

SIR FYNWY

MONMOUTHSHIRE



# Monmouthshire Well-being Assessment 2022



## Version Control

Title	Well-being Assessment
Purpose	To provide evidence base for Well-being Assessment
Owner	Head of Policy Performance and Scrutiny
Approved by	Draft
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Next review date	
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The well-being assessment is made up of different parts:

- Gwent as a whole (see [www.gwentpsb.org/well-being-plan/well-being-assessment](http://www.gwentpsb.org/well-being-plan/well-being-assessment) for more details of the Gwent well-being assessment)
- Monmouthshire as a whole
- 5 local areas within Monmouthshire centred around Abergavenny, Monmouth, Usk, Chepstow, and Caldicot.

A summary of the Monmouthshire well-being assessment is also available. To see further analysis please visit [www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/our-monmouthshire)

## Severnside

### Environmental Well-being

The Severnside area includes several areas of population in the south of the county – including Portskewett, Caldicot, Rogiet, Magor and Undy – and also has the mainline railway to South Wales and the M4 motorway. The landscape along the coastal zone is primarily flat, with productive fields of Grade 2 and 3 agricultural lands, bounded by traditional reens to drain the low lying land, protected from coastal flooding by a flood bank.<sup>1</sup> The land rises to the north to a series of low hills before rising further towards Wentwood.

Severnside has extensive environmental assets, some of which benefit from international protection, and habitats include marine, freshwater, species-rich grassland and ancient woodland. As described in the Chepstow and Lower Wye section, the Severn Estuary is of international importance for wintering and passage waterfowl, saltmarshes, exposed sandbanks, fish feeding areas and an unusually large natural tidal range which influences the species that occur here. The estuary is protected as a Ramsar site, overseen by the United Nations, as well as a Special Area of Conservation protected by European legislation.<sup>2</sup>



*Severn Estuary*

There are 8 Sites of Special Scientific Interest that protect the Gwent Levels area to create a large tract of well-connected land and associated reens. The SSSIs incorporate the estuary, woodland, wet farmland and drainage ditches, wetland and marsh and meadow.<sup>3</sup> The Gwent Levels SSSI has seen the successful reintroduction of water vole, which have spread far beyond the reintroduction sites. The Levels also support otters and many other species, and Gwent Wildlife

Trust is working on a Shril Carder Bee Project to maintain Monmouthshire's population of this rare bumblebee. There are 31 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in this area, many of which are meadow and grassland and help to provide a flower-rich resource for this important species and other pollinators.

The Living Levels Partnership is a lottery-funded programme to promote and reconnect people to the heritage, wildlife and wild beauty of the historic landscape of the Gwent Levels.<sup>4</sup> This includes preserving and protecting approximately 5,700 hectares of land, including much of the Severnside area and is a mixture of habitats such as coastal floodplains, reens, saltmarshes and mudflats.

However, a major threat to environmental resilience in this area comes from further development, which would reduce the extent of the natural areas as well as potentially break up currently well-connected habitats. Concerns about further development as a result of the proposed M4 relief road have receded now that Welsh Government has turned down that proposal, removed the corridor for the route of a proposed highway, and reiterated their plans for no new major road-building schemes.<sup>5</sup>

Other threats to the wildlife, property and infrastructure of this area include flooding and inundation by saline water from the Severn Estuary. Much of the levels area is protected by flood defences, and discussions over the maintenance of these are ongoing with NRW. There is uncertainty about the extent of future sea-level rise, but with models anticipating between 22 and 28cm rise at Cardiff by 2050 and potentially 43-76cm by 2080 as a result of climate change, the risk of coastal flooding increases.<sup>6</sup> Rising sea levels are also a threat to the saltmarshes and mudflats that make the Severn Estuary so valuable for wildlife since research suggests that 77% of these face being 'squeezed' against existing sea defences causing a movement of sediment and habitat loss for thousands of wading birds.<sup>7</sup>

Parts of Caldicot are at risk of flooding where the Nedern Brook joins the River Severn. There are also a significant number of properties (138) and people (498) at high or medium risk of surface water flooding in the wider Severnside area, the largest number of people likely to be affected out of all of the 5 areas of Monmouthshire.<sup>8</sup> In February 2020, widespread surface water flooding occurred in and around the grounds of Caldicot Castle and the Severn Bridge Industrial Estate affecting numerous properties and businesses, as well as several roads, residential properties and gardens.<sup>9</sup>

