

Monmouthshire County Council

Local Transport Plan

Policy and Legislation Context

Reference:

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1. Introduction

This report sets out the relevant legislation, policy and guidance, for the emerging Local Transport Strategy for Monmouthshire.

The study area lies in south east Wales directly adjacent to the border with England, and therefore both English and Welsh legislation and policy is relevant.

Monmouthshire County Council shares a boundary with Newport City Council, Torfaen County Borough Council, Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council and Powys County Council in Wales and the Forest of Dean District Council and Herefordshire Council in England. In addition to those local authority areas directly adjacent to Monmouthshire, the county also experiences high numbers of journeys made to and from South Gloucestershire and therefore the relevant plans of this local authority have also been presented in this summary of policy context.

Regional transport powers reside with the West of England Combined Authority, the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority and TraCC.

Monmouthshire is part of the Cardiff Capital Region and TraCC is the Joint Committee for the local authorities in Mid Wales within which Powys lies. Alongside Bristol and Bath and North East Somerset, South Gloucestershire forms part of the West of England Combined Authority.

The South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan sets the local context for transport services in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen as well as in Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. Similarly, the Mid Wales Joint Local Transport Plan covers in Powys as well as in Ceredigion and Gwynedd. The policy context for transport planning in Newport is set out in the Newport City Council Local Transport Plan.

As a two-tier authority, Gloucestershire County Council provide the transport services for the Gloucestershire area, within which Forest of Dean District Council lies. Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan 2016 – 2031 sets out the plan for the county's transport network.

2. National Legislative, Policy and Strategy Context

The following section sets out a review of the legislation, policy and strategy of relevance to the emerging Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan. The location of Monmouthshire's boundaries adjacent to administrations in both England and Wales means that the review covers relevant documents in both countries.

2.1 National Level Legislation and Policy – Wales

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, 2015

This 2015 Act¹ is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales with an overarching aim of creating a Wales we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals and advocates five ways of working as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1 Well-being Goals



The 2015 Act places a duty on public bodies in Wales and those listed in the Act to work to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. To help do this they must set and publish well-being objectives and think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach².

The WelTAG guidance requires the consideration of the well-being goals and ways of working throughout appraisal.

¹ <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

² <http://gov.wales/topics/people-and-communities/people/future-generations-act/?lang=en>

Environment (Wales) Act, 2016

Enacted in 2016 by the National Assembly for Wales, the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 provides an iterative framework that ensures managing natural resources sustainably will be a core consideration in decision-making. Natural Resources Wales are the principal organisational body to help deliver the aims of the Act and are required to prepare a number of documents, which include:

- State of Natural Resources Report;
- National Natural Resources Policy; and
- Area Statements.

The Act also includes provisions to tackle climate change, through statutory emission reduction targets and carbon budgeting to support their delivery.

Active Travel (Wales) Act, 2013

Enacted in 2013 by the National Assembly for Wales, the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 makes it a legal requirement for local authorities in Wales to map and plan for suitable routes for active travel, and to build and improve their infrastructure for walking and cycling every year.

It creates new duties for highways authorities to consider the needs of walkers and cyclists and make better provision for them. It also requires both the Welsh Government and local authorities to promote walking and cycling as a mode of transport so that local communities rely less on cars when making short journeys.

Future Wales – The National Plan 2040 (Welsh Government, 2021)

Future Wales: The National Plan sets out the planning framework for Wales over the next 20 years. The plan places a focus on the promotion of sustainable development in response to the predicted changes in population, the way we work and the way we travel.

Future Wales is a spatial plan and therefore outlines the direction for investment in infrastructure and development which is for the benefit of Wales and its population. It is stated new development and infrastructure should be complementary to ensure maximum benefits are achieved. The plan is the highest tier of development plan within Wales and therefore focuses on solutions to issues and challenges at a national scale with strategic and local development plans being required to conform with the plan.

The plan is informed by and is set out to reflect the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations Act. The plan promotes development that contributes to achieving the seven wellbeing goals and improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It is stated that planning authorities should support improvements to connectivity within and between rural settlements and should identify stronger strategic transport links between rural areas and larger towns and cities for mutual economic benefit.

Policies 11 and 12 of the plan sets out the strategic approach to national and regional connectivity and outline the Welsh Government's commitment to delivering more active travel and sustainable infrastructure. It is stated that the Welsh Government will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities, operators and partners to deliver the following measures to improve regional connectivity:

- **Active Travel** – Prioritising walking and cycling for all local travel, including supporting the implementation of the Active Travel Act to create comprehensive networks of local walking and cycling routes that connect places that people need to get to for everyday purposes.
- **Bus** – Improve the legislative framework for how local bus services are planned and delivered, invest in the development of integrated regional and local bus networks to increase modal share of bus travel and improve access by bus to a wider range of trip destinations.
- **Metros** – Develop the South East Metro, South West Metro and North Wales Metro to create new integrated transport systems that provide faster, more frequent and joined-up services using trains, buses and light rail.
- **Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles** – Supporting the roll-out of suitable fuelling infrastructure to facilitate the adoption of ultra-low emission vehicles, particularly in rural areas.

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 12 (Welsh Government, 2024)

The twelfth edition of PPW sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. PPW edition 12 has an aim to ensure the planning system contributed to the delivery of sustainable development, and improves social, economic, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of Wales. Within PPW, sustainable development is defined as “the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the well-being goals.”

PPW states the most effective way to secure sustainable development through the planning system is through a plan-led approach. Therefore, it is essential that plans are adopted and kept under review. Section 2 of PPW also states that sustainable places are the goal of the land-use planning system in Wales, with a focus on maximising well-being and creating such sustainable places through placemaking.

Placemaking is emphasised as a key component within planning and urges incorporation at the earliest possible stage. It is defined as “draw[ing] upon an area’s potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people’s prosperity, health, happiness and well-being in the widest sense”. The understanding is that placemaking involves consideration beyond the context of the development site and into the wider surroundings.

Section 4 of PPW states an element of placemaking is active and social places. “Active and Social Places are those which promote our social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being by providing well-connected cohesive communities”. To help create active and social places, it is stated that movement through walking, cycling, and public transport should be prioritised to provide a choice of transport modes and reduce the dependence on private vehicles. Active travel routes, public transport stations and stops promote more movement when positively integrated. In addition, Section 4.1.6 states local authorities should set out in their development plan, an integrated planning and transport strategy to demonstrate how the authority will reduce dependency on vehicles and facilitate the provision of transport infrastructure and necessary sustainable transport improvements and development.

PPW edition 12 Section 6 states green infrastructure is fundamental in shaping places and the sense of wellbeing. In addition, green infrastructure is intrinsic to the quality of the spaces people live, work and play in. To ensure development contributes to the protection and provision of green infrastructure assets and networks, PPW edition 12 introduces the need for a Green Infrastructure Assessment. Green Infrastructure Assessments provide evidence to support the preparation of plans and should be undertaken as part of development plan preparation. Furthermore, Green Infrastructure Assessments should consider how benefits can be delivered through green infrastructure and must address the reduction of pollution as far as possible, the climate emergency by ensuring multi-function benefits are provided, and the health and wellbeing of communities.

Net Zero Wales

A series of statutory 5-year carbon budgets have been established for Wales to define the pathway to meet the national net zero 2050 target. ‘Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales’ (2019) was the Welsh Government’s first of its series of plans to address the carbon budget from 2016-2020.

Current policy relating to the achievement of net zero is set out in the ‘Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25)’ (2021). The document sets out 123 policies and proposals for meeting Carbon Budget 2 which requires a 37% average reduction with a 0% offset limit. Modelling projects that the targets of Carbon Budget 2 will be met for 2025 and an overall 44% reduction against the 1990 baseline is expected.

Net Zero Strategic Plan (Welsh Government, 2022)

Net Zero Wales sets an ambition for the Welsh public sector to reach the net zero target by 2030. The strategic milestones for achieving this goal are provided in the Net Zero Carbon Status by 2030 Road Map (2021). The Public Sector Net Zero Reporting Guide (2023) sits alongside the Road Map to guide consistent measuring and understanding of the Welsh public sector’s carbon emissions. It also supports the preparation of decarbonisation action plans for the sector.

The Welsh Government’s strategic approach, to the declared climate emergency, as an important public sector employer, is detailed in the Net Zero Strategic Plan (2022). The aim of achieving net zero by 2030 is

central to the plan which includes 54 initiatives to provide the foundation for progress towards this aim. The plan also brings together evidence from across the Welsh Government to outline priority decarbonisation initiatives, which include those relating to building and infrastructure (incorporating transport infrastructure), the public sector's corporate fleet and business travel).

Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy (Welsh Government, 2021)

Llwybr Newydd: The Wales Transport Strategy 2021 sets out the Welsh Government's vision priorities for Wales to create a more prosperous, green and equal society. The strategy sets out the short-term priorities and long-term ambitions including nine mini plans which explain how the Welsh Government will deliver the priorities for different transport modes and sectors.

