesses to feature local experiences and itineraries on their websites and in guest information, cultivating a 'concierge'-style culture of cross-promotion within the tourism industry.

— **Develop new, localised experiences** — Support the industry to bring at least five private-sector led, bookable product experiences to the market each year, providing guidance at each step of the process, from concept design to product development, to branding and marketing. We'll prioritise experiences that are local, independent and family-run; have a sense of local identity; and provide visitors with the opportunity to experience locally-made produce, from perfume to wine to art. Some of the experiences should appeal to younger markets, including families. Indoor experiences will also be encouraged.

— Deliver bold, destination-wide experiences

— Work with our businesses, organisations and communities to develop one new, signature, high-profile public-private experience a year to raise the profile of the destination in general. Ideas might include:

— Wine and Walking Trails / A collaboration between the area's leading vineyards, to create a bookable 'wine trail' experience, which link up to local walks.

— Views to inspire / A collaborative arts and culture project to showcase the area's story as a place that has inspired world-leading poetry, art, music and TV, building on the Picturesque Wye Tour initiative that launched just before Covid.

— Jumping the border / A series of experiences designed to play on Monmouthshire's borderland position, with stop-off points on both sides of the border; Instagrammable spots at key crossings; a giant swing across the river etc.

— **Sustain signature events** — Support the area's outstanding signature events by working with organisers to identify potential sustainable funding, allowing for strategic planning and continuous improvement of the visitor experience for both residents and visitors.

— **Coordinate year-round events** — Partner with key event venues such as Chepstow Racecourse, to create a coordinated calendar of year-round events, ensuring opportunities to enhance the visitor experience and encourage longer stays are maximised.

— Develop iconic town-specific events

— Collaborate with public, private, and third-sector partners to create at least one signature event per town that reflects its unique character and identity – a music festival in Monmouth, for example, to celebrate the town's rich heritage as a place of music production. These should feel fresh and youthful, and include family and younger markets.

— **Support off-season events** — Foster the development of new out-of-season festivals and events, such as a Walks and Wines Festival in Abergavenny, and aim to launch one major shoulder-season event across the county by 2030 to unify our communities, such as a county-wide walking festival.

— **Unique Welsh weddings** — Collaborate with the Weddings' sector to continue to grow Monmouthshire's stand-out weddings' offer, and to cross-promote longer-stay and return holidays to those attending local weddings and family celebrations.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council to coordinate and facilitate; but delivery and implementation will be private and third sector led.

Wild Swimming at Usk Island. Callum Baker. Abergavenny Food Festival. Drabble & Co.



3.Enriching Experiences (cont.)

2

High-quality accommodation

- **Focus on high-quality serviced accommodation**
 - We will focus on securing investment in keynote destination inns and hotels, particularly in town centres and visitor hubs where they are lacking, to create a critical mass of quality accommodation in Monmouthshire's market towns. We'll also ensure that opportunities identified through the Replacement Local Development Plan are maximised to deliver improved options for families.
- **Conduct an Accommodation Review**
 - Deliver an Accommodation Review and Investment Plan with input from private sector leaders, focusing on town-centre heritage buildings with reinvestment potential, starting with a pilot in Monmouth for a character 4-5* boutique inn or hotel.
- **Strengthen relationships with accommodation providers** — Formalise relationships with current leading serviced accommodation owners, through a CRM model, supporting existing businesses to modernise while maintaining a confident sense of place, and exploring expansion opportunities for exemplars.
- **Promote best practice** — Celebrate local providers through targeted content marketing aimed at industry and customers.
- **Promote keystone Monmouthshire inns**
 - Promote the concept of keystone Welsh inn developments in the centre of our market towns, building on our traditions and heritage: a fun and relaxed community centre, showcasing local food, drink, arts, crafts; a driver of local events; a place where businesses gather to discuss new ideas; a training ground for hospitality skills.

Roles & Responsibilities:

The private sector but facilitated via a strategic and proactive approach to identifying and attracting investment, led by Monmouthshire County Council in collaboration with other regional and national partners.

