

Nature Recovery Action Plan and GI Strategy Public Consultation

1. Consultation Communication Plan

The Local NRAP and Green Infrastructure Strategy public consultation was launched at Usk County Show on 14th September 2024 and ran for six weeks. A shorter questionnaire was conducted at Usk Show on the day of the launch. The consultation had originally been planned for May/June 2024 but was delayed due to the announcement of the general election. Following lifting of restrictions around the pre-election period, many large consultations were launched, including the Replacement Local Development Plan Deposit. Engagement with the consultation was low potentially due to consultation fatigue during 2024.

Table 1: Timetable of Events

Date	Location	Methodology
14 th September 2024	Usk County Show	Launch public consultation (including asking visitors to stall at show)
15 th September 2024	Online	Press release issued advertising consultation, press release promoted on social media and via mailing lists
7 th October 2024	Libraries and Hubs*	Consultation advertised on information boards and posters in libraries for green libraries week. Hard copies made available.
31 st October 2024		Consultation closed

*Caldicot, Chepstow, Abergavenny, Monmouth, Gilwern and Magor



Picture 1: Display at Usk Show, similar boards were used at libraries



Picture 2: Poster for libraries and hubs

The press release was reported on by at least three sources:

- Monmouthshire Beacon [Shape the future of our environment in Monmouthshire](#)
- South Wales Argus [Council launches consultation to shape the future of environment](#)

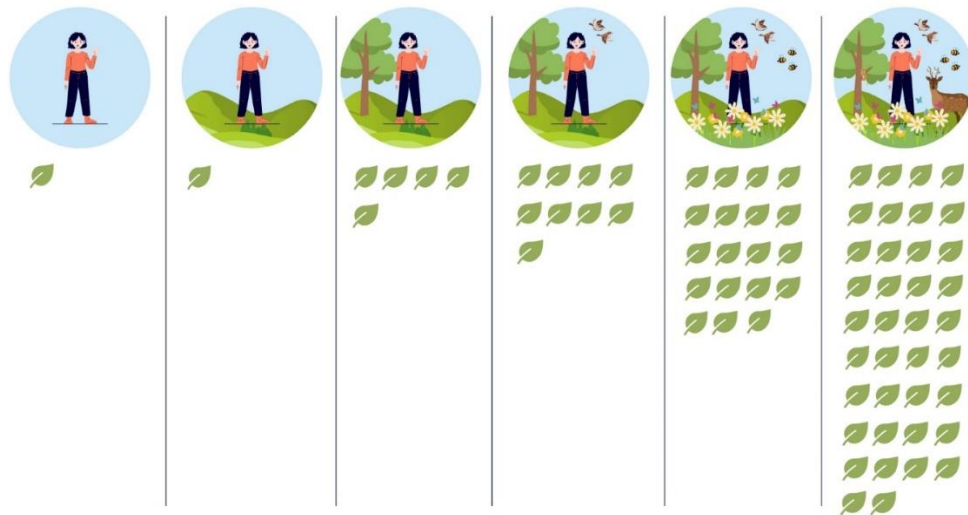
- Green Economy Wales [Consultation Launched to Shape the Future of Monmouthshire's Environment](#)

Table 2: Number of respondents

Part of Questionnaire	Number of Respondents
Short Usk Show Questionnaire	42
Monmouthshire's Natural Heritage	53 (including four hard copy responses)
Monmouthshire Local NRAP	17
MCC Green Infrastructure Strategy	20

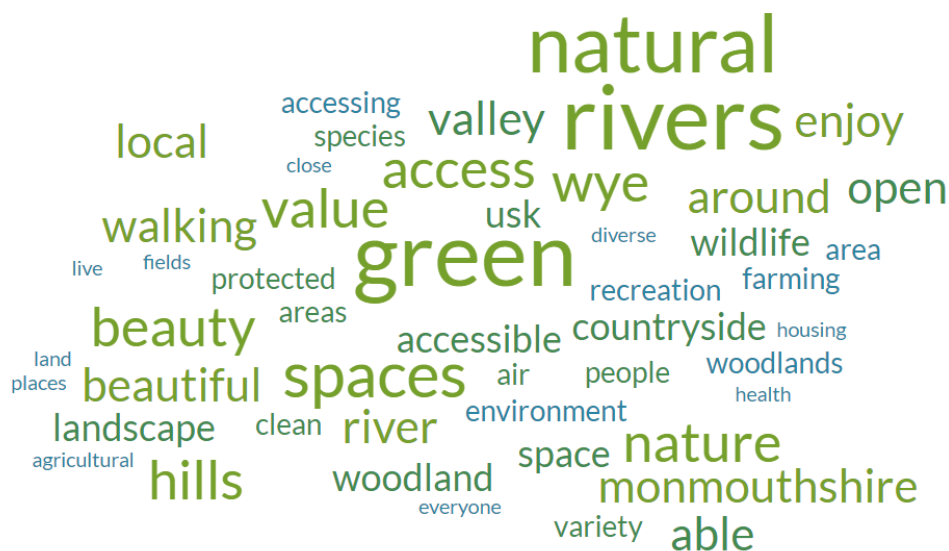
2. Views on Monmouthshire's Natural Heritage

