

Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan

Self-Assessment of the Preferred Strategy against the Tests of Soundness

June 2021



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Replacement Local Development Plan**

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Tests of Soundness**

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Planning Policy Service

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1. Purpose of this Paper

- 1.1 This Background Paper has been published alongside the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) Preferred Strategy¹. As part of the development plan process the Council needs to demonstrate that the Plan is 'sound'. The purpose of this paper is to assess the Preferred Strategy against the tests of soundness set out in the Development Plans Manual (Edition 3 – March 2020).
- 1.2 The self-assessment undertaken is considered to demonstrate that the Preferred Strategy and the stages undertaken and processes followed to reach this stage are 'sound'.
- 1.3 The soundness of the RLDP will continue to be assessed against the tests of soundness as the Plan progresses and eventually at an independent Examination by a Planning Inspector.
- 1.4 The Council's self-assessment of the Preferred Strategy is set out below.
- 1.5 One of the soundness tests relates to the Plan's general conformity with the recently adopted Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (Welsh Government, February 2021). An assessment of the Preferred Strategy against the policies of Future Wales has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix 1

¹ <https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/planning-policy/local-development-plan-revision/?preview=true>

2. Self-assessment of the Preferred Strategy against the Tests of Soundness

<p>Development Plans Manual – Ed 3, March 2020</p>	<p>Response This self-assessment has been undertaken to monitor consistency with the Tests of Soundness at the Preferred Strategy stage of the Replacement Local Development Plan process. It has also helped identify future requirements as we work towards the preparation of the Deposit Plan.</p>
<p>Preparation Requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has preparation of the plan complied with legal and regulatory procedural requirements? (LDP Regulations, CIS, SEA Regulations, SA, HRA etc.?) • Is the plan in general conformity with the NDF (now referred to as Future Wales: The National Plan 2040) and/or SDP? (when published or adopted respectively) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the procedural requirements. Notable reference should be had to the publication of the Initial Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) (June 2021) and the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report (June 2021) which have been published as supporting documents to the Preferred Strategy. These build on the work undertaken to accompany earlier stages of the Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) process – Integrated Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (December 2018) and Initial Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report (December 2018). ▪ Scheduled consultation arrangements and documents are in accordance with the LDP Regulations (2005 as amended 2015). The scope and method of consultation is considered to be consistent with the Community Involvement Scheme, which has been amended to reflect our revised consultation and engagement arrangements in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The manner in which public engagement events will take place has been reviewed in line with the Coronavirus Regulations (2020) and Ministerial advice² to ensure social distancing measures and other adjustments can be put in place when conducting any public events to ensure the safety of colleagues and our communities. The Council has also reviewed digital involvement options to provide our communities and stakeholders with information and the ability to engage with the RLDP consultation in a virtual manner through hosting two webinars. ▪ Full details of the consultation arrangements and documentation can be viewed in a number of places including the Council Report, the consultation email and letter and the Council’s website. Significant non-statutory consultation has also been undertaken to gain an understanding of the issues and options relevant to the County, with a couple of stages revisited due to updated evidence and reviewed in light of Covid-19. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consultation on the Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper (Updated June 2021) followed by a review of their relevance in light of Covid-19 in June 2020 and incorporated into the Review of RLDP

² Minister for Housing and Local Government Letter to Local Authority Leaders and Chief Executives National Park Authority Chief Executives – Planning System and Covid-19, 7th July 2020

Issues, Vision and Objectives and Evidence Base in light of Covid-19 prepared in September 2020 and endorsed by Cabinet in October 2020.

- A first call for candidate sites (autumn 2018) and publication of the Candidate Site Register (February 2019) for information.
 - Non-statutory consultation on the Growth and Spatial Options undertaken between July and August 2019. This stage was revisited between January and February 2021 to take account of updated Welsh Government 2018-based population and household projections which were published in August 2020 and comprise important new evidence that require consideration and form the starting point in for the Plan's evidence base.
 - The Plan had progressed to the Preferred Strategy stage of the RLDP process in March 2020, with commencement of the statutory consultation on the RLDP Preferred Strategy and the second call for candidate sites during March 2020. Progress on the RLDP was subsequently paused in March 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic meant we could not continue with the Preferred Strategy public engagement events. Following advice from the Minister for Housing and Local Government, the decision was subsequently made to cease the Preferred Strategy consultation and second call for candidate sites on 20th July 2020. Following this, as noted above, the publication of the Welsh Government 2018-based population projections in August 2020 represented new evidence requiring a revisit of the Growth and Spatial Options and Preferred Strategy stages.
- Full details of the consultation methods undertaken will be set out in the Initial Consultation Report prepared to accompany the Deposit Plan.
 - Welsh Government published Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 in February 2021. This establishes the national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040 and provides the policy framework for SDPs and LDPs, with a requirement for the lower tier plans to be in general conformity with Future Wales. The policy framework set out in the Preferred Strategy is considered to be in general conformity with this and does not preclude the objectives of Future Wales being met during the RLDP Plan period. The detailed boundaries associated with many of Future Wales' policies will be pursued through the preparation of the SDP, which has yet to commence. It provides the policy context for national and regional growth, with the RLDP providing the policy framework for growth to address and meet Monmouthshire's local issues and needs. An assessment of the Preferred Strategy against the policies of Future Wales has been undertaken and is attached at Appendix 1.

- A particular area of relevance to Monmouthshire is the requirement of Policy 34 for the Strategic Development Plan to identify a green belt to the north of Cardiff, Newport and the eastern part of the region. The South East Wales Regional Strategic Diagram (page 163 of Future Wales) provides an indicative plan of the area for consideration with the detailed boundary to be defined through the preparation of the SDP. In advance of an SDP, the area shown for consideration in Future Wales should be treated as a designated Green Belt. In assessing the spatial strategy for distributing growth within the County consideration has been given to paragraph 3.72 of PPW11 which states that “when considering a Green Belt designation, a sufficient range of development land which is suitably located in relation to the existing urban edge should be made available, having regard to the longer term need for development land, the effects of development pressures in areas beyond the Green Belt and the need to minimise demand for travel. This may require land to be safeguarded, and boundaries of proposed Green Belts must be carefully defined to achieve this”. In this respect, the Preferred Strategy is considered to facilitate the identification of a Green Belt in southern Monmouthshire with the primary settlements situated outside the broad coverage, consistent with the indicative plan and meeting the aims of Policy 34 but allowing for an appropriate level of growth in Monmouthshire to address its local challenges and issues. The Council still has significant concerns, however, regarding the Green Belt designation as a permanent designation that would have long-term policy implications for future growth and prosperity in Monmouthshire.
- The Preferred Strategy preparation process has reflected the policies of Future Wales having regard to the strategic nature of the Preferred Strategy document. For example, following the publication of the draft NDF and subsequent Future Wales document and the identification of a Green Belt in the south/mid of the County (which would act to hinder development opportunities in this area over the long-term), focussing growth in the north of the County formed one of the spatial options consulted on as part of the Growth and Spatial Options Paper (December 2020). Furthermore, spatial options for Dispersed Growth and New Settlement and New Settlement with Limited Growth in Primary Settlements, Secondary Settlements and Severnside only which formed part of the initial Growth and Spatial Options Consultation Paper (June 2019) have been ruled out for the RLDP on the basis that Welsh Government officials have stated that a New Settlement cannot be pursued outside of the Strategic Development Plan or joint LDP processes. Such changes are considered to demonstrate actions taken to ensure general conformity with Future Wales and SDP processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More generally, the overarching policy framework of the Preferred Strategy is considered to align with the policy aims of the Future Wales, with many common policy themes running through both. Examples of this include the placemaking (Policy 2), active travel (Policy 12), town centre first (Policy 6) and creating resilient ecological networks and enhancing green infrastructure provision (Policy 9). Particularly relevant in a Monmouthshire context, however, is the policy focus on supporting rural communities (Policy 4) and the rural economy (Policy 5) and delivering affordable homes (Policy 7), which are key challenges for the County. In this respect the Preferred Strategy is considered to set the strategic framework for delivering many of the policy objectives of Future Wales at a local level.
<p>Test 1: Does the plan fit? (Is it clear that the LDP is consistent with other plans?)</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it have regard to national policy (PPW) and Future Wales? • Does it have regard to Well-being Goals? • Does it have regard the Welsh National Marine Plan? • Does it have regard to the relevant Area Statement? • Is the plan in general conformity with the NDF? • Is the plan in general conformity with relevant SDP (when adopted)? • Is it consistent with regional plans, strategies and utility programmes? • Is it compatible with the plans of neighbouring LPAs? • Does it reflect the Single Integrated Plan (SIP) Well-being Plan or the National Park Management Plan (NPMP)? • Has the LPA demonstrated it has exhausted all opportunities for joint working and 	<p>The formulation of the Preferred Strategy has been prepared with full regard to the relevant plans and strategies, whilst recognising that it will need to respond and develop as it progresses through its preparatory process. The national, regional and local plans are where relevant identified within the Preferred Strategy but also within the background and supporting documents and within the in-combination considerations of the ISA and HRA Reports. The ISA process reviews the relevant policies, plans and programmes and considers their implications in relation to the growth levels and spatial options considered and have subsequently informed the Preferred Strategy and associated Strategic Policies. Each of the questions is discussed in turn:</p> <p>National Policy (PPW11) and Future Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy has had regard to national policies and guidance as set out in PPW11 and associated Technical Advice Notes (TANs). The Preferred Strategy and supporting documents refer to relevant sections of PPW11 specific to the issue being discussed and the policy requirements of PPW11 have been considered and incorporated where relevant in the preparation of the Strategic Policies. The supporting text adds further commentary on the links to national guidance, including the identification of further work to be undertaken in the preparation of the Deposit Plan. Each of the Strategic Policies is supported by a policy context section which sets out links to the wider policy framework including PPW11 and TANs and are grouped by the overarching policy themes of PPW11. The relationship between the Preferred Strategy and Future Wales is discussed above. Reference has also been made to Welsh Government’s Building Better Places (July 2020) which sets out its response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The RLDP and Preferred Strategy are recognised as a key mechanism in delivering the planning policy priorities identified in the Building Better Places document to assist in the Covid-19 recovery and maintaining and enabling the sustainable improvements that have arisen from the situation.