Opposite:
The Angel Hotel, Abergavenny.

3

More access to local produce

- **Promote local food and drink** — We will collaborate with Monmouthshire's food and drink partners to actively promote local produce to the visitor industry, showcasing the area's offerings through destination marketing.
- **Support local arts and crafts** — Build connections between tourism and the creative industries, offering opportunities for businesses to showcase and sell local arts, crafts, and produce in their venues.
- **Promote local food and drink products and related experiences** — Continue to promote local food & drink across all channels and work with vineyards to offer sommelier workshops for hospitality providers to promote local wines.

Roles & Responsibilities:

Monmouthshire County Council to facilitate via food and drink and cultural/creative programmes.





Tintern Abbey Cottage.
Wonderful Escapes at Wern-y-Cwm Farm.
Decanter World Wine Award winning White Castle Vineyard near Abergavenny.

ENABLERS

1

PARTNERSHIP
MARKETING

2

STRONG SUPPORT
STRUCTURES

3

SUSTAINABLE AND
INCLUSIVE DELIVERY

4

CREATIVITY AND
INNOVATION

1. PARTNERSHIP MARKETING

A refreshed place brand

We'll work with all our partners to keep the Monmouthshire brand contemporary and vibrant, proactively challenging tired perceptions of the area. That means continually reinvigorating our content to appeal to new and younger audiences and bringing our communities to the centre of the story. We'll also start to build the tourism brand into a broader place brand, so that our assets can also be used to promote inward investment and wider sector growth.

Market-facing branding

We'll take a flexible approach to destination branding, promoting 'Monmouthshire' in certain contexts, while also aligning ourselves with other market-facing destination brands like Dean and Wye, Bannau Brycheiniog, where appropriate, as we do now.

Croeso cynnes Cymraeg

We'll work together to ensure that we become a confident gateway to contemporary Wales – encouraging the use of the Welsh language to bring a distinctive sense of identity and place to our story.

Visit Wales Industry Roadshow 2023.
© Crown Copyright.



Consumer Marketing: content and partner-led

Monmouthshire County Council will continue to play a leading role in marketing the destination, as well as harnessing our platforms to provide vital information to visitors and residents that are already in the area. This includes continuing to maintain a rich product database of everything the area has to offer on our website. Through this Plan we'll aim to secure funding and resources to deliver more high-profile marketing campaigns to attract longer stays.

We'll also continue to work in partnership to expand the reach and impact of our work, working with VisitBritain; Visit Wales; Southern Wales Tourism; Cardiff Capital Region; neighbouring local authorities; key regional partnership including the Marches Forward Partnership, the Living Levels Partnership and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site; Bannau Brycheiniog National Park Authority; Wye Valley National Landscape; destination management/marketing organisations and tourism associations in the area; town councils; and chambers of trade – as well as tourism and hospitality businesses and organisations, and communities.

We want to encourage as many people as possible to make and share high-quality content about our destination and we'll encourage local people and influencers to get creative through competitions and showcases. We'll share more content that celebrates our unique borderland and Welsh identity.

We'll remain agile and innovative and the Destination Management Partnership will ensure that partners are abreast of the latest digital and social media marketing trends, including AI. A small editorial content board of local creative and marketers will get the work started.

B2B Marketing: bookable experiences

Monmouthshire County Council will also continue to work with partners such as Visit Wales and Southern Wales Tourism to support the industry to develop and create bookable experiences, and to find routes to market for their products. This includes collaborating with intermediaries to distribute products more broadly on our area's behalf; and working directly with tour operators and the trade market. Businesses will be encouraged to use low commission rate booking channels such as TXGB to reduce tourism leakage, and increase reach and bookability (e.g., to overseas operators via the Visit Britain eShop). The potential for growing the corporate market in collaboration with ICC Wales, Cardiff Capital Region and Visit Wales will also be explored.

