

Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Board ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN 2009/10

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 About the Board

Led by the County Council, the Monmouthshire Environment Partnership Board (EPB) brings together representatives of the key organisations responsible for shaping and delivering the environmental content of the county's Community Strategy.

The member organisations are the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority, the Countryside Council for Wales, the Environment Agency Wales, the Forestry Commission, the Gwent Wildlife Trust, Monmouthshire County Council (Countryside, Environmental Health, Planning Policy, Sustainability, Transport, Waste), Monmouthshire GreenWeb, Monmouthshire Community Recycling, Rural Community Action, Energy Savings Trust, Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations and the Wye Valley AONB.

The Board aims to:

- foster communication between the relevant environmental organisations at a strategic level;
- help make partnership projects happen and to promote working together for the benefit of the county;
- assist the identification of environmental needs and action priorities of the people of Monmouthshire;
- contribute to the environmental aims, priorities and project programme of the evolving Community Strategy;
- monitor performance in delivering the Strategy and other relevant action programmes.

This document is particularly intended to address the third and fourth aims.

1.2 EPB Priorities for Monmouthshire 2006–08

Following a conference in 2006 the EPB provisionally concluded that the county's environmental priorities were:

- To safeguard and improve the global and local condition of the environment by increasing understanding, appreciation and responsible enjoyment of its qualities, and by encouraging contributions to its well being;
- To reduce non-renewable energy consumption through the efficient use of energy and to increase renewable energy consumption;
- To make progress towards making Monmouthshire a 'zero waste' county through waste reduction, re-use of waste, recycling and composting;

- To reduce the growth of environmentally damaging vehicle traffic through integrated measures that increase the use of the most sustainable travel modes or reduce the need to travel;
- To maintain, protect and enhance the visual quality, biodiversity and historic value of the urban and rural environments of Monmouthshire;
- To eliminate or reduce other sources of air, land and water pollution in the county.

The EPB has also identified five key project areas in which it hopes to generate increased collaboration and action, all with an emphasis on developing a focus on citizens' needs and their participation. These are:

- Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship – coordination and information sharing at a county level and joint project development;
- Waste – extending the 'zero waste' approach at a community level;
- Energy Efficiency – raising awareness, overcoming barriers and generating community projects;
- Sustainable Transport – better engagement with citizens – e.g. a Transport Forum or events;
- The Rural Landscape – strategic ecological connectivity networks across the landscape.

Work in these key project areas is being progressed variously by sub-groups or Board members. This approach aims to increase collaboration and action within the county.

2 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

The EPB recognises the importance of progressing work within these identified priority areas. The EPB has developed a concise policy framework through which to deliver its focused outcomes, within the context of the Monmouthshire Community Strategy. In addition to tying in with the Community Strategy, the policy framework is allied to the goals of the constituent organisations and to reflect the main strategies and plans of national, regional and local government and environmental organisations.

Thus, this is not a comprehensive evidence-based detailed environmental strategy with targets and indicators. Partners' own strategies and plans, referenced below, provide more detail; the Board does not at present feel the need to, or have the resources to, assemble and monitor a detailed strategy. However, we will aim to keep this statement up-to-date.

2.1 Community Strategy Vision (2008)

By 2020 Monmouthshire will be a place where, *inter alia*:

- People live in more inclusive, cohesive, prosperous and vibrant communities, both urban and rural, where there is better access to local services, facilities and employment opportunities.

- The distinctive character of its built heritage, countryside and environmental assets has been protected and enhanced.
- People enjoy more sustainable lifestyles that give them opportunities for healthy activity, reduced reliance on private cars and minimised impact on the global environment.

Among the more detailed aspirations:

- *Services will be delivered locally wherever this is possible. People will benefit from good walking and cycling routes and have to use their cars less often.*
- *People are able to choose to live in a sustainable affordable home and are supported by services to do so.*
- *Our community will be clean, safe and cared for. People will make a local contribution to tackling the global issue of climate change and will acknowledge the effects that this has on our local environment.*

Priorities identified by the Local Service Board (2008–11) are:

- Transport/access to services and facilities
- Affordable and sustainable housing for our communities
- Taking local action in response to Climate Change
- More integrated, sustainable and accessible public services

2.2 A Summary of Environmental Objectives for Monmouthshire

This summary is intended to capture the main objectives of those organisations, working individually or in partnership, which are engaged in the protection and enhancement of the Monmouthshire environment. Most are represented on the EPB. It is based largely on the EPB Coordinator's review of the main current relevant plans, available on request. These plans are referred to in italics below.