<p>collaboration on both plan preparation and the evidence base?</p>	<p>Well-Being Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy has full regard to the provisions of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 and the well-being goals, as well as the five ways of working reflected in the additional non-statutory consultation and engagement undertaken on the Issues, Vision and Objectives (Updated June 2021) and the Growth and Spatial Options Paper (December 2020). The promotion and recognition of well-being has been a consideration from the outset of the Plan preparation process. The links between the RLDP objectives and the Well-being Goals is clearly set out in the Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper (Updated June 2021), which relates and groups the issues and opportunities under the well-being goals themes. Each Strategic Policy provides a table setting out its links to the wider policy framework and which of the well-being goals it will contribute to. <p>Welsh National Marine Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Strategic Policies cover a number of issues and policy areas which complement the aims and objectives of the Marine Plan. In particular, Strategic Policies S3 – Sustainable Place Making and High Quality Design, S4 – Climate Change and S18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation complement the Marine Plan by directing development away from areas of flood risk, protecting and enhancing green infrastructure and networks and recognising the challenges posed by climate change. The relationship with the Marine Plan will be enhanced further through the preparation of detailed policies in the Deposit Plan. <p>Area Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monmouthshire forms part of the South East Wales Area Statement along with Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Newport and Torfaen, which was published by NRW in March 2020. The Preferred Strategy has regard to the Area Statement’s strategic themes of Linking Our Landscape; Climate Ready Gwent; Healthy Active Connected; and Ways of Working and through the Strategic Policies seeks to achieve many of the outcomes associated with each theme. Examples of this include Strategic Policy S18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation which is consistent with many of the outcomes sought from the Area Statement including improved resilience of our ecosystems across Gwent and the need to safeguard and enhance core habitat networks and support ecological connectivity on and between our best sites across Gwent. Similarly, Strategic Policies S3 – Sustainable Placemaking and High Quality Design and S4 – Climate Change are consistent in their aims as many of the outcomes associated with Climate Ready Gwent and Healthy Active Connected. Overall, the Preferred Strategy is considered to be consistent with the key themes and aims of the South East Wales Area Statement.
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Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

- Conformity with Future Wales is discussed above and in Appendix 1.

Strategic Development Plan (SDP)

- The preparation of an SDP has not commenced for the region, although Monmouthshire County Council has been actively involved in the discussions and agreements put in place to date and Council has formally resolved to be part of the SDP.

Regional plans, strategies and utility programmes

- The Preferred Strategy has been prepared within the context of the relevant regional plans, strategies and utility provider programmes, with Section 2 of the Preferred Strategy, associated background papers and the supporting commentary of the Strategic Policies providing details of the documents that have been considered. Specific reference is made to the Cardiff Capital Region and the role Monmouthshire can play in contributing to its main objectives and programmes. The Initial Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment also consider the in-combination effects of the Preferred Strategy along with other plans and strategies in the region and conclude that the Strategy is in line with both regional and local environmental protection objectives.
- The preparation of the Preferred Strategy has also involved a regional and coordinated approach to the collection of evidence, including population projection modelling, regional employment study, and Integrated Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This has provided a consistent and comparable approach to methodologies and a basis to consider the evidence and any implications on a more regional basis as well as at a local level. This approach will continue through the preparation of the Deposit Plan, with a number of jointly commissioned pieces of evidence already in progress including a Development Viability Model and a Renewable Energy Assessment, with others scheduled to commence imminently including a Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment and Green Belt and Green Wedge Review. Long standing regional working methods associated with areas such as waste and minerals are continued and reflected in the Preferred Strategy.
- Utility companies have been involved from an early stage in the development of the Preferred Strategy to ensure consistency with their programmes. For example, discussions have taken place between the Council and Western Power and Welsh Water, with more detailed discussions to follow as part of the assessment on candidate sites and the preparation of the Deposit Plan.

Plans of Neighbouring Authorities (LPAs)

- The Preferred Strategy takes into account cross-border issues and the plans of neighbouring authorities and reflects the discussions and agreements reached relating to cross-border issues. Examples include agreement on the approach to the housing numbers attributed to growth in the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority area, consideration of Newport’s capacity to accommodate an element of Monmouthshire’s growth on previously developed land, and discussion with the Forest of Dean regarding their issues and objectives. Further details of joint working and collaboration are set out in paragraphs 2.46 – 2.48 of the Preferred Strategy.
- As noted above, in recognition of the value of working with neighbouring authorities, and in response to PPW11 and the Development Plans Manual (Ed 3, March 2020) emphasis on collaborative working, we have worked on or are working on a number of pieces of evidence together. These include a: Larger than Local Employment Study, Population and Household Projections, Integrated Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulation Assessment, Development Viability Model and Renewable Energy Assessment. The nature of the co-operation with authorities and sharing of approaches including comparable thematic policy areas will be developed as the Plan’s preparatory process continues. This will build on work undertaken by SEWSPG and topic-based Pathfinder groups, which have helped establish a common approach to a number of Plan preparation tasks including candidate sites assessments, sustainable settlement appraisals and retail and employment land monitoring.
- Regard will also be had to the emphasis on regional working in light of future provisions around Strategic Development Plans and Future Wales.

Single Integrated Plan (SIP), Well-being Plan or the National Park Management Plan (NPMP)

- The Monmouthshire Well-being Plan was prepared by the Public Service Board and endorsed in February 2018. The Issues, Vision and Objectives (Updated June 2021) 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 1.21, PPW11). In this respect, the Well-being Plan has been an integral part of the Preferred Strategy preparation ensuring it seeks to address key issues identified for Monmouthshire. The Strategic Policies also set out which of the Well-being Plan objectives it has a particular link to.
- The area of Brecon Beacons National Park that sits within Monmouthshire County Council’s administrative area is excluded from the extent of the RLDP’s geographical area and does not form part of