Llwybr Newydd requires governments, local authorities, transport providers and other policy areas to work together to help ensure transport contributes to the current and future wellbeing of Wales.

Llwybr Newydd's vision is to create an accessible, sustainable and efficient transport system and the priorities for the next five years include;

- Priority 1: Bring services to people in order to reduce the need to travel;
- Priority 2: Allow people and goods to move easily from door to door by accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure; and
- Priority 3: Encourage people to make the change to more sustainable transport

The short-term priorities will contribute to the four long-term, well-being ambitions over the next twenty years. The ambitions are to be:

1. Good for people and communities
2. Good for the environment
3. Good for places and the economy; and
4. Good for culture and the Welsh Language

The ambitions show how Wales wants transport to contribute to the wider Welsh Government ambitions and to the goals in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

To adapt to a changing climate, the strategy highlights existing transport infrastructure should be maintained and well managed, and if needed, upgraded to support modal shift. Where new transport infrastructure is necessary, the sustainable transport hierarchy should be used which is to prioritise the use of walking and cycling, followed by public transport, ultra-low emissions vehicles and other private motor vehicles.

National Transport Delivery Plan 2022 to 2027 (Welsh Government, 2023)

The Delivery Plan sets out the programmes, projects and policies identified by the Welsh Government to deliver the Wales Transport Strategy up to 2027. A number of high-level, overarching measures are included to support the implementation of the Strategy over the five-year plan period. These relate to the management of the National Transport Delivery Plan, integrating journey planning and ticketing, behavioural changes, active travel, bus and rail. Programmes and individual projects identified within the Delivery Plan of most relevance to the transport and accessibility in Monmouthshire and the emerging Local Transport Plan are as follows:

- SWML 1 - South Wales Mainline Strategic Development.
- SWML 2 - Additional Stations (5) between Cardiff and Severn Tunnel Junction.
- SWML 4 - Swansea - Severn Tunnel Junction capacity improvements.

- SWM8 - Metro Enhancement Framework Corridor Studies (including Newport – Chepstow & Eastern Valleys Corridor study; Newport – Chepstow & Eastern Valleys Corridor Development; Newport – Chepstow & Eastern Valleys Corridor outline design; and Newport – Chepstow & Eastern Valleys Corridor Phased Delivery).
- SRN 6g - M4 sustainable transport studies to support modal shift, aligned to tests set out in the Welsh Government’s response to the Roads Review.
- SRN 7g - M4 safety and resilience studies, aligned to tests set out in the Welsh Government's response to the Roads Review.

Programme for Government 2021-2026 - Update (Welsh Government, 2021)

In December 2021 the Welsh Government published their updated Government programme to reflect the co-operation agreement reached with Plaid Cymru. The updated programme sets out ten objectives with an accompanied wellbeing statement which sets out how these objectives will be used to maximise the governments contribution to Wales’ seven well-being goals. Each objective is accompanied by the individual steps the Welsh Government proposes to take and have been set in accordance with the sustainable development principle and the five ways of working set out in the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Objectives include building a stronger and greener economy and maximising the progress towards decarbonisation in addition to embedding our response to the climate and nature emergency in everything we do. Areas of action include working towards the new target of 45% of journeys by sustainable modes by 2040 and Commission independent advice that will examine potential pathways to net zero by 2035.

The updated programme outlines a number of minister commitments which deliver on a range of activities that sit in individual portfolios. Of most pertinence to the emerging transport plan is the portfolio of climate change where activities include:

- Give Transport for Wales new powers to better integrate rail, bus and active travel;
- Invest in travel options that encourage public transport and support walking and cycling;
- Work with Transport for Wales and local authorities to strengthen the promotion of walking and cycling;
- Support innovative new social enterprise schemes such as bike maintenance repair cafes and bike recycling schemes;
- Develop new Active Travel Integrated Network Maps; and
- Work with schools to promote Active Travel and Road Safety.

One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket: Planning Buses as a Public Service for Wales (Welsh Government, 2022)

The ‘One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket’ white paper was published by Welsh Government in March 2022 for consultation until June 2022. The paper is focused around creating a bus system dedicated to providing the best possible service to the public. This can be expressed as a bus system which is governed and designed to serve the public interest, with the widest possible geographic coverage, fully integrated connections between different services, the highest possible service frequencies, and simple unified easy-to-use ticketing and information.

The white paper sets out the following over-arching aims:

- a bus system that is purposely designed to maximise the public good;
- a bus system that efficiently uses public investment to strategically address public priorities for bus improvements, thereby justifying greater public investment; and
- a bus system, which forms part of an integrated transport network that provides an excellent travel option, wherever people need it, whenever people need it, throughout Wales.

To provide an excellent travel option for people in the long term, the paper sets out the need for:

- a comprehensive network of bus routes to serve the widest feasible range of destinations, both at busy times and less busy times in the evenings and Sundays.
- coordinated timetables for bus-bus connections and bus connections with all other modes of public transport.
- simple area-wide fares, valid across all bus routes and on all modes of public transport.

Climate Emergency (Welsh Government, 2019)

In April 2019, the Welsh Government declared a climate emergency in Wales to draw attention to the magnitude and significance of the latest evidence from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Following this, the UK Parliament declared a climate emergency in May 2019.

Welsh Government has expressed their hope that the declaration could help to trigger a wave of action at all levels and stated that tackling climate change requires collective action and that the government has a central role to making collective action possible. The statement refers to the Welsh Government's previously set targets in 2017, reaffirming the commitment to achieving a carbon neutral public sector by 2030.

In May 2019, Monmouthshire declared a climate emergency which mandated that the council would reduce its net carbon emissions to zero by 2030. The RLDP states that the reliance on the motor car and patterns of long travel to work distances are key issues that need to be considered as part of efforts to reduce carbon emissions within the Monmouthshire context.

As part of its commitment to becoming net zero by 2030, the council has prepared a Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan (2021). The objectives set out in the plan include those relating to emissions from transport. These are to:

- Reduce the impact of vehicles and encourage the use of electric and hydrogen vehicles.
- Encourage and make it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive.
- Encourage people to use public transport rather than cars.

2.2 National Level Objectives and Strategies – UK-wide and England

National Infrastructure Strategy (HM Treasury, 2020)

The National Infrastructure Strategy sets out plans to transform UK infrastructure. Within this Strategy, the UK Government sets out its intentions to level up communities and nations across the UK through investment in rural areas, towns and cities. The UK Government also sets out how bold action is needed in order for the UK to meet its net zero emissions target by 2050.

Funding commitments include an investment of £1.3 billion in charging infrastructure to accelerate the mass adoption of electric vehicles and putting £5 billion into buses and cycling.

The strategy also highlights the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic upon infrastructure and the UK Government states that it will work to understand the longer-term effects the pandemic may have on UK infrastructure, and the implications for policy. This includes predictions of more working from home in the future and an increase in cycling in the long-term.

Road Investment Strategy 2 (RIS 2) (2020 – 2025) (Department for Transport and Highways England, 2020)

The RIS 2 establishes a long-term strategic vision for the Strategic Road Network. It sets out the performance standards that Highways England must meet, lists planned enhancement schemes and sets out the funding availability between 2020 and 2025. The vision is based on the Strategic Road Network forming the main framework for economic growth, and that this will form an integral part of a wider transport network where a variety of modes of transport are attractive for both for work and leisure travel.

RIS 2 recognises that the Strategic Road Network, and how this has grown in the past, has affected the environment, air quality and communities surrounding this. Central Government recognise that there is a need to fix those negative impacts through a series of strategies, including: ‘The Road to Zero’, ‘Clean Air, Clean Growth’ and the ‘Transport Decarbonisation Plan’.

Continued investment in the Strategic Road Network, alongside schemes within these strategies and decarbonising vehicles to achieve zero-emissions, it is considered necessary to ensure that the road network is ready to meet these needs. The Strategy sets out ring-fenced funds for investment in measures to improve environmental outcomes, such as through the Environment and Wellbeing Fund, User and Communities Fund and the Innovation and Modernisation Fund.

Two schemes are listed which are geographically adjacent to Monmouthshire, within Bristol and South Gloucestershire. These are:

- M49 Avonmouth Junction ‘Open for Traffic’ Scheme: This includes the creation of a new junction on the M49 to support development at Avonmouth and has now been completed.
- Severn Resilience package ‘RIS3 Pipeline’ Scheme: This is a scheme that Highways English will develop during RP2, which may be considered for RP3. This will likely to include gathering views from stakeholders and local people who might be affected by any potential future proposals and the extent to which proposal can support ambitious development.

Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain (Department for Transport, 2021)

The plan sets out the Government’s approach to decarbonising the transport system in the UK. This includes commitments, actions and timings for the decarbonisation of all forms of transport. Measures set out include increasing walking and cycling; supporting the adoption of zero emission buses and coaches; decarbonising the railways; supporting the uptake of zero emissions cars, vans, motorcycles and scooters; and accelerating maritime and aviation decarbonisation.

Network Rail Railway Upgrade Plan (2019 – 2024) (Network Rail, 2022)

Network Rail, as the arms-length body of the Department for Transport and regulated by the Office of Rail and Road, has produced the Network Rail Railway Upgrade Plan (2019 – 2024), which sets out schemes that aim to improve the reliability of the railway and make further intervention to remove bottlenecks. Mega projects of relevance to the Monmouthshire area include:

- Cardiff area signalling renewal scheme, which is to deliver significant performance improvements and unlock infrastructure capacity.
- Modernisation of the South Wales mainline to deliver new modern trains, provide more seats and better journeys for passengers travelling between South Wales, Thames Valley and London.
- Improvements to Bristol Parkway station, which as part of the 7.5 billion Great Western route modernisation project, includes £50m spent on station improvements including a new platform at Bristol Parkway.
- Bristol area re-signalling to double tracks from two to four into Bristol Temple Meads at Filton Bank to enable more frequent services from Bristol to London from 2019.

Within the Control Period 6 Delivery Plan Update (2020) for Wales and West³, schemes in and around the Monmouthshire area include:

- Supporting TfW's £5bn plan to transform rail services, with increased capacity, new rolling stock and improvements to stations across the network. This will include the transfer of the Core Valley Lines infrastructure to TfW.
- Improvements which focussed on delivery of punctuality, and improving resilience, reliability and reducing delays in South West Wales. This will include installing new pumps at Sudbrook pumping station which serves the Severn Tunnel.
- In the Western area, this has included continued works on the electrification from Cardiff to east of Chippenham; working with the West of England Combined Authority (and North Somerset) on the development of MetroWest phase one and two; alongside continued improvements to Bristol Temple Meads.

Central Government Strategies

UK Government has set out a range of relevant national strategies seeking to deliver positive change across sectors including transport. These include:

- The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution (Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, 2020): The Plan demonstrates a significant commitment to tackling greenhouse gases by bringing together ambitious policies and significant new public investment, while seeking to mobilise private investment. The points include driving the growth of low carbon hydrogen, accelerating the shift to zero emission vehicles, green public transport, cycling and walking and investing in carbon capture, usage and storage.
- Clear Air Strategy (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, 2019): This strategy sets out the aim to reduce particulate matter emissions by 30% by 2020, and by 46% by 2030. Whilst there is generally compliance with the concentration limit values set out in legislation, levels are above for NO_x. An air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide is therefore in place.
- 25-year Environment Plan (HM Government, 2018): The Plan makes a shift towards helping restore the natural world and tackle the effects of climate change. The Plan seeks to embed an 'environmental net gain' principle for development, including housing and infrastructure, and valuing natural capital.
- Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener (BEIS, 2021): sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet 2050 net zero targets.
- Road to Zero (Department for Transport, 2018): This sets out plans to enable an expansion of Green Infrastructure across the country, reduce zero emissions from vehicles already on the UK's roads and drive the uptake of zero emission cars, vans, and trucks. It is expected that by 2040, all new cars and vans will have zero carbon emissions and aim to achieve net zero transport emissions by 2050.
- Clean Growth Strategy (Department for BEIS, 2017): Developed as a strategy to inform the Industrial Strategy, key policies and proposals aim to accelerate clean growth and accelerate the shift to low carbon transport (currently 24% of UK Emissions).
- Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (Department for Transport, 2022): The strategy aims to double the level of cycling by 2025 and reverse the decline in walking. The Strategy aims to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorted journeys, or as part of a longer journey.

³ <https://cdn.networkrail.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/cp6-delivery-plan-update-wales-and-western.pdf>

2.3 Regional Policy Context

The following section of this review sets out relevant ambitions, objectives, problems, and schemes within the following pertinent areas:

- **Cardiff Capital Region:** As the transport authority for Monmouthshire with schemes emerging from the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the South Wales Metro.
- **Gloucestershire County Council:** As the transport authority for the Forest of Dean area, the adopted and emerging Local Transport Plan will be relevant to the study area.
- **West of England Combined Authority:** The West of England Combined Authority consists of Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset. The Combined Authority was awarded power over transport spending for South Gloucestershire in May 2017.
- **Pan-Severn Initiatives:** Given the strategically important location of Monmouthshire, it is also relevant to consider Pan-Severn / Severnside initiatives which could inform the identification of Scheme objectives or long-list schemes.

2.3.1 Regional Level: Cardiff Capital Region

Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (Cardiff Capital Region, 2016)

The Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) City Deal represents an agreement between the UK Government, Welsh Government and the ten local authorities across the South East Wales region. To enable the creation of 25,000 new jobs, the City Deal includes a £1.2 billion investment in Cardiff Capital Region's infrastructure through a 20-year Investment Fund. It also legislated for the creation of a non-statutory Regional Transport Authority to co-ordinate transport planning and investment – the Cardiff Capital Region Transport Authority.

The Transport Authority is responsible for: regional planning for the local transport network, overseeing the development of a South East Wales Metro, working with both Transport for Wales and Welsh Government to ensure objectives for transport investment are aligned.

Alongside the delivery of the South East Wales Metro scheme and the Valley Lines Electrification programme, the City Deal also seeks to boost the digital infrastructure within the Region area. The City Deal requests that the Cardiff Capital Region prioritise exploring the case for direct international connectivity and mobile infrastructure across 4G and 5G technologies.

South Wales Metro (Transport for Wales)

The South Wales Metro is an integrated public transport network that will make it easier for people to travel across the Cardiff Capital Region by transforming rail and bus services, as well as improving cycling and walking. As a key member of the Cardiff Capital Region, Monmouthshire will benefit from improvements which include electrifying around 170km of track, upgrading of stations including Abergavenny from April 2023 and Chepstow from April 2025⁴ and building at least five new stations in the Core Valleys.

In addition, improvements will include a new hourly service between Cardiff and Cheltenham via Chepstow from December 2022. Other schemes across the Cardiff Capital Region area include the removal of the pacer trains by December 2020, improving journey times and frequency from the head of each valley using new trains, eliminating diesel use trains on the Central Metro lines by 2024 and providing more seamless ticketing options.

As part of the South Wales Metro Programme for Capital Transport Grants (2019 – 2020), an additional 150-200 space Park & Ride facility on the south side of Severn Tunnel Junction⁵ station has been considered. There is currently a substantial shortfall of spaces, which creates problems within the existing car park and nearby streets.

⁴ <https://trc.cymru/whats-happening-south-east-wales>

⁵ <https://www.cardiffcapitalregion.wales/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/appendix-7-ltf-19-20-certa-metro-programme-final-draft.pdf>

2.3.2 Regional Level: Draft Gwent Public Services Board Well-being Plan (Gwent Public Services Board, 2022)

The Gwent Public Services Board covers the local authorities of Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport, Monmouthshire and Torfaen. The Public Services Board has undertaken a Well-being Assessment to investigate how to improve well-being for the area. This assessment found evidence of inequality and deprivation in the communities and identified the need to take action on the climate and nature emergencies given that they are impacting on well-being in the area.

The findings of the assessment have been used to prepare a draft Well-being Plan for Gwent. The plan sets out a number of objectives with steps described to support the achievement of each:

- To create a fair and equitable Gwent for all.
 - By reducing the gap in the number of years lived in good health between the most and least deprived communities in Gwent
 - By ensuring that communities feel empowered, healthy and safe.
 - By creating equitable opportunities in education and by reducing the gaps in achievement.
 - By reducing the impacts of child poverty.
 - By improving low and no carbon transport links that enable access to employment, education, culture and leisure.
 - By supporting the creation of meaningful employment and training opportunities that enable everyone to receive fair pay for the work they do.
 - By working with housing providers and other stakeholders to ensure good quality, energy efficient and appropriate housing for all.
- To create a Gwent that has friendly, safe and confident communities.
 - By creating a safer Gwent by reducing anti-social behaviour, preventing crime as much as possible, improving road safety and enhancing our green spaces.
 - By ensuring that Gwent is a welcoming, diverse and thriving place to live and visit by being inclusive and creating cultural opportunities for all.
 - By creating volunteering opportunities across the region which will empower residents to have control over their own communities.
 - By creating access to good quality, healthy and affordable food with secure supply chains and opportunities for local growth.
 - By reducing digital exclusion and embracing digital innovation.
 - By enabling access to valuable work for everyone by enhancing skills and education opportunities and taking advantage of emerging sectors.
- To create a Gwent where the natural environment is protected and enhanced.
 - By reducing the environmental impact of production and consumption.
 - By declaring a nature emergency in Gwent.
 - By responding to the climate emergency and protecting and preparing communities for the risk associated with climate change.
 - By exploring and promoting community energy projects.
 - By transforming food, transport and energy in Gwent.
 - By recognising biodiversity as an asset, addressing the root causes of biodiversity loss and better managing the pressures on natural environments.

