



Powys Replacement Local Development Plan (2022 - 2037)

Powys Sustainable Settlements and Rural Communities

5. Integrated Planning and Transport Strategy Background Paper

November 2023

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1. Introduction

1.1 This background paper aims to set out the integrated planning and transport strategy for the Powys Replacement Local Development Plan (LDP) (2022 – 2037). It considers the legislative framework and policy context regarding transport for the LDP area and in Wales, including Welsh Government priorities to reduce carbon emissions by reducing the need for people to travel and the implementation of a transport hierarchy.

1.2 The provision of sustainable transport and the concept of “Living Locally” within Powys is considered, together with how the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy has been integrated within the evidence informing the Replacement LDP Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Options. This includes looking in detail at the methodologies and evidence detailed in the Settlement Assessment, Small Settlement Assessment, and Cluster Analysis background papers. Recognition is given to the predominantly rural nature of Powys and how a different approach needs to be applied to the more rural areas, as set out in the Rural Approach background paper.

1.3 Additionally, the paper includes a review of the Adopted LDP (2011-2026) transport policies and provides integrated planning and transport policy recommendations for the Replacement LDP.

2. National and Regional Planning Legislative and Policy Context

Introduction

2.1 It is essential that any policies and proposals contained within the Powys Replacement LDP and relating to transport are consistent and integrated with National and Regional legislation, regulations, plans, and strategies. This section of the paper, therefore, provides an overview of the strategic policy context and highlights some of the most relevant messages for the preparation of Powys Replacement LDP.

Legislation

Transport (Wales) Act 2006

2.2 This act sets out the duties of the Welsh Ministers in developing transport policies within Wales and provides the basis under which transport strategies/policies and plans are developed within Wales.

Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021

2.3 There is a legislative requirement for local authorities to produce a Local Transport Plan. This duty was transferred to Corporate Joint Committees (CJC) on 30th June 2022 by the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021. Statutory guidance is set out in the [Corporate Joint Committees \(Transport Functions\) \(Wales\) Regulations 2021](#) which set out how CJsCs should prepare Regional Transport Plans (RTP).

2.4 Although the duty to produce a RTP sits with the CJsCs, the duty to deliver the RTP is the responsibility of local authorities. Despite this, it is expected that the local authorities in each CJC will collaborate on a single collective delivery plan, known as a Regional Transport Delivery Plan. A CJC must develop policies for local authorities to implement the Wales Transport Strategy. These policies must include transport facilities and services that are:

- Required to meet the needs of people living or working in the region, visiting or travelling through the region;
- Required for the transportation of freight; and
- Facilities and services for pedestrians.

2.5 RTPs must consider the transport needs of disabled persons (within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010) and of persons who are elderly or have mobility problems, and more widely consider overcoming barriers.

Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015)

2.6 The Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development. Whilst not a new concept for the planning system the concept has been expanded under the Well-being Act; it requires an improvement in the delivery of all four aspects of well-being: social, economic, environmental and cultural. The Well-being Act provides a clear definition of sustainable development and has established seven well-being goals which are intended to shape the work of all public bodies in Wales. The Act is about improving the social,

economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. There are seven well-being goals which are as follows: A prosperous Wales, a resilient Wales, a healthier Wales, a more equal Wales, a Wales of cohesive communities, a Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language and a globally responsible Wales.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

2.7 The Active Travel (Wales) Act aims to make Active Travel the most attractive option for shorter everyday journeys (journeys to work, school, to access shops or services and therefore not just recreational). This Act states that “Its purpose is to enable more people to undertake Active Travel, meaning more people can enjoy the benefits of Active Travel. to encourage people to leave their cars behind and use Active Travel where it is suitable for them to do so.” The priority for the ‘reduction in the need to travel’ and a shift away from private vehicle usage for travel is reflected in the Welsh Government’s Future Wales: The National Plan 2040 and Llwybr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021. Enabling more people to undertake Active Travel will mean more people can enjoy the health benefits of Active Travel, help reduce greenhouse emissions, tackle poverty and disadvantage and help the economy to grow.

2.8 The Act makes provision for the mapping of Active Travel routes and related facilities in connection with Active Travel Network Maps (ATNMs). It also requires local authorities in Wales to deliver year on year improvements in Active Travel routes and facilities to enhance opportunities for pedestrians and cyclists to make meaningful journeys without relying on the car. It requires highways authorities in Wales to make enhancements to routes and facilities for pedestrians and cyclists in all new road schemes and to have regard to the needs of walkers and cyclists in a range of other highway authority functions. It also requires the Welsh Ministers and local authorities to promote Active Travel journeys in exercising their functions under this Act. The principles of Active Travel are found throughout Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11), which stresses the need for the planning system to create an environment and infrastructure for people to walk and cycle.

2.9 The Active Travel Act should be implemented in such a way that it enriches the lives of as many people as possible. Developing a transport system that is not so heavily dependent on private vehicles and that integrates walking, cycling and public transport effectively can bring great benefits to everyone. However, this potential will only be realised if the needs of people with protected characteristics, particularly disabled people, are properly considered at all stages of creating the network and they, and their representative organisations, are properly involved in engagement and consultations.

Learner Travel (Wales) Measure 2008 (LTM)

2.10 This sets out the specifications for which local authorities must provide home to school transport and sets out a duty on Welsh Government and local authorities to promote sustainable modes of travel when exercising duties under the Measure. Note: this measure is in the process of being reviewed (November 2023).

National Policy Context

Future Wales, The National Plan 2040 (February 2021)

2.11 Future Wales, The National Plan 2040 forms the national development framework which sets out the strategic direction for development in Wales to 2040. It aims to address key national priorities through the planning system, including sustaining and developing a vibrant economy, achieving decarbonisation and climate resilience, developing strong ecosystems and improving the health and well-being of communities.

2.12 Future Wales contains policies to improve connectivity, both nationally (Policy 11) and regionally (Policy 12) with an emphasis on public transport, Active Travel and supporting ultra-low emission vehicles. The Plan includes the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy for Planning, set out in Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11), Figure.1

2.13 One of the aims of Future Wales is to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private vehicles and to support a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. The National Plan includes regional transport policies, including one for the Mid-Wales Region (Powys and Ceredigion), Policy 27 – Movement in Mid Wales. The Welsh Government recognises that travel by road and private vehicle across Mid-Wales is central to regional movement across the Region. Alongside Welsh Government’s investment in public transport and Active Travel, it will also continue to invest in the road network and support the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles in the region.

2.14 Implementation of Future Wales’ strategic placemaking approach, and its principles, will ensure development contributes positively towards building sustainable places that support active and healthy lifestyles, with urban neighbourhoods that are compact and walkable, organised around mixed-use centres and public transport, and integrated with green infrastructure.

Planning Policy Wales Edition 11 (February 2021)

2.15 Planning Policy Wales, Edition 11, (PPW 11) sets out the land use planning policies and overarching sustainable development goals for Wales.

2.16 PPW 11 states that “Sustainable Places are the goal of the land use planning system in Wales...all development decisions...should seek to contribute towards the making of sustainable places and improved well-being” (para 2.2). It goes on to state (as set out in Figure 4: Key Planning Principles – Achieving the Right Development in the Right Place), that the planning system can create and sustain communities by:

“...creating well-designed places and cohesive rural and urban communities which can be sustained by ensuring the appropriate balance of uses and density, making places where people want to be and interact with others.”

2.17 PPW 11 emphasises the link between the number of homes due to be provided and the expected job opportunities, as well as the location of any new development in relation to existing or planned infrastructure. This is important to minimise the need to travel, reduce private vehicle reliance and increase opportunities for cycling, walking and the use of public transport. Development plans are deemed to “...provide the main means for achieving integration between land use and transport planning” (para. 4.1.5).

2.18 At the same time PPW 11 recognises that for most rural areas the opportunities for reducing car use and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport are more limited

than in urban areas. Due to this PPW advises that in rural areas most new development should be located in settlements which have relatively good accessibility by non-car modes when compared to the rural area as a whole. Development in these areas should embrace the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes and, where possible, offer good Active Travel connections to the centres of settlements to reduce the need to travel by private vehicle for local journeys. (para. 3.39).

2.19 Additionally, PPW 11 advises that:

“Local service centres, or clusters of smaller settlements where a sustainable functional linkage can be demonstrated, should be designated by local authorities as the preferred locations for most new development including housing and employment provision. The approach should be supported by the service delivery plans of local service providers” (para. 3.40).

Llwybr Newydd - The Wales Transport Strategy 2021

2.20 Llwybr Newydd - The Wales Transport Strategy (2021), sets out the Welsh Government’s vision for how the transport system can help deliver on Welsh Government priorities. It sets out the short-term priorities for the next five years and long-term ambitions for the next 20 years, along with nine mini-plans explaining how they will be delivered for different transport modes and sectors. The three headline priorities set out within the Strategy are:

- **Priority 1:** bring services to people in order to reduce the need for people to use their cars on a daily basis.
- **Priority 2:** accessible, sustainable and efficient transport services and infrastructure.
- **Priority 3:** behaviour change.

2.21 The Strategy requires governments, local authorities, transport providers (both commercial and third sector) and colleagues in other policy areas to work together to ensure that transport contributes to the current and future well-being of Wales.

2.22 Targets set out in the Wales Transport Strategy, include having 45% of journeys being made by walking, cycling and public transport by 2040, with interim targets of 35% by 2025 and 39% in 2030 (the 2021 baseline is 32%). The Strategy also aims to have a 10% reduction in car miles travelled by 2030.

2.23 The Strategy has committed to a ‘Rural Pathway’ which sets out how regional Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and Welsh Government policy makers will work together on strategies to tailor solutions to extend the geographical reach of public transport links into rural areas, and trip reduction through car sharing schemes and creation of ‘local distribution networks’ hubs to help manage the impacts of increasing home deliveries. Development proposals in rural areas of Powys are required to demonstrate innovative solutions to connect rural locations to services and facilities.

National Transport Delivery Plan (2022 – 2027)

2.24 The National Transport Delivery Plan sets out how transport will be delivered against the priorities and ambitions set out in Llwybr Newydd – The Wales Transport Strategy 2021. This includes the programmes, projects and new policies that are intended to be delivered in the 2022-2027, five-year period.

2.25 The Delivery Plan promotes the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy and recognises the land use planning system, as guided by Future Wales's role, in delivering on "Priority 1: bring services to people in order to reduce the need for people to use their cars on a daily basis". Within Annex 3, is a delivery pathway for rural areas which makes specific reference to Powys.

2.26 The Delivery Plan recognises that the transport needs of communities in rural Wales will be different to those in more urban areas, and that it is important to work with those communities to plan the types of public transport services they will need. The Rural Pathway proposed in the Delivery Plan, takes a hub-and-spoke approach, helping those in the most isolated communities better access their local village or town. From there they will have a wider range of public transport and Active Travel choices, to travel locally or to connect them to their nearest transport interchange for longer journeys. The Delivery Plan explains that through the development of the local authority Active Travel Network Maps, new Active Travel routes will be developed between rural communities and their nearest town and or public transport services. Working with local authorities the aim is to build "hub-and-spoke" Active Travel corridors, to connect market towns and other significant local centres, to surrounding villages and outlying developments.

Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance

2.27 The Welsh Transport Appraisal Guidance (WelTAG) is a framework used to assess the strategic case for proposed changes to the transport system. It contains best practice for the development, appraisal and evaluation of proposed transport interventions in Wales. WelTAG is recommended as the starting point whenever a problem is identified with the transport system or within another area that is affected by, or affects, the transport system. The WelTAG process must be applied to all transport projects funded in part or in full by the Welsh Government, with the process developed over five stages.

Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy for Wales: Facilitating the Transition to Net Zero (March 2021)

2.28 This strategy delivers a vision for electric vehicle charging to meet Wales' unique requirements. It sets out the position at the time of writing in providing electric charging for cars and vans, the charging needs for the decade, and how these can be met. The strategy assumes two scenarios being most likely – "fast charging dominant" and "rapid charging dominant". It identifies a predicted requirement of 31,130 fast and rapid direct current (DC) charging points for Powys by the year 2025, rising to 93,945 fast and rapid charging points by 2030.

2.29 Slow charging at 3.6kW typically occurs over 8-12 hours in the domestic/workplace environment. Fast charging points are mainly rated at 7kW or 22kW and should deliver full charges over 4-6 hours, and are typically found in supermarkets, car parks etc. Rapid (and ultra-Rapid) charging points tend to be found at motorway services or on major roads and deliver power at 43–50kW, providing an 80% battery charge in 20 minutes. The fast-charging scenario does not require significant vehicle efficiency or battery performance improvements, whereas the rapid-charging scenario is predicated on continued improvements in car battery size and performance, and enhancements to the grid network to meet the additional electrical demand.

2.30 Powys is identified within the strategy as one of the higher charging demand areas across Wales, due to its rural nature. However, the grid network and capacity continue to be an issue in mid-Wales and a maybe a possible hindrance to the uptake of electric vehicles.

Active Travel Act Guidance (July 2021)

2.31 The Active Travel guidance, published in July 2021, replaces previous guidance on Active Travel and is split into two parts. Part 1 provides an outline summary of the aims, processes and key considerations associated with the duties of the Active Travel (Wales) Act (2013). Whilst Part 2, provides detailed technical advice on how infrastructure should be planned and designed. The vision is for walking and cycling to be the natural mode of choice for short everyday journeys, or as part of a longer journey in combination with other sustainable modes with there being a 15-year ambition for there to be a comprehensive network of safe, direct, cohesive, comfortable, and attractive walking and cycling routes within and connecting to key settlements across Wales.

Welsh Government: All Wales Plan 2021-25 Working Together to Reach Net Zero (April 2022)

2.32 Alongside Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2, the first All Wales Plan - Working Together to Reach Net Zero, has been published, which demonstrates the commitment from partners in working together to reach Net Zero. As part of the Pledge Campaign launched in 2019, Welsh Government has received 118 pledges for action from businesses, the public sector, communities, schools and other groups and organisations, which are showcased by the All Wales Plan. The All Wales Plan also includes case studies of actions already taken, including local examples in Powys, and recognises the crucial role of children and young people in raising awareness and concerns about Climate Change.

Welsh Government: Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 (2021-25) (October 2021)

2.33 Net Zero Wales Carbon Budget 2 follows on from Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales which covered the first carbon budget (2016-2020). It fulfils the Welsh Ministers' statutory duty to prepare and publish a report before the end of 2021, setting out Welsh Government's proposals and policies for meeting Net Zero.

Technical Advice Note 18 (TAN 18) – Transport (2007)

2.34 TAN 18 sets out the Welsh Government's aim to promote sustainable transport in Wales. The TAN focuses on the role integrated land use planning and development of transport infrastructure, can have in addressing the environmental aspects of sustainable development, in particular climate change. The integration of land use planning and transport can help to achieve Welsh Government environmental policy objectives by:

- Promoting resource and travel-efficient settlement patterns;
- Ensuring new development is located where there is, or will be, good access by public transport, walking, and cycling thereby minimising the need for travel and fostering social inclusion;
- Encouraging the location of development near other related uses to encourage multi-purpose trips;
- Promoting cycling and walking;

- Supporting the provision of high-quality, inclusive public transport; and
- Ensuring that transport infrastructure or service improvements necessary to serve new development allow existing transport networks to continue to perform their identified functions.

2.35 TAN 18 (para. 3.4) emphasises the need to identify residential sites in accessible areas which have good links to jobs, shops and services by modes other than the car and where public transport services have existing or planned capacity to absorb further development. Based upon this settlement policies should, among other considerations, promote housing development at locations with good access by walking and cycling to primary and secondary schools and public transport stops, and by all modes to employment, further and higher education, services, and require layouts and densities, which maximise the opportunity for residents to walk and cycle to local facilities and public transport stops. The theme of sustainable transport and accessibility is given considerable weight in national guidance and places an onus on Local Planning Authorities to prioritise it.

2.36 TAN 18 acknowledges the difficulties of creating sustainable locations in more rural areas. However, it advises that development in rural locations should still embody sustainability principles, balancing the need to support the rural economy, whilst maintaining and enhancing the environmental, social and cultural quality of rural areas. Most new development should be located in places accessible by a range of travel modes. As part of the settlement strategy of the development plan, planning authorities should consider identifying key local service centres. These centres may comprise a market town, large village or closely associated group of villages. Such service centres should be the preferred locations for most new development including housing and employment provision. The identification of key service centres will help to promote the use of public transport, walking and cycling and minimise the need for journeys to larger centres.

