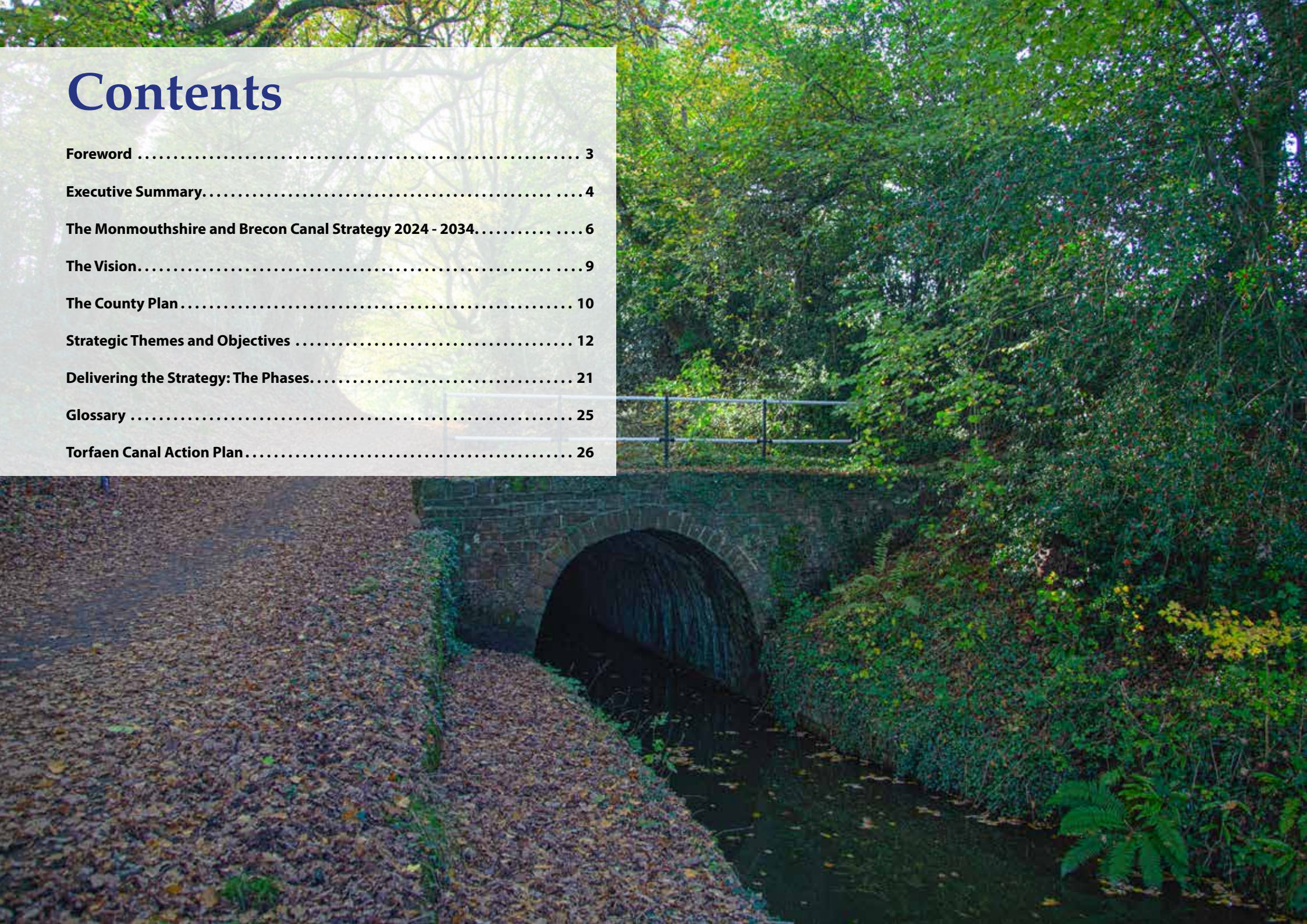




# The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal Strategy 2024 - 2034

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Strategy 2024 - 2034</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>The Vision</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>The County Plan</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Strategic Themes and Objectives</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Delivering the Strategy: The Phases</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>Glossary</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>Torfaen Canal Action Plan</b> .....	<b>26</b>



# Foreword

**Torfaen is privileged to have the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal pass through our County. Winding down from the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, it passes the Blaenavon World Heritage Site, Pontypool, and then through Cwmbran to Newport. An additional section – the Crumlin Arm – then links Newport with Cwmcarn Forest and all the communities along the way. The canal touches the hearts of all these communities and is truly a wonderful asset for the Council to have ownership of.**

The canal is massively valued by our communities. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, the canal became a lifeline for many people who used it for exercise and wellbeing. Since the pandemic the canal continues to be loved and enjoyed by people who use it in a variety of different ways. The canal is used for fishing, walking and exercise, commuting, wildlife watching, mindfulness, and boating. Within Cwmbran, it has been described as a little piece of countryside in an otherwise busy urban environment.

Not only is the canal valued by our communities, it is of huge importance to wildlife – our natural heritage. As well as providing habitat, the canal acts as a green and blue corridor which allows wildlife to travel great distances and connect with other populations. This connectivity is important for wildlife resilience as species can move easily to find food, shelter and for breeding. The canal waterway, green verges and tree lined banks are all crucial for this role.

The social and cultural heritage of the canal is equally as valuable. Built over 200 years ago by our ancestors, the canal is part of the soul of the Welsh valleys. The canal gave life to this valley when it first enabled the massive industrial growth before being replaced by the railways and this legacy is still felt today when people talk of the canal.

Within this Strategy the Council sets out its ambition to restore full navigation to the canal to Cwmbran Town centre by 2034. Water adds value and it is well recognised that waterway restoration projects bring significant economic, social and environmental benefits. A well-managed thriving canal destination will be the driving force for significant regeneration in Torfaen's urban centres. The Council recognises that this aspiration can only be delivered through working in partnership with experienced and passionate canal groups. In Torfaen we are lucky to have incredible canal partners working with us, who have already demonstrated

tremendous positive outcomes for the canal in recent years. The Strategy has been developed with them.

The canal does face its share of challenges which are documented in these pages. With a long-term vision to restore navigation to the canal, key issues need to be resolved in the short and medium to allow us to get there. This is why the Council has set out a phased approach to developing the canal as the showstopping destination it should be within Torfaen, of regional if not national importance.

I hope that you enjoy reading Torfaen's Canal Strategy and Action Plan and we look forward to realising the full potential of the canal through it's delivery over the next 10 years.



**Councillor Joanne Gauden**

**Executive Member for Economy, Skills and Regeneration**



# Executive Summary



The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal is the centrepiece of Destination Torfaen, connecting our exceptional visitor experiences across Torfaen. Not only is it full of wildlife and history, but it is deeply valued by our communities.

Furthermore, its close proximity to all three major towns within the Borough provide significant opportunities for the canal to support the economic regeneration of Blaenavon, Pontypool and Cwmbran town centres.

Recognising these two interconnected opportunities, the strategic vision for the canal has been developed in partnership with the community and key stakeholders:

*The canal is a vibrant corridor for recreation, leisure, heritage and wellbeing providing investment, employment, training, and participation opportunities to our local communities along its length. It supports the local economy and is a major contributor to quality of life in the area. By 2034, a well maintained and thriving navigable waterway has been created, connecting Cwmbran Town Centre to the wider northern canal network.*

The Strategy will cover a 10-year period. It sets out the important role that the whole canal can play in supporting prosperity and wellbeing throughout Torfaen, as well as providing specific detail on the management of the canal in Torfaen's ownership. To achieve the vision, a phased approach will guide delivery:

### Phase 1 2024 – 2026 Building the Foundations

By 2026, success looks like: The navigable canal is developed to attract more visitors

*In order to progress to Phase 2, the availability of a sustainable water supply to enable long term functionality of a navigable canal will need to be confirmed*

### Phase 2 2026 – 2029 Moving Towards Restoration

By 2029, success looks like: Navigation has been reinstated up to Mount Pleasant Road

### Phase 3 2029 – 2034 Moving towards Reaching Town Centre

By 2034, success looks like: Navigation has been reinstated to a new canal destination within Cwmbran Town Centre

There are five 'themed' areas of work that need to come together across all three phases to ensure we maximise the rich and varied opportunities of the canal. The themes, are integrated across all activity:

1. Sustainable Maintenance and Management
2. Destination Development, Leisure and Travel
3. Community and Partnership
4. Resilient Heritage
5. Achieving Restoration and Navigation to Cwmbran Town Centre





# The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Strategy 2024 - 2034

## **Destination Torfaen**

Tourism attractions in Torfaen offer a host of world class experiences to visitors. From walking in the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, mountain biking through the breath-taking scenery of north Torfaen, immersing in history at the internationally recognised Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site to enjoying a cultural exhibition or performance at Pontypool Museum, Blaenavon Workmen's Hall, Llantarnam Grange or the Congress Theatre.

Uniquely in Wales, the canal also runs through, or close to, all of our town centres. There are basins or potential basins in the Blaenavon World Heritage site, at Pontymoile in Pontypool and at Five Locks and Canalside in Cwmbran. These can be drivers of economic growth and development, bringing visitors and investment.

Not only is the canal full of wildlife and history, it is deeply valued by our communities who passionately care about it. The canal in Torfaen is unique. A well-managed canal will bring many positive impacts to people and communities, improving quality of life and well-being.

## **Water availability**

A sustainable supply of water is essential for a fully functioning and navigable canal. At the time of writing, long term availability of water is unknown due to the implementation of water abstraction licensing on all sections of the canal. More information is available under The Vision section of this document.

## **What will the Strategy and Action Plan do?**

This Strategy provides a framework for action that will support better collaboration, partnership working and co-ordination of activities to deliver the canal's potential as the centrepiece of our Destination Torfaen approach. By working in partnership with our communities as well as public, private and third sector partners, this Strategy and Action Plan will ensure that the canal fulfils this potential, taking a balanced approach to decision making.

The Strategy will provide the platform to make effective future funding bids to Government and other funding bodies.

## How has the Strategy and Action plan been developed and who is it for?

This Strategy has been prepared by Torfaen County Borough Council in consultation with a broader range of interested groups, organisations, and individuals, and reflecting over 1200 survey responses from the community.

The consultation showed overwhelmingly how much everyone cares for the canal. Biodiversity and overall management of the canal featured strongly, as well as developing the canal corridor as a recreational resource for the community.