	<p>Monmouthshire’s Planning Authority remit. The relationship and impact on the Brecon Beacons National Park, does, however, remain a significant consideration for the preparation of the RLDP. The Preferred Strategy is considered to reflect the aims of the ‘A Management Plan for the Brecon Beacons National Park’ (2015-2020), particularly its themes aiming to ‘Manage the Parks Landscape’ and ‘Conserving and Enhancing Biodiversity’. Strategic Policy SP18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscaping and Nature Conservation is of particular relevance to achieving the aims of the Management Plan.</p> <p>Joint Working and Collaboration on both plan preparation and the evidence base</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As demonstrated above, a significant amount of the evidence base has been commissioned on a joint basis with Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen and on a regional basis with Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Caerphilly and Newport. We have also held regular joint meetings to ensure there is a consistency of approach. Further details of joint working and collaboration are set out in paragraphs 2.46 – 2.48 of the Preferred Strategy and specific examples referenced throughout the Preferred Strategy in relation to the Strategic Policies. ▪ On-going meetings and collaboration are also pursued through the longstanding South East Wales Strategic Planning Group (SEWSPG), the Planning Officers South Wales (POSW) and the South East Wales Planning Officer Society (SEWPOS).
<p>Test 2: Is the plan appropriate? (Is the plan appropriate for the area in the light of the evidence?)</p> <p>Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it locally specific? • Does it address the key issues? • Is it supported by robust, proportionate and credible evidence? • Can the rationale behind plan policies be demonstrated? • Does it seek to meet assessed needs and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development? • Are the vision and the strategy positive and sufficiently aspirational? • Have the ‘real’ alternatives been properly considered? 	<p>Is it Locally Specific?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy builds upon the objectives of the Well-being Plan which are locally specific, having regard to the outcomes of the consultation undertaken in its preparation. The formulation of the Preferred Strategy is underpinned by the locally specific evidence of the Monmouthshire Well-being Plan. The findings of the MCC Economies of the Future Reports (2018) also helped to identify locally specific issues and options for the future of Monmouthshire. Building on these, non-statutory consultation was undertaken during January 2019 on the Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper to identify the issues facing Monmouthshire and discuss possible ways forward in the RLDP. The Council’s decision to declare a Climate Change Emergency during May 2019 has also formed a key focus in the emerging Preferred Strategy. Following on from these, the Growth and Spatial Options Paper (December 2020) sets out a range of alternative growth and spatial options to address the different issues facing Monmouthshire. As a result of these non-statutory consultations exercises, the Preferred Strategy proposed a strategy that has emerged as a direct result of a number of very locally specific issues, including an ageing demographic, high houses prices, high out-commuting rates and a commitment to locate development in Monmouthshire’s most sustainable settlements.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it logical, reasonable and balanced? • Is it coherent and consistent? • Is it clear and focused? 	<p>Does it address key issues?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In addition to the above, each growth and spatial option has been assessed to consider its contribution to the RLDP overarching objectives. Details of this assessment is set out in the Growth and Spatial Options Background Paper (June 2021). The growth and spatial options that form the basis of the Preferred Strategy have been chosen as it is considered these best address the key issues facing the County, including an ageing demographic, high house prices and the proposed distribution of development based on a sustainable settlement hierarchy and sustainable development principles that incorporate climate change challenges. Each Strategic Policy also highlights the links to the RLDP objectives and Monmouthshire PSB Well-being Plan objectives. The locally specific, key issues are referenced extensively throughout the Preferred Strategy and have formed the principal rationale for choosing the policy approach taken. <p>Is it supported by robust, proportionate and credible evidence?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extensive evidence building has been undertaken to support the Preferred Strategy. A full breakdown is provided in Appendix 1 of the Preferred Strategy. In addition to theses, further studies and pieces of evidence will be or are currently being undertaken and commissioned, including viability modelling, Strategic Flood Consequence, and Green Wedge Review. Further work will be undertaken during the Plan preparatory process as appropriate and necessary. <p>Can the rationale behind plan policies be demonstrated?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The evidence gathered has informed the preparation of the strategic policies, which need to be read in conjunction with one another in order to gain an understanding of the overall policy direction of the Plan. Each strategic policy has a reasoned justification and a summary table setting out how it relates to the relevant RLDP objectives, national policy, and Well Being Goals, as well as the key evidence. The Strategic Policies have been grouped by PPW11's overarching policy themes and the relevant sections of PPW11 are referenced as these combined with the locally specific evidence forms a key approach to establishing the rationale to the Plan's policies. <p>Does it seek to meet assessed needs and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy is derived from evidence that assesses the needs of the County, particularly in respect of homes (both market and affordable) and jobs, as well as the need to protect the most valuable areas of land. Population and household modelling has been undertaken and a selection of population, housing and economic growth options have been consulted upon in the Growth and Spatial Options
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Consultation Paper (December 2020). This also provides details on how well each option meets the needs of Monmouthshire, based on the Issues, Vision and Objectives Paper. In addition to this, the Local Housing Market Assessment has provided key evidence on the level of affordable housing need in the County. An Employment Land Review has also been undertaken to quantify the future employment land requirements based on the Welsh Government Practice Guidance for Economic Development. The need for homes and jobs has also been considered alongside the need to protect the County's land resources for environmental, agricultural and nature conservation purposes. The balance to be achieved between these differing and sometime competing needs will continue to be a key focus of the RLDP as it progresses to the Deposit stage.

- The achievement of sustainable development is a central component of the Plan. The Integrated Sustainability Appraisal process has an integral and iterative role in the preparation of the RLDP. In this respect, its use in testing or measuring the performance of the RLDP from its inception through to the preparation of the Preferred Strategy is indicative of the iterative feedback between the ISA and the RLDP as work progresses.
- The hierarchy of settlements has been developed taking account of the sustainability credentials of each settlement and how they can contribute to their wider communities. This hierarchy recognises and acknowledges the availability of services and facilities, accessibility issues and other considerations. Reference should be made to the Sustainable Settlement Appraisal Background Paper (June 2021) for full details. This work has formed the basis for the proposed spatial strategy, which seeks to ensure development is located in the most sustainable settlements within a Monmouthshire context.

Are the vision and the strategy positive and sufficiently aspirational?

- The RLDP Vision has been developed to take into account the key challenges and opportunities for change, whilst being aspirational and positive enough to seek a reversal to the otherwise projected decline in job numbers and younger age groups present in the County, as established in the Welsh Government 2018 based Principal projections. The vision for growth is a positive one which seeks to create high quality, sustainable places in both urban and rural settlements within a Monmouthshire context. The Preferred Strategy takes a positive, yet realistic approach to achieving growth within the context of Monmouthshire and tackling key national and local issues, such as the provision of affordable homes, growing Monmouthshire's economic base, tackling climate change and creating sustainable places to live and work in. The Preferred Strategy is considered to present a balanced approach to growth by putting forward a strategy that is aspirational enough to address a number of key issues facing the County, whilst also being deliverable and building on significant changes that have occurred since the Covid-19 pandemic such as the increased propensity to work from home and the importance of creating communities with locally

	<p>accessible services. This element of the Plan will be evidenced further as the Plan progresses to the Deposit stage.</p> <p>Have the ‘real’ alternatives been properly considered?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A number of different alternative growth and spatial options were considered as part of the Growth and Spatial Options Consultation Paper (December 2020). The assessment of all options is identified in Section 4 of the Preferred Strategy and in more detail in the Growth and Spatial Options Background Paper (December 2020). The Strategic Options have also been considered through the ISA process. <p>Is it logical, reasonable and balanced?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy has emerged from a clear understanding of the issues at a national, regional and local level. It has considered a range of options and has had regard to the views expressed during the non-statutory consultation and engagement exercises to date and made changes to the options considered as a result. The Preferred Strategy has emerged from engagement and evidence and as such it is considered to be logical and reasonable within the context of the issues facing Monmouthshire. It is considered to provide a balanced approach that integrates with other plans and strategies, whilst ensuring it is reflective of national policy and the need for a sustainable and deliverable Plan. <p>Is it coherent and consistent?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy sets out a coherent strategy from which its strategic policies flow. The strategy is guided by, and consistent with, the Plan vision and objectives, the principles of sustainability set out in national planning guidance, the growth and spatial options and the evidence base. <p>Is it clear and focused?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy is set out in a clear and logical form, clearly showing the links between the various elements of the Strategy. It provides a clear focus of its purpose, identifying the vision and issues associated with the Plan and how the Preferred Strategy will seek to address these.
<p>Test 3: Will the plan deliver (Is it likely to be effective?) Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will it be effective? • Can it be implemented? 	<p>Will it be effective?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy’s objectives have emerged from an understanding of the challenges and needs of Monmouthshire as well as a sound, logical and robust evidence base. The strategy seeks to integrate and reflect other Plans and Strategies as part of an integrated approach to delivery, maximising its opportunities to be effective in its implementation.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there support from the relevant infrastructure providers both financially and in terms of meeting relevant timescales? • Will development be viable? • Can the sites allocated be delivered? • Is the plan sufficiently flexible? Are there appropriate contingency provisions? • Is it monitored effectively?’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Preferred Strategy makes provision for 8,366 homes, including the provision of approximately 2,450 affordable homes, which will make significant progress in addressing the current housing waiting list. This level of growth will enable the provision of market and affordable housing and, importantly, provides the opportunity to address the unbalanced demography, improve labour force retention and assists in the County’s housing affordability challenge. ▪ In order to meet the housing provision figure of 8,366, the RLDP will need to make new allocations for 3,658 homes reflecting the number of units that already have planning permission or that will be delivered via other housing supply streams, such as windfall and infill sites. These new allocations provide the Council with the opportunity to open up longer term directions for strategic growth and implement place-making and climate change principles. ▪ The Preferred Strategy also provide the planning policy framework to enable the provision of 7,215 jobs over the Plan period to help grow Monmouthshire’s economic base and reduce the out-commuting experienced within the County. This level of job growth aligns with the projected population and housing growth and takes account of adjustments to household membership rates for key younger age groups and a reduced level of commuting by retaining more of the resident workforce. There has been a fundamental shift in working practices since the start of Covid-19 pandemic with an increased propensity to work from home/remotely. It is expected that this trend will continue over the longer term in accordance with Welsh Government’s ambition of 30% of the Welsh workforce working from or near home. This provides residents with the opportunity to both live and work in the County in this new way, providing a flexible approach to achieving this level of job growth, whilst also achieving the Welsh Government and Council’s aim of reducing the need for commuting. It will also be achieved through the allocation of a minimum of 43ha of employment land to facilitate the delivery of industrial and business employment uses. Economic based initiatives such as the Monmouthshire 2040: Our Economic Growth and Ambition Statement (November 2019) and Investment Prospectus (March 2020) will support intervention options required to help deliver jobs. The RLDP will also include a policy framework to support job growth from other key employment sectors including retail, leisure and tourism. ▪ The Preferred Strategy will result in an extra 0.42% of the County land area being built upon. A key objective of the Plan remains to retain and protect the rural character, landscape and best and most versatile agricultural land. <p>Can it be implemented?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The preparation of the Preferred Strategy is with the clear intention that it will be implementable and that its policies and proposals will be delivered within the Plan period. The Preferred Strategy sets out a
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deliverable spatial framework and strategic growth which is based on sustainability principles and is responsive to the needs of the communities of Monmouthshire. The policies and proposals (both strategic and eventually specific within the future Deposit Plan) will provide the framework through which the Plan's objectives will be implemented and the decision-making process undertaken. More detailed assessment work, covering issues such as viability, phasing and deliverability of sites will be undertaken to support the preparation of the Deposit Plan.

