

TRANSFORMING CHEPSTOW A PLACEMAKING PLAN SUMMER 2023



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In collaboration with

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... on behalf of:



monmouthshire
sir fynwy



Trawsnewid Trefi
Transforming Towns



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Placemaking Plan

Date: 19-05-2023

Job: 10406

Version: 09 (English)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Monmouthshire County Council and Chepstow Town Council has identified the need for a Place making Plan for Chepstow that provides the strategic framework to guide future changes in the town. The "Transforming Chepstow Plan" is the place making strategy and plan for the town.

This Plan has a foundation in the Place Plan that Chepstow Town Council was developing during the Covid-19 pandemic, with the Town Council joining Monmouthshire County Council in 2022 in preparing this strategic regeneration framework. Both Councils have identified synergies in coming together to produce a single Place making Plan which will combine and develop further the emerging themes and solutions from the Place Plan work in alignment with and in support of relevant Welsh Government (WG) / Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) policies, plans and funding opportunities.

The purpose of this document is to guide future regeneration spend in the town and ensure future Chepstow is an attractive and vibrant town well placed to serve its existing and future residents and visitors.

The Plan highlights the challenges facing the town which have been identified through bringing together other studies and conversations in addition to several consultation opportunities that were provided during October and November 2022. Community surveys have identified areas to prioritise with traffic and congestion, the health of Chepstow's High Street and the need for a range of community facilities being at the forefront of people's minds, notwithstanding other areas for focus.

The Plan's Vision for the next fifteen years is therefore centred on ***"Chepstow being a great place for local people, businesses and visitors. The town centre is an accessible and distinctive place for local enterprise, arts, culture and public spaces, with transport and movement improved through integrated and multi-modal provision. The town's neighbourhoods are well-connected, with the right range of services to support residents' well-being through a focus on green solutions."***

The Vision is supported by four key themes, being **i) Getting Around the Town ii) Community and People iii) Open, Natural Space, Environment and Well-Being and iv) Destination and Experience.**

From listening to the local community, understanding how ideas can address priority policy areas and identifying areas of funding and resources, the Plan has identified its priority projects, whilst not dismissing other lower-ranking actions for the town.

The Plan's immediate focus is centred on the town's High Street through a menu of activity that is about tackling vacant properties, offering building improvement grants and finding ways to activate footfall through work space and meanwhile projects. The role of the Drill Hall in the wider town centre is also recognised as an art, cultural and community hub that can complement the High Street offer and appeal.

To create a better environment for all that allows supports the local economy and the

wider well-being of Chepstow is vital. The Plan therefore prioritises investment at the train station with a bus and rail interchange that is linked into town centre bus stops, a demand responsive transport scheme that operates into evening, as well as daytime, and wider active travel links across the town.

The role of green infrastructure in the daily well-being of communities is also identified as important, such as in the Dell area of the town centre and within Bulwark and Thornwell.

Other supporting projects are outlined

that the Plan can enable and support when needed. The Plan is not a sealed down document but can react to other opportunities as and when they occur.

The Plan provides the platform for putting Chepstow back on the map at a strategic and local level. Strategically it provides a focus to have conversations with Welsh Government and other national organisations, providing a business case for investment and funding. At a local level it provides a co-ordinated mechanism for directing action across all partners and a common ground for delivery.