Developing a unified 'concierge' experience

Monmouthshire is a relatively small destination, and stakeholders feel strongly that we can stand out from the rest by offering a high-quality 'curated' or 'concierge' experience to our guests. At its heart, this isn't a highly technical or complex idea to implement well. It's about all local businesses understanding the offer inside-out and actively cross-promoting each other. So, in the future, we'll meet up more regularly, research and visit what's going on in the area, and proactively offer bespoke ideas and itineraries to our visitors - via marketing channels, welcome packs within local businesses, and personal recommendations. Partners will also explore harnessing AI to power a WhatsApp concierge service for visitors to the area, enabling them to research and 'book as they go.' On a physical, destination level, this concept will be brought to life through better digital signage and interpretation in communities, ideally linking back to the same base data and content.

Catering for residents

This Plan is all about delivering a high-quality visitor experience that is also good for residents. We'll continue to lead the way in Wales by making sure that our 'tourism' marketing isn't transactional, and that our brand, our content and our platforms cater for local people, and are co-created with them. We'll play a role in delivering content that cuts-through on the UK stage, generating civic pride here at home.

Knights at Chepstow Castle.
© Crown Copyright.



2. STRONG SUPPORT STRUCTURES

A revitalised Destination Management Partnership

This is a Plan created by Monmouthshire County Council and informed by extensive market intelligence, and with the input of a wide range of key stakeholders. And it's ultimately designed to be co-owned by our partners, and to inspire collaboration and co-creation. To support the delivery of the Plan, Monmouthshire County Council will create a strengthened Destination Management Partnership, empowered and resourced to make a difference. The Destination Management Partnership will meet quarterly, and will be chaired by a member of Monmouthshire County Council's Cabinet. It will include a cross-section of public, private and third sector partners and report regularly to the South East Wales Tourism Forum. Training and development opportunities will be provided for the group, including learning journeys.

Strengthened destination marketing organisations, tourism associations and community interest companies

Monmouthshire County Council will proactively engage with localised tourism associations, identifying ways to support them – and any new or emerging organisations – to grow their reach and impact. The vision will be to gradually rebalance the model, so that the Destination Management Partnership becomes a strategic group, underpinned by a network of strong tourism associations overseeing the Plan's delivery at localised levels by 2030.

Wales Perfumery near Monmouth.



Town and community engagement

Monmouthshire County Council's tourism team will also meet with the town councils on a regular basis: this will be integrated into existing placemaking meeting structures and forums. Town councils will also be invited to Destination Management Partnership meetings.

Cross-sector relationships

As outlined, Monmouthshire County Council will lead the work of strengthening partnerships within adjacent sectors, building on the good work achieved with food and drink in the county. We'll establish new links with the creative industries sector at county and regional level, to explore film and television location promotion, and broader strategic opportunities linked to the experience economy.

Business support and skills development

Business support services will be actively promoted to the tourism sector, including Monmouthshire County Council provision. Opportunities to work with skills partners, such as local educational providers, to develop the hospitality workforce will continue to be explored, as well as school-based talks and presentations by our industry leaders.

3. SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE DELIVERY

Future generation tourism

Monmouthshire County Council will work with education and youth worker colleagues to tap into existing youth forums to capture the views of future generations, and to develop a sector that places their requirements front-of-mind.

Community ownership

Ensuring a community-led approach to tourism growth and development is at the heart of this Plan. Communities will be involved in its ongoing delivery, and community sentiment will be closely tracked in the future to ensure that challenges are properly mapped, understood and mitigated.

Environmental management

Tourism will continue to be considered at relevant ongoing environmental partnership meetings, with measures taken to redress any negative trends, as appropriate, based on data and insights.

An inclusive welcome

All public sector partners will ensure that our channels are accessible and inclusive, and we'll work with the industry to develop and fund investments to ensure that our venues, attractions, events and visitor infrastructure are accessible – physically, in terms of the product offer, and in the way they are promoted.

Data-led delivery

As outlined, new approaches will be adopted to capture and join-up data across a wide range of destination touchpoints, from harnessing SMART technology within destinations to using AI to interpret and prioritise data findings. The Plan itself will remain agile and responsive to these insights.