2.2.1 Sustainability and Resilience

We will:

- Seek to mitigate and adapt to the global and local effects of climate change and reduced supplies of oil and other resources.
- Aim to ensure that our actions do not compromise the quality of life of future generations.
- Aim to maintain and, where consistent with our other aims, to improve the quality of life of our citizens by providing environmental services and by encouraging citizen engagement and self-reliance.
- Encourage the production or provision of goods and services as closely as reasonably possible to their use by citizens.
- Encourage all organisations and individuals to make environmental considerations a key factor in their decision-making.
- Encourage all organisations and also individuals to make sustainability considerations of all kinds a key factor in their planning and decision-making processes particularly by promoting the use of a sustainability checklist.

2.2.2 The Natural Environment

We will:

- ❑ Protect and enhance the quality and diversity of the county's best inland and coastal landscapes and most valuable wildlife habitats, while taking account of the need to manage the countryside as a productive resource.
- ❑ Ensure that opportunities are taken to enhance all landscapes and wildlife habitats, minimising the loss of biodiversity particularly by seeking a mosaic of inter-connected semi-natural habitats.
- ❑ Ensure that national targets for species and habitats, and targets reflecting local values, are translated into effective action.
- ❑ Provide a basis for monitoring progress.

(For more detail refer to Monmouthshire and Brecon Beacons National Park Unitary Development Plans, Brecon Beacons National Park Plan, Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, Severn River Basin Management Plan and Monmouthshire Local Biodiversity Action Plan)

2.2.3 The Built Environment

We will:

- ❑ Promote patterns of development that use the spare capacity of the existing infrastructure and services and enhance the viability of existing towns and villages.
- ❑ Improve the quality and attractiveness of our urban and rural settlements.
- ❑ Promote more sustainable homes and other buildings, particularly by more efficient use of energy.
- ❑ Seek the supply of high-quality, affordable and social housing in locations consistent with sustainable development.
- ❑ Protect and encourage the conservation of historic buildings and heritage sites.

(For more detail refer to Monmouthshire and National Park Unitary Development Plans and local regeneration action plans)

2.2.4 Resource Management

We will:

- ❑ Reduce carbon dioxide emissions through energy efficiency and the promotion of renewable energy generation where appropriate.
- ❑ Seek to ensure clean water in rivers, streams, lakes and groundwater.
- ❑ Promote sustainable use of water.
- ❑ Protect coastal areas and flood plains from flood risk so far as is consistent with economic and social considerations.
- ❑ Restrict development on flood plains.
- ❑ Prevent the pollution of land and soil, and deal with any past contamination.
- ❑ Increase the reuse, recycling and composting of waste material, reducing as far as possible the residual amount going to landfill or incineration.
- ❑ Identify suitable sites and sustainable technologies for dealing with residual waste in the short term, while longer term zero waste strategies are being developed.

- Plan for the sustainable use of minerals, minimising harm from their extraction, encouraging their reuse, and safeguarding important reserves.

(For more detail refer to Monmouthshire Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Strategy, Severn River Basin Management Plan, Monmouthshire and National Park Unitary Development Plans, Severn Shoreline Management Plan and (to be reviewed) Monmouthshire Waste Management Strategy)

2.2.5 Movement of Goods and People around the County

We will:

- Aim to reduce the emission of greenhouses gases and air pollution from transport by encouraging more sustainable forms of travel.
- Reduce congestion.
- Improve access for all to services, facilities and employment.
- Improve the quality of our public and community transport.
- Improve walking and cycling networks.
- Increase road safety.

(For more detail refer to Regional Transport Plan, Unitary Development Plans, Air Quality Action Plans and (to be reviewed) Local Transport Plan)

2.2.6 Recreation, Tourism and the Local Economy

We will:

- Maintain, improve and promote access to, and responsible enjoyment of, the countryside.
- Seek equality of access to the countryside.
- Aim to maximise the economic and health values of access to the countryside.
- Encourage economic development that is consistent with environmental objectives, such as green tourism, local food and timber initiatives, and heritage tourism.
- Encourage the take-up of financial support for land and building management consistent with our environmental objectives.