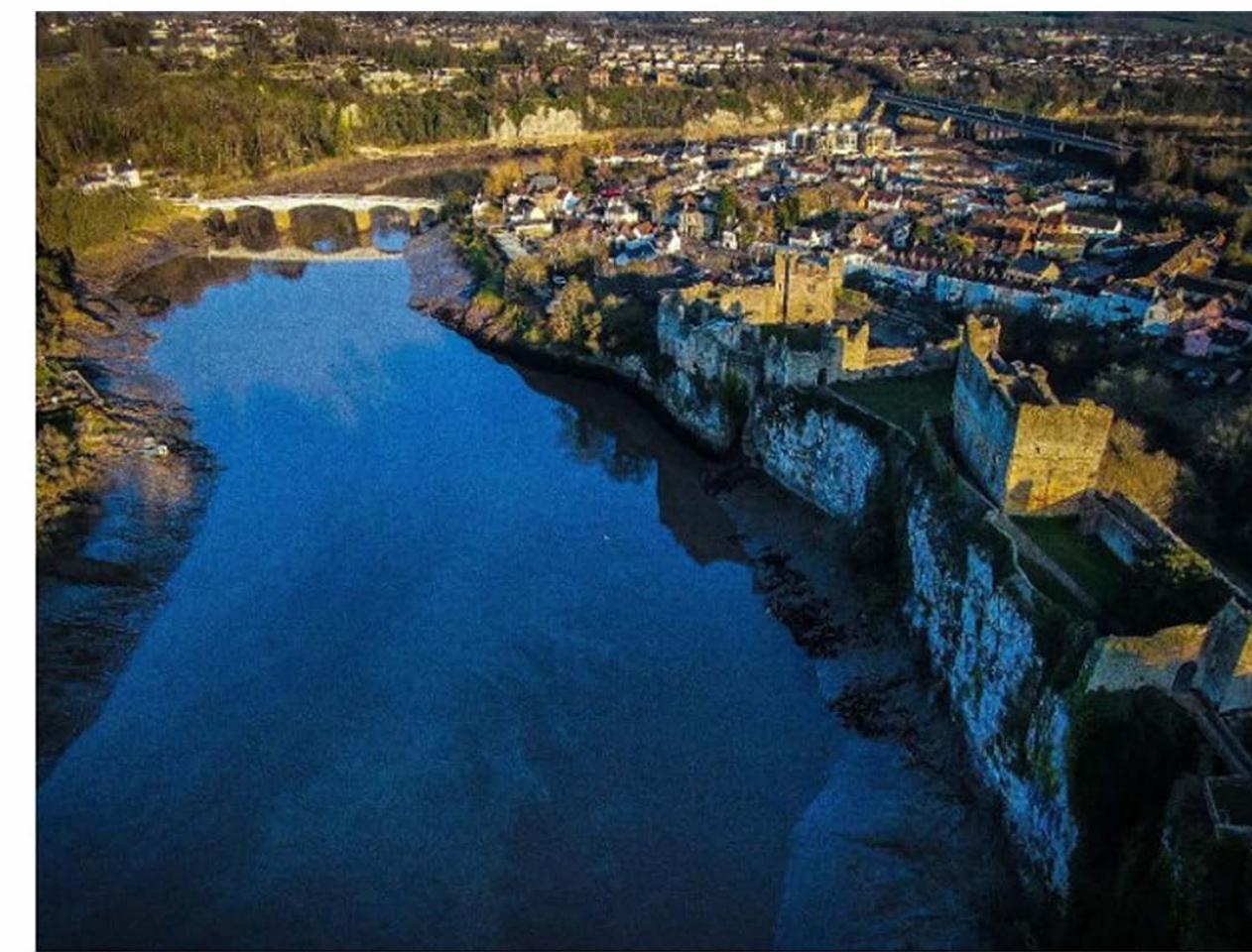


Image from: www.visitmonmouthshire.com/explore/chepstow

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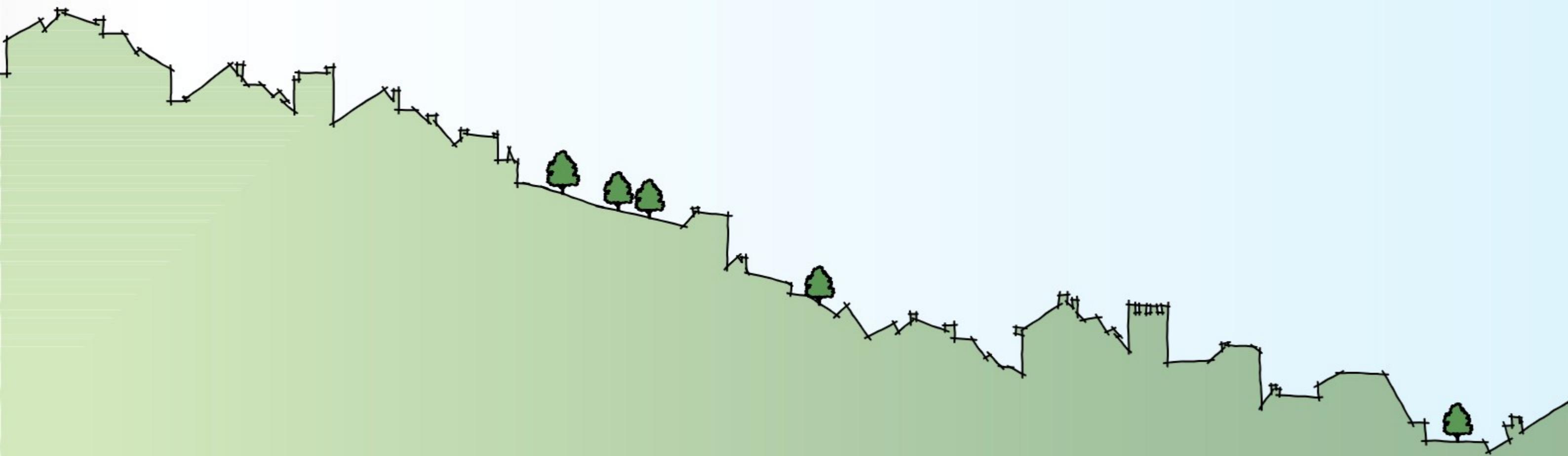
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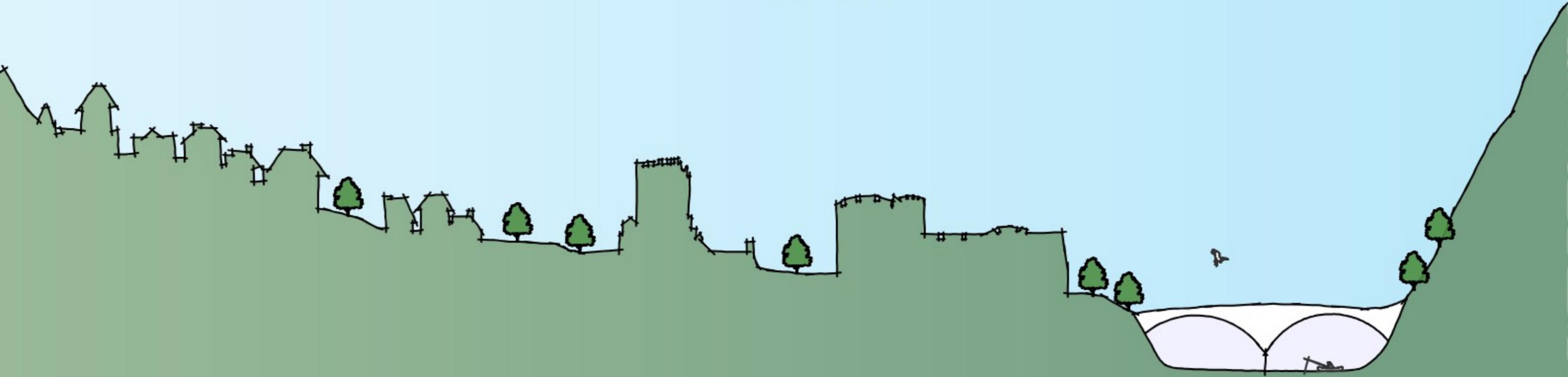
CHAPTER 04

VISION, THEMES
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Chapter 01

The Placemaking Plan



PURPOSE

Monmouthshire County Council and Chepstow Town Council identified the need for a Placemaking Plan for Chepstow that would provide the strategic framework which will guide future changes in the town. The "Transforming Chepstow Plan" is the place making strategy and plan for the town.

Chepstow Town Council have been working to produce a Place Plan, a shared vision for the town developed through extensive stakeholder engagement. Monmouthshire County Council has identified an opportunity to prepare a strategic regeneration framework for Chepstow which would guide future regeneration spend in the town and ensure future Chepstow is an attractive and vibrant town well placed to serve its existing and future residents and visitors. The plan will also expect to unpick some of the existing challenges as well as look ahead at the transformation required to ensure that the town is able to capitalise on potential opportunities resulting from a planned future increase in population with the current Local Development Plan (LDP).

Both Councils have identified synergies in coming together to produce a single Placemaking Plan which will combine and develop further the emerging themes and solutions from the Place Plan work in alignment with and in support of relevant Welsh Government (WG) / Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) policies, plans and funding opportunities.

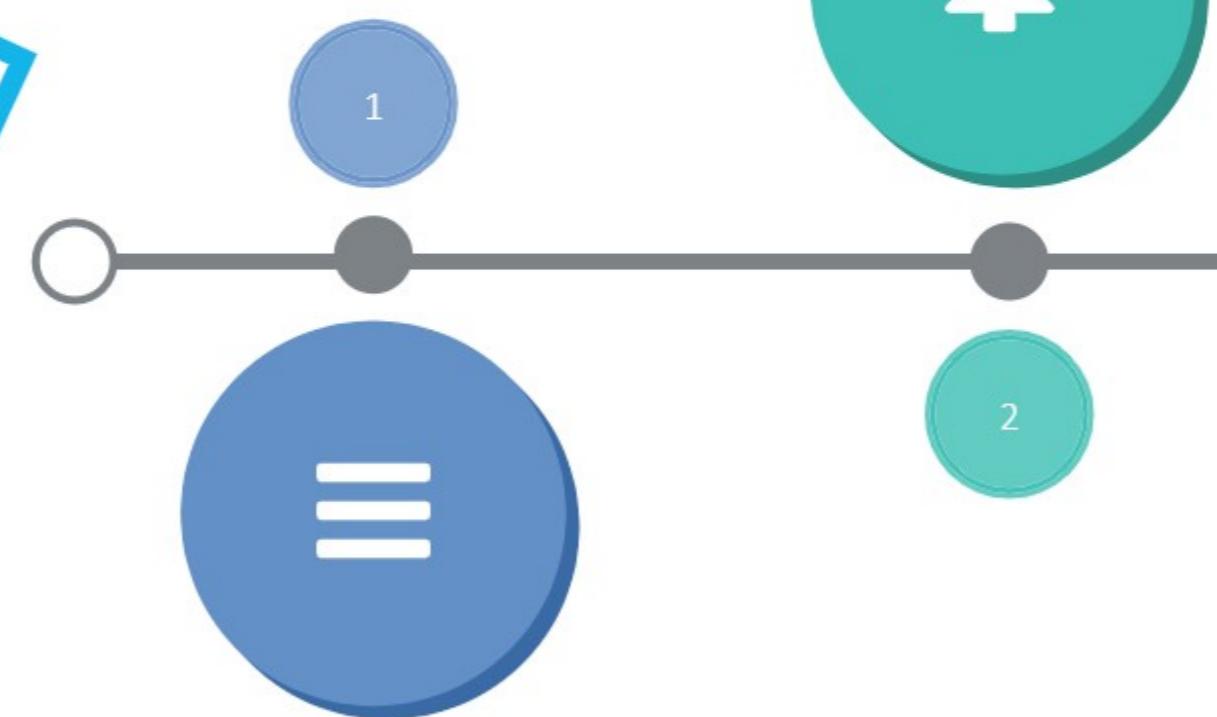
Plan Aim

To prepare a strategic regeneration framework for Chepstow which would guide future regeneration spend in the town and ensure future Chepstow is an attractive and vibrant town well placed to serve its existing and future residents and visitors.