All-Terrain Wheelchairs at Whitestone.
Wye Valley National Landscape.



4. CREATIVITY AND ORIGINALITY

Creative collaboration

Monmouthshire's story as a place of creative inspiration for world leading poets, artists, musicians and television producers is relatively untapped. We want to bring that story to life, showcase our creativity in our communities, and continue to make art. As outlined, we'll therefore do more by 2030 to create experiences that showcase our area's influence on art and culture.

We'll create new linkages with creative industries sector partners and local cultural organisations to explore opportunities to collaborate and bring more art to our tourism businesses. This will include working within Monmouthshire County Council to deliver a Cultural Strategy for our county that reflects the ambition of this Plan.

We'll also do more to involve the local creative community in destination marketing activity – using music produced locally in film content, local illustrators to create artworks etc.

Finally, we'll continually explore the way in which other rural communities have harnessed creativity to shift their propositions, bringing examples of good practice to the Destination Management Partnership.

Wye Valley Sculpture Garden. Gemma Kate Wood.
Foraging in Abergavenny. © Crown Copyright.
Castell Roc Music Festival in Chepstow Castle. Castell Roc.



GREAT PLACES
TO VISIT, CAN MAKE
BRILLIANT PLACES
TO LIVE.

Outstanding destination experiences are built by policy-makers, industry leaders, third-sector organisations and local communities collaborating in ways that are regenerative, outward-looking and creative.

Monmouthshire is the birthplace of British tourism. This our chance to get together to make our destination stand out again as the most inspiring place and welcoming place in Wales to stay, invest and live.

LET'S GET TO WORK.

*Look at the stars
Look how they shine for you
And everything you do
Yeah, they were all yellow*

Coldplay, Yellow – written on a starry night during the band's recording sessions at Rockfield Studios, 1999.



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Appendix 2

PLAN ON A PAGE

Here's a one-page summary of the detailed Plan that follows:

Purpose

Monmouthshire is the birthplace of British tourism and now we're shaping its future.

Our guiding purpose: to become a blueprint for next generation regenerative rural destinations. The most inspiring, connected and welcoming place in Wales to stay, invest and live.

Ambition 2030

By 2030 we want to be Wales's stand-out rural destination. A place of imaginative experiences and characterful places to eat, drink, and stay – rich in sense of place. We'll celebrate Monmouthshire's creative energy: encouraging the next generation to get inspired, get involved, and shape the future.

Aim

We'll bring vibrancy to our high streets, adventure to our landscapes, and confidence to our communities through more and better tourism that celebrates and enriches our quality of life.

Objectives

Economic growth	Improved infrastructure	Vibrant culture	Enhanced experiences	Environmental protection
Economic growth. More private sector investment.	Sense of arrival. Better basics.	Community participation. Improved civic pride.	Signature experiences. Keynote places to stay.	Improved visitor awareness & behaviour. Public transport use.

Visitor, business and resident satisfaction with tourism.

Future Growth Markets: Wider UK and International Markets

Local residents , including families and young people.	Independent Explorers from within 2hrs – encouraging longer-stays.	New visitor markets from across the UK and beyond , including younger cohorts.
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Special interest markets:

Outdoor Activities; Equestrian; Gardens; Weddings; Corporate.

Proposition

Monmouthshire-made experiences that are uniquely local, distinctively Welsh and international in quality.

Vibrant communities	Natural adventure	Inspiring culture
Creative spirit – a place of inspiration.		

Drivers

Stand out	Stay	Sense of Place
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Priorities

Vibrant Places Integrated placemaking. Better basics – including connectivity. Living Welsh culture and language.	Active Landscapes for healthy lifestyles A walking and cycling county. A boosted activity sector. Promoting responsible tourism.	Enriching Experiences Monmouthshire-made experiences and events. High-quality accommodation. Showcasing local produce.
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Enablers

Brand marketing	Strong support structures	Sustainable and inclusive delivery
Creativity and originality		