(For more detail refer to Monmouthshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Wye Waterway Plan, Brecon Beacons National Park Plan and ROWIP, Wye Valley AONB Management Plan, Monmouthshire Economic Development Strategy)

2.2.7 Engaging with Communities

We will work with other partners and the communities of Monmouthshire to:

- Make urban and rural environments cleaner, greener and more pleasant places to live, work and visit.
- Deal with local problems such as litter, dog-fouling, fly-tipping, vermin, graffiti, eyesores, vandalism, and noise.

(Ongoing work and programmes such as Environmental Grants and Tidy Towns address these matters)

- Raise awareness and understanding of the need to care for the environment in all the areas covered by this statement.
- Encourage and support good practice in education for sustainable development and global citizenship in local educational establishments.

- ❑ Promote sustainable living.
- ❑ Encourage and support citizen engagement in environmental decision-making and volunteering in environmental conservation and improvement.
- ❑ Encourage good environmental practice and, where appropriate working in partnership, by organizations in all sectors.

(For more detail refer to many of the plans cited above)

3 THE EPB ACTION PLAN

The following programme, which will be kept under review and modified when necessary, summarises actions that the EPB will carry out itself or for which the Board will take some responsibility. Our actions are intended to meet needs that we have identified and that are unlikely to happen without our intervention. This is therefore not a summary of the many actions planned by Board partners or others that require no significant action by the Board.

3.1 Energy

3.1.1 A Green Energy Area was coordinated by the EPB at the Monmouth Show in 2007 and 2008 aiming to raise awareness and encourage individual members of the public, businesses and community groups to reduce energy use, invest in renewables and consider other transport options than individual private car use.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
Green Energy Area at agricultural shows	A one-stop information area on energy saving, low carbon transport and renewable energy technologies.	Provide advice and information about energy efficiency, renewable energy and green transport options	Reduced energy use, lower carbon emissions.	EPB, Energy Saving Trust, MCC	Annual

3.1.2 The Brecon Beacons National Park's Big Green Challenge has inspired community groups and individuals to conserve energy and invest in renewable energy technologies. This approach, and the experience gained could inspire people across Monmouthshire.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
Disseminate information and best practice from the Big	More people and organisations have the	Information can be used to reduce energy use	Reduced energy use, lower carbon	BBNP, Green Valleys, Mon	Ongoing

Green Challenge across Monmouthshire via GreenWeb and other means.	information to enable them to be energy efficient and reduce their CO2 emissions.	and assist people to make informed choices.	emissions.	GreenWeb	
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3.1.3 The Monmouthshire Local Service Board has decided that one of its priority areas will be to develop responses to the issue of climate change. The EPB will assist and support the Local Service Board with climate change related projects, events and initiatives.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
Assist and support the Local Service Board with climate change related projects, events and initiatives, including the Local Delivery Agreement.	Local Service Board will benefit from the expertise and knowledge of the Environment Partnership Board.	The Local Service Board will develop more effective responses to the issue of climate change.	Effective responses in terms of both mitigation and adaptation to climate change.	EPB partners who are members of the LSB, LSB.	Ongoing, according to LSB work programme and assistance required.

3.1.4 There is an urgent need to move to a low or zero carbon economy in the light of the twin challenges of climate change and peak oil. Many say it is a great economic opportunity and must be grasped now, but as a society we are just starting on that journey and the path by which we get there is by no means clear. A low carbon economy will minimise waste, make efficient use of natural resources, energy will be generated by low carbon means and local needs will be met by local production. The EPB will support the zero carbon community approach.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
Support community initiatives to move to low or	Reduced CO2 emissions, more resilient communities.	Support for communities, local networks and groups to	Carbon reductions, support for local producers,	MCC, EPB, Transition Town and other community	Ongoing

zero-carbon lifestyles.		reduce carbon emissions.	waste reduction.	groups	
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3.1.5 There is a concern amongst ecologists that the rise in interest in small scale renewable energy generation could have a negative impact on protected species and their habitats if insensitively sited. There appears to be a lack of research and expert knowledge in this area, which needs to be rectified in order to ensure that the development of renewable energy technologies is not adversely affected, and that vulnerable species (eg bats and freshwater fauna) are adequately protected.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Convene a meeting of interested parties to assess current knowledge and scope a possible project.	Improved knowledge of the impact of domestic renewables developments on species.	The project will assist ecologists, energy developers, planners and householders.	Particular species are adequately protected and renewable energy technologies do not suffer from adverse publicity and impacts.	EPB, Wye Valley AONB, BBNP, GWT, EAW, MCC.	Initial meeting convened by April 2010