2.37 The TAN notes that transport issues in rural areas will vary depending on the relative isolation from major urban centres. Long distance out-commuting from rural areas raises sustainability issues given the length of the journey and the rural location means that conventional public transport is unlikely to be viable in response. Local authorities may need to consider whether different policy approaches are required depending on the proximity of rural areas to urban centres. For example, the development plan strategy may require a more decentralised approach to employment location in order to minimise overall private vehicle mileage in an area without strong functional linkages to larger settlements. For a rural area close to a large urban area, development serving local needs may be directed to settlements to provide sufficient demand to enable public transport services to extend from the main centre.” (para.3.13).

Technical Advice Note 4 (TAN 4) – Retail and Commercial Development (2016)

2.38 TAN 4 promotes a ‘town centre first’ approach that recognises retail and commercial centres as diverse, mixed use focal points that should be primary considerations when assessing the most appropriate places for a wide variety of developments. It is emphasised that the “...co-location of these uses and their high levels of accessibility by a range of transport options make them sustainable locations” (para.2.1). TAN 4 reiterates the important role that retail and commercial centres play in creating sustainable locations, seeking to ensure they have a positive future. It states that “...good access to and within, retail and commercial centres is key, both to the vibrancy of those places and to ensure that everyone in society has access to the wide variety of goods and services.” Furthermore, it

requires development plans to ensure access is sustainable in nature by promoting the ability to "...walk, cycle or use public transport to get to retail and commercial centres." (para.2.7). TAN 4 demonstrates the need to consider retail and commercial centres when considering the sustainability of a location, both in terms of their mix of uses and their accessibility. Powys is predominantly a rural county and some settlements have limited or no retail and commercial services serving them. It has therefore been important to consider the functional linkages between settlements and supporting town centres.

Technical Advice Note 6 (TAN 6) – Planning for Sustainable Rural Communities (2010)

2.39 TAN 6 develops upon the principles outlined in national planning policy guidance in relation to sustainable rural communities. With regard to informing the location of development, TAN 6 advises "Development plans should set out a spatial vision for rural communities. This should be based on a sound understanding of the functional linkages within the area and the potential for improving the sustainability of the existing settlement pattern. The TAN recognises that many rural communities can accommodate development, particularly to meet local needs. New development can help to generate wealth to support local services, ensuring that communities are sustainable in the long term." (para 2.2.1). In accordance with TAN 6, an audit of services and facilities by individual settlements (including those in rural communities) and the consideration of functional linkages within the area, has been undertaken to inform the settlement strategy for the Replacement LDP (see Settlement Assessment, Small Settlement Assessment, Cluster Analysis and Rural Approach background papers).

Local and Regional Transport Plans/Strategies

2.40 Development plan strategies and policies need to be consistent and integrated with the strategies and policies contained in Joint Local Transport Plans, the Wales Transport Strategy and National Transport Finance Plan. Development plans should also take into account other plans and reports with transport implications.

The Mid Wales Local Transport Plan

2.41 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) was jointly produced by the three Mid Wales Local Authorities of Ceredigion County Council, Gwynedd Council (for the Meirionnydd part of Gwynedd) and Powys County Council.

2.42 The plan preparation was overseen by the Mid Wales Transportation (TraCC) Board. The role of TraCC continues to be (as part of Growing Mid Wales) to bring together the highways and public transport functions of the three local authorities to provide specific regional solutions to local integrated transport issues. TraCC also assists the Welsh Government in delivering its national integrated transport policies on a regional basis and identifies priorities for future investment in collaboration with partners.

2.43 The Mid Wales Local Transport Plan was submitted to Welsh Government in January 2015, covering a detailed programme from 2015-2020 and a framework for schemes until 2030. The LTP is a statutory document that sits alongside LDPs and other policies and plans of each of the Local Authorities. The Local Transport Plan identifies issues and opportunities for all aspects of transport, limited to those that are within a local transport authority's remit and excludes schemes relating to the rail or trunk road network.

Regional Transport Plan

2.44 Welsh Government published guidance in July 2023, relating to the preparation of Regional Transport Plans that are the responsibility of the CJC. The CJC have stated in their Corporate Plan (draft November 2023) that they will develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within its area, which they will implement through the Regional Transport Plan. Once the plan and its policies have been agreed each highway authority (Ceredigion and Powys County Council's) will need to write a delivery plan for policies.

Other Cross-boundary Strategies / Plans

2.45 The following cross-boundary strategies / plans have been produced by Powys County Council and / or Welsh Government in conjunction with organisations including Shropshire County Council, Growing Mid Wales and Local Enterprise Partnerships. Each of these strategies contain interventions that could help improve transport connections between England and Wales:

- Mid-Wales and Shropshire Cross-Border Study Final Strategy (2020).
- The Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy (2017- 2018)
- The Marches and Mid Wales Joint Appraisal Framework Phase 2 Final Report (2020)

Identified Key Interventions

Public Transport

2.46 An increase of bus routes / frequencies, with there being opportunities for specific new sustainable transport links at targeted growth areas and strategic employment sites e.g., Welshpool to Newtown (improved bus 'shuttle' service). The current T12 service between Welshpool and Oswestry runs approximately twice a day, and X75 service between Welshpool and Shrewsbury runs approximately every two hours. Section 5 includes further details on Bus Services in the Plan area.

Road Network

- Opportunities for short sections of '2 on 1' roads, Differential Acceleration Lanes (DALs) and crawler lanes these interventions enable safe overtaking opportunities on otherwise single carriageway roads.
- Opportunities for road enhancements, such as straightening, removing bends and widening of narrow sections at selected locations.
- A programme of enhancements to selected structures to allow 44 tonne HGVs to operate across the whole of the Freight Route Network (FRN). Schemes for increasing the number of opportunities for overtaking, online enhancements, and enhancements to selected structures, should be considered as part of route strategies on the FRN; this is likely to include improvements to the A494, A483 and A470 trunk roads.
- The strategies / reports, include major schemes which would reduce the impact of bottlenecks on the FRN, providing journey time savings and increased journey time

reliability for freight movements. Within the Powys Replacement LDP area this includes a bypass on the A483. The improvement would see a new road bypass traffic away from the two villages, Pant (in Shropshire) and Llanymynech (part in Powys LDP area) on the A483 between Welshpool and Oswestry. This would reduce journey times between Mid Wales and Deeside and the Northwest of England.

Freight by rail

- The Marches and Mid Wales Freight Strategy (2017-18) identified the potential to encourage a switch of some freight from the roads to the rail network. This possibility may require safeguarding existing railway sidings at railway stations or the protection of potential future rail hubs.

3. Local Context

The Powys Local Planning Authority Area

3.1 Powys is a largely upland and very rural county, characterised by its low population density averaging at 26 people per square kilometre. The transport network (illustrated in Figures 1-3) is important to Powys but influenced by its topography, together with the low population density. The A470 is a strategic trunk road linking North and South Wales and is an important route through South and West Powys linking Brecon (BBNP), Builth Wells, Rhayader and Llanidloes. The A483 links South-west Wales with Llanwrtyd Wells, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Newtown and Welshpool to Oswestry and beyond to Cheshire and North-West England. The East-West A44 links Aberystwyth, Rhayader and Llandrindod Wells into Herefordshire and the Midlands.

3.2 Whilst public bus services are available linking many of the settlements through Powys and the LDP area, including long-distance services to North and South Wales, frequency of services is limited and can be inconvenient. Dependency on private vehicle ownership and usage therefore remains high. Two main railway lines cross the County; the Cambrian Line, running between Aberystwyth and Birmingham International linking Machynlleth, Newtown and Welshpool. And the Heart of Wales Line between Shrewsbury and Swansea linking Llanwrtyd Wells, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells and Knighton, plus a number of smaller settlements along the route, again providing important transport links in Powys.

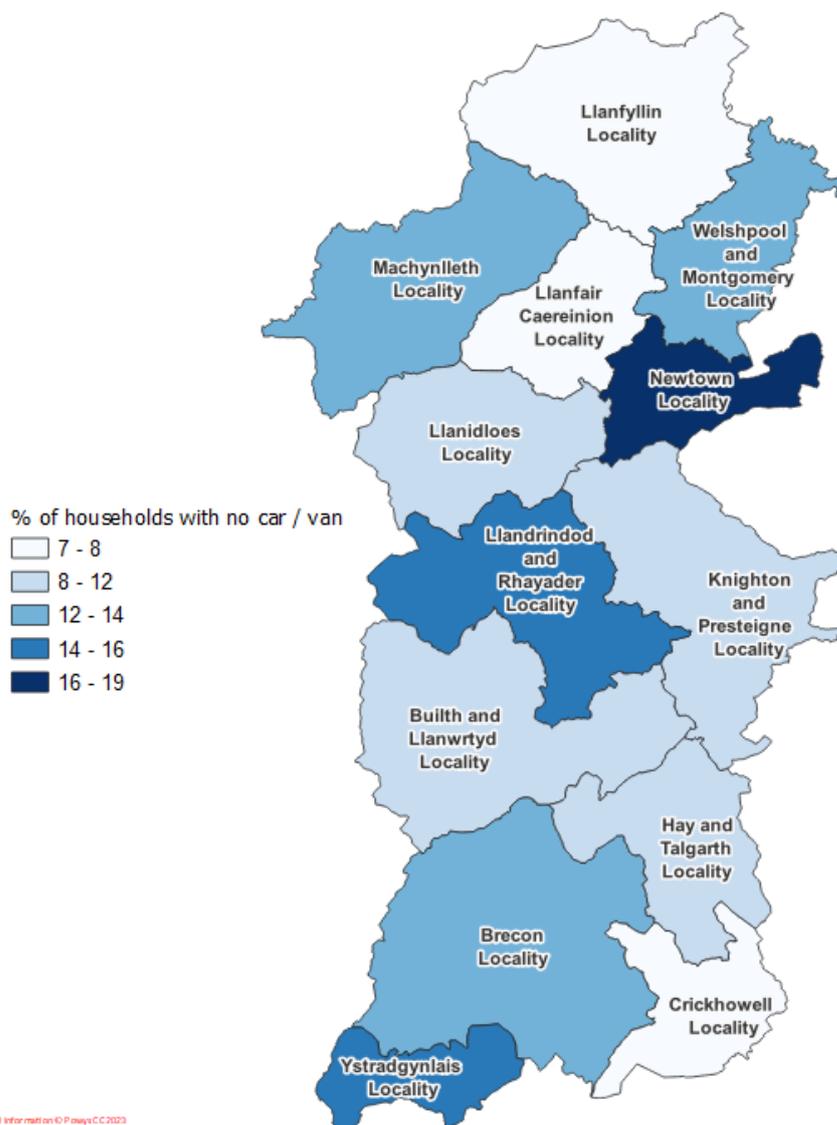
3.3 Settlements within Powys vary considerably from relatively isolated rural villages and hamlets to more accessible market towns that serve a wider area. The pattern and distribution of the lightly populated settlements mean in these places commercial public transport is limited and the delivery of supported transport routes can be difficult. Community Transport can provide for some of the unmet needs by providing transport to a range of groups and individuals and generally fill the gap where no public transport is available. This is especially important given the generally ageing population and the need to travel long distances for some services, including medical treatments.

Census data (2021) for Powys

3.4 The 2021 Census recorded the number of households with either a car or a van. Figure 2 uses the Census data to show the percentage of households in the 13 localities of Powys, where there was no cars or vans in the household.

3.5 In 2021 in Powys, there were 60,178 households of those 13% (7,889) had no access to either a car or van within the household. As shown in Figure 1, some of the localities have a relatively high percentage of households that do not have a car or a van, particularly within the localities that contain the Tier 1 / Tier 2 settlements of Newtown (19%), Llandrindod Wells / Rhayader (16%) and Ystradgynlais (16%). This means that the provision of services, Active Travel routes and good public transport is needed in these settlements to cater for residents who don't have access to a vehicle.

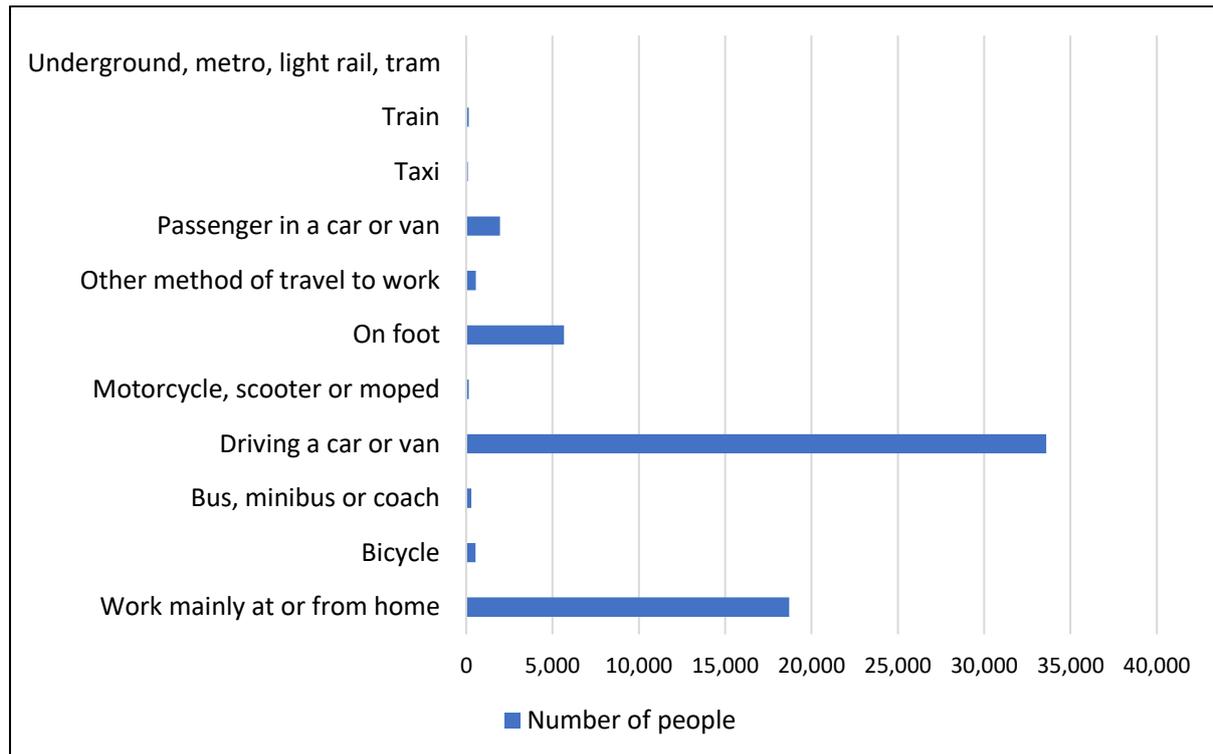
Figure 2. Vehicle Availability – Percentage Number of Households with no Cars or Vans by Locality



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3.6 The Census (2021) data also provides information about the economically active population that travel to work (Figure 3). Figure 3 shows that over 50% of the economically active population drove to work in a car or van, with only 3% getting a lift as a passenger. Interestingly more people rode a bicycle to work than used public transport. At the time of the Census in 2021, 30% of people stated they worked from home; however, this figure may have been influenced by precautions in response to the Covid 19 pandemic.

Figure 3. Method of Travel to Work for all Usual Residents Aged 16 Years and over in Employment the Week Before the Census



3.7 The 2021 Census data showed that 50% or more of workers either worked from home or travelled less than 2km to get to a place of work, in the Tier 1 settlements of Llandrindod Wells, Newtown, Welshpool and Machynlleth. This is a useful indicator of the number of people who live and work within the same settlement; and provides significant potential for minimising the need to travel and for sustainable travel. Some of the more rural smaller settlements had the highest number of homeworkers, examples include Llangurig, Trefeglwys, Clyro and Glasbury, where over 40% worked from home. However, care needs to be taken when interpreting the data as the 2021 Census was undertaken when Covid 19 restrictions were in place and people were being encouraged to work from home. Settlements neighbouring Shropshire and the authorities in South Wales, have the largest proportion (over 40%) of people traveling more than 10km to get to work, this includes Abercrave, Ystradgynlais and Crew Green.

3.8 Table 1 details the distance travelled to work for all usual residents aged 16 years and over that were in employment the week before the 2021 Census. The table shows that almost a quarter of residents travelled less than ten kilometres to get to work. However over 18% of residents travelled over 20 kilometres, with 2,993 residents travelling further than 60 kilometres to get to work.