The Nedern Brook has poor water quality, due to pollution from sewage misconnections.<sup>10</sup> In the Gwent levels, a unique reen and ditch network is under pressure from development and diffuse rural, industrial and sewage pollution.<sup>11</sup> There is also a large Groundwater Source Protection Zone covering most of Portskewett Ward, and half of Caldicot as far south as the Severn Estuary.<sup>12</sup>



*Caldicot Castle in the Gwent levels*

The Severnside area has some accessible green spaces, such as Magor Marsh, Caldicot Castle Country Park, the Nedern Brook Wetlands site, Rogiet Countryside Park and Black Rock. However, most of the towns and villages in the area are deficient in easily accessible natural or semi-natural greenspace.<sup>13</sup> Compared with elsewhere in the county, fewer people in Severnside said that the landscape and countryside are what is good about where they live. There is 74km of public rights of way

enabling people to explore the countryside, including access to the Wales Coastal Path.<sup>14</sup>

Many of the Tree Preservation Orders in this area are in urban areas, villages and around historic estates where they are important landscape features. Some areas of woodland are also protected by Tree Preservation Orders.<sup>15</sup> However, in comparison with the rest of Monmouthshire, and Wales as a whole, Severnside has much less urban tree cover. Rogiet only has 8.4% tree cover and Caldicot has 8.7% (compared with a Welsh average of 16.4%), with a subsequent reduction in the benefits given by urban trees such as reducing runoff, increasing biodiversity and providing shading and cooling.<sup>16</sup>

*“Lots of open countryside around for walking and leisure”*

There are no Air Quality Management Zones in Severnside and no areas of particular concern for air quality. Although nitrogen dioxide and particulate levels are likely to be high along the M4 and M48 corridors, they are not located close to sensitive receptors such as homes or schools.

There is no local Transition Town group or similar. However, through the work of the Caldicot Town Team and other groups, there are small groups of people working together on a range of different sustainability projects. The council is working closely with volunteers to run the new TogetherWorks space in Caldicot, which will be the venue for several re-use and repair projects, such as a Library of Things, Repair Café and community fridge, so it is expected that this will become a focus for a range of community sustainability initiatives.<sup>17</sup>

## Economic Well-being

As with Chepstow and Monmouth, Severnside includes house prices that are among the most and least expensive in Monmouthshire. Overall, it is the second least expensive area of the county, though.<sup>18</sup>

Vacancy rates in the centre of Magor have decreased from 13.6% in 2019 to no vacant units in 2021. However, rates in the central shopping area of Caldicot have risen compared to last year, to 13.4%.<sup>19</sup> Caldicot's easy access to the motorway and proximity to Newport means that there is a high trade draw away from the town for certain goods – mainly to Spytty Retail Park in Newport, but also Bristol's Cribbs Causeway and Cardiff.<sup>20</sup>

What would you like your community to look like in the future?

*"I would like it to be a community hub of cafes and independent shops"*

*"More variety of shops. People coming here because there's something here they want – one-off shops for instance"*

In this area, 7% of the working-age population receive employment-related benefits, with 10% considered to be income deprived. 200 people (1.1%) are claiming Job Seeker's Allowance or Universal Credit for unemployment, of which 40 are aged 16-24. 11.7% of children are in low-income families.

In the Severnside catchment area, 18% of households are below 50% of the median income for the UK, and 25% are below 60%, as compared with 17% and 22% respectively for Monmouthshire, and 25% and 33% for Wales as a whole.<sup>21</sup> The Elms has the joint second-lowest percentage of working-age people in income deprivation in the county, while Shirenewton has the joint lowest percentage of working-age people in employment deprivation.<sup>22</sup> Improvement work focussed on Severn Tunnel Junction will benefit Caldicot, Magor/Undy and Rogiet, by making it easier for people to travel by train.

