

# **Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan**

## **ISSUES, VISION AND OBJECTIVES PAPER**

**Updated June 2021**



**monmouthshire**  
**sir fynwy**







**Monmouthshire County Council  
Replacement Local Development Plan**

**Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper**

**Updated June 2021**

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## Executive Summary

- i. The Council is preparing a Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) for Monmouthshire (excluding the part of the County that is within the Brecon Beacons National Park). The RLDP will identify where and how much new development will take place during the 'Plan period' (2018-2033). It will allocate land for development, identify areas to be protected, and contain policies to guide decisions on applications for planning permission. We aim to adopt the RLDP late 2023.
- ii. The RLDP will be accompanied by an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) which will consider the environmental, equalities, health and well-being impacts of the Plan. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal is a working document, updated as the RLDP progresses. The RLDP will include an Infrastructure Plan, setting out what is needed to support the development of the allocated sites, and will sit alongside a Local Transport Plan and Economic Strategy. Together, these Plans will seek to deliver on the Council's economic ambition and its core purpose to build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.
- iii. This Paper identifies the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing the County (economic, environmental, social and cultural). Thirty-eight key issues have been identified (see **Table 2.1**), informed by a range of evidence, in particular the public engagement unpinning Monmouthshire's Public Service Board Well-being Plan.
- iv. The Monmouthshire Replacement LDP Vision is

### **By 2033 Monmouthshire will be a place where:**

- (1) People are living in sustainable, resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations and are more inclusive, cohesive, prosperous, vibrant and balanced demographically. Both urban and rural communities are well-connected with better access to local services and facilities, open space and employment opportunities.**
- (2) Communities and businesses are part of an economically thriving and well-connected County.**
- (3) The best of the County's built heritage, countryside, landscape and environmental assets have been protected and enhanced to retain its distinctive character.**
- (4) People enjoy healthier, more sustainable lifestyles with improved access to public transport and active travel opportunities and have a minimised impact on the global environment.**

### **The spatial implications of achieving this Vision will be that by 2033:**

**Monmouthshire will have grown sustainably, with a proportionate distribution of new homes and jobs across the most sustainable settlements, which are supported by amenities and infrastructure with the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs.**

**Development will have contributed to facilitating sustainable lifestyles by delivering high quality places that promote low carbon developments with an appropriate mix of uses and that are well-connected both digitally and physically to the wider area in terms of character, environment and movement by public transport, walking and cycling.**

- v. The role of the RLDP vision is to clarify the core purpose of the RLDP and provide a framework for developing the RLDP's Preferred Strategy and future detailed policies. It sets out how Monmouthshire will develop, change or be conserved in land use planning terms.
- vi. Seventeen RLDP objectives (see below) have been drawn up to set out how the issues will be addressed and the vision delivered. These have been reviewed and amended to reflect relevant feedback from the targeted engagement process, the Council's declaration of a climate emergency in May 2019, continued development of the RLDP evidence base and the spatial element of the Vision. They were also reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and endorsed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 as remaining relevant. The objectives are listed under the most relevant Well-being goals from the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015, and matched against the LDP issues, the theme from Planning Policy Wales edition 11 (PPW11), and matched against the PSB Monmouthshire Well-being Plan (see **Table 4.1**).

### **1) Economic Growth/Employment**

To support a thriving, well-connected, diverse economy, which provides a range of good quality employment opportunities to enable and encourage indigenous business growth and attract inward investment and competitive innovative businesses in appropriate growth sectors, including through the provision of start-ups and grow on spaces.

### **2) Retail Centres**

To sustain and enhance the County towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow, Monmouth, Caldicot and Usk as vibrant and attractive retail centres serving their own populations and those of their surrounding hinterlands, along with increasing the potential customer base through future growth whilst recognising that the role of these centres is evolving.

### **3) Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape**

To protect, enhance and manage Monmouthshire's natural environment and ecosystems. This includes, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the County's other high quality and distinctive landscapes, protected sites, protected species and other biodiversity interests, along with the connectivity between them by creating new linkages for them to adapt while at the same time maximising benefits for the economy, tourism, health and well-being.

### **4) Flood Risk**

To ensure that new development takes account of the risk of flooding, both existing and in the future, including the need to avoid inappropriate development in areas that are at risk from flooding or that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and the need to design development to appropriately manage surface water run-off.



## **5) Minerals and Waste**

To meet the County's regional and local obligations to manage and dispose of its waste and to safeguard and exploit its mineral resource in a sustainable fashion.

## **6) Land**

To promote the efficient use of land, including the need to:

- Maximise opportunities for development on previously developed land, whilst recognising that brownfield opportunities are limited in Monmouthshire.
- Protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land whilst at the same time recognising that this will not always be possible given high proportion of BMV land in the County and the limited opportunities for brownfield development.

## **7) Natural Resources**

To promote the efficient use of natural resources including providing increased opportunities for water efficiency, energy efficiency, renewable energy, recycling and waste reduction.

## **8) Health and Well-being**

To improve access for all ages to recreation, sport, leisure activities, open space and the countryside and to enable healthier lifestyles.

## **9) Demography**

To increase opportunities for the younger population to both live and work within Monmouthshire to assist in ensuring a balanced demography.

## **10) Housing**

To provide a level of housing that is sufficient to provide a wide ranging choice of homes both for existing and future residents, while ensuring that local needs for appropriate, affordable and accessible housing are met as far as possible, particularly in towns but also in rural areas, so long as such housing can assist in building sustainable balanced communities.

## **11) Placemaking**

To promote good quality sustainable places through design, layout and mix of uses that enhance the character and identity of Monmouthshire's settlements and countryside; create attractive, safe and accessible places to live, work and visit; and promote people's prosperity, health, happiness and well-being.

## **12) Communities**

To build sustainable resilient communities where people have good access to employment, shops, housing, public transport, active travel, healthcare, community and cultural facilities.

## **13) Rural Communities**

To sustain existing rural communities as far as possible by providing development opportunities of an appropriate scale and location in rural areas in order to assist in building sustainable rural communities and strengthening the rural economy.

## **14) Infrastructure**

To ensure that appropriate physical and digital infrastructure (including community and recreational facilities, sewerage, water, transport, schools, health care and broadband etc.) is in place or can be provided to accommodate new development.

**15) Accessibility**

To seek to reduce the need to travel by promoting a mix of land use allocations and improved internet connectivity, and where travel is required, to provide opportunities for active travel and integrated sustainable transport.

**16) Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language**

To protect and enhance the built environment, culture and heritage of Monmouthshire for the future while maximising benefits for the economy, tourism and social well-being, including supporting and safeguarding the Welsh Language.

**17) Climate Change**

To strive to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C, supporting carbon reduction through a variety of measures including the use of renewable energy, the design and location of new development, encouraging balanced job and population growth to reduce out-commuting, the provision of broadband connectivity to reduce the need to travel, the provision of ultra-low emission vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce emissions and improve air quality, and the provision of quality Green Infrastructure.

## 1. Introduction

### Purpose of this paper

- 1.1 This Paper plays a key role in informing the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy. It sets out the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing the County informed by a range of evidence, including the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB) Well-being Plan (February 2018), Monmouthshire Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022 (February 2018), LDP Review Report (March 2018), LDP Annual Monitoring Reports (2015-2018) and RLDP Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (December 2018), along with wider contextual factors. It also sets out the RLDP vision and objectives to address the issues, challenges and opportunities identified.

### Background

- 1.2 A full review of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP) commenced in 2017, with the final Review Report published in March 2018. Based on the evidence contained in the Review Report, it was concluded that the LDP should be revised and that this should take the form of a full revision procedure. The publication of the LDP Review Report triggered the process through which a RLDP will be prepared and adopted for the County.
- 1.3 The Council is currently in the process of preparing a RLDP for the County (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park) which will cover the period 2018-2033. The RLDP will set out land use development proposals for the County and will identify where and how much new development will take place over the replacement Plan period. It will also identify areas to be protected from development.
- 1.4 The RLDP is being prepared in accordance with the Delivery Agreement (DA), a second revision to which was agreed by Welsh Government in October 2020. The DA sets out the proposed approach, timescales and consultation arrangements for the RLDP. The agreed timetable will see the RLDP being adopted in late 2023. Work has progressed on the RLDP with the initial call for Candidate Sites, the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, the Initial Habitats Regulations Screening Report and the Growth and Spatial Options (non-statutory consultation) being produced to date. Unfortunately, progress on the preparation of the RLDP has however not proceeded as quickly as envisaged in the original Delivery Agreement. This is due to various factors, including the Covid-19 pandemic and the publication of the corrected Welsh Government 2018-based population and household projections in August 2020. This has resulted in the need to revisit the Growth and Spatial Options and Preferred Strategy stages of the RLDP process.
- 1.5 The RLDP will be accompanied by an Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) which will consider the environmental, equalities, health and well-being impacts of the Plan. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal is a working document, updated as the RLDP progresses. The RLDP will include an Infrastructure Plan, setting out what is needed to support the development of the allocated sites, and will sit alongside a Local Transport Plan and Economic Strategy. Together, these Plans will seek to deliver on the Council's

economic ambition and its core purpose to build sustainable and resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations.

- 1.6 The preparation of the Issues, Vision and Objectives is one of the first key stages in the RLDP preparation process. This Paper identifies the key issues, challenges and opportunities facing the County and sets out the vision and objectives for the RLDP. It should be noted that there are some elements of the current adopted LDP that are still considered relevant and as such this is a review process as opposed to writing a completely new Plan.
- 1.7 As part of the RLDP pre-Deposit Plan proposals, a Preferred Strategy must be prepared<sup>1</sup>. The LDP Manual (Edition 2, August 2015) notes that strategic issues, a vision and objectives should be included within the Preferred Strategy. This Paper plays a key role in informing the RLDP Preferred Strategy. It sets out the key issues, challenges and opportunities for the County informed by a range of evidence including the PSB Well-being Plan, Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022, LDP Review Report, LDP Annual Monitoring Reports and RLDP Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, along with wider contextual factors such as national guidance/legislation and the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. It also sets out the RLDP vision and objectives to address the key issues, challenges and opportunities identified. In accordance with Welsh Government guidance this stage of the plan preparation process draws heavily on and reflects the PSB Well-being Plan (paragraphs 1.6 and 1.27 Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11, February 2021).

### What are the Issues, Vision and Objectives?

- 1.8 The **issues** relate to the key issues, challenges and opportunities that the RLDP is seeking to address (economic, environmental, social and cultural aspects) and form the basis of the RLDP objectives. As noted above, the issues are informed by a wide range of evidence, including the Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan, Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022, LDP Annual Monitoring Reports (2015 – 2018) and LDP Review Report, along with wider contextual factors such as national guidance/legislation and the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal. The issues, challenges and opportunities are also informed by key sustainability matters which must be developed as part of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA) of the RLDP. The sustainability issues must be addressed in order for the Plan as a whole to be considered sustainable. The sustainability issues are developed utilising baseline information, which describes the position of a number of different economic, social, cultural and environmental characteristics relating to the County at a set point in time (the baseline). This information is set out in the RLDP SA Scoping Report (December 2018).
- 1.9 The role of the RLDP **vision** is to clarify the core purpose of the RLDP and provide a framework for developing the Preferred Strategy and future detailed policies. It should set out how Monmouthshire will develop, change or be conserved and provide

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Regulation 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Plan (Wales)) Regulations 2015

the land use expression of this (Paras 6.1.1 and 5.2.3.1 respectively, LDP Manual Edition 2, 2015).