- As part of the preparation of the Deposit RLDP an effective and appropriate monitoring framework will be developed and included within the Plan. This will form the basis for undertaking the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will represent the main method for measuring and assessing the progress in the implementation of the policies and proposals of the adopted RLDP.

Is there support from the relevant infrastructure providers both financially and in terms of meeting the relevant timescales?

- Infrastructure providers are an important component in developing the RLDP and form a key consultee. In this respect they have and will continue to be engaged throughout the Plan making process. Notably further consultation will be undertaken in the preparation of the Deposit Plan to ensure that Plan delivery is fully evidenced. As noted above, discussions have taken place between the Council and utility providers including Western Power and Welsh Water. Other infrastructure providers have also been involved in on-going discussions including the Health Board and Transport for Wales.

Will the development be viable?

- The need for development to be viable is an important aspect in the preparation of the Plan and will be evidenced in relation to the identification of sites or the development of specific policies. Work is currently being developed at a regional level to establish a robust and consistent methodology for assessing viability across authorities in the south east Wales region. This work sits alongside viability modelling at a site-specific level ensuring that viability assessments submitted with candidate sites are appropriately informed by local conditions and policy and are robustly evidenced.
- A second call for candidate sites is being undertaken over an 8-week period, commencing at the same time as the consultation period on the Preferred Strategy. Detailed information on site viability is required as part of this exercise, with a guidance note also issued to help land owners and developers on the level and type of information required. A Viability Steering Group has also been established to inform the viability process and ensure key inputs reflect market conditions in Monmouthshire. This site-specific information

together with viability modelling will be used to evidence that the sites allocated in the Deposit Plan are viable.

Can the sites allocated be delivered?

- The Preferred Strategy does not identify specific allocations. Allocations will be identified as part of the Deposit plan with their deliverability evidenced accordingly.

Is the Plan sufficiently flexible? Are there appropriate contingencies in place?

- The Preferred Strategy has been designed to provide a flexible policy framework which is capable of providing certainty on how much growth is proposed and its broad distribution, but flexible enough to consider appropriate and acceptable opportunities that may arise during the Plan period, such as windfall sites and rural enterprise developments. The dwelling and employment land requirement figures contain a flexibility allowance to allow for unforeseen circumstances that may emerge through the Plan period. The flexibility allowance will be given further consideration as part of the Deposit Plan preparation.

Is it monitored effectively?

- As part of the preparation of the Deposit Plan an effective and appropriate monitoring framework will be developed and included within the Plan and will form the basis for undertaking the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). The AMR will represent the main method for measuring and assessing the progress in the implementation of the policies and proposals of the adopted RLDP. In the meantime, a number of annual monitoring exercises will continue to be undertaken to help ensure evidence is up-to-date. This includes the annual housing surveys, Employment and Retail Surveys and preparation of the Adopted LDP Annual Monitoring Reports.

Appendix 1

Monmouthshire RLDP Preferred Strategy – General Conformity with Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 Assessment

Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 (referred to as Future Wales from this point on) was published by Welsh Government in February 2021 to promote development that enhances well-being and quality of life in Wales. It considers the issues significant to Wales’s prosperity and well-being, such as the economy, housing, transport, energy, and the environment. It identifies where national developments should take place, where the key growth areas are and what infrastructure and services are needed. It is set in the context of a vision that will help deliver sustainable places across Wales by 2040, by supporting placemaking and ensuring our choices direct development to the right places, making the best use of resources, creating and sustaining accessible healthy communities, protecting our environment and supporting prosperity for all.

The requirement for a development plan to be in general conformity with the upper tier statutory development plan in Wales is set out in primary legislation. Planning Policy Wales 11 (February 2021) and the Development Plans Manual (March 2020) provide additional guidance on how to assess general conformity. Paragraph 2.18 of the Development Plans Manual notes that “the fact that a development plan may be inconsistent with one or more policies in the upper tier plan, either directly or through the omission of a policy/proposal, does not, by itself, mean that the plan is not in general conformity. Rather, the fundamental point is how significant the inconsistency is from the point of view of delivery of the upper tier plan”. It goes on to note in paragraph 2.19 “whilst it would be acceptable for the lower tier plan to provide further detail in relation to making it more locally distinctive, it fundamentally must not undermine the overarching strategy, policies or proposals in the upper tier plan(s)”. The requirement to be in general conformity with Future Wales is also a test of soundness and will be tested through the examination process.

The purpose of this this Appendix is to demonstrate that the Monmouthshire’s Preferred Strategy assists in the delivery of the Future Wales policies and is in general conformity with its overarching strategy.

The following section assesses whether the RLDP objectives and Strategic Policies set out in the Preferred Strategy are considered to be in general conformity with Future Wales Policies using the traffic light model below:

RLDP/Preferred Strategy is considered to be in general conformity with the Future Wales 2040 policy objective.
RLDP/Preferred Strategy is considered to make a neutral contribution to the Future Wales 2040 policy objective.
RLDP/Preferred Strategy is not considered to be in general conformity with the Future Wales 2040 policy objective.

Future Wales Policy*	Relevant RLDP Objectives and Preferred Strategy Strategic Policies	General Conformity with FW Strategy
<p>Policy 1 – Where Wales will grow</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports sustainable growth in all parts of Wales. In three National Growth Areas there will be growth in employment and housing opportunities and investment in infrastructure. The National Growth Areas are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys • Swansea Bay and Llanelli • Wrexham and Deeside <p>The National Growth Areas are complemented by Regional Growth Areas which will grow, develop and offer a variety of public and commercial services at regional scale. There are Regional Growth Areas in three regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The South West • Mid Wales • The North <p>Development and growth in towns and villages in rural areas should be of appropriate scale and support local aspirations and need.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives:</p> <p>Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment</p> <p>Objective 6 – Land</p> <p>Objective 9 – Demography</p> <p>Objective 10 – Housing</p> <p>Objective 12 – Communities</p> <p>Objective 13 – Rural Communities</p> <p>Preferred Strategy Strategic Policies:</p> <p>S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth</p> <p>S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy</p> <p>S6 – Delivery of Homes</p> <p>S7 – Affordable Homes</p> <p>S8 – Strategic Development Sites</p> <p>S10 – Sustainable Transport</p> <p>S13 – Employment Sites Provision</p>	<p>Monmouthshire is not identified as a growth area in Future Wales, however, the policy allows for growth in towns and villages in rural areas of an appropriate scale and to support local aspiration and need. The Preferred Strategy growth level has emerged from an understanding of the issues, challenges and needs of Monmouthshire as well as a sound, logical and robust evidence base.</p> <p>A number of growth and spatial options were consulted on in the Growth and Spatial Options Paper (December 2020). The paper sets out how the different levels and distribution of growth would impact on the key issues and objectives of the RLDP. Overall, the level and distribution of growth proposed in the Preferred Strategy is considered to be the most conducive to achieving the RLDP vision and the Council’s core purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities across Monmouthshire. It also performs the most positively against the RLDP objectives and better overall against the ISA themes than any of the other five growth options and three spatial options consulted on.</p> <p>Further details are provided in the Growth and Spatial Options Background Paper (June 2021). This sets out that the proposed level of growth of 8,366 homes (including 2,450 affordable), 43ha of employment land and the policy framework to enable the provision of 7,215 jobs provides the opportunity to address the County’s key challenges including an unbalanced demography, improve labour force retention</p>