Table 1. Distance Travelled to Work for all Usual Residents Aged 16 Years and over in Employment the Week Before the 2021 Census

Distance Travelled	Number	%
Less than 2km	8,048	13.0
2km to less than 5km	3,139	5.1
5km to less than 10km	4,012	6.5
10km to less than 20km	6,316	10.2
20km to less than 30km	4,010	6.5
30km to less than 40km	2,075	3.4
40km to less than 60km	2,288	3.7
60km and over	2,993	4.8
Works mainly from home	18,698	30.3
Works mainly at an offshore installation, in no fixed place, or outside the UK	10,147	16.4
Total	61,726	100.0

4. Powys Adopted LDP (2011-2026) – Key Issues, Objectives, Policies and Review Report / Annual Monitoring Report Outcomes

Powys Adopted Local Development Plan (2011-2026)

4.1 The Powys LDP was adopted 17th April 2018, the sections below outline the key issues, objectives and policies in relation to transport contained within the Adopted LDP (2011-2026).

Key Issues

- Sustainable travel to work opportunities should be promoted through the LDP co-locating employment, housing and public transport and supporting home-working.
- One of the challenges for the LDP, given the rural nature of Powys and its dispersed population, will be to direct development to accessible locations which ideally provide a choice of transport modes such as walking, cycling and public transport.
- In spite of rising fuel costs, car ownership is high reflecting the rural and dispersed population of the county and the high costs associated with public transport provision.
- Frequent and regular public transport services are predominantly limited to key strategic road and rail routes in the county, such as the Traws Cymru bus service.
- Future development and regeneration opportunities in some parts of Powys are reliant on transport network improvements such as the Newtown by-pass.
- Improvements to the transport infrastructure are important within Powys and to connect Powys with adjoining regions. The LDP must safeguard the routes of planned improvements and seek contributions from development towards improvements where appropriate.

Objectives

To support the provision of new infrastructure and services to meet the future needs of Powys' communities.

Adopted LDP (2011-2026) Policies

Adopted LDP Policy DM13 – Design and Resources

4.2 Adopted LDP Policy DM13 – Design and Resources falls within a suite of development management policies that all planning applications are considered against. Transport considerations fall within Policy DM13, Criterion 10.

Policy DM13 – Design and Resources

Development proposals must be able to demonstrate a good quality design and shall have regard to the qualities and amenity of the surrounding area, local infrastructure and resources.

Proposals will only be permitted where all of the following criteria, where relevant, are satisfied:

Criteria number 10 “The development has been designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transport network - journey times, resilience and efficient operation - whilst ensuring that highway safety for all transport users is not detrimentally impacted upon.

Development proposals should meet all highway access requirements, (for all transport users), vehicular parking standards and demonstrate that the strategic and local highway network can absorb the traffic impacts of the development without adversely affecting the safe and efficient flow of traffic on the network or that traffic impacts can be managed to acceptable levels to reduce and mitigate any adverse impacts from the development.”

Adopted LDP Policy T1 - Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure

4.3 Adopted LDP Policy T1 - Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure, seeks to enable transport and traffic infrastructure improvements to ensure an efficient, effective and integrated system. It requires proposals to have regard to the safety of all road users in all areas especially those making ‘purposeful journeys’ as Active Travel. It also requires consideration of the impact development proposals will have on the wider transport network and the local environment.

Policy T1 – Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure

Transport infrastructure, traffic management improvements and development proposals should incorporate the following principal requirements:

- 1. Safe and efficient flow of traffic for all transport users, including more vulnerable users, and especially those making ‘Active Travel’ journeys by walking or cycling;**
- 2. Manage any impacts to the network and the local environment to acceptable levels and mitigate any adverse impacts; and,**
- 3. Minimise demand for travel by private transport and encourage, promote and improve sustainable forms of travel including Active Travel opportunities in all areas.**

Transport infrastructure improvements will be supported where they promote sustainable growth, maximise the efficiency and safety of the transport systems, improve public and private transport integration and encourage passenger and freight rail operations.

Adopted LDP Policy T2 – Safeguarding of Disused Transport Infrastructure

4.4 Adopted LDP Policy T2 – Safeguarding of Disused Transport Infrastructure is included within the LDP following the TAN 18 advice for local planning authorities to safeguard disused transport infrastructure (including railways) or routes which may potentially be brought back into productive use even if that is likely to be outside the Plan period. It expects as an interim measure for local planning authorities to, where possible, consider their use as open space corridors for walking and cycling.

Policy T2 – Safeguarding of Disused Transport Infrastructure

Disused transport infrastructure and routes are safeguarded from development proposals which prevent or restrict future re-use for transport purposes.

Adopted LDP Policy T3 – Newtown By-pass

4.5 Adopted LDP Policy T3 – Newtown By-pass was included within the Plan following the need to protect the identified route for a by-pass to relieve congestion in the town and to improve the flow of traffic on the A483/A489/A470/A44 east/west strategic routes through Mid Wales to the Midlands. At the time of the deposit plan and the examination, construction work on the bypass was underway and completed shortly after the LDP was adopted.

Policy T3 – Newtown By-pass

The route of the Newtown by-pass is safeguarded and protected.

Adopted LDP Policy DM1 – Planning Obligations

4.6 LDP Policy DM1 – Planning Obligations, seeks to ensure that new development is accompanied by an appropriate level of infrastructure, facilities, services and related works where they are necessary to make the development acceptable.

Policy DM1 – Planning Obligations

Planning obligations will be sought by agreement with applicants, where necessary, to ensure that:

- 1. The development provides for adequate infrastructure necessary to serve the proposal, and that satisfactory maintenance and / or restoration arrangements are achieved;**
- 2. Significant adverse socio-economic and environmental impacts are addressed and mitigated;**

3. Benefits are secured in the public interest to meet the additional demands of development proposals on local communities.

Where on-site provision or mitigation is not appropriate, off-site provision, or a financial contribution towards it, may be sought.

Should it be demonstrated that for viability reasons not all of the identified contributions can be reasonably required, priority will be determined on the basis of the individual circumstances of each case.

Review Report of the Powys Adopted LDP (2022)

4.7 A review of the Adopted LDP (2011-2026) was undertaken in 2022 and consequently a Review Report published in February 2022. The Review Report sets out where the Adopted LDP has delivered and is performing well and those areas that have not been implemented or delivered as intended. It also identified areas of the Adopted LDP that needed to be updated to reflect changes to national planning policy and guidance, along with other relevant strategies and evidence. The transport policies T1, T2, T3, and DM13 criterion 10 were reviewed, and the following observations made:

4.8 LDP Policy T1 – Travel, Traffic and Transport Infrastructure, seeks to enable transport and traffic infrastructure improvements to ensure an efficient, effective, and integrated system whilst having regard to the safety of all users. This policy is supported by LDP Policy DM13 criterion 10, which requires development to be designed and located to minimise the impacts on the transport network. Both policies have been effective, however, it is anticipated that the policies will be reconsidered to reflect the emphasis in PPW (Edition 11) and Future Wales (February 2021) regarding sustainable travel and the transport hierarchy. PPW states that “an important consideration will be minimising the need to travel, reducing reliance on the private vehicle and increasing walking, cycling and use of public transport”, this needs to be reflected in the Replacement LDP.

4.9 LDP Policy T2 – Safeguarding of Disused Transport Infrastructure, this LDP policy had not been used in the periods of monitoring undertaken (17th April 2018 to 31st March 2021). PPW (Edition 11) paragraph 5.3.8 of the Review Report states “Disused railways and disused or unused rail sidings should, in collaboration with Transport for Wales and Network Rail, be safeguarded from development which could adversely affect them being brought back to rail use in the future. Any planning application or proposed development plan policy in the vicinity of, or directly affecting a former railway line should consider the impact on their potential use for rail in the future. As an interim measure, it may be appropriate to use disused rail alignments as open space corridors, for example for walking and cycling”. Research will be undertaken to identify the disused railways and disused or unused rail sidings and other transport infrastructure, in the Plan area, as part of the review process. This research will enable an understanding of the policy approach to be taken going forward and may lead to the identification of Green Infrastructure opportunities.

4.10 LDP Policy T3 – Newtown By-pass, this policy was included within the LDP to ensure the proposed route of the Newtown Bypass was safeguarded and protected. Now that the Newtown Bypass is fully operational the policy is no longer required and will not be included in the Replacement LDP.

4.11 The Review Report also recognised that PPW (Edition 11) requires LDPs to include an integrated planning and transport strategy, setting out how the LPA will:

- integrate and co-ordinate sustainable transport and land use planning;

- facilitate and promote accessibility for all;
- reduce the need to travel;
- reduce dependency on private vehicles;
- prioritise and support walking, cycling and use of public transport
- support the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles;
- reduce transport related airborne pollution; and
- facilitate the provision of transport infrastructure and necessary sustainable transport improvements and development.

4.12 The Review Report therefore anticipated that the Replacement LDP will include a strategic policy relating to integrated planning and transport and recommended for the policy framework to be amended to reflect the growing emphasis on sustainable travel.

4.13 LDP Policy DM1- Planning Obligations, was considered in the Review Report to be working effectively with contributions being received (subject to viability considerations) to mitigate the impacts of new development and help provide necessary infrastructure such as recreation and open space, community and educational facilities. The report recommended that consideration is given to the most effective method of providing infrastructure to support development in the Replacement LDP, in order to carry out appropriate infrastructure planning and to take into consideration up-to-date viability evidence.

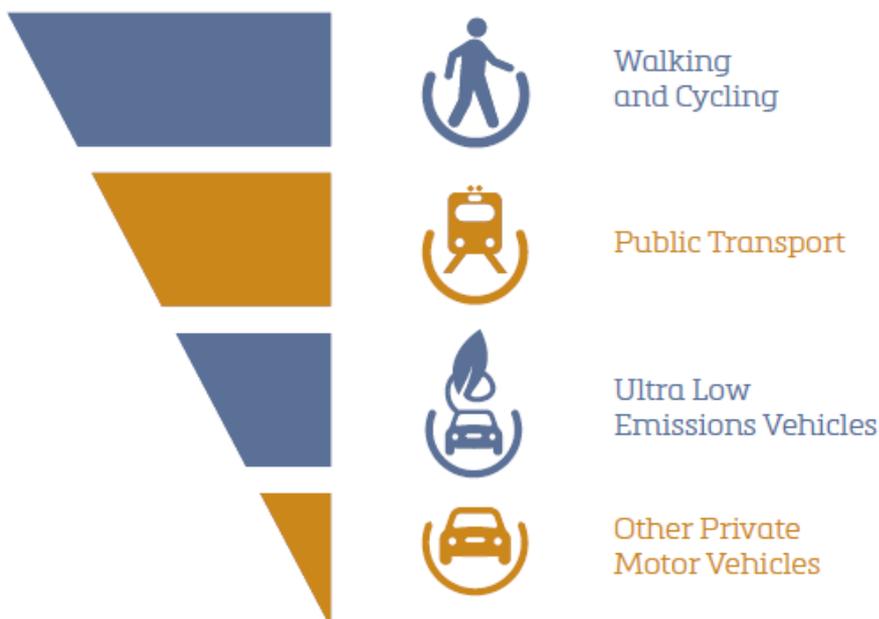
5. Sustainable Transport in Powys County Council

Introduction and the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy

5.1 It is important to understand the sustainable travel opportunities and the accessibility to services of different settlements in relation to other parts of the Plan area as well as across the wider region. Settlements that are well connected via multi-modal forms of transport help increase the possibilities for use of sustainable transport options for local residents to access a range of facilities including education, employment and retail. As such, it is vital to understand the number of Active Travel routes as a means of encouraging walking and cycling, the level of public transport provision to minimise reliance on the private vehicle and the distance to the major highway network.

5.2 Planning Policy Wales (Edition 11) clearly states that the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy (Figure 4) must be a key principle in the preparation of development plans, including selecting site allocations, and when considering and determining planning applications. Careful consideration needs to be given in development plans to the allocation of new sites which are likely to generate significant levels of movement, to ensure that access provisions which enable walking and cycling, as well as for public transport, are included from the outset and that any implications associated with airborne pollution can be addressed. The transport hierarchy prioritises walking, cycling and public transport ahead of the use of private motor vehicles. However, it also recognises that Ultra Low Emission Vehicles have an important role to play in the decarbonisation of transport, particularly in rural areas with limited public transport services.

Figure 4. Welsh Government's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy for Planning



5.3 Welsh Government promote the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy to reduce the need to travel, prevent car-dependent developments in unsustainable locations, and to support the

delivery of schemes located, designed and supported by infrastructure that prioritises access and movement by active and sustainable transport modes.

5.4 PPW 11 emphasises the link between the number of homes due to be provided and the expected job opportunities, as well as the location of any new development in relation to existing or planned infrastructure. This is important to minimise the need to travel, reduce private vehicle reliance and increase opportunities for cycling, walking and the use of public transport. Development plans are deemed to "...provide the main means for achieving integration between land use and transport planning" (paragraph 4.1.5).

5.5 At the same time PPW 11 recognises that for most rural areas the opportunities for reducing private vehicle usage and increasing walking, cycling and the use of public transport are more limited than in urban areas. Due to this PPW advises that in rural areas most new development should be located in settlements which have relatively good accessibility by non-private vehicle modes when compared to the rural area as a whole. Development in these areas should embrace the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes and, where possible, offer good Active Travel connections to the centres of settlements to reduce the need to travel by car for local journeys (paragraph 3.39).

5.6 PPW 11 recognises that different approaches to sustainable transport will be required in different parts of Wales, particularly in rural areas, and new development will need to reflect local circumstances. For example, a planning authority wishing to grow a rural village, despite it having limited public transport accessibility, could apply the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy by: first considering how the location and design of new development could encourage walking and cycling to shops and services in the village centre; then consider whether new development could be located near a bus stop or enable improvements to the bus service; before finally considering the needs of private motor vehicles, including measures to encourage the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

5.7 It is important that a settlement has good accessibility to services and facilities to help communities to meet many of their everyday needs. Good access to sustainable travel modes provides choice to the user and can reduce reliance on private vehicles for travel. Access to Active Travel routes and public transport also tackles an element of social exclusion and enables individuals who cannot drive or afford a car access to essential services and facilities. The presence of an Active Travel route within a settlement helps to identify opportunities for meaningful walking and cycle journeys, encouraging users to walk or cycle rather than using private vehicles for shorter trips.

5.8 The following sections look at transport opportunities within the Powys LDP area for each of the transport modes listed in the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy starting with walking and cycling.

Walking and Cycling

5.9 Active Travel is a term used in the Active Travel Act guidance to describe walking and cycling for purposeful journeys to a destination, or in combination with public transport. Whilst walking and cycling are in themselves healthy activities that are to be encouraged, it is when they displace car journeys that they deliver significant benefits for the health and well-being of Wales. Achieving modal shift by displacing private vehicle journeys with walking and cycling and public transport is at the heart of Llwybr Newydd, the Wales Transport Strategy.

5.10 Within the Active Travel Act guidance, the term “walker” (or pedestrian) includes not only those who travel by foot (walking or running), but also users of wheelchairs or other mobility aids. Thus, somebody using an electric wheelchair, mobility scooter, or similar vehicle would also be considered a walker rather than a motorised travel user. The term “Cycling” and “cyclist” includes users of pedal cycles, but not motorbikes. This definition of cycling includes e-cycles (also called electric assisted pedal cycles, electric cycles or pedelecs).

5.11 Walking and cycling are good for health and well-being. They support valuable social and recreational opportunities and are integral to placemaking, creating life and activity in public places and providing the opportunity to meet people. Sustainable places invite people to walk and cycle as part of their everyday routine. The Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 makes walking and cycling the preferred option for shorter journeys, particularly everyday journeys, such as to and from a workplace or education establishment, or in order to access health, leisure or other services or facilities for walking and cycling to access work, education, services and facilities.

5.12 The 2021 Census data for Powys, showed that of the residents aged 16 years and over in employment who travelled to work, only 5,669 (9.2%) walked and 536 (0.9%) cycled. This is partly reflective of the rural and dispersed population of Powys, with only 13% (8,048) of the residents who travelled to work having a journey of less than two kilometres. This demonstrates the importance for the Replacement LDP, of co-locating new housing and employment sites within the same settlements. Additionally, PPW 11 states in paragraph 4.1.31 that ‘Planning authorities must support Active Travel by ensuring new development is fully accessible by walking and cycling. The aim should be to create walkable neighbourhoods, where a range of facilities are within walking distance of most residents, and the streets are safe, comfortable and enjoyable to walk and cycle.

5.13 Active Travel is particularly important to those households in Powys who do not have access to a car or van as shown in Figure 2. This figure is relatively high in towns such Newtown (19%), Llandrindod Wells (16%) and Ystradgynlais (16%). Powys has an ageing population that suggests that Active Travel routes (suitable for wheelchairs and mobility scooters) and increased and more regular bus services will be needed in the future to enable the elderly demographic to continue to access services and to prevent social isolation.