- 1.10 The RLDP **objectives** reflect/elaborate on the Plan’s Vision and set out how the issues, challenges and opportunities identified as facing the area will be addressed through the RLDP. The objectives identified should be capable of being addressed through the land use planning system. The objectives have regard to those set out in the Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan<sup>2</sup> and other corporate plans and are formed having undertaken a review of the wider national, regional and local policy context, baseline evidence and SA Scoping Report. This has enabled us to understand the wider context and identify the main issues facing the County and set out objectives to address the issues. This should identify how economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations are balanced to deliver sustainable development in Monmouthshire over the Replacement Plan period.

### RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives

- 1.11 The Issues, Vision and Objectives have been updated since the Adopted LDP (2011 – 2021) to reflect the current position within Monmouthshire. Of note, a review of the adopted LDP Issues, Vision and Objectives was undertaken to support the LDP Review Report. The Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan and Monmouthshire Corporate Business Plan 2017-2022 (Incorporating Well-being Objectives) were both published in February 2018. Both of these documents provide well-being objectives and are key contributors to the update of the issues, vision and objectives for the RLDP. Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February 2021) supports this approach, recognising the significance of local well-being plans as a key evidence source for LDPs (paragraphs 1.6 and 1.27).
- 1.12 The Monmouthshire Well-being Plan was prepared by the Public Service Board (PSB) which is made up of four statutory members namely; Monmouthshire County Council, Aneurin Bevan University Health Board, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Natural Resources Wales. Other organisations are also invited, in Monmouthshire this includes; Public Health Wales, Gwent Police, Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Melin Homes and voluntary organisations represented through the Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations. While this work has been carried out on behalf of the Public Service Board rather than Monmouthshire County Council specifically, it identifies important issues for the County as a whole that must be considered. The Well-being Plan identifies four objectives:
- Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.
  - Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.
  - Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.

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<sup>2</sup> Paras 1.6 and 1.27 of Planning Policy Wales edition 11

- Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

1.13 The Corporate Business Plan is produced by Monmouthshire County Council. This utilises the contributions made to the Well-being Plan along with issues raised most frequently to County Councillors and issues reported to Community Hubs, the contact centre and on the My Monmouthshire App. The Corporate Business plan 2017-2022 sets out the Council's four Well-being Objectives:

- Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.
- Develop opportunities for communities and businesses to be part of a thriving and well-connected County.
- Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment for the well-being of current and future generations.
- Maximise the potential in our communities to develop the well-being of people throughout their lives.

1.14 The Adopted LDP Sustainability Issues have also been updated and are published in the RLDP Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Scoping Report. The SA Scoping Report includes a wide range of social, cultural, environmental and economic baseline data. The Sustainability Issues have also been considered and incorporated as appropriate in this document, but are not repeated in their entirety.

1.15 The Issues and Objectives have been grouped in accordance with the Seven Well-being Goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The Well-being Goals are set out in Appendix 1. It should be noted that many of the issues and objectives cross a number of well-being goals, and have, therefore, been grouped as a best fit with the goals. However, the cross-cutting themes should not be overlooked.

### **Consultation on RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives**

1.16 As stated above, the issues, vision and objectives are heavily drawn from and reflect the PSB Well-being Plan which was extensively consulted upon by the Public Service Board in 2017 and resulted in contributions from more than 1,400 people. This approach reflects Welsh Government guidance which recognises the significance of local well-being plans as a key evidence source for LDP preparation (paragraphs 1.6 and 1.27, PPW11, February 2021). In view of this, and given that it is not a statutory requirement to consult on the RLDP issues, vision and objectives, it was not considered necessary to undertake a full public consultation exercise on this initial stage of the plan preparation process. Discussions on the draft issues, vision and objectives took place through the Area Committee and Area Cluster meetings in January and February 2019, where views were sought on the Draft Paper. A RLDP Member Workshop also took place in January 2019 where views were sought on the draft issues, vision and objectives. Feedback from these meetings has been noted and considered, and where appropriate, has informed the final issues, vision and objectives set out in this paper. The RLDP vision and objectives have continued to be

refined prior to inclusion in the Preferred Strategy to reflect the outcomes of further stakeholder engagement/consultation in relation to the growth options, the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and continued development of the RLDP evidence base.

### Review of the RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives in light of Covid-19

- 1.17 The RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives were reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and endorsed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 as remaining relevant. Further to this in July 2020, Welsh Government published its planning priorities in Building Better Places – Placemaking and the Covid-19 Recovery, to assist in taking action in the recovery period after the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. A formal review of the RLDP Issues, Vision and Objectives and Evidence Base<sup>3</sup> was undertaken and agreed by Council in October 2020 to ensure consistency with Welsh Government's priorities. No new issues were identified through the review that are not already adequately covered within the Issues, Vision and Objectives, no amendments to the RLDP were proposed as part of this review. The spatial element of the vision has nevertheless been further amended following consultation on the RLDP Growth and Spatial Options in January – February 2021. The updated Vision is set out in this Paper and the Preferred Strategy (June 2021).

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Monmouthshire-RLDP-Review-of-Issues-Vision-Objectives-and-Evidence-Base-in-Light-of-Covid.pdf>

## 2. Replacement LDP Issues

- 2.1 In order to assist in the development of the RLDP vision and objectives, a number of key issues have been identified that will need to be addressed in the RLDP. The existing LDP issues have been reviewed to determine whether they remain relevant. They were also reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and endorsed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 as remaining relevant<sup>4</sup>. New issues, challenges and opportunities that have arisen since the adoption of the LDP have also been identified, including those contained in the PSB Well-being Plan, as well as wider contextual factors. Accordingly, the issues have been updated, where appropriate, to reflect the current position within Monmouthshire. The Issues have been grouped in accordance with the Seven Well-being Goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to ensure that they are framed within this context (Appendix 1 refers). This allows for the appreciation of social, economic and environmental matters to be embedded into the Plan. Further detail/background information on the identified issues, challenges and opportunities is set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.2 As noted above a number of Issues were found to have increased emphasis and importance in light of Covid-19, these are indicated in the table below using an asterisk against both the headline and relevant individual Issues. An additional section has also been included within the table to provide further detail on how the RLDP can support such Issues given their increased emphasis in light of Covid-19.

**Table 2.1: Issues and Opportunities**

<b>A Prosperous Wales (Well-being Goal 1)</b>
<b>Employment &amp; Economy*</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<p><b>Issue 1*</b> - There has been a slow uptake of employment land in the past. There is subsequently a need to consider whether existing available land is suitably located and fit for purpose for appropriate growth sectors. There is also a need to consider potential future demand for employment land along with Council aspirations for innovation across Monmouthshire in light of the recent removal of the Severn Bridge tolls and the ambitions and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCDC).</p> <p><b>Issue 2*</b> - While unemployment is low there is a net-outflow of commuters, both levels of out commuting and distances travelled to work are relatively high. There is a need to provide support for inward investment and local employment growth/opportunities.</p> <p><b>Issue 3*</b> - Wage levels available for local jobs are lower than the average for Wales and the UK. Evidence continues to suggest that the income for economically active women who both live and work within the County is significantly lower than that of men within the</p>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Monmouthshire-RLDP-Review-of-Issues-Vision-Objectives-and-Evidence-Base-in-Light-of-Covid.pdf>



same category. This coupled with high property prices makes it difficult for young people and future generations to live and work locally. Additional employment opportunities for young people are required to help reduce the numbers of this age group leaving the County.

**Issue 4\*** - Monmouthshire has a dual economy. The qualifications, skills and earnings of the residents are above the regional and national average, however, for those working in the area earnings are lower and employment is relatively less skilled.

**Issue 5\*** - The increasing ageing population and shrinking working age population (the relative absence of 20-40 year olds and our median age of 48 years, compared to a median age of 34 years in Cardiff) is limiting employment growth within Monmouthshire and social sustainability of communities. This is exacerbated by limited Job opportunities and affordable housing availability.

**Issue 6\*** - There is a need to sustain and regenerate the County's rural economy. There is current uncertainty regarding the impact of Brexit on agricultural subsidies.

**Issue 7\*** - Higher levels of those in employment work at home compared to the Welsh average. Efficient digital infrastructure is essential to support home working and the general connectivity of the County's rural areas and to support economic growth<sup>5</sup>.

**Issue 8\*** - The role of high streets is changing due to out of town retail centres, the increase in internet shopping, changing shopping habits (e.g. top-up grocery shopping) and austerity and as a result vacancy rates in some of the County's retail centres have increased. There is a leakage of expenditure out of the County and a need to protect the County's retail centres from out of town developments.

**Issue 9\*** - Tourism plays a significant part in the Monmouthshire economy particularly in assisting in the diversification of the rural economy and in sustaining the County's historic town centres. In 2019 2.28 million visitors came to Monmouthshire, having an overall economic impact of £244 million. Staying visitors generate a higher economic impact than day visitors at £185million compared to £59 million in 2019 (Monmouthshire STEAM Report 2019) highlighting the continued need for visitor accommodation.

#### **How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?**

**A(i)** The RLDP can encourage a vibrant economy within the County, specifically by ensuring that sufficient employment sites are suitably located in attractive, accessible and sustainable locations and are of an appropriate size and type to meet the needs of the market/key employment/growth sectors, including, through support of start-up and growing businesses to help diversify the economy.

**A(ii)** The RLDP can aim to ensure that there is a portfolio of sites available which is appropriate to market conditions and the needs of the Monmouthshire economy along with the wider Cardiff Capital Region. Consideration can be given to using CPO powers to ensure sites come forward.

<sup>5</sup> The current situational analysis of Superfast Broadband Next Generation Access (NGA) coverage in the Cardiff Capital Region, based on the OMR/SAPC undertaken prior to the Superfast Cymru Phase 2 (SFC2) Procurement, paints a stark picture in terms of the current lack of coverage in Monmouthshire in comparison to our other nine Local Authority partners - currently 12.56% of premises in Monmouthshire are NOT covered in comparison to 3-4% in the other nine Local Authorities within the region.

