

# Monmouthshire

Replacement Local Development Plan  
**Growth & Spatial Options**  
**Easy Read Summary**

DECEMBER 2020



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy



# What is the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP)?

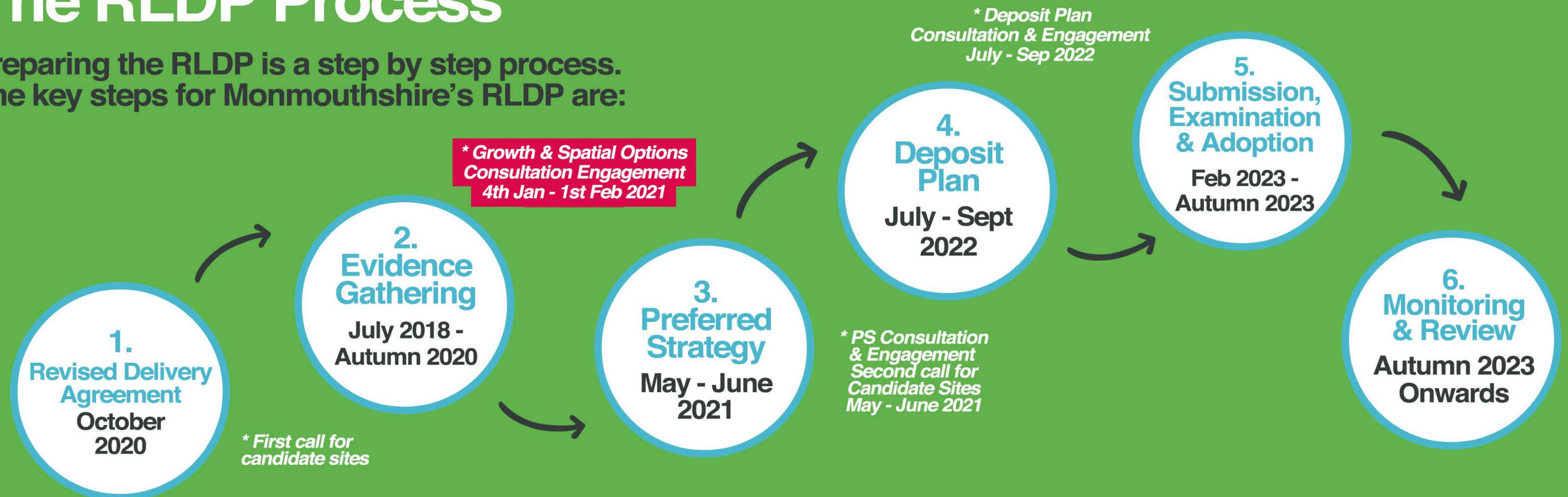
Monmouthshire County Council is preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for the period from 2018 to 2033. The RLDP will allocate land for development, designate areas for protection and contain policies to provide the basis for decisions on planning applications. It will cover the whole of the County except for the part within the Brecon Beacons National Park.

The RLDP process commenced in 2018, however the Plan's timetable has been delayed primarily due to the current pandemic and publication of updated key evidence. As a result we are revisiting the Growth and Spatial Options and Preferred Strategy stages of the Plan process.



## The RLDP Process

Preparing the RLDP is a step by step process. The key steps for Monmouthshire's RLDP are:





As part of the evidence gathering and to help us decide on how to plan for the future of Monmouthshire we have identified a wide range of issues facing our communities.

## Our Key Issues, Challenges & Opportunities



*These issues, challenges and opportunities have been re-assessed and endorsed by the Council in October 2020 that they still remain relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.*



# The different Growth Options

We are currently at the stage of identifying and considering different growth scenarios using the latest 2018 Welsh Government (WG) population and household projections as the starting point. A total of six different growth options are being consulted upon, which are considered to represent a realistic range of growth scenarios for the County.

A variety of alternative projections have been modelled in order to specifically tackle Monmouthshire's key issues of: reducing our ageing demographic, providing more affordable housing (including more affordable market homes), and reducing our high levels of out commuting.

Policy assumptions have been applied to different modelling forecasts that aim to address these key issues. These are:


- **To increase household formation rates** – the 2018 population projections show a projected increase of households comprising 4+ adults, indicating young adults are living with their parents or in shared accommodation, unable to afford their own home. By increasing household formation rates, more homes will be built increasing opportunities for these young adults to access housing within the County rather than move elsewhere. This objective will be supported by affordable housing and private sector housing mix policies. This approach will help retain younger adult age groups and rebalance Monmouthshire's ageing demographic (RLDP Objectives 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13).
- **Apply a reduction in the commuting ratio** – the 2011 census indicated that 54% working age population commutes out of the County for work. This adjustment reflects the Council's economic ambition to attract new employment to the County, meaning fewer people will need to travel out for work. This approach will support the Council's Climate Emergency declaration (RLDP Objectives 1, 14, 15 and 17).
- **Adjust migration rates** to reflect local influences to take into account the removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls. This adjustment reflects known trends. Monmouthshire's population is ageing and declining so in-migration continues to be essential to rebalance Monmouthshire's ageing demographic and ensure communities are socially and economically sustainable. Affordable housing policies will prioritise residents with a local connection to Monmouthshire (RLDP Objectives 9, 12 and 13).
- **A specific policy-led affordable housing element** is added to all the selected growth options. These additional dwellings will be delivered on sites comprising at least 50% affordable housing and will meet 10% of affordable housing identified by Monmouthshire's Local Housing Market Assessment 2020). This approach will help address the lack of affordable housing (RLDP Objectives 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13).




\* New allocations – as the Plan period started in 2018, the existing supply of housing (completions from 2018 to now, sites with planning permission and current LDP allocations that are being brought forward) and small sites/windfalls will all contribute to the housing requirement indicated, reducing the number of new housing allocations required. A flexibility allowance will be added to the housing requirement as per Welsh Government guidance.

\*\* Job growth levels - Employment growth will reduce out-commuting and promote self-contained communities. However, increased home and remote working means not all of the jobs indicated need to be provided within the County. While it will not be possible for all employment sectors to work from home/work remotely, policy support requiring broadband connectivity and supporting the provision of local employment hubs will enable those who can, to do so.