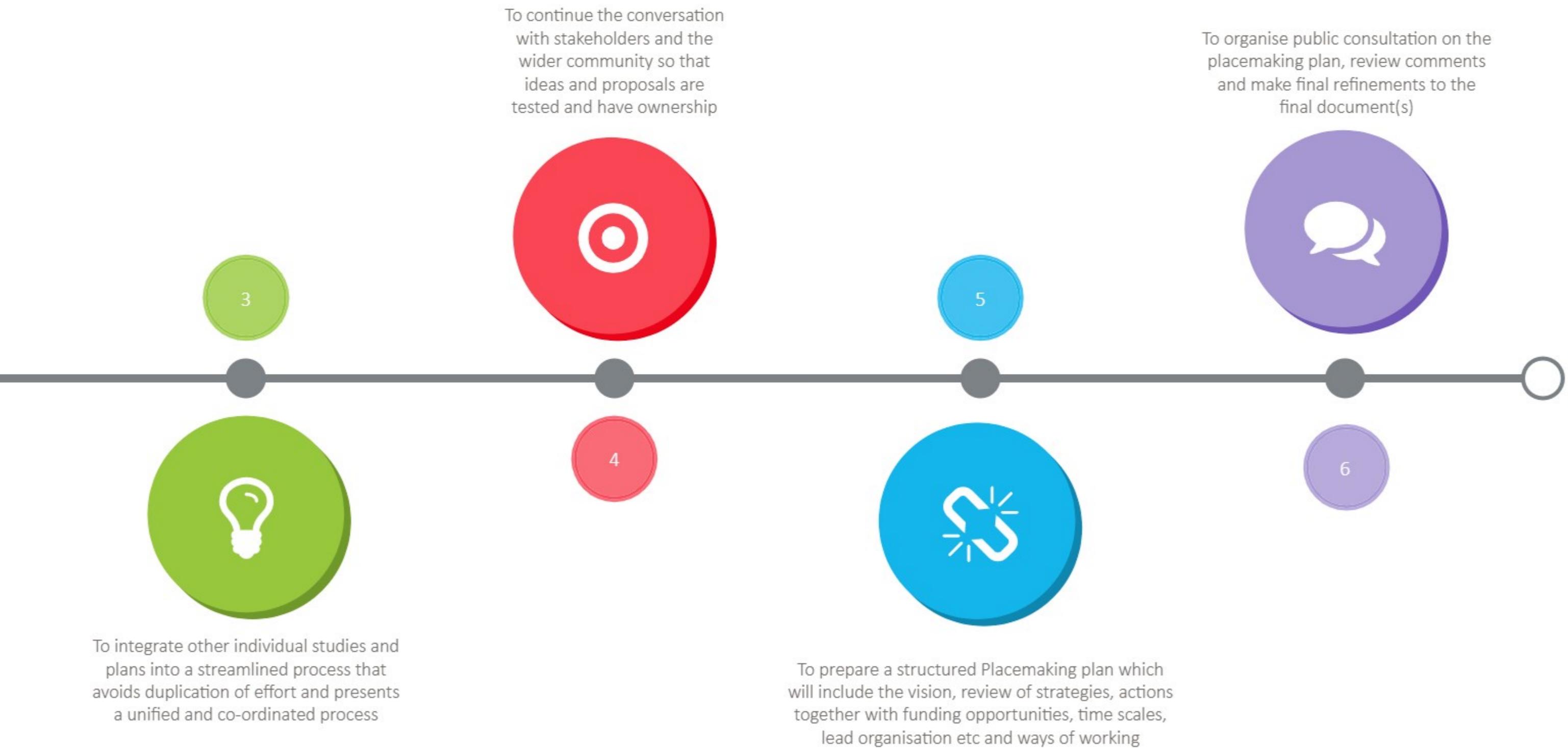
Plan Objectives



To use the shared vision and emerging themes as a basis for developing a place based plan of actions



To review, understand and use the conversations from the Place Plan work so that there is continuity of process, thinking and delivery



WHAT IS A PLACEMAKING PLAN?

Welsh Government's Planning Policy Wales states that placemaking is:

"a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes. It draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote people's prosperity, health, happiness and well-being in the widest sense"

Placemaking considers the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings.

This will be true for major developments creating new places as well as small developments created within a wider place.

Placemaking should not add additional cost to a development, but will require smart, multi-dimensional and innovative thinking to implement and should be considered at the earliest possible stage.

Placemaking adds social, economic, environmental and cultural value to development proposals resulting in benefits which go beyond a physical development boundary and embed wider resilience into planning decisions.

The Design Commission for Wales's Placemaking Guide 2020 talks about the need for a holistic approach being needed that takes into consideration whole places rather than individual land uses or each development in isolation.

The concept of placemaking has developed in response to 'placelessness' within the built environment whereby new development lacks a distinct identity, character, sense of community or collective ownership. Placemaking has grown in importance as the links with health and wellbeing have been more explicitly explored and understood.

How Does a Plan Support Good Placemaking?

Whilst a Placemaking Plan is not the sole solution to managing change and providing direction to a town like Chepstow it is important to frame long term aspirations and to also nourish relationships between the place, the people, and the activities. The goal here is to make the whole greater than the sum of its parts.

A long-term strategy and plan also ensures practical issues have been considered and the design of the space is able to accommodate the likely range of end uses required. A Plan is also about creating a place and not just about design as it's about creating and developing an experience that people feel welcome and comfortable in.

Long-term placemaking activities should be developed in consultation with the community as they are the local experts who can present valuable perspectives and insights about the area's history, culture, function, or any other aspect that's considered meaningful for the people.

Key Drivers

The following key drivers have been highlighted as part of the community led Place Plan process. These are:

Empowering Communities & Maintaining Services

To protect, enhance and diversify the town's social and cultural assets as well as our valued facilities and services to meet the needs of all members of the community.

Open Spaces & Natural Environment

To protect and where possible improve the natural environment around and within the town and ensure that people of all ages and levels of mobility have access to high quality green and open spaces.

Shopping, Working & Visiting

To ensure the town centre remains an accessible and attractive hub of the town and the wider area and maintain and grow the position of Chepstow as a great place to live, work and visit.

Getting Around

To address issues associated with highways and the impact of high volumes of traffic and poor air quality, and to support the creation of a local transport system that is fit for all journeys that all people need to take in and beyond the town.

Heritage & Place

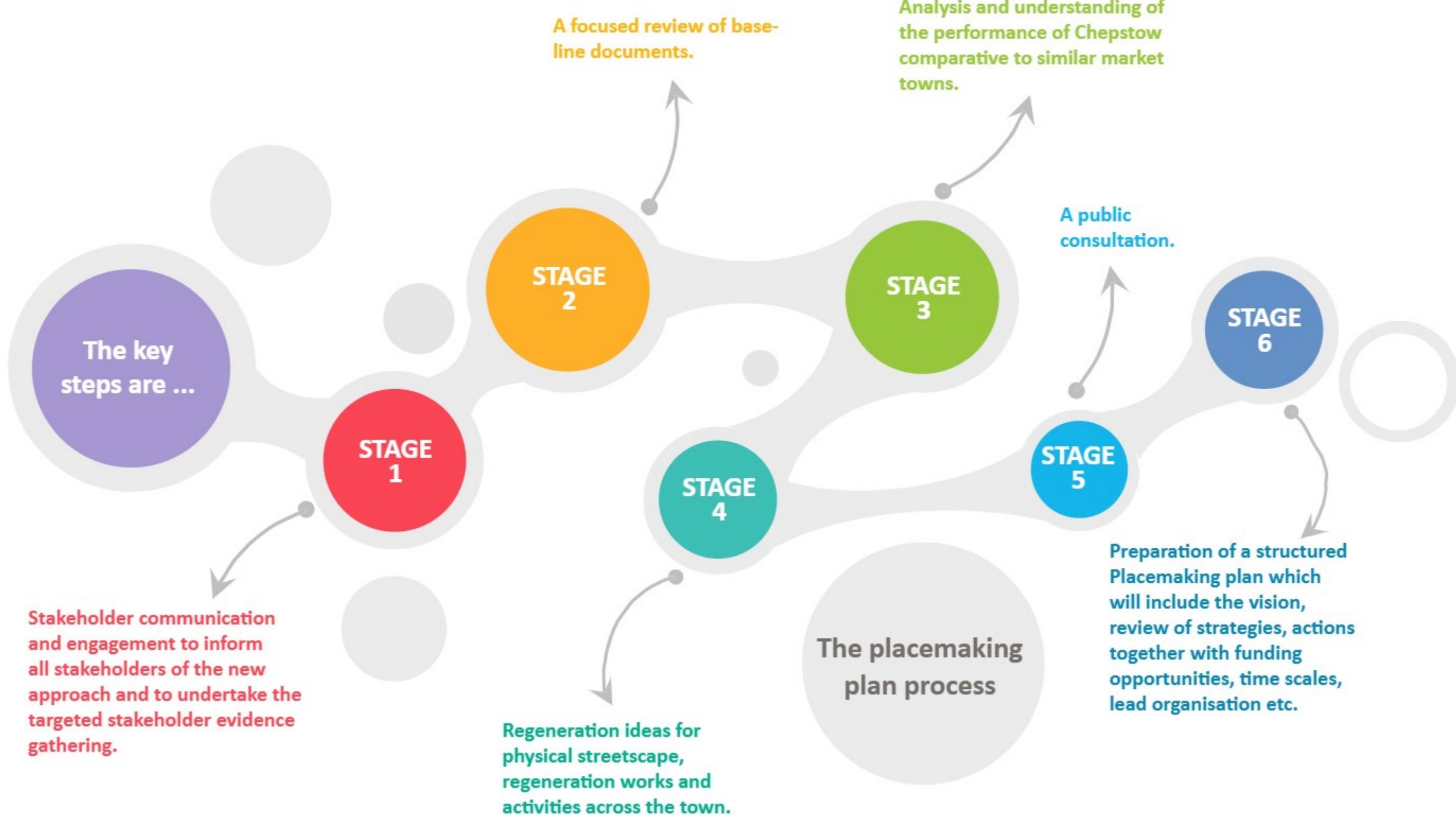
To protect the heritage and built environment assets of the town and celebrate our culture that will help in generating a sense of belonging and pride amongst the local population as well as attracting visitors into town, as well as retailers and employers.