The consultation began with questions to gauge awareness and feelings on climate and nature emergency issues, and views on Monmouthshire's natural heritage. The questionnaire from Usk show included some of the same questions, and a pictorial question on how "connected" one felt to nature. The stamps collected are summarised on Picture 3 below



Picture 3: Summary of responses to "How connected do you feel to nature"

Respondents were asked what they valued most about the natural environment and landscape of Monmouthshire. The most popular responses were access to countryside and greenspaces in towns, some respondents specifically mentioned walking, rights of way or cycling access. Rivers and streams were equally as popular. The beauty or scenery of Monmouthshire and diverse wildlife were also mentioned.



Picture 4: Word cloud of responses to what respondents' value most about Monmouthshire

When asked to rank priority for nature recovery action in Monmouthshire, most respondents (62%) agreed that rivers should be highest priority. Woodland was the second highest priority (21% top, 47% second). One respondent thought Urban should be the top priority, but most respondents ranked this 5th. We also asked respondents to pick three actions which they thought were the most essential or meaningful – these were 1) Restoring native habitats, 2) Protecting water courses, 3) protecting endangered species. All the options given were selected, with popular answers being restoring native habitats, protecting water courses, and protecting endangered species.

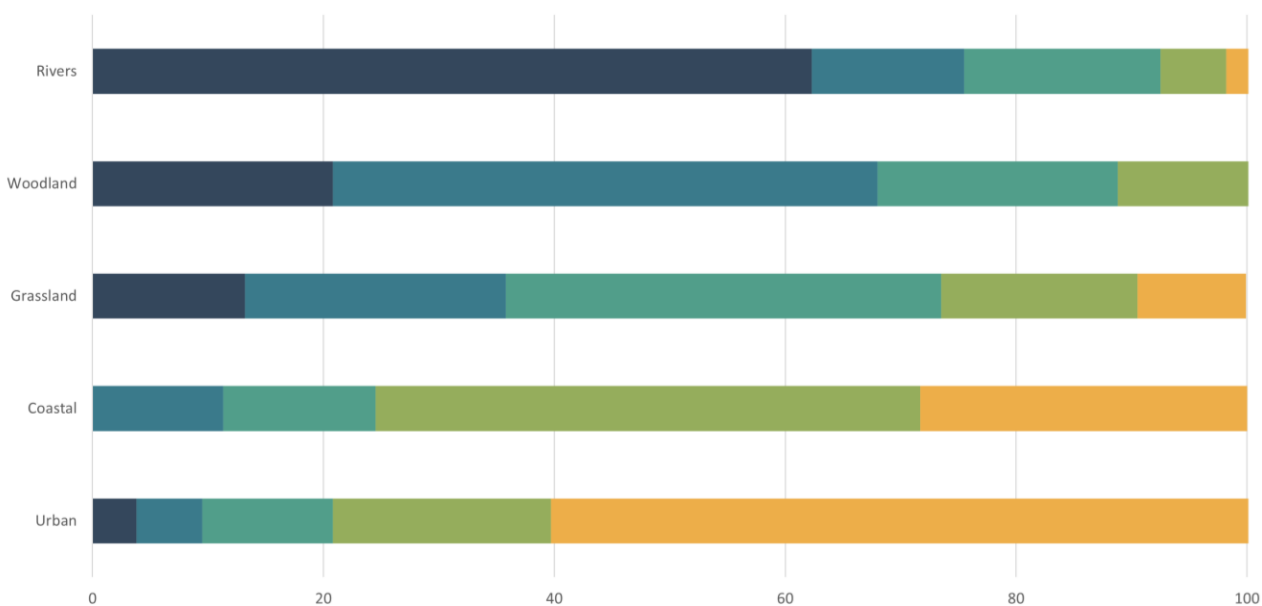


Chart 1: Landscape priorities

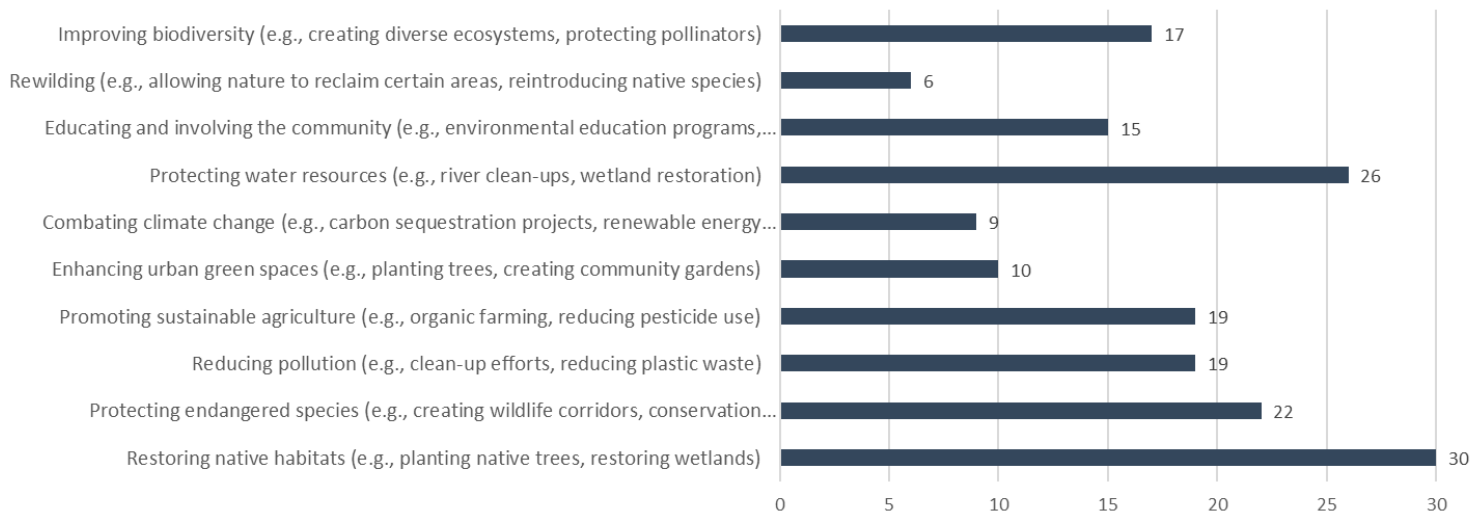


Chart 2: Nature Recovery Actions

3. Monmouthshire Local NRAP