5.14 Annex 3 of The National Transport Delivery Plan (2022-2027) explains that through the development of the local authority Active Travel Network Maps, new Active Travel routes will be developed between rural communities and their nearest town and / or public transport opportunity. It is recognised that Active Travel routes in rural areas may involve longer distances and more challenging terrain than in urban areas.

Active Travel Network Maps (ATNM)

5.15 Under section 2(4) of the Active Travel Act, Welsh Ministers are empowered to designate localities for Local Authorities to prepare Active Travel Network Maps (ATNM). The 'Designated Localities' in the Powys LDP area are the towns of:

- Builth Wells
- Knighton
- Llandrindod Wells
- Llanidloes
- Machynlleth
- Newtown
- Presteigne
- Welshpool
- Ystradgynlais

5.16 The duty on Local Authorities to map routes and produce ATNMs is specific to those Designated Localities. The ATNM must include existing routes suitable for walking and / or cycling as well as future proposed routes for walking and /or cycling. Each route should be supported with specific details that make up a schedule. This is to ensure that there are plans in place for the creation of Active Travel networks in all the most populous areas in each authority. It does however not limit an authority's ability to develop network maps for other localities, where there is demand for Active Travel routes and a high potential for their use.

5.17 The maps, which show both current Active Travel routes and future routes in the Designated Localities for Powys, can be viewed on the Welsh Government hosted DataMap Wales site: <https://datamap.gov.wales/maps/active-travel-network-maps>.

5.18 The Active Travel Guidance states in paragraph 4.13.1 that: "ATNMs should be used to inform the preparation and review of LDPs and Strategic Development Plans. PPW 11 requires that ATNMs inform site allocations, with priority given to sites that can be connected to existing and planned Active Travel routes. The Maps, therefore, have an important role in helping the planning system ensure new development is linked to the wider Active Travel network.

5.19 Paragraph 4.13.2 of the Guidance states: 'ATNMs are not definitive maps, in the way that the rights of way maps are, and the location of new routes can be indicative. For Active Travel routes being incorporated within new development, the exact route should be considered as part of the overall design for a scheme and be informed by a wider site and context analysis. This is in the context of walking and cycling being the priority in the design of new development, as required by Welsh Government's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy. Once a route has been built, its exact location should be reflected in an updated version of the ATNM.

5.20 While the ATNMs focus on designated settlements (localities) within a local authority, as required by the Active Travel Act, the principles underpinning Active Travel route planning are also relevant and applicable in smaller settlements.

Active Travel Routes Extending into Surrounding Settlements.

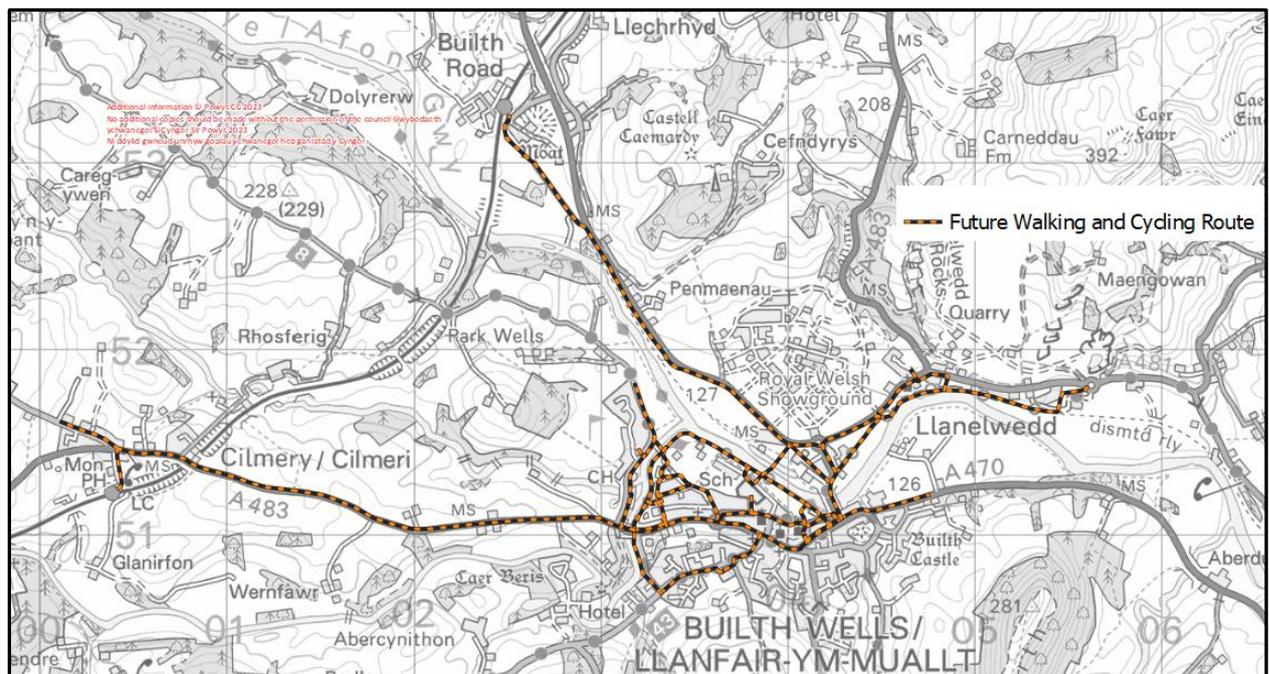
5.21 Duties relating to the promotion of Active Travel and making provision for walkers and cyclists in exercise of certain functions apply to the whole of the local authority area (not only Designated Localities). The duty to improve provision for walkers and cyclists therefore applies to all developments and highway improvements both within and outside of the Designated Localities.

5.22 Connecting outlying communities to a nearby Designated Locality and linking localities to each other and to key destinations such as workplaces and transport hubs where the distance is suitable, is a core element of network planning. Routes serving these purposes should therefore be included within the ATNM even though they sit outside a Designated Locality. Funding for such routes can be applied for (provided there is clear evidence of potential for modal shift), though the focus of the networks should be within the Designated Localities which are likely to have a higher impact.

5.23 The existing Active Travel routes shown within the ATNMs, are all within Designated Localities. Some future routes have been mapped that will connect Designated Locality settlements with smaller settlements these are shown in Figures 5 to 10 below. It should be noted that the future routes are aspirational routes only at this stage. The presence of a future route is not indicative of whether there are, or are not, existing pedestrian / cycle facilities in place.

Builth Wells

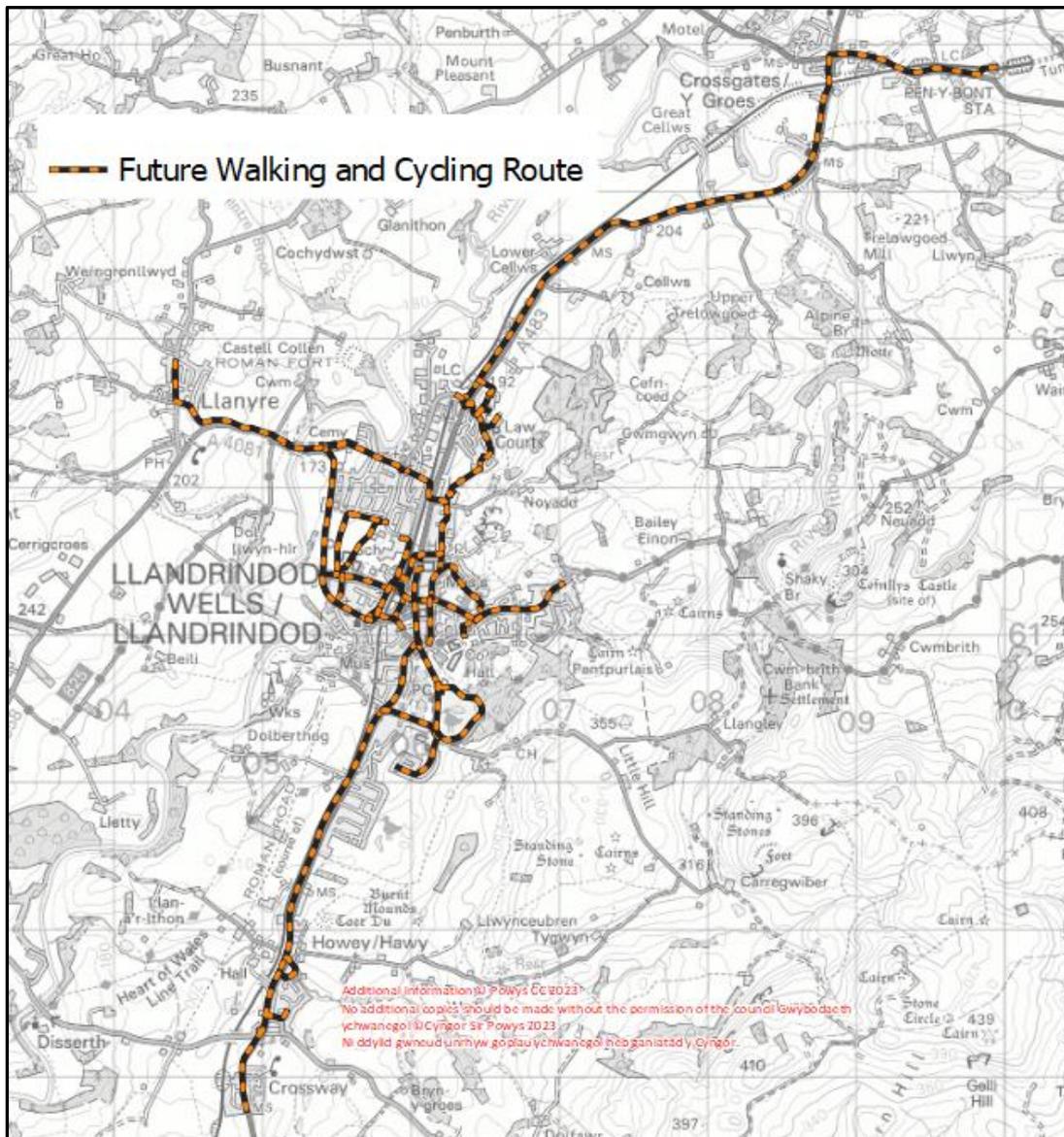
Figure 5. Designated future routes connecting Builth Wells with Llanelwedd, Builth Road and Cilmerly.



(Note some pedestrian / cycle facilities are already in place connecting Builth Wells to Llanelwedd and Builth Road).

Llandrindod Wells

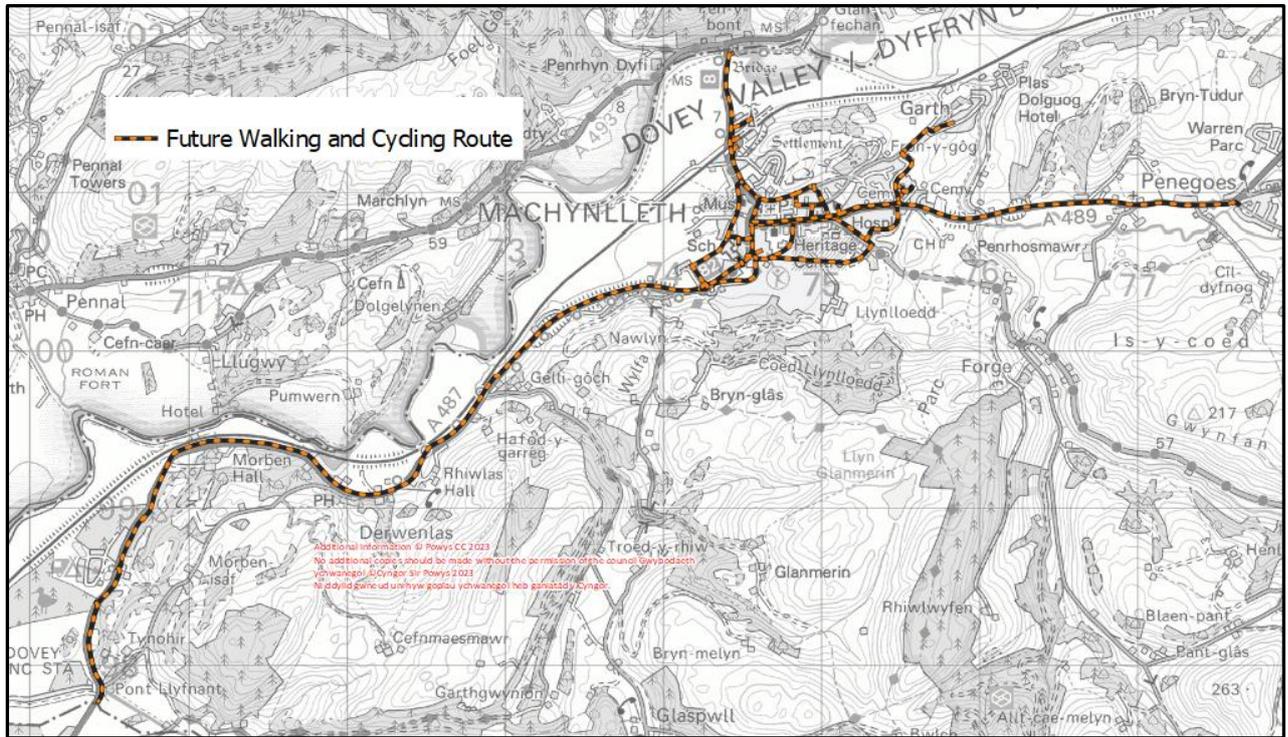
Figure 6. Designated future routes connecting Llandrindod Wells with Crossgates, Howey and Llanyre.



(Note some pedestrian / cycle facilities are already in place connecting Llandrindod Wells to Howey and Llanyre).

Machynlleth

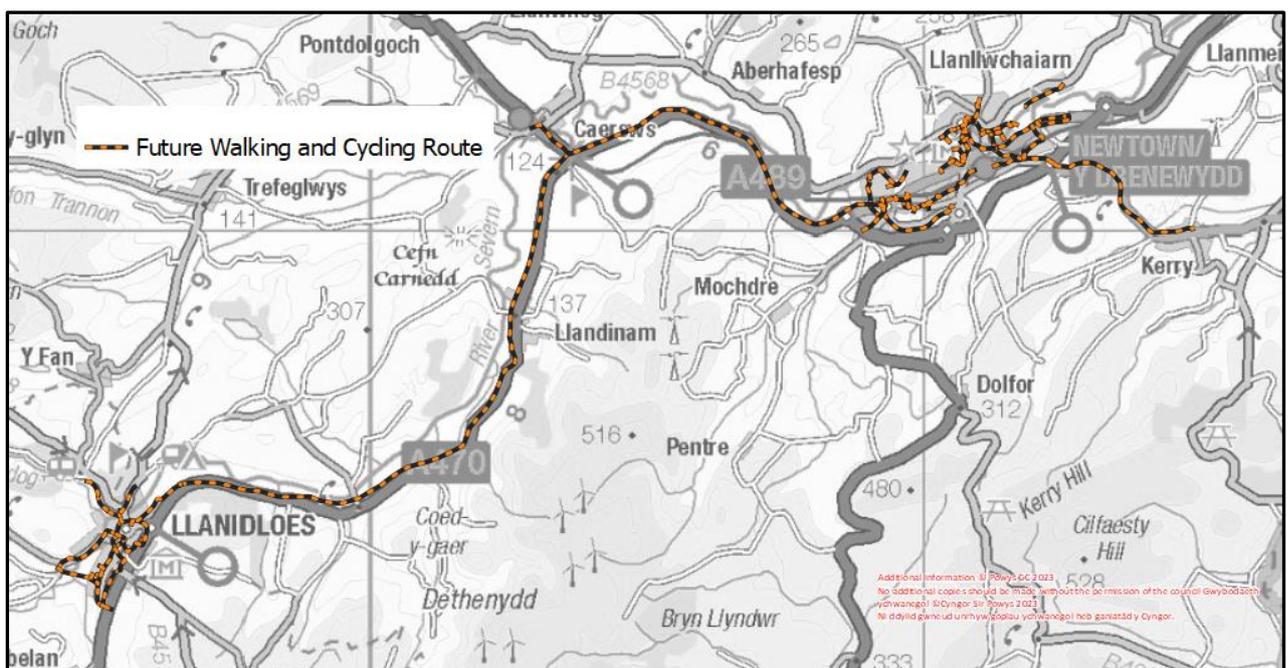
Figure 7. Designated future routes connecting Machynlleth with Derwenlas and Penegoes.



(Note some pedestrian / cycle facilities are already in place connecting Machynlleth with Derwenlas and Penegoes).

