

# Cwmbran

Torfaen County (Monmouthshire)

'Mark One' New Town – Designated 4 November 1949

Cwmbran was the first New Town to be designated in Wales and followed proposals made by Lewis Silkin in 1948 for two Welsh New Towns. Cwmbran included existing housing and industry and was partly constrained by existing railway lines and a canal. It was designed to provide housing for those employed in existing industry who travelled from the South Wales Valleys. It was thus an unusual 'Mark One' New Town in that it was designed to provide homes and not employment, and was to intended correct an existing imbalance rather create a new 'balanced community'. Today, Cwmbran is the largest settlement in Torfaen County Borough and is well located, with good access to the M4 and the city coastal zone. It is considered by its current planners to be successful and popular.



Ruth Shanville/Geograph.org.uk

## Key facts:

- **Location:** 8 kilometres north of Newport, 21 kilometres north east of Cardiff.
- **2011 Census population:** 48,535, in 20,495 households.<sup>1</sup>
- **Local authority:** Torfaen County Borough Council.
- **Local Plan status:** Torfaen County Borough Local Development Plan (to 2021) (adopted 2013).

## New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 4 November 1949.
- **Designated area:** 1,279 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 55,000 (population at designation: 12,000).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to provide houses for existing industry. The original masterplan was prepared by Anthony Minoprio with Spencely and Macfarlane – Minoprio had been the planner of Crawley New Town. Development Corporation wound up 31 March 1988.

## Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in Cwmbran that are owner-occupied (65.5%) is 6.9% and 2% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. The proportion of socially rented homes (24.6%) is 3.1% and 6.5% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively.
- Cwmbran has similar levels of deprivation to the rest of Wales, with a slightly higher proportion of households (0.6%, compared with the Welsh average of 0.5%) being deprived in all four dimensions. There are pockets of high deprivation, particularly in the Northern and Central Cwmbran areas.
- The 2011 Census reported that the 'general health' of Cwmbran residents is slightly below the UK New Towns and UK averages. 43.5% declared themselves to be in 'very good' health – 3.2% and 4.1% below the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 32.8% declared themselves to be

in 'good' health – less than 1% lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages. 6.4% declared 'bad' health – 2.1% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages.

## Employment/economic profile:

- The town centre is the main retail centre in Torfaen County Borough, serving as a sub-regional centre for Newport and Monmouthshire. The town centre has an extensive range of services, and there are positive opportunities for expanding its role.
- Cwmbran's proximity to the M4 and the city coastal zone makes the area attractive in terms of investment for business, commercial and residential development. Over 50% of the population of Torfaen County Borough is located in Cwmbran, and the Development Plan aims to secure further investment around this key settlement.

## Development Corporation legacy:

- The town has a good economic base, in terms of both the town centre and industrial land allocated and developed.
- There is a need to address the simultaneous ageing of the housing stock, and the bad design of some housing areas.
- The Mon and Brecon Canal was regarded as a liability rather than a strength, which has limited its use as a key asset for the town.

## Key issues for the future:

- Pressure for growth in the Newport/Cwmbran area could potentially lead to coalescence, and there is a shared objective between both local authorities to maintain their physical separation and retain their distinctive characters.
- Cwmbran has been identified as a 'growth hub' for Torfaen Borough.
- Expansion/redevelopment of the town centre.
- Protection and further allocations of industrial land.

<sup>1</sup> Totals for the following wards: Upper Cwmbran, Pontnewydd, Croesyceiliog North, Croesyceiliog South, Fairwater, St Dials, Llanyrafon North, Llanyrafon South, Llantarnam, Greenmeadow, Coed Eva, Two Locks

## Did you know?

The Burton Biscuits factory in Llantarnam, Cwmbran, employs around 800 people, producing 1.85 tonnes of Wagon Wheels every hour. The factory also makes Jammie Dodgers and Maryland Cookies.