**By 2033:**




**-5,110 people**



**-225 Homes**

New allocations \*: 0

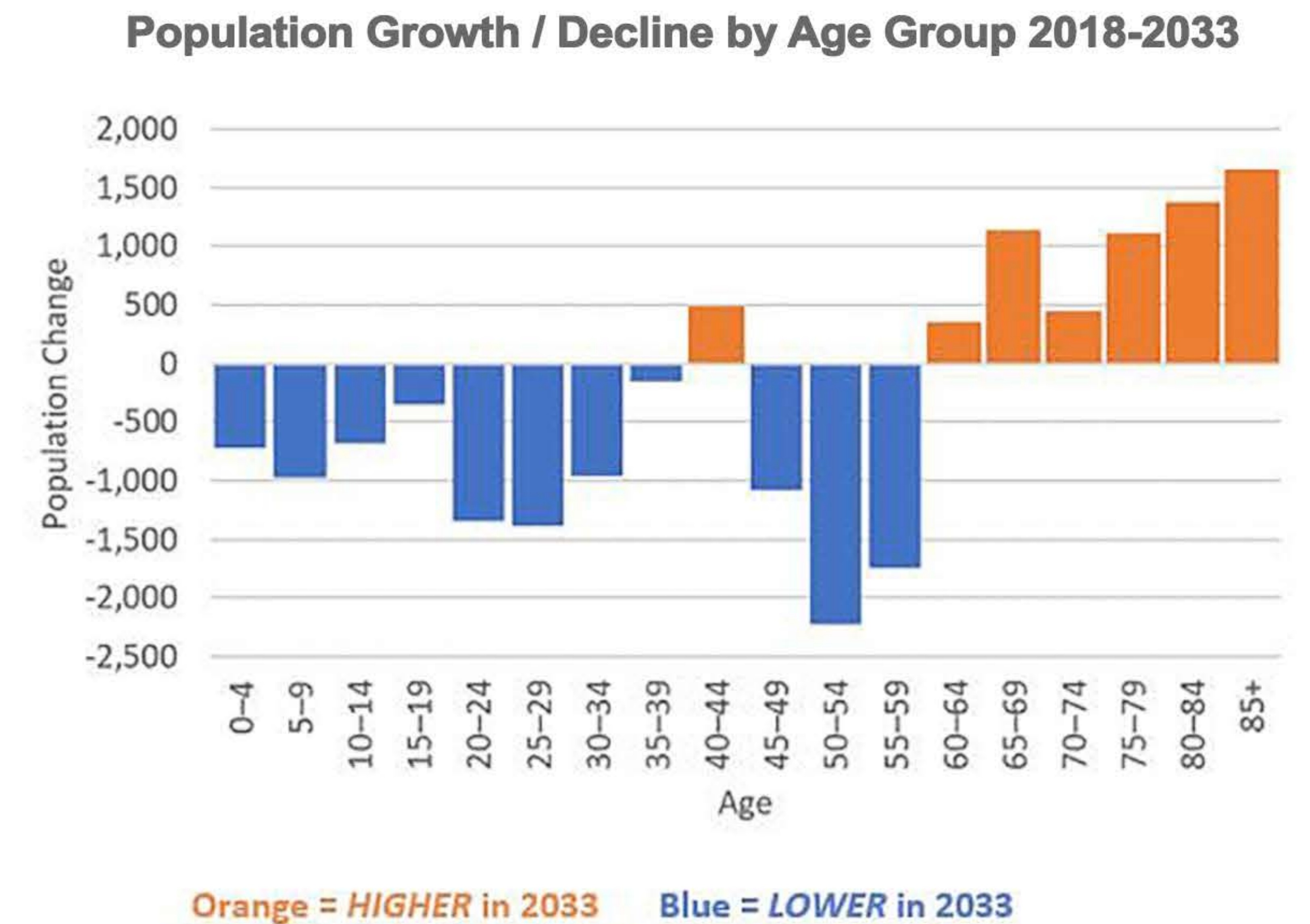


**-1,800 Jobs \*\***

## Option 1: Balanced Migration

(with added policy assumptions)

This a demographic-led projection, which balances in-migration and out-migration so any population change is due to natural change (births and deaths). This scenario however also adds policy assumptions for an increase in household formation rates and a reduction in the commuting ratio, in order to influence the retention of the local population. It also includes the affordable housing policy-led element. This scenario shows there is negative growth.



### Pros:

- Limited impact upon Monmouthshire’s biodiversity and landscape.
- Limited climate change impact.

### Cons:

- There is no new growth, which means that Monmouthshire would not require any new housing development until 2033.
- It will fail to deliver any new affordable housing.
- With no new market housing, supply will be further restricted and house prices will further increase. This will mean many people, including younger people, will not be able to live in the County.
- There is an increasing ageing demographic which will put pressure on the County’s services and will not deliver balanced sustainable communities.
- The working age demographic will decline therefore Monmouthshire’s workforce shrinks and the attractiveness for start-up businesses decline.



By 2033:



+ 6,047 people



3,930  
Homes

New allocations \*: 0

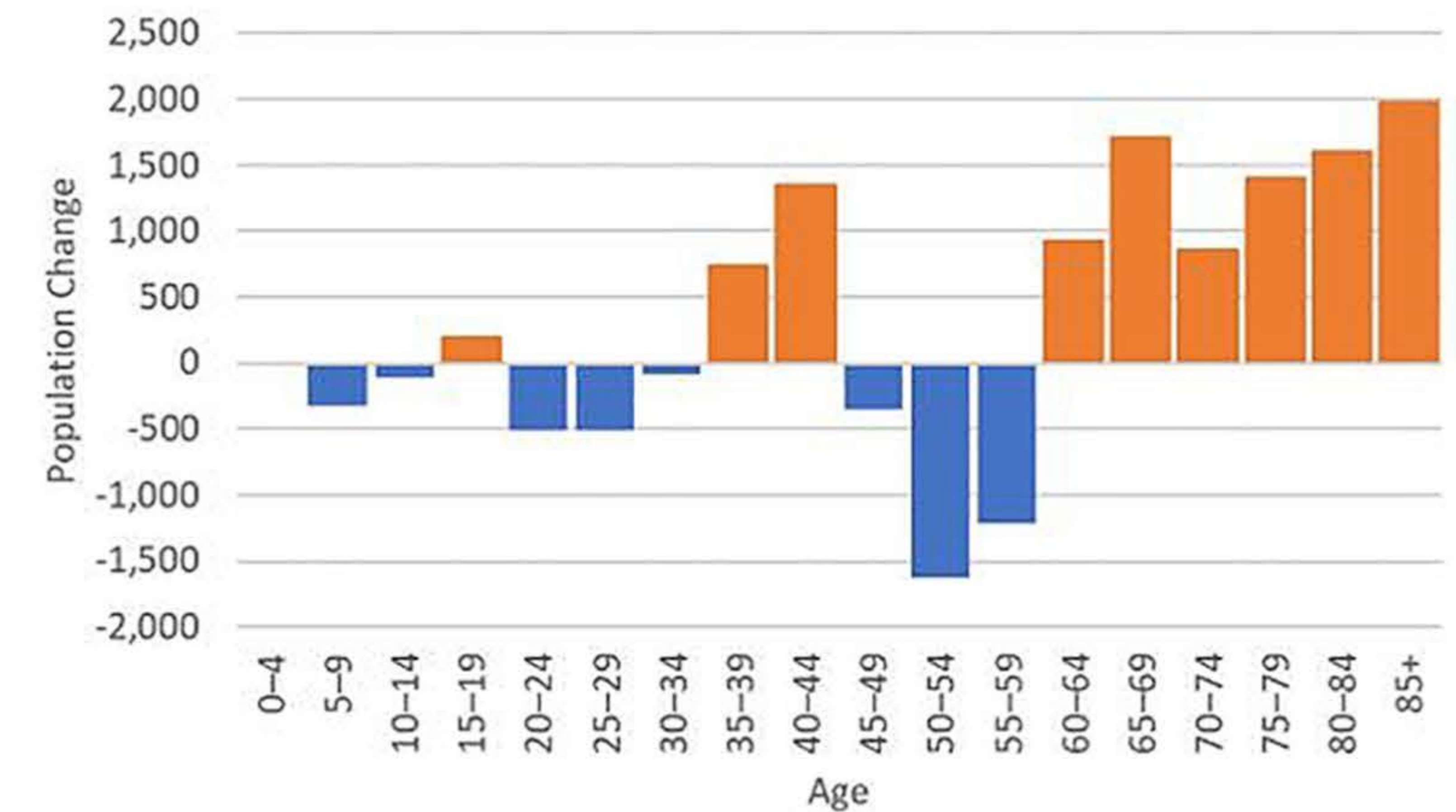


3,120 Jobs

## Option 2: Welsh Government Principal Projection

This is a demographic-led projection, which replicates the Welsh Government 2018 population scenario. The affordable housing policy-led element has been added but there have been no further policy assumptions applied.

Population Growth / Decline by Age Group 2018-2033



Orange = HIGHER in 2033    Blue = LOWER in 2033

### Pros:

- Limited impact upon Monmouthshire's biodiversity and landscape.
- Limited climate change impact.

### Cons:

- There is limited growth, which means that we would not require any new allocations\*.
- There is limited new additional affordable housing.
- There is limited new market housing leading to a restricted supply and further increase in house prices meaning that many people, including younger age groups, will not be able to live in the County.
- There is an increasing ageing demographic which will put pressure on the County's services and will not deliver balanced sustainable communities.
- The working age demographic will decline therefore Monmouthshire's workforce shrinks and the attractiveness for start-up businesses decline.