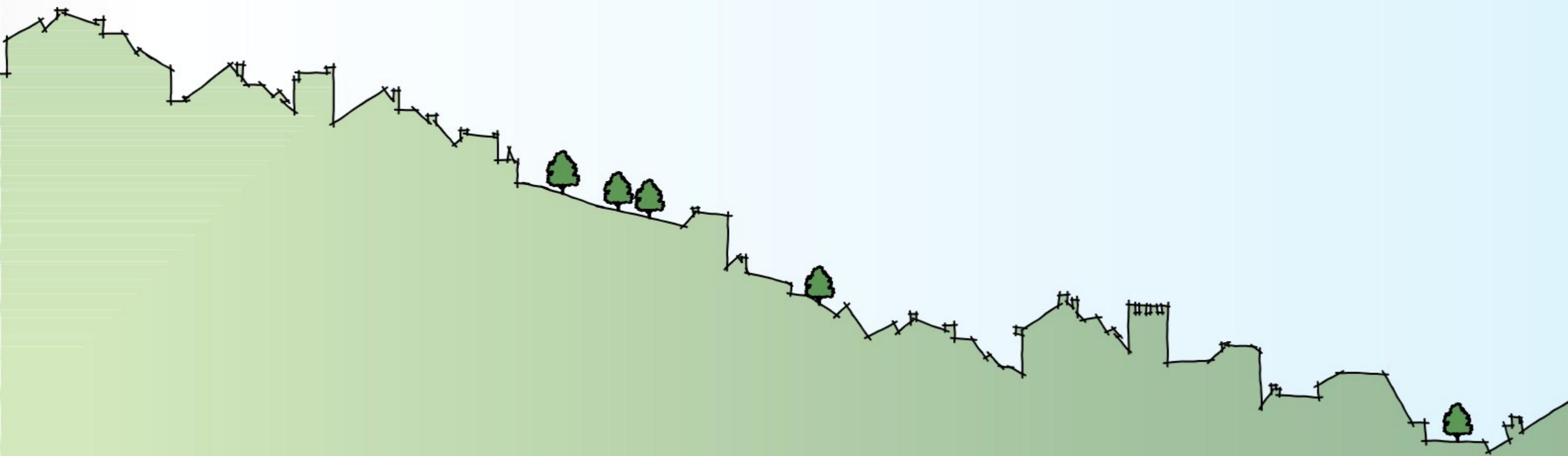
Future Homes & Sustainable Development

To ensure that the community of Chepstow plays an active role in the future growth of the town, considering the needs of current and future generations for quality, climate responsive and affordable homes, both within Chepstow and the surrounding areas.



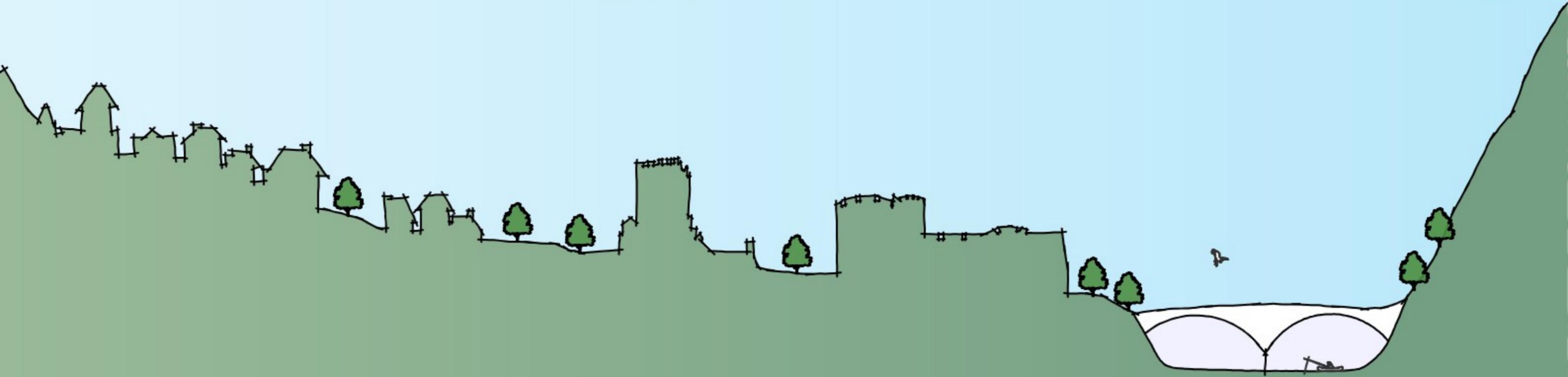
THE PLAN PROCESS





Chapter 02

Chepstow in Context



LOCATION CONTEXT

Chepstow is a town located in the South Wales region in Monmouthshire which abuts the border with Gloucestershire in the east.

It is located in a strategic location on the River Wye and a short distance from the River Severn which is about 2 miles to the south east.

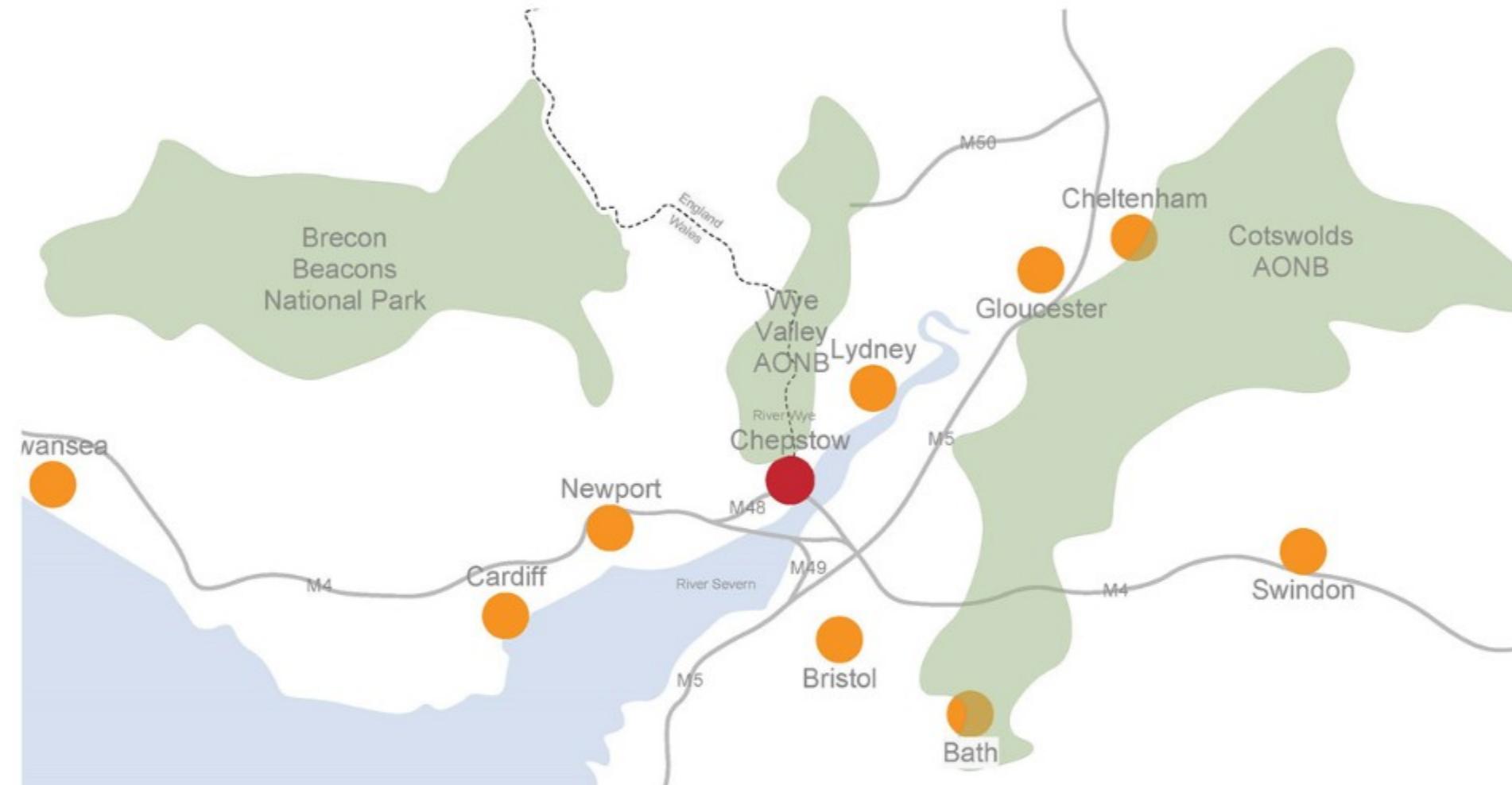
Chepstow is located approximately 30 miles east of Cardiff and 17 miles north west of Bristol which are two major hubs of employment and travel within the region.

The population is approximately 14,000. Newport is the closest large Welsh city to Chepstow which lays approximately 19 miles to the west and is easily accessed via the M48/M4 corridor widening up travel within the region.