		<p>and out-commuting rates and assist in the County’s housing affordability challenge. On the basis of the evidence base prepared to support the Preferred Strategy it considered the level and distribution of growth proposed is of an appropriate scale to specifically address local aspirations and needs.</p>
<p>Policy 2 – Shaping Urban Growth and Regeneration – Strategic Placemaking</p> <p>The growth and regeneration of towns and cities should positively contribute towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lives, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure.</p> <p>Urban growth and regeneration should be based on the following strategic placemaking principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creating a rich mix of uses; • providing a variety of housing types and tenures; • building places at a walkable scale, with homes, local facilities and public transport within walking distance of each other; • increasing population density, with development built at urban densities that can support public transport and local facilities; • establishing a permeable network of streets, with a hierarchy that informs the nature of development; • promoting a plot-based approach to development, which provides opportunities for the development of small plots, including for custom and self-builders; and • integrating green infrastructure, informed by the planning authority’s Green Infrastructure Assessment. <p>Planning authorities should use development plans to establish a vision for each town and city. This should be supported by a spatial framework that guides growth</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives:</p> <p>Objective 3 – Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape</p> <p>Objective 8 - Health and Well-being</p> <p>Objective 11 – Placemaking</p> <p>Objective 12 – Communities</p> <p>Objective 13 – Rural Communities</p> <p>Objective 15 – Accessibility</p> <p>Objective 16 – Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies:</p> <p>S3 – Sustainable Placemaking and High Quality Design</p> <p>S10 – Sustainable Transport</p> <p>S12 – Community and Recreation Facilities</p> <p>S18 – Green infrastructure, landscape and Nature Conservation</p>	<p>The Preferred Strategy’s core aim is to deliver sustainable and resilient communities. The Strategic Policy Framework seeks to ensure development contributes to the creation of sustainable places that focus on delivering placemaking and ensuring Monmouthshire’s communities are sustainable in the long terms and are attractive places to live, work and visit.</p> <p>The policy framework set out in the Preferred Strategy is considered to reflect the policy objectives of the Future Wales policy and provide the basis to make a significant contribution to placemaking objectives at the local level within Monmouthshire.</p>

<p>and regeneration, and establishes a structure within which towns and cities can grow, evolve, diversify and flourish over time.</p>		
<p>Policy 3 – Supporting Urban Growth and Regeneration – Public Sector Leadership</p> <p>The Welsh Government will play an active, enabling role to support the delivery of urban growth and regeneration. The Welsh Government will assemble land, invest in infrastructure and prepare sites for development. We will work with local authorities and other public sector bodies to unlock the potential of their land and support them to take an increased development role.</p> <p>The public sector must show leadership and apply placemaking principles to support growth and regeneration for the benefit of communities across Wales. The public sector’s use of land, developments, investments and actions must build sustainable places that improve health and well-being.</p> <p>Planning authorities must take a proactive role and work in collaboration with the Welsh Government and other public sector bodies to identify the best locations for growth and regeneration, and provide certainty about how they should be developed.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment Objective 10 – Housing Objective 11 – Placemaking Objective 14 – Infrastructure</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy S3 – Sustainable Placemaking & High Quality Design S5 – Infrastructure Provision S6 – Delivery of Homes S7 – Affordable Homes S8 – Strategic Development Sites S13 – Employment Sites Provision</p>	<p>The Preferred Strategy policy framework establishes a clear focus for growth in Monmouthshire with building sustainable and resilient communities as a core vision. Monmouthshire County Council recognise the significant role it must play in providing public leadership in achieving this aim. A key policy objective of the Preferred Strategy is the addressing affordable housing challenges in the County.</p> <p>The RLDP will identify specific housing areas where there is an identified need on sites where 50% of the dwellings will be affordable. To help achieve this the Council is undertaking initial appraisals to weigh up the merits of establishing its own Development Company to undertake residential and commercial development. It is also actively working with private developers and Registered Social Landlords to ensure the aims of the Preferred Strategy are delivered. Similarly, the RLDP has a key role in supporting the Council’s vision for economic growth and priorities set out in the Monmouthshire 2040: Our Economic Growth and Ambition Statement.</p>
<p>Policy 4 – Supporting Rural Communities</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports sustainable and vibrant rural communities.</p> <p>Strategic and Local Development Plans must identify their rural communities, assess their needs and set out policies that support them. Policies should consider how age balanced communities can be achieved, where depopulation should be reversed and consider the role of new affordable and market housing, employment</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment Objective 8 – Health and Well-being Objective 9 – Demography Objective 10 – Housing Objective 11 – Placemaking Objective 12 – Communities Objective 13 – Rural communities</p>	<p>The issues identified in Policy 4 of Future Wales are directly related to the issues and challenges that the Monmouthshire RLDP is seeking to address. The Preferred Strategy proposes a level and distribution of growth that provides the opportunity to address the County’s key issues/challenges including an unbalanced demography, improve labour force retention and out-commuting rates and assist in the County’s housing affordability challenge. In this respect the Preferred Strategy is considered to offer a significant contribution to achieving the objectives of Policy 4 of Future Wales whilst also</p>

<p>opportunities, local services and greater mobility in tackling these challenges.</p>	<p>Objective 16 – Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy S3 – Sustainable Placemaking & High Quality Design S6 – Delivery of Homes S7 – Affordable Homes S10 – Sustainable Transport S14 – Rural Enterprise S15 – Visitor Economy</p>	<p>being the most conducive to achieving the RLDP vision and the Council’s core purpose of building sustainable and resilient communities across Monmouthshire. It also performs the most positively against the RLDP objectives and better overall against the ISA themes than any of the other five growth options and three spatial options consulted on.</p>
<p>Policy 5 – Supporting the rural economy The Welsh Government supports sustainable, appropriate and proportionate economic growth in rural towns that is planned and managed through Strategic and Local Development Plans. Strategic and Local Development Plans must plan positively to meet the employment needs of rural areas including employment arising from the foundational economy; the agricultural and forestry sector, including proposals for diversification; start-ups and micro businesses. The Welsh Government also strongly supports development of innovative and emerging technology businesses and sectors to help rural areas unlock their full potential, broadening the economic base, and creating higher paid jobs.</p>	<p>Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment Objective 9 – Demography Objective 11 – Placemaking Objective 12 – Communities Objective 13 – Rural Communities Objective 16 – Culture, Heritage and Welsh Language</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy S3 – Sustainable Placemaking & High Quality Design S5 - Infrastructure S14 – Rural Enterprise</p>	<p>A significant issue for Monmouthshire is the need to sustain and regenerate the County’s rural economy consistent with the policy aims of Policy 5 of Future Wales. The Preferred Strategy provides the policy framework to allow for an appropriate amount of diversification and enterprise in rural areas as well as the infrastructure both physical and digital to facilitate this. The Preferred Strategy also recognises the role the agricultural and forestry, tourism and leisure sectors play in Monmouthshire’s economy and seeks to facilitate their growth at an appropriate scale.</p>