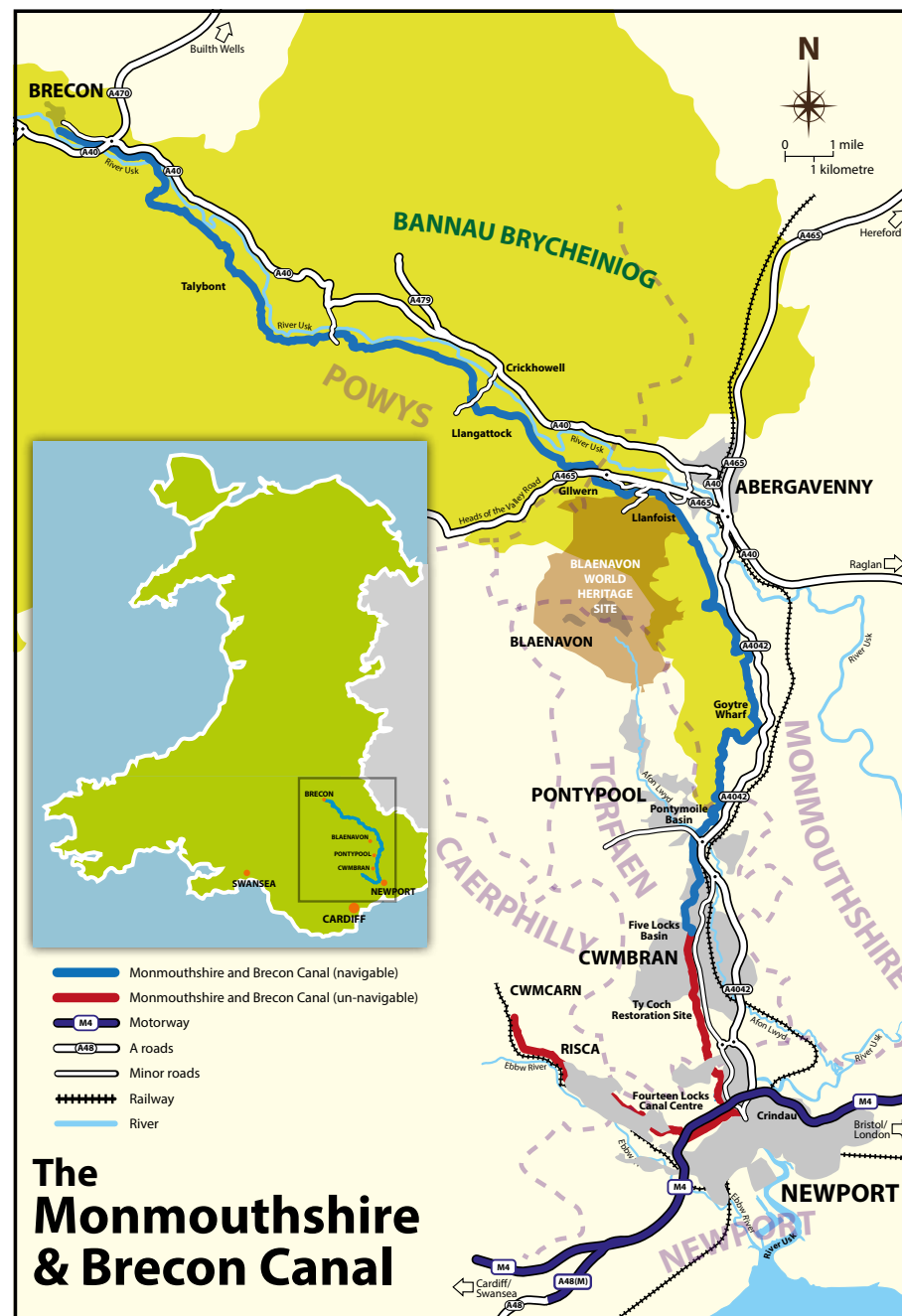
The Strategy is supported by an Action Plan which provides the mechanism for prioritising, delivering and monitoring activity on the canal. Delivery of the Action Plan will depend on agreement, collaboration, and long-term commitment and resources by a range of partners. Engaging with key canal partners will be critical to delivery.

## The Canal

The Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal comprises 35 miles (56km) of navigable canal from Brecon to Five Locks Basin in Cwmbran, a further 7 miles (11km) of un-navigable ('remainder') canal to Newport on the main line, and 7 miles (11km) to Cwmcarn on the Crumlin Arm.

Widely regarded as one of the most scenic waterways in the UK, the immense value of the canal is evident. It stretches across some of Wales' finest natural and historic landmarks including the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park and the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site. As it winds down towards the coast, it passes through areas of both open countryside and major urban settlements. The canal offers a unique opportunity to link and connect these attractions, driving footfall and economic growth into the heart of some of the most deprived communities.

The canal has multiple owners along its length. The northern section is owned and managed by Glandŵr Cymru - the Canal and River Trust in Wales, while the section south of Pontypool is in the ownership of the respective local authorities – Torfaen, Newport, and Caerphilly. Navigation is prevented on the southern section by several road crossings where the canal has been culverted through pipes. The








first culverted section of canal is at Five Locks Road in Cwmbran and from this point south, the canal is classed as a 'remainder' or non-navigable canal.

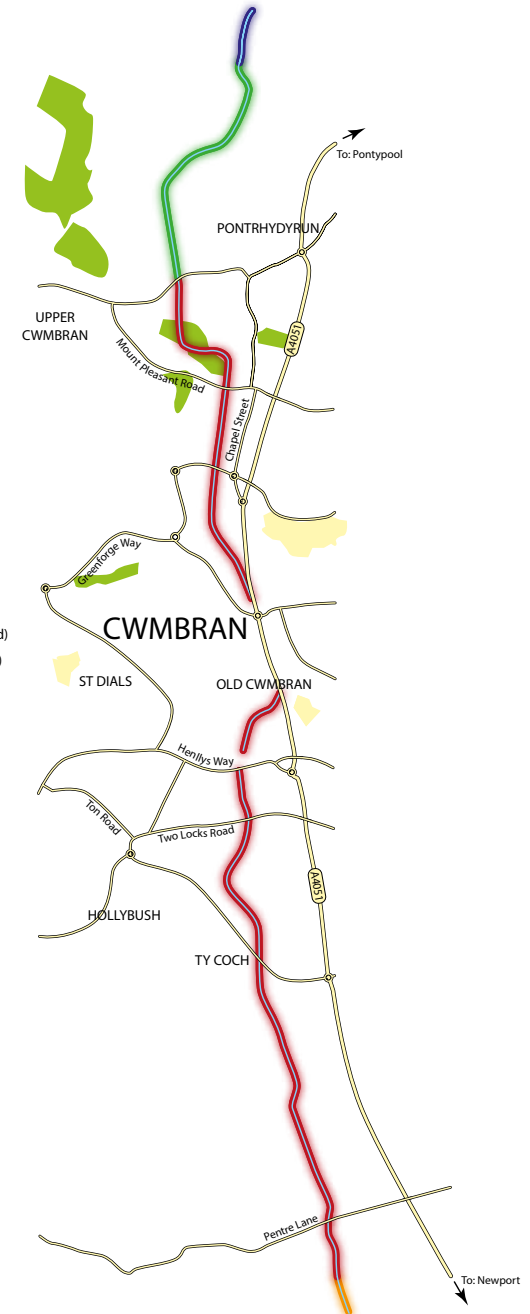
This Strategy and Action Plan relates directly to the section of canal within Torfaen Borough. It covers the 'canal corridor', which includes the water channel, the towpath (footpath running along the waterway), and the adjoining bank and boundary features.

Approximately half of the canal in the Borough is owned and managed by the Canal and River Trust (CRT). The CRT section is fully navigable. Ownership is transferred to Torfaen County Borough Council at Bridge 47 (Soloman's Bridge) meaning the Council looks after a short section (0.75 miles) of navigable canal to Five Locks basin. South of Five Locks Road, the canal is referred to as 'remainder' canal and is not navigable for boats. The section of approximately 3.75 miles is owned and managed by the Council down to the administrative boundary with Newport City Council where Newport then take over ownership.

The Strategy recognises that Torfaen County Borough Council has direct management responsibility and decision making powers only on the sections within its ownership. The Council is committed to working with adjacent canal owners to develop joined up initiatives that develop and promote the canal as a major attraction in south and mid Wales.



-  Navigable (CRT owned)
-  Navigable (TCBC owned)
-  Un-navigable (TCBC owned)
-  Un-navigable (NCC owned)
-  Roads





# The Vision

The strategic vision for the canal has been developed in partnership with the community and key stakeholders:

*The canal is a vibrant corridor for recreation, leisure heritage and wellbeing providing investment, employment, training, and participation opportunities to our local communities along its length. It supports the local economy and is a major contributor to quality of life in the area. By 2034, a well maintained and thriving navigable waterway has been created, connecting Cwmbran Town Centre to the wider northern canal network.*

To achieve the vision, a phased approach is required over a 10-year period. The phasing is set out below, with more details in the following pages.

## Phase 1 2024 – 2026 Building the Foundations

By 2026, success looks like: The navigable canal is developed to attract more visitors

*In order to progress to Phase 2, the availability of a sustainable water supply to enable long term functionality of a navigable canal will need to be confirmed*

## Phase 2 2026 – 2029 Moving Towards Restoration

By 2029, success looks like: Navigation has been reinstated up to Mount Pleasant Road

## Phase 3 2029 – 2034 Moving towards Reaching Town Centre

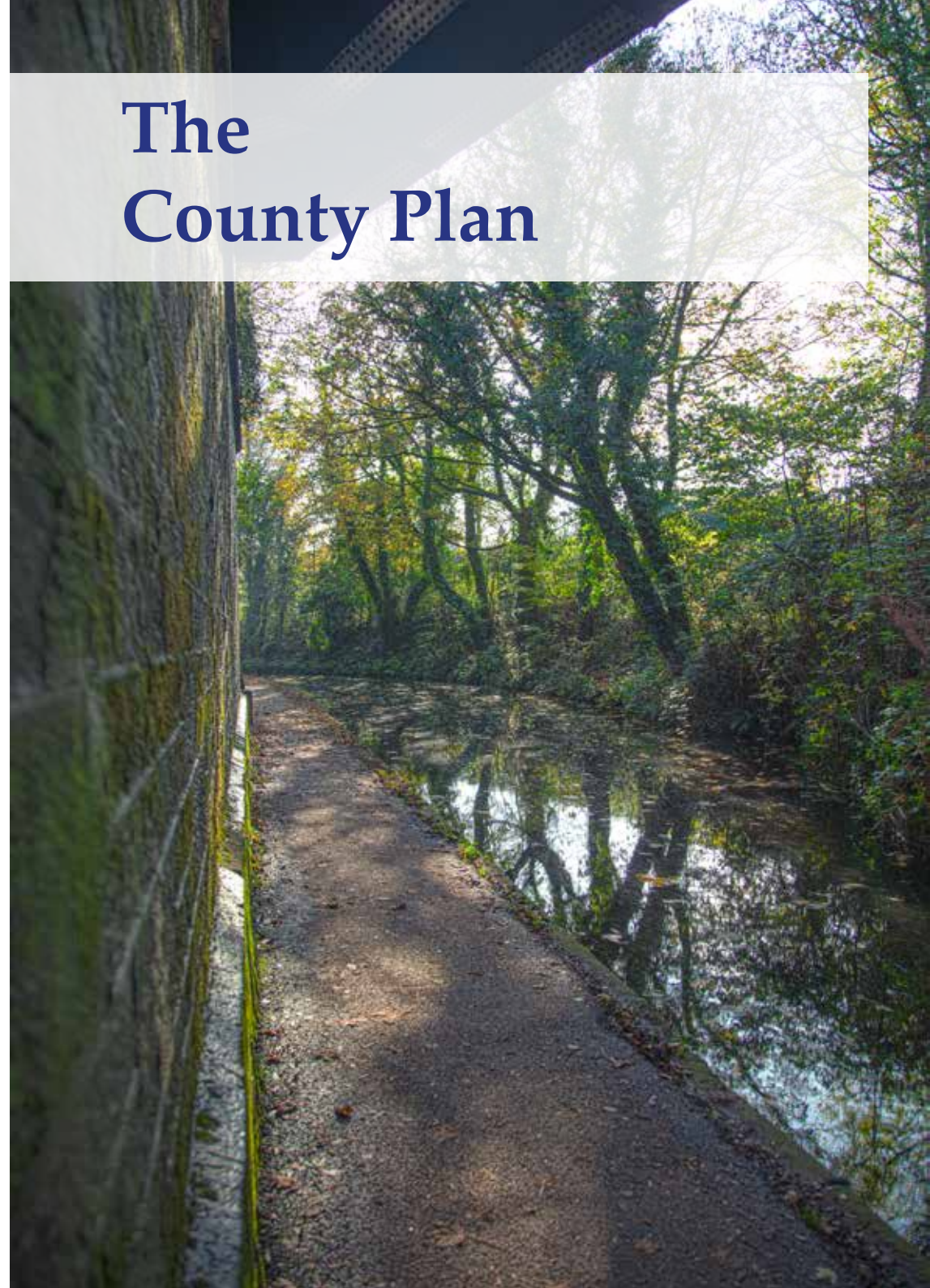
By 2034, success looks like: Navigation has been reinstated to a new canal destination within Cwmbran Town Centre



This approach has been suggested as it is clear from public and stakeholder engagement that more needs to be done to maintain the canal in the short term. This not only improves the asset for community use, but also builds the case to attract the multimillion-pound investment necessary to achieve restoration in later phases. It allows time to review and update existing plans for restoration so that a realistic and up to date projection of costs can be presented, allowing identification of suitable funding. A key piece of work is also needed to look at water availability and sustainability.