## Social Well-being

Severnside's population of just over 20,000 includes the largest proportion of working-age residents, with 60.8% aged between 16 and 64 and the lowest proportion of people aged 65 and over (22.4%).<sup>23</sup>

3 of the 11 most deprived areas in Monmouthshire are located within Severnside: West End, part of Dewstow and Green Lane and part of Severn. For each area, the main category of deprivation is the physical environment which covers air quality and emissions, flood risk and green space.<sup>24</sup>

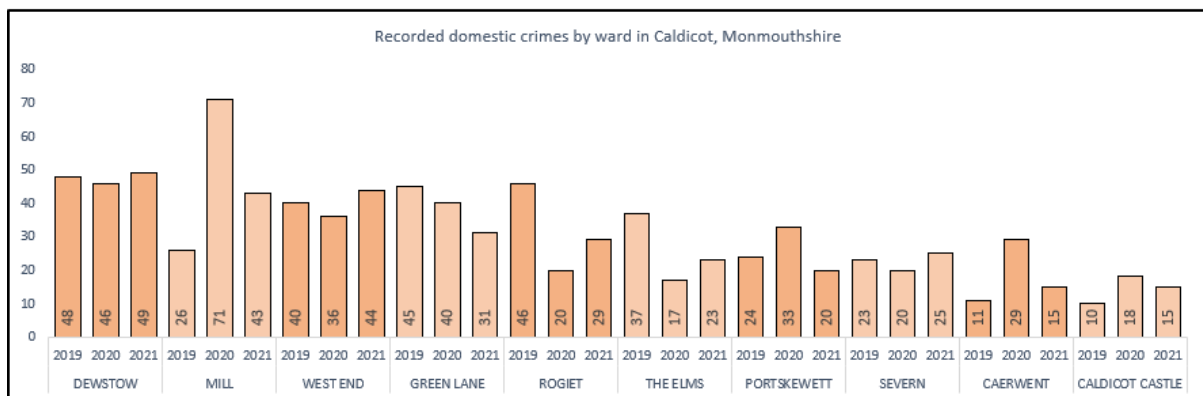
West End has the lowest percentage of key stage 4 leavers entering higher education, at 10.2%.<sup>25</sup> Flying Start is available to some residents and their young children in West End.

On average, travel times to several services are shorter when compared to other areas in Monmouthshire and are more in line with the Wales average, as classified by the Wales index for Multiple Deprivation.

81% of people in Severnside reported good or very good health in the 2011 census. Again, variations within the area are notable, ranging from 75% in Dewstow to 89% in The Elms. Dewstow & Green Lane 2, followed by West End, have the highest rates of people living with long term limiting illness in the Severnside area. West End also sees the highest rates of cancer incidence in the Severnside area.

From November 2020 to November 2021, overall crime in Caldicot remained the same, at 20.7% of the county's. There has been a reduction of recorded crimes for Shoplifting, Theft, and Commercial Burglaries. However, there has been a marked increase in Residential Burglary, which is up from 34 recorded incidents to 65. Other notable increases are in Criminal Damage and Arson, Rape, and Other Sexual Offences. From April 2020 to March 2021, 230 incidents of ASB were recorded in Caldicot, accounting for 20.3% of all reported ASB across Monmouthshire. The wards with the highest prevalence were Green Lane, Mill and Severn Wards. As of January 2021, there were 52 adults accessing support, 29 for alcohol and 23 for other substances.

Dewstow in Caldicot has recorded the most domestic-related crime over the last three years. From January 2021 to November 2021, Dewstow made up 17% of all recorded crime in the Caldicot area. There is a significant rise in the amount of recorded domestic abuse crimes in Mill in 2020; 37% of these crimes were recorded as Violence without injury.



## Cultural Well-being

Severnside is uniquely placed as being the landfall of the instantly recognisable new Prince of Wales Bridge in Wales. The area is bordered by the Severn Estuary coast line, including the Caldicot and Wentloog levels, and Magor Marsh is an important part of the landscape used by visitors and residents.