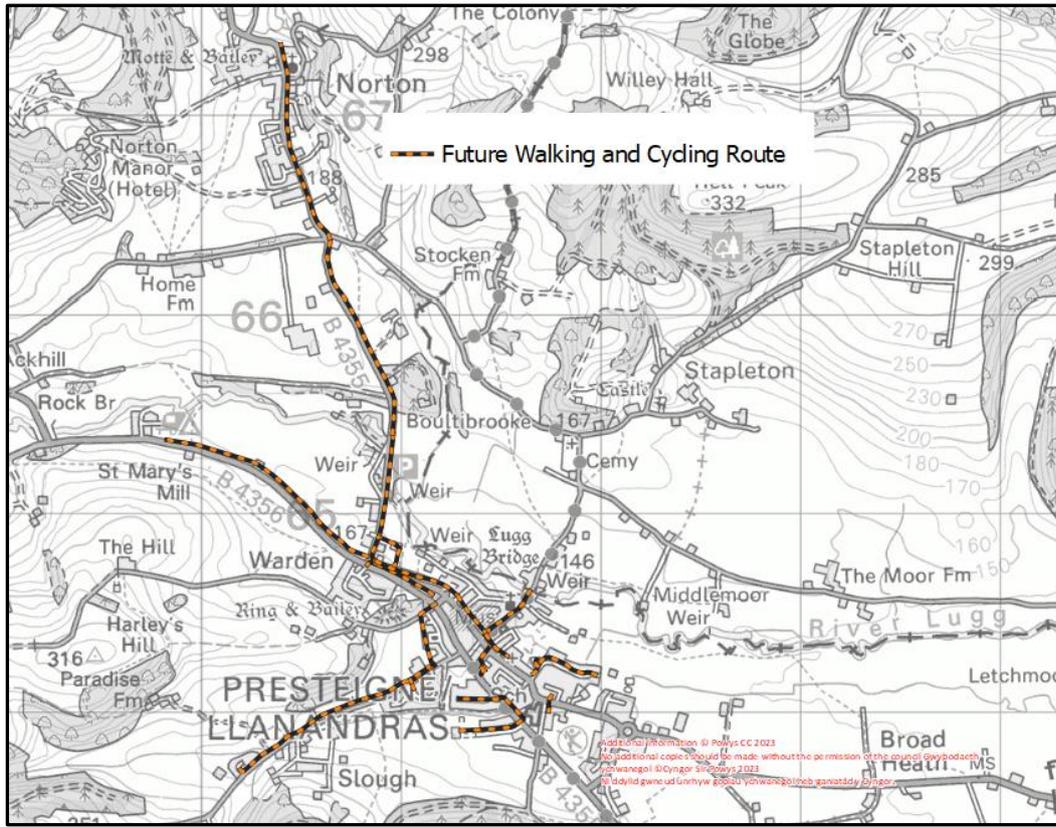
Newtown and Llanidloes

Figure 8. Designated future routes connecting Newtown and Llanidloes with Caersws, Kerry and Llandinam.



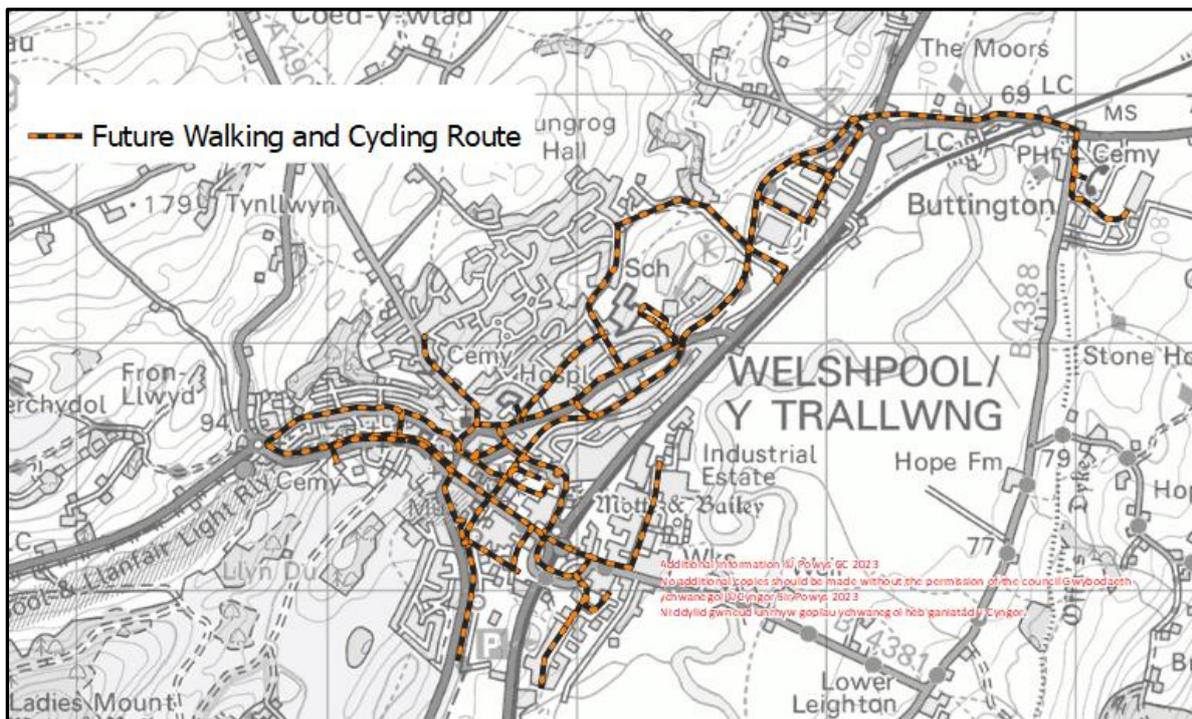
Presteigne

Figure 9. Designated future routes connecting Presteigne with Norton.



Welshpool

Figure 10. Designated future routes connecting Welshpool with Buttington.



Note pedestrian facilities are already in place between Welshpool and Buttington.

New developments and Contributions for Active Travel Infrastructure

5.24 Consideration of Active Travel is key in the preparation of the Replacement LDP from determining Strategic Options and a Settlement Hierarchy to selecting allocated sites. Careful consideration needs to be given to the allocation of new sites which are likely to generate significant levels of movement, to ensure that access provisions which enable walking and cycling, as well as for public transport, are included from the outset and that any implications associated with airborne pollution can be addressed. Sites likely to generate significant levels of movement, may need to make provision for Active Travel infrastructure that will be secured through either a planning condition or a Section 106 agreement.

5.25 New development needs to maximise walking and cycling access, by prioritising the provision within the site, and providing or making financial contributions towards the delivery offsite. The aim being to create permeable, legible, direct, convenient, attractive and safe walking and cycling routes that connect proposed developments to:

- a) service centres;
- b) public transport nodes;
- c) community facilities;
- d) commercial and employment areas;
- e) educational facilities;
- f) tourism facilities and destinations; and
- g) leisure opportunities.

5.26 The Active Travel guidance sets out the standards expected of new and improved Active Travel infrastructure in Wales, including related facilities, and the considerations to be taken into account when choosing the design solutions for particular routes and sites. It also sets out effective approaches to planning walking and cycling networks and includes audit tools to assess existing infrastructure and future routes for their suitability. The network mapping of existing and aspiration Active Travel routes may impact upon the suitability of a site for development and / or inform the type of infrastructure provision or improvements requested by the Council.

5.27 Developments should also seek to enhance green infrastructure provision as part of Active Travel proposals, recognising the potential to combine natural planting, greenery and / or water systems to create attractive, green and safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians. The addition of green infrastructure to Active Travel routes can provide numerous benefits including flood mitigation, climate change adaptation, enhanced biodiversity, improved connectivity and positive wellbeing impacts.

5.28 It is recognised that Active Travel opportunities in rural areas may involve consideration of longer distances and more challenging terrain than in urban areas. Welsh Government is exploring the benefits that electric cycle hire schemes can bring in all parts of Wales, including rural areas. Welsh Government is developing an e-cycle purchase loan scheme for roll-out in 2023/24 that substantially reduces the financial barriers to e-cycle and e-cargo cycle ownership, which will support those in rural areas make longer Active Travel journeys and help rural communities contribute to achieving modal shift targets.

Public Transport

5.29 Paragraph 4.1.36 in PPW 11 states that: “The availability of public transport is an important part of ensuring a place is sustainable. It enables people to undertake medium and long journeys without being dependent on having access to a car. The planning system should facilitate this by locating development where there is, or can be, good access by public transport. The design, layout, density and mix of uses of a place are also fundamental to sustaining public transport services and encouraging and enabling people to use them”.

5.30 Also, in PPW 11, paragraph 4.1.37 states that “Planning authorities must direct development to locations most accessible by public transport. They should ensure that development sites which are well served by public transport are used for travel intensive uses, such as housing, jobs, shopping, leisure and services, reallocating their use if necessary. In rural areas, planning authorities should designate local service centres, or clusters of settlements where a sustainable functional linkage can be demonstrated, as the preferred locations for new development.”

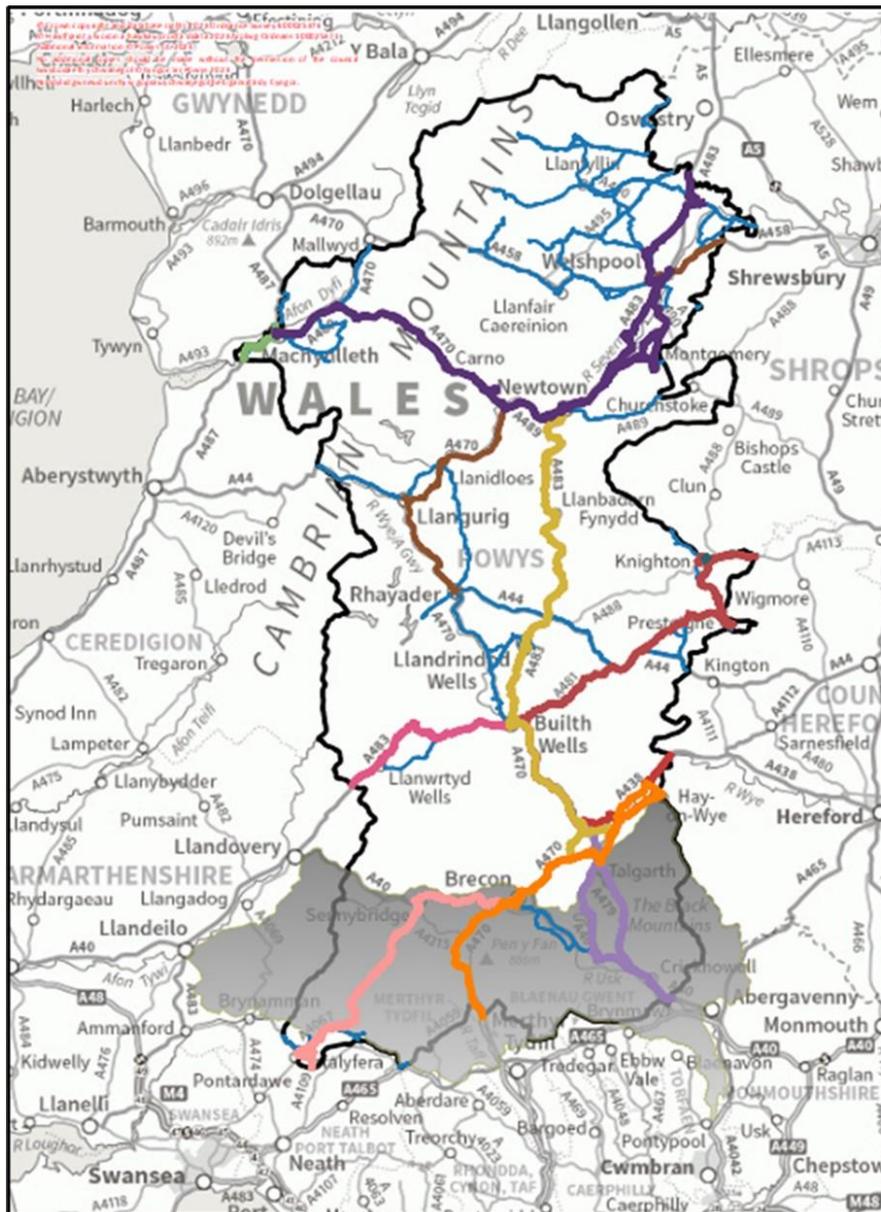
5.31 Paragraph 4.1.38 of PPW 11 states that: “Planning authorities must ensure the layout, density and mix of uses of new development support the use of public transport and maximises accessibility potential. In particular, higher densities and mixed-use development should be encouraged in areas highly accessible by public transport. In these circumstances, the implications of airborne pollution will need careful consideration including the need to meet decarbonisation targets”.

5.32 Paragraph 4.1.39 of PPW 11 states that: “Planning authorities should consider whether public transport services are of a scale which makes public transport an attractive and practical travel option for occupiers and users travelling to and from development sites. They should also consider whether it is necessary to mitigate the movement impact of a development and minimise the proportion of car trips that the development would generate. Where additional public transport would be required to allow development to proceed, an appropriate policy must be included in the development plan, and financial contributions secured through planning conditions and / or planning obligations. New public transport infrastructure and services need to be put in place early on in a development, and before the people living there move in, to support sustainable travel patterns from the outset”.

Bus Services

5.33 Figure 11 shows the main regional bus routes operating across the Plan area, these routes are supported by area and local routes. It is evident that most of the regional routes connect settlements within Powys to larger service centres outside of the County, with destinations including Aberystwyth, Cardiff, Hereford, Shrewsbury and Wrexham. This is particularly important for access to services such as hospitals and university education unavailable within the County.

Figure 11. Regional Bus Routes across LDP Area (note services overlap so whole route may not be visible)



- T14 Hereford - Cardiff
- T12 Machynlleth - Wrexham
- T6 Swansea - Brecon
- T4 Cardiff - Newtown
- T2 Bangor - Aberystwyth
- X15 Llandrindod Wells - Hereford
- X75 Llanidloes - Shrewsbury
- X14 Builth Wells - Carmarthen
- X12 Builth Wells - Abergavenny
- X11 Builth Wells - Ludlow
- 740 Knighton - Ludlow
- Area Routes
- Bannau Brycheiniog / Brecon Beacons National Park

5.34 A list of the existing bus services operating in Powys are shown in Appendix 1 detailing each bus service, its starting point, stops on the route, final destination, the settlements served and the times of services per day / week. In addition to Regional and Area bus services, is the daily (one a day outbound and return) National Express service from Aberystwyth to Birmingham / London. This route provides a service to the settlements of Machynlleth, Welshpool, Newtown. The settlements of Newtown, Welshpool, Ystradgynlais and Machynlleth have a Local circular service transporting residents from within the settlement to the settlement's main services.

5.35 It can be seen from the bus timetables that very few settlements have what would be termed a regular bus service (every 30 minutes) in an urban area. A regular service within Powys, is when there is at least one bus for an outward journey in the morning with a return service in the afternoon. For some settlements, bus services are only available on specific day of the week.

5.36 Bus routes and services can be subject to regular change and therefore bus schedules are based on a snapshot of current provision at the time of writing. However, in the context of settlements accommodating housing or employment growth, extensions and tweaks to the existing bus network are often far more feasible than establishing new routes, which can prove costly and can be impractical, especially with reduced availability of subsidy.

5.37 Public transport services can complement Active Travel routes and train journeys if they are well-located, reliable and regular enough to effectively serve the local community. In a predominantly rural authority like Powys transport interchanges are also important, enabling residents to drive from their homes to settlements with bus services, park their car and continue the remainder of their journey on public transport.

5.38 In 2013, Powys had the highest proportion of population (28%) in England and Wales living in rural hamlets and isolated dwellings. Due to the size of and the predominantly rural character of Powys there are a significant number of small settlements which are not served by a regular bus service.

5.39 The Welsh Government's concessionary pass assists those who live on or near a bus route, but the community transport sector remains reliant on external funding to provide a stable level of service. The "TrawsCymru" longer-distance bus services are supported by the Welsh Government and the use of some sections for more local journeys provides connections and opportunities to the wider network.

The Future of Bus Services in Powys

5.40 There are currently no plans to change the number of routes or vary the frequencies of buses on those routes. A new bus interchange is planned for Machynlleth and is expected to be constructed in 2024 / 2025, if funding is finalised. However, the National Transport Delivery Plan (Annex 3) (2022-2027) explains that there are a number of programmes that will contribute to extending the reach of public transport in rural areas of Wales. The main programme will be the bus network redesign which is aimed at providing more services to more people. Part of the design programme will aim to connect villages with an intertown network of frequent, fast bus services and train lines. This will be supported by the bus reform legislation which will give the public sector control on where buses services run. As well as new technologies, new service models will play an important part in allowing people to access public transport in a way and at a time that best suits their needs.