2.3.3 Regional Level: South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan (South East Wales Valleys local authorities, 2015)

The South East Wales Valleys Local Transport Plan sets the context for transport services in Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen as well as in Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taf. The plan notes the position of the authorities covered within the wider Capital Region and the region's commitment to achieving a low carbon future. Connections to the wider region, particularly Cardiff, Newport and the M4 corridor, are identified as being crucial to the successful future of the South East Wales Valleys.

A number of core activities and interventions are set out to support the achievement of the plan:

- Developing innovative walking, cycling and Smarter Choices programmes.
- Continuing investment in the regional rail system.
- Improving the quality of bus services across the region.
- Developing better public transport integration.
- Making better use of the regional road system.

The plan lists the short, medium and longer term aspirational transport schemes of each local authority. Those in closest proximity to the boundaries of Monmouthshire and most likely to impact upon travel within and to and from the county include:

- Cross-boarder National Cycle Network (NCN) 492 link from Monmouthshire County to Afon Llwyd Greenway and NCN 492 (Edlogan Way link).
- Realignment and improvement of the B4248 Blaenavon to Brynmawr.
- Development of a Pontypridd – Blackwood – Pontypool Bus Rapid Transit System.
- Delivery of a new Pontypool Bus Station.
- Improvements to and expansion of capacity at Pontypool & New Inn Park and Ride.
- New active travel route from Pontypool (New Inn) to Mamhilad business parks via A4042.
- New active travel route – Forgeside, Big Pit, Industrial Estate loop allowing for connections from the outlying community to commercial and business estates as well as to the Blaenavon - Brynmawr Active Travel route.
- New Inn – Llandegfedd reservoir: Cycle link from Pontypool/New Inn to the Monmouthshire County Council rural NCN 423 route.

2.3.4 Regional Level: Mid Wales Joint Local Transport Plan (Mid Wales Transportation (TraCC), 2015)

The Mid Wales Joint Local Transport Plan has been jointly prepared by the Mid Wales Local Authorities of Powys, Ceredigion and Gwynedd and overseen by TraCC as a Joint Committee of the local authorities for transport. The plan aims to address the key issues and opportunities for Mid-Wales:

- Difficulties in gaining access to employment and services, particularly for those without a car and because of the need to travel long distances;
- Poor opportunities for passing, pinch point and constraints on the strategic road network leading to increased journey times.
- Increased risks to the resilience of the network through impacts of climate change, including flood risk.
- Opportunities to increase mode share by active travel modes and to improve the health and well-being and road safety.

The plan identifies a high volume of journeys being made along the A40 from Crickhowell towards Abergavenny in Monmouthshire. The schemes considered necessary to address these issues over the plan period are also set out in the plan. Those in closest proximity to Monmouthshire with greatest potential to influence travel within and to and from the county include:

- Scheme to provide park and ride hubs at unspecified strategic locations across the local authority areas covered by the plan.
- Improved local bus service infrastructure along key strategic routes across the local authority areas covered by the plan by providing high quality, consistent waiting facilities in line with Statutory Quality Bus Partnership Standards.
- Scheme package to provide a capital funding stream across the local authority areas covered by the plan for public transport, county council and partner fleet and community transport to purchase new or replacement vehicles and to support central journey management and scheduling systems.

2.3.5 Regional Level: Gloucestershire Local Transport Plan (2020 – 2041) (Gloucestershire County Council, 2020)

The Gloucestershire LTP recognises the role of Gloucestershire’s rural areas as being key to the attractiveness of Gloucestershire as a whole. The LTP seeks to promote technological advances and societal changes, including better integration of all modes; SMART places and innovation; and new vehicle technologies and shared mobility. The aim- of the plan is to achieve a significant mode shift from private car to active and public travel options, and to enable Gloucestershire to achieve CO2 reduction targets whilst conserving the environment.

While many transport challenges are the same in rural areas (congestion pinch points, air quality and transport reliability), these areas face specific challenges in providing an inclusive transport system that supports connectivity to the all residents. Strategic transport priorities within the rural areas include: delivering demand responsive transport services to ensure these provide public transport accessibility; increasing the frequency of bus services; and ensuring convenient connections through improved connectivity at interchange hubs.

The plan identifies that growth areas, such as in Lydney in the Forest of Dean, are likely to require strengthened accessibility towards the settlements of Gloucester and Cheltenham in the north-east, and south towards south Wales and Bristol. Schemes described within the LTP include:

- Enhancements and frequency increases at Lydney railway station which is viewed to be developed as a multi-modal interchange hub.
- Investigation of the possibility of a direct rail connection from Lydney / Chepstow through the Severn Tunnel to Bristol.
- The potential need for a new bypass in Chepstow to ensure traffic can flow freely. This would enable additional growth and allow traffic through Chepstow town centre to be dominated by more active and sustainable modes of transport.
- Consideration for a longer-term new Severn Crossing is already set out through Glos2050. Whilst this has been described as a Lydney-Sharpness bridge, other locations have been suggested through consultation. Significant growth allocations would have to be made in both areas to justify the infrastructure costs of a third river crossing. As a rail bridge, this could offer better connectivity with shorter journey times.
- Accessible walking and cycling routes located on key desire lines to local services and to interchange hubs, will form a strategic priority to encourage an uptake of sustainable travel modes for short journeys.

2.3.6 Regional Level: West of England

West of England Joint Local Transport Plan 4 2020-2036 (West of England Combined Authority, 2020)

The West of England Combined Authority consists of Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Bath and North East Somerset. Work on the Joint Local Transport Plan was led by the West of England Combined Authority and prepared in collaboration with Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset councils.

The overarching aim of the Joint Local Transport Plan is to ensure that transport is carbon neutral by 2030, by encouraging a substantial shift towards cleaner and greener, more inclusive and more sustainable forms of transport. This will involve a shift away from car uses through mass-transit schemes and initiatives to dissuade use (such as work-place parking levies).

Alongside three Metrobus routes, recent achievements have included programmes to facilitate travel behaviour change including increased cycling and bus use. The impact of the removal of the Severn Tolls which has resulted in an increased level of traffic across the crossing, is covered within the JLTP4's assessment of 'beyond the West of England connectivity challenges'.

The challenges identified include: increased delays on already congested sections and junctions on the M4 Junction 19 and 20, and M5 Junction 16, 17 and 19; increased congestion at these locations resulting in a diversion of trips onto other routes across the West of England; and increased delays to buses as they get stuck in additional traffic. To reduce the impact of congestion on the road network, the following improvements have been identified as being necessary:

- Divert traffic to the Bristol urban area from the M4/Almondsbury towards the M49.
- Capture vehicle trips bound for North Somerset, the Bristol urban area and Bath through a new Park & Ride, metrobus and other bus links, as well as MetroWest.
- Consider demand management measures, such as charging measures and controls, on both sides of the Severn, to raise revenue for sustainable transport alternatives.
- Improve the offer (including frequency) of cross-Severn public transport linking the West of England with Chepstow, Newport and Cardiff.

Within the West of England, technical work undertaken through the Joint Transport Study to support the Joint Local Transport Plan and identify where infrastructure investment is needed has identified the need for a mass transit public transport mode across the four core corridors with higher potential trip demand (mass transit from Bristol to Bristol Airport, to the North Fringe, to the East Fringe and to Bath).

Future challenges are recognised as the need to manage the integration of mass transit network within existing networks; these proposed networks face north and east, rather than towards Monmouthshire in the west.

The rail priority for the West of England remains MetroWest. Building on this priority, there is also a demand for new 'turn up and go' style services, such as strategic rail-based Park and Ride and parkway stations, and enhanced services from Cardiff to Portsmouth. It is recognised that at present, some Park and Ride activity takes place on the A466 outside Chepstow.

West of England Transport Delivery Plan (West of England Combined Authority, 2021)

The West of England Transport Delivery Plan sets out the currently funded transport projects that are progressing to delivery between 2021 and 2025 across the region. The Plan states that the long-term aspiration for transport in the West of England is to connect people and places for a vibrant, inclusive and carbon neutral West of England. To achieve this, five key objectives are set out:

- Take action against climate change and address poor air quality;
- Support sustainable and inclusive economic growth;
- Enable equality and improve accessibility;

- Contribute to better health, wellbeing, safety and security; and
- Create better places.

West of England Joint Transport Study (JTS) (2018 - 2036) (West of England Combined Authority, 2017)

The West of England JTS was prepared by Bristol, South Gloucestershire, Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset councils with the aim of providing a clear direction for the long-term development of the transport system to 2036 and beyond.