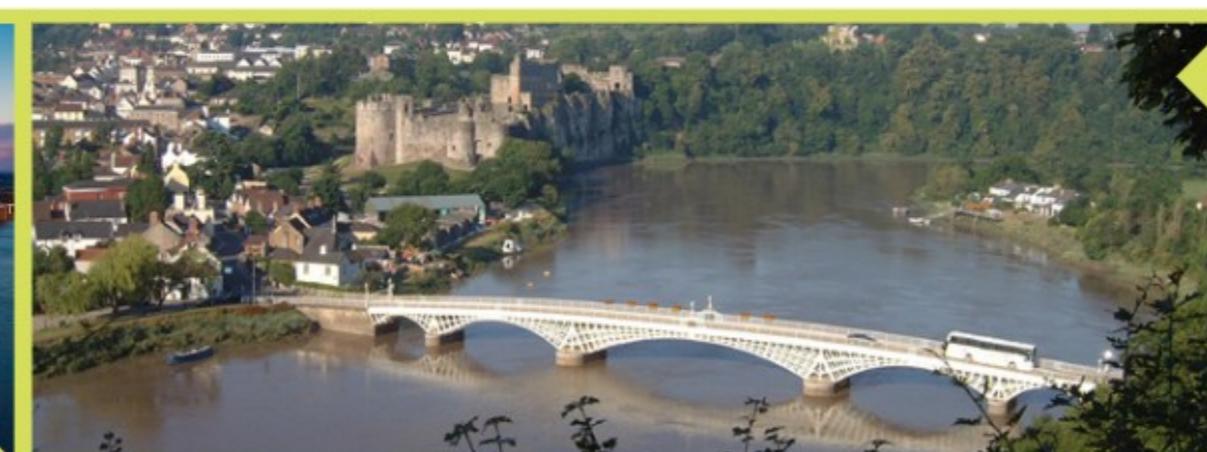
Other significant settlements in this area include Caldicot which lays 3 miles to the southwest.

Chepstow has transport links with direct train services to Newport and Gloucester which further open up to the national rail network.

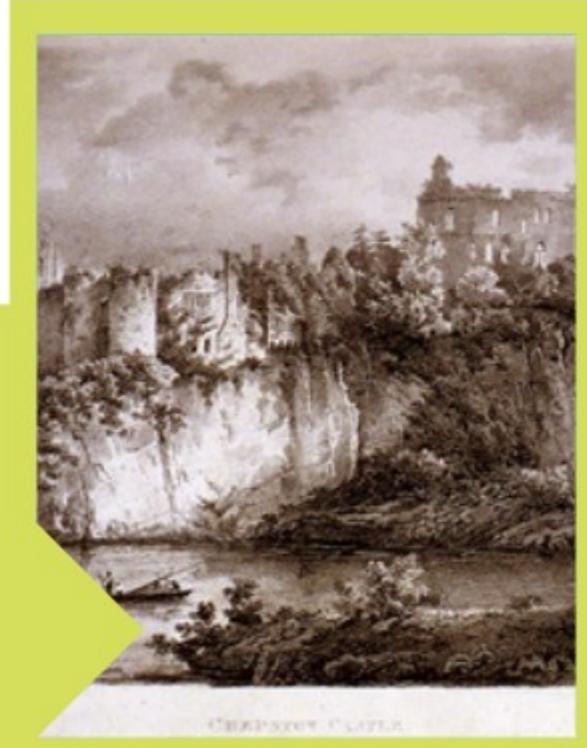
The M48 leads directly to Chepstow and crosses the River Severn leading through to Aust before rejoining the M4 and M5 at Almondsbury. The M4 Severn Bridge can be accessed directly from Chepstow via the M48 also. The A48 links to Gloucester and the Forest of Dean moving up the Wye Valley.



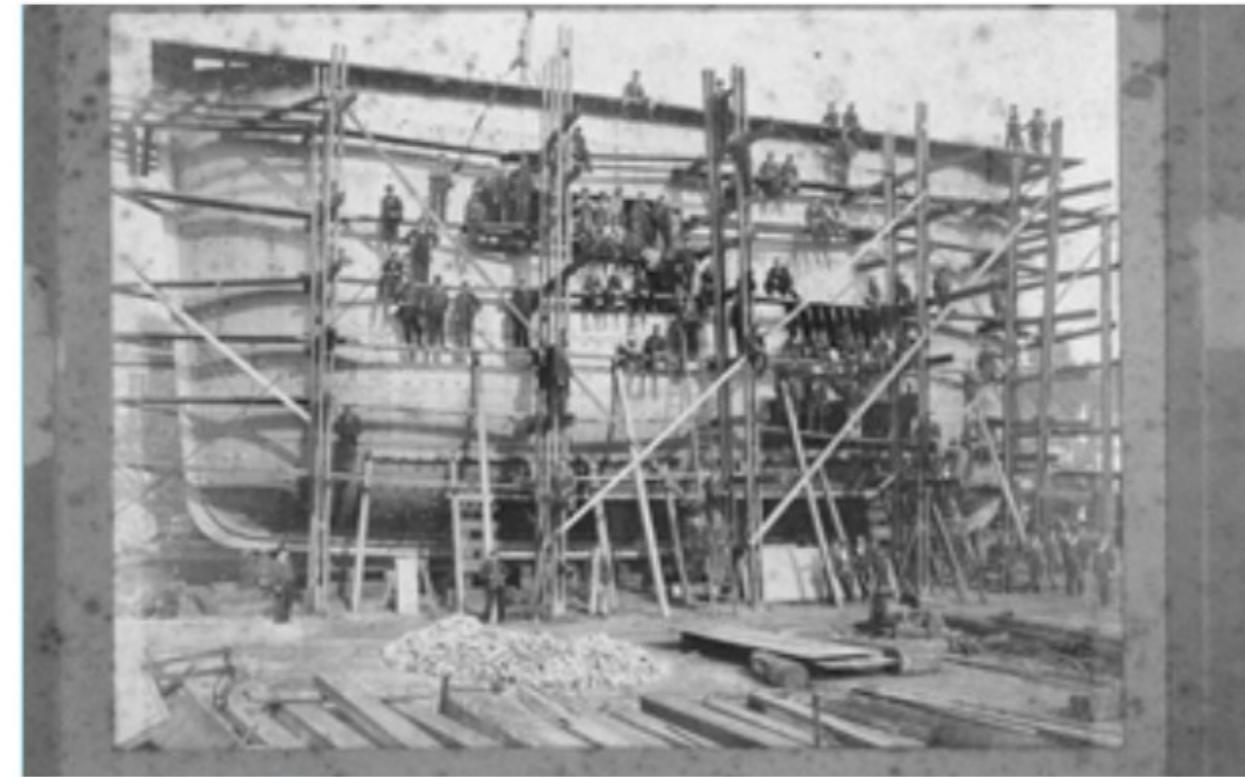
M48 Severn Bridge



Chepstow Castle on River Wye



CHEPSTOW TIMELINE OF HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT



Source: MonHeritage Archives

The name Chepstow derives from the Old English *ceap/chepe stowe*, meaning *market place* or *trading centre*. The word "stow" usually denotes a place of special significance, and the root *cheip* is the same as that in other placenames such as Chipping Sodbury and Cheapside. The name is first recorded in 1307, but may have been used by the English in earlier centuries. Welsh name *Cas-gwent* refers to the "castle of Gwent".

CHEPSTOW TIMELINE OF HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The oldest site of known habitation at Chepstow is at Thornwell- overlooking the estuaries of the Wye and Severn close to the modern M48 motorway junction, where archaeological investigations in advance of recent housing development revealed continuous human occupation from the Mesolithic period of around 5000 BC until the end of the Roman period, about 400 AD. There are also Iron Age fortified camps in the area- dating from the time of the Silures, at Bulwark, 1 mile (1.6 km) south of the town centre, and at Piercefield and Lancaut, some 1.5 miles (2.4 km) to the north. During the Roman occupation- there was a bridge or causeway across the Wye, about 0.6 miles (0.97 km) upstream of the later town bridge.

After the Norman conquest of England Chepstow was a key location. It was at the lowest bridging point of the River Wye, provided a base from which to advance Norman control into South Wales, and controlled river access to Hereford and the Marches.

Chepstow Castle- was founded by William Fitzosbern, 1st Earl of Hereford, in 1067, and its Great Tower, often cited as the oldest surviving stone fortification in Britain, dates from that time or shortly afterwards.

The town mainly traded in timber and bark from the Wye Valley, and with Bristol. From medieval times, Chepstow was the largest port in Wales- its ships sailed as far as Iceland and Turkey, as well as to France and Portugal, and the town was known for its imports of wine.

Chepstow was given its first charter in 1524, and became part of Monmouthshire when the county was formed.

The castle and town changed hands several times during the English Civil War. The port continued

to flourish; during the period 1790 to 1795, records show a greater tonnage of goods handled than Swansea, Cardiff and Newport combined.