3.1.6 There are many funding schemes for energy efficiency and renewable energy developments for householders, schools and businesses. The network of energy efficiency advice centres can offer impartial advice and information, but the services that they provide are not widely known.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Investigate effective ways to publicise and promote the energy efficiency advice line number.	More people using the services of the South East Wales Energy Advice Centre.	Energy used more efficiently	Financial savings, reduced use of fossil fuels, reduced carbon dioxide emissions.	MCC, Mon GreenWeb, EST	Annual (autumn)

3.1.7 Sharing best practice and leading by example – looking at our own practice as partners.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Sharing best practice and leading by example – looking at our own practice as partners	EPB partners are more aware of their own impact and will know how it can be reduced.	Encourage all partners to reduce their impact re energy.	Reduced carbon dioxide emissions, reduced energy use.	EPB	Ongoing

3.2 Waste

A waste forum had been a sub-group of the Environment Partnership Board until 2008. Its aim was to support and facilitate the development and promotion of waste management in Monmouthshire, with the input of and in consultation with the voluntary, community, business and public sectors. It is suggested that a waste Forum is arranged annually.

3.2.1 Annual forum meeting of interested parties to discuss waste issues relevant to Monmouthshire.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Establish annual Waste Forum, and then arrange annually	Waste Forum established	Provide an opportunity for local people to meet with waste management officers and service providers annually with the objective of improving services	Improved services that meet the needs of local people, promote waste minimisation and recycling and assist in meeting MCC targets.	EPB, MCC, MCR	Annual

3.2.2 Improved coordination of resources to respond to fly tipping.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Improve the	Reduced fly	Partners	Communities,	EAW,	Ongoing

coordination of responses to fly tipping in Monmouthshire	tipping, reduced cost to Monmouthshire residents, reduced risk of pollution incidents. Communities take pride in their local environment.	working together more effectively to prevent and respond to fly tipping incidents. Utilise existing WAG sponsored initiatives such as 'Pride in our Communities' which is coordinated by Environment Agency Wales.	landscape, countryside and all forms of life protected from fly tippers.	MCC, KWT, Gwent Police	
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3.3 Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship (ESDGC)

3.3.1 Establish and continue to support a network of providers of education for sustainable development and global citizenship.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
The EPB will establish a network of providers of education for sustainable development and global citizenship in Monmouthshire and continue to support this network via a coordinating role.	Network established. Education for sustainable development and global citizenship flourishes in Monmouthshire, coordination of services improves; information and resources shared.	Enables coordination of services, provision of partnership events, sharing of knowledge, expertise, equipment and services.	Better coordination of ESDGC services. Enhanced ESDGC partnership working developed. ESDGC providers better informed. ESDGC flourishes in Monmouthshire; citizens better informed about	MCC, EPB ESDGC Sub-group	Ongoing

			issues and solutions.		
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3.3.2 Publicise and promote environmental and sustainability education provision in Monmouthshire.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Publicise and promote environmental and sustainability education provision in Monmouthshire.	Events, awareness raising campaigns in Monmouthshire	Advice and information provided about ESDGC in Monmouthshire.	Schools and community groups better informed on ESDGC issues, support available and activities they can be involved in. Monmouthshire's environment is enhanced. Reduced use of fossil fuels, CO2 emissions and financial savings for schools and community groups.	MCC, EPB ESDGC sub-group	Ongoing

The Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship sub-group members include Monmouthshire County Council, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Gwent Outdoor Education Centres, Brecon Beacons National Park, EPB, Monmouthshire Community Recycling, Keep Wales Tidy (Eco-Schools), Countryside Council for Wales, National Trust, Dwr Cymru – Welsh Water.

3.4 Landscape-scale Biodiversity and Land Management

3.4.1 Sub-group of the EPB will be established and maintained to coordinate or assist with the development of landscape scale and biodiversity linking projects across landscapes, and disseminate best practice to community groups undertaking conservation projects.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Establish and maintain a sub-group	Sub-group established and maintained	Develop and/or coordinate landscape	Prevent duplication, sharing of knowledge,	EPB ecological connectivity sub-group	Ongoing

to develop, and/or coordinate landscape scale and biodiversity linking projects across landscapes and disseminate best practice to community and other groups undertaking conservation projects		scale biodiversity and land management projects, and disseminate information to community groups undertaking conservation projects to ensure that opportunities are optimised to link habitats.	expertise and resources to protect biodiversity from threats such as habitat fragmentation and climate change		
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The ecological connectivity sub-group members include Monmouthshire County Council, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission Wales, Brecon Beacons National Park, EPB, Countryside Council for Wales, Wye Valley AONB, The Woodland Trust, Forgotten Landscape Partnership.

