



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

April 2024

Executive Summary

KEY MESSAGES

- First published in 2019, the Green Infrastructure Strategy has been reviewed to reflect changes in policy, the new Gwent Green Grid Regional Green Infrastructure Strategy and updated baseline data. The review also reflects progress in delivery of green infrastructure projects over the last 5 years.
- Planning Policy Wales 12 defines Green Infrastructure as 'the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places' (such as towns and villages).
- This Green Infrastructure Strategy promotes an integrated and joined up approach to delivering Green Infrastructure that takes into account the needs of Monmouthshire's communities, environment and economy.
- An important overarching principle underpinning the Strategy is the need to recognise the multi-functionality of Green Infrastructure assets and to maximise the benefits different assets can deliver through an integrated approach. For example, green spaces can be used for sustainable food production, contribute to flood management and provide access to nature for informal recreation. These benefits can support improved health and well being, climate mitigation/adaptation and biodiversity.
- It is essential that the inter-relationship and connections between the individual projects outlined in the Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan are considered in the round to ensure that opportunities for shared outcomes and mutual benefits are maximised.



SETTING THE SCENE

Background

This Strategy sets out Monmouthshire County Council's approach to the planning, management and delivery of Green Infrastructure (GI) focussed around the following strategic objectives and priorities:

- Improve Health & Wellbeing
- Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience
- Support Climate and Nature Resilience
- Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness
- Support Sustainable Economic Development

In doing so, the GI Strategy will help contribute to the delivery of:

- Replacement Local Development Plan
- MCC Community and Corporate Plan
- MCC Climate and Nature Emergency Strategy and Action Plans
- MCC Biodiversity and Ecosystem Resilience Forward Plan and Action Plan
- MCC Nature Recovery Action Plan
- Public Service Board Wellbeing Plans

Overview of the GI Strategy

The Strategy was prepared by CBA on behalf of Monmouthshire County Council.

Volume 1 – Strategic Framework (this document)

Volume 1 of the Strategy sets out the Council's strategic framework for GI provision in Monmouthshire. It identifies key priorities and strategic opportunities where the restoration, maintenance, creation or connection of green features and functions would deliver the most significant benefits, both on a county-wide basis and for locations where growth is planned in the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan (RLDP) 2018-2033 Preferred Strategy (endorsed October 2023).

As required by Planning Policy Wales, the GI Strategy is informed by a Green Infrastructure Assessment for Monmouthshire (see Vol1 Appendix D) developed in accordance with the principles of the NRW Green Infrastructure Assessment Guidance Note 42 (2023).

Volume 2 – Delivery Plan

Volume 2 of the Strategy provides the Council's delivery plan for GI in Monmouthshire. Provided as a separate document, the Delivery Plan includes prioritised action plans for delivery of strategic/landscape-scale GI projects, and local GI projects to support development at the key growth locations and rural secondary settlements. The action plans are designed to support funding bids by the Council and its delivery partners.

GIS Database of GI Assets

A comprehensive and user-friendly GIS Database of GI assets and related information is held by the Council, which provides a tool for informing land use planning and land management decision-making with regards to GI.

The Green Infrastructure Strategy will be kept under review by the Council and updated as necessary to have regard to changing circumstances.

What is GI?

Chapter 6 (Distinctive & Natural Places) of Planning Policy Wales 12 defines GI as follows:

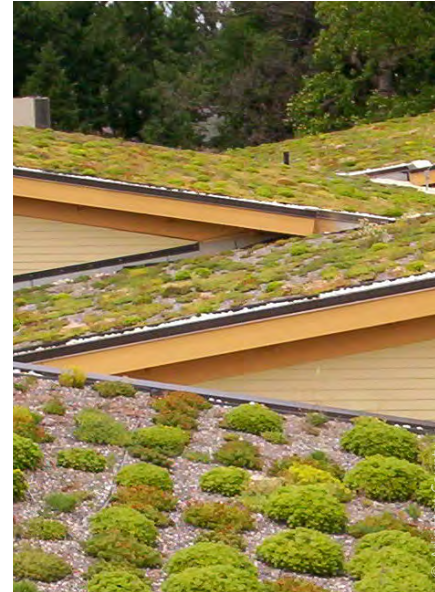
'Green infrastructure is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect places.'