<p><b>A(iii)</b> The RLDP can ensure that, wherever possible, jobs and homes are located in close proximity to each other to provide greater opportunity for people to work and live locally. The Replacement LDP can also ensure a range and choice of homes are available, in new developments, particularly where there is a need for affordable housing, to assist in regaining a balanced population.</p> <p><b>A(iv)</b> The RLDP needs to take a role in strengthening the local economy, ensuring an appropriate economic base to enable people to live and work in the County.</p> <p><b>A(v)</b> The RLDP can contain policies that support the diversification of the rural economy.</p> <p><b>A(vi)</b> The RLDP can help to address digital exclusion by seeking to support the improvement of rural broadband and delivery of high speed connections.</p> <p><b>A(vii)</b> The RLDP must contain policies that protect the vitality and viability of existing town centres, providing additional retail opportunities where appropriate, including in relation to the regeneration of Caldicot and Usk, and ensure that the distribution of development supports these main centres in order to retain retail expenditure.</p> <p><b>A(viii)</b> The RLDP will enable a review of the towns' primary shopping frontages (PSF) and related policies to have regard to the changing role of the high street.</p> <p><b>A(ix)</b> The RLDP can contain policies that encourage tourism development while at the same time ensuring that the natural and built heritage that attracts visitors to the area is preserved and enhanced.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b></p>
<p>The RLDP will provide a positive planning policy framework to support and enable sustainable economic growth, including in relation to our high streets and tourism sector, over the Plan period.</p>
<p><b>A Resilient Wales (Well-being Goal 2)</b></p>
<p><b>Air</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p><b>Issue 10</b> - While air pollution is not a major problem in Monmouthshire it can cause significant problems for people's health. The greatest problems associated with air quality in the County are caused by vehicle emissions, this is particularly apparent in the two Air Quality Management Areas in the County at Usk and Chepstow.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b></p>
<p><b>B(i)</b> The RLDP can seek to minimise any polluting effects that might arise from new development in the County by encouraging appropriate patterns of development that seek to reduce the usage of private vehicles and to allow for increased walking, cycling and use of public transport (active travel). It can also take measures to ensure that the location of new development does not worsen conditions in existing Air Quality Management Areas or result in new ones.</p>
<p><b>Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity &amp; Landscape*</b></p>

<b>Issue</b>
<p><b>Issue 11*</b> - Monmouthshire is renowned for its beautiful landscapes and major biodiversity resources including River SACs. The best of these assets should be protected, managed and enhanced for future generations.</p> <p><b>Issue 12*</b> - There is a need to improve connectivity within the landscape through protecting and improving existing wildlife networks and corridors, including both green and blue infrastructure, and creating new linkages to allow species to move and adapt to climate change impacts. GI is also beneficial to human well-being.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b>
<p><b>C(i)</b> The RLDP should ensure that new development is sustainable, does not cause harm to international, national and locally protected sites and species and, that where appropriate, necessary mitigation measures are taken to avoid any such adverse effects. The River Wye and River Usk water bodies within the County are currently experiencing water quality issues, specifically in relation to phosphate levels, the RLDP must ensure development in these catchment areas does not contribute to or increase phosphate levels.</p> <p><b>C(ii)</b> The RLDP must ensure biodiversity is considered in any development in order to protect any interest on the site and encourage biodiversity enhancements where necessary.</p> <p><b>C(iii)</b> It will be necessary to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the RLDP to ensure that any cumulative effects of development in Monmouthshire and adjoining areas does not result in harm to internationally designated nature conservation sites.</p> <p><b>C(iv)</b> The RLDP can contain policies to protect and enhance the green and blue infrastructure networks across the County.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b>
The RLDP will provide a positive planning policy framework to support and enable placemaking and the provision of locally accessible open /green space and to protect/enhance our natural environment.
<b>Flooding</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<b>Issue 13</b> - Parts of the County are vulnerable to flooding. Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding, as well as many other risks, so mitigating climate change and building resilience is crucial.
<b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b>
<b>D(i)</b> The RLDP must ensure new development is located away from flood risk areas and has a role to play in terms of reducing the risk from present day flood risk, as well as in relation to climate change adaptation and resilience.
<b>Minerals &amp; Waste</b>
<b>Issue</b>

<p><b>Issue 14</b> - Monmouthshire has made good progress in the promotion of the recycling and composting of waste, and the elimination of waste to landfill. Monmouthshire also has to make an appropriate contribution to the regional requirement for waste management.</p> <p><b>Issue 15</b> - Mineral extraction plays a limited role in Monmouthshire's economy but there is a need to safeguard the County's resources in order to make an appropriate contribution to the sustainable supply of aggregates to the South Wales economy as a whole.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b></p>
<p><b>E(i)</b> The RLDP can identify sites that are appropriate for waste management or disposal facilities to meet local or regional requirements.</p> <p><b>E(ii)</b> The RLDP can ensure that mineral resources are safeguarded and exploited in a sustainable fashion that also enables Monmouthshire to meet its obligation to make a contribution to the requirements of the South Wales region.</p>
<p><b>Land</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p><b>Issue 16</b> - There are limited opportunities for brownfield development within the County's existing urban areas.</p> <p><b>Issue 17</b> - Monmouthshire has a significantly high percentage of best and most versatile agricultural land (i.e. Grade 1, 2 or 3a). While there is a need to conserve these resources, there are limited opportunities within the County for brownfield development and development on lower grades of agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3b, 4 and 5).</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b></p>
<p><b>F(i)</b> The RLDP will seek to prioritise the use of previously developed land where opportunities arise.</p> <p><b>F(ii)</b> The RLDP should seek to protect best and most versatile agricultural land whilst at the same time recognising that this will not always be possible where there is an overriding need for development.</p>
<p><b>A Healthier Wales (Well-being Goal 3)</b></p>
<p><b>Human Health*</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p><b>Issue 18*</b> - While Monmouthshire performs relatively well on indicators relating to health, there is a need to promote opportunities for healthy living particularly in the context of an ageing population.</p> <p><b>Issue 19*</b> - While an ageing population brings many opportunities, it also brings challenges and increases in the number of people living with long term conditions can create pressures on existing health care provision.</p> <p><b>Issue 20*</b> - On the whole Monmouthshire's residents have good access to public open space, however, there are deficiencies in many of the County's communities in relation to community and recreational facilities. This can contribute to rural isolation in certain areas.</p> <p><b>Issue 21*</b> - Obesity is a growing problem throughout Wales. Although obesity rates in Monmouthshire are below the Welsh average consideration should be given to promoting healthy lifestyles.</p>

<b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b>
<p><b>G(i)</b> The RLDP can assist in creating a healthier Monmouthshire by ensuring sufficient policies are in place to support the provision of blue and green infrastructure and retention of the existing resource.</p> <p><b>G(ii)</b> The RLDP can provide policies to ensure health care provision is supported.</p> <p><b>G(iii)</b> The RLDP can affect the provision of public open space and recreation by protecting, where necessary, existing open space and facilities as well as requiring new development to make a contribution to the provision of additional facilities.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b>
The RLDP will provide a positive planning policy framework to support and enable placemaking and the provision of locally accessible open /green space and to protect/enhance our natural environment.
<b>A More Equal Wales (Well-being Goal 4)</b>
<b>Population*</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<p><b>Issue 22*</b> - Monmouthshire is a predominantly rural county with almost half (47%) of the total population living in wards defined as being in rural areas (i.e. with a population of less than 10,000).</p> <p><b>Issue 23*</b> - The population of Monmouthshire has shown a steady increase over a ten year period to 2011, although more recently the rate of growth has slowed. This growth is being fuelled by in-migration.</p> <p><b>Issue 24*</b> - Monmouthshire has a significantly higher proportion of older age groups (65+) and lower proportion of young adults (16 – 44) compared to the Welsh average, the sharpest decline of which is in the working age population. The relative absence of young adults is often linked to the affordability of housing across the County and has an impact on future prospects of economic growth.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b>
<p><b>H(i)</b> The RLDP must decide on the level of growth appropriate for Monmouthshire and the spatial distribution of this growth between different urban and rural communities to address the challenges we face (including demography and affordability), balancing the greater sustainability of urban settlements with the difficulties of maintaining services in rural areas.</p> <p><b>H(ii)</b> There is a need to achieve a more balanced population structure to ensure there is a sufficient population of working aged people to support the Monmouthshire economy and to provide more opportunities for young people to both to stay within and move to the area. The RLDP needs to take a role in strengthening the local economy, ensuring an appropriate economic base to enable people to live and work in the County and ensuring that demand for homes is satisfied by providing good quality affordable homes for those who need them.</p> <p><b>H(iii)</b> The RLDP can help to address issues surrounding the ageing population through facilitating the provision of accessible services supported by connective infrastructure to meet local population growth needs.</p>

<b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b>
The RLDP growth levels will deliver positive demographic change over the Plan period that is essential to support and enable the provision of balanced communities throughout the County.
<b>A Wales of Cohesive Communities (Well-being Goal 5)</b>
<b>Housing*</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<p><b>Issue 25*</b> - Average house prices in the County are high at £297,628 compared to a Welsh average of £187,477 (Hometrack March 2020). The most significant increases have been experienced in recent years. There is a need to consider the potential impact on house prices arising from the recent removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls, the ambitions and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the South East Wales Metro, together with the economic growth of the Bristol/SW region and the opportunities for Monmouthshire as a border county and its location between Bristol and Newport and Cardiff, the 'Great Western Cities'.</p> <p><b>Issue 26*</b> - House prices are also high in relation to earnings and there is a pressing need for additional affordable housing in the County in both urban and rural areas to assist in ensuring a balanced population.</p> <p><b>Issue 27*</b> - A range and choice of housing is needed to both meet the needs of an ageing population and to attract and retain the younger age groups.</p> <p><b>Issue 28*</b> - There is limited scope for significant or long term expansion of the existing urban areas within the County due to a mix of physical, environmental and policy constraints.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b>
<p><b>I(i)</b> The RLDP will affect the amount of housing to be provided by both deciding on overall levels of growth/spatial options and by setting thresholds and proportions to determine the amount of this residential development that is affordable. It can also ensure a range and choice of homes are available in new developments and influence the type, tenure and nature of housing built within the County.</p> <p><b>I(ii)</b> The RLDP will have to resolve the amount of housing to be built in rural areas, balancing the need to sustain rural settlements by supporting services and enabling people to remain in their communities with the need to protect the countryside and ensure sustainable patterns of development.</p> <p><b>I(iii)</b> The RLDP process must balance the extent to which the Main Towns and Severnside area can continue to accommodate further growth in the medium to long term against the potential for a new settlement in order to facilitate the creation of sustainable resilient communities.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b>

The RLDP will ensure /enable a range and choice of homes (housing mix) in future housing developments to address affordability issues and to build sustainable and resilient communities. The Preferred Strategy allows for a level of growth and for affordable housing-led sites: this remains critical to addressing the issues and objectives.
<b>Infrastructure*</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<p><b>Issue 29*</b> - Poor access to community facilities and declining local service provision is a particular issue for rural communities.</p> <p><b>Issue 30*</b> - Limited public transport, particularly in rural areas makes it harder to access jobs, services and facilities, which could be exacerbated by rising fuel prices. There are nevertheless future opportunities for investment in public transport through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and advances in technology.</p> <p><b>Issue 31*</b> - There is a need to ensure that adequate physical, digital and social infrastructure is provided to support new development. This includes: broadband infrastructure, the provision of sufficient water and sewerage infrastructure, transport infrastructure and active travel to support non-car modes of travel.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b>
<p><b>J(i)</b> The RLDP can consider allocating land for housing and employment in rural areas in an attempt to sustain existing rural community facilities and services, weighing this against the need to avoid unsustainable travel patterns.</p> <p><b>J(ii)</b> The RLDP can help ensure adequate provision of infrastructure to serve new development and can contain support policies to enable improvements or enhancements for existing development, e.g. provision of electric vehicle charging (EVC), broadband connectivity and renewable energy.</p> <p><b>J(iii)</b> The RLDP will contain allocations and policies to support the priorities of the emerging local transport plan and cycling strategy.</p>
<b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b>
The RLDP will ensure digital and charging infrastructure provision is in place or can be provided to accommodate new development and will support active travel opportunities.
<b>A Wales of Vibrant Culture &amp; Thriving Welsh Language (Well-being Goal 6)</b>
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>
<b>Issue</b>
<b>Issue 32</b> - Monmouthshire has a significant built heritage resource in terms of scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and archaeologically sensitive sites that, together with their settings, require protection and enhancement.