As a man-made structure, the canal must be continually refilled with water, as water is naturally lost each day due to evaporation and seepage. The navigability of the canal relies on an adequate and sustained water supply to maintain the correct depth for boats and for the functioning of locks. The regular supply of water into the canal is therefore a key element of managing both the navigable and remainder sections of the canal in the Council's ownership. Implementation of the Water Act 2003 requires the review of water abstraction points and the agreement of licences governing the flow and supply of water into the canal. This is to protect the special ecological status of the rivers and streams that feed the canal, particularly the River Usk which is a Special Area of Conservation. Water availability is a strategic risk that the Council and our partners continue to monitor. The restoration and use of several locks to Town Centre will require significant amounts of additional water. The Council will continue to work with partners to seek sustainable solutions to water availability. The outcome of this work will be reviewed annually and reported through the Strategy's annual reporting process. Any impacts to delivery of the Strategy's ambitions will also be reviewed and considered.

# The County Plan



Inspired by the Well-being of Future Generations Act (Wales), the Council has adopted the County Plan which highlights our ambitions to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Torfaen between 2022 and 2027. The Objectives of the Canal Strategy have been linked to those of the County Plan, as set out below, so that an annual programme of activities can be agreed to help us monitor and achieve our ambitions.

Wellbeing Objectives	Canal Strategy Objectives
<p><b>4. We will make Torfaen more sustainable by connecting people and communities, socially, digitally and physically</b></p>	<p>Objective 5: To optimize the canal as a strategic travel route by enhancing the Active Travel infrastructure, offering improved facilities and increasing opportunities for people to use sustainable transport options for all or some of their journey.</p> <p>Objective 6: To support a partnership approach to implementing, delivering, communicating and monitoring the Strategic Action Plan by implementing a governance framework</p> <p>Objective 7: To build and improve community cohesion along the canal corridor by engaging with diverse communities to cocreate inclusive opportunities for more people to get involved in achieving the vision of this Strategy</p> <p>Objective 8: To build a skilled and engaged Canal Volunteer network and programme of work that supports the sustainable management of the canal corridor by taking a coordinated approach to activity.</p>
<p><b>5. We will respond to the climate and nature emergencies, recycle more and make improvements to the local environment</b></p>	<p>Objective 1: To manage the canal asset efficiently, effectively and sustainably to provide a safe and functional waterway and tow path, with the emerging impacts of climate change and nature emergency duly considered through a coordinated Management Plan</p>
<p><b>6. We will make Torfaen a great place to do business by working with local employers, encouraging new business start-ups and entrepreneurial activities</b></p>	<p>Objective 12: To enable job creation and growth within the Borough by promoting existing and attracting new business and investment along the canal corridor</p>
<p><b>8. We will support our local culture and heritage and make Torfaen a thriving, safe and attractive place to live and visit</b></p>	<p>Objective 2: To continuously improve the Canal Management Plan through regular monitoring and review</p> <p>Objective 3: To ensure the Canal is accessible, welcoming, and safe for all, through delivery of specific project interventions.</p> <p>Objective 4: To develop the canal as an outstanding destination in its own right which attracts more visitors through the development of a strategic leisure offer that enhances the canal's role as a link between attractions within and outside of Torfaen.</p> <p>Objective 9: To improve the condition of all the canal's heritage value by ensuring its preservation and enhancement is appropriately considered and managed</p> <p>Objective 10: To raise the profile of the canal's heritage significance to support greater appreciation and knowledge through community engagement and information sharing</p> <p>Objective 11: To achieve the Vision of restoring full navigation to Cwmbran Town Centre by developing a business case, securing resource, and funding and creating a new canal-side destination</p>



# Strategic Themes and Objectives



The Canal Strategy objectives are grouped under strategic themes which capture the rich and varied values of the canal and the project opportunities that they present. These themes have been selected through public engagement and stakeholder discussions and run throughout all three phases of the strategy.

## ■ Strategic Theme 1: Sustainable maintenance and management

*“Having the canal on our doorstep should not make us take it for granted.”*

*Anonymous, 2022 canal public engagement survey*

**Objective 1:** To manage the canal asset efficiently, effectively and sustainably to provide a safe and functional waterway and tow path, with the emerging impacts of climate change and nature emergency duly considered through a coordinated Management Plan

**Objective 2:** To continuously improve the Canal Management Plan through regular monitoring and review

The canal is a man-made structure and requires regular maintenance. Without this it will deteriorate. The waterway and towpath are rich in vegetation which needs careful and regular management to allow people to enjoy the canal whilst enabling wildlife to thrive. As restoration of navigation progresses, the cost of maintaining the canal will increase due to additional maintenance of the waterway for boat traffic as well as maintaining the working locks.

A Canal Management Plan will be developed which will balance the requirement to maintain safe access for people and boats, protect the condition of the built features and balance the ecological significance of the canal. This will be used to guide the maintenance of the canal by the Council and our partners and volunteers.

The Council’s Climate and Nature Emergency Action Plan sets out the wider ambitions for the Council to reduce carbon emissions to be Net Zero by 2030 which will bring positive sustainability impacts on canal maintenance. The impact climate change will have on the canal, particularly water management and the role the canal and its environment can play in carbon storage are considered in the Action Plan.

## Strategic Theme 2: Destination Development, Leisure & Travel

*“Let’s make it a tradition to walk the whole canal path every year!”*

*Anonymous, 2022 canal public engagement survey*

- Objective 3:** To ensure the Canal is accessible, welcoming, and safe for all, through delivery of specific project interventions
- Objective 4:** To develop the canal as an outstanding destination in its own right which attracts more visitors through the development of a strategic leisure offer that enhances the canal’s role as a link between attractions within and outside of Torfaen
- Objective 5:** To optimize the canal as a strategic travel route by enhancing the Active Travel infrastructure, offering improved facilities and increasing opportunities for people to use sustainable transport options for all or some of their journey

As a major gateway into Torfaen between Bristol and Cardiff, the canal has the potential to be a high-quality visitor destination and outdoor recreational resource. A destination in its own right, the canal can provide hubs of activity, creating off-road links with existing attractions and destinations including the Blaenavon Industrial Landscape World Heritage Site, the Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, Cwmcarn Forest Drive, Pontypool and Cwmbran Town Centres and Newport Waterfront.

The canal corridor provides unique opportunities for leisure activities, healthy recreation, and sustainable travel. This is not only for people who enjoy using the towpath but also for people to use the waterway for boating, and other paddle sports.

Today, the towpath is a strategic Active Travel route and Public Right of Way, enabling walking and cycling as viable modes of travel for short everyday journeys between communities, employment sites & visitor hubs.

In the 2022 public engagement survey, when asked which aspects of the canal were important to them 80% (932 out of 1164) told us the canal was a place to relax and 73.5% (855 out of 1164) told us the canal was a place to exercise. 20.3% (236 out of 1164) people told us the canal was an important route to commute.

## Strategic Theme 3: Community & Partnerships

*“It was the canal that gave our valley life, it is time the valley gave the canal its life back”*

*Anonymous, 2022 canal public engagement survey*

- Objective 6:** To support a partnership approach to implementing, delivering, communicating and monitoring the Strategic Action Plan by implementing a governance framework
- Objective 7:** To build and improve community cohesion along the canal corridor by engaging with diverse communities to cocreate inclusive opportunities for more people to get involved in achieving the vision of this Strategy
- Objective 8:** To build a skilled and engaged Canal Volunteer network and programme of work that supports the sustainable management of the canal corridor by taking a coordinated approach to activity

Strengths-based strategic partnerships and meaningful community engagement are key to achieving sustainable benefits for communities, the environment and the economy.

Effective partnerships bring together diverse skills and resources, increase credibility for projects and provide a broader range of outcomes. Demonstrating true community interest in the canal is crucial to support funding bids that will deliver the long-term vision.

Our local communities are a valued resource for the canal. We benefit from passionate and proactive community partnerships which ensure a grassroots approach to project development and delivery. These groups include Torfaen Canal Volunteers, Bridge 46 to Five Locks Canal Group, Old Cwmbran Canal Watch and more who will all be crucial to delivering the Strategy. We also benefit from close working relationships with experienced partners in canal operation and restoration including Canal and River Trust, and the Monmouthshire, Brecon, and Abergavenny Canals Trust. These valued partnerships will be crucial to delivering the strategy, particularly in developing and delivering the plans for restoration and ongoing long-term commercial operation of the canal.

The Council recognises the major contribution volunteers make. They play a crucial role in all aspects of the management, restoration, maintenance and operation of the canal. We will work with volunteers as a key element of effective restoration work, where major engineering contracts are not an essential element.



Volunteers will be supported in this role with the establishment of a volunteering charter (Memorandum of understanding), placement support, and suitable training ensuring volunteers feel valued for their contribution to the canal by all partners.

The 2022 public engagement survey highlighted that 36.4% of people who responded (417 people) wanted more practical volunteering opportunities. Many people said the canal offered a place to feel part of a community and developing this 'canal community' of active and involved volunteers and interested people will be a key objective for this strategy. Many people also referenced the importance of the canal as a place to make friends and to socialise.

#### Strategic Theme 4: Resilient Heritage

*"It's a jewel in Torfaen's crown"*

*Anonymous, 2022 canal public engagement survey*

**Objective 9:** To improve the condition of all the canal's heritage value by ensuring its preservation and enhancement is appropriately considered and managed

**Objective 10:** To raise the profile of the canal's heritage significance to support greater appreciation and knowledge through community engagement and information sharing

Heritage comes in many forms. In the context of this Strategy, heritage includes the built historic environment of the canal corridor, the natural heritage which includes the canal's wildlife and biodiversity value and the social heritage which includes the cultural significance of the canal for the people of Torfaen. Resilience relates to the ability of this heritage to cope and recover from pressures and setbacks.

Originally an industrial man-made feature, the canal has naturally evolved into a thriving and well-connected wildlife corridor. It is one of Torfaen's key natural habitats, providing a home to a wealth of animal and plant life.

It shows a wide and interesting range of habitats along its length including urban and countryside, shaded and open water, submerged and emergent vegetation and grass verges and hedges along its boundaries. Beyond Torfaen, the canal is an integral feature within the south-east Wales wetland network which includes the River Usk, streams and brooks, connecting drains and marshy areas. Its linear and continuous nature allows species to move freely through the landscape, a particularly vital function in an urban setting such as Cwmbran where roads

and walls can fragment the landscape. Many species use the canal including kingfishers, bats, damselflies and dragonflies.

The Council has a Public Bodies Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty under Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. This duty requires that public authorities 'must seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity so far as consistent with the proper exercise of their functions and in doing so promote the resilience of ecosystems'. This influences how we manage the canal and how it will be restored.

Built over 200 years ago, the canal is also a key historical landmark within Torfaen. It has 10 listed structures along its length under the Council's ownership, with several unlisted structures also bringing a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the canal corridor. This built heritage has local and national significance, offering examples of the lengths our ancestors went to drive forward industry in the area.