Work began on the Monmouthshire Local NRAP in 2022, when members of the Monmouthshire and Newport Local Nature Partnership (as it was then) were asked to feedback on what habitats and species they considered priorities for Monmouthshire and how the local NRAP should look. The Monmouthshire and Newport LNP separated into two partnerships in 2023, and the first draft of the Monmouthshire Local NRAP was sent to Monmouthshire members in January 2024. Members fed back to the LNP coordinator, and the changes were incorporated into final draft.

Public consultation feedback on the Monmouthshire Local NRAP was positive. Most were enthusiastic about the aims and objectives of the plan supported the content. A few felt it was too complicated, which we intend to address. We have summarised the recommendations made by respondents, and how we are going to address this below.

Table 3: Recommendations and Response

Recommendation	Response
Practical solutions	Part 1 of the NRAP is the introduction setting out the strategy. Parts 2 and 3 will provide habitat and species action plans which will include practical solutions
Firmer engagement strategy	The General Action Plan (Section 4) includes engagement actions suitable for all LNP members to take. Following initial review with LNP members it was decided the make the GAP more specific to LNP members and remove some tasks which were specific to the LNP coordinator, such as producing a comms plan and engagement strategy. These are now in the work programme for the LNP coordinator.
Funding Options	Funding programmes are dynamic, so including within a static document is not practical. We already highlight funding options as they become available to members on the LNP mailing list. We will develop our website to include a section of funding options.
More commentary from national and local wildlife groups	We have consulted with LNP members, which include representatives from national and local wildlife groups, and the feedback received was incorporated into the draft. The LNP coordinator will continue to expand LNP engagement and increase member input into the Local NRAP.