<p><b>Issue 33</b> - There is a need to protect, promote and enhance the best of our landscape and heritage which are an important part of our culture and play a key role in tourism and economic growth, along with providing support for the Welsh Language to ensure it is safeguarded and supported.</p> <p><b>Issue 34</b> - The distinctive settlement pattern of Monmouthshire relates to historic towns and villages and their relationship with the surrounding rural areas. There has nevertheless been substantial suburban expansion in the South of the County, particularly adjacent to the M4 corridor. This area is likely to receive further pressure for growth due to the recent removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls and the ambitions and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the South East Wales Metro, together with the economic growth of the Bristol/SW region and the opportunities for Monmouthshire as a border county and its location between Bristol and Newport and Cardiff, the 'Great Western Cities'.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b></p>
<p><b>K(i)</b> The RLDP can contain measures to preserve and enhance the built heritage and best of the historic environment of Monmouthshire.</p> <p><b>K(ii)</b> The RLDP can help protect, promote and enhance the best of our landscape and heritage which are an important part of our culture and play a key role in tourism and economic growth, along with providing support for the Welsh Language to ensure it is safeguarded and supported.</p> <p><b>K(iii)</b> Community involvement provides an opportunity to seek views on how Welsh language and culture interact with LDP policies and proposals. The future of the Welsh language depends on a range of factors beyond the planning system, particularly education, demographic change, community activities and a sound economic base to maintain thriving sustainable communities. The planning system can contribute to the future well-being of the Welsh language by creating conditions for well-paid employment opportunities and a range of quality housing options resulting in sustainable communities. Planning policies must not seek to control housing occupancy on linguistic grounds<sup>6</sup>.</p> <p><b>K(iv)</b> The RLDP can play a key role in promoting good quality sustainable design that will enable new development and future growth to respect and enhance the existing distinctive character of Monmouthshire.</p>
<p><b>Landscape</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p><b>Issue 35</b> - Monmouthshire has a rich and diverse landscape that brings wider benefits to the local economy particularly through tourism and health and well-being. Monmouthshire as a whole incorporates parts of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b></p>

<sup>6</sup> Technical Advice Note 20 paragraphs 1.7.3, 2.2 and 2.6.4



<p><b>L(i)</b> The RLDP must seek to protect high quality landscapes throughout the County, paying particular attention to those contained in the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Blaenavon World Heritage Site and in the setting of the Brecon Beacons National Park.</p>
<p><b>A Globally Responsible Wales (Well-being Goal 7)</b></p>
<p><b>Climatic Factors*</b></p>
<p><b>Issue</b></p>
<p><b>Issue 36*</b> - The volume of traffic in the County has continued to increase, up nearly 19% in the nine years to 2019 (StatsWales, April 2019). There is a pattern of relatively long travel to work distances, high levels of car ownership and reliance on the private car.  <b>Issue 37*</b> - Small Scale and Local Authority wide Renewable Energy schemes are generally supported across Monmouthshire, however, a more proactive approach should be undertaken for schemes of a local authority scale (i.e. 5MW - 25MW).  <b>Issue 38*</b> - Monmouthshire's rurality, limited public transport, high levels of car ownership and the subsequent reliance on the private car, combined with high energy consumption and waste management can all contribute to carbon emissions. MCC recognises that we are in a climate emergency and has committed to strive to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP Influence these Issues?</b></p>
<p><b>M(i)</b> Concerns about climate change require that efforts are made to reduce the reliance on the private car and the consequent impact of carbon dioxide emissions. The RLDP needs to consider appropriate patterns of development that promote a safe, efficient, accessible and sustainable transport system that provides opportunities for walking and cycling and encourages active travel in order to support carbon reduction. The RLDP will provide a mix of employment and housing allocations with the aim of reducing the need to travel, acknowledging however that the reasons why people live where they do is complex.  <b>M(ii)</b> A renewable energy assessment will be undertaken to identify areas of potential for local authority and strategic renewable energy development.  <b>M(iii)</b> The RLDP will consider ways to support carbon reduction through a variety of measures including the use of renewable energy, the design and location of new development, encouraging balanced job and population growth to reduce out-commuting, the provision of broadband connectivity to reduce the need to travel, the provision of ultra-low emission vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce emissions and improve air quality, and the provision of quality Green Infrastructure. Proposals will be considered against our commitment to strive to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C.</p>
<p><b>How can the RLDP support these Issues given increased emphasis in light of Covid-19</b></p>
<p>The RLDP policy framework will support and enable renewable energy generation and provide opportunities for active travel and integrated sustainable transport solutions.</p>

*\* indicates the Issue has increased emphasis and importance in light of Covid-19*

### **3. Replacement LDP Vision**

3.1 The role of the RLDP vision is to clarify the core purpose of the Plan and provide a framework for developing the Preferred Strategy and future detailed policies. The vision will set the overarching context for Monmouthshire for the period up to 2033. The vision set out in the adopted LDP has been reviewed and updated to take account of the issues, challenges and opportunities facing the County and reflects key elements of the PSB Well-being Plan and Corporate Business Plan.

#### **3.2 The Monmouthshire RLDP Vision**

**By 2033 Monmouthshire will be a place where:**

- (1) People are living in sustainable, resilient communities that support the well-being of current and future generations and are more inclusive, cohesive, prosperous, vibrant and balanced demographically. Both urban and rural communities are well-connected with better access to local services and facilities, open space and employment opportunities.**
- (2) Communities and businesses are part of an economically thriving and well-connected County.**
- (3) The best of the County's built heritage, countryside, landscape and environmental assets have been protected and enhanced to retain its distinctive character.**
- (4) People enjoy healthier, more sustainable lifestyles with improved access to public transport and active travel opportunities and have a minimised impact on the global environment.**

**The spatial implications of achieving this Vision will be that by 2033:**

**Monmouthshire will have grown sustainably, with a proportionate distribution of new homes and jobs across the most sustainable settlements, which are supported by amenities and infrastructure with the delivery of affordable housing to meet local needs.**

**Development will have contributed to facilitating more sustainable lifestyles by delivering high quality places that promote low carbon developments with an appropriate mix of uses and that are well-connected both digitally and physically to the wider area in terms of character, environment and movement by public transport, walking and cycling.**

## 4. Replacement LDP Objectives

4.1 In order to achieve the vision and address the key issues a number of objectives have been produced for the RLDP (as set out in Table 4.1), building upon the Adopted LDP objectives and the well-being objectives set out in the Monmouthshire Well-being Plan. As with the issues, the objectives have been grouped in accordance with the Seven Well-being Goals as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The table also sets out the links between the objectives and the RLDP issues and both the main policy themes identified in Planning Policy Wales (PPW) Edition 11 and the Monmouthshire Well-being Plan objectives. Table 4.2 further demonstrates the alignment of the objectives with the Seven Well-being Goals. The Objectives were reviewed in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and endorsed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 and Council in October 2020 as remaining relevant<sup>7</sup>. Accordingly, a number of the Objectives were found to have increased emphasis and importance in light of Covid-19, these are indicated in the table below using an asterisk against the headline.

**Table 4.1 – RLDP Objectives**

RLDP Objective Number	Headline	RLDP Objective	RLDP Issues addressed	Main PPW11 theme	Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective
<b>A Prosperous Wales (Well-being Goal 1)</b>					
<b>Objective 1</b>	Economic Growth/ Employment*	To support a thriving, well-connected, diverse economy, which provides a range of good quality employment opportunities to enable and encourage indigenous business growth and attract inward investment and competitive innovative businesses in appropriate growth sectors, including through the provision of start-ups and grow on spaces.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 24	Productive and enterprising places	Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/Monmouthshire-RLDP-Review-of-Issues-Vision-Objectives-and-Evidence-Base-in-Light-of-Covid.pdf>

RLDP Objective Number	Headline	RLDP Objective	RLDP Issues addressed	Main PPW11 theme	Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective
<b>Objective 2</b>	Retail centres*	To sustain and enhance the County towns of Abergavenny, Chepstow, Monmouth, Caldicot and Usk as vibrant and attractive retail centres serving their own populations and those of their surrounding hinterlands, along with increasing the potential customer base through future growth whilst recognising that the role of these centres is evolving.	8	Active and social places	Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
<b>A Resilient Wales (Well-being Goal 2)</b>					
<b>Objective 3</b>	Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape*	To protect, enhance and manage Monmouthshire's natural environment and ecosystems. This includes, the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the County's other high quality and distinctive landscapes, protected sites, protected species and other biodiversity interests, along with the connectivity between them by creating new linkages for them to adapt while at the same time maximising benefits for the economy, tourism, health and well-being.	11, 12, 35	Distinctive and natural places	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
<b>Objective 4</b>	Flood risk	To ensure that new development takes account of the risk of flooding, both existing and in the future, including the need to avoid inappropriate development in areas that are at risk from flooding or	12, 13	Distinctive and natural places	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and

RLDP Objective Number	Headline	RLDP Objective	RLDP Issues addressed	Main PPW11 theme	Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective
		that may increase the risk of flooding elsewhere and the need to design development to appropriately manage surface water run-off.			adapting to the impact of climate change.
<b>Objective 5</b>	Minerals and Waste	To meet the County's regional and local obligations to manage and dispose of its waste and to safeguard and exploit its mineral resource in a sustainable fashion.	14, 15	Productive and enterprising places	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
<b>Objective 6</b>	Land	To promote the efficient use of land, including the need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• maximise opportunities for development on previously developed land, whilst recognising that brownfield opportunities are limited in Monmouthshire.</li> <li>• protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land whilst at the same time recognising that this will not always be possible given high proportion of BMV land in the County and the limited opportunities for brownfield development.</li> </ul>	16, 17	Strategic and spatial choices	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
<b>Objective 7</b>	Natural resources	To promote the efficient use of natural resources including providing increased opportunities for water efficiency, energy	14, 15, 31, 37	Productive and	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment

RLDP Objective Number	Headline	RLDP Objective	RLDP Issues addressed	Main PPW11 theme	Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective
		efficiency, renewable energy, recycling and waste reduction.		enterprising places	whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
<b>A Healthier Wales (Well-being Goal 3)</b>					
<b>Objective 8</b>	Health and Well-being*	To improve access for all to recreation, sport, leisure activities, open space and the countryside and to enable healthier lifestyles.	18, 20, 21, 33, 35	Active and social places	Provide children and young people with the best possible start in life.
<b>A More Equal Wales (Well-being Goal 4)</b>					
<b>Objective 9</b>	Demography*	To increase opportunities for the younger population to both live and work within Monmouthshire to assist in ensuring a balanced demography.	2, 3, 4, 5, 24	Active and social places	Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.
<b>A Wales of Cohesive Communities (Well-being Goal 5)</b>					
<b>Objective 10</b>	Housing*	To provide a level of housing that is sufficient to provide a wide ranging choice of homes both for existing and future residents, while ensuring that local needs for appropriate, affordable and accessible housing are met as far as possible, particularly in towns but also in rural areas, so long as such housing can assist in building sustainable balanced communities.	23, 25, 26, 27, 28	Active and social places	Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.