5.41 Welsh Government Fflecsi pilots have shown that demand-responsive travel can provide a more flexible and adaptable service, with particular success in rural communities. Although TrawsCymru services serve strategic long-distance routes, they also serve many rural communities along the way, providing them with vital links to be able to complete longer journeys by sustainable means. There is investment in TrawsCymru services and also decarbonising the fleet to make the service an even more sustainable choice. Public transport not only needs to be available, but also affordable. This is particularly important in rural areas where people may have fewer transport choices for low-cost independent mobility. The 'Fair Fares' policy will explore making bus travel more affordable which will benefit rural communities with limited sustainable travel options.

5.42 The Settlement Assessment, Small Settlement Assessment and Cluster Analysis background papers (discussed in the Sections 6 of this paper), identify the level of public transport services available and the frequency of services for each settlement assessed.

Train Services

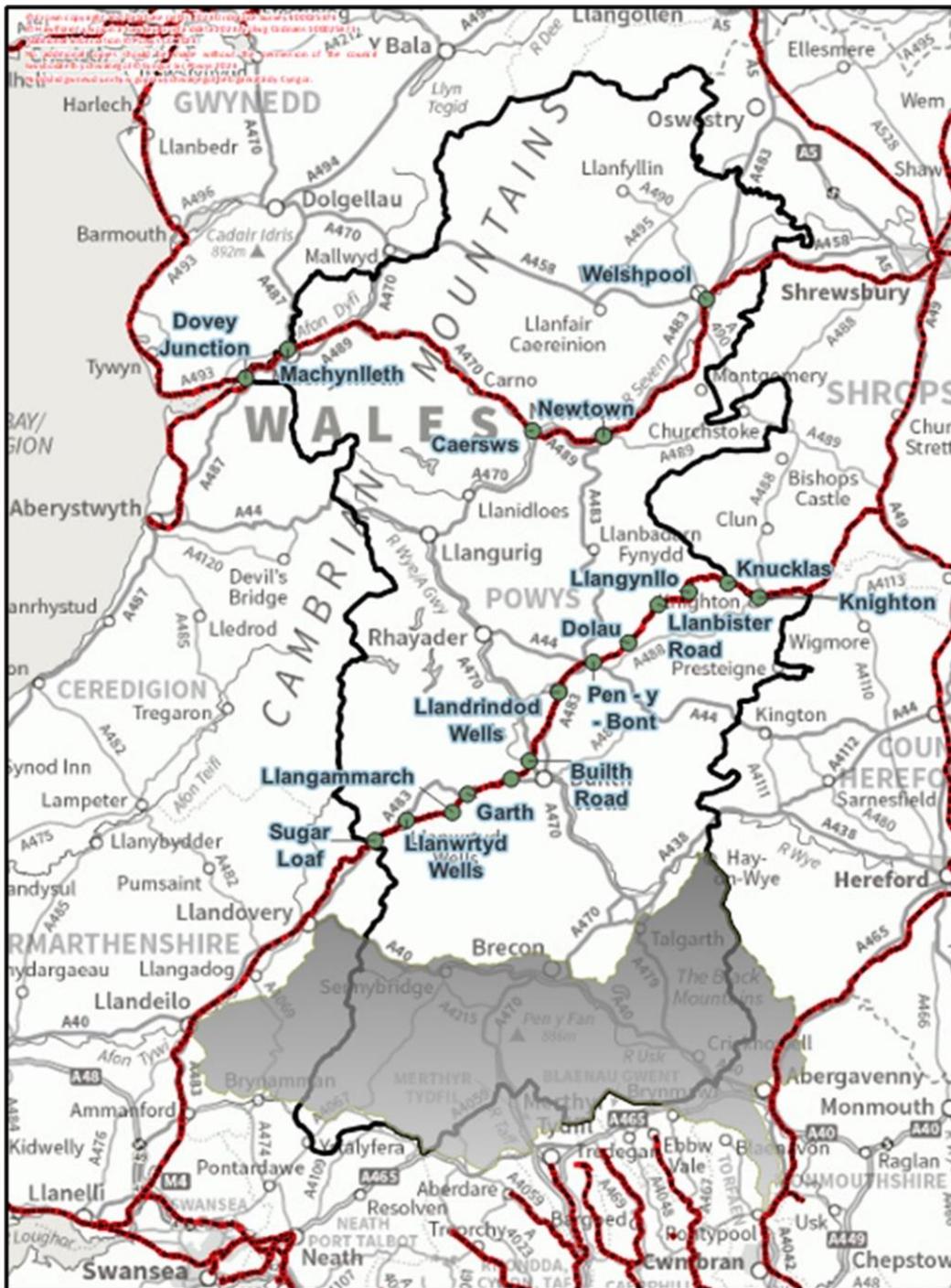
5.43 There are two railway lines crossing the County which run between Aberystwyth and Birmingham International (Cambrian Main Line) and between Shrewsbury and Swansea (Heart of Wales line). These railway lines provide an important passenger train service to residents accessing services within and outside of Powys. The lines are also important to commuters and tourists giving access to the UK wide national rail network and connections to major towns and cities. Figure 12 shows the routes and railway stations across Powys and how they connect with the wider area.

5.44 The Cambrian train line operates a mostly two hourly passenger service (with some hourly trains) of twelve trains each way a day (Monday to Friday with fewer services at weekends). Transport for Wales have plans to increase the frequency, so that majority of the service becomes hourly over the next few years (by 2025). The stations on the Cambrian line include: Aberystwyth, Dovey Junction, Machynlleth, Caersws, Newtown, Welshpool, Shrewsbury, Telford, Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street. Passengers travel the Cambrian line to get to Shrewsbury for direct trains to North Wales, South Wales and Manchester.

5.55 There are two disused railway stations on the Cambrian line, Carno and Abermule which closed in the 1960s. Although there maybe the possibility that they could be reopened in the future, Transport for Wales have no immediate plans.

5.56 The Heart of Wales train line operates a less frequent service, with a total of five trains a day in each direction (Monday to Friday, with fewer services at weekends), in some cases there is approximately three and a half hours between services. The railway line is important for connecting some of the smaller rural settlements within Powys, to the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements acting as service centres. The railway stations on the Heart of Wales line include Swansea, Llandeilo, Llandovery, Cyngordy, Sugar Loaf, Llanwrtyd Wells, Llangammarch, Garth (Powys), Cilmeri, Builth Road, Llandrindod Wells, Penybont, Crossgates, Dolau, Llanbister Road, Llangynllo, Knucklas, Knighton, Craven Arms and Shrewsbury.

Figure 12. Train Services across the Replacement LDP Area



- Railway Stations
- Train line
- Bannau Brycheiniog / Brecon Beacons National Park

5.57 Passenger transport plans have called for enhanced levels of train services and also for improved facilities, both at railway stations and in the rolling stock. Key factors include increasing the frequency and reliability of trains and reducing overcrowding. A transformed train service would take pressure from the road network, improve access to jobs and services and support tourism.

Ultra-low Emissions Vehicles

5.58 Welsh Government recognises within the Sustainable Transport Hierarchy that Ultra Low Emission Vehicles have an important role to play in the decarbonisation of transport, particularly in rural areas with limited public transport services.

5.59 PPW 11 in paragraph 4.1.40 states that: "To encourage the use of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles the planning system should encourage and support the provision of electric vehicle charging points as part of new development".

5.60 Future Wales sets out the Welsh Government's requirements for the provision of electric vehicle (EV) charging points for non-residential development. The provision of EV charging points should be planned as part of the overall design of a development. Charging points must not cause an obstruction to walking or cycling, should be resistant to vandalism, and located where there is good lighting and natural surveillance.

5.61 It is also recognised that Hydrogen-fuelled vehicles may provide opportunities to decarbonise transport options, particularly in rural areas where grid constraints may limit the roll-out of an extensive network of EV charging points. Hydrogen has the potential advantage of being able to utilise existing vehicle fuelling infrastructure sites. At the time of writing, the Authority has commissioned some research on Hydrogen opportunities.

5.62 Hydrogen may have an important role replacing diesel fuel in agricultural, distribution and public service vehicles in the future.

Electrical Vehicle Points in Powys

5.63 A number of EV charging points have been installed in the Councils' car parks and will continue to be installed as funding allows. Powys County Council's Highways Department plans to install the next phase of EV chargers in public car parks in Llanwrtyd Wells, Llanfyllin, Carno and Llanfair Caereinion.

5.64 The existing EV charging Points in Powys are found in the following locations which are car parks operated by Powys County Council:

- Maengwyn Street Car Park, Machynlleth, SY20 8DY
- Mount Street Car Park, Llanidloes, SY18 6BZ
- Hereford Street Car Park, Presteigne, LD8 2AT
- High Street Car Park, Llandrindod Wells, LD1 6BG
- The Groe Car Park, Builth Wells, LD2 3BL
- Church Street Car Park, Welshpool, SY21 7DD
- Back Lane Car Park, Newtown, SY16 2NH
- Bowling Green Lane Car Park, Knighton, LD7 1DJ
- Dark Lane Car Park, Rhayader, LD6 5DD

- Heol Eglwys Car Park, Ystradgynlais, SA9 1EY
- Oxford Road Car Park, Hay-on-Wye, HR3 5EQ, (in BBNPA LDP area)

5.65 Further EV charge points are provided by the private sector, particularly in supermarket car parks. These tend to be located within the larger settlements and coincide with the distribution of EV charge points in Powys County Council car parks. Further charge points have been made available by the tourism sector, in hotel car parks and at visitor centres (e.g. National Trust, Elan Valley). However, the location of these charge points is generally away from recognised settlements, in what is classed as the Open Countryside. Further information on the location and distribution of EV Charge points can be found at: <https://www.zap-map.com/live/>.

Future Development of EV

5.66 The National Transport Delivery Plan (2022-2027) mentions Electric Car Clubs that offer an alternative way of looking at car usage; both for those who want to use their car less, or may only use it some of the time, and for people who may struggle to afford the high cost of running a car. Welsh Government is working in partnership with Powys County Council, Transport for Wales, and a range of partners to look at how to increase provision of community-based car clubs.

5.67 Open Newtown has been awarded European funding to invest in an electric vehicle charging network across north Powys. In parallel, they are developing a new car club for the region, to help familiarise local householders to electric vehicle usage, and to explore new approaches for developing local community transport. Both components are intended to help convert Mid Wales over to low carbon (EV) vehicles, to create and retain jobs and income from this transition and to use the new infrastructure to support affordable access to travel for communities and those in need. Open Newtown are also working in collaboration with partners in Machynlleth, Caersws, Carno and Welshpool to establish a string of car clubs along the Cambrian Train Line, using electric vehicles to give low carbon and lower cost access to vehicles.

5.68 Further car clubs in the County are run by TripTo that brings together three car clubs, based in Llanidloes, Machynlleth and Llandrindod Wells under one umbrella organisation.

Other Private Motor Vehicles and the Road Network

5.69 Powys is a predominantly rural County that covers an area of approximately 5,187 square kilometres, some 23% of Wales. The private vehicle for many people, particularly those who live outside of the main towns (approximately 60% of the population), is the only realistic form of transport. It is important therefore that the road infrastructure within Powys is maintained and improved.

5.70 The County of Powys contains more than 6,000 kilometres of roads. Powys County Council is the local highway authority, responsible for all classes of road other than the strategic 430 kilometres of Trunk Roads, which are the responsibility of Welsh Government, through the Trunk Road Agency. Powys is centrally located at the heart of Wales meaning that, in addition to local traffic, it is crossed by vehicles traveling between north and south Wales and between the English border and the west coast of Wales.

5.71 Figure 1 shows the main strategic routes across the LDP area, these include the following:

- **A470** – Connecting: Newtown, Llanidloes, Rhayader, Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells and Brecon.
- **A458** – Connecting: Shrewsbury, Welshpool, Llanfair Caereinion
- **A483** – Connecting: Oswestry, Welshpool, Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Builth Wells, Llanwrtyd Wells and Llandoverly.

As well as connecting the main towns as listed, the main strategic routes connect many smaller settlements along the way.

5.72 Other important main roads include the A44, A488, A489, A490, A491 and the A495, these are interconnected with a framework of smaller, but equally important for rural communities, B and C class roads.

5.73 The road network in Mid-Wales experiences a relatively high rate of casualties and serious and fatal motorcycle collisions are notable in this respect. Table 2 and Table 3 are taken from the results for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) indicators in Annual Monitoring Report 2023 and demonstrate the number of accidents and injuries. The data recorded for 2020 and 2021 shows a reduction in road accidents due to travel restrictions during the Covid 19 pandemic.

Table 2. Total Number of Police Recorded Road Accidents Involving Personal Injury in Powys.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
No. of road accidents	351	216	299	315

Table 3. Number of Casualties in Road Accidents by Severity in Powys.

	2019	2020	2021	2022
Slightly injured	230	207	288	333
Seriously injured	107	81	96	115
Fatalities	14	4	5	13

5.74 The concentration of traffic particularly heavy goods and agricultural vehicles can put pressure on parts of the network, where passing / overtaking places are limited, causing uncertain journey times and may impact local communities.

5.75 Within the LDP area resources for road maintenance are limited and are mainly focussed on the principal routes. However, one of the largest employers within the Plan area is the agricultural and forestry sector, where the majority of traffic make use of the minor road network.

5.76 Carbon emissions are generally low in Powys compared to more urban areas of Wales which reflects the dispersed traffic, rather than levels of vehicle ownership and the reliance of car use. Air quality itself, is generally good within the County, however it is

recognised ([Powys Air Quality Progress Report 2022](#)) that the main source of air pollution is caused by vehicle emissions (Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂)), from the county's extensive road network. Where monitoring has been undertaken the results have shown that levels do not exceed the annual mean NO₂ Air Quality Strategy objective level of 40µg/m³.

5.77 Prior to the completion of the Newtown Bypass, an Air Quality Management Area had been designated in Newtown. The diversion of traffic away from the town (via the bypass) resulted in an improvement to air quality meaning the AQMA was no longer required so revoked.

Road Improvements

5.78 There are few major development schemes in mid-Wales and in consequence funding contributions from developers are generally small and infrequent. This weakens the support that can be given to internal improvement to cross-border connections in comparison with many areas of Wales.

5.79 Welsh Government (Highways) has a programme of improving sections of the following trunk roads:

- New section of the A487 north of Machynlleth, including a new bridge across the River Dyfi. Timescale 2022-2024, works are underway and scheduled to be complete in 2024.
- A483 Pant to Llanymynech – Welsh Government will work with National Highways to see whether scheme proposals align to the tests set out in the Welsh Government's response to the Roads Review. Timescale 2022-2027.

5.80 The Welsh Government's Resilient Fund is being spent in Powys on schemes to mitigate and adapt roads to the effects of climate change, including addressing disruptions caused on the highway network by severe weather. The following roads are going to be, or have been adapted:

- A495 Godor Farm bends
- A458T between A483T (Sarn y bryn roundabout south of Welshpool and Forden
- B4381 Leighton Road Junction with B4388
- B4385 Chapel House, Castle Cereinion
- B4398 South of Cerreghofa lochs Nr Llanymynech
- A458T between Pont Sychcoed Cyfronnyd
- B4393 Glanyrnwy farm LLansantffriad-ym-mechain
- Gravel Rd Gwystre
- B4393 Pont Talwrn and junction with A490
- B4393 Llandrinio River Bridge towards Crew Green

5.81 At Glasbury Bridge a renewal scheme with a new deck is planned but it needs to be determined if the abutments and central supports can be utilised or if they need to be replaced.

6. Integrating Planning and Transport for the Replacement LDP

6.1 Paragraph 4.1.5 of PPW 11, states that development plans provide the main means for achieving integration between land use and transport planning. It requires LPAs to provide an explanation of the authority's transport aims, details of the way in which the transport policies support the other objectives of the plan, and how the development plan (including its land allocations and policies) will support sustainable transport.

6.2 Planning Policy Wales also requires LPAs to set out in their development plan an integrated planning and transport strategy. Which details how the LPA will:

- integrate and co-ordinate sustainable transport and land use planning;
- facilitate and promote accessibility for all;
- reduce the need to travel;
- reduce dependency on private vehicles;
- prioritise and support walking, cycling and use of public transport;
- support the uptake of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles;
- reduce transport related airborne pollution; and
- facilitate the provision of transport infrastructure and necessary sustainable transport improvements and development.