Easy read section	We will develop an easy read summary of the Local NRAP which will be presented as a webpage
Community Action Plan	We will develop a list of community actions that residents can undertake to make a difference. This will be presented as a webpage, which can be easily updated to ensure that links remain live and usable.
Protect green areas from development	These recommendations are not within the scope of the LNP to deliver nor appropriate for the Local NRAP to include. National Planning Policy, the Replacement Local Development Plan and Nature Recovery Supplementary Planning Guidance are more appropriate mechanisms.
Hold landowners accountable for damage	
Swift bricks on new houses	

Outcome of the Local NRAP Consultation

- No changes to the Local NRAP Part 1 Strategy document are proposed
- We will create an easy-read summary of the Local NRAP to be published alongside the strategy
- We will create a Community Action Plan to identify actions that can be taken by individuals
- We will develop our web presence to present these documents online, and include signposting towards funding sources

4. MCC Green Infrastructure Strategy

The MCC Green Infrastructure Strategy was first published in March 2019. A co-production of the 2019 version was undertaken including workshops with Town and Community Councils and other local stakeholders. The updated version is a refresh of the 2017 Strategy to consider changes in national and local policies.

Feedback on the refreshed Green Infrastructure Strategy was positive; the majority stated it increased their knowledge of green infrastructure services and benefits. The majority supported the aims and objectives of the strategy. Concerns raised are summarised in Table 5:

Table 5: Concerns and Response

Concern	Response
Not enough projects to deliver in a timely manner	A GI Strategy Projects database is being developed was intended to be informed by the public consultation and form a dynamic document which lists current and potential projects.
Move on from consultation to delivery	The current GI Strategy is used to inform delivery of projects by the GI Team and other relevant teams. The refreshed GI strategy will continue to inform the delivery and the emerging GI Strategy Projects database.
Executive summary needed	The document does have an executive summary that is available as a separate document, the link was included as part of the consultation.

Respondents were asked what they were hoping to see in the GI Strategy which wasn't included. The responses included are summarised in Table 6:

Table 6:

Matter Raised	Response
Protected areas around villages and towns to prevent further development	The GI strategy works alongside the Replacement Development Plan to ensure that development is sustainable.
Maintenance of reens, coastal path and footpaths and cutting back/down weeds especially on footpaths	The GI Strategy promotes access to natural greenspaces but does not have a direct role in maintenance of these routes. Maintenance of reens is the responsibility of landowners and/or the Internal Drainage District. The Countryside Access Improvement Plan (CAIP) details procedures relating to maintenance of the wales coast path and footpaths.
More emphasis on green cycling and walking routes	The GI Strategy promotes access and walking and cycling routes and is interconnected with other strategies relating to transport and the Active Travel Network Mapping which are the places for emphasis on cycling and walking specifically.
Policy changes within MCC to implement use of green infrastructure by staff to raise awareness and normalise protection of nature and active travel	The GI strategy, alongside the Nature Recovery Action Plan, and the Local Transport Strategy promote nature and active travel this is also reflected in the current LDP and emerging deposit RLDP. The development of the latter must deliver net benefit for biodiversity in line with our S6 act commitments.
Wider stakeholder base to include biodiversity and environment organisations	The stakeholder base of the GI Strategy is very broad as it promotes partnership working to deliver and improve GI with organisations such as environmental NGO's (such as GWT) statutory bodies (such as NRW), including the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership, community groups and town and community councils.
More clarity on proposals	A GI Strategy Projects database is being developed which was intended to be informed by the public consultation and form a dynamic document which lists current and potential projects.
Reduce invasion of green spaces by only repurposing empty buildings for housing	The GI strategy works alongside the Replacement Development Plan to ensure that development is sustainable a specific chapter on Green Infrastructure and policy is included in the deposit RLDP.

Potential Green Infrastructure projects that respondents would like to see include:

- More pollinator friendly projects
- Cycle / walking track from Usk to Little Mill

- Safer cycle/walking network around Monmouthshire
- Defined actions that deliver defined outcomes
- Revamped bridge over the Monnow
- Green pathways in Usk
- Rainwater storage

The GI strategy, together with the Placemaking Plans, Nature Recovery Action Plan, Replacement Local Development Plan, Countryside Access Improvement Plan, Local Transport Strategy, provide opportunities for these projects. The Ciria Sustainable Drainage Systems Manual provides technical standards and best practice around rainwater storage.

Outcome of the Green Infrastructure Strategy Consultation

- No changes to the GI Strategy Volume 1 or 2 are proposed
- An executive summary is available
- We will expand our Green Infrastructure projects pages on the website to publicise projects.