<b>RLDP Objective Number</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>RLDP Objective</b>	<b>RLDP Issues addressed</b>	<b>Main PPW11 theme</b>	<b>Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective</b>
<b>Objective 11</b>	Placemaking	To promote good quality sustainable places through design, layout and mix of uses that enhance the character and identity of Monmouthshire's settlements and countryside; create attractive, safe and accessible places to live, work and visit; and promote people's prosperity, health, happiness and well-being.	1, 11, 12, 18, 20, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 34, 35	Strategic and spatial choices	Respond to the challenges associated with demographic change.
<b>Objective 12</b>	Communities	To build sustainable resilient communities where people have good access to employment, shops, housing, public transport, active travel, healthcare, community and cultural facilities.	1, 5, 7, 8, 9, 18, 20, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35	Strategic and spatial choices	Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
<b>Objective 13</b>	Rural Communities	To sustain existing rural communities as far as possible by providing development opportunities of an appropriate scale and location in rural areas in order to assist in building sustainable rural communities and strengthening the rural economy.	6, 7, 20, 22, 26, 29, 30, 34	Productive and enterprising places	Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
<b>Objective 14</b>	Infrastructure*	To ensure that appropriate physical and digital infrastructure (including community and recreational facilities, sewerage, water, transport, schools, health care and broadband etc.) is in place or can be provided to accommodate new development.	12, 19, 20, 31	Productive and enterprising places	Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.

RLDP Objective Number	Headline	RLDP Objective	RLDP Issues addressed	Main PPW11 theme	Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective
<b>Objective 15</b>	Accessibility	To seek to reduce the need to travel by promoting a mix of land use allocations and improved internet connectivity, and where travel is required, to provide opportunities for active travel and integrated sustainable transport.	10, 30, 36	Active and social places	Develop opportunities for communities and business to be part of an economically thriving and well-connected county.
<b>A Wales of Vibrant Culture &amp; Thriving Welsh Language (Well-being Goal 6)</b>					
<b>Objective 16</b>	Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language	To protect and enhance the built environment, culture and heritage of Monmouthshire for the future while maximising benefits for the economy, tourism and social well-being, including supporting and safeguarding the Welsh Language.	9, 32, 33, 34, 35	Distinctive and natural places	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.
<b>A Globally Responsible Wales (Well-being Goal 7)</b>					
<b>Objective 17</b>	Climate Change*	To strive to limit the increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C, supporting carbon reduction through a variety of measures including the use of renewable energy, the design and location of new development, encouraging balanced job and population growth to reduce out-commuting, the provision of broadband connectivity to reduce the need to travel, the provision of ultra-low emission vehicle charging infrastructure to reduce	10, 12, 36, 37, 38	Distinctive and natural places	Protect and enhance the resilience of our natural environment whilst mitigating and adapting to the impact of climate change.



<b>RLDP Objective Number</b>	<b>Headline</b>	<b>RLDP Objective</b>	<b>RLDP Issues addressed</b>	<b>Main PPW11 theme</b>	<b>Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objective</b>
		emissions and improve air quality, and the provision of quality Green Infrastructure.			

*\* indicates the Objective has increased emphasis and importance in light of Covid-19*

**Table 4.2 – Matrix of RLDP Objectives against the Well-being Goals**

		Prosperous Wales	Resilient Wales	Healthier Wales	More equal Wales	Wales of cohesive communities	Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language	Globally responsible Wales
1	Economic Growth/Employment							
2	Retail centres							
3	Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape							
4	Flood risk							
5	Minerals and Waste							
6	Land							
7	Natural resources							
8	Health and Well-being							
9	Demography							
10	Housing							
11	Placemaking							
12	Communities							
13	Rural Communities							
14	Infrastructure							
15	Accessibility							
16	Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language							
17	Climate Change							

## APPENDIX 1

### Seven well-being goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015



Goal	Description of the goal
<b>A prosperous Wales</b>	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work
<b>A resilient Wales</b>	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change (for example climate change).
<b>A healthier Wales</b>	A society in which people's physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
<b>A more equal Wales</b>	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio economic background and circumstances).
<b>A Wales of cohesive communities</b>	Attractive, viable, safe and well-connected communities.
<b>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</b>	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
<b>A globally responsible Wales</b>	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

1. Source: Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

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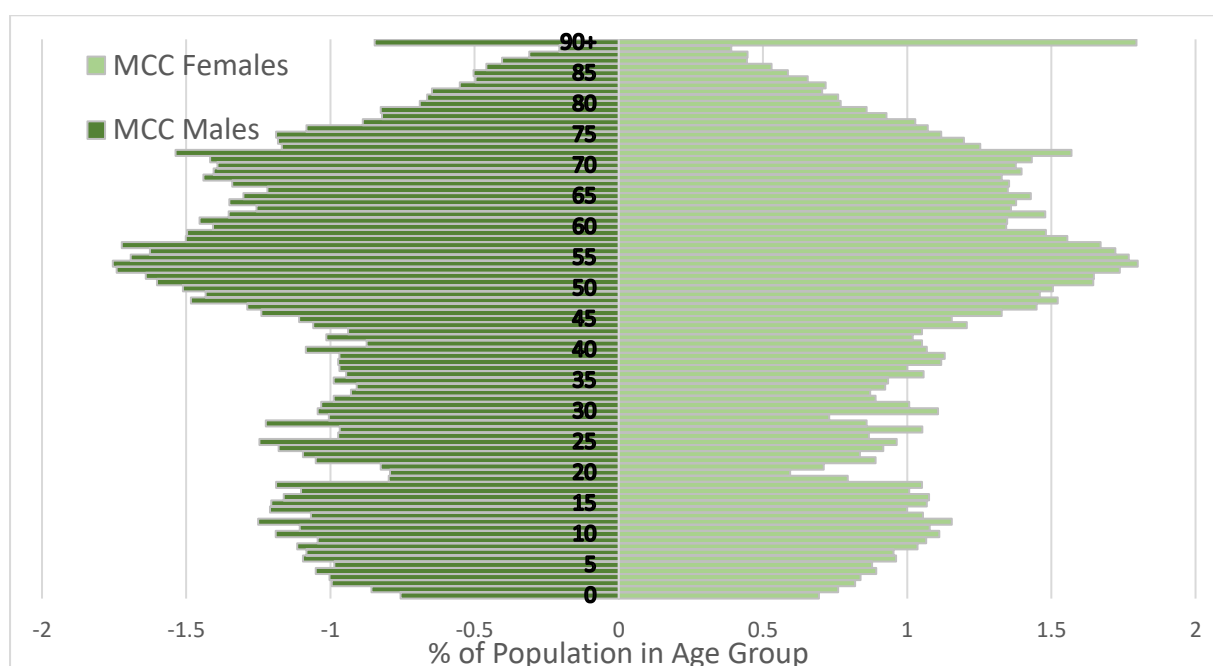
## APPENDIX 2

### Monmouthshire's Key Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

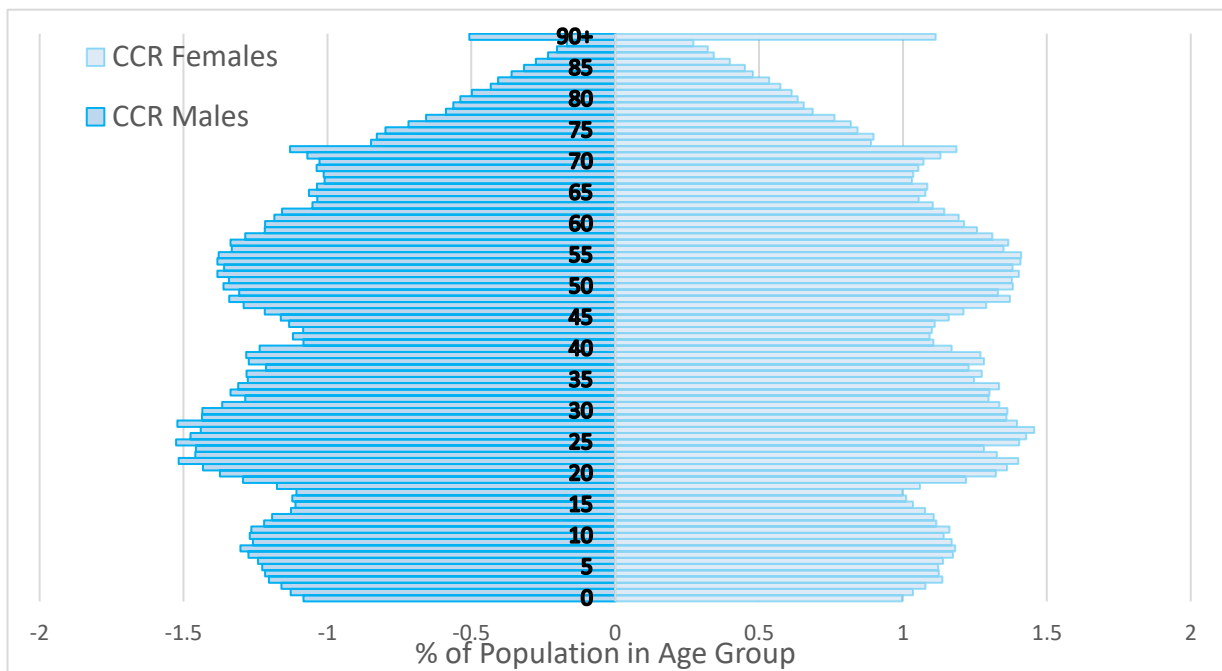
#### DEMOGRAPHY

- The population of Monmouthshire has shown a steady increase over the ten-year period to 2011, increasing from 84,885 to 91,323 (7.58%) over the period 2001 - 2011 (Census 2011). The population has continued to grow since 2011, albeit at a slower rate. This growth is being fuelled by in-migration.
- The latest Mid-Year Estimates (2019 MYEs) give Monmouthshire a population of 94,590 in 2019. This latest mid-year population estimate for 2019 is higher than the equivalent 2019 population estimate from the 2014 based projections (93,070) and marginally lower than the 2020 population estimates from the 2018-based projections (94,768). The 2018-based projections 2021 population estimates for Monmouthshire are 95,134
- Monmouthshire has a significantly higher proportion of older age groups (65+) and lower proportion of young adults (16 – 44) compared to the Welsh and Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) average. The age structure of Monmouthshire's population and its relation to the rest of CCR is illustrated in the chart below. This clearly indicates the low presence of people aged 20-40 in the County, which are usually correlated to dynamic economies. On the other hand, there is a significant proportion of population in older age groups, particularly between the age of 50 and 70, indicating that the County is largely home to a population in retirement age and are not economically active.