6.3 The following background papers have been prepared to support the development of Spatial Options for the Replacement LDP.

1. Settlement Assessment
2. Small Settlement Assessment
3. Cluster Analysis
4. Rural Approach
5. Integrated Planning and Transport Strategy (this paper).

6.4 Within the background papers a strategic integrated planning and transport approach has been followed. The assessments and scoring within the papers, have given priority to ranking settlements that enable residents to be able to reduce the need to travel, that have walking, cycling and public transport opportunities and can be less dependent on having to use private vehicles. This in turn facilitates and promotes accessibility for all and will reduce transport airborne pollution. In recognition that Powys is a predominantly rural County with a dispersed population, consideration has also been given to the location of EV charge points for where there are no alternatives to using a private vehicle. "Local service centres and clusters of smaller settlements where a sustainable functional linkage has been demonstrated, have also been designated. The clusters take into consideration existing and proposed Active Travel routes and public transport to support the provision of transport infrastructure and any necessary sustainable transport improvements and development.

6.5 The background papers establish an initial Settlement Hierarchy for the Replacement LDP. The Settlement Assessment and Small Settlement Assessment background papers categorise settlements, identifying those that are the most sustainable in terms of access to services, employment provision, broadband and transport opportunities. The Cluster Analysis background paper identifies where larger settlements acting as service centres, have functional relationships (via Active Travel or public transport) with smaller settlements to form clusters. The Rural Approach background paper considers settlements which are more isolated from the main service centres (longer drive times) and/or have little if any access to public transport provision.

Settlement Assessment

6.6 The Development Plans Manual Edition 3 (March 2020) states that LPAs should undertake a Settlement Assessment to inform decisions regarding where development should be spatially located to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, minimise unsustainable patterns regarding the movement of people and support local services and facilities.

6.7 The Manual recommends that LPAs formulate a methodology for assessing the role and function of settlements which must be clearly set out in the evidence base. It should be transparent regarding how settlements are being assessed, the key assessment components and how this has been applied in a consistent manner across the area.

6.8 A Settlement Assessment analyses the components of existing settlements, their functional relationships with each other plus their current and potential future roles. A comprehensive range of variables have been considered as part of this process to help establish a Sustainable Settlement Hierarchy that can inform the Replacement LDP. The results help to identify the most appropriate locations to accommodate future development in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, minimise unsustainable patterns of movement and support local services and facilities. This process is fundamental to Powys achieving an inclusive network of communities comprising strong, interdependent, connected and cohesive settlements.

Settlement Assessment Background Paper

6.9 The Settlement Assessment background paper analysed a range of information to determine the role and function of settlements across the Replacement LDP area, through the application of a Four Principle scoring matrix. The Four Principles used to analyse each settlement were:

Principle 1 - Sustainable transport and accessibility in and around settlements;

Principle 2 - The availability of local facilities and services in and around settlements;

Principle 3 - The level of employment opportunities in and around settlements; and

Principle 4 – Broadband provision.

6.10 The Towns and Large Villages designated in the Adopted LDP (2011 – 2026), 58 in total, were included within the assessment. Consideration of each settlement against the Four Principles resulted in the formulation of the upper tiers of an initial Settlement Hierarchy. This has been used to inform the Spatial Options and decisions as to where development should be spatially located to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth.

6.11 Welsh Government's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy sits at the heart of the scoring system for each of the principles. Comprehensive consideration has been given to access to services, facilities and opportunities that reduce the need to travel, followed by the provision and access to Active Travel, public transport and EV charging points.

6.12 Each settlement was assessed against a scoring system and ranked according to its overall score. This enabled the identification of broad groupings of settlements with similar roles and functions.

Principle 1: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

6.13 This principle focuses on sustainable transport and accessibility on the basis that its provision reduces the need to travel by car and enables access to a wider range of services by sustainable transport modes. The scoring has been weighted to best capture the most sustainable transport options in the first instance, in alignment with the sustainable transport hierarchy. To measure Principle 1, the following factors have been assessed: -

- The presence of designated Active Travel Routes within the settlement;
- The frequency of public transport services within/in proximity to a settlement;
- Distance to a rail station (The distance is measured from a central address point within a settlement to the nearest rail station via the road network);
- The presence of EV charging points within the settlement and;
- A settlement's proximity to a strategic highway network (Trunk or A Road).

6.14 In order to measure Principle 1, each settlement's proximity to multi-modal forms of transport has been considered. The presence and number of Active Travel routes has been assessed based on whether the settlement is a Designated Locality (Section 5). Whilst the availability of bus services has taken into consideration the frequency of services. Settlements with limited services, that only occur on a few days of the week score the lowest. With regards to access to rail services, settlements which scored the highest were those with a station within the settlement. The remaining scores with regards to access to rail services, took into consideration the distance to the nearest train station (including stations not within Powys), with anything over ten miles not scoring at all. As Powys is an extensive rural authority the full range of the transport hierarchy needs to be considered. This reflects the more limited opportunities to use public transport in Powys compared to more urban authorities. Therefore, to promote the use of ultra-low emission vehicles, settlements have received additional scoring if they have EV charging points available for public use.

6.15 The proximity to a strategic highway network is important in the rural context and reflects the inter-connectedness of each settlement and access to services, including public transport facilities, by road. This aspect of the scoring has the lowest weighting to reflect its position in the transport hierarchy. The strategic highway in this instance is defined as the Trunk and Class I (A) Roads.

6.16 The settlements that score highly under Principle 1 can be considered to have more sustainable transport options than other lower scoring settlements, due to their higher level of accessibility.

Principles 2, 3 and 4

6.17 Principles 2, 3 and 4 relate to the provision of services, facilities, employment opportunities and broadband provision; the scoring takes into consideration their presence, quantity and quality. These three principles are important as they reflect the settlements' ability to meet residents' daily needs, with just minimal or Active Travel, reducing car usage and prioritising and supporting walking and cycling to access services and employment opportunities.

Findings of the Settlement Assessment

6.18 The initial findings of the Settlement Assessment found that there is a wide disparity between the 58 settlements assessed in terms of their sustainable transport links and accessibility. The main points of interest that came out of the settlement assessment are as follows:

Principle 1: Transport

6.19 The top five scoring settlements are Newtown, Welshpool, Llandrindod Wells, Knighton and Machynlleth. All can be seen as central transport hubs that benefit from Active Travel routes, railway stations, fairly regular bus services and EV charging facilities. They are also well placed geographically to take advantage of the strategic trunk road network within the Plan area.

6.20 Outside of the top group of settlements, there are a further four settlements that score well. These settlements lacked a railway station, but do have Active Travel routes, fairly regular bus services, and EV charging facilities. The settlements are Builth Wells, Ystradgynlais, Presteigne, and Llanidloes. Both Llanwrtyd Wells and Caersws score relatively well, due to the presence of a railway station within the settlement, proximity to the trunk and Class I (A) road network and fairly frequent bus services. However, neither settlement benefitted from designated Active Travel routes or EV charging facilities.

Principle 2: Availability of Facilities and Services

6.21 The Settlement Assessment showed the highest scoring settlements with regards to access to services and facilities as Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Welshpool, Machynlleth, Builth Wells, Llanidloes and Ystradgynlais. All of these settlements have a secondary school, hospital and a supermarket serving a far wider catchment than just the settlement itself.

6.22 Outside of the highest scoring group of settlements, there are a further set of settlements that have significant amounts of services and facilities which include Llanfyllin, Presteigne, Knighton, Llanfair Caereinion, Rhayader, Hay on Wye, Llanwrtyd Wells, Montgomery, Llanrhaeadr ym Mochnant and Llansantffraid ym Mechain. All of these settlements have a GP surgery and some education provision, which in some cases is a primary school or an all through school. Retail provision in these settlements is more limited, with less diversity and quantity, with most having a convenience store rather than a large supermarket. Whilst the service provision in these settlements is more limited than in the highest scoring settlements, they are still serving communities beyond the immediate settlement and are considered key in supporting neighbouring / rural communities due to their distribution across the Replacement LDP area.

Principle 3: Employment opportunities

6.23 The settlements that score well against Principle 3 – Employment Opportunities, are Newtown, Welshpool, Ystradgynlais, Builth Wells, Llandrindod Wells, Llanfyllin and Machynlleth. Followed by Knighton, Hay on Wye, Presteigne, Rhayader and Llanidloes. All of these settlements included a range of employment opportunities including traditional B1/B2 and B8 use classes, retail and jobs in the care sector. The 2021 data from BRES, together with Nomis employee data, supported these findings with the exception of

Rhayader, Llanidloes and Machynlleth. The low scoring for these three settlements, is reflective of the fact that the statistical areas (Middle and Lower Super Output Areas) encompass large rural areas with a low population density.

Principle 4: Broadband Provision

6.24 The provision of adequate broadband is important for Powys residents, as evidenced by the percentage of people able to homework (although it is acknowledged that not all homeworking jobs are broadband dependent). In an extensive rural area such as Powys, the broadband provision enables access to jobs, services and educational opportunities that would otherwise be unavailable or require traveling long distances.

6.25 From the assessment all but three settlements, had over 95% broadband coverage of 30 Mbps or more. For the remaining three settlements, consideration will be given in the Replacement LDP Infrastructure Plan to any planned improvements.

Conclusions of the Settlement Assessment

6.26 In addition to assessing the 58 settlements against the Four Principles, consideration was also given to the population size of the settlements (in accordance with the Development Plans Manual (Edition 3)) The results identified three tiers of settlements to inform an initial Settlement Hierarchy for the Replacement LDP, see Figure 13.

6.27 Tier 1 - The towns of Newtown, Welshpool, Llandrindod Wells, Machynlleth, Builth Wells, Knighton and Ystradgynlais. These settlements scored the highest against the Four Principles, which reflects their role as service and employment centres and transport hubs for their rural hinterlands and smaller neighbouring settlements.

6.28 Tier 2 - Outside of the Tier 1 towns a further ten settlements score well; Llanidloes, Presteigne, Rhayader, Llanfyllin, Llanfair Caereinion, Llanwrtyd Wells, Hay on Wye, Montgomery, Four Crosses, and Abermule and whilst not offering the full range of services and facilities as the Tier 1 towns, they also act as hubs for their surrounding communities and rural hinterland either through the provision of services or employment opportunities.

6.29 Tier 3 – The remaining 41 settlements are considered to be of a size and have services and employment opportunities sufficient to meet some of their resident's needs, but in many cases, residents need to travel to a higher tier settlement to access some services, such as supermarkets, high schools and health care provision. Consideration has been given to the relationships between settlements within the 'Cluster Analysis' background paper, which looks in detail at how the Tier 3 settlements relate to the Tier 1 and Tier 2 settlements.

Small Settlement Assessment

6.30 This Small Settlement Assessment background paper sits alongside the Settlement Assessment background paper. It looks at the settlements lower down the Adopted LDP (2011 – 2026) Settlement Hierarchy, those falling within the definition of Small Villages and Rural Settlements, a total of 104 smaller settlements.

6.31 Within the Small Settlement Assessment, information on services, facilities, employment provision, transport opportunities and broadband, was collated and assessed for each of the 104 settlements, using a methodology consistent with that in the Settlement Assessment. This data was further supported by information on the size and population of the settlements. Further consideration was given to the connections between the smaller settlements and higher order larger settlements, particularly the Towns (Tier 1 and 2 settlements).

6.32 The methodology used in the Settlement Assessment was modelled for the Small Settlement Assessment to reflect the lower population and more limited services and opportunities available in the smaller settlements. It identified which settlements had a range of services and transport options available to support sustainable local communities, whilst also considering key linkages with higher order settlements

Four Principles

6.33 Like the Settlement Assessment each settlement was considered against the Four Principles:

Principle 1 - The level of sustainable transport and accessibility in and around settlements;

Principle 2 - The availability of local facilities and services in and around settlements;

Principle 3 - The level of employment opportunities in and around settlements; and

Principle 4 - The level of broadband provision

6.34 Again, Welsh Government's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy sits at the heart of the scoring system for each of the principles. With comprehensive consideration being given to residents having access to services, facilities and opportunities that reduce the need to travel, followed by the provision and access to Active Travel, public transport and EV charging points.

Principle 1: Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

6.35 With regards to Principle 1, the following factors have been assessed: -

- The presence of cycle paths or pavements, connecting the small settlement to a higher order settlement.
- Proposed Active Travel Routes, connecting the small settlement to a higher order settlement.
- The presence of a bus service (at least daily), connecting the small settlement to a higher order settlement.
- Distance to a railway station (The distance is measured from a central address point within the small settlement to the nearest railway station via the road network).
- The presence of EV charging points for public use within the small settlement.

- A settlement's proximity to a strategic highway network (Trunk or Class I (A) Road) (There must be a clear link to the network from the small settlement).

Principles 2, 3 and 4

6.36 Similar to within the Settlement Assessment, Principles 2, 3 and 4 relate to the provision of services, facilities, employment opportunities and broadband provision. The scoring system takes into consideration their presence, or the distance needed to be travelled to access them. These three principles are important as they reflect the settlements' ability to meet some of a residents' daily needs, and whether other services, facilities and employment opportunities can be accessed by Active Travel, public transport or a short car journey.

Findings of the Small Settlement Assessment

6.37 The Small Settlement Assessment background paper found a wide disparity between the 104 small settlements assessed in terms of sustainable transport links and access to services / facilities, employment opportunities and broadband provision.

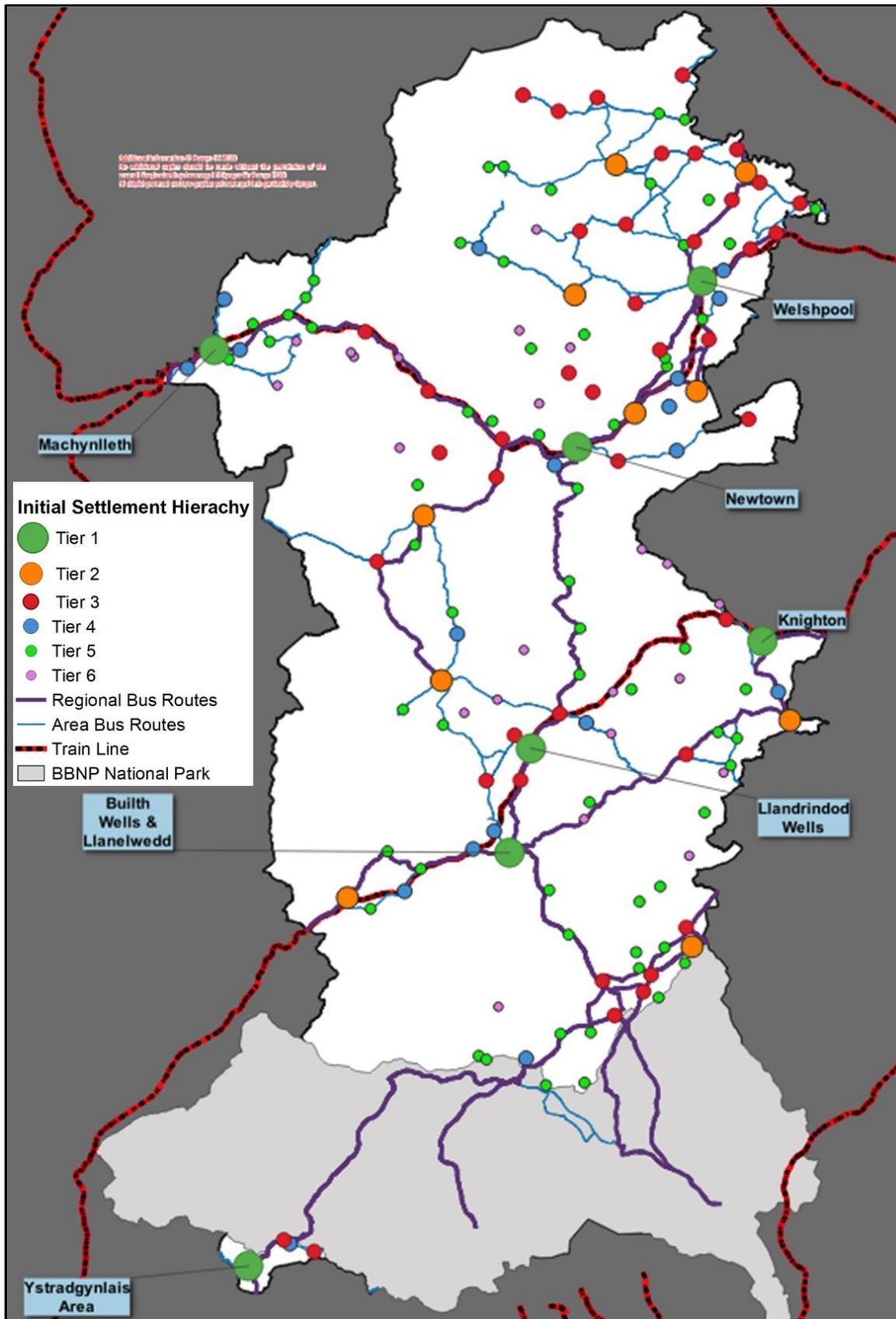
6.38 The top three scoring small settlements under Principle 1 (Transport and Accessibility) were Penegoes, Derwenlas and Welshpool Buttington. All three settlements are in close proximity and connected to a Town, via footpaths / cycle paths, future Active Travel routes and regular (at least several buses a day) public transport.