The canal is a designated Conservation Area within which the Council has a duty to ensure special attention is paid to preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. The Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals (2011) considers the special architectural and historic significance of the canal to be its surviving physical features of a canal network developed 200 years ago. The changing views and landscape setting which combines both rural and urban, the many canal lock flights, stone bridges, aqueducts, and milestones, are all tangible remains which express the canal's heritage value and significance. Taken collectively, these important heritage assets help to create a sense of pride and place in the canal corridor.

Being a unique historical and natural landmark within the Borough, the canal has played a key part in many people's lives. Many residents will speak of their memories of the canal as children, how it was a place to relax and have fun. People remember how the canal was before it was culverted through sections of Cwmbran. It is important to record and pass on these memories as they detail social history and heritage which makes the Valley unique. These are not currently being captured or recorded in any other way.

The 2022 public engagement survey indicated that 92.6% (1079 people) of people responding regarded 'wildlife and nature' as one of the most important aspects of the canal. 71.6% (833 people) of people responding said that the history of the canal was one of the most important aspects of the canal to them. 64.6% (753 people) of people also said they felt the canal was "part of the character of Torfaen".



**Strategic Theme 5: Achieving Restoration and Navigation to Cwmbrian Town Centre**

**Objective 11:** To achieve the Vision of restoring full navigation to Cwmbrian Town Centre by developing a business case, securing resource, and funding and creating a new canal-side destination

**Objective 12:** To enable job creation and growth within the Borough by promoting existing and attracting new business and investment along the canal corridor

Canals can be drivers for sustainable economic growth, which increase prosperity and unlock private sector development and investment. The canal in Torfaen is well placed as a southern gateway to the tourism attractions of the eastern valley. The restoration of the canal, extending navigation south to Cwmbrian Town Centre presents a major strategic opportunity to deliver significant economic, social, and environmental benefits to the communities of Torfaen, the wider South East Wales region and Cardiff Capital Region.

Investment to secure the canal's future enables economic growth around the areas it connects thereby helping build resilience into local economies. It provides cultural and recreational benefits to our communities which include some of the most deprived in Wales. A restored and navigable canal will be a catalyst to drive

further economic and social regeneration, creating jobs and growth not only from increased footfall and spend, but by also attracting private sector investment.

The canal is currently only navigable from Brecon Basin to Five Locks Basin. From this point, there are several blockages preventing navigation to Cwmbrian Town Centre, namely Five Locks Road, Mount Pleasant Road, Maendy Way and Greenhill Road. For this reason, it will be necessary to consider a step by step approach to delivering restoration and navigation works. The canal can be broken into six sections:

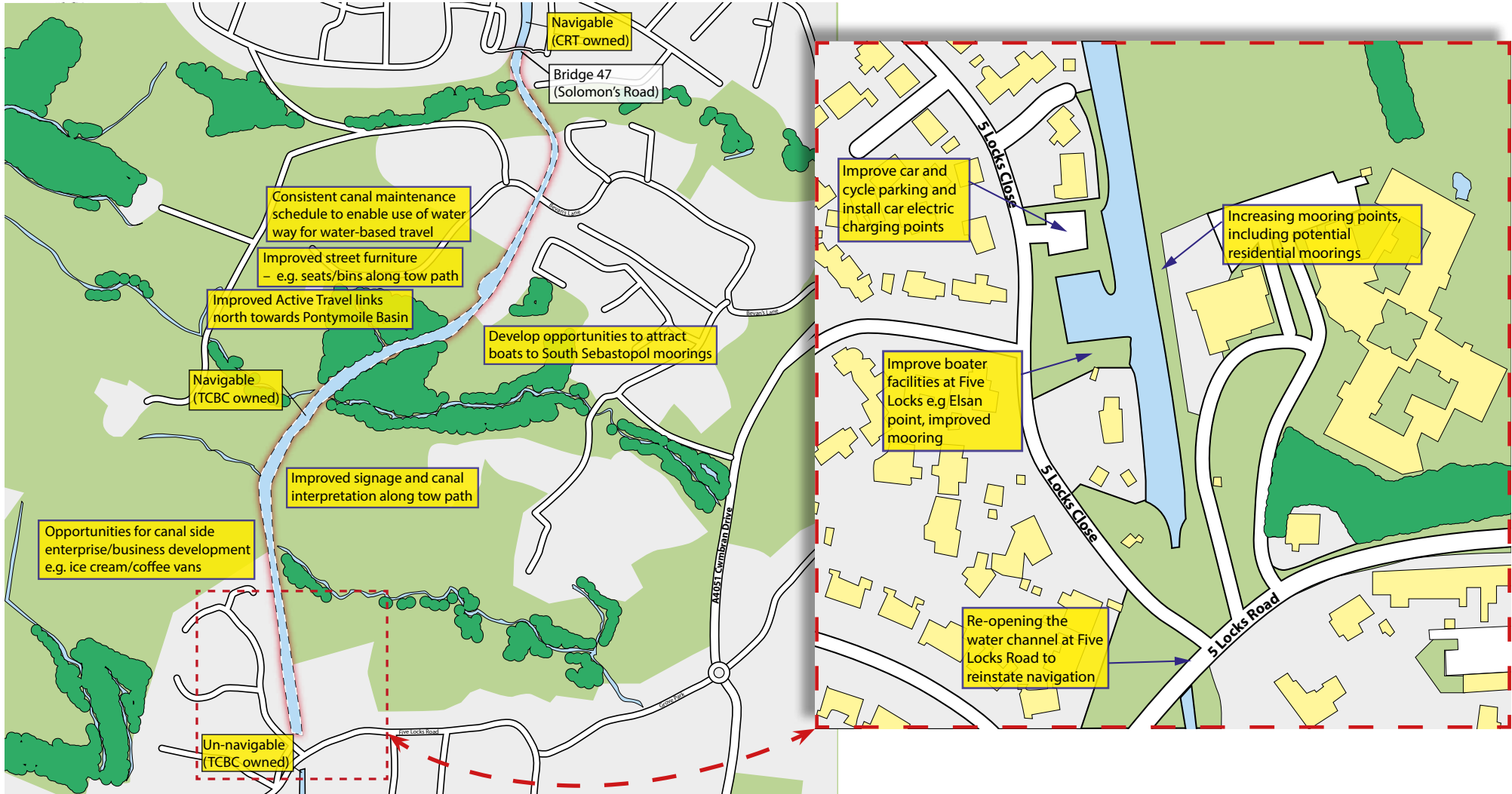
1. The navigable canal: Bridge 47 to Five Locks Basin
2. Five Locks to Mount Pleasant Road
3. Mount Pleasant Road to Greenhill Road
4. Canalside development, Cwmbrian Town Centre
5. Old Cwmbrian to Ty Coch
6. Ty Coch to Pentre Lane



# 1: The navigable canal: Bridge 47 to Five Locks Basin

Located approximately 1 mile to the north of Cwmbran Town Centre, Five Locks Basin is the current southern terminus of navigation. Positioned in a largely residential area, the Basin currently offers limited facilities to attract visitors and overnight canal users. There is little incentive for those people enjoying existing visitor hubs and water-based activity on the northern canal to extend their visit south to Five Locks Basin.

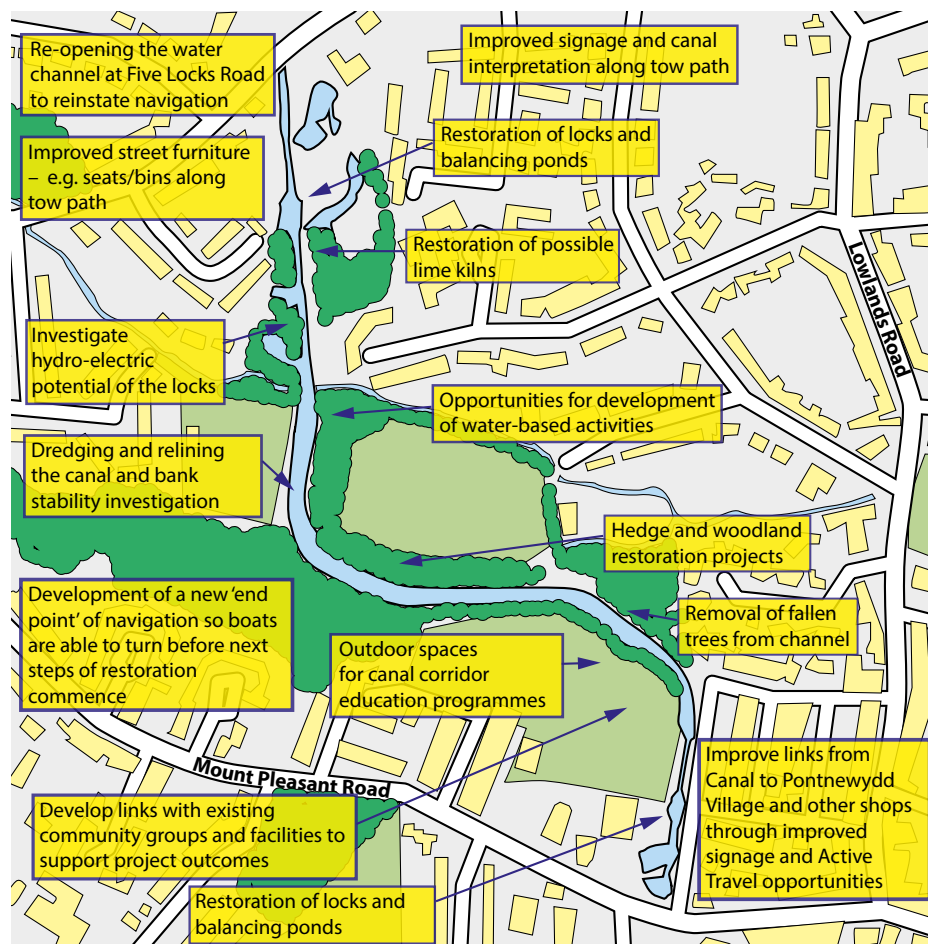
There is potential to enhance the leisure and recreational potential of the Basin to position it more positively as a destination to visitors and wider canal users. As the current terminus to navigation, it provides a natural point from which to build a destination. An established and vibrant destination at Five Locks Basin will support applications for funding to extend navigation southwards.





## 2: Five Locks to Mount Pleasant Road

This section of canal will be the first area for major restoration works that reinstate navigation should studies prove that enough water is available for full restoration of navigation. It is surrounded by a largely residential area with connections possible on foot and by bike to Pontnewydd Park and Village. The area includes the Five Locks flight of locks each in need of restoration and repair as well as some balancing ponds. The area also includes important biodiversity which creates a green corridor through this largely urban area. There are several heritage interest points along this section which could be better promoted to attract more visitors, especially boaters staying at Five Locks Basin.



## 3: Mount Pleasant Road to Greenhill Road

This section of canal is a key travel route between Five Locks Basin and Cwmbran Town Centre. It includes three remnant locks and adjoining balancing ponds and holds high heritage value due to these features. After Mount Pleasant Road, this area will be the next focus for restoration. It is adjoined by small areas of relatively open grassland giving it a more open feel in places than other sections of the urban canal. There is little integration of the canal with the townscape and, due to the culverted section after Mount Pleasant Road, the canal here feels isolated. There are opportunities to improve connectedness of the canal through better signage and maintenance to improve the canal condition.