<p>Policy 6 – Town Centre First Significant new commercial, retail, education, health, leisure and public service facilities must be located within town and city centres. They should have good access by public transport to and from the whole town or city and, where appropriate, the wider region. A sequential approach must be used to inform the identification of the best location for these developments and they should be identified in Strategic and Local Development Plans.</p>	<p>S15 – Visitor Economy</p> <p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment Objective 2 – Retail Centres Objective 11 – Placemaking Objective 12 – Communities Objective 13 Rural Communities Objective 15 – Accessibility</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy S3 – Sustainable Placemaking & High Quality Design S11 – Retail & Commercial Centres Hierarchy</p>	<p>In accordance with PPW11 the Preferred Strategy sets out the retail hierarchy for Monmouthshire with a view to sustaining and enhancing the County’s main town as vibrant and attractive centres and to maintain the essential local shopping facilities. The hierarchy assists the implementation of the sequential approach and town centre first principle by directing retail and commercial development to the appropriate position in the hierarchy.</p>
<p>Policy 7 – Delivering Affordable Homes The Welsh Government will increase delivery of affordable homes by ensuring that funding for these homes is effectively allocated and utilised. Through their Strategic and Local Development Plans planning authorities should develop strong evidence based policy frameworks to deliver affordable housing, including setting development plan targets based on regional estimates of housing need and local assessments. In response to local and regional needs, planning authorities should identify sites for affordable housing led developments and explore all opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment Objective 6 – Land Objective 9 – Demography Objective 10 – Housing Objective 12 – Communities Objective 13 – Rural Communities</p> <p>Preferred Strategy Strategic Policies: S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy</p>	<p>Tackling affordability issues in Monmouthshire’s housing market has been identified as a key challenge to address through the RLDP process. Accordingly, the Preferred Strategy establishes a policy framework that seeks to address this through an affordable housing target of 2,450 affordable homes, commencing work to establish affordable housing percentage thresholds for inclusion in the Deposit Plan and seeking to allocate sites in housing market areas where there is an identified affordable housing need on a 50/50 split of affordable homes and private market homes. Additional opportunities to increase the supply of affordable housing, such as a housing mix policy will be explored in the Deposit Plan.</p>

	<p>S6 – Delivery of Homes S7 – Affordable Homes S8 – Strategic Development Sites</p>	<p>The latest Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA) (December 2020) provides the evidence base on affordable housing matters within the RLDP.</p>
<p>Policy 8 – Flooding Flood risk management that enables and supports sustainable strategic growth and regeneration in National and Regional Growth Areas will be supported. The Welsh Government will work with Flood Risk Management Authorities and developers to plan and invest in new and improved infrastructure, promoting nature-based solutions as a priority. Opportunities for multiple social, economic and environmental benefits must be maximised when investing in flood risk management infrastructure. It must be ensured that projects do not have adverse impacts on international and national statutory designated sites for nature conservation and the features for which they have been designated.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 3 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape Objective 4 – Flood Risk Objective 6 – Land Objective 7 – Natural Resources Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change S18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation</p>	<p>The Preferred Strategy makes a policy commitment to avoid locating development in areas at risk of flooding, or where appropriate, minimise the risk of flooding including the incorporation of measures such as Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems and flood resilience design. The Preferred Strategy also recognises the significant role Green Infrastructure plays in flood attenuation and water resource management and managing and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems resilience.</p>
<p>Policy 9 – Resilient Ecological Networks and Green Infrastructure To ensure the enhancement of biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems and the provision of green infrastructure, the Welsh Government will work with key partners to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify areas which should be safeguarded and created as ecological networks for their importance for adaptation to climate change, for habitat protection, restoration or creation, to protect species, or which provide key ecosystems services, to ensure they are not unduly compromised by future development; and • identify opportunities where existing and potential green infrastructure could be maximised as part of 	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 3 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape Objective 4 – Flood Risk Objective 6 – Land Objective 7 – Natural Resources Objective 8 – Health and Well-being Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change S18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation</p>	<p>Monmouthshire has significant Green Infrastructure, landscape, biodiversity and nature conservation resources. The need to protect and enhance these resources is a key focus of the RLDP, recognising the multifunctional role it has in delivering active travel, placemaking, ecosystem resilience, climate change mitigation and improving general health and well-being.</p> <p>The Council has prepared the Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy (2019), which has also informed the evidence base of the SE Wales Area Statement. This provides an overarching framework for positive actions by all stakeholders involved in the future protection, management and enhancement of Green Infrastructure in Monmouthshire and sets out key strategic objectives and priorities for guiding</p>

<p>placemaking, requiring the use of nature-based solutions as a key mechanism for securing sustainable growth, ecological connectivity, social equality and well-being. Planning authorities should include these areas and/or opportunities in their development plan strategies and policies in order to promote and safeguard the functions and opportunities they provide. In all cases, action towards securing the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity (to provide a net benefit), the resilience of ecosystems and green infrastructure assets must be demonstrated as part of development proposals through innovative, nature-based approaches to site planning and the design of the built environment.</p>		<p>the planning management and delivery of Green Infrastructure in Monmouthshire.</p>
<p>Policy 10 – International Connectivity The Welsh Government identifies the following Strategic Gateways to facilitate international connectivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cardiff Airport • Holyhead Port • Haven Waterway, including the Ports of Milford Haven and Pembroke Dock • Fishguard Port <p>The Welsh Government will work with the operators, investors and local authorities to support Strategic Gateways and maintain their international connectivity roles.</p> <p>Strategic and Local Development Plans should support the Strategic Gateways by maximising the benefits they provide to their respective regions and Wales.</p> <p>New development around the Strategic Gateways should be carefully managed to ensure their operation is not constrained or compromised.</p>		<p>There are no Strategic Gateways to facilitate international connectivity identified in the Monmouthshire boundary. The RLDP is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on the achieving the Future Wales policy.</p>
<p>Policy 11 – National Connectivity</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 14 – Infrastructure</p>	<p>The Preferred Strategy seeks to promote sustainable forms of transport, reduce the need to travel, increase provision for</p>

<p>The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving national connectivity. Our priorities are to encourage longer-distance trips to be made by public transport, while also making longer journeys possible by electric vehicles. The Welsh Government will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities, operators and partners to support the delivery of the following measures to improve national connectivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rail Network – Transform the rail network and improve the quality of rail services for passengers. • Bus Network – Invest in the development of the national bus network, fully integrated with regional and local bus networks, to increase modal share of bus travel and improve access by bus to a wider range of trip destinations. • Strategic Road Network – Invest in road improvements to reduce journey times, deliver a safer and more resilient road network, and improve air and noise quality. Create a network of rapid-charging points to enable longer distance travel by electric vehicles throughout Wales. • National Cycle Network – Revitalise the National Cycle Network to create a network of traffic-free paths connecting cities, towns and countryside across Wales. <p>Planning authorities should support developments associated with improvements to national connectivity and, where appropriate, maximise the opportunities that arise from them.</p> <p>Planning authorities must ensure that, where appropriate, new development contributes towards the improvement and development of the National Cycle Network and key links to and from it.</p>	<p>Objective 15 – Accessibility Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change S5 – Infrastructure Provision S10 – Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>walking and cycling and improve public transport provision. The spatial strategy of the RLDP is to focus development in those locations that provide the best opportunities for achieving sustainable development, which offer a choice of transport modes and contribute towards the development of a sustainable transport network and provide opportunities to enhance and connect to the Active Travel Networks. Enhancing the use of ultra-low emission vehicles through the provision of sufficient charging infrastructure is also recognised as a key contributor to improving sustainable national connectivity given Monmouthshire’s rural character.</p> <p>An updated Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan taking account of recent key evidence including the South East Wales Transport Commission Final Recommendations Plan: November 2020 and South East Metro will be prepared alongside the preparation of the Deposit Plan. The RLDP will support the transport schemes in identified within the updated LTP, and where appropriate, safeguard land for key transport proposals.</p>
<p>Policy 12 – Regional Connectivity</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 14 – Infrastructure</p>	<p>The Preferred Strategy seeks to promote sustainable forms of transport, reduce the need to travel, increase provision for</p>

