



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

March 2019

Executive Summary

KEY MESSAGES

- Planning Policy Wales defines Green Infrastructure as 'the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places' (such as towns and villages).
- This Green Infrastructure Strategy promotes an integrated and joined up approach to delivering Green Infrastructure that takes into account the needs of Monmouthshire's communities, environment and economy.
- An important overarching principle underpinning the Strategy is the need to recognise the multi-functionality of Green Infrastructure assets and to maximise the benefits different assets can deliver through an integrated approach. For example, greenspaces can be used for sustainable food production, contribute to flood management and provide access to nature for informal recreation.
- It is essential that the inter-relationship and connections between the individual projects outlined in the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan are considered in the round to ensure that opportunities for shared outcomes and mutual benefits are maximised.



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SETTING THE SCENE

Background

The Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience through GI in line with the Monmouthshire Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan prepared under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. It also sets out the Council's approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes through GI in line with the objectives of the Monmouthshire Public Service Board Wellbeing Plan prepared under the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

The GI Strategy has five strategic objectives and associated priorities for guiding the planning, management and delivery of GI in Monmouthshire. These are to:

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

Overview of the GI Strategy

The Strategy was prepared by Chris Blandford Associates (CBA) on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council.

Volume 1 – Strategic Framework

Volume 1 of the Strategy sets out the Council's strategic framework for GI provision in Monmouthshire. It identifies key priorities and strategic opportunities where the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits, both on a county-wide basis and for key settlements where growth is planned in the adopted Local Development Plan (2011-2021).

Volume 2 – Delivery Plan

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

GIS Database of GI Assets

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

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

What is GI?

GI is the **network** of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. Individually, these elements are **GI assets**, and the roles that these assets play are **GI functions**. When appropriately planned, designed and managed, the assets and functions have the potential to deliver a wide range of **benefits** – from providing sustainable transport links to mitigating and adapting the effects of climate change.

GI assets range from country parks, lakes and woodlands to urban interventions such as green roofs and street trees. They can be specific sites at the local level or broader environmental features at the landscape scale within and between rural and urban areas such as wetlands, moors and mountain ranges.



Range of GI Scales/Connectivity

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



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Vision for GI in Monmouthshire

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

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

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

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



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

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

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
























Strategic GI Objectives

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

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



The GI Strategy's objectives will contribute to the Welsh Government's National Well-being Goals, and the Council's Local Well-being Objectives and Biodiversity & Resilience Objectives as highlighted below:

| GI Strategy Objective | National Well-being Goals (see Box 3.3) | | | | | | | Local Well-being Objectives (see Box 3.4) | | | | Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives (see Box 3.5) | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 1 – Improve Health & Wellbeing | | |  | |  |  | |  | |  | | | | | | | | |
| 2 – Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience | |  |  | | | | | | |  | |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 – Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness | | |  | | |  | | | |  | | | | | | | | |
| 4 – Increase Climate Change Resilience | |  | | | | |  | | |  | | | | | | | | |
| 5 – Support Sustainable Economic Development |  | | | | | | | | | |  | | | | | | | |

Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network

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

An overview of the strategic needs and opportunities for restoring, maintaining, creating and/or connecting GI assets to help strengthen Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network for the future can be found in Volume 1 of the GI Strategy

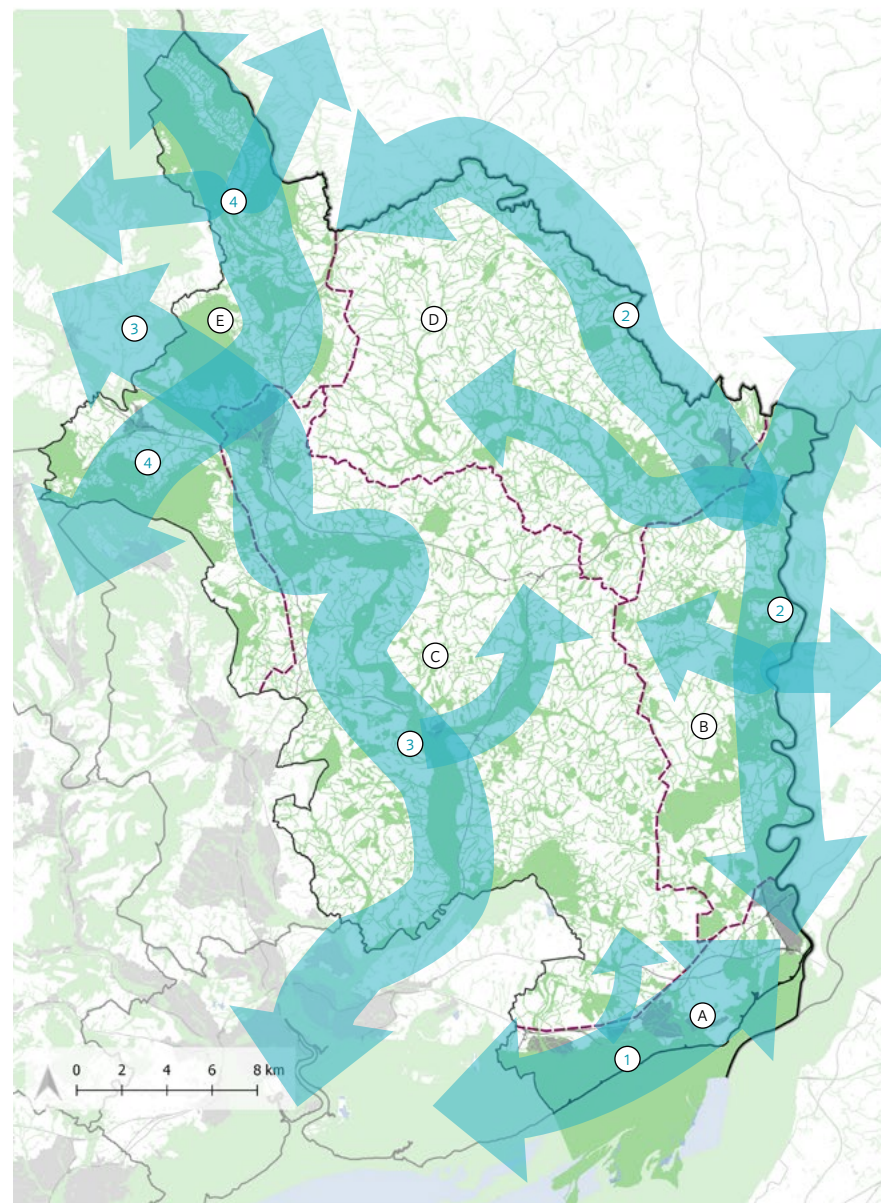
Strategic GI Corridors:

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

GI Zones:

- A: Gwent Levels
- B: Wye Valley
- C: Usk Catchment
- D: Wye Catchment
- E: Brecon Beacons Uplands

 Existing GI Network



Settlement GI Networks

Set within the context of the Strategic GI Network for Monmouthshire, the key opportunities for strengthening the GI Networks in and around the the **key growth locations** and **rural secondary settlements** identified for development in the adopted Local Development Plan (2011-2021) are highlighted in the GI Strategy. Where appropriate, these opportunities are carried forward into the projects set out in the GI Delivery Plan (Volume 2).



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