Component elements of green infrastructure can function at different scales and some components, such as trees and woodland, are often universally present and function at all levels.

At the landscape scale green infrastructure can comprise entire ecosystems such as wetlands, waterways, peatlands and mountain ranges or be connected networks of mosaic habitats, including grasslands.

At a local scale, it might comprise parks, fields, ponds, natural green spaces, public rights of way, allotments, cemeteries and gardens or may be designed or managed features such as sustainable drainage systems.

At smaller scales, individual urban interventions such as street trees, hedgerows, roadside verges, and green roofs/walls can all contribute to green infrastructure networks.'



Range of GI Scales/Connectivity

Adapted from GI Design and Placemaking (Scottish Government, 2011)



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY

Purpose for GI in Monmouthshire

Monmouthshire has a well-connected multifunctional green infrastructure network comprising high quality green spaces and links that offer many benefits for people and wildlife.



The network's integrity and connectivity is maintained, protected and enhanced in a planned and managed way, which recognises the interdependency and multifunctionality of landscape, heritage and biodiversity elements.

Investment in green infrastructure underpins the County's ongoing economic, social and environmental success by supporting sustainable growth, improving quality of life and place, delivering ecosystem resilience and tackling the nature and climate emergencies.

Monmouthshire is a green and healthy place to live, with an increasingly coherent and resilient ecological network of wildlife habitats, helping to conserve biodiversity.



The GI purpose is underpinned by the following three core aims:

1. **Support health and wellbeing delivering strong communities and vibrant places; enriching people's lives through engagement and activity**
2. **Maintain and enhance biodiversity and support resilient ecosystems to address the nature and climate emergencies**
3. **Conserve, protect and enhance Monmouthshire's GI assets**

Together, the purpose and three core aims provide the overarching framework for positive actions by all stakeholders involved in the future protection, management and enhancement of GI in Monmouthshire.

Strategic GI Objectives

The GI Strategy's purpose and core aims are supported by five strategic objectives and associated priorities for guiding the planning, management and delivery of GI in Monmouthshire. These objectives and priorities are reflected in the GI projects identified in the Delivery Plan (see Volume 2), and are also intended to be used in monitoring the outcomes of projects. The strategic GI objectives are:

1. **Improve Health & Wellbeing**
2. **Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience**
3. **Support Climate and Nature Resilience**
4. **Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness**
5. **Support Sustainable Economic Development**



The GI Strategy's objectives will contribute to the Welsh Government's National Well-being Goals, and the Council's Local Well-being Objectives and Biodiversity & Resilience Objectives as highlighted below:

GI Strategy Objective	National Well-being Goals (see Box 3.3)							Local Well-being Objectives (see Box 3.4)				Biodiversity & Resilience Forward Plan Objectives (see Box 3.5)							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 – Improve Health & Wellbeing																			
2 – Enhance Biodiversity & Increase Ecosystem Resilience																			
3 – Support Climate and Nature Resilience																			
4 – Strengthen Landscape Character & Distinctiveness																			
5 – Support Sustainable Economic Development																			

Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network

The Strategic GI Network provides an overarching framework for GI planning, management and delivery across the County as an integral part of the wider Gwent Green Grid. The network embraces strategic GI corridors connecting GI assets within the County and in neighbouring areas, providing important GI links to Monmouthshire's main settlements.