## 4: Canalside, Cwmbran Town Centre

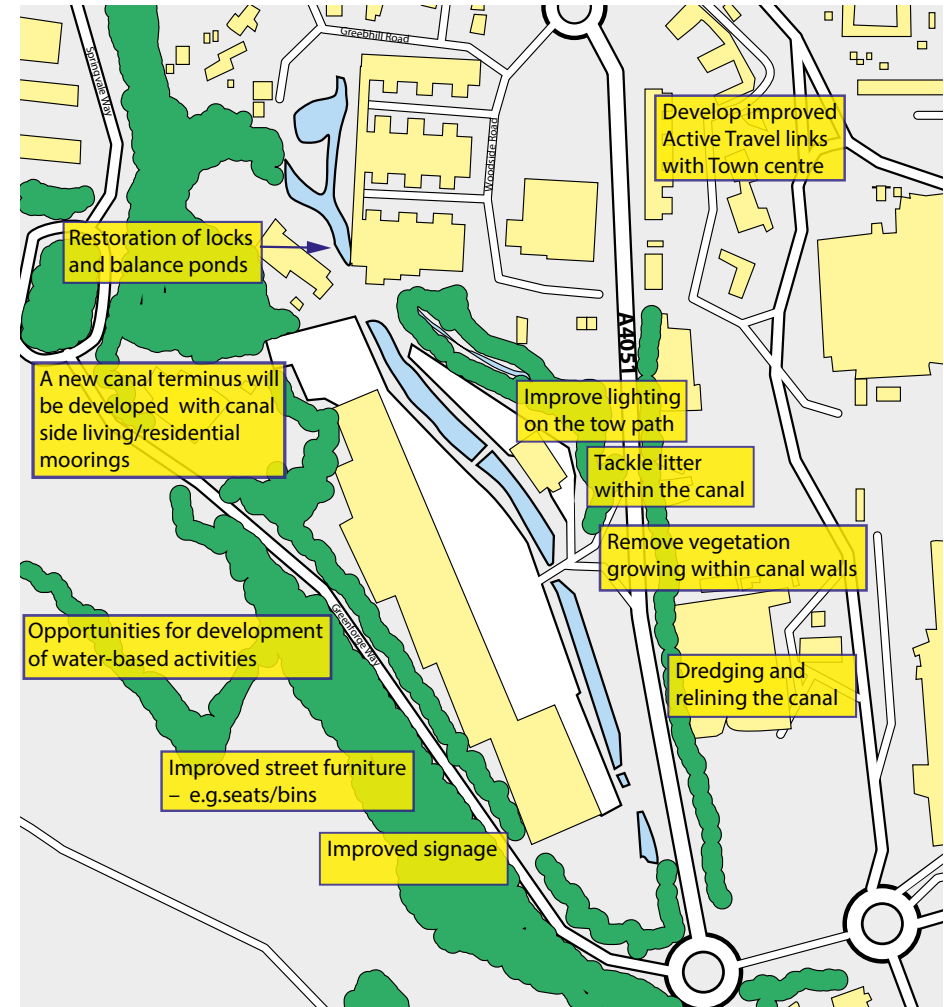
The vision for this Strategy Area is aligned to the policy direction presented within the adopted Local Development Plan (LDP) (2013) which allocates land to the west of Cwmbran Town Centre for the development of a distinctive new Town Centre quarter focused on an active and vibrant canal side destination. This supports a high-quality mixed-use development, with the canal at its heart, incorporating waterside living, leisure activities, commercial development, cultural uses, and biodiversity enhancements.

The ambition and redevelopment opportunities for Canalside will be addressed through the Cwmbran Place making Plan.

The canal is currently a detached and underutilised asset of the Town Centre. Creating better physical and visual linkages between the canal and the Town Centre has the potential to deliver significant economic, social, and physical benefits uplifting the appearance and appeal of the canal as a visitor destination. The proximity of the site to Cwmbran Town Centre offers the opportunity to create a mixed-use development that complements the existing retail and leisure offer of the town potentially developing a café culture and evening economy. The development will provide a southern terminus for navigation and a high-quality destination for residents, visitors to the Town Centre and users of the canal corridor. With or without full restoration of navigation, a well maintained canal waterside attraction will still add enormous value to a Canalside development.

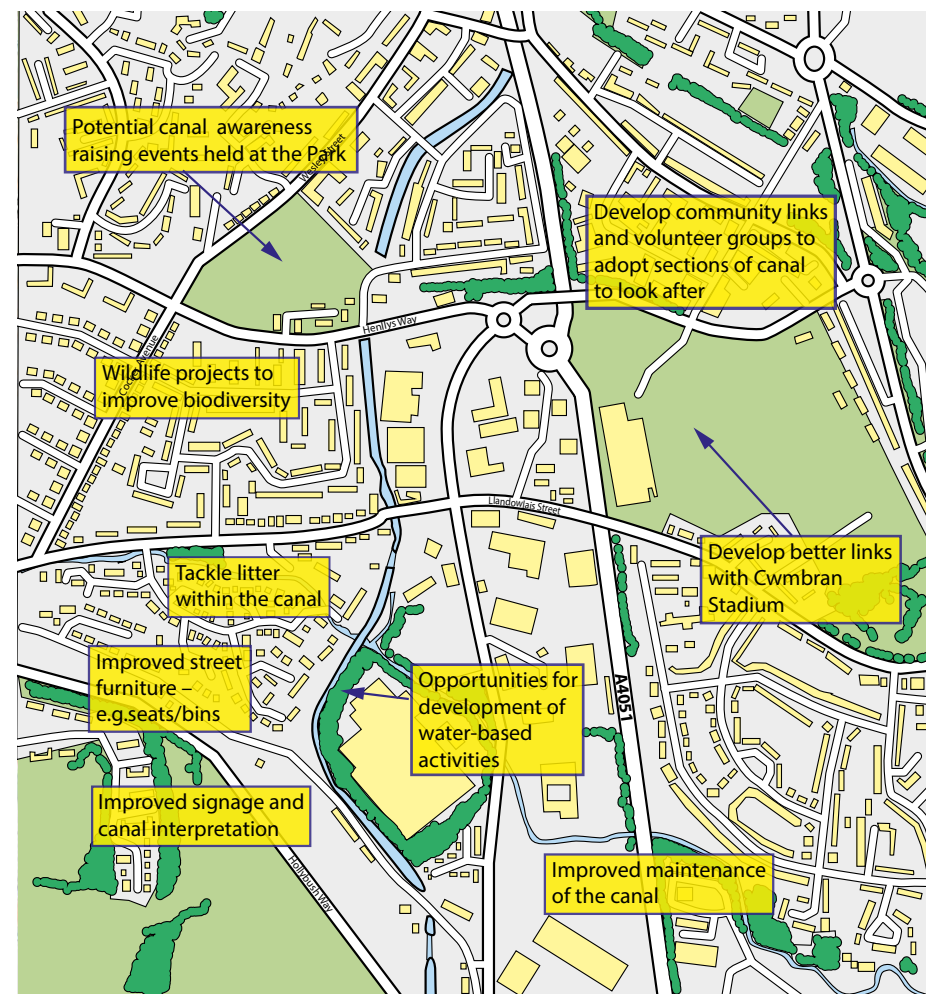
An emerging Placemaking Plan for Cwmbran Town Centre will identify this Canalside development as a key Intervention Area highlighting project opportunities that will seek to better integrate it with Cwmbran Town Centre. It is essential that delivery of this Strategy aligns with the Placemaking Strategy once agreed.

Taking forward the delivery of this will require private sector development partners and investment. Similarly, it will be necessary to work closely with the owners of Cwmbran Town Centre.



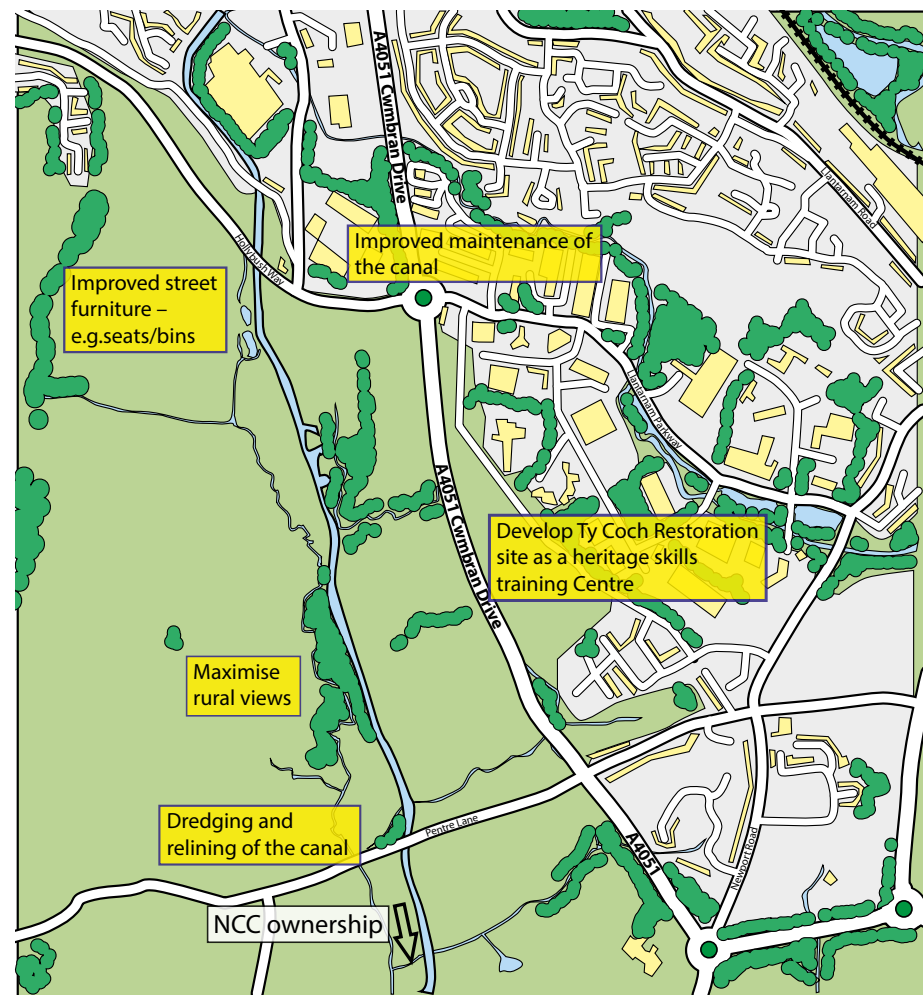
## 5: Old Cwmbrian to Ty Coch

This section links Cwmbrian Centre with Ty Coch. It is the first visible section after the long canal culvert which runs alongside Cwmbrian Drive. This length of canal is valued for leisure purposes including fishing and wildlife watching. It passes over the Dowlais Brook providing good connectivity for wetland wildlife. The tow path is well used by residents and is an important Active Travel route. Within the scope of this strategy, major restoration works to reinstate navigation through culverted sections are not planned here. Opportunities will focus on improving the condition and maintenance of the canal, as well as improving its function as an Active Travel route for all users. There is potential for development of small-scale projects to bring small craft onto the canal (such as a trip-boat, canoes, and rowing boats) to raise awareness of the canal and to develop its leisure offer.



## 6: Ty Coch to just south of Pentre Lane (Newport City Council boundary)

As the southern-most section of canal in the Council's ownership, this section is the most rural and includes the Ty Coch restoration site which is currently leased to the Monmouthshire, Brecon, and Abergavenny Canals Trust. Features of the canal here demonstrate the age, style and materials characteristic of the Canal corridor; many of the larger structures such as the bridges are listed buildings. Sensitive management of the tree line and hedgerows along the towpath here could present a good opportunity to maximise this section as a quiet, rural space for wellbeing and wildlife. The Ty Coch restoration site offers significant heritage value as the canal and locks have been restored and are an example of what can be achieved in the other strategy action areas. Opportunities here include developing the restoration site as a venue to teach specialist canal heritage skills that will support restoration of the northern stretches. It also provides a venue for community engagement events which raise awareness of the canal and take advantage of this unique setting within the Council owned section.