Severnside has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest proportion of those declaring themselves as Christian (62.2%) as well as the lowest proportion of those stating they are of a religion other than Christian (1.1%). In terms of ethnicity, figures show the area has a lower proportion of the population who are mixed race and black ethnicity compared to the other areas, whereas the proportion of population of white ethnicity is 98.5%.<sup>26</sup>

The Severnside area is covered by the Cas-gwent, Cil-y-coed a'r Cyffiniau Welsh language society. Coffee mornings are held regularly in the Caldicot library. Severnside is one of 2 of the 5 areas with Welsh medium education, with Ysgol Gymraeg y Ffin, located in Caldicot. This could be one of the reasons why figures for Welsh within Monmouthshire are at their highest in this area: 11.2% of the population of Severnside stated that they were able to speak Welsh as well as 8.3% saying they could speak, read and write in Welsh.<sup>27</sup>

In Severnside, Caldicot Castle and Country Park is of particular historical importance and is increasingly being used for festivals and events. Over the past few years, the Castle has hosted a range of events from music concerts to archery competitions. The area also has a number of other historically significant features.



*Caldicot Castle*

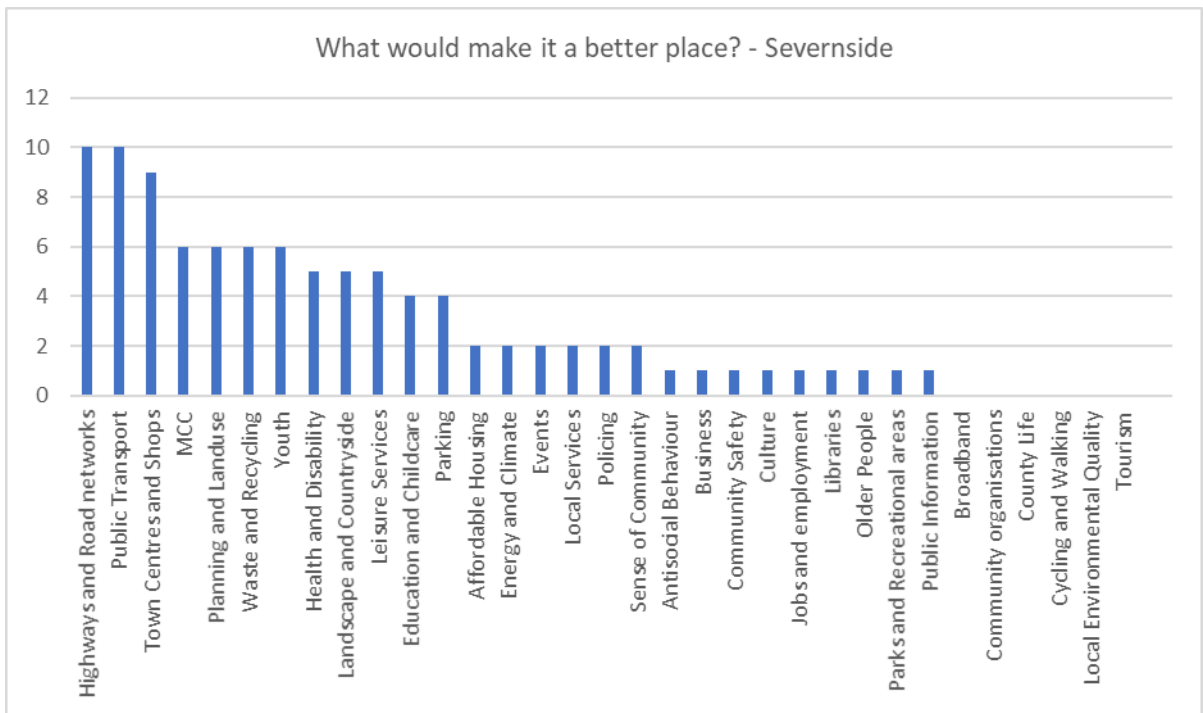
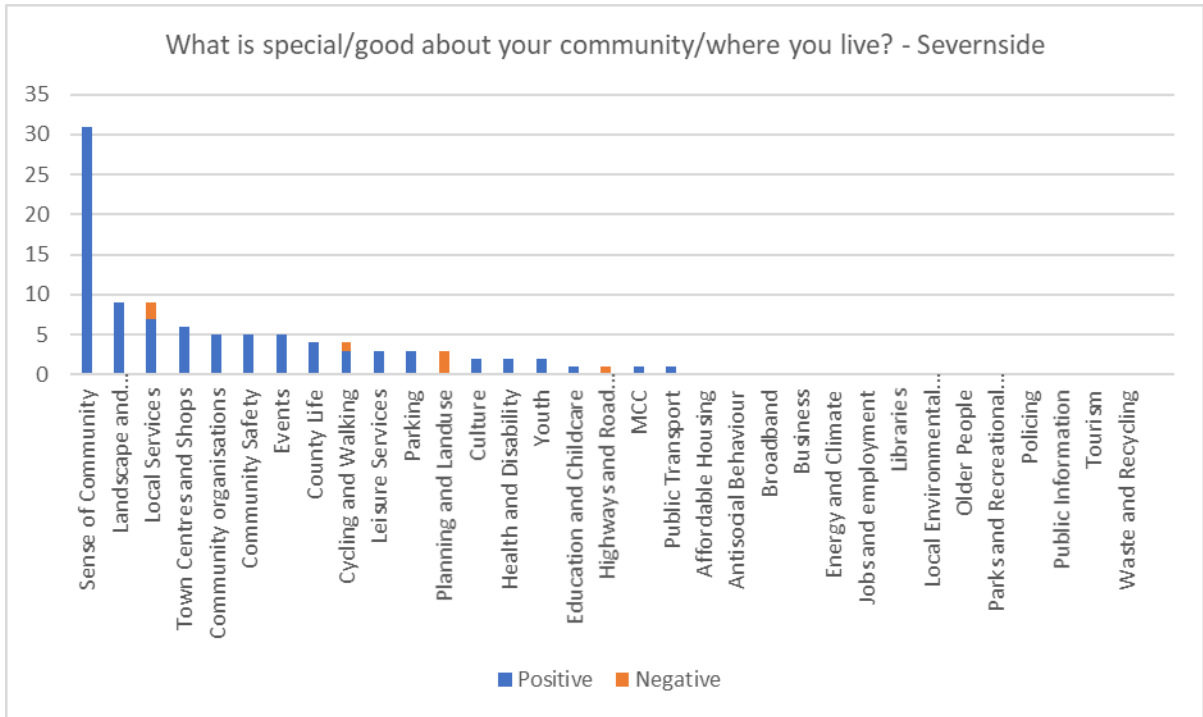
Travel time to a leisure centre in the area is slightly higher than the average for Wales: on average it takes 68 minutes on public transport and 12 minutes on private transport.<sup>28</sup> Travel time to a library in the area is also slightly higher than the average for Wales, taking 55 minutes on public transport and 11 minutes on private transport.<sup>29</sup>