The town became an important centre for tourism from the late eighteenth century, when the "Wye Tour" became popular. Visitors regularly took boats from Ross-on-Wye and Monmouth down the river, visiting, drawing and painting the "picturesque" views of the area, which included those of Tintern Abbey, Piercefield House, and the ruined Chepstow Castle.

In the 19th century a shipbuilding industry developed, and the town was also known for the production of clocks, bells, and grindstones. The port's trade declined after the early 19th century, as Cardiff, Newport and Swansea became more suitable for handling the bulk export of coal and steel from the Glamorganshire and Monmouthshire valleys. However, shipbuilding was briefly revived when the National Shipyard No.1 was established during the First World War and for a short period afterwards, when the first prefabricated ships, including the War Glory, were constructed there. The influx of labour for the shipyards, from 1917, led to the start of "garden suburb" housing development at Hardwick (now known locally as "Garden City") and Bulwark.

The town developed rapidly after the opening of the Severn Bridge in 1966- which replaced the car ferry between Beachley and Aust and allowed easier commuting between Chepstow and larger centres including Bristol and Cardiff. In 2016 the 200th anniversary of the Wye Bridge and the 50th anniversary of the Severn Bridge were marked with celebrations in the town.



Source: MonHeritage Archives

POLICY SUMMARY - NATIONAL

Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) contributes to the seven national objectives through its five Organisational Goals (2017-2022).

All five contribute to this objective:

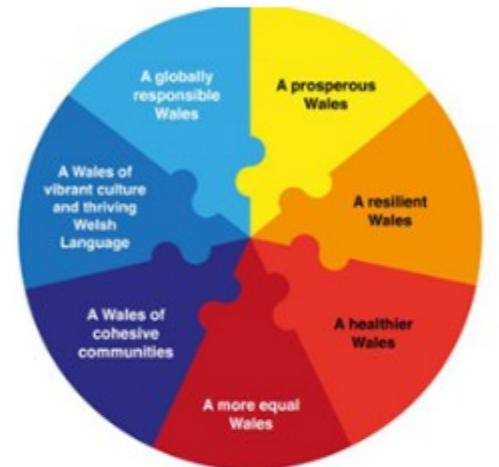
- The best possible start in life
- Lifelong well-being
- Maximise the potential of the natural and built environment
- Thriving and well-connected county
- Future-focused Council – including providing good sustainable local services whilst delivering excellent customer experience.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development.

The Well-being Act has established seven well-being goals which are intended to shape the work of all public bodies in Wales. In order to demonstrate that appropriate consideration has been given to the Well-being goals and sustainable development principle in the decision making process, public bodies are required to have regard to the 'five ways of working' contained in the Well-being Act. These require consideration of: involvement; collaboration; integration; prevention; and long term factors.

Planning Policy Wales 2018

Planning Policy Wales (PPW) sets out the land use planning policies of the Welsh Government. Within the document it sets out to define "Placemaking" as a holistic approach to the planning and design of development and spaces, focused on positive outcomes, which draws upon an area's potential to create high quality development and public spaces that promote



people's prosperity, health, happiness, and well-being in the widest sense.

In the context of Chepstow PPW see placemaking as considering the context, function and relationships between a development site and its wider surroundings. The policy document also sees it not as an additional cost to a development, but will require smart, multi-dimensional and innovative thinking to implement and should be considered at the earliest possible stage. Placemaking adds social, economic, environmental and cultural value to development proposals resulting in benefits which go beyond a physical development boundary and embed wider resilience into planning decisions.

The use of masterplans, development briefs or place plans can complement strategies by providing additional detail and supporting the implementation of development plan policies.

Wales Transport Strategy

The Wales Transport Strategy provides the framework for transport related activities and sets out the strategic priorities of a safe, integrated, sustainable, efficient and economic transport system serving Wales. It provides the context for

the Welsh Government's aim to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car, and supports a modal shift to walking, cycling and public transport. This is reflected in Planning Policy Wales and Future Wales, which put placemaking at the heart of the planning system. This modal shift is supported by the sustainable transport hierarchy, which prioritises walking, cycling and public transport.

The current Wales Transport Strategy, One Wales: Connecting the Nation, was published in 2008. Since then the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 has been introduced, which is increasingly influential in the way we integrate active travel with new development. This is essential to enable people to walk and cycle as part of their everyday activities. Metro schemes are also being developed in the Southeast, South West and the North, which are being driven by significant investment from the Welsh Government and its delivery partners.

Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013

The Act places a number of duties on the local authorities to continuously improve new and existing facilities and routes for walkers and cyclists and to prepare maps identifying current and potential future routes for their use. The Act also requires new road schemes to consider the needs of pedestrians and cyclists at planning and design stages. The active travel network should be designed or enhanced to meet a set of best practice standards.

Future Wales – the National Plan 2040

Future Wales – the National Plan 2040 is our national development framework, setting the direction for development in Wales to 2040. It is a development plan with a strategy for addressing 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 our communities.

Environment Act 2016 Part 1 Sustainable Management of Natural resources and Part 2 Climate Change

Natural resources are essential for the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we eat. They enhance the quality of the places where we live, work and visit and provide the landscapes and biodiversity that make these areas special. Natural resources that are healthy and thriving are also healthier for people, their communities and for the economy, but demands on our natural resources are increasing. If we don't act now to manage our natural resources sustainably, there will be serious consequences that affect us all. We need to change the way we do things so that we continue to benefit from our natural resources now and in the future.



NATIONAL (CONTD)

Environment Act 2016 Part 1 Sustainable Management of Natural resources and Part 2 Climate Change

The Environment Act helps us meet this challenge by introducing the sustainable management of natural resources as a new approach which ensures that the way in which the use of and the impacts on our natural resources do not result in their long term decline. We have learnt from the experiences of our international partners and are using international best practice by for example, implementing the UN Convention on Biological Diversity ecosystem approach, to help Wales lead the way on Sustainable Development. Our aim is to sustainably manage our natural resources in a way and at a rate that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generations and which contribute to the seven well-being goals in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

Part 1 of the Act- S6 Biodiversity Duty requires public authorities to seek to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote resilient ecosystems. To comply with this duty public authorities are required to embed consideration of biodiversity and ecosystems into policies, plans, programmes and projects. The Nature Recovery Action Plan for Gwent sets out more detailed guidance on a Gwent wide approach. Complying with the S6 duty will help maximise contributions to the Well-being goals. The Welsh government has published the following guidance :

- Action Plan for Pollinators in Wales 2013
- Action Plan for Pollinators Review 2013-2018 [Future Actions action-plan-for-pollinators-review-and-future-actions-en.pdf](http://future-actions.action-plan-for-pollinators-review-and-future-actions-en.pdf) (gov.wales)
- The Nature Recovery Action Plan 2015
- Natural resources Wales 2017
- Future Wales the National Plan 2040