<p>The Welsh Government will support and invest in improving regional connectivity. In urban areas, to support sustainable growth and regeneration, our priorities are improving and integrating active travel and public transport. In rural areas our priorities are supporting the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles and diversifying and sustaining local bus services.</p> <p>The Welsh Government will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities, operators and partners to deliver the following measures to improve regional connectivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active Travel – Prioritising walking and cycling for all local travel. We will support the implementation of the Active Travel Act to create comprehensive networks of local walking and cycling routes that connect places that people need to get to for everyday purposes. • Bus – Improve the legislative framework for how local bus services are planned and delivered. We will invest in the development of integrated regional and local bus networks to increase modal share of bus travel and improve access by bus to a wider range of trip destinations. • Metros – Develop the South East Metro, South West Metro and North Wales Metro. We will create new integrated transport systems that provide faster, more frequent and joined-up services using trains, buses and light rail. • Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles – Support the roll-out of suitable fuelling infrastructure to facilitate the adoption of ultra-low emission vehicles, particularly in rural areas. <p>Planning authorities must plan the growth and regeneration of the National and Regional Growth Areas to maximise opportunities arising from the investment in public transport, including identifying opportunities for</p>	<p>Objective 15 – Accessibility Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change S5 – Infrastructure Provision S10 – Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>walking and cycling and improve public transport provision. The spatial strategy of the RLDP aims to focus development in those locations that provide the best opportunities for achieving sustainable development, which offer a choice of transport modes and contribute towards the development of a sustainable transport network and provide opportunities to enhance and connect to the Active Travel Networks. Enhancing the use of ultra-low emission vehicles through the provision of sufficient charging infrastructure is also recognised as a key contributor to improving sustainable national connectivity given Monmouthshire’s rural character.</p> <p>An updated Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan taking account of recent key evidence including the South East Wales Transport Commission Final Recommendations Plan: November 2020 and South East Metro will be prepared alongside the preparation of the Deposit Plan. The RLDP will support the transport schemes in identified within the updated LTP, and where appropriate, safeguard land for key transport proposals.</p>
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<p>higher density, mixed-use and car-free development around metro stations.</p> <p>Active travel must be an essential and integral component of all new developments, large and small. Planning authorities must integrate site allocations, new development and infrastructure with active travel networks and, where appropriate, ensure new development contributes towards their expansion and improvement.</p> <p>Planning authorities must act to reduce levels of car parking in urban areas, including supporting car-free developments in accessible locations and developments with car parking spaces that allow them to be converted to other uses over time. Where car parking is provided for new non-residential development, planning authorities should seek a minimum of 10% of car parking spaces to have electric vehicle charging points</p>		
<p>Policy 13 – Supporting Digital Communications</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports the provision of digital communications infrastructure and services across Wales. Planning authorities must engage with digital infrastructure providers to identify the future needs of their area and set out policies in Strategic and Local Development Plans to help deliver this.</p> <p>New developments should include the provision of Gigabit capable broadband infrastructure from the outset.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 14 - Infrastructure</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S5 – Infrastructure Provision</p>	<p>Given Monmouthshire’s rural character, the RLDP recognises the importance of ensuring the provision of adequate digital infrastructure to enhancing the County’s economic and community connectivity and communication needs and reducing the need to travel.</p>
<p>Policy 14 – Planning in Mobile Action Zones</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports increased mobile phone coverage and the associated economic and social benefits it brings.</p> <p>The Welsh Government will identify Mobile Action Zones, showing locations where there is little or no mobile telecommunications coverage.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 14 - Infrastructure</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S5 – Infrastructure Provision</p>	<p>Future Wales does not identify the Mobile Action Zones at this stage. The RLDP is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on achieving the policy aims. This will be reviewed once the Mobile Action Zones are published.</p>

<p>The Welsh Government, planning authorities and mobile telecommunications operators must work together to achieve increases in mobile coverage within Mobile Action Zones.</p>		
<p>Policy 15 – National Forest The Welsh Government is committed to developing a national forest through the identification of appropriate sites and mechanisms. Action to safeguard proposed locations for the national forest will be supported.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 3 - Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape Objective 4 – Flood Risk Objective 6 – Land Objective 7 – Natural Resources Objective 8 – Health and Well-being Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change S18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation</p>	<p>Future Wales does not identify the location(s) of the proposed national forest at this stage. The RLDP is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on achieving the policy aims. This will be reviewed once the location(s) are published. There is an opportunity for proposed sites for the National Forest to be submitted via the Call for Candidate Sites.</p>
<p>Policy 16 – Heat Networks Within Priority Areas for District Heat Networks planning authorities should identify opportunities for District Heat Networks and plan positively for their implementation. Large scale mixed-use development should, where feasible, have a heat network with a renewable / low carbon or waste heat energy source. Planning applications for such development should prepare an Energy Masterplan to establish whether a heat network is the most effective energy supply option and, for feasible projects, a plan for its implementation.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change</p>	<p>There are no Priority Areas for District Heat Networks identified within the Monmouthshire boundary within Future Wales. The RLDP does, however, establish the strategic policy framework to support the development of renewable and low/zero carbon energy generation. An assessment of the potential for renewable energy generation, using the Welsh Government Toolkit, will inform the Deposit Plan in terms of specific areas of search or the potential for particular types of renewable and low/zero carbon energy.</p>
<p>Policy 17 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy and Associated Infrastructure The Welsh Government strongly supports the principle of developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies and at all scales to meet our future</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change</p>	<p>There are no Pre-Assessed Areas for Wind Energy within the Monmouthshire boundary within Future Wales. Consistent with Policy 17 of Future Wales the RLDP does, however, establish the policy framework for developing renewable and low carbon energy from all technologies through Strategic</p>

<p>energy needs.</p> <p>In determining planning applications for renewable and low carbon energy development, decision-makers must give significant weight to the need to meet Wales' international commitments and our target to generate 70% of consumed electricity by renewable means by 2030 in order to combat the climate emergency.</p> <p>In Pre-Assessed Areas for Wind Energy the Welsh Government has already modelled the likely impact on the landscape and has found them to be capable of accommodating development in an acceptable way. There is a presumption in favour of large-scale wind energy development (including repowering) in these areas, subject to the criteria in policy 18.</p> <p>Applications for large-scale wind and solar will not be permitted in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and all proposals should demonstrate that they will not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the environment.</p> <p>Proposals should describe the net benefits the scheme will bring in terms of social, economic, environmental and cultural improvements to local communities.</p> <p>New strategic grid infrastructure for the transmission and distribution of energy should be designed to minimise visual impact on nearby communities. The Welsh Government will work with stakeholders, including National Grid and Distribution Network Operators, to transition to a multi-vector grid network and reduce the barriers to the implementation of new grid infrastructure.</p>		<p>Policy S4 – Climate Change. An assessment of the potential for renewable energy generation, using the Welsh Government Toolkit, will inform the Deposit Plan in terms of specific areas of search or the potential for particular types of renewable and low/zero carbon energy.</p>
<p>Policy 18 – Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance</p>		<p>Policy 18 of Future Wales sets out the criteria Welsh Government will use to assess renewable and low carbon energy developments of national significance. The RLDP is therefore considered to have a neutral impact on its delivery</p>

<p>Proposals for renewable and low carbon energy projects (including repowering) qualifying as Developments of National Significance will be permitted subject to policy 17 and the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. outside of the Pre-Assessed Areas for wind developments and everywhere for all other technologies, the proposal does not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding landscape (particularly on the setting of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty); 2. there are no unacceptable adverse visual impacts on nearby communities and individual dwellings; 3. there are no adverse effects on the integrity of Internationally designated sites (including National Site Network sites and Ramsar sites) and the features for which they have been designated (unless there are no alternative solutions, Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI) and appropriate compensatory measures have been secured); 4. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on national statutory designated sites for nature conservation (and the features for which they have been designated), protected habitats and species; 5. the proposal includes biodiversity enhancement measures to provide a net benefit for biodiversity; 6. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on statutorily protected built heritage assets; 7. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts by way of shadow flicker, noise, reflected light, air quality or electromagnetic disturbance; 8. there are no unacceptable impacts on the operations of defence facilities and operations (including aviation and 		<p>as it is not Monmouthshire's policy framework being used to determine the proposals.</p>
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<p>radar) or the Mid Wales Low Flying Tactical Training Area (TTA-7T);</p> <p>9. there are no unacceptable adverse impacts on the transport network through the transportation of components or source fuels during its construction and/or ongoing operation;</p> <p>10. the proposal includes consideration of the materials needed or generated by the development to ensure the sustainable use and management of resources;</p> <p>11. there are acceptable provisions relating to the decommissioning of the development at the end of its lifetime, including the removal of infrastructure and effective restoration.</p> <p>The cumulative impacts of existing and consented renewable energy schemes should also be considered.</p>		
<p>Policy 19 – Strategic Policies for Regional Planning</p> <p>Strategic Development Plans should embed placemaking as an overarching principle and should establish for the region (and where required constituent Local Development Plans):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a spatial strategy; 2. a settlement hierarchy; 3. the housing provision and requirement; 4. the gypsy and traveller need; 5. the employment provision; 6. the spatial areas for strategic housing, employment growth and renewable energy; 7. the identification of green belts, green corridors and nationally important landscapes where required; 8. the location of key services, transport and connectivity infrastructure; 9. a framework for the sustainable management of natural resources and cultural assets; 	<p>RLDP Objectives:</p> <p>Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment</p> <p>Objective 5 – Minerals and Waste</p> <p>Objective 7 – Natural Resources</p> <p>Objective 10 – Housing</p> <p>Objective 14 – Infrastructure</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies:</p> <p>S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth</p> <p>S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy</p> <p>S3 – Infrastructure Provision</p> <p>S6 – Delivery of Homes</p> <p>S9 – Gypsy and Travellers</p> <p>S10 – Sustainable Transport</p> <p>S13 – Employment Sites Provision</p>	<p>The preparation of the Preferred Strategy has also involved a regional and coordinated approach to the collection of evidence, including population projection modelling, regional employment study, and Integrated Sustainability Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment. This has provided a consistent and comparable approach to methodologies and a basis to consider the evidence and any implications on a more regional basis as well as at a local level. This approach will continue through the preparation of the Deposit Plan, with a number of jointly commissioned pieces of evidence already in progress including a Development Viability Model and a Renewable Energy Assessment, with others scheduled to commence imminently including a Strategic Flood Consequence Assessment, Green Belt and Green Wedge Review and transit Gypsy and Traveller needs. Long standing regional working methods associated with areas such as waste and minerals are continued and reflected in the Preferred Strategy.</p>