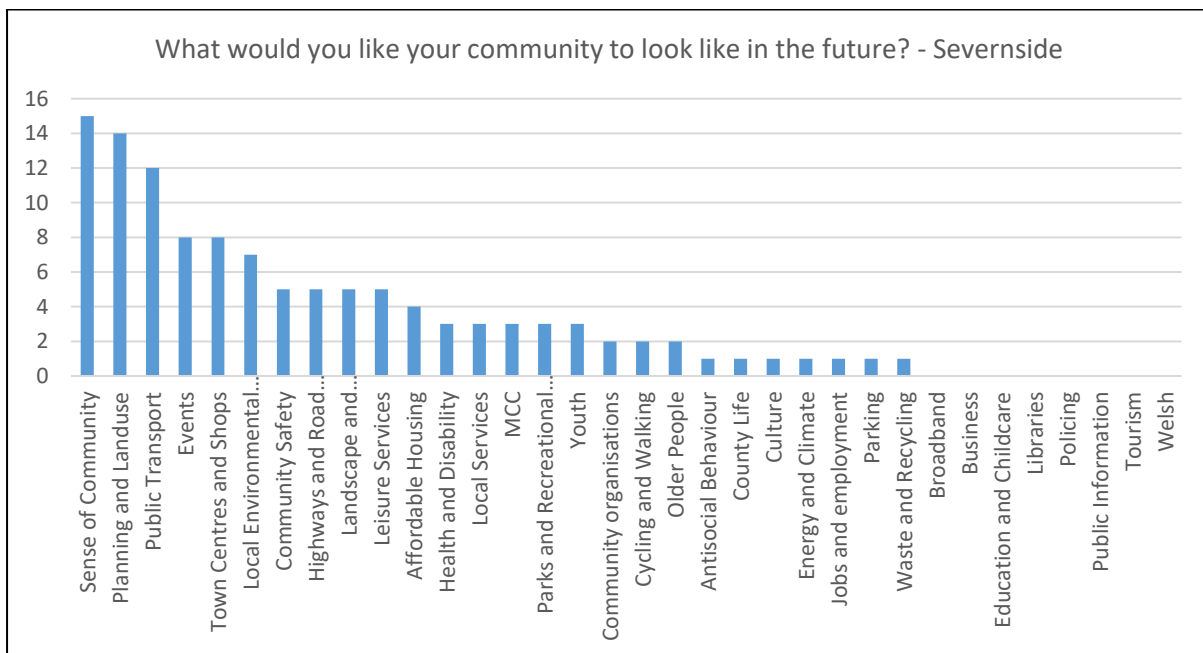
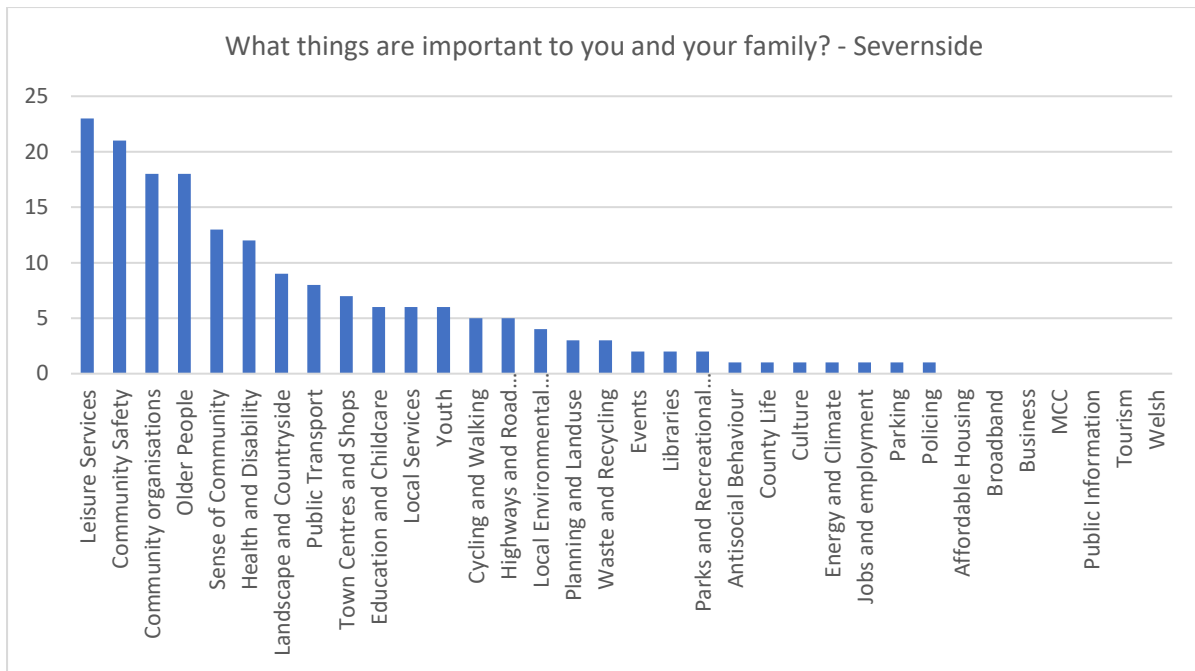
## Engagement responses