The JTS notes that the M4 and M48 Severn Crossings play a critical role in connecting South Wales to the rest of the UK and Ireland with continental Europe. There are also significant commuting flows from South Wales (particularly Monmouthshire) to the West of England. Written in advance of the Severn Toll removal and the decision not to progress with the M4 to Newport, there is considered to be a strong case for intervention in the West of England to tackle the effects of this increased congestion and securing the full benefits of the removal of the tolls for both sides of the Severn.

Measures to mitigate these impacts should primarily focus on mode shift for movements across the Severn. The JTS recommends that mitigation measures should also include improved service frequencies and capacity of trains between Cardiff, Bristol and Newport, and consideration of opportunities for strategic Park and Ride on the M48 in the Chepstow Area.

2.4 Local Policy Context

The following section sets out relevant local policies for the assessment of transport schemes in Monmouthshire and the surrounding local authorities.

2.4.1 Monmouthshire County Council Policy Context

Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP) (2011- 2021) (Monmouthshire County Council, 2014)

The adopted Local Development Plan for Monmouthshire consists of Monmouthshire County Council LDP 2011-2021, which was adopted in 2014.

The Key Diagram of the LDP sets out how Monmouthshire benefits from strategic links to Bristol and South West England as well as towards the Forest of Dean and Gloucester at Chepstow, whereas the Severnside settlements provide connections further west to Cardiff and Newport. To the north east of the county, at Monmouth there are existing links to Hereford as well as Gloucester and the Midlands, while to the north west Abergavenny and Llanfoist allow for access to Brecon and the Heads of the Valley (A465). There are also links towards the settlements of Pontypool and Cwmbran to the west of Usk and south of Penperlleni.

The strategic approach to development in Monmouthshire is set out through the following policies:

- Policy S1 - The Spatial Distribution of New Housing Provision identifies that the main focus for new housing development is to be within the Main Towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth. The Severnside sub-region (including Caerwent, Caldicot, Magor, Portskewett, Rogiet, Sudbrook and Undy) is the focus for a smaller amount of new housing development. A small amount of new housing development is also to be directed to the Rural Secondary Settlements of Usk, Raglan and Penperlleni.
- Policy S2 - Housing Provision: Provision will be made in the plan area to meet a requirement for 4,500 residential units in the Plan Period 2011 -2021. This will be met through the following spatial distribution: 566 units at Abergavenny, 675 at Chepstow and 825 at Monmouth. A total of 1,614 homes will be delivered within the Severnside Settlements and 495 at the Rural Secondary Settlements.
- Policy S3 - Strategic Housing Sites: Strategic Housing Sites are set out in the plan at Abergavenny, Caldicot/Portskewett, Chepstow, Monmouth, Magor/Undy and Sudbrook.
- Policy S9 - Employment Sites Provision: Provision is made in the plan for a suitable range and choice of site for industrial and business development, including 37ha at Magor, and 5-6ha at the Main Towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Monmouth.

Policies in the adopted LDP which set out the policy approach to transport schemes within Monmouthshire include:

- Policy S16 - Transport requires all development to promote sustainable, safe forms of transport which reduce the need to travel by car, promote public transport, walking and cycling and improve road safety. The policy also requires that the adverse effects of parking should be minimised, road safety should be improved and public transport between the main towns is enhanced. The policy endorses the development of the key role of the main towns around which high capacity sustainable transport links can be developed. Policy S16 sets out support for the following strategic transportation schemes, which were also identified in the now replaced Regional Transport Plan:
 - Severn Tunnel Junction Interchange;
 - M48 Interchange – Rogiet;
 - Monmouth Links Connect 2 (walking and cycling routes);
 - Abergavenny and Chepstow Rail Stations Park and Ride and bus access improvements;
 - Chepstow Park and Ride;
 - Monmouth Park and Ride.
- Policy MV1 - Proposed Developments and Highway Considerations, Policy MV2 Sustainable Transport Access, Policy MV3 Public Rights of Way; Policy MV4 Cycleways and Policy MV5 - Improvements to Public Transport Interchanges and Facilities set out development management considerations for various types of new transport infrastructure.
- Policy MV10 - Transport Routes and Schemes sets out those routes and schemes that will be safeguarded from development that would likely prejudice their implementation. Alongside the now cancelled M4 corridor enhancement, these included:

Table 1 MV10 Transport Routes and Schemes

Monmouthshire County Council Road	Public Transport Improvement Schemes	Walking and Cycling Schemes
B4245 Magor/Undy By-pass B4245/M48 Link Road*	Abergavenny rail station interchange *	Monmouth Links Connect 2*
B4245/Severn Tunnel Junction Link Road	Chepstow rail station and bus station interchange *	Abergavenny walking and cycling network
A48 Chepstow Outer By-pass	Severn Tunnel Junction interchange *	Llanfoist pedestrian and cycling river crossing
A472 Usk By-pass	Monmouth coach stop	Severn Tunnel Junction pedestrian and cycling access
	Monmouth park and ride *	
	Chepstow park and ride *	
	Monmouth bus station improvement	
	Abergavenny bus station improvement	

** Indicates those schemes identified in the South East Wales Transport Alliance Regional Transport Plan*

Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy (Monmouthshire County Council, 2020)

Monmouthshire County Council is currently preparing its RLDP, the most recent stage of consultation undertaken being for the Preferred Strategy from December 2022 to January 2023.

The RLDP identifies Abergavenny, Caldicot, Chepstow and Monmouth as the county's Primary Settlements with opportunities at these locations for employment, access to services and facilities and sustainable transport. Additional opportunities are found at the wider Severnside area and in the Secondary Settlements of Penperlleni, Raglan and Usk, and in a number of smaller rural settlements.

The Preferred Strategy makes provision for approximately 5,400 to 5,940 homes and 6,240 additional jobs over the Plan period 2018-2033 through Strategic Policy S1 – Preferred Growth Strategy. Development is to be focused on the county's most sustainable settlements of Abergavenny, Chepstow, and Caldicot as set out in Strategic Policy S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy. Strategic site allocations are identified at these settlements at Abergavenny East; Bayfield, Chepstow; and Caldicot East. The key diagram carries forward the strategic links identified in the currently adopted LDP.

Key policies relating to transport and movement in the RLDP Preferred Strategy include:

- Strategic Policy S3 - Sustainable Placemaking & High Quality Design, supports the delivery of development that incorporates an appropriate mix of uses to minimise the need to travel and to maximise opportunities for active travel and public transport use.
- Strategic Policy S5 - Infrastructure Provision: Where existing infrastructure is inadequate to serve the development, new or improved infrastructure and facilities to remedy deficiencies must be provided in phase with proposed development. Planning obligations will be sought to secure improvements in infrastructure where necessary to make development acceptable and may include amongst others, those for active travel, sustainable transport measures, transport infrastructure or green infrastructure.
- Strategic Policy S10 - Sustainable Transport: Development must promote sustainable, low carbon, safe forms of transport which reduce the need to travel by car. They must also increase provision for walking and cycling and improve public transport. The role of Monmouthshire's Primary Settlements should be developed in accordance with the South East Wales Regional Plan and Monmouthshire's LTP for low carbon sustainable transport opportunities and links to the South East Wales Metro.

Monmouthshire Infrastructure Plan (Monmouthshire County Council, 2013)

Prepared in support of the adopted LDP policies, the Infrastructure Plan sets out the items of infrastructure required to make the LDP deliverable based on known gaps in the network. In terms of transport, the Infrastructure Plan notes:

- Bus Services: Whilst a number of bus services run on a purely commercial basis, the majority of these are subsidised by the Council in order to provide a service across the whole of Monmouthshire. During the LDP period, the Council will be working with SEWTA on the development of a Regional Bus Strategy which is likely to look at infrastructure and service improvements.
- Rail: For Monmouthshire, plans identify station improvements (including parking and improved bus interchange facilities) at Severn Tunnel Junction, Abergavenny and Chepstow stations and service improvements on the Abergavenny and Chepstow lines.
- Cycling and Pedestrians: It is acknowledged that there is a shortage of off road countryside access provision, gaps in public rights of way infrastructure, poor accessibility for people with mobility or visual impairments and little information available for horse riders and cyclists.
- Highways: The Infrastructure Plan identifies that there are a number of major highways schemes required to deliver the LDP. These are set out within Policy S16 and Policy MV10.

Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment (Gwent Public Services Board, 2022)

The Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment has been prepared as part of the wider Gwent Well-being Assessment to provide an evidence base that allows for an understanding of well-being in the county. The Well-being Assessment feeds into the preparation of the Gwent Public Services Board Well-being Plan.