POLICY SUMMARY - REGIONAL

Cardiff Capital Region

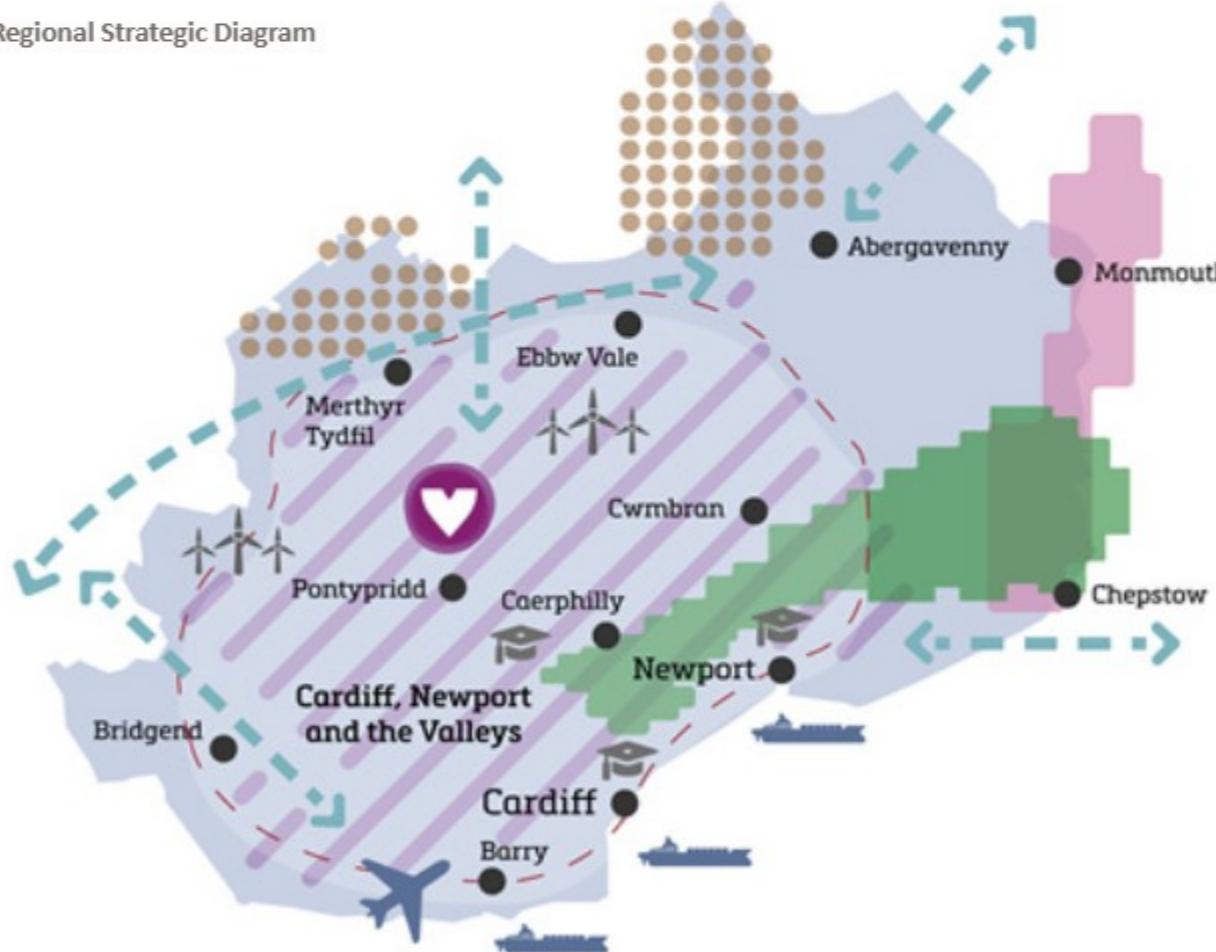
The Cardiff Capital Region City Deal is a unique programme of collaborative working, passionately committed to being the catalyst for regional growth and sustainable success. The deal represents the joint commitments made by the ten local authorities of the Cardiff Capital Region, the UK Government and the Welsh Government to unlock £1.3bn of collective investment. CCR's vision is for "A Prosperous Capital City-Region for Wales" — a decision making centre, a global gateway for capital, trade, and visitors, a knowledge hub and a major population centre

and business cluster for Wales. Its approach to investment and levelling up is centred on ensuring that the Strategic Hubs and Cities provide and receive the maximum economic benefit from a complementary relationship. It supports the different and distinctive roles of strategic hubs and build on their key strengths to provide a diverse range of complementary employment opportunities.

Western Gateway

The Western Gateway is a cross-border economic partnership of Local Authorities, City Regions,

Regional Strategic Diagram



Local Enterprise Partnerships and Governments (in Wales and Westminster), working together to bring additionality to the area's existing strategies and structures. The Western Gateway goes one step further than 'regional'. Covering the core cities of Bristol and Cardiff, it stretches across south Wales and western England, from Swindon to Swansea, Wiltshire and Weston-Super-Mare to Tewkesbury. Our focus is inclusive and clean economic growth, where scale and collaboration can achieve more for our people and the wider economies of our countries than our constituent parts could achieve alone. Its focus is on inclusive and decarbonised economic growth, where scale and collaboration can deliver more for our people and the wider economies of our countries than our constituent parts could achieve alone. Its Vision is about "Propelling a greener, fairer, stronger Britain", supported by a number of ambitions.

National Growth Area	
National Connectivity	
Ports	
Green Belt - Areas for Consideration	
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty	
National Parks	
Valleys Regional Park	
South East Metro	
Cardiff Airport	
Pre-assessed Areas for Wind Energy	
Universities	

POLICY SUMMARY - LOCAL

Monmouthshire Corporate Plan

The Plan is in line with the goals and ambitions of our partners in other public services such as the NHS, Police, Public Health, housing associations and the Fire and Rescue Service. These and many more organisations are part of the Monmouthshire Public Service Board (PSB). Priorities that are relevant to this submission are:

- Social Justice- a fair and equal society, respecting and upholding diversity within our communities, addressing child poverty and worklessness
- Enterprise & Job creation- capitalise on the Cardiff Capital Region City Deal and reducing bridge tolls to unlock opportunity and drive economic growth so that productivity becomes a lever for increased prosperity
- Locally Accessible Services – maintaining a local service offer and enhancing our leisure and recreation provision
- The provision of quality housing, including affordable housing, to meet the needs of our communities and to address the needs of our changing demography.

Monmouthshire's Replacement Local Development Plan

Monmouthshire County Council is consulting on a new RLDP Preferred Strategy. The Preferred Strategy is the first statutory consultation stage in the Plan preparation process and provides the strategic direction for the development and use of land in Monmouthshire (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park) over the Plan period 2018 to 2033 and identifies how much growth is needed and where this growth will broadly be located.

The Monmouthshire Replacement LDP Vision is-

By 2033 Monmouthshire will be a place where:

- 1) People are living in sustainable, resilient communities that support the wellbeing of current and future generations and are more inclusive, equal, safe, cohesive, prosperous, vibrant and balanced demographically. Both urban and rural communities are well-connected with better access to local services and facilities, open space and employment opportunities.
- 2) Communities and businesses are part of an economically thriving, ambitious and well-connected County.
- 3) The best of the County's built heritage, countryside, biodiversity, landscape and environmental assets have been protected and enhanced to retain its distinctive character.
- 4) People enjoy healthier, more sustainable lifestyles with improved access to public transport and active travel opportunities and have a minimised impact on the global environment, supporting our ambitions for a zero carbon county.

In December 2022, the County Council commenced its consultation on its preferred strategy which is centred in a Demographic-led Strategy Growth supported by a spatial options that has a focus on growth in the County's most sustainable settlements of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Caldicot including Severnside, as well as some growth in our most sustainable rural settlements, excluding those settlements in the Upper Wye catchment area. The key message from the preferred strategy are:

- Makes provision for approximately 5,400 - 5,940 homes over the Plan period 2018-2033 (Strategic Policy S1). This includes approximately 1,580- 1,850 affordable

homes (Strategic Policy S6). As there are currently approximately 3,740 homes in the housing landbank, land will be allocated for approximately 1,660- 2,200 new homes, including 830- 1,100 new affordable homes.

- Sets out the planning policy framework to enable the provision of approximately 6,240 additional jobs (Strategic Policy S1) by allocating sufficient employment land and by including policies to facilitate economic growth (Strategic Policy S12). The RLDP will be supported by an Economic Development Strategy.
- Focuses growth in the County's most sustainable settlements of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Caldicot (including Severnside) (Strategic Policy S2). Due to the lack of an identified strategic solution to the treatment of phosphates at the Monmouth Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW) within the Plan period, no new site allocations are proposed in the primary settlement of Monmouth or within the upper River Wye catchment area north of Bigsweir Bridge.
- Identifies Preferred Strategic Site Allocations in the primary settlements of Abergavenny, Chepstow and Caldicot (Strategic Policy S7). Other detailed site allocations will be set out in the Deposit RLDP.
- Limits the impact of climate change by ensuring new homes are net zero carbon ready and well connected with existing settlements, providing attractive and accessible places to live and work.
- Sets out strategic policies on a range of topic areas, reflecting the four placemaking themes in Planning Policy Wales (PPW)12 .

CHEPSTOW PLACE PLAN

Chepstow Town Council identified the need to understand the views of the local community in and around Chepstow as part of a Place Plan process. The consultation programme was developed to enable residents, businesses, key stakeholders and young people to get involved, and join a community wide 'conversation' about the future of the town.