A summary of the responses from the area to some of the engagement exercise questions is provided. To make it easier to analyse the many diverse comments that were received to the open-ended questions that were asked, comments were grouped into categories or themes. This allows us to identify some of the most common themes that respondents in the area mentioned.

The following graphs show the themes that were used to categorise the comments, and where appropriate, whether these were more positive or negative in response is provided.







<sup>1</sup> Public Service Board Monmouthshire Environmental information for well-being assessments, NRW

<sup>2</sup> Monmaps Countryside Layer

<sup>3</sup> Monmaps Countryside Layer

<sup>4</sup> Living Levels: Recapturing, enhancing and celebrating The Gwent Levels

[www.livinglevels.org.uk](http://www.livinglevels.org.uk)

<sup>5</sup> M4 Corridor Decision Letter

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/m4-corridor-around-newport-decision-letter.pdf>;

Written Statement: M4 Relief Road TR111 Protected Corridor

<https://gov.wales/written-statement-m4-relief-road-tr111-protected-corridor>;

Freeze on new roads projects to be announced

<https://gov.wales/freeze-new-roads-projects-be-announced>

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- <sup>6</sup> Evidence for the third UK Climate Change Risk Assessment Summary for Wales  
[www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-Wales-Summary-Final.pdf](http://www.ukclimaterisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/CCRA-Evidence-Report-Wales-Summary-Final.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> Severn Estuary climate change mudflats 'squeeze' report  
[www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17062875](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17062875)
- <sup>8</sup> Monmouthshire Flood Risk Management Plan
- <sup>9</sup> Section 19 Flood Investigation Report: Caldicot  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/09/Caldicot-S19-Report-Feb-2020-FINAL.pdf](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/09/Caldicot-S19-Report-Feb-2020-FINAL.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> Public Service Board Monmouthshire Environmental information for well-being assessments, NRW
- <sup>11</sup> Water Watch Wales Map Gallery  
<https://waterwatchwales.naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/en>
- <sup>12</sup> Monmaps Countryside Layer
- <sup>13</sup> MCC Open Space Study Ashley Godfrey Associates, 2008  
[www.planningpolicy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MonmouthshireOpenSpace-Dec08.pdf](http://www.planningpolicy.monmouthshire.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MonmouthshireOpenSpace-Dec08.pdf)
- <sup>14</sup> Monmaps Countryside Layer
- <sup>15</sup> Monmaps Countryside Layer
- <sup>16</sup> Town Tree Cover in Monmouthshire, NRW, 2016  
<https://cdn.naturalresources.wales/media/679615/eng-urban-tree-summary-2016.pdf?mode=pad>
- <sup>17</sup> Caldicot celebrates opening of new community hub  
[www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19591676.caldicot-celebrates-opening-new-community-hub](http://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/19591676.caldicot-celebrates-opening-new-community-hub)
- <sup>18</sup> UK House Price Index summary: July 2021  
[www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-house-price-index-summary-july-2021](http://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-house-price-index-summary-july-2021)
- <sup>19</sup> MCC 2020 Retail Background Paper – March 2021  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Retail-Report-2020.pdf](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Retail-Report-2020.pdf);  
MCC Adopted Local Development Plan 2011-2021 Annual Monitoring Report  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/12/AMR-2019-2020.pdf](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2020/12/AMR-2019-2020.pdf)
- <sup>20</sup> MCC 2020 Retail Background Paper – March 2021  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Retail-Report-2020.pdf](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Retail-Report-2020.pdf)
- <sup>21</sup> MCC 2020 Retail Background Paper – March 2021  
[www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Retail-Report-2020.pdf](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/app/uploads/2021/05/Retail-Report-2020.pdf)
- <sup>22</sup> Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019  
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation/?lang=en>
- <sup>23</sup> Census 2011, InfoBase Cymru Age Structure  
[www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/2011census/demography/tabular?viewId=957&geoId=78&subsetId=](http://www.infobasecymru.net/IAS/themes/2011census/demography/tabular?viewId=957&geoId=78&subsetId=)
- <sup>24</sup> Indicator Data by Lower Layer Super Output Areas – Physical Environment Domain  
<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation/WIMD-Indicator-data-2019/indicatordata-by-lowerlayersuperoutputarea-physicalenvironmentdomain>
- <sup>25</sup> Indicator Data by Lower Layer Super Output Areas – Education Domain  
<https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation/WIMD-Indicator-data-2019/indicatordata-by-lowerlayersuperoutputarea-educationdomain>
- <sup>26</sup> Ethnic Group, Census 2011  
[www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks201uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks201uk)
- <sup>27</sup> Welsh Language Skills, Census 2011  
[www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks207wa](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/ks207wa)
- <sup>28</sup> Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019  
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation/?lang=en>
- <sup>29</sup> Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019  
<http://gov.wales/statistics-and-research/welsh-index-multiple-deprivation/?lang=en>