The Well-being Assessment identifies a number of key emerging trends for the county for the coming years. The following key trends identified in the Well-being Assessment are of most relevance to the themes of transport and accessibility:

- Limited public transport affects social opportunities for some people who may become isolated in rural communities, exacerbating loneliness and mental health.
- Monmouthshire has a high carbon footprint per head of population.
- The rural nature of Monmouthshire means that transport is a significant contributor to the county's carbon emissions, with some areas also experiencing poor air quality. There is high car ownership and the rural nature of the county limits take-up of active travel while many people do not have a driveway which, along with affordability, will slow the adoption of electric vehicles. There needs to be a move away from private cars to more active travel, public transport and low emission vehicles in order to reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.
- The effects of climate change are becoming apparent in Monmouthshire, particularly flooding, which has impacted many communities in recent years. This is likely to get worse as the build-up of greenhouses gases continue to affect global weather patterns.

Monmouthshire County Council Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan (Monmouthshire County Council, 2021)

In May 2019, Monmouthshire County Council passed a motion to declare a climate emergency. With this declaration the council entered into a commitment to:

- Strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030.
- Encourage and support residents and businesses to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions.
- Work with partners across the county and other councils and organisations to help develop and implement best practice methods in limiting global warming to less than 1.5 °C.

The Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan was originally adopted by the council in October 2019. It covers ten broad objectives that are included to help deliver a net reduction in carbon emissions by 2030. Each of the objectives contains actions for the local authority which will help to reduce the council's own emissions, as well as actions that will help to reduce county-wide carbon emissions. The strategy acknowledges that actions relating to county-wide emissions will need to be taken forward in partnership with the community. The objectives are as follows:

- Energy and buildings - Reduce the amount of energy that is used for buildings and street lighting.
- Nature recovery and green spaces - To absorb carbon, to support biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, and the ability to adapt.
- Waste - Reduce waste by encouraging people to reduce, re-use and recycle more.
- Greener transport - Reduce the impact of vehicles and encourage the use of electric and hydrogen vehicles.
- Education and involvement - Help people understand climate change and what they can do to make a difference.
- Renewable energy – Speed up the move from fossil fuels to renewable energy.

- What we buy - Reduce carbon by thinking carefully about when and what we buy and the whole life costs.
- Active travel - Encourage and make it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive.
- Public transport - Encourage people to use public transport rather than cars.
- Climate adaptation - Preparing and adapting for the impact of climate change.

In November 2021 an updated and amended action plan was published by the council. Actions are included for each of the objectives of the strategy. Actions for reducing county-wide emissions which are of most relevance to transport and accessibility are as follows:

- Reducing the impact of vehicle use and encouraging use of electric and hydrogen vehicles.
 - Encourage the use of electric or hybrid taxis.
 - Develop proposals for increased public EV charging including on street and in car parks.
 - Develop proposals for EV charging in new housing development.
 - Provide free car parking whilst charging in council owned car parks for up to 3 hours for electric vehicles.
- Encouraging and making it easier for people to walk and cycle rather than drive.
 - Improve, expand and maintain safe and convenient cycle and footpath networks, to encourage active travel.
 - Develop e-bike and cycle hire schemes beginning in town centres.
 - Ensure the RLDP allocates sites that promote the Twenty Minute Town concept to reduce the number of car journeys people have to make.
 - Work with communities to trial 20 mph speed limits in some areas ahead of a national roll-out of this policy.
 - Develop and promote co-working spaces across the county and with partners to reduce the need for long commutes to offices.
- Encouraging people to use public transport rather than cars.
 - Encourage public transport use through the increased investment being made in the South Wales Metro.
 - Continue to make the case to national governments for improved public transport provision, including train frequencies and station provision.
 - Develop an app or website that gives people journey information for public transport, booking options for demand responsive transport and access to the volunteer operated community lift-share scheme.

Monmouthshire County Council Community and Corporate Plan 2022-2028 (Monmouthshire County Council, 2023)

The Community and Corporate Plan sets out the overarching ambition for the council and county of Monmouthshire. The plan sets out the purpose of the county: “to become a zero-carbon county, supporting well-being, health and dignity for everyone at every stage of life”. The priorities of the of the plan are for Monmouthshire to be a:

- Fair place to live where the effects of inequality and poverty have been reduced;
- Green place to live and work with reduced carbon emissions, making a positive contribution to addressing the climate and nature emergency;
- Thriving and ambitious place, full of hope and enterprise;
- Safe place to live where people have a home where they feel secure in;
- Connected place where people feel part of a community, are valued and connected to others; and
- Learning place where everybody has the opportunity to reach their potential.

The plan includes a number of actions which are set out to help achieve the priorities listed. Actions of most relevance to transport and accessibility are as follows (each action is included below its associated overarching objective):

- A greener place to live.
 - Improve walking and cycle routes and integrate these with the public transport network.
 - Expand access to electric charging infrastructure, to support the switch to low emissions vehicles.
- A thriving and ambitious place.
 - Ensure town centres are accessible via active travel and public transport such as the proposed Magor Walkway station.
 - Support the development of a modern, accessible, integrated and sustainable transport system through the implementation of a local transport plan.
 - Develop active travel routes that encourage people to walk and cycle to towns, schools and local key destinations.
 - Invest in better bus infrastructure and work with partners to enhance the local railway system including the development of a new station at Magor and improvements at Severn Tunnel Junction to improve access and usage.
 - Work with partners to increase the frequency of train services, creating plans for a metro that links Monmouthshire to Bristol, Newport and Cardiff.
 - Develop a county wide digital solution that matches those who need to travel with those who have car spaces.
 - Maintain and improve key highways infrastructure including roads, pavements and bridges.
 - Work with Gloucestershire County Council and The Forest of Dean District Council to improve transport infrastructure which reduces congestion in and around Chepstow.
 - Make representations to Welsh Government for a speed limit reduction on the A40 at Raglan and other sites of community concern, and work with Welsh Government, Town and Community Councils and schools to address road safety issues, particularly around schools.

Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) (Monmouthshire County Council, 2015)

The current Monmouthshire LTP identifies the key transport issues relevant to the county, the high-level interventions needed to address these and the specific priorities for the local authority. The LTP does not contain specific rail service or trunk road proposals.

The objectives of the LTP are:

- **Safety and security:** to reduce the number and severity of road traffic casualties and improve levels of personal security when travelling.
- **Connectivity and accessibility:** To improve access for all to employment opportunities, services, healthcare, education, tourism and leisure facilities at a local level, whilst improving connectivity by sustainable transport between South-East Wales and the rest of Wales, the UK and Europe.
- **Quality and efficiency:** To improve interchange within and between modes of transport, improve the quality and efficiency and reliability of the transport system, to improve awareness of public transport and active travel opportunities and reduce traffic growth, traffic congestion and to make better use of the existing road system.
- **Environment:** To achieve a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport for moving both people and freight and better integration, to reduce significantly the emission of greenhouse gases from transport, and to reduce the impact of the transport system on the local street scene and the natural, built and historic environment.
- **Land use and regeneration:** To ensure developments in South East Wales are accessible by sustainable transport, and to make sustainable transport and travel planning an integral component of regeneration schemes.

2.4.2 Blaenau Gwent Policy Context

Blaenau Gwent LDP (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 2012)

The LDP sets out the vision for the development of the county up to 2021. Through Policy SP4 - Delivering Quality Housing, provision is made for the development of 3,907 new dwellings in order to deliver the 3,500 new dwellings required to increase the population to 70,849 by 2021. In order to achieve this level of development, new housing is apportioned through Policy SP5: Spatial Distribution of Housing Site, as follows:

- Ebbw Vale - 1,719 dwellings
- Tredegar - 696 dwellings
- Upper Ebbw Fach - 438 dwellings
- Lower Ebbw Fach - 228 dwellings

Brynmawr is the closest settlement to the boundary with Monmouthshire and lies within the Upper Ebbw Fach Area. A number of housing site allocations are set out for Brynmawr through Policy H1 - Housing Allocations.

Policies T1, T2, T3, T4, T5 and T6 identify specific improvements to cycle routes and the rail network, the safeguarding of disused railway infrastructure, as well as improvements to bus services, new roads and highways improvements in the plan area.

Those of considered to be of most relevance to Monmouthshire are:

- Completion of HOV cycle route linking Nine Arches Tredegar to Brynmawr.
- Completion of cycle route from Brynmawr to Blaenavon.
- Safeguarding of disused railway infrastructure east of Brynmawr.

- Provision of Bus Priority Scheme along the Brynmawr to Newport bus corridor.
- Bus interchange improvement at Brynmawr.
- Online improvements between the Peripheral Distributor Road and the A465.
- Dualling of the Heads of the Valleys Road (Tredegar to Brynmawr).

Blaenau Gwent RLDP Preferred Strategy (Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council, 2020)

Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council is currently preparing its RLDP, the most recent stage of consultation undertaken being for the Preferred Strategy from January 2020 February 2020.