# Delivering the Strategy: The Phases



## Phase 1 2024 – 2026 Building the Foundations

During Phase 1, the navigable canal including Five Locks Basin will be developed to attract more visitors and encourage increased footfall and water-based activities further south, whilst supporting momentum for restoration. A crucial task that will underpin all future restoration activity will be to establish if there is a sustainable water supply for the canal that enables restoration and navigation to Cwmbran Town Centre. The development and delivery of phases 2 and 3 are dependent on this outcome. Work will include reviewing and gathering data including condition assessments of the built and natural heritage of the canal. Alongside this, a review of the existing design proposals, required surveys and costs that deliver restoration and navigation work to Cwmbran Town Centre is required. This information is key to informing the design of future restoration project interventions and funding bids at phase 2.

Water availability is a strategic risk that the Council and its partners continue to investigate and monitor. In the event that insufficient water supply is forthcoming to support progression to phases 2 and 3, the Strategy will be reviewed and revised outcomes identified. It is noted that there are many economic, social, and environmental benefits that can be achieved on the canal without implementing restoration and navigation works. Small scale community-based projects will be developed that enhance the entire length of canal within the Council's ownership.

### **At the end of this stage we will be able to demonstrate that:**

- There is or is not a sustainable water supply for the canal to support the progression of restoration.
- The navigable section of canal within the Council's ownership attracts increased use.
- Five Locks Basin is developed to attract more visitors both on the waterway and towpath.
- A clear understanding of the revenue and capital resource requirements for delivery of phases 2 and 3 with a fundraising strategy developed to enable activities.

Running concurrently, the Placemaking Plan for Cwmbran will deliver activity towards a new Canalside destination as a separate but interlinked workstream to this Strategy.



## Phase 2 2026 – 2029 Moving Towards Restoration

Building on the momentum and understanding gained from phase 1, this phase will focus on unlocking navigation southwards towards Cwmbran Town Centre. To unlock navigation, it will be necessary to identify private sector partners and investors and will require a fully resourced project team to deliver this. To progress restoration proposals, the Strategy identifies six sections of canal as the basis for a step-by-step approach to achieving navigation to Cwmbran Town Centre. Funding will be sought to deliver the necessary programme management, surveys, permissions and works required to restore navigation from Five Locks Road to Mount Pleasant Road (section 2 of the canal), although opportunities to extend navigation through sections 3 and 4 will be taken should the right funding opportunity appear.

As well as focusing on restoration, project interventions to benefit the entire canal within the ownership of the Council will continue to be implemented during this time.

### **At the end of this stage we will be able to demonstrate that:**

- The works to restore navigation to section 2 of the canal from Five Locks Road to Mount Pleasant Road have secured funding and been delivered.
- A clear plan will have been developed for funding the management and delivery of restoration to a new destination within Cwmbran Town Centre.

## Phase 3 2029 – 2034 Moving towards Reaching Town Centre

Actions during this phase focus on completing the last restoration work packages to allow boats to reach the Town Centre. Activity will link with a comprehensive mixed-use development in line with the Cwmbran Placemaking Plan and Local Development Plan, to create a new vibrant destination to the West of Cwmbran Town Centre.

Extending navigation beyond the Town Centre is not within the scope or timeframe of this strategy although partnership activity to develop these next steps will take place which will include developing the potential of Ty Coch Restoration site as the next canal destination.

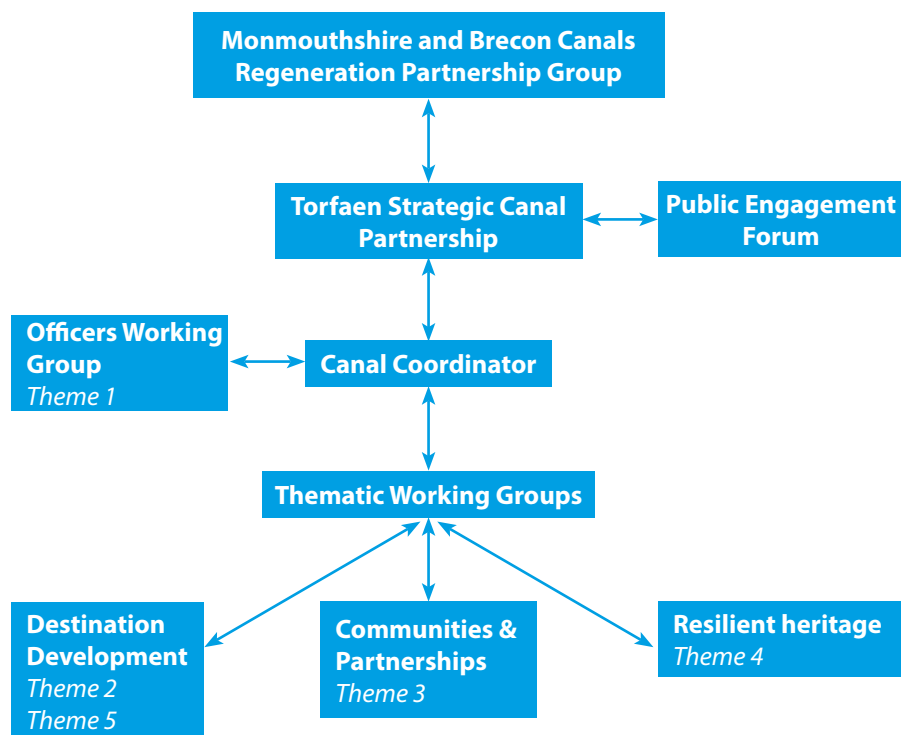


## Governance and Management

The objectives set out will be met over the next ten years and beyond by the implementation of the wide range of activities and projects presented within this Strategy and Action Plan. Partnership working with a variety of agencies, authorities, private investors, and community groups will be key to successful delivery.

Most actions will require a collective approach whilst other actions will fall to a single body to implement. Although projects may stand alone, each should contribute to achieving the vision for the Torfaen Canal. Projects will be managed and monitored to ensure control and delivery of standards. Risk will be managed in line with the Council's Risk Management processes.

A management and governance structure to achieve this is set out below.



## Canal Coordinator

The Canal Coordinator is charged with ensuring co-ordination and continuity of action between the various partners, promoting the canal and liaising with key stakeholders on wider issues relating to canals nationwide.

## Monmouthshire and Brecon Canals Regeneration Partnership Group

The role of the Regeneration Partnership Group is to provide a strategic link between the four owners of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal (Canal and River Trust, Torfaen County Borough Council, Newport City Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council), key stakeholders (including the Monmouthshire, Abergavenny and Brecon Canals Trust), and the Authorities with an interest in the canal (Monmouthshire County Council, Powys County Council, and Bannau Brycheiniog National Park). The Partnership provides a forum to share updates and information, develop joint funding opportunities, coordinate maintenance across ownership boundaries, and manage restoration initiatives across ownership boundaries. The Torfaen Strategic Canal Partnership will update this Group with progress within Torfaen and will provide the strategic link of local action with wider initiatives.

## Torfaen Strategic Canal Partnership

The role of the Torfaen Strategic Partnership is to oversee and monitor the actions of and endorse the work of the Torfaen Canal Thematic Working Groups. The issue of water availability and its impact on the deliverability of actions, particularly those under Theme 5, will be considered and managed by this Partnership. The Partnership will have representatives from Elected Ward and Community Council Members, and Senior Officers from partner organisations and will meet quarterly. Core membership of the partnership includes Torfaen County Borough Council, Cwmbran Community Council, Pontypool Community Council, Canal and River Trust, Monmouthshire Brecon Abergavenny Canal Trust, Torfaen Voluntary Association, Natural Resources Wales, Gwent Wildlife Trust, and CADW. The Partnership will act as champions for the canal and ambassadors of the Working Groups' activities.

The partnership will be serviced by the respective chairs of each Thematic group and the Canal Operators group who will prepare update reports setting out progress achieved over the previous quarter, future proposals and identification of any issues for consideration for each of the thematic areas. The Partnership will monitor the activity of, set the priorities of and agree the annual programme of works for the Torfaen Canal Thematic Working Groups.



## Canal Operations Group

Membership of this group will include Council Officers with technical expertise and responsibility for managing and maintaining the canal. They will meet quarterly to review and address operational issues emerging on the canal including water availability ecology, drainage, access, and maintenance. The group will be responsible for actions that meet the objectives of Theme 1 “Sustainable Maintenance and Management”. Within this context the group will focus on coordinating management of the canal asset to provide a safe and functional waterway and tow path, as well as risk management. Minutes from the Group will be shared with the Thematic Working Groups to ensure a coordinated approach to action delivery. A summary of progress and any issues arising from the Group will be included in an update report made by the Chair to the Torfaen Strategic Canal Partnership.

## Thematic Working Groups

Thematic Working Groups linked to the delivery of each of the strategic themes will be established. These Groups will deliver the objectives and action plans of each theme ensuring that each group has ownership of and understands its management actions and responsibilities for the Strategy period. Membership of each group will comprise Officers from partner organisations, specifically those with expertise and responsibilities relating to the strategic theme/s relating to that Group. Open access will be permitted by an application process allowing groups or individuals with an interest to positively participate.

The Strategy presents actions based on five themes. The Working Group structure reflects the themes and their associated Action Plans.

The Working Groups are:

### 1. Destination Development

This group will take responsibility for actions that meet objectives under “Theme 2 Destination Development, Leisure and Travel” and “Theme 5 Achieving Restoration and Navigation to Town Centre”. Within this context the group will focus on ensuring the canal is accessible for all and improving it as a strategic travel route, developing the canal as a destination that attracts visitors, achieving the aim of restoring full navigation to the canal and realising the economic potential of the waterway. Core membership of the group will include Torfaen County Borough Council, Canal and River Trust, Monmouthshire Brecon Abergavenny Canal Trust,

Natural Resources Wales, CADW, Gwent Wildlife Trust, and Torfaen Access Forum.

### 2. Communities and Partnership

This group will take overall responsibility for delivery of actions linked with the objectives under “Theme 3 Community and Partnership”. Within this context the group will focus on developing and supporting volunteer and community action to improve the canal and leading on supporting a partnership approach to project development and delivery. Core membership of the group will include Torfaen County Borough Council, Torfaen Voluntary Association, Torfaen Canal Volunteers, Bridge 46 to Five Locks Canal Group, Monmouthshire Brecon Abergavenny Canal Trust, and Canal and River Trust.

### 3. Resilient Heritage

This group will take overall responsibility for delivery of actions linked with the objectives under “Theme 4 Resilient Heritage”. Within this context the group will focus on raising awareness of, protecting and enhancing the condition of the natural and cultural heritage of the canal. Core membership of the group will include Torfaen County Borough Council, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Torfaen Museum and CADW.

Working Groups will meet on a quarterly basis and quarterly reports will be presented by the Chair of each Group to the Torfaen Strategic Canal Partnership. Groups will review their Action Plans on an annual basis together with a review of any monitoring outcomes. To assist integration between the Groups, the Chairs will meet on an annual basis to jointly discuss their Group’s forward action plans and to identify the potential for joint working opportunities. The minutes of all Working Groups will be disseminated between groups and the Canal Operations Group to ensure synergistic management of the canal.

### Public Engagement Forum

The purpose of the quarterly public engagement forum is to update the public on actions achieved by the Thematic Working Groups and to provide opportunities to ask questions, provide feedback and raise issues. The annual forum will be arranged by the ‘Communities & Partnerships Thematic Working Group’ and may take place virtually or in person. A Members briefing will be held before each Public Engagement Forum. The outcomes of the Forum will be included in the ‘Communities & Partnerships Thematic Working Group’ report made to the Torfaen Strategic Canal Partnership.





# Glossary



**Active Travel** - means walking and cycling, including the use of mobility scooters and aides, for everyday journeys. This includes journeys to school, to work, to the shops or to access services, such as health or leisure centres.