6.39 It was also found that the small settlement Welshpool Buttington, located on the outskirts of the Tier 1 settlement - Welshpool, had the most access to employment opportunities. Whilst residents of the small settlement are located within close proximity to the industrial parks within Welshpool, the small settlement also hosts some of the industrial estates / business parks that serve the town of Welshpool itself. There were a further 15 small settlements located less than three miles from a business park / industrial estate (some of which are located within the BBNP) and had small scale employment opportunities within the small settlement itself.

6.40 Of the 104 small settlements 28% had access to four or more services. A total of 66% of the settlements had access to adequate broadband provision.

6.41 The small settlements were assessed by adding the weighted score, from the Four Principles to a population score calculated by categorising the population size of the settlement. The small settlements were then ranked and divided into three categories providing Tiers 4, 5 and 6 of an initial Settlement Hierarchy for the Replacement LDP. Figure 14.

Figure 14. Map Showing Initial Replacement LDP Settlement Hierarchy Tier 1 to Tier 6.



Cluster Analysis

6.42 Following the Settlement Assessment and the Small Settlement Assessment, further analysis was considered necessary to determine how to distribute growth in the Replacement LDP in a way which reflects the diversity of the LDP area and meets the needs of local communities. Linking settlements via clusters seeks to achieve this.

6.43 PPW 11 (para.3.40) advises that “Local service centres, or clusters of smaller settlements where a sustainable functional linkage can be demonstrated, should be designated by local authorities as the preferred locations for most new development including housing and employment provision.

6.44 There are several criteria which are considered appropriate to identify settlements within the Plan area with the potential to form a cluster. However, it is important that the criteria reflect placemaking principles and are conducted using a strategic integrated planning and transport approach. Therefore, the criteria used to determine clusters and what constitutes a ‘functional relationship’ has considered the concepts of ‘Living Locally’ and ‘20 Minute Neighbourhoods’ and how these concepts can be applied to a predominantly rural County such as Powys.

Living Locally / 20-minute Neighbourhoods/Communities

6.45 The concept of a 20-minute neighbourhood/community is one which has been widely publicised in the press in recent years and has spread around the world. It is defined as a place designed so that residents can meet the vast majority of their day-to-day needs within a 20-minute walk (approximately 800 metres) of their homes. Day-to-day needs are defined as shopping, leisure activities, access to schools, local services such as a GP practice and ideally access to work. It also means access to green space and a local environment that encourages Active Travel to promote health and wellbeing, as well as wider connections across and between local neighbourhoods and further afield. A 20-minute neighbourhood is a place where people want and can afford to live, so affordable housing must be part of it. The concept of 20-minute neighbourhood is commonly associated with large urban areas, however, it is also being considered by planning authorities in rural areas.

6.46 Predominantly rural Counties, such as Powys comprise of small towns, villages and hamlets that do not necessarily have neighbourhoods in the same way larger towns and cities do. The main towns in Powys cover a relatively small area and their centres are therefore, typically no further than a 20-minute walk from their outer boundaries. Smaller neighbouring settlements are not always connected via pavements or cycle routes, so a different approach is needed to take this into account.

6.47 RTPI Cymru published a discussion paper titled “**Living Locally in Rural Wales – Planning Policy and Practice**” in 2022. The paper explored the concept of living locally in rural areas in Wales and whether the guiding principles behind the urban, 15 minute neighbourhood model can be applied in more remote rural areas. It also explored what role the planning system can play in supporting more sustainable, local living in rural Wales, not only to encourage less reliance on motor vehicles and support decarbonisation, but also to encourage the wider practice of placemaking within rural communities in Wales.

6.48 One of the key findings from the report is that when considering concepts such as 15-minute cities, 15-minute neighbourhoods, 20-minute neighbourhoods and other extended variations including liveable or walkable neighbourhoods is that **“the name is not the point, nor is the number of minutes specified. What matters is that, at its best, this is a holistic and transformational approach to place-making, with significant potential to**

improve people’s health and wellbeing”. At its heart lies the notion of sustainable, efficient, accessible and connected places where local residents can access daily goods, services and places by a short walk or cycle, or without the use of a private motor car. Places support community bonds and social cohesion, where dwellers feel part of a community and through participation in decision making have a feeling of ownership within their local area.

6.49 The findings from the Settlement Assessment have been used to identify the most appropriate locations to accommodate future development in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of growth, minimise unsustainable patterns of movement and support local services and facilities. The Cluster analysis utilises the findings from the Settlement Assessment and the Small Settlement Assessment, to identify an inclusive network of communities; that comprise of strong, interdependent, connected, and cohesive settlements, in-keeping with the concept of ‘Living Locally / 20 Minute Neighbourhoods’ and where reliance on the private vehicle can be limited. The Cluster Analysis recognises that due to the dispersed nature of the settlements in the Plan area, the concept of living locally needs to be expanded from its traditional meaning. Therefore, consideration has been given to residents being able to access services within a defined number of minutes via public transport, rather than just Active Travel.

Cluster Criteria

6.50 The following criteria have been used to identify settlements with the potential to form a cluster:

- 1. The main settlement within the cluster is a Tier 1 or Tier 2 settlement as identified in the Settlement Assessment background paper; and**
- 2. Smaller settlements within the cluster are a Tier 3 settlement as identified in the Settlement Assessment background paper or a Tier 4 or Tier 5 from the Small Settlement Assessment background paper, and**
- 3. All settlements within the cluster have a functional linkage with a choice of modes of travel:**
 - Tier 3-5 settlements within the cluster have a functional link (approximately ten-minute journey time or less) with the Tier 1 or Tier 2 settlement via a bus or train route into or adjacent to the settlement or;**
 - Tier 3-5 settlements within the cluster should have a functional link (approximately 25-minute journey time or less walking, or 15 minutes or less cycling) with a Tier 1 or Tier 2 settlement via an Active Travel route option, either walking or cycling.**

6.51 To identify settlements within the specified journey times isochrones were created from a central point in the host (Tier 1 / Tier 2) cluster settlement, using Open Route Service data in the QGIS, Geographical Information System (GIS) Software. Maps showing the isochrones along with bus, train and Active Travel routes can be viewed in the Cluster Analysis background paper.

6.52 A ten-minute drive time isochrone (for public transport) was found to be the most reflective catchment area for the Tier 1, Tier 2 settlements. Consideration was given to 15 minute and 20-minute drive times, but analysis found a lot of overlapping isochrones that did not truly reflect the relationships between settlements.

6.53 It was acknowledged that some of the bus journeys, from the host settlement to a lower order settlement, may take a few minutes longer than ten minutes, due to time allocated for dropping off and picking up passengers. However, as long as the journey followed a direct bus route this was considered acceptable within the methodology.

6.54 The 25-minute journey time for walking equates to a maximum distance of approximately 2,000 metres. Consideration was only given to settlements where there is an existing Active Travel Route or pedestrian footway between settlements.

6.55 The 15-minute journey time for the cycling isochrone equates to approximately 4,000 metres. It is anticipated that these routes may also be used by residents using a mobility scooter, or similar vehicle within the Active Travel Act. The distance travelled within 15 minutes, will vary depending on a cyclist's fitness and ability, or the type and maximum speed of a mobility scooter. Only traffic free cycle paths, which includes existing cycling Active Travel Routes have been considered, this is to ensure that regard is given to the ability of the route to be used by all demographics including children and elderly residents (on mobility scooters).

6.56 The findings from the Cluster Analysis are detailed in Figure 15. Note settlements not included within a cluster are not included in the Figure.

Rural Approach

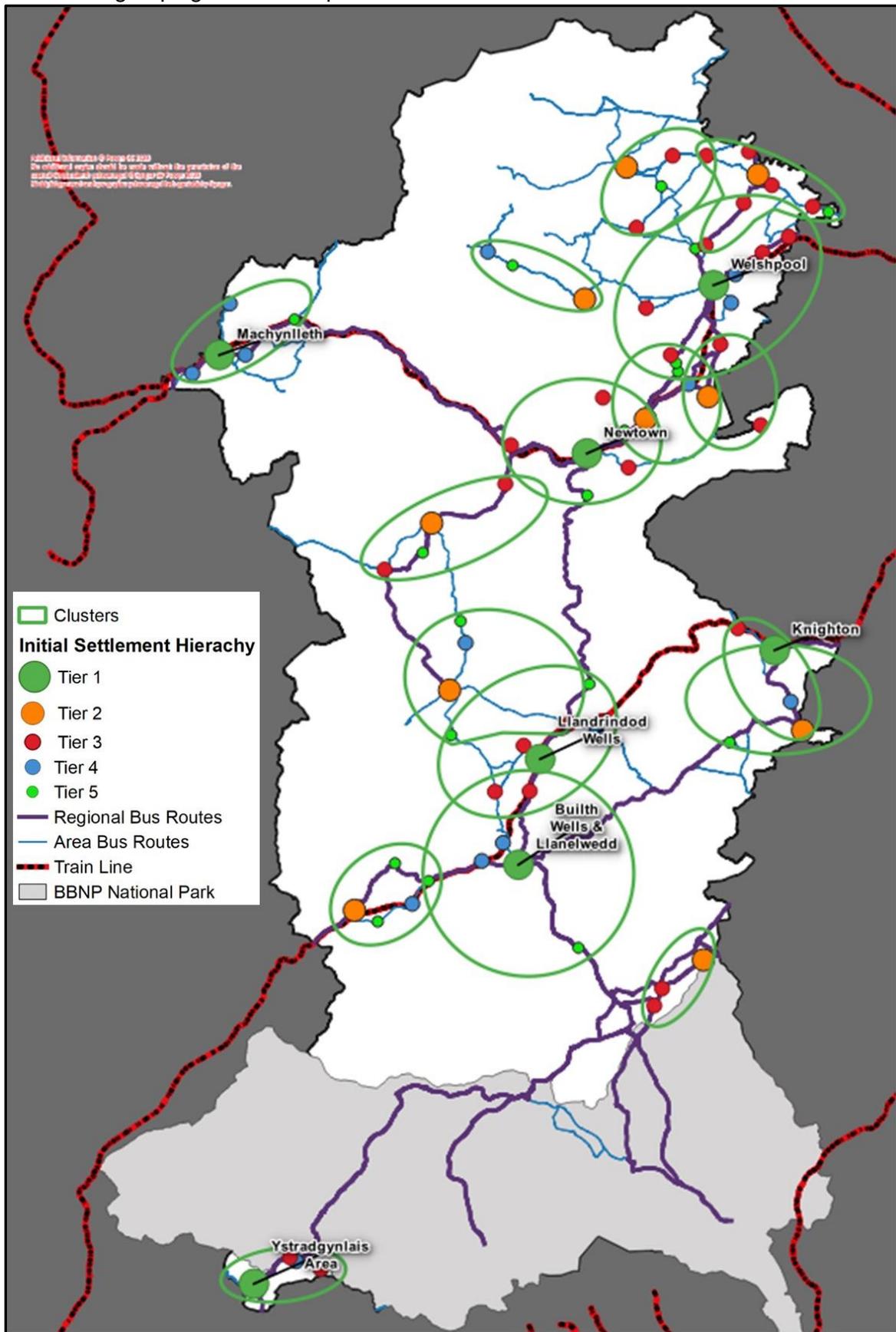
6.57 Powys is predominantly a rural planning authority, Policy 4 set out in Future Wales, "Supporting Rural Communities" requires that LDPs identify their rural communities, assess their needs and set out policies that support them. Policies need to consider how age balanced communities can be achieved, where depopulation should be reversed and consider the role of new affordable and market housing, employment opportunities, local services and greater mobility in tackling these challenges".

6.58 Future Wales recognises that there are significant disparities between rural areas with regard to the feasibility of delivering effective and public transport systems and Active Travel routes. It states: "A rural location within the proximity of major urban areas experiences different issues compared with a more isolated rural location. It may not be appropriate for policies to be applied to both types of location equally." Travel by the car in many rural areas of Powys therefore may be the only realistic mode of travel.

6.59 The Rural Approach background paper identifies the areas outside of the Clusters (shown in Figure 15) as the parts of the Plan area to be treated as 'Rural', within the Replacement LDP. Public transport and Active Travel opportunities are limited within rural communities and as detailed in Policy 4 of Future Wales, some growth may be required to meet rural needs. In these circumstances, it is necessary for an alternative approach to be included within the Integrated Planning and Transport Strategy. For development to be enabled within rural communities, it will be more appropriate to promote the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles, the enhancement of the public rights of way network (where it can connect residents with services), improved digital infrastructure and parking facilities near public transport hubs, to enable parts of a journey to be made via train or bus.

6.60 Future Wales recognises that it is important for rural communities to develop strong economies and support local enterprise. The presence of local rural business and employment opportunities can reduce the need for workers to travel long distances and reduce the reliance on larger economic centres.

Figure 15. Map showing the initial location and distribution of settlement clusters, together with broad groupings and overlaps.



7. Key Findings and Recommendations

Implementation of the Integrated Planning and Transport Strategy

7.1 The findings from the Settlement Assessment, Small Settlement Assessment and Cluster Analysis background papers are underpinned by Welsh Government's Sustainable Transport Hierarchy and the concept of living locally. These findings have informed the initial Replacement LDP Settlement Hierarchy and Spatial Options. However, other factors such as the location of Regional Growth Areas, community aspirations, infrastructure capacity, constraints information and employment and housing need, are also important and have been taken into consideration in the determination of the final version of the settlement hierarchy and Spatial Options.

7.2 The Replacement LDP will promote the concept of 'Living Locally', whereby the majority of new development where possible, will need to be within walking / cycling distance or have a short journey via public transport to key everyday services, which in turn will promote physical activity and the health and well-being of residents. In this regard, the Spatial Options will be based on factors which share the concept of 'Living Locally' and the integrated planning and transport strategy. This approach will ensure that the Spatial Strategy delivers on the outcomes set out in Future Wales, the priorities of Llwybr Newydd - The Wales Transport Strategy (2021) and is in alignment with the National Sustainable Placemaking Outcomes.

Rural Approach

7.3 Future Wales sees sustainable rural settlements as accessible places, well connected to the wider areas they serve. The Welsh Government is supportive of enhanced public transport and Active Travel modes but recognises that travel by private vehicle may be the only realistic mode of travel for some, especially in remote areas. The Welsh Government has said it will support investment in public transport, Active Travel and vehicle charging networks to support ultra-low emission vehicles. It will also support investment in the road network where this is necessary to maintain or improve rural accessibility, sustainability and community well-being.

7.4 At the regional level, LPAs are required to support improvements to connectivity within and between rural settlements. LPAs are required to assess the need to improve connectivity between regions and be confident to align regional and local development proposals with opportunities in neighbouring authorities. Regions are required to work together to identify ways to develop stronger strategic transport links between rural areas and larger towns and cities for mutual economic benefit. It is important that rural communities can access wider job and economic markets, and decisions on regional economic development and transport infrastructure and services should consider the needs of all parts of Wales.

7.5 Llwybr Newydd - the Wales Transport Strategy (2021) has committed to a 'Rural Pathway' which sets out how regional Corporate Joint Committees (CJCs) and Welsh Government policy makers will work together on strategies to tailor solutions to extend the geographical reach of public transport links into rural areas, and trip reduction through car sharing schemes and creation of 'local distribution networks' hubs to help manage the impacts of increasing home deliveries. Development proposals in Powys will need therefore to demonstrate innovative solutions to connect rural locations to services and facilities.

7.6 To reflect the fact that public transport and Active Travel opportunities are limited within rural communities and as detailed in Policy 4 of Future Wales, that some growth may be required to meet rural needs, an alternative approach will be considered. Where development is needed in the 'Rural' parts of the Plan area the Replacement LDP will promote within its strategy and policies the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles, the enhancement of pedestrian / cycle paths and the public rights of way network (where it can connect local people with services), improved digital infrastructure and the facilitation of parking facilities near public transport hubs to enable parts of a journey to be made via train or bus.