An overview of the strategic needs and opportunities for restoring, maintaining, creating and/or connecting GI assets to help strengthen Monmouthshire's Strategic GI Network for the future can be found in Volume 1 of the GI Strategy

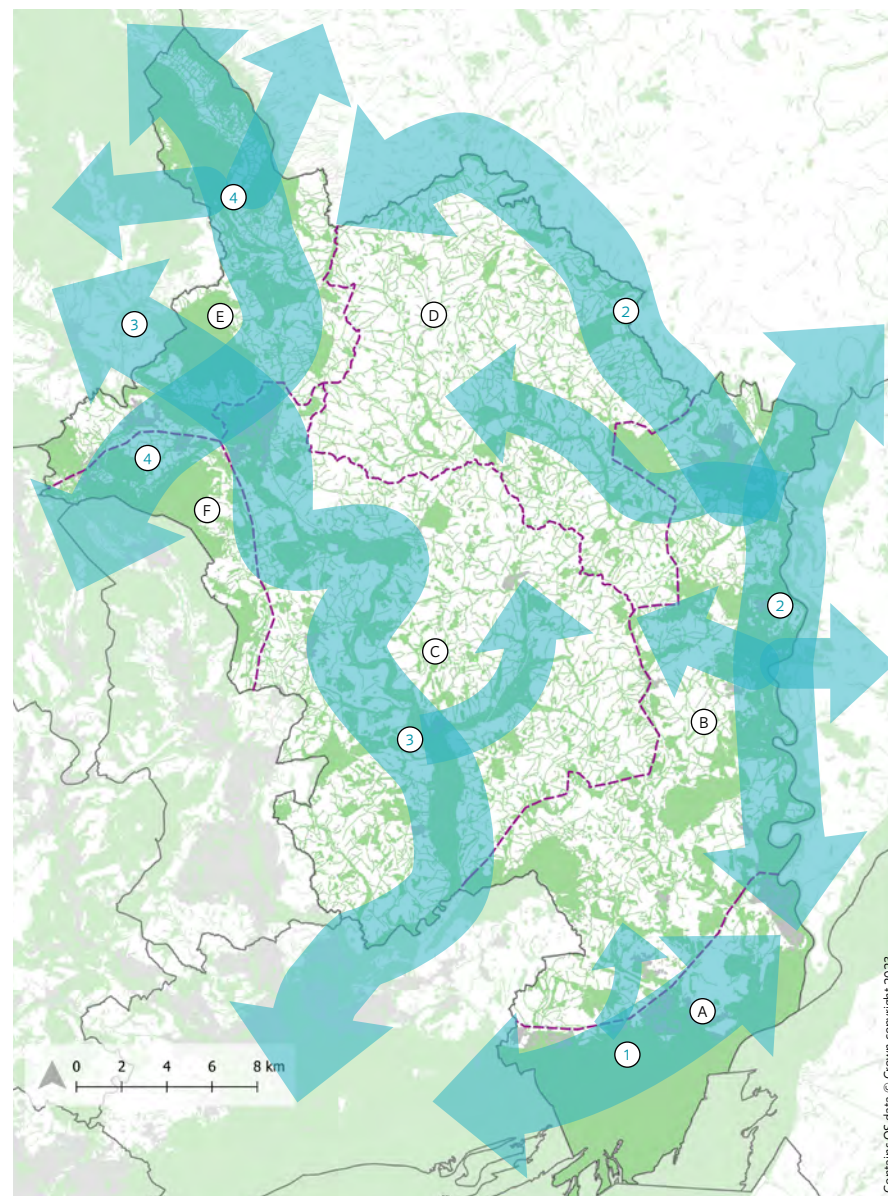
Strategic GI Corridors:

- 1: Gwent Levels/Coast
- 2: Wye Valley & Tributaries
- 3: Usk Valley & Tributaries
- 4: Bannau Brycheiniog Uplands

GI Zones:

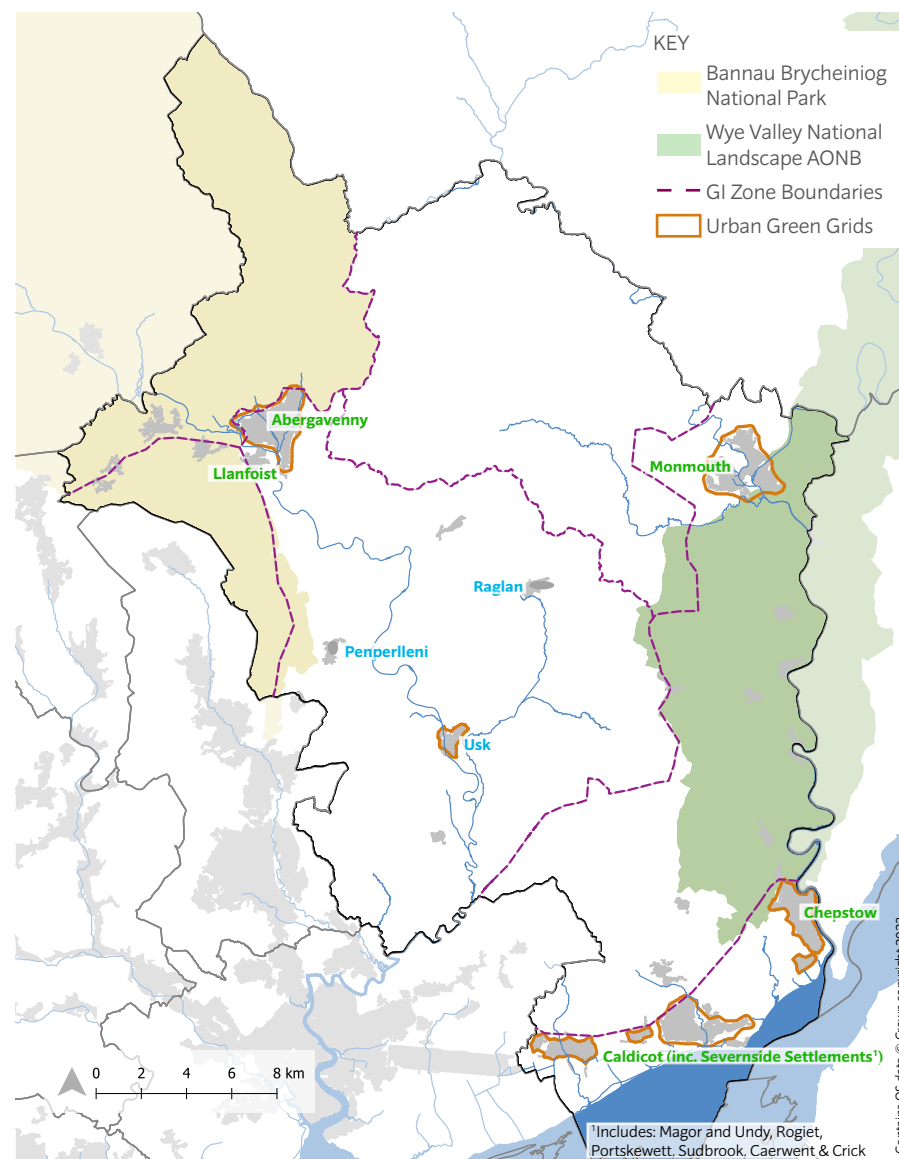
- A: Gwent Levels
- B: Wye Valley & Wentwood
- C: Central Monmouthshire – South
- D: Central Monmouthshire – North
- E: Bannau Brycheiniog & Black Mountains
- F: Eastern South Wales Valleys

 Existing GI Network



Settlement GI Networks

Set within the context of the Strategic GI Network for Monmouthshire, the key opportunities for strengthening the GI Networks in and around the the **primary settlements** and **secondary settlements** identified for development in the Monmouthshire Replacement Local Development Plan 2018-2033 Preferred Strategy (endorsed October 2023) are highlighted in the GI Strategy. Where appropriate, these opportunities are carried forward into the projects set out in the GI Delivery Plan (Volume 2).



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