The RLDP, through Strategic Policy 1 - Sustainable Economic Growth makes provision for the delivery of 2,115 homes to deliver a housing requirement of 1,755, as well as for the delivery of at least 1,500 jobs with an aspiration to deliver 3,375 jobs across 3-46 ha of allocated employment land. To achieve the required level of housing, 45% of the homes is to be directed to the Primary Settlement of Ebbw Vale, 50% to Main Settlements and 5% to Secondary Settlements, Villages and Hamlets. Brynmawr is the closest of the settlements in the plan area to the boundary with Monmouthshire and along with Nantyglo and Blaina will accommodate a total of 423 new homes.

Strategic Policy 11 - Sustainable Transport and Accessibility of the RLDP sets out the approach to supporting sustainable transport and accessibility across the plan area. Support is set out in the policy for:

- The delivery of the Metro Improvements including the proposed extension of the rail service to Abertillery, the increase in frequency of rail services on the Ebbw Valley Railway and integration of public transport services and active travel routes across the South East Wales Region.
- Key transport measures and schemes identified in the Local Transport Plan

Furthermore, the policy requires that developments be located and designed to minimise travel, reduce dependency on the private car and enable sustainable access to employment, local services and community facilities.

2.4.3 Torfaen Policy Context

Torfaen LDP (Torfaen County Borough Council, 2013)

Torfaen LDP sets out the development strategy and detailed policies and proposals for the future development and use of land in the plan area up to 2021. The Key Diagram of the plan identifies strategic links between Blaenavon and Abergavenny in Monmouthshire via the B4246 and from Pontypool to the wider Monmouthshire county area via the A4042. Provision is made through Policy S5 - Housing for the development of 4,700 dwellings in Torfaen (by identifying sites for approximately 5,740 dwellings). The focus for housing delivery is as follows:

- North Torfaen - approximately 550 dwellings;
- Pontypool - approximately 1,875 dwellings; and
- Cwmbran (south & east and north & west combined) - approximately 2,275 dwellings.

Policy S6 – Employment and Economy states that employment and economic development needs will be met through the identification of 40.3ha of land for employment and business purposes and 35ha for strategic regional employment.

Transport related requirements are addressed through Policies T1, T2 and T3. Through these policies land is safeguarded for a number of major transport improvements and former transport routes so that they might be brought back into use improvements to the cycle network. Those of most relevance to Monmouthshire county include:

- Safeguarding land for North Torfaen Highway and Public Transport Improvements (mainly A4043 & B4246 corridors);

- Safeguarding land for Pontypool & New Inn Park and Ride / Share Facility;
- Safeguarding the ‘Low Level’ railway line between Blaenavon and Pontypool;
- Safeguarding the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal is safeguarded;
- Safeguarding of land for improvements to the cycle route between Pontypool & New Inn Train Station and Pontypool Town Centre;
- Safeguarding of land for improvements to the cycle route between Pontypool & New Inn Train Station and Mamhilad; and
- Safeguarding of land for improvements to the cycle route between Usk (Monmouthshire) and Coed-y-Gric Road, Griffithstown.

Torfaen County Borough Council resolved to withdraw the Torfaen RLDP (2018-2033) in April 2023 and are currently working to commence the preparation of a new plan.

2.4.4 Newport Policy Context

Newport LDP 2011 – 2026 (Newport City Council, 2015)

The adopted Newport LDP provides the basis for land use planning within the council’s administrative area up to 2026. The LDP provides the vision for Newport as a gateway to Wales and a centre of regeneration.

The LDP sets out a target to deliver approximately 10,350 homes and 7,400 new jobs over the plan period. This includes through continued development of the Eastern Expansion Area (Policy SP11) to the east of town centre which was designated in the Newport Unitary Development Plan 1996 – 2011. The following policies in the LDP address transport related development in Newport:

- Policy SP14 - Transport Proposals provides support for transport proposals in Newport that support traffic-free walking and cycling facilities and encourage the use of public transport. It also supports modes that reduce energy consumption and pollution; improve road safety; assist economic growth and urban regeneration; relieve traffic congestion in the long term; and support environmental improvements.
- Policy SP15 - Integrated Transport requires that an integrated approach to transport is pursued in line with national and regional transport strategies.
- Policy SP16 - Major Road Schemes safeguards land for the following strategic highway schemes:
 - M4 Motorway Junction 28 Tredegar Park Interchange Improvement.
 - Western Extension of the Southern Distributor Road as the Duffryn Link Road Between Maesglas and Coedkernew.
 - North South Link – Llanwern.

Policies T1 to T8 set out the overall transport strategy of the LDP including policies to address proposals to improve the railway system, improvements and management of the road network, car parking, walking and cycling, and Public Rights of Way. Specific schemes supported through these policies include:

- New railway stations at Llanwern, Caerleon and Coedkernew; and
- Continued protection and development of National Cycle Route Number 47, Cwmcarn to Newport, National Cycle Route 4 Caerphilly to Newport and Chepstow and National Coastal Route 88 Caerleon to Newport and Cardiff.

Newport RLDP Growth and Spatial Options (Newport City Council, 2023)

Once adopted the RLDP will replace the current LDP and cover the period 2021 to 2036. To date the council has consulted on the Draft Vision, Issues and Objectives (2022) and Growth and Spatial Options (2023). The RLDP is still at a relatively early stage of preparation and to date only draft versions of the vision and objectives and six housing and job growth scenarios has been consulted upon through these documents.

The next stage of plan making will be to prepare the Preferred Strategy document to set out the overall objectives for the plan and the 'Preferred Strategy' for growth or change over the plan period. The Preferred Strategy is likely to include options for major development sites in the plan area.

Newport Local Transport Plan (LTP) (Newpoert Cirty Council, 2015)

The LTP sets out the transport issues and opportunities for the city up to 2020 as well as into the longer term up to 2030, noting Newport's strategic location on national road, rail and sea routes in the south eastern section of the Cardiff Capital Region.

The plan is set out to align with the National Transport Plan priorities and to support:

- **Economic growth:** Support economic growth and safeguard jobs across Wales, but with a particular focus on the Cardiff Capital Region.
- **Access to employment:** Reduce economic inactivity by delivering safe and affordable access to employment sites.
- **Tackling poverty:** Maximise the contribution that effective and affordable transport services can make to tackling poverty and target investment to support improvements in accessibility for the most disadvantaged communities in the region.
- **Sustainable travel and safety:** Encourage safer, healthier and sustainable travel.
- **Access to services:** Connect communities and enable access to key services.

It provides support for the three largest proposed contributors to improved connectivity in the Cardiff Capital Region namely: the now halted new M4 route, Great Western Mainline Electrification and Cardiff Capital Region Metro.

Transport schemes identified in the LTP which are most likely to be of relevance to transport and accessibility in Monmouthshire include:

- Newport to Bristol rapid bus/corridor improvement.
- Newport East Park & Ride (Llanwern Steelworks Regeneration site).
- Active Travel – Eastern Corridor Traffic-free and off road links between existing and new developments on the east of Newport. Routes include cross border links to Monmouthshire extensions of work already completed on Llanwern Eastern Distributor Road.
- Cardiff Capital Region Metro Programme.

Herefordshire Core Strategy 2011 - 2031 (Hereford Council, 2015)

The Herefordshire Core Strategy presents the vision for the county to 2031. It includes policies to guide development and change in the county over the plan period. Through Policy SS2 - Delivering New Homes, a minimum of 16,500 homes is to be delivered in Herefordshire between 2011 and 2031. The focus of housing growth is at Hereford (6,500 new homes) and the other urban areas of Bromyard, Kington, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye (which together will accommodate 4,700 new homes). The rural settlements will accommodate 5,300 new homes over the plan period.

Policy SS5 – Employment Provision identifies the main areas for employment growth at Hereford (15ha); Leominster (up to 10ha), Ledbury (15ha), and Ross-on-Wye (10ha). Ross-on-Wye is the closest of these settlements to boundary with Monmouthshire, lying some 11.5km to the north east and within 13km of Monmouth.

Policy MT1 – Traffic management, highway safety and promoting active travel sets out a number of requirements for developments in relation to movement and transportation. These include:

- Demonstration that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development.
- Promotion and incorporation of integrated transport connections and supporting infrastructure.
- Encouragement of active travel.
- Protection of existing local and long distance footways, cycleways and bridleways.
- Having regard for the Highways Development Design Guide and cycle and vehicle parking standards as prescribed in the Local Transport Plan.

Herefordshire new Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Hereford Council)

Herefordshire County Council are currently working to prepare a new Local Plan that will set out the planning framework up to 2041. Up to July 2022, the Council had undertaken three early stages of consultation in relation to the options it might take forward in the plan for the spatial distribution of development, policies for determining planning applications and potential strategic development areas for the county. The next stage will involve consultation on a draft version of the new Local Plan.

Herefordshire Council Local Transport Plan LTP 2016 – 2031 (Hereford Council, 2016)

The Herefordshire LTP aims to make best use of the county's transport assets and where possible facilitate more efficient usage together with improvements in the quality of public places. While the more sizeable settlements in Herefordshire are located some distance from the boundary with Monmouthshire, The LTP notes links towards Abergavenny and Monmouth from the county via the A465 and A40, respectively.