Figure 1: Population Structure 2019 MYEs - Monmouthshire



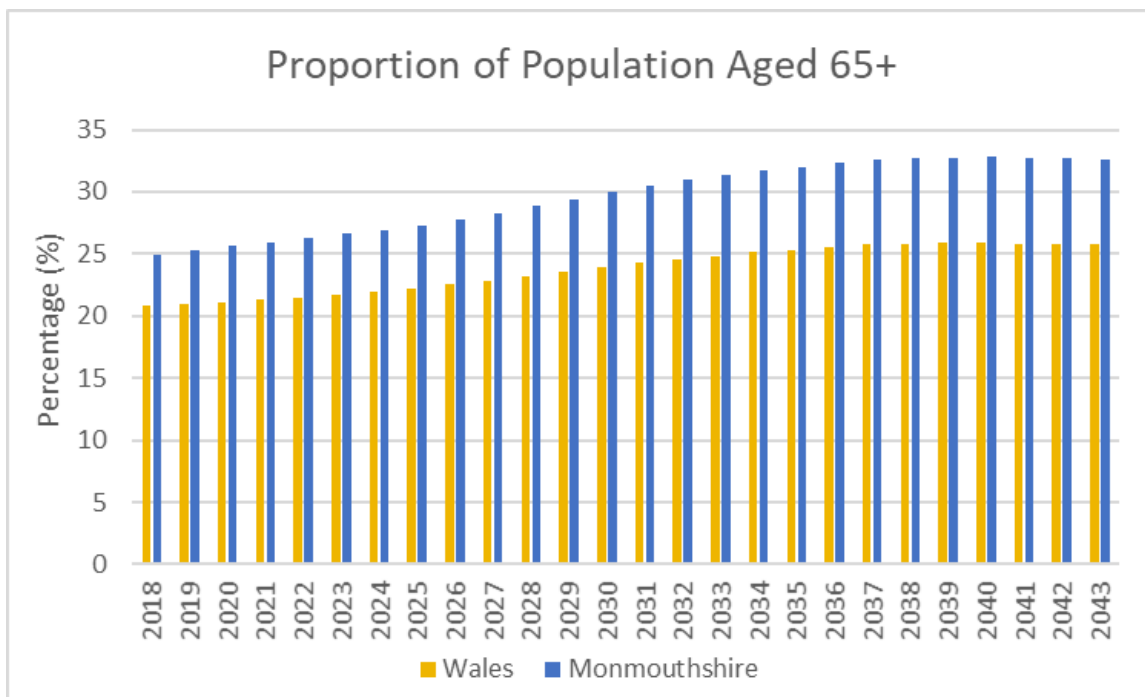
**Figure 2: Population Structure 2019 MYEs – Cardiff Capital Region**



Source: ONS Population Estimates

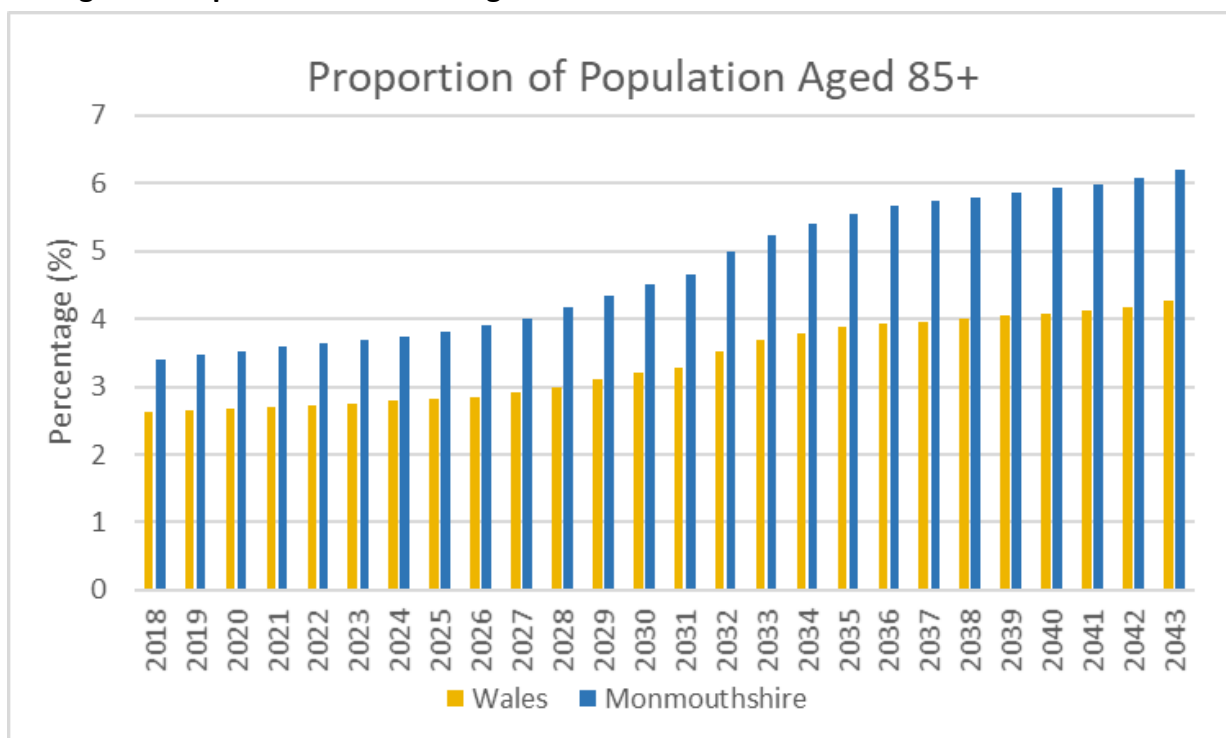
- Monmouthshire has a median age of 49, compared to a median age of 33.6 in Cardiff (ONS population mid-year estimates 2019). The increasing ageing population and shrinking working age population is limiting employment growth within Monmouthshire and the social sustainability of communities. The relative absence of young adults is often linked to the affordability of housing across the County and has an impact on future prospects of economic growth.
- This trend is projected to continue as shown in the graphs below.

**Figure 3: Population Estimates Ages 65+ in Wales and Monmouthshire**



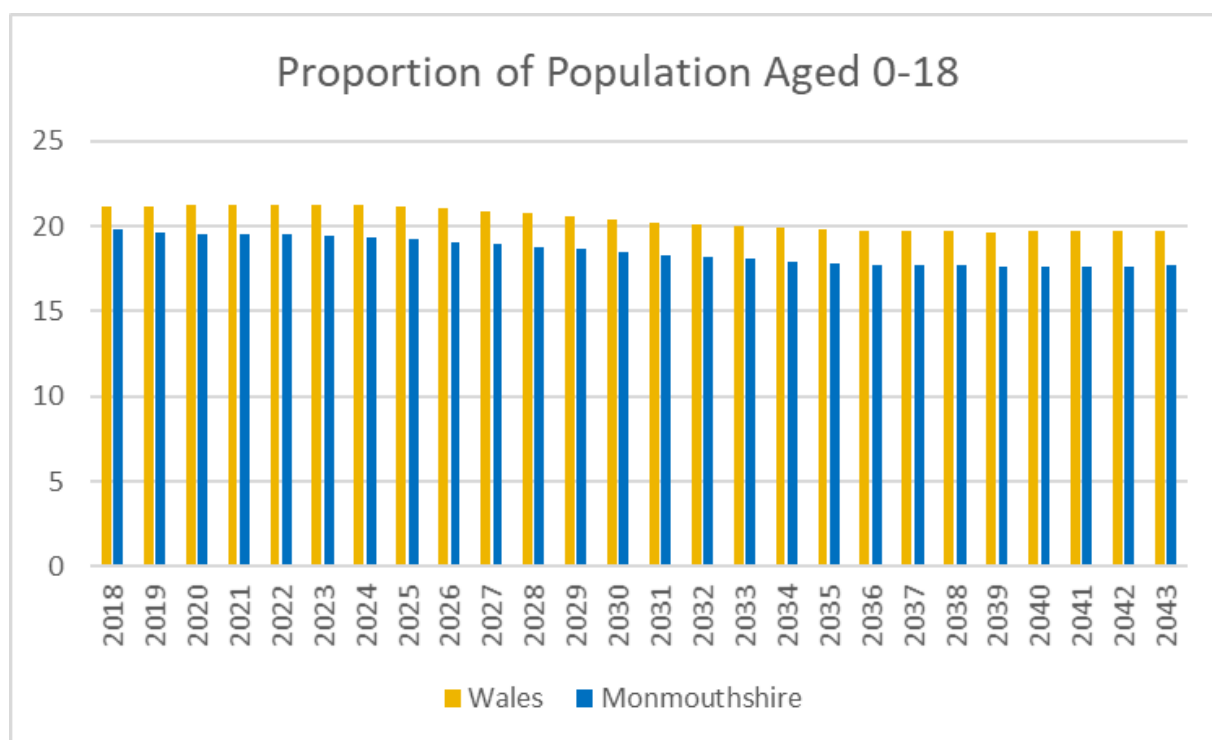
Source: StatsWales

**Figure 4: Population Estimates Ages 85+ in Wales and Monmouthshire**



Source: StatsWales

**Figure 5: Population Estimates Aged 0-18 in Wales and Monmouthshire**



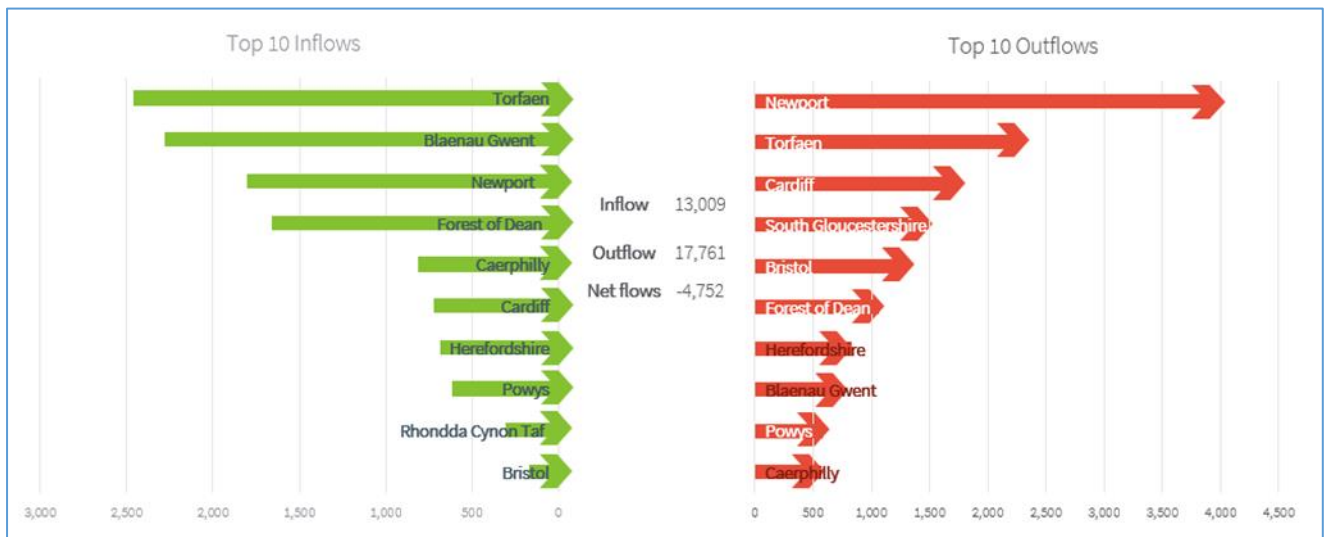
Source: StatsWales

## ECONOMY

### Employment and Commuting

- The labour market profile of Monmouthshire’s residents is healthy despite its high economic inactivity levels. Unemployment rate stood at 2.6% (January 2020 - December 2020) which is 1.35 percent below the Cardiff Capital Region (CCR) average and is also lower than the national average (ONS, Annual Population Survey – January 2020 - December 2020). The economic inactivity rate in Monmouthshire stood at 16.6% in 2020, which is a reflection of its population structure where many are of retirement age (ONS, Annual Population Survey – January 2020 - December 2020).
- Levels of out commuting and distances travelled to work are relatively high. Around 40% of Monmouthshire’s residents who are in employment work outside the County (Census, 2011). The charts below show the top 10 inflow and outflow commuting destinations for Monmouthshire.