Due to Covid-19, the planned public engagement for the Chepstow Place Plan was shaped in response to restrictions placed on face-to face events, and a range of online channels and techniques were used to reach out. Online community engagement activities ran between March and end of May 2021 and included:

- A project website – futurechepstow.co.uk launch at the beginning of March 2021
- An online "town map" embedded into the website
- Survey form (via website)
- Comment form (via website)
- Online Community and Stakeholder Focus Groups (via Zoom)

To communicate with as many people in and around Chepstow – the following were undertaken to promote the Place Plan and to inform the community of the consultation phase included:

1. Leaflet drop to residents and businesses
2. Posters
3. Press releases
4. Town Council Facebook page posts
5. Emails to all schools

6. Emails to over 100 key stakeholders

7. The creation of a Bilingual website

Other opportunities included:

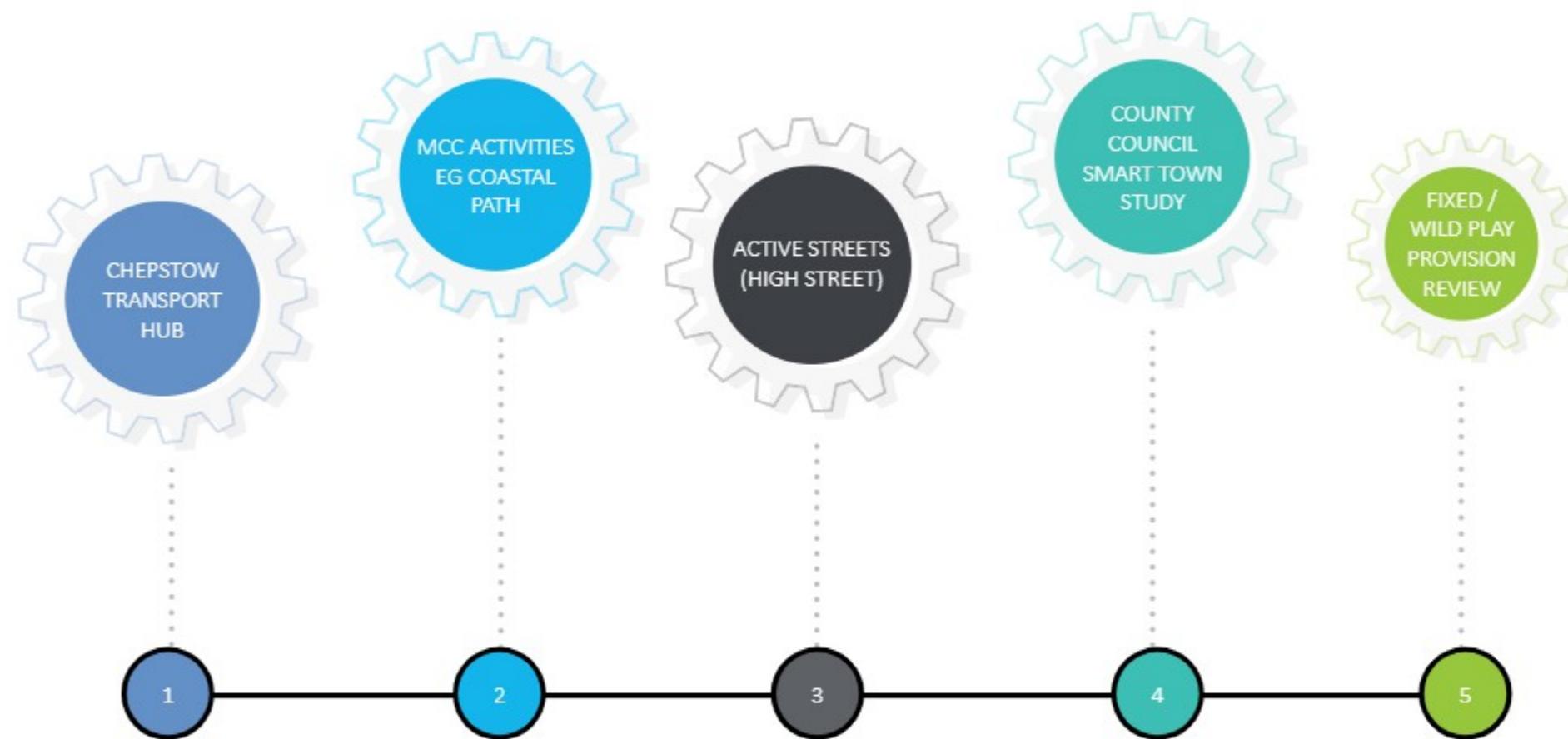
- Mapping strengths, weaknesses and opportunities via the online 'town map'
- Online Survey
- Focus Groups: During May 2021, Focus Group sessions were conducted using Zoom



LIVE STUDIES AND PLANS

The County Council and Town Council have seen the opportunity through this study to stitch and knit together all the various studies, policies and strategies that relate to Chepstow, and to integrate these with local level action to deliver shared objectives at both national, regional and local level.

At the time of writing this Placemaking Plan, the following live studies and plans were underway, amongst others ...



Chepstow Place-Making and Transport

In 2018 a transport appraisal guidance (WelTAG) Stage One (Strategic Outline Case) Chepstow Transport Study was previously undertaken between April 2018 and December 2018, which was jointly commissioned by Monmouthshire County Council, Gloucestershire County Council and Forest of Dean District Council. The 2018 Stage One Study focussed upon the strategic corridor of the A48, which included wider issues and impacts along the corridor from Lydney in the east to Chepstow in the west.

In 2020, Arup had been commissioned to undertake a WelTAG / Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) Stage Two (Outline Business Case) by Monmouthshire County Council, on behalf of several Strategy partner organisations in Wales and England.

This study applied a five-case business model approach (strategic, transport, financial, financial, management). Following a comprehensive review of the study context and feedback from stakeholders, a number of problems were identified, with some problems occurring at a local level pertinent to Chepstow, and others relevant at a regional or strategic level.

These problems are summarised as:

- High levels of congestion and increasing traffic
- Limited bus connectivity and facilities
- Higher relative cost of public transport journeys
- Poor facilities for Ultra Low Emission

Vehicles

- Limited network resilience with few alternatives for crossing the river Wye
- Limited rail connectivity and facilities
- High number of commuting journeys
- Air quality issues
- The highway network dominates Chepstow, with perceived safety issues
- The A48 causes community severance through Chepstow

The Stage Two process shortlisted a number of options, being:

- Reducing the need to travel
- Encouraging sustainable travel behaviour, freight Delivery and Service Plans
- Active Travel Upgrades and Additions
- Walking Friendly Chepstow High Street
- Chepstow Bike Share Scheme
- Chepstow Transport Hub
- West-facing Public Transport Upgrades
- East-facing Public Transport Upgrades
- Park and Ride (Rail)
- Local Bus Service Upgrades
- On-demand taxi (Demand Responsive Transport)
- Electric Vehicle Charging Points
- Chepstow Bypass- 60mph Carriageway

Option

- Chepstow Bypass- 40mph 'Lower Carbon' Option

A copy of the full stage 2 report can be found here:

<https://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/2021/10/report-published-into-chepstow-traffic-and-travel/>

Revised objectives were created at Stage Two of the Chepstow Transport Study to reflect and respond to the latest evidence base, including addressing the existing situation, future trends, stakeholder priorities, and legislative and policy drivers.

The objectives aim to address one or more of the identified problems. If a transport intervention is appraised to perform positively in addressing the objectives, it is considered it would help overcome the problems identified.

It is considered that the objectives are relevant to different spatial scales, with some most relevant at regional or strategic level, and others pertinent at local level.



CREDIT: JOHN LORD

In summary, if the aforementioned options were agreed to be taken forward for further study at WelTAG / TAG Stage Three, grouped into three distinct packages. These were:

- Package 1: Active Travel Improvements [AT1 - Active Travel Upgrades and Additions; AT2 - Walking Friendly Chepstow High Street; AT3 - Chepstow Bike Share Scheme]
- Package 2: Chepstow Transport Hub and Connectivity Improvements [PT2 – Chepstow Transport Hub; PT7 Park and Ride (Rail); PT4 – West/North-facing Regional Public Transport Upgrades; PT5 – East-facing Regional Public Transport Upgrades; PT8 – Local Bus Service Upgrades; Option B1, 2 and 3: Influencing travel behaviours; Option ULEV1: Electric vehicle charging points; Option PT9 – On-demand taxi (Demand Responsive Transport Services)]
- Package 3: Chepstow Bypass [Option H2B – Beachley and Sedbury 40mph 'Lower Carbon' Single Carriageway]

In June 2022, Monmouthshire County Council launched a consultation on the future of transport in Chepstow, focusing on a Transport Hub. This follows on from our previous consultation on the

Chepstow Transport Study in 2020. The Transport Hub can be split into several different elements, and explores travel methods such as the bus network, demand responsive transport such as taxis, electric vehicle infrastructure and park and ride facilities.

As part of the stage 3 development work, a number of proposals were consulted on within the community and stakeholders. These are:

- PT2 – Chepstow Transport Hub;
- PT4-West-facing Public Transport Upgrades and PT5-East-facing Public Transport Upgrades;
- PT7 – Park and Ride (Rail);
- PT8 –Local Bus Service Upgrades;
- PT9 –Demand Responsive Transport Services;
- ULEV1 –Electric vehicle charging points; and
- B1, 2 and 3 – Influencing travel behaviours.

These proposals have a direct relationship to this place making strategy and plan and are therefore detailed further within the action plan section of this document.

Chepstow Transport Hub and Active Travel online public consultation

Your chance to comment

Monmouthshire County Council are seeking your comments on their transport hub and active travel proposals.



This consultation follows the previous consultation on the Chepstow Transport Study in 2020.

Since then, we have considered the feedback and recommendations provided at that stage of the study. We are now further developing and seeking your feedback on two work packages: Chepstow Transport