**By 2033:**



**+ 6,147 people**



**4,770  
Homes**

approx. 110 homes on  
new site allocations\*

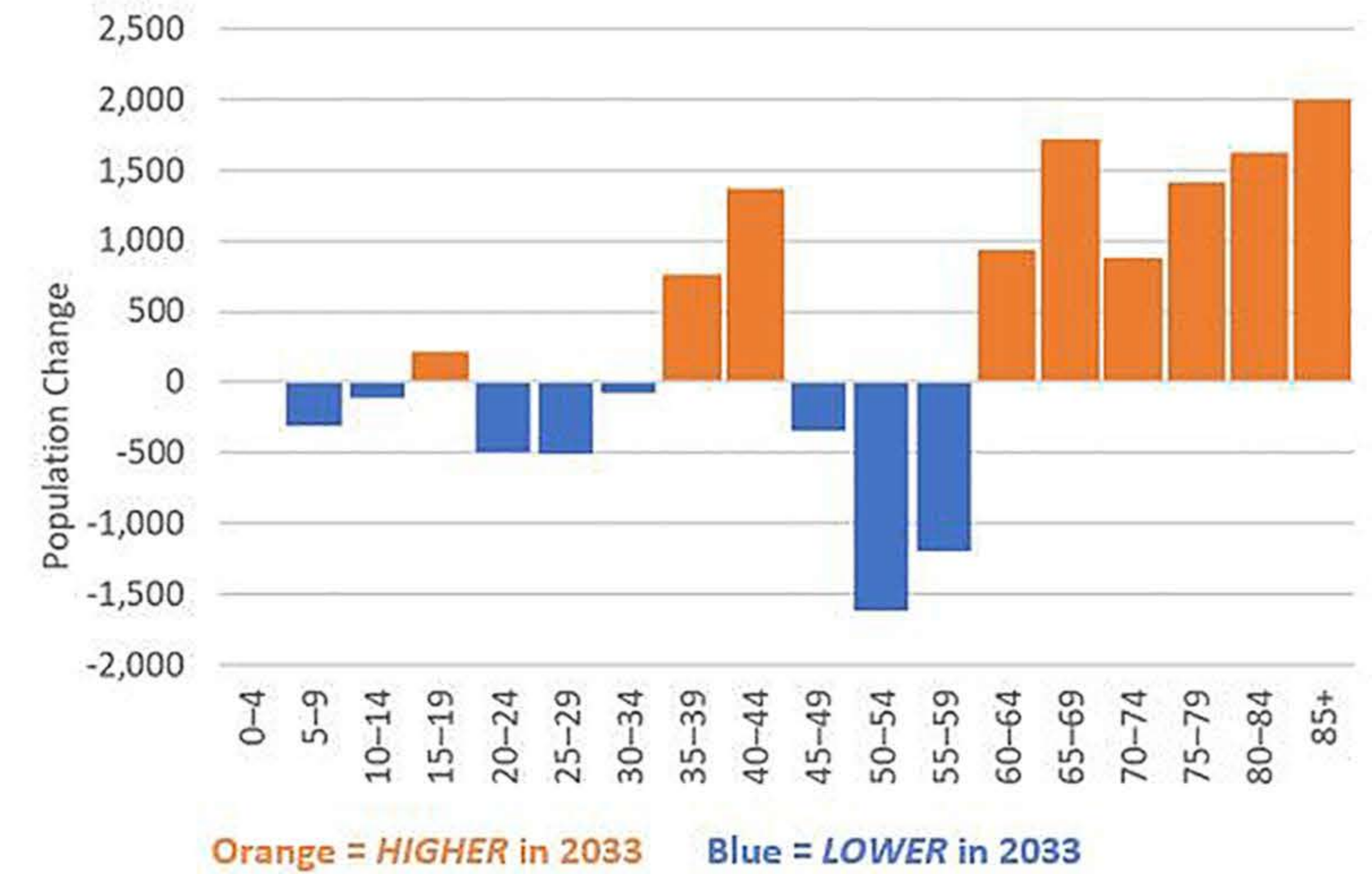


**3,975 Jobs**

## **Option 3: Welsh Government Principal Projection (with added policy assumptions)**

This is a demographic-led projection, which also replicates the Welsh Government 2018 population scenario as a starting point. This scenario however also adds an increase in household formation rates and a reduction in the commuting ratio. It also includes the affordable housing policy-led element.

**Population Growth / Decline by Age Group 2018-2033**



### **Pros:**

- Opportunities to secure some affordable housing and services / facilities.
- An overall declining in the working age population groups, although there is some growth in the 35 - 44 working age group.

### **Cons:**

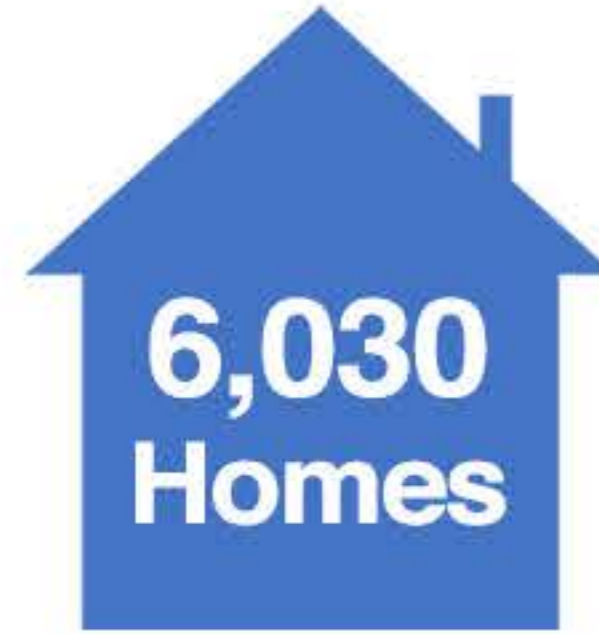
- Will fail to deliver a meaningful number of affordable homes.
- Continuation of a restricted supply of housing (thus further increase of house prices) and therefore unlikely to keep younger people within the County to live and work.
- Does not address the County's ageing demographic and will not deliver balanced sustainable communities.