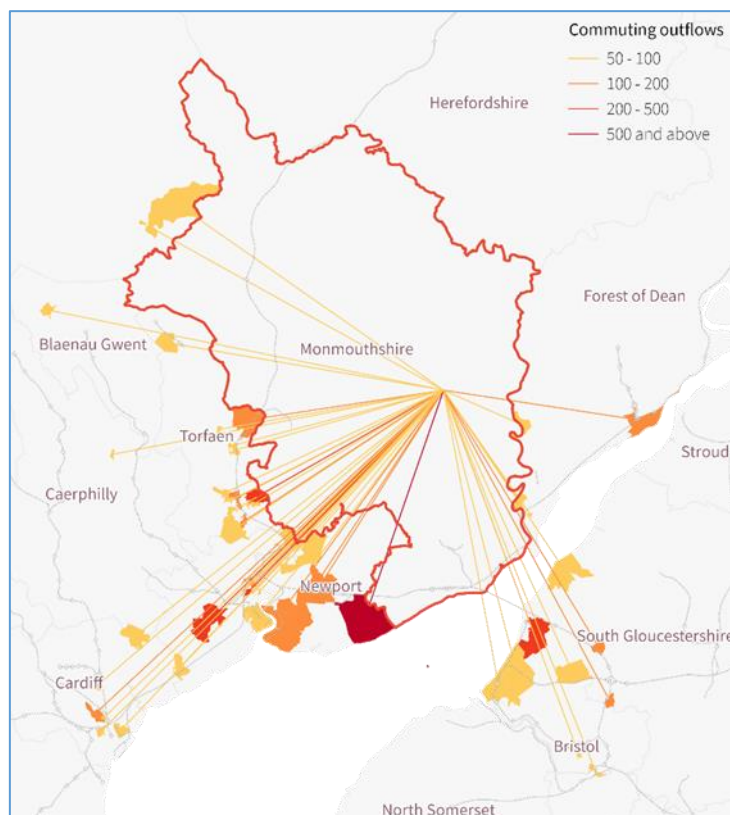
**Figure 6: Commuting Flows**



Source: ONS, Census 2011

- Figure 7 below maps the direction of the most significant commuting outflows from Monmouthshire (50 moves and above) which shows some key employment centres in Cardiff, Newport, Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

**Figure 7: Commuting Outflows from Monmouthshire – flows of 50 and above**



Source: ONS, Census 2011

Map contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2017



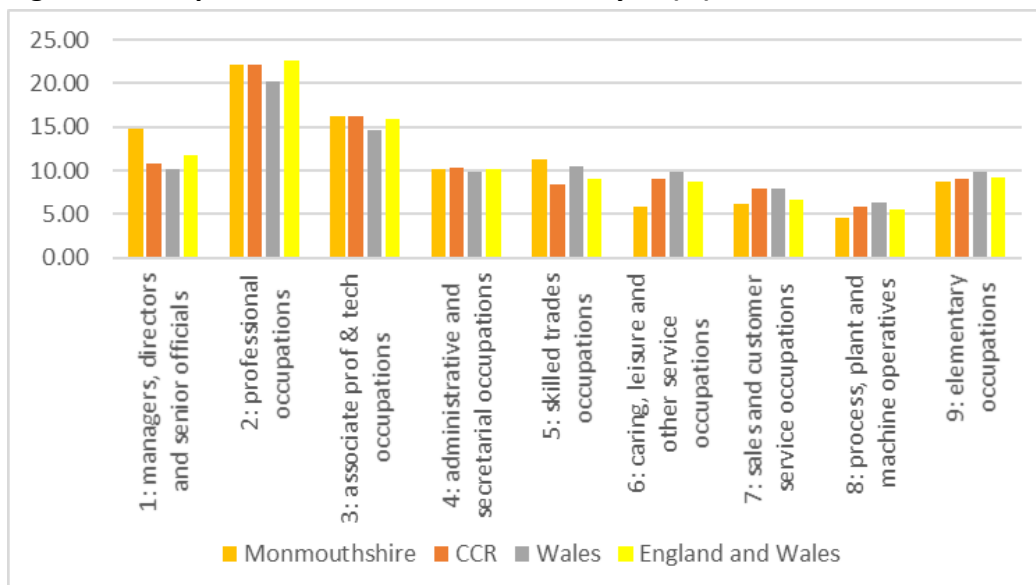
- There is a need to provide support for inward investment and local employment growth/opportunities to reduce out commuting, retain young people, and increase prosperity.

### Occupation and Earnings

- There is a dual labour market in Monmouthshire, meaning that the people who live in Monmouthshire have a different profile from those who work in Monmouthshire. The qualifications, skills and earnings of the residents are above the regional and national average, however, for those working in the area earnings are lower and employment is relatively less skilled:
  - The resident profile is markedly skewed towards high-skills/high-earning occupations, while the workplace profile presents a relatively higher proportion of people employed in low-skill and routine occupations, as shown in figures 8 and 9 below.
  - Residents’ earnings are higher than workplace earnings. Residents (and those who can afford to buy a house in Monmouthshire) are likely to be earning their relatively higher wages in higher skills jobs outside Monmouthshire. Wage levels available for local jobs are lower than the average for the UK and Wales.

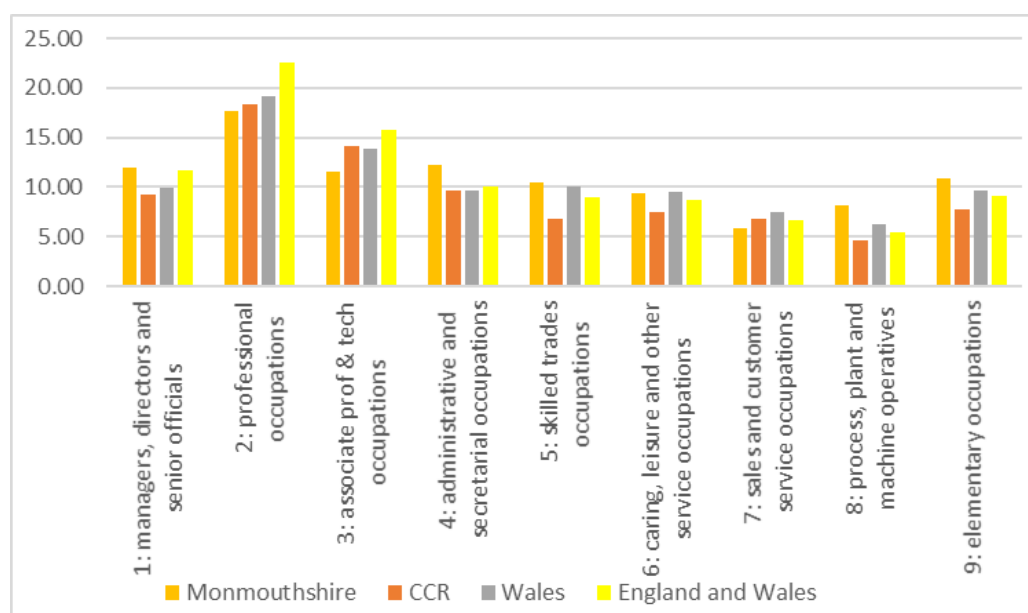
The gross annual mean pay for people working in Monmouthshire stood at £32,608 in 2020, compared with £38,600 in the UK and £31,476 in Wales (ONS, ASHE, 2020). This coupled with high property prices makes it difficult for young people and future generations to live and work locally. Additional employment opportunities for young people are required to help reduce the numbers of this age group leaving the County.

**Figure 8: Occupational Profile – Resident Analysis (%) 2020**



Data Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey – January 2020 – December 2020

**Figure 9: Occupational Profile – Workplace Analysis (%) 2020**



Data Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey – January 2020 – December 2020

- Evidence continues to suggest that the income for economically active women who both live and work within the County is significantly lower than that of men within the same category, as indicated in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10: Median Gross Weekly Earnings (2020)**

Indicator	Earnings
Monmouthshire – Resident (Male)	£661.70
Great Britain (Male)	£619.00
Monmouthshire – Workplace (Male)	£579.70
Monmouthshire – Resident (Female)	£549.30
Great Britain (Female)	£543.00
Monmouthshire – Workplace (Female)	£568.70

Source: ONS, ASHE

### Employment land

- There has been a slow uptake of employment land in the past (2014-15: 0.38ha; 2015-16: 1.13ha; 2016-17: 3.21ha; 2017-18: 5ha, 2018-19: 0.873ha, 2019-20: 3.74ha, LDP Annual Monitoring Reports 2015-20). There is subsequently a need to consider whether existing available land is suitably located, fit for purpose and readily available for appropriate growth sectors.
- There is also a need to consider potential future demand for employment land along with Council aspirations for innovation across Monmouthshire in light of the recent removal of the Severn Bridge tolls and the ambitions and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal (CCRCDC).

## Home Working and Digital Connectivity

- Higher levels of those in employment in Monmouthshire work at home compared to the Welsh average i.e. 15% in Monmouthshire compared to the Welsh average of 12% (Census, 2011). Efficient digital infrastructure is essential to support home working and the general connectivity of the County's rural areas and to support economic growth. This could also improve quality of life and reduce commuting.
- There are significant differences in the digital connectivity of Monmouthshire compared to Wales, England and neighbouring authorities. Data on 'ThinkBroadband' suggests that 1.42% of properties (residential and commercial) across England have coverage of 15Mbps or less. This rises to 3.25% in Wales and 8.82% in Monmouthshire. Monmouthshire has a lower proportion of properties covered by >24Mbps (superfast broadband) than England, Wales, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Newport (Source Q1 2021 Data on 'ThinkBroadband', May 2021).