**Built heritage** – manmade structures with local and national historical significance.

**Business case** - provides justification for undertaking a project. It evaluates the benefit, cost and risk of alternative options and provides a rationale for the preferred solution. It is used to attract investor funding.

**Canal corridor** – the section of canal which includes all related canal features including the waterway, tow path, and boundary hedges and fences on both sides.

**Culvert** - a structure that channels water past an obstacle. Typically embedded to be surrounded by soil, a culvert may be made from a pipe, reinforced concrete, or other material. A culverted canal section means the canal water has been channelled through a culvert.

**Listed building/structure** - a building which has been designated as being of special architectural or historical interest. The rights of an owner to deal with the property are restricted depending on the importance of the listing.

**Local Development Plan (LDP)** - sets out a local planning authority's proposal for future development and use of land in their area.

**Natural heritage** – native ecological and natural features with local and national significance.

**Placemaking Plan** – A plan for an area which involves working collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to comprehensively consider the future development of distinctive and vibrant places.

**Social and cultural heritage** – this includes the stories and memories of people.

**Towpath** – the footpath which runs along the length of the canal.

**Waterway** – the section of the canal which contains water.



# Torfaen Canal Action Plan



The following table presents actions to achieve the objectives in each Phase. Delivery of some actions is dependent on additional funding and resourcing being identified.

The action plan is 'a living document' which will be monitored and updated during the life cycle of the strategy. The first review and update will take place Nov - Dec 2024.



## Phase 1 (2024 – 2026) Building the Foundations

Action	Lead	Partners	Dependencies	Relevant Section/s of Canal	Theme
<b>Objective 1: To manage the canal asset efficiently, effectively, and sustainably to provide a safe and functional waterway and tow path, with the emerging impacts of climate change and nature emergency duly considered through a coordinated management plan</b>					
Establish the “Canal Operations Group” (attended by key TCBC operational Officers) to meet quarterly to review and address operational issues emerging on the canal to improve cross team collaboration by January 2024.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		None	1-6	
Develop a Canal Management Plan, that considers climate and nature impacts, with agreed monitoring criteria by July 2024.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		None	1-6	
Agree a joint maintenance approach with the Canal and River Trust to deliver efficiencies on maintenance of the navigable canal by August 2024.	TCBC Canal Operations Group	CRT	Funding	1	
Undertake effective condition monitoring and risk management, including climate related risks, of the waterway, towpath and built assets.	TCBC Canal Operations Group	CRT	None	1-6	
Develop the Call Torfaen ‘Canals, Rivers, and Culverts’ report form to capture more meaningful data about issues reported on the canal to increase understanding and target action by December 2024.	TCBC Canal Coordinator	TCBC Operations Group	None	1-6	
Mobilise 10 volunteers to support sustainable asset maintenance and fundraising.	TCBC Canal Coordinator	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 2: To continuously improve the Canal Management Plan through regular monitoring and review</b>					
Install monitoring equipment by December 2025 that supports greater understanding and awareness of how the canal is used enabling active and effective management and maintenance.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 3: To ensure the Canal is accessible, welcoming, and safe for all, through delivery of specific project interventions</b>					
Work with businesses, partners, and officers to install 10 items of replacement or new canal street furniture, prioritised based on the condition of street furniture along the canal.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	TCBC Canal Operations Group	Funding	1-6	
Secure funding to resurface and widen the tow path where identified as a priority	Thematic Working Group: Destination development		Funding	1-6	
Support 10 community volunteers to undertake canal litter picks as part of the Council's Litter and Fly-tipping Strategy.	TCBC Litter and Fly-tipping Prevention Officer	TVA	Funding	1-6	



Produce an education campaign to reduce litter and dog fouling on the tow path by December 2025.	TCBC Canal Operations Group	Keep Wales Tidy TCBC Comms	Funding	1-6	
Identify hot spots of antisocial behaviour and deliver an awareness raising campaign by December 2025.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	Gwent Police	None	1-6	
<b>Objective 4: To develop the canal as an outstanding destination in its own right which attracts more visitors through the development of a strategic leisure offer that enhances the canal's role as a link between attractions within and outside of Torfaen</b>					
By December 2025, deliver marketing campaign to promote the canal as a place to visit.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	Torfaen Tourism Association	Funding	1-6	
Develop a plan to promote the canal as a key destination linking key attractions through the borough, delivering outcomes of the Destination Torfaen Strategy.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	Torfaen Tourism Association		1-6	
Support Canal and River Trust in promoting key canal hubs Llanfoist and Govilion and their links with the Blaenavon World Heritage Site and Blaenavon Town Centre through.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development				
Develop links between the canal and Pontypool Town Centre via Pontypool registered Park and Garden to support Levelling Up investment and other regeneration priorities in the Pontypool Placemaking plan.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	Friends of Pontypool Town Torfaen Tourism Association			
Integrate opportunities for the canal into the to be established Cwmbran Town Board as part of UK Government 'Long term plan for Towns' during spring and summer 2024.	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team				
Install 3 community art features to enhance the sense of place for local communities.	TCBC Canal Coordinator	Thematic Working Group: Destination development Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre Coleg Gwent	Funding	1-6	



Finalise the masterplan by July 2024 to inform development of Five Locks Basin as a visitor and community canal hub.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Funding	1	
Implement projects identified in the agreed Five Locks Masterplan: possible projects include Elsan point installation, new toilet/shower room, mooring improvements, better signage, more seating areas, and electric vehicle charging points by December 2025.	TCBC Canal Operations Group	Thematic Working Group: Destination development TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team TCBC External Funding Team Funding partners	Funding	1	
By July 2024, develop a brand for the Canal destination which will be used in all social media/print/literature/street furniture/exhibitions etc.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development		None	1-6	
Develop opportunities with 3 boat hire companies which will result in an increase in the number of their customers visiting the Torfaen owned section of canal.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development		Company engagement	1	
Replace all the missing canal bridge number plaques within the Torfaen owned section of canal by December 2024.	TCBC Canal Operations Group	MBACT	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 5: To optimize the canal as a strategic travel route by enhancing the active travel infrastructure, offering improved facilities, and increasing opportunities for people to use sustainable transport options for all or some of their journey</b>					
Improve facilities for cycle parking at 2 key access points and in public car parks on and adjacent to the canal.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development		None	1-6	
Develop and promote a walking route to link Pontymoile Basin with Pontypool Town Centre, taking advantage of the new Levelling Up Fund Town centre improvements.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team TCBC Active Travel CRT	Funding	Pontymoile	



Promote existing walking and cycling routes linking the canal to the Sustrans Pontypool to Blaenavon Cycle Route 49 to encourage footfall through Pontypool Town Centre and other existing walking routes to the Blaenavon World Heritage Site.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team TCBC Active Travel CRT	Funding	Pontymoile and north	
Promote availability of local facilities (shops, toilets, doctors etc) to people visiting by boat at key areas including Pontymoile Basin and Five Locks (and mooring points in between) by providing updated information to boat hire companies and improving wayfinding.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development			Pontymoile 1-6	
<b>Objective 6: To support a partnership approach to implementing, delivering, communicating, and monitoring the Strategic Action Plan by implementing a governance framework</b>					
Establish the governance structure with schedules of meetings prepared and shared a year in advance.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		None	1-6	
Develop and update Terms of Reference by January 2024 to support the Governance Structure to define clear roles and responsibilities and feedback mechanisms.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		None	1-6	
Prepare and implement Communication Plan by January 2024 to agree a shared approach to communication with key partners and the public.	Thematic Working Group: Communities and Partnership		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 7: To build and improve community cohesion along the canal corridor, by engaging with diverse communities to cocreate inclusive opportunities for more people to get involved in achieving the vision of this Strategy</b>					
Establish an annual programme of community engagement sessions and events and ensure these are advertised on TCBC corporate website and Connect Torfaen and through partner social media and websites.	Thematic Working Group: Communities and Partnership	TCBC Operations Group	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 8: To build a skilled and engaged Canal Volunteer network and programme of work that supports the sustainable management of the canal corridor by taking a coordinated approach to activity.</b>					
Establish a Canal Volunteer Programme by September 2024 to identify which tasks volunteers can undertake highlighting training requirements, health and safety considerations, equipment, and facilities requirements for volunteers and to identify funding requirements.	Thematic Working Group: Communities and Partnership	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance MBACT	None	1-6	
<b>Objective 9: To improve the condition of all the canal's heritage value by ensuring its preservation and enhancement is appropriately considered and managed</b>					
By December 2024, create a built heritage asset register to prioritise repairs for built structures on the canal and to identify opportunities for community participation.	Thematic Working Group: Resilient Heritage	Cadw, NLHF, CRT, MBACT	Funding	1-6	



Undertake full ecological survey of the canal (navigable and remainder sections) by December 2024 to gather baseline data for biodiversity within the channel and along the canal corridor to inform ongoing management and to inform future restoration/ navigation feasibility and design work.	Thematic Working Group: Resilient Heritage		Funding	1-6	
Arrange volunteer 'Balsam Bashing' days to tackle the invasive Himalayan Balsam from the Torfaen canal.	Thematic Working Group: Resilient Heritage	Keep Wales Tidy	None	1-6	
<b>Objective 10: To raise the profile of the canal's heritage significance to support greater appreciation and knowledge through community engagement and information sharing</b>					
Develop and install a local history and wellbeing trail on the canal towpath.	Bridge 46 to Five Locks Canal Group	TCBC Operations Group	Funding	1-6	
Link with 3 schools within walking distance from canal to develop opportunities to use the canal to support the curriculum.	Thematic Working Group: Communities and Partnership		School engagement	1-6	
Develop and deliver species identification training and workshops for communities e.g. Amphibian identification workshops, canal wildflower identification walks, bat surveys	TCBC Canal Operations Group	TCBC Canal Coordinator	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 11: To achieve the Vision of restoring full navigation to Cwmbran town centre by developing a business case, securing resource, and funding and creating a new canal-side destination</b>					
Commission a Water Sustainability Survey to determine if there is a sustainable and long term supply of water for the canal to enable full restoration of navigation. To consider: - Potential demands on water and water availability - Flood risk/management - Potential sources of water - SUDS.	TCBC Operations Group		Funding	1-6	
Ascertain ownership and access rights for land required for restoration scheme and contact any individuals affected by the plans.	TCBC Canal Coordinator	Torfaen Canal Partnership TCBC Asset Management	None	1,2,3,4	



Produce a comprehensive report for each canal Strategy Area that outlines all practical tasks required for restoration and navigation including which surveys (e.g. flood risk and water management), which plans, and which permissions are required. To include indicative timescales, associated costs to commission the surveys and plans, and the further resources required for bid development and delivery.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	TCBC Canal Operations Group Torfaen Canal Partnership External design/ engineering/ cost consultancy services	Funding	1,2,3,4	
Develop a Fundraising Strategy by December 2025 to fund the step by step restoration work packages.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	TCBC External Funding Team Funding partners External design/ engineering/ cost consultancy services	None	1,2,3,4	
<b>Objective 12: To enable job creation and growth within the Borough by promoting existing and attracting new business and investment along the canal corridor</b>					
Develop a canal investment prospectus with small- and large-scale opportunities for businesses to invest directly in the canal – e.g. sponsor a bench, sponsor 1km of tow path, rent a pitch for a mobile café, lease of moorings.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Local businesses TCBC Economic Development Team	None	1-6	
Develop links and explore interest and opportunities with small businesses, focusing on the canal's Strategic Action areas to encourage integration of the canal in market and business planning.	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Local businesses Canal partners	None	1-6	