The LTP sets out a number of policies to address transport related issues including the management of transport assets, road safety, passenger transport, freight, active travel and air quality.

Policy LTP PT7 – Rail improvements provides specific support for the Department for Transport, Welsh Government, Network Rail and train operating companies in improving the frequency, quality, reliability, comfort and affordability of rail services. This includes support for joint working to protect services between Hereford and London via Ledbury and Birmingham, and between Manchester and South Wales.

Adopted Local Plan

The Local Plan for the Forest of Dean comprises the Core Strategy (2012), the Allocations Plan (2018) and Cinderford Northern Quarter (CNQAAP) (2012).

Core Strategy (Forest of Dean District Council, 2012): The Core Strategy notes the relative inaccessibility of the area compared to its near neighbours particularly in terms of access to the motorway network as well as public transport. Whilst it is considered that major improvements are both unrealistic and unlikely to be justifiable, the Core Strategy furthers that significant local changes to basic infrastructure must be promoted when identifying locations for new development. This will include improvements to transport systems at Cinderford and Lydney.

The Core Strategy sets out that between 2006 and 2026, 5,162 new homes are required (with the total requirement identified as 6,200 when taking into account those already built out). Policy CSP.5 - Housing sets out how approximately 75% of all new housing and 80% of new employment will be focussed in the four towns, divided according to their need and capacities. Approximately 1,900 new dwellings and 30ha of employment land will be developed at Lydney, about 1,050 dwellings and 26ha of employment land at Cinderford, approximately 650 dwellings and 6.8ha of employment land at Coleford and 350 dwellings and 5ha of employment land at Newent. Only 110 homes are planned in Tutshill and Sedbury, which are the closest settlements to Monmouthshire at Chepstow.

Allocations Plan (Forest of Dean District Council, 2018): The majority of the policies within the Allocations Plan are site-specific, with eight development management style policies that apply across the whole area. The three site allocations identified within the Sedbury and Tutshill area are situated to the east of the settlement. Coleford is within 5km of Monmouth town. Thirteen sites are allocated for housing, employment and mixed uses within Coleford. These sites are predominantly located away from the western edge of the settlement which is closest to the boundary with Monmouthshire.

Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan (Forest of Dean District Council, 2012): The Area Action Plan sets out the approach for the regeneration of the Northern Quarter. Cinderford is located some 10km from the boundary with Monmouthshire and given its specific focus at the neighbourhood level within the settlement, it is of little relevance to the emerging transport plan.

Forest of Dean Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (Forest of Dean District Council, 2015): The IDP notes the significant flows of traffic resulting from out-commuting and the impact on the Severn Crossing and A48. The IDP notes that further consultation will be necessary with Monmouthshire County Council to understand the exact nature of the problems that arise on the A48 around Chepstow, and the investments in infrastructure that could help alleviate problems at this location.

Emerging Local Plan

A new Local Plan is being developed to set out how the Forest of Dean will develop over the 20 years to 2041. The council, consulted on a Second Preferred Option strategy, from August 2022 to October 2022. The Second Preferred Option strategy is still subject to evaluation including possible alternatives, potential sites and policies.

At this stage the Second Preferred Option strategy does not include specific sites for allocation, however general areas considered appropriate for development are referred to. This includes the promotion of Lydney as the largest of the forest towns to accommodate 1,326 new homes over the plan period. The underlying themes supporting this approach including improving access to the town and support for nearby settlements as well as support for the existing towns and villages of the forest, taking advantage of the existing networks and reinforcing or creating new sustainable transport and travel opportunities.

Sedbury and Tutshill are identified as major villages in the Second Preferred Option strategy document, some of which benefit from a good service base and are well connected. The major villages are to accommodate a total of 907 new homes over the plan period. Development at Coleford is to be limited to 107 new homes given its physical constraints. The next stage for the new Local Plan will be consultation on a draft version of the plan.

2.4.7 South Gloucestershire Policy Context

Adopted Local Plan

The adopted Development Plan for South Gloucestershire comprises the Core Strategy (2006 – 2027) (2013), the Policies Sites and Places Plan (PSP) (2017) and the Joint Waste Core Strategy (2011).

Core Strategy 2006-2027 (South Gloucestershire District Council, 2013): The Core Strategy makes provision for 28,355 new homes from 2006 to 2027. Development in the North Fringe of Bristol is focussed at two key areas – Patchway / Cribbs Causeway (Policy CS26 -Cribb/Patchway New Neighbourhood) and East of Harry Stoke (Policy CS27 – East of Harry Stoke New Neighbourhood). The Patchway / Cribbs Causeway new neighbourhood will accommodate an additional 5,700 homes and 50ha of employment and the East of Harry Stoke new neighbourhood will accommodate 2,000 homes as part of a mixed use community. This is on top of provision for around 2,400 homes and 14ha of employment at the Charlton Hayes which is an existing allocation. The Core Strategy also includes a number of policies that directly address transport requirements over the plan period:

- Policy CS7 - Strategic Transport Infrastructure: Sets out the schemes that will be given priority over the plan period. These include the completion of the Greater Bristol Bus Network, construction of a Rapid Transit network to serve communities of North and East Bristol Fringes and improvements to the rail services.
- Policy CS8 – Improving Accessibility: Sets out the approach to support improved accessibility and providing users of new development with a range of travel options other than the private car. Developments that create significant demand for travel will be more favourably considered where they are closer to public transport and facilities and services. Furthermore, developments should contribute to appropriate transport improvements and incorporate a mix of uses and active transport infrastructure to reduce the need to travel by car. Where car parking is provided as part of development it should be integrated as to not compromise the street scene, infrastructure for sustainable transport or highway safety.

Policies Site and Places (PSP) Plan (South Gloucestershire District Council, 2017): The PSP plan covers policies for development management and allocations for new and existing sites within South Gloucestershire. Alongside the two new neighbourhoods at Patchway / Cribbs Causeway and East of Harry Stoke, Policy PSP47 – Site Allocations and Safeguarding sets out a total of 31 sites/routes for development/safeguarding for transportation, minerals, education/community, sports and leisure, open space, retail, and housing/mixed uses.

The plan also includes the following policies which are of most relevance to transport:

- Policy PSP10 – Active Travel Routes: Which safeguards existing and proposed Active Travel Routes (ATR). One of these strategic cycling routes connects across the M48 to Chepstow.
- Policy PSP11 – Transport Impact Management: Which sets out the criteria which new developments that generate a demand for travel should meet.
- Policy PSP12 - Motorway Service Areas and Roadside Facilities: Which sets out criteria against which proposals for new Motorway Service Areas on the Strategic Highway Network, or new roadside service facilities on other transport routes will be considered.

- Policy PSP13 - Safeguarding Strategic Transport Schemes and Infrastructure: Which identifies that beyond the schemes set out within Strategic Policy CS7, the Council will work with partners to deliver:
 - The Avonmouth Severnside Project which includes a package of sustainable transport measures to promote walking, cycling and public transport use in the area and a new intermediate junction on the M49 to unlock the Avonmouth / Severnside Enterprise Area.
 - The approved MetroBus network as defined on the policies map, with a long-term aspiration for bus segregation.
- PSP14 - Safeguarding Rail Schemes and Infrastructure: Sets out the requirement for development proposals to safeguard the role of the existing rail lines, rail freight facilities and railway stations within South Gloucestershire and the delivery of the Severn Beach station enhancement.
- Policy PSP15 - Park and Ride / Share: Provides the criteria against which proposals for park and ride, park and share, and kiss and ride facilities will be acceptable. It also allocates land for a Park and Ride facility at Nibley and Tormarton.

Emerging Local Plan

South Gloucestershire Council are currently in the process of developing a new Local Plan which will include a new strategy and policies to guide and manage growth and change over the next 15 years.

Most recently the council consulted upon the Local Plan 2020 – Phase 2 Urban, Rural and Key Issues document between February 2022 and April 2022. The Phase 2 document set out the approaches that could be taken forward in urban areas and within the boundaries of the district’s market towns as well as growth in the rural villages and settlements. While the document identifies a number of potential site allocations in urban areas and within the existing boundaries of the market towns, it does not identify individual sites across all areas.

The Phase 2 Urban, Rural and Key Issues document sets out to safeguard a number of sizeable existing employment sites in the North Fringe including at Cribbs Causeway (34.3ha), Jupiter Road (7.8ha), Patchway Industrial Estate (22.3ha), Land at Filton Northfield (16.8ha) and three sites East of A38 (Rolls Royce Main (35.2ha), South of B4057 and Southern Site (16.7ha)). Two safeguarded employment sites (Land West of A38 (including Runway and Royal Mail) and Land West of A38 and South of Railway Line) have been reduced to 24ha and 49ha respectively with potential housing site allocations suggested on parts of the land within their boundaries.