3.5 Movement of Goods and People around the County

3.5.1 Annual forum meeting of interested parties to discuss transport and travel issues relevant to Monmouthshire.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
Establish annual Transport Forum, and then arrange annually	Transport Forum established and maintained	Provide an opportunity for local people to meet with transport planners and providers annually with the objective of improving services	Improved transport services through the input of local transport users, transport planners and providers.	EPB, Transport sub-group, MCC, SEWTA	Annual

3.5.2 Encourage the further development of the SEWTA regional car share scheme.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
To assist in the further development of the existing SEWTA regional car share scheme.	To increase the number of Monmouthshire residents signed up to the SEWTA car share scheme.	To reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys.	Car travel reduced, traffic reduced, carbon dioxide emissions reduced.	MCC, EPB, SEWTA	Ongoing

3.5.3 One of the Monmouthshire Local Service Board priority areas relates to transport, enabling people to access services and facilities more readily, and reduce reliance on the private car. The EPB will assist and support the Local Service Board with transport related projects, events and initiatives.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead Partners	Timescale
Assist and support the Local Service Board and its partners with transport related projects, events and initiatives.	Local Service Board will benefit from the expertise and knowledge of the Environment Partnership Board.	The Local Service Board will develop more effective responses to transport related issues.	Effective responses to transport issues.	EPB partners who are members of the LSB, LSB.	Ongoing, according to LSB work programme and assistance required.

3.6 Involved and Active

This is a new area of activity identified by the guidance document “Environmental Issues for Community Strategies” (Sept 2008). It should also assist other partnerships in Monmouthshire to deliver their own Action Plans.

3.6.1 Coordinate opportunities for volunteers to get involved with environmental projects, working with other partners.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Coordinate opportunities for volunteers to get involved with environmental projects,	More volunteers helping with environmental projects	More work undertaken to improve the Monmouthshire environment	Improved environment, more volunteers involved with environmental projects	GAVO, EPB	Ongoing

working with other partners.					
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3.6.2 Explore use of a standardised approach to volunteering initiatives (Health and Safety, CRB checks etc). This is relevant to ESDGC strand and also to the work of Tidy Towns.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Explore use of a standardised approach to volunteering initiatives (Health and Safety, CRB checks etc).	Efficient use of resources and manpower, volunteers able to move easily between projects/ organisations	Organisations taking on volunteers have standard practice to follow. Consistency for volunteers.	Volunteering is made easier; practices standardised across organisations.	GAVO, MCC, GWT, BBNP, WVAONB, EPB	By April 2010

3.7 Environment Partnership Board Coordination and Development

3.7.1 Quarterly meetings of EPB.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
Arrange quarterly meetings of the Environment Partnership Board	Meetings held quarterly	Provide a networking opportunity for partners, sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources.	Improved coordination of environmental projects and enabling partnership working.	EPB	Ongoing

3.7.2 Responding to initiatives and strategies ranging from Local Development Plan to Regional Transport Plan and Tidy Towns Initiative.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partners	Timescale
To respond to initiatives, consultations and strategies as	Providing an Environment Partnership Board perspective to	Ensuring that the Environment Partnership Board views	Ensuring that environmental and sustainable development	EPB	Ongoing, as required.

appropriate	a range of bodies and organisations.	are represented on documents and bodies as required.	opinions are heard and acted upon.		
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3.7.3 Increase awareness of the Environment Partnership Board and its areas of expertise.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partner	Timescale
Increase awareness of the Environment Partnership Board and its areas of expertise.	More statutory groups, third sector organisations, groups and other forums and partnerships are aware of the EPB and its role.	People more inclined to attend EPB events, and are able to influence our work.	Creates opportunities for partnership working, sharing resources and enabling beneficial projects to happen.	EPB	Ongoing

3.7.4 Maintain the relationship between the EPB and other Partnerships, including the Monmouthshire Biodiversity Partnership.

Project	Result	Use	Benefit	Lead partner	Timescale
Maintain the relationship between the EPB and other Partnerships, including Monmouthshire Biodiversity Partnership.	Partnerships mutually better informed, and opportunities for joint working can be maximised	Knowledge shared and networks strengthened.	Monmouthshire's condition is improved.	EPB	Ongoing