<p>10. ecological networks and opportunities for protecting or enhancing the connectivity of these networks and the provision of green infrastructure; and</p> <p>11. a co-ordinated framework for minerals extraction and the circular economy, including waste treatment and disposal.</p> <p>The Welsh Government requires the adoption of Strategic Development Plans in the North, Mid Wales, South West and South East regions.</p>	<p>S16 – Sustainable Waste Management S17 - Minerals</p>	<p>This regional approach to many of the policy areas covered in the RLDP will provide a substantial evidence base for the preparation of the South East SDP.</p>
<p>Policy 33 – National Growth Area – Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys</p> <p>Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys will be the main focus for growth and investment in the South East region.</p> <p>Strategic and Local Development Plans should recognise the National Growth Area as the focus for strategic economic and housing growth; essential services and facilities; advanced manufacturing; transport and digital infrastructure.</p> <p>The Welsh Government will work with regional bodies and local authorities in the region and in neighbouring regions of England to promote and enhance Cardiff, Newport and the Valleys’ strategic role and ensure key investment decisions support places in the National Growth Area and the wider region.</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports Cardiff’s status as an internationally competitive city and a core city on the UK stage. Cardiff will retain and extend its role as the primary national centre for culture, sport, leisure, media, the night time economy and finance.</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports an increased strategic role for Newport as a focus for sustainable, long-term growth and investment. The Welsh Government will work with authorities within the region and in England to</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 1 – Economic Growth / Employment Objective 6 – Land Objective 9 – Demography Objective 10 – Housing Objective 12 – Communities Objective 13 – Rural Communities</p> <p>Preferred Strategy Strategic Policies: S1 – Strategic Sustainable and Resilient Growth S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy S6 – Delivery of Homes S7 – Affordable Homes S8 – Strategic Development Sites S10 – Sustainable Transport S13 – Employment Sites Provision</p>	<p>Monmouthshire is not identified as a growth area in Future Wales, however, the policy supports development in the wider region which addresses the opportunities and challenges arising from the region’s geographic location and its functions as a Capital Region.</p> <p>The Preferred Strategy seeks to build on Monmouthshire’s key strategic location that benefits from good links to Cardiff, Bristol and the Midlands. The RLDP recognises that given Monmouthshire position as the gateway to Wales combined with the wider opportunities associate with the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal, South East Wales Metro and the County’s strategic location between the Great Western Cities of Cardiff, Newport and Bristol, the County has potential to contribute to the aims for the wider region.</p>

<p>promote Newport’s strategic role and ensure key investment decisions in Wales and England support Newport.</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports co-ordinated regeneration and investment in the Valleys area to improve well-being, increase prosperity and address social inequalities. The Welsh Government will work with regional bodies, local authorities, businesses, the third sector, agencies and stakeholders to support investment, including in the manufacturing sector, and to ensure a regional approach is taken to addressing socio-economic issues in the Valleys.</p> <p>The Welsh Government supports development in the wider region which addresses the opportunities and challenges arising from the region’s geographic location and its functions as a Capital Region.</p>		
<p>Policy 34 – Green Belts in the South East</p> <p>The Welsh Government requires the Strategic Development Plan to identify a green belt to the north of Cardiff, Newport and the eastern part of the region to manage urban form and growth.</p> <p>The Strategic Development Plan must consider the relationship of the green belts with the green belt in the West of England. Local Development Plans and development management decisions should not permit major development in the areas shown for consideration for green belts, except in very exceptional circumstances, until the need for green belts and their boundaries has been established by an adopted Strategic Development Plan.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 3 – Green Infrastructure, Biodiversity and Landscape Objective 6 – Land</p> <p>RDLP Strategic Policies: S2 – Spatial Distribution of Development – Settlement Hierarchy S8 – Strategic Development Sites S18 – Green Infrastructure, Landscape and Nature Conservation</p>	<p>The South East Wales Regional Strategic Diagram (page 163 of Future Wales) provides an indicative plan of the area for consideration with the detailed boundary to be defined through the preparation of the SDP. In advance of an SDP, the area shown for consideration in Future Wales should be treated as a designated Green Belt. In assessing the spatial strategy for distributing growth within the County consideration has been given to paragraph 3.72 of PPW11 which states that “when considering a Green Belt designation, a sufficient range of development land which is suitably located in relation to the existing urban edge should be made available, having regard to the longer term need for development land, the effects of development pressures in areas beyond the Green Belt and the need to minimise demand for travel. This may require land to be safeguarded, and boundaries of proposed Green Belts must be carefully defined to achieve this”. In this respect, the Preferred</p>

		<p>Strategy is considered to facilitate the identification of a green belt in southern Monmouthshire with the primary settlements situated outside the broad designation, consistent with the indicative plan and meeting the aims of Policy 34 but allowing for an appropriate level of growth in Monmouthshire to address its local challenges and issues. The Council still has significant concerns, however, regarding the Green Belt designation as a permanent designation that would have long-term policy implications for future growth and prosperity in Monmouthshire.</p>
<p>Policy 35 – Valleys Regional Park The Welsh Government supports the establishment of the Valleys Regional Park. Strategic and Local Development Plans should embed its principles into their planning frameworks. The Welsh Government will work with local authorities, the third sector and key partners to support the Valleys Regional Park and maximise opportunities for new development.</p>		<p>Policy 35 – Valleys Regional Park is not considered to be directly related to Monmouthshire. The Preferred Strategy is therefore considered to have a neutral impact of achieving its aims.</p>
<p>Policy 36 – South East Metro The Welsh Government supports the development of the South East Metro and will work with Transport for Wales, local authorities and other partners to enable its delivery and maximise associated opportunities. Strategic and Local Development Plans must support the South East Metro. Planning authorities should plan growth and regeneration to maximise the opportunities arising from better regional connectivity, including identifying opportunities for higher density, mixed-use and car-free development around new and improved metro stations.</p>	<p>RLDP Objectives: Objective 14 – Infrastructure Objective 15 – Accessibility Objective 17 – Climate Change</p> <p>RLDP Strategic Policies: S4 – Climate Change S5 – Infrastructure Provision S10 – Sustainable Transport</p>	<p>An updated Monmouthshire Local Transport Plan taking account of recent key evidence including the South East Wales Transport Commission Final Recommendations Plan: November 2020 and South East Metro will be prepared alongside the preparation of the Deposit Plan. The RLDP will support the transport schemes identified within the updated LTP, and where appropriate, safeguard land for key transport proposals.</p>

*Table excludes FW Policies 20 – 32 as these cover the north west and south west regions

Conclusion

As the assessment above demonstrates, the Preferred Strategy aligns with the objectives of Future Wales and establishes a policy framework that is in general conformity with Future Wales and makes a positive contribution to its policy aims. At a local and regional level, the RLDP is well-placed to implement the vision and objectives of Future Wales by ensuring that it includes policies that adhere to principles of placemaking and sustainable development.

Future Wales includes policy provisions for issues at a national level such as International Connectivity and Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments of National Significance. These are shown in yellow above, to indicate that the Preferred Strategy makes a neutral contribution to these areas. Similarly, a neutral affect is indicated for policies areas where locations are yet to be published such as Planning Mobile Action Zones and National Forest and also for the Policy 35 relating to the Valleys Regional Park which is not directly relevant to Monmouthshire. Whilst the RLDP does not directly include provisions for these issues, they are not considered to have a material impact on the ability of the RLDP to align with the over-arching vision and objectives of Future Wales.