## Phase 2 (2026 – 2029) Moving Towards Restoration

Action	Lead	Partners	Dependencies	Relevant Section/s of Canal	Theme
<b>Objective 1: To manage the canal asset efficiently, effectively, and sustainably to provide a safe and functional waterway and tow path, with the emerging impacts of climate change and nature emergency duly considered through a coordinated management plan</b>					
Identify opportunities to improve the management of green spaces on and around the canal.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		None	1-6	
Investigate the potential contributions the canal can make towards achieving the Council's target to be net zero carbon by 2030 e.g. opportunities for renewable energy including micro hydro-electric power.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 2: To continuously improve the Canal Management Plan through regular monitoring and review</b>					
Update the Management Plan at each key large-scale restoration phase.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 3: To ensure the Canal is accessible, welcoming, and safe for all through delivery of specific project interventions</b>					
Review of opportunities to increase lighting on the towpath in line with wider TCBC lighting policies. Deliver based on outcomes of review.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 4: To develop the canal as an outstanding destination in its own right which attracts more visitors through the development of a strategic leisure offer that enhances the canal's role as a link between attractions within and outside of Torfaen</b>					
Develop opportunities to introduce boats to sections of the remainder canal – e.g. canoe, paddle board, rowing boats. Include a review of storage, access, safety facilities.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		Funding	2-6	
<b>Objective 5: To optimize the canal as a strategic travel route by enhancing the active travel infrastructure, offering improved facilities, and increasing opportunities for people to use sustainable transport options for all or some of their journey</b>					
Implement and deliver Active Travel Road crossing improvements programme.	TCBC Active Travel		Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 6: To support a partnership approach to implementing, delivering, communicating, and monitoring the Strategic Action Plan by implementing a governance framework</b>					
Review Governance Structure to ensure it is fit for purpose for delivering anticipated large-scale restoration projects, explore delivery models and legal frameworks for delivery and ongoing operational activity.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 7: To build and improve community cohesion along the canal corridor, by engaging with diverse communities to cocreate inclusive opportunities for more people to get involved in achieving the vision of this Strategy</b>					
Undertake an annual public engagement session will be arranged for people to ask questions about the delivery of the strategy.	Thematic Working Group: Communities and Partnership		None	1-6	

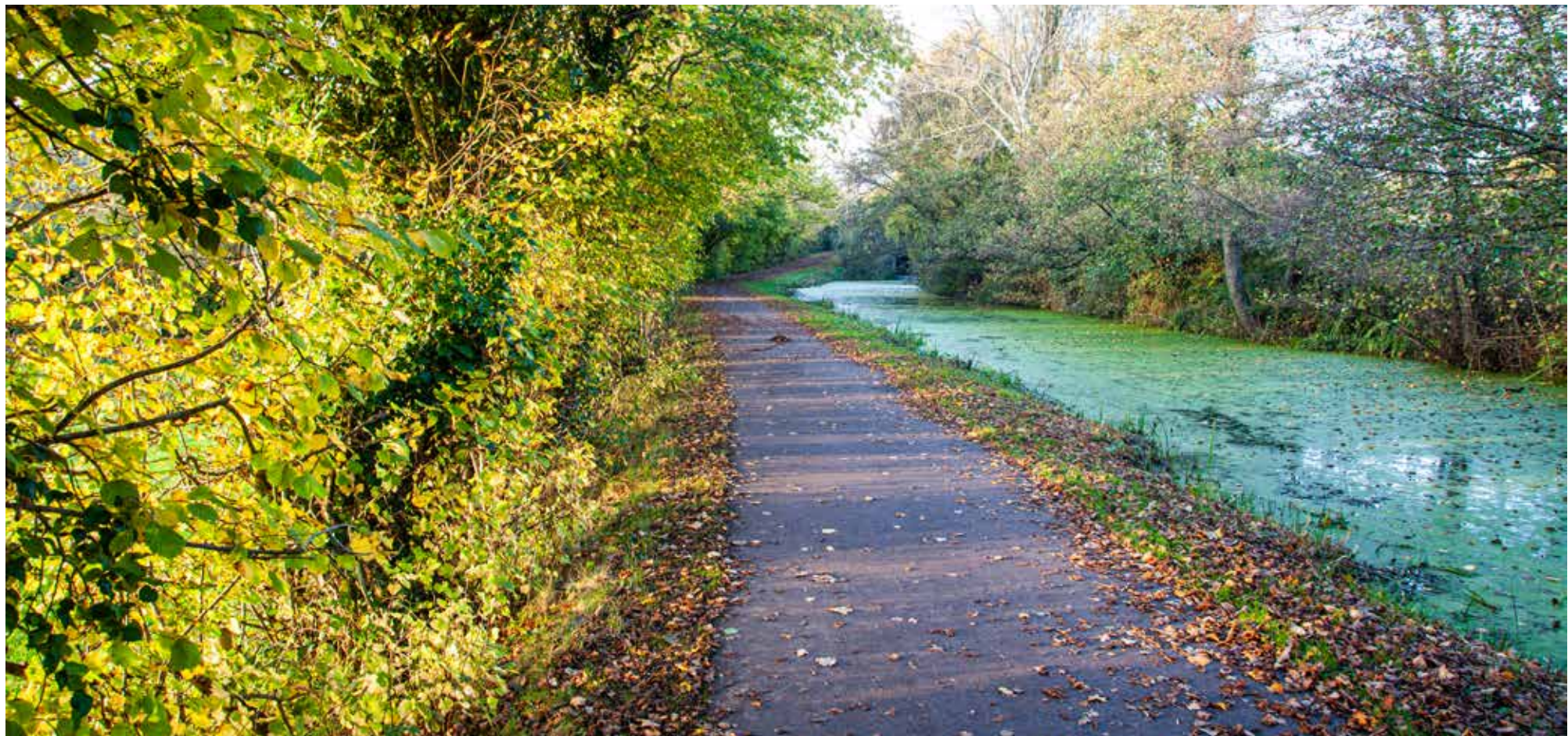


<b>Objective 8: To build a skilled and engaged Canal Volunteer network and programme of work that supports the sustainable management of the canal corridor by taking a coordinated approach to activity</b>					
Develop and seek funding for a volunteer skills and development project which will continue to build the base of volunteers and increase skills. Volunteer activity will be guided by the built heritage asset register and ecological opportunity mapping. To include, where possible, a Volunteer Supervisor post to lead the project.	Thematic Working Group: Communities and Partnership	Torfaen Voluntary Alliance MBACT	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 9: To improve the condition of all the canal's heritage value by ensuring its preservation and enhancement is appropriately considered and managed</b>					
<b>Objective 10: To raise the profile of the canal's heritage significance to support greater appreciation and knowledge through community engagement and information sharing</b>					
Develop an oral history project to capture spoken history of the Torfaen canal to save for future generations and to share with communities. Seek funding to deliver.	Thematic Working Group: Resilient Heritage		Funding	1-6	
Develop exhibition of canal heritage.	TCBC Canal Coordinator	Torfaen Museum Community NLHF	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 11: To achieve the Vision of restoring full navigation to Cwmbran town centre by developing a business case, securing resource, and funding and creating a new canal-side destination</b>					
Prepare a business case including economic / social / environmental case for investment to support funding bids that deliver restoration and navigation works from Five Locks to Cwmbran Town Centre.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Torfaen Canal Partnership External socio-economic consultancy services	Funding	1-4	
Prepare full design and cost work packages for each canal Strategy Area to enable step by step/full delivery of navigation to Cwmbran Town Centre.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	TCBC Canal Operations Group Torfaen Canal Partnership External design/ engineering/ cost consultancy services	Funding	1-4	



Seek private sector investment and delivery partners to support the development of Canalside in line with Policy SAA 2 of the Torfaen Local Development Plan (2013).	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Torfaen Canal Partnership	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team.	4	
Seek funding for implementing Strategy Area project packages according to the Fundraising Strategy.	TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team.		Funding	1-6	

**Objective 12: To enable job creation and growth within the Borough by promoting existing and attracting new business and investment along the canal corridor**



### Phase 3 (2029 – 2034) Reaching the Town Centre

Action	Lead	Partners	Dependencies	Relevant Section/s of Canal	Theme
<b>Objective 1: To manage the canal asset efficiently, effectively, and sustainably to provide a safe and functional waterway and tow path, with the emerging impacts of climate change and nature emergency duly considered through a coordinated management plan</b>					
Consider the long-term plans for commercial operation of the canal within Torfaen.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 2: To continuously improve the Canal Management Plan through regular monitoring and review</b>					
Continue to undertake an annual review and update of the Canal Management Plan.	TCBC Canal Operations Group		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 3: To ensure the Canal is accessible, welcoming, and safe for all, through delivery of specific project interventions</b>					
Work with neighbouring canal owners to develop a consistent approach along the length of tow path.	TCBC Canal Coordinator	All LAs All Canal Partners	None	1-6	
<b>Objective 4: To develop the canal as an outstanding destination in its own right which attracts more visitors through the development of a strategic leisure offer that enhances the canal's role as a link between attractions within and outside of Torfaen</b>					
Continue to develop wider connections with local and national organisations and schemes to promote the canal as a "destination."	Torfaen Canal Partnership	Canal and River Trust MBACT Blaenavon World Heritage Site Partnership	Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 5: To improve the canal as a strategic travel route by increasing opportunities for people to use sustainable transport options for all or some of their journey.</b>					
Consider opportunities for integrating the canal and tow path within wider transport strategies particularly plans for greener transport options linking the canal with the wider borough.	Thematic Working Group: Destination development		Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 6: To support a partnership approach to implementing, delivering, communicating, and monitoring the Strategic Action Plan by implementing a governance framework</b>					
Develop links with Newport City Council and Caerphilly Borough County Council as part of future planning for continuing restoration further south.	Torfaen Canal Partnership		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 7: To build and improve community cohesion along the canal corridor, by engaging with diverse communities to cocreate inclusive opportunities for more people to get involved in achieving the vision of this Strategy</b>					



<b>Objective 8: To build a skilled and engaged Canal Volunteer network and programme of work that supports the sustainable management of the canal corridor by taking a coordinated approach to activity</b>					
Continue to develop links with community groups along the canal to explore opportunities to integrate the canal into their medium- and long-term individual project aspirations e.g. Friends of groups.	TCBC Canal Coordinator		None	1-6	
<b>Objective 9: To improve the condition of all the canal's heritage value by ensuring its preservation and enhancement is appropriately considered and managed</b>					
Review and update existing Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Proposals.	TCBC Planning	Cadw	Funding	1-6	
Develop Design Guidance for the Canal Conservation Area as Supplementary Planning Guidance to the Replacement Local Development Plan to assist management of the canal and inform the development of restoration/navigation design proposals.	TCBC Planning	Cadw	Funding	1-6	
Through the activities to restore navigation to the canal, the condition of the canal's heritage will be improved long term.	All		Funding	1-6	
<b>Objective 10: To raise the profile of the canal's heritage significance to support greater appreciation and knowledge through community engagement and information sharing</b>					
<b>Objective 11: To achieve the Vision of restoring full navigation to Cwmbran town centre by developing a business case, securing resource, and funding and creating a new canal-side destination</b>					
Complete restoration work packages to a new canal destination in Cwmbran Town Centre.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Torfaen Canal Partnership	Funding	1-4	
Explore feasibility to further develop the Ty Coch Restoration Site.	TCBC Canal Coordinator TCBC Strategic Regeneration Team	Torfaen Canal Partnership	Funding	6	
Work with Newport City Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council to develop long term aspirations for restoring navigability further south.	Torfaen Canal Partnership	Newport City Council Caerphilly County Borough Council	None	6	



**Objective 12: To enable job creation and growth within the Borough by promoting existing and attracting new business and investment along the canal corridor**

Work with private sector investment partners to develop a new canal-side destination to the west of Cwmbran Town Centre.

Torfaen Canal Partnership

Private sector development partners  
Owners of Cwmbran Town Centre

Investment Partners

4







The  
**Monmouthshire  
& Brecon  
Canal**  
Strategy 2024 - 2034