**By 2033:**



**+ 10,641 people**



**6,030 Homes**

approx. 1,370 homes on new site allocations\*

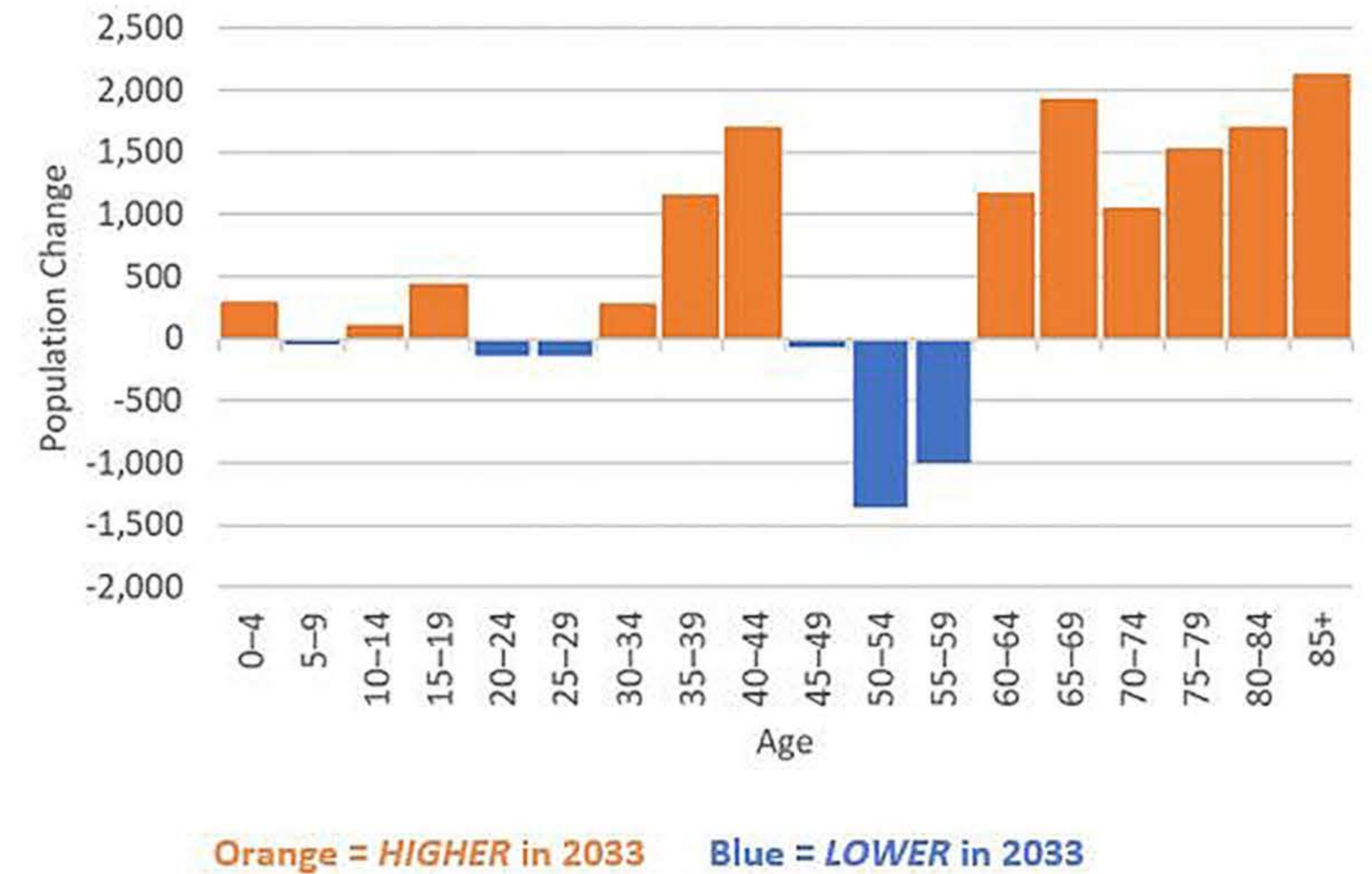


**5,460 Jobs**

## **Option 4: Dwelling-led** (based on housing completion rates)

This is a dwelling-led projection based on the last five years of housing completions, which gives an average annual dwelling growth of 310 dwellings per annum in Monmouthshire. It also includes the affordable housing policy-led element.

**Population Growth / Decline by Age Group 2018-2033**



### **Pros:**

- Further growth established in the working age groups (30 - 44).
- Opportunities to secure some affordable housing and infrastructure improvements.
- Opportunities to sustain services / facilities.
- This level of growth is known to be easily achievable based on past experience.

### **Cons:**

- Still remains a higher proportion of the older population living in the County and will not deliver balanced sustainable communities
- Not a meaningful amount of affordable housing provision.
- Not enough new dwellings to provide a range and choice of homes to address the County's affordability issues.
- Past build rates in Monmouthshire are a reflection of the amount of land released for housing rather than a reflection of need.



**By 2033:**



**+ 12,443 people**



**7,605  
Homes**

approx. 2,945 homes on  
new site allocations\*



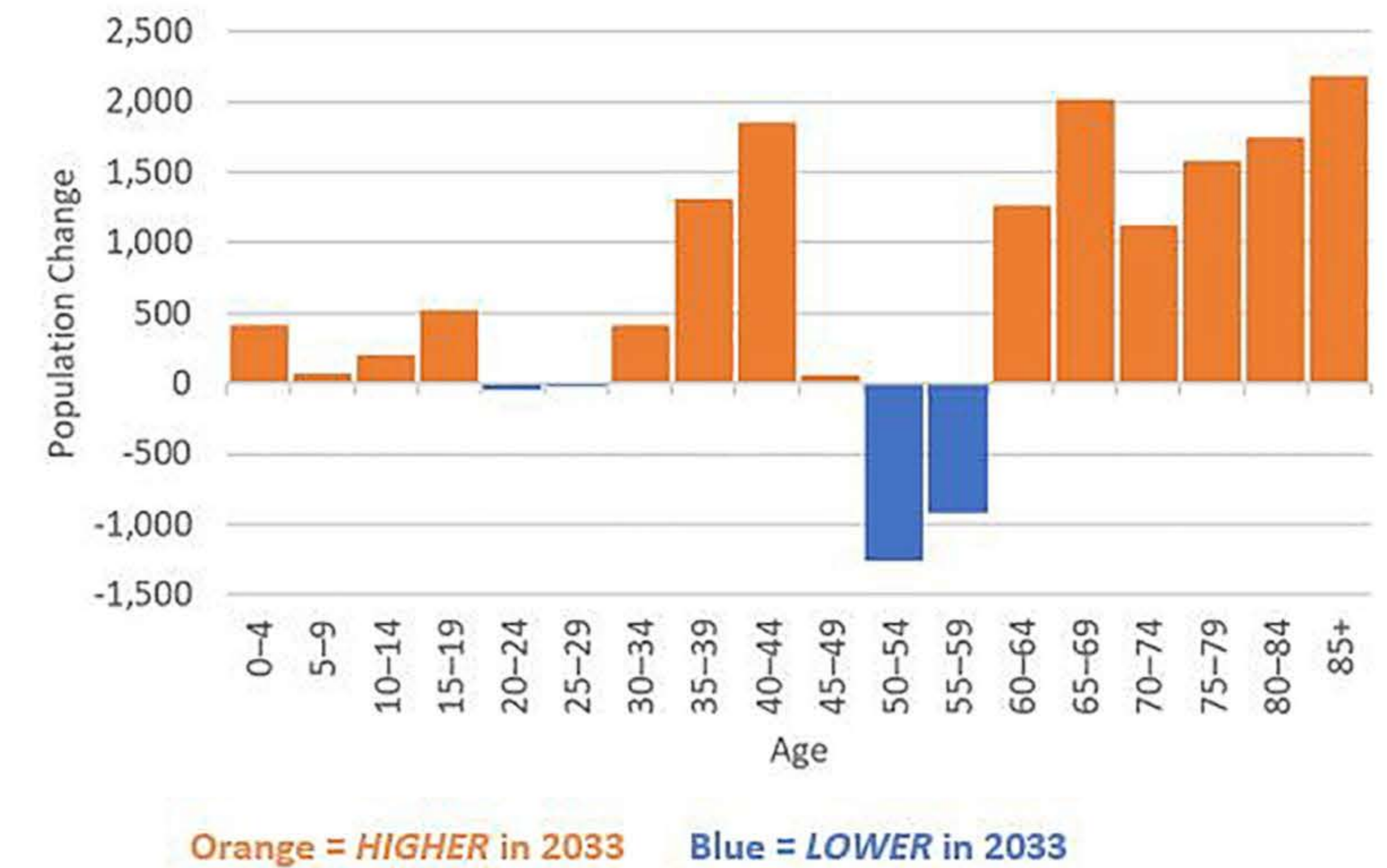
**7,215 Jobs**

## **Option 5: Population-led** (with added policy assumptions)

This is a demographic-led projection which adjusts in-migration rates to reflect local trends from the last 5 years (2015-20) to take into account the removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls. The scenario also adds the policy assumptions to increase household formation rates and a reduction of the commuting ratio. It also includes the affordable housing policy-led element.

**This is the Council's preferred option.**

**Population Growth / Decline by Age Group 2018-2033**



### **Pros:**

- Enables more balanced and sustainable communities in terms of demography that would meet the needs of and support both the urban and rural communities.
- Significant growth in the working age group (30-49) fuelling growth in employment provision.
- Opportunities to secure significant affordable housing.
- Opportunities to deliver a wider choice and housing mix of market homes suitable for the younger working age population group (smaller 2 / 3 bed homes).
- Opportunities to secure infrastructure improvements.
- Opportunities to sustain services / facilities.