## Retail and Town Centres

- The role of high streets is changing due to out of town retail centres, the increase in internet shopping, changing shopping habits (e.g. top-up grocery shopping) and austerity and as a result vacancy rates in some of the County's retail centres have increased. There is a leakage of expenditure out of the County and a need to protect the County's retail centres from out of town developments. (Monmouthshire Retail Background Paper, 2020; Monmouthshire Retail Expenditure Forecasts Update, 2017).

## Tourism

- Tourism plays a significant part in the Monmouthshire economy particularly in assisting in the diversification of the rural economy and in sustaining the County's historic town centres.
- Visitor numbers in Monmouthshire over the 2018-19 period are set out in Figure 11 below. Visitor numbers in Monmouthshire saw a 1.1% rise since 2018 when the South East Wales regional number fell by 2.0%. Since 2015, visitor numbers have increased by 4.3%. Staying visitors generate a higher economic impact than day visitors i.e. £185 million compared to £60 million in 2019 (Monmouthshire STEAM Report 2019) highlighting the continued need for visitor accommodation.
- Since 2012 the annual number of staying visitors has increased by 26% and staying visitor days by 30% in comparison to 24% for South East Wales for the same period. The annual number of staying visitors to Monmouthshire was 116,000 more in 2019 than in 2012 (Monmouthshire STEAM Report 2019).
- Day visitors continue to be important to Monmouthshire, with the 1.73 million day visits accounting for 89% of all visits to the County in 2019. Day visits increased by

1.1% from 2018 levels, when visitor days increased by 2.1 on 2018. (Monmouthshire STEAM Report 2019).

**Figure 11: Monmouthshire Visitor Numbers 2018-19**

Visitor Numbers		Serviced	Non-Serviced	SFR	Staying Visitors	Day Visitors	All Visitors
2019 (Millions)	M	0.300	0.114	0.145	0.559	1.725	2.284
2018 (Millions)	M	0.305	0.104	0.145	0.554	1.707	2.260
Change 18/19 (%)	%	-1.7	+9.6	+0.6	+1.0	+1.1	+1.1
Share of Total (%)	%	13.1	5.0	6.4	24.5	75.5	100

Data Source: Monmouthshire STEAM Tourism Economic Impacts 2019 Year in Review Summary

## HOUSING

### Housing Market and House Prices

- Average house prices in the County are high at £299,001 when compared to the Welsh average of £187,560 (Hometrack February 2020). The average house price is nevertheless similar to the South Gloucestershire average of £299,803. The most significant increases in the County have been experienced in recent years as indicated in figure 12.

**Figure 12: Average House Prices in Monmouthshire, Wales and adjacent Local Authorities July 2010 – January 2019**



Source: Data for July 2010 to January 2019 obtained from Hometrack in May 2021

- House prices are also high in relation to earnings. The lower quartile house price to income ratio in the County is 10:1 (Hometrack, March 2020-February 2021). This ratio varies across Monmouthshire and is significantly higher in some rural areas, as indicated in Figure 13.

**Figure 13: Lower Quartile House Price to Income Ratios for a Sample of Rural Wards (April 2020 – March 2021)**

Ward	Lower Quartile House Price to Income Ratio
Crucorney	10:1
Llanbadoc	13:1
Raglan	12:1
Mitchel Troy	11:1
Trellech	13:1
St Arvans	12:1
Portskewett	10:1
Goytre	11:1
Llanfoist	12:1
Llanelly Hill	10:1

Source: Hometrack May 2021

- The number of households in affordable housing need (Bands 1-4) currently stands at over 2,400 (Monmouthshire Local Housing Market Assessment 2020-2025; December 2020). There is a pressing need for additional affordable housing in the County in both urban and rural areas to assist in ensuring a more balanced population.
- There is a need to consider the potential impact on house prices arising from the recent removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls, the ambitions and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the South East Wales Metro.
- To address the demographic imbalance in the County and support economic prosperity a range and choice of housing is needed to both meet the needs of an ageing population and to attract and retain the younger age groups.
- There is limited scope for significant or long term expansion of the existing urban areas within the County due to a mix of physical, environmental and policy constraints.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity & Landscape

- Monmouthshire is renowned for its beautiful landscapes and major biodiversity resource that bring wider benefits to the local economy particularly through tourism. Monmouthshire as a whole incorporates parts of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the Brecon Beacons National Park and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. The best of these assets must be protected, managed and enhanced for future generations.
- There is a need to improve connectivity within the landscape through protecting and improving existing wildlife networks and corridors, including both green and blue infrastructure, and, creating new linkages to allow species to move and adapt to climate change impacts. Green Infrastructure is also beneficial to human well-being.

### Flooding

- Parts of the County are vulnerable to flooding. Climate change is likely to increase the risk of flooding, as well as many other risks, so mitigating climate change and building resilience is crucial.

### Minerals & Waste

- Monmouthshire has made good progress in the promotion of the recycling and composting of waste, and the elimination of waste to landfill. Monmouthshire also has to make an appropriate contribution to the regional requirement for waste management.
- Mineral extraction plays a limited role in Monmouthshire's economy but there is a need to safeguard the County's resources in order to make an appropriate contribution to the sustainable supply of aggregates to the South Wales economy as a whole.

### Air

- While air pollution is not generally a significant problem in Monmouthshire, there are two Air Quality Management Areas in the County at Usk and Chepstow where there is a link between this issue and traffic congestion.

### Land

- There are limited opportunities for brownfield development within the County's existing urban areas. The proportion of land area defined as 'built on' stands at 3% in Monmouthshire (Corine Landcover Inventory, 2018).
- Monmouthshire has a significantly high percentage of best and most versatile agricultural land (Grade 1, 2 and 3) at 69% (Welsh Government – Agricultural Land Classification Maps, November 2017). While there is a need to conserve these

resources, there are limited opportunities within the County for brownfield development and development on lower grades of agricultural land (i.e. Grade 3b, 4 and 5).

### **Climatic Factors**

- The volume of traffic in the County has continued to increase, up nearly 19% in the nine years to 2019 (StatsWales, May 2021). There is a pattern of relatively long travel to work distances (as detailed above), high levels of car ownership (45% of households have 2 or more cars (Census 2011)) and reliance on the private car.
- Small Scale and Local Authority wide Renewable Energy schemes are generally supported across Monmouthshire, however, a more proactive approach should be undertaken for schemes of a local authority scale (i.e. 5MW - 25MW).
- On 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019, Monmouthshire Council supported a motion to declare a climate emergency:
  - That this Council will strive to reduce its own carbon emissions to net zero in line with the Welsh Government target of 2030.
  - That this Council will develop a strategy and associated costed action plans to aim to deliver these targets as soon as practicable.
  - That this Council revise the Corporate plan, Well-being plan, Local Development Plans and other relevant plans and policies in support of above.
  - Publicise this declaration of a climate emergency to residents and businesses in the County and encourage, support and enable them to take their own actions to reduce their carbon emissions in line with a 2030 target.
  - 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.

## **HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

### **Human Health**

- While Monmouthshire performs relatively well on indicators relating to health, there is a need to promote opportunities for healthy living particularly in the context of an ageing population.
- While an ageing population brings many opportunities, it also brings challenges and increases in the number of people living with long term conditions can create pressures on existing health care provision.

- On the whole Monmouthshire’s residents have good access to public open space, however, there are deficiencies in many of the County’s communities in relation to community and recreational facilities. This can lead to rural isolation in certain areas.
- Obesity is a growing problem throughout Wales. Although obesity rates in Monmouthshire are below the Welsh average consideration should be given to promoting healthy lifestyles. Figure 14 below sets out key indicators of health related lifestyle which indicates that obesity rates in Monmouthshire are below the Welsh and Aneurin Bevan Health Board figures. However, it should be noted that this is based on a very small sample size and is therefore not entirely representative.

**Figure 14: Health Related Lifestyle 2018/19 and 2019/20 Combined**

<b>Health Related Lifestyle Indicator</b>	<b>Monmouthshire %</b>	<b>Aneurin Bevan Health Board %</b>	<b>Wales %</b>
<b>Smoker</b>	17	18	17
<b>E-Cigarette User</b>	4	7	6
<b>Weekly Alcohol Consumption &gt;14 Units</b>	20	17	19
<b>Ate 5 Portions of Fruit &amp; Vegetables</b>	32	20	24
<b>Active &lt;30 Minutes a Week</b>	27	31	33
<b>Overweight or Obese</b>	56	65	60
<b>Obese</b>	23	29	24

Source: National Survey for Wales 2018/19 and 2019/20

### Infrastructure

- Poor access to community facilities and declining local service provision is a particular issue for rural communities.
- The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 geographical access to services domain captures the accessibility of a range of services for households, looking specifically at inaccessibility of services that are considered key to day to day living. Both tangible (inaccessibility to a supermarket) and social deprivation (isolation from community activities) are considered. The WIMD shows that of the 56 lower super output areas (LSOAs) in Monmouthshire, 37 fall within the 50% most deprived, with 29 in the 30% most deprived and 15 in the 10% most deprived. Of the 1909 LSOAs in



Wales, the lowest ranks recorded in Monmouthshire for access to services were in Llantillio Crossenny (6), Crucorney (49), Llanover 1 (61), Trellech United 1 (79) and Llanover 2 (80) (StatsWales).

- Limited public transport, particularly in rural areas makes it harder to access jobs, services and facilities, which could be exacerbated by rising fuel prices. There are nevertheless future opportunities for investment in public transport through the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and advances in technology.
- There is a need to ensure that adequate physical and digital infrastructure is provided to support new development. This includes:
  - Broadband infrastructure
  - The provision of sufficient water and sewerage infrastructure
  - Transport infrastructure and active travel to support non-car modes of travel.

## CULTURAL HERITAGE

- As detailed in Figure 15, Monmouthshire has a significant built heritage resource in terms of scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens and archaeologically sensitive sites that, together with their settings require protection and enhancement.

**Figure 15: Monmouthshire’s Heritage Assets (number)**

	<b>2021</b>
<b>Listed Buildings</b>	2146
<b>Scheduled Ancient Monuments</b>	169
<b>Historic Parks and Gardens</b>	44
<b>Archaeologically Sensitive Areas</b>	10
<b>Landscapes of Outstanding Historic Interest</b>	3

Source: MCC Heritage Team/ Cadw

- There is a need to protect, promote and enhance the best of our landscape and heritage which are an important part of our culture and play a key role in tourism and economic growth, along with providing support for the Welsh Language to ensure it is safeguarded and supported.
- The distinctive settlement pattern of Monmouthshire relates to historic towns and villages and their relationship with the surrounding rural areas. There has nevertheless been substantial suburban expansion in the South of the County, particularly adjacent to the M4 corridor. This area is likely to receive further pressure for growth due to the recent removal of the Severn Bridge Tolls and the ambitions and opportunities associated with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and the South East Wales Metro, together with the economic growth of the Bristol/SW region and the opportunities for Monmouthshire as a border county and its location between Bristol and Newport and Cardiff, the ‘Great Western Cities’.