

Newtown

Powys

'Mark Three' New Town – Designated 18 December 1967

In 1957 a group of county councils established the Mid-Wales Industrial Development Association – one of the first regional development bodies in the UK – to arrest rural depopulation in Mid-Wales, promote industry and revitalise economic and social life. Following an initial proposal for a large NewTown, a more modest approach was adopted, based on the expansion of the existing market town of Newtown under a new Mid-Wales Development Corporation (succeeded on dissolution by the Development Board for Rural Wales). The expansion of Newtown was to involve the provision of cultural and commercial facilities to encourage and sustain immigration. Factories were built in advance of homes to accelerate development. Today, Newtown is the largest town in mid-Wales and a primary key settlement in the Wales Spatial Plan.



Key facts:

- **Location:** 53 kilometres east of Aberystwyth, 51 kilometres south west of Shrewsbury.
- **2011 Census population:** 11,357, in 5,015 households.¹
- **Local authority:** Powys County Council.
- **Local Plan status:** Powys Local Development Plan 2011-2026 Deposit Draft, published in July 2014. Wales Spatial Plan (adopted 2004, updated 2008).

New Town designation:

- **Designated:** 18 December 1967.
- **Designated area:** 606 hectares.
- **Intended population:** 13,000 (population at designation: 5,500).
- **Development Corporation:** Designated to stem the depopulation of rural Mid-Wales and to create conditions for economic growth in the area. Outline plan drawn up by Cwmbrian Development Corporation, acting as agents for the Mid-Wales Development Corporation. Development Corporation wound up 31 March 1977.

Housing, deprivation and health:

- The proportion of homes in Newtown that are owner-occupied (52%) is 6.7% and 11.5% lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 30.7% of households are in social rent – 9.2% and 12.6% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively.
- 36.7% of Newtown households are not deprived in any dimension – 0.9% and 2.3% lower than the Welsh New Towns and Wales averages, respectively. 35.2% of Newtown households are deprived in one dimension – 1.6% and 3.2% higher than Welsh New Towns and Wales averages, respectively. The numbers of Newtown households in deprivation in two, three or four dimensions are lower than the Welsh NewTown and Wales averages.
- The 2011 Census reported that 43.6% of Newtown residents declared themselves to be in 'very good' health – 3.1% and 4.0% lower than the UK New Towns and UK averages, respectively. 35.5% declared themselves to be in 'good'

health – a little over 1.5% higher than the UK New Towns average and UK averages. 5.3% and 1.4%, respectively, declared themselves to be in 'bad' and 'very bad' health – just over 1% higher than the UK New Towns and UK averages for 'bad' health and around 0.2% above the UK New Towns and UK averages for 'very bad' health.

Employment/economic profile:

- As a primary key settlement, Newtown offers a variety of small, locally owned businesses and some national retailers, serving its resident population and the wider Mid-Wales area.
- Newtown has recently seen large new retail developments, including new supermarkets.
- Newtown is within the Powys Local Growth Zone.
- Powys Regeneration Partnership is bringing £4 million into the local economy for innovative regeneration through local business and community groups, funded through the Rural Development Plan, supported by the Welsh Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Development Corporation legacy:

- The majority of the new housing was well designed.
- Flood control defences and the riverside parkland are assets.
- There was substantial industrial development and relocation of fellmongery 'downwind' and out of town.
- Not all the road infrastructure envisaged has materialised.
- Some pre-designation Newtown residents still criticise what they considered to be a housing allocation policy in parts of Newtown that did not favour existing residents.

Key issues for the future:

- Development of a premium business site.
- Providing housing to accompany strategic employment sites.
- Restoring the Montgomery Canal and promoting it for tourism.
- Transport network improvements, such as the Newtown bypass, to support development and regeneration opportunities in parts of Powys.

¹ Newtown and Llanllwchaearn (parish) Census data used

Did you know?

Social reformer and industrial pioneer Robert Owen was born in Newtown in 1771 and left to seek his fortune ten years later.