### **Cons:**

- Increased pressure on Monmouthshire's infrastructure and natural environment.
- Challenges in reducing climate change impact but opportunities to design for carbon neutral development.
- Challenges in meeting the level of job growth due to the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit but opportunities for Monmouthshire to strengthen its economic base through The Council's 'Economies of the future' strategy and opportunities for increased remote/home working.



**By 2033:**



**+17,403 people**



**9,060 Homes**

approx. 4,400 homes on new site allocations\*

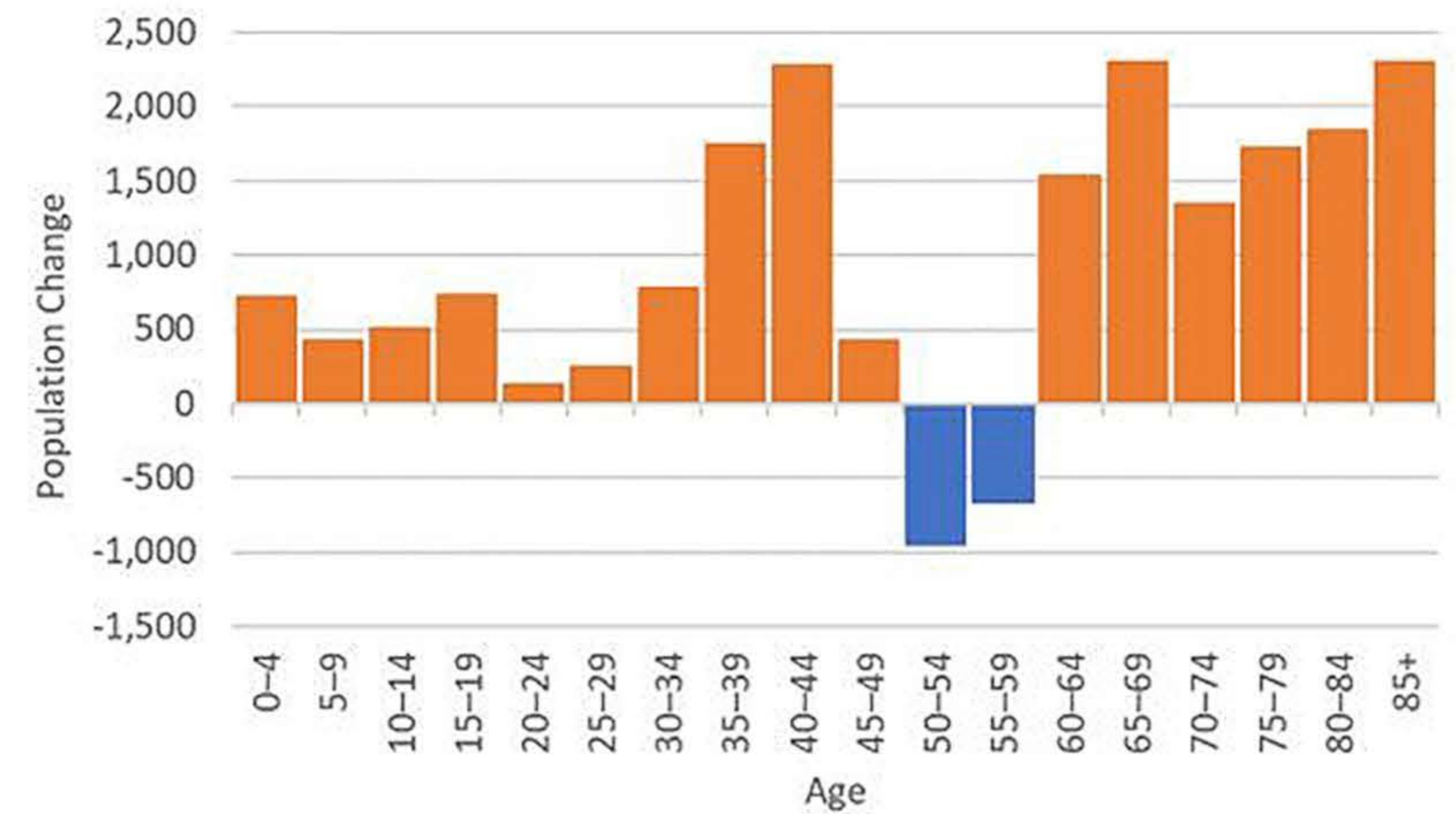


**9,630 Jobs**

## **Option 6: Employment-led** (with added policy assumptions)

This is an employment-led projection based on recognised economic forecasts. This particular scenario uplifts Monmouthshire's past economic growth rate in line with Monmouthshire's ambition to grow economically. A policy assumption has been added to reduce the commuting ratio. The scenario also includes the affordable housing policy led element.

**Population Growth / Decline by Age Group 2018-2033**



Orange = HIGHER in 2033    Blue = LOWER in 2033

### **Pros:**

- Significant growth established in the working age people groups (25- 49) making the County more attractive to investors and employers fuelling growth in employment provision.
- A more balanced demography.
- High level of job creation combined with a reduction in the commuting level resulting in an increased amount of employment generated for the residents of the County and more sustainable travel patterns.
- Opportunities to secure significant affordable housing.
- Opportunities to secure infrastructure improvements.
- Opportunities to sustain services / facilities.

### **Cons:**

- There is greater ambiguity around the effects of 'employment-led' scenarios due to uncertainty associated with economic forecasts.
- Challenges in meeting the level of job growth due to the uncertainty surrounding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit but opportunities for Monmouthshire to strengthen its economic base through The Council's 'Economies of the future' strategy and opportunities for increased remote/home working
- High level of dwelling growth is challenging and may be unachievable so benefits from this option may not come to fruition.
- Increased pressure on Monmouthshire's infrastructure and natural environment.
- Challenges in reducing climate change impact but opportunities to design for low carbon or carbon neutral development.



# The Different Spatial Options

As well as considering choices for the level of growth the RLDP will also need to consider where the growth should be distributed across the County. Four different spatial options are being considered. These are:

## Spatial Option 1: Continuation of the existing LDP Strategy

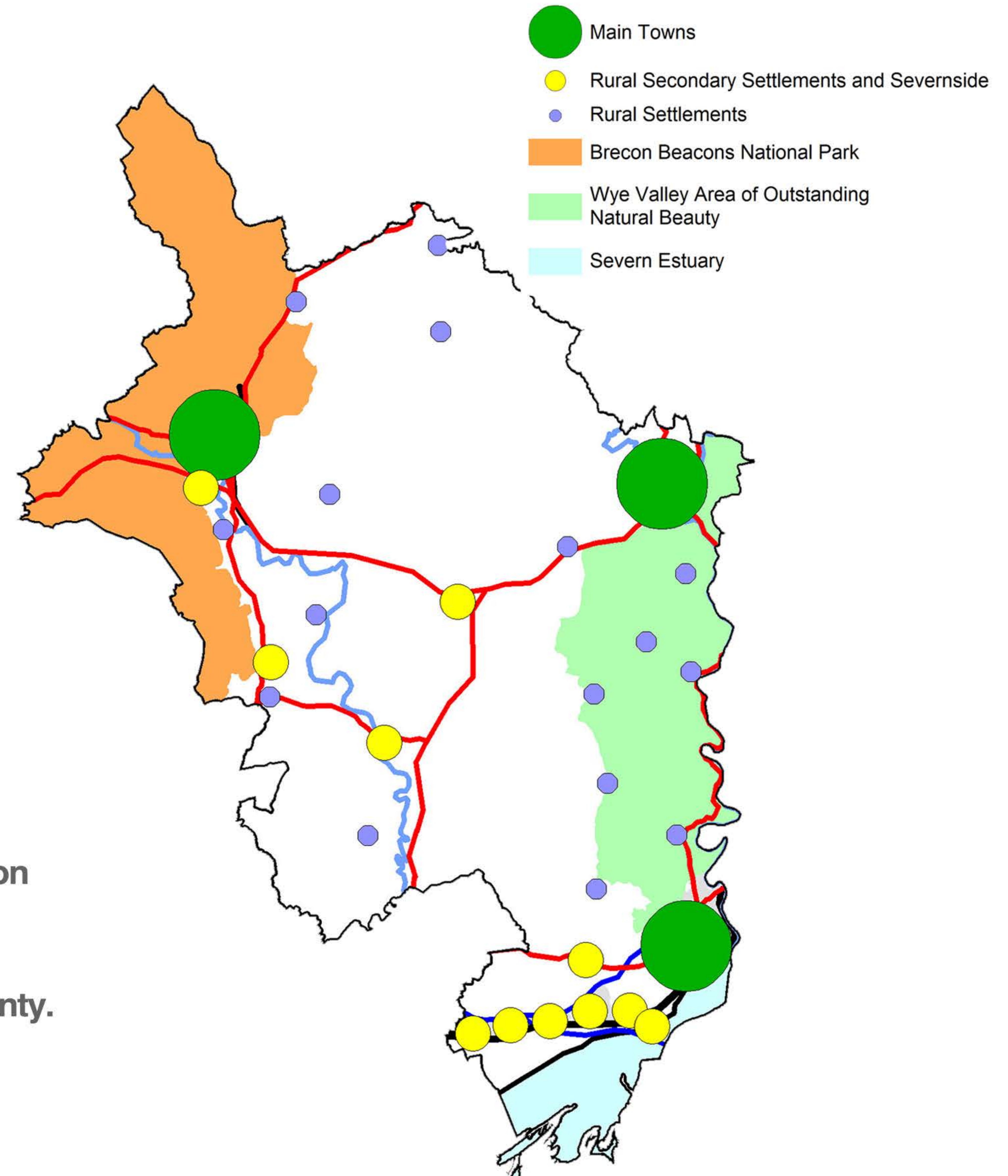
Follows the existing Adopted RLDP Strategy through to the Replacement LDP, which distributes development around the County. There would be a particular focus on Main Towns. New residential development would be accompanied by new employment opportunities, where possible.

### Pros:

- Provides growth in sustainable areas that have existing access to facilities, public transport links and employment opportunities.
- Would provide affordable housing across the Main Towns, rural secondary settlements, Severnside and some rural settlements.
- Would help support facilities in existing settlements, particularly in those rural areas where facilities are struggling / declining.

### Cons:

- The focus of development in the Main Towns will result in further pressure on the environment and infrastructure in these towns.
- The focus of growth in the Main Towns could disadvantage growth and provision of facilities within secondary and rural settlements within the County.
- The provision of employment opportunities together with residential developments has not been fulfilled in all of the Strategic Mixed Use Sites allocated in the adopted LDP.





## Spatial Option 2:

### Distribute Growth Proportionately across the County's most Sustainable Settlements \*

Growth, including jobs and affordable housing, would be distributed across the County's most sustainable settlements, with the level of growth proportionate to that settlement's size and amenities, affordable housing need as identified in the LHMA, the capacity for growth and/or the need for development to sustain the community.

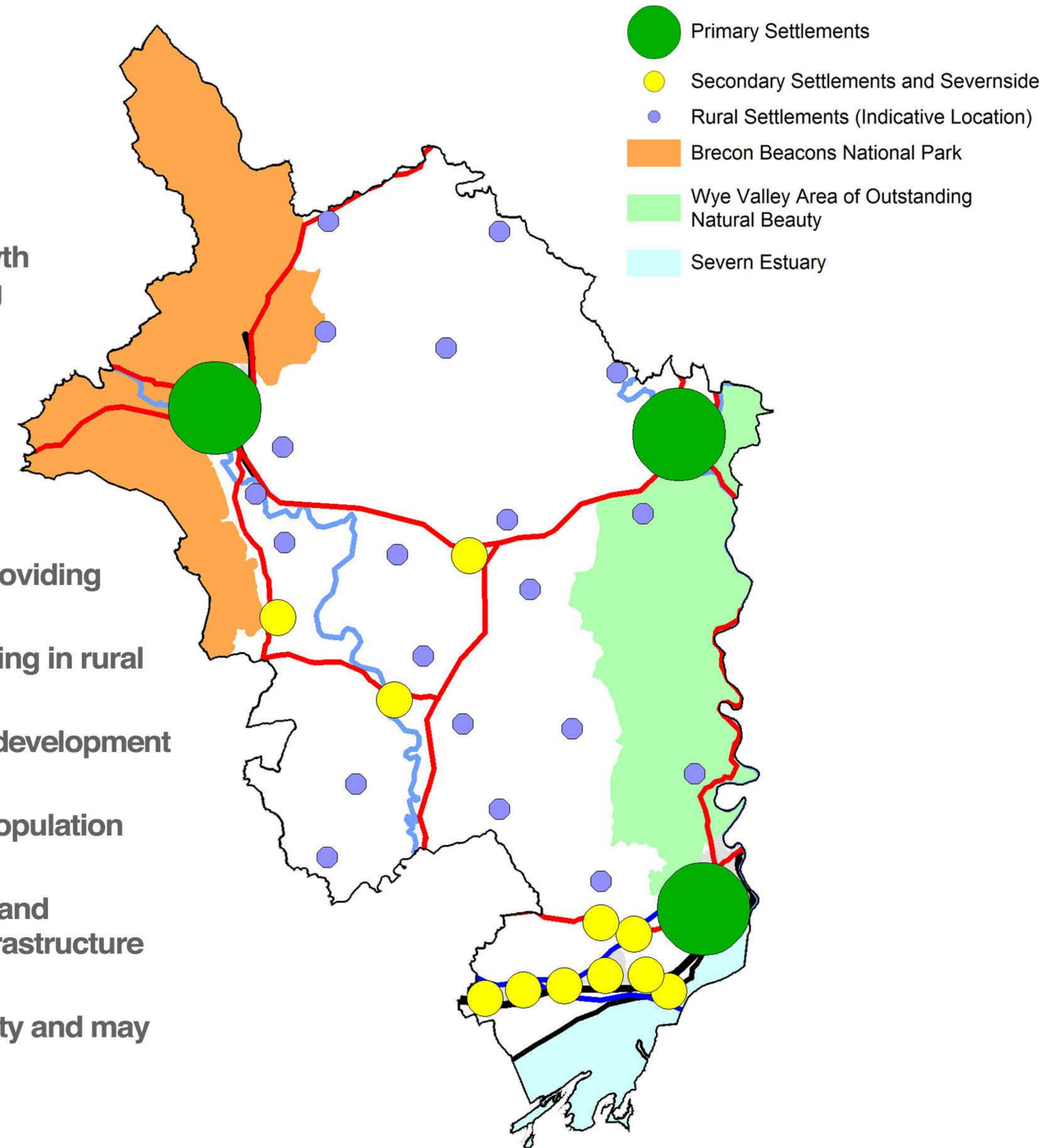
This is the Council's preferred option.

#### Pros:

- Provides growth in the most sustainable areas while at the same time providing opportunities for specific rural areas to become more sustainable.
- Would meet housing needs both market and affordable housing, including in rural areas where growth has been limited previously.
- Affordable housing would be provided in all housing market areas with development focused in identified sustainable settlements having the greatest need.
- Proportionate development would assist in ensuring a more balanced population throughout the County.
- Would utilise existing infrastructure, particularly in Primary Settlements and Severnside. Development will generate opportunities to provide new infrastructure and enhance existing infrastructure.
- Would help support existing facilities and services throughout the County and may also attract additional facilities.

#### Cons:

- Some rural areas could be disadvantaged as they would not all benefit from additional housing to help support existing facilities or attract additional facilities.
- Some of the most sustainable settlements currently have infrastructure capacity issues, which would need to be addressed to enable growth in these areas.



\* A Sustainable Settlement Appraisal will be published to inform the Preferred Strategy to identify Monmouthshire's most sustainable settlements. This will consider settlements in terms of their location, level of service provision, capacity and their role and function within the area.



## Spatial Option 3: Focus Growth on the M4 corridor

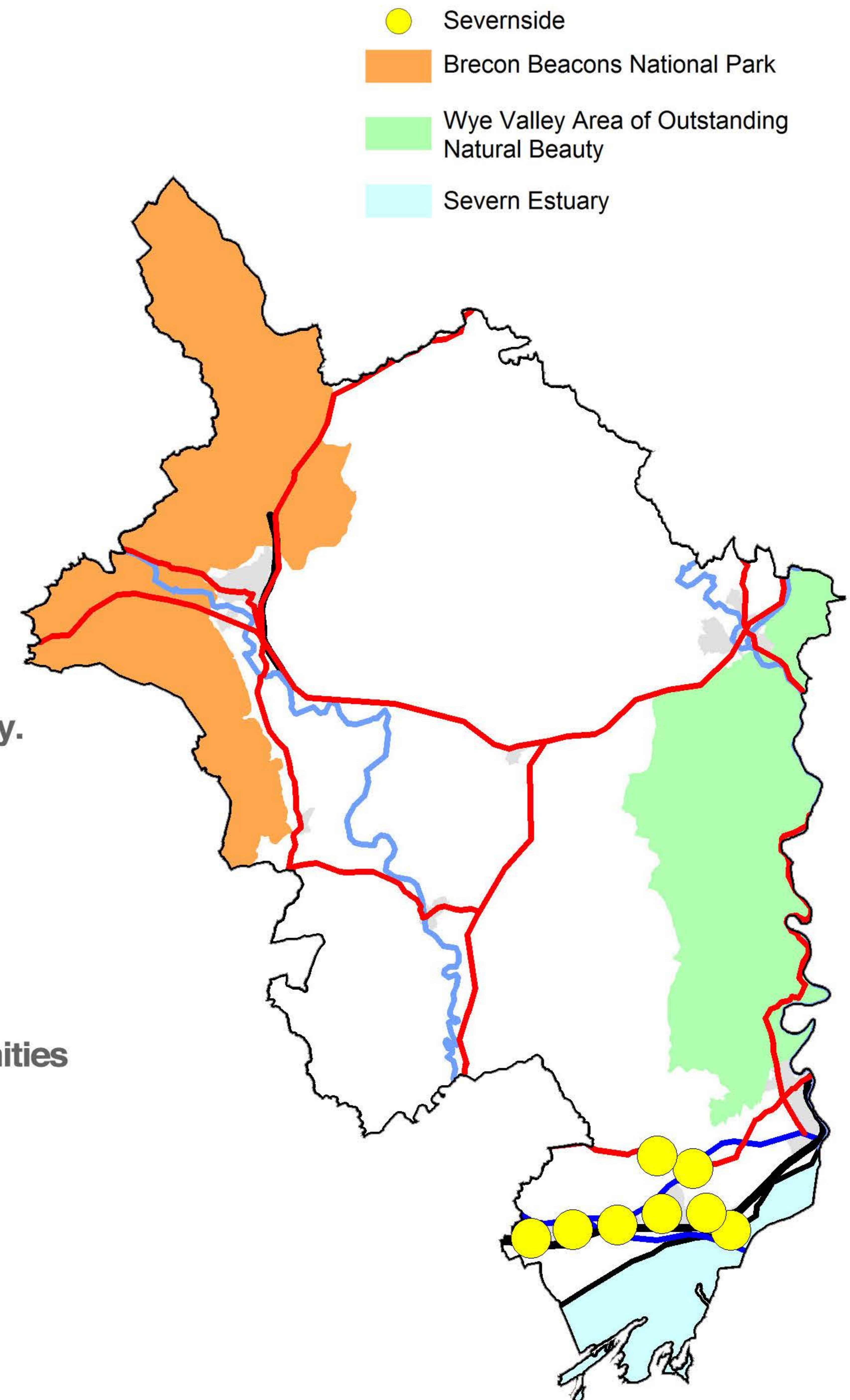
Growth to be predominantly located in the South of the County in the Severnside area close to the M4 / M48.

### Pros:

- Opportunity to capitalise on strategic rail and M4 links to the Cardiff Capital Region and South West England.
- Opportunity to link housing and employment growth due to the opportunities for choice and range of employment land.
- Opportunity to achieve infrastructure improvements in the South of the County.
- Less pressure on greenfield edge of settlement sites and higher grade agricultural land outside the Severnside area.

### Cons:

- Ignores the rest of the County and does not assist in sustaining rural communities across the County as a whole.
- Would not address market and affordable housing need across all Housing Market Areas.
- Would not assist in sustaining rural communities and would not support existing facilities or enable provision of additional facilities / infrastructure improvements outside the settlements in the South of Monmouthshire.





## Spatial Option 4: Focus Growth in the North of the County

Growth to be distributed across the most sustainable settlements within the North of the County.

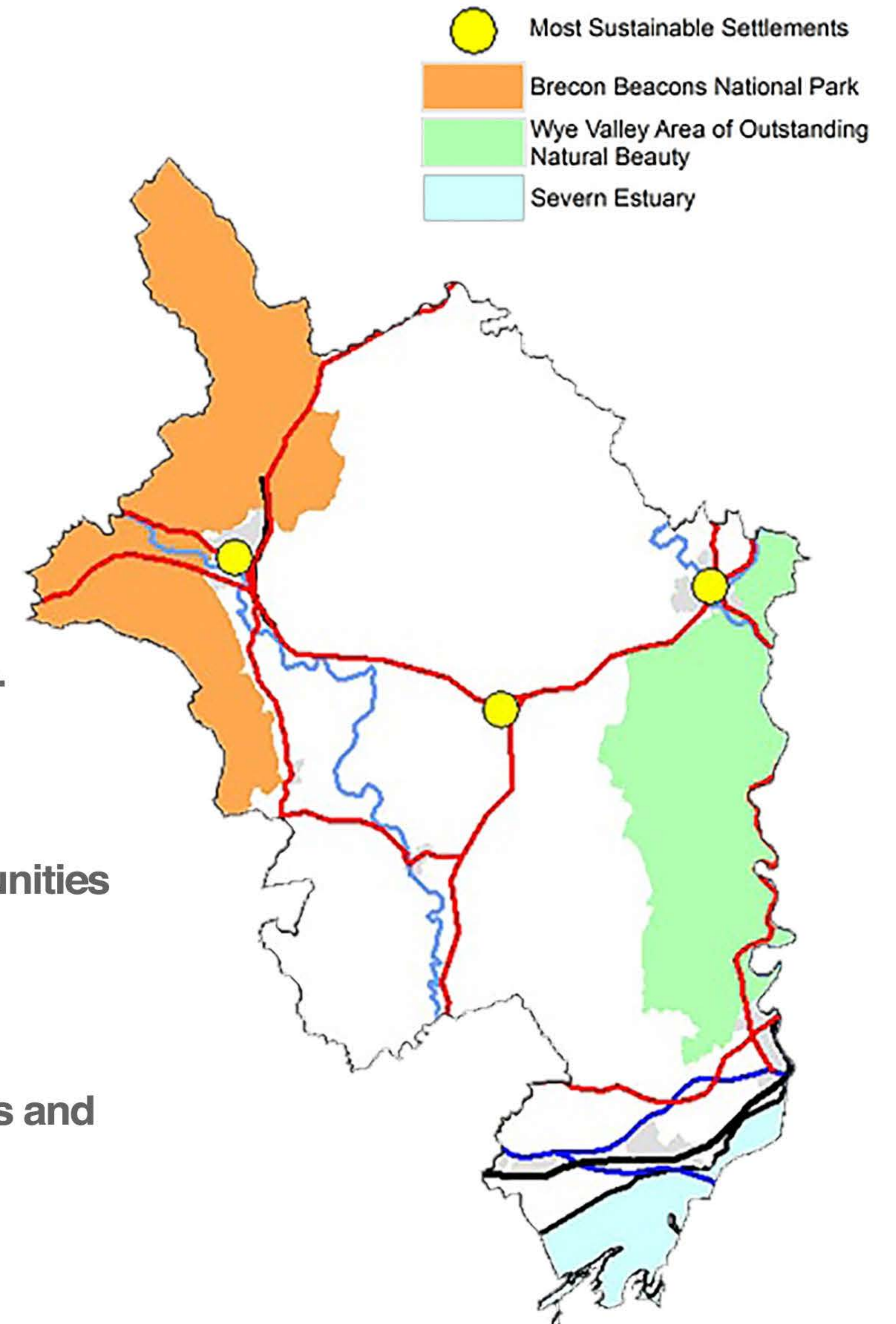
### Pros:

- Opportunity to capitalise on its strategic rail and road links to the Heads of the Valleys and wider Cardiff Capital Region via the A465, and towards Herefordshire via the A449 and A40.
- Potential to provide economic opportunities and increase levels of self-containment within the sustainable settlements of North Monmouthshire.

### Cons:

- Ignores the rest of the County and does not assist in sustaining rural communities across the County as a whole.
- Would not address market and affordable housing need across all Housing Market Areas.
- Would not support existing facilities or enable provision of additional facilities and infrastructure in areas outside North Monmouthshire.

To ensure that level of growth and where that growth will go is sustainable, all the Growth and Spatial options have been assessed against an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal.





# The Council's Preferred Growth and Spatial Options

## Option 5: Population-Led (with added policy assumptions)

By 2033:

+ 12,443 people

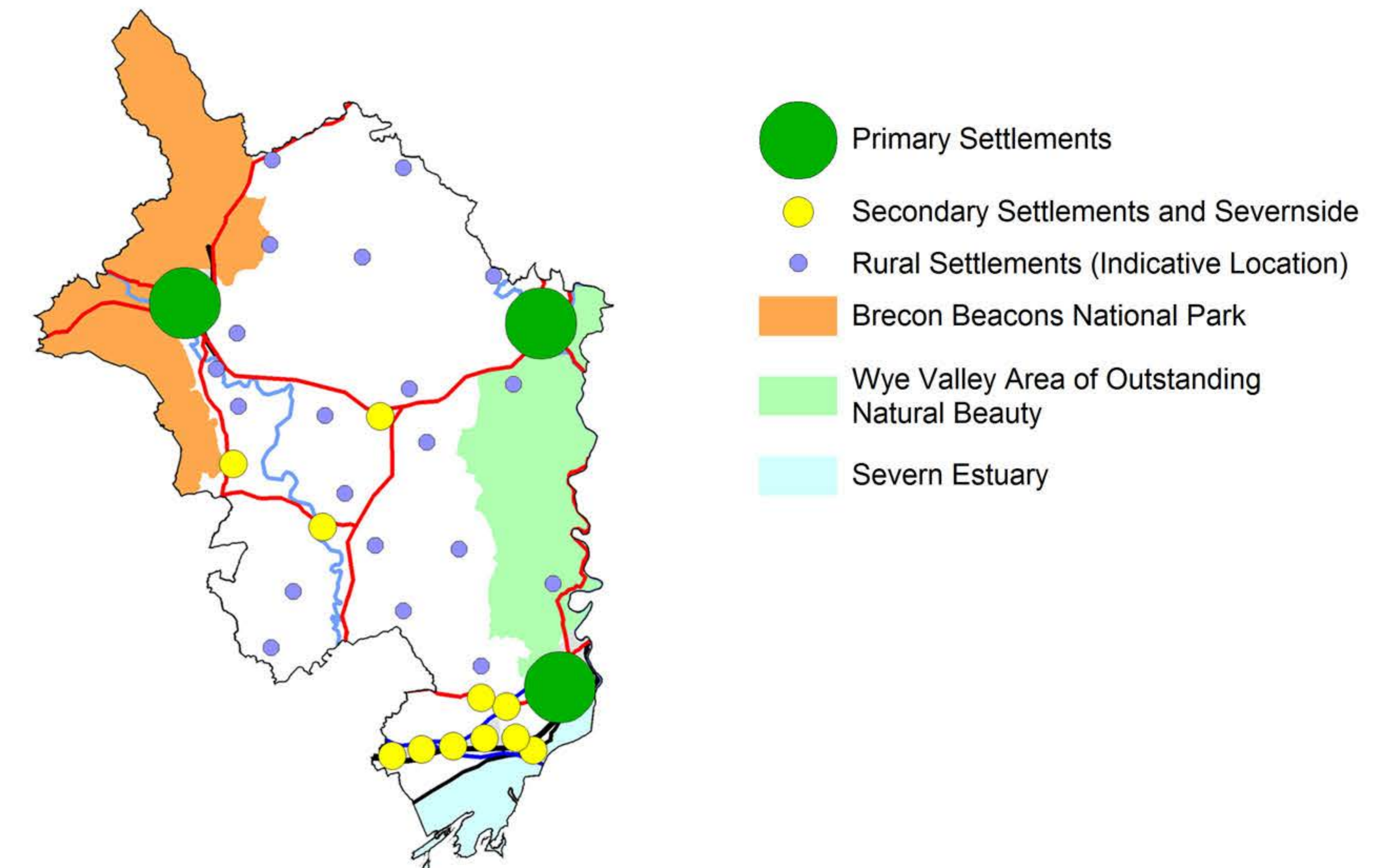
7,605 Homes  
approx. 2,945 homes on new site allocations\*

7,215 Jobs

This is the Council's preferred growth option because it has the potential to:

- Provide a level of growth that will help to deliver the Council's core purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities for current and future generations.
- Provide a wide choice of homes and secure a significant level of affordable homes.
- Assist in ensuring communities have a balanced population and are socially sustainable.
- Result in an increase in the working age population group, which would support job growth within the County.

## Spatial Option 2: Distribute Growth Proportionately across the County's most Sustainable Settlements



This is the Council's preferred spatial option because it has the potential to:

- Enable the provision of homes, both market and affordable throughout the County's most sustainable settlements, both urban and rural communities.
- Direct job growth to sustainable locations across the County, which will assist in reducing the need to out-commute and promote self-contained communities.
- Assist in ensuring a more balanced population throughout the County.



# Next Steps

Consultation and engagement on the Growth and Spatial Options will take place between **4<sup>th</sup> January** and **1<sup>st</sup> February 2021**.

We'd like to hear your thoughts and ideas on the growth and spatial options - how much do you think Monmouthshire should grow? And where should this growth go?

## Questions to think about:

- Do you agree with the Council's preferred Growth Option 5?
- What is your preferred growth option and why?
- How will this growth option address the issues Monmouthshire is facing?
  
- Do you agree with the Council's preferred Spatial Option 2?
- What is your preferred spatial option and why?
- How will this spatial option address the issues Monmouthshire is facing?



As part of the consultation process there will be webinar presentation events where there is opportunity to engage with Council Planning Officers. For further information of these events please visit the planning policy website:

[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-current-consultations](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/planning-policy-current-consultations)

For further detailed information please visit the 'Growth and Spatial Options Report' and Integrated Sustainability Appraisal of Strategic Options (ISAR) at: [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy)

To leave a consultation response and be fully updated on the process of the RLDP please register on the RLDP database. We encourage you to submit consultation comments direct onto the database which provides a portal to also view all representations submitted.

[www.monmouthshire.planning-register.co.uk](http://www.monmouthshire.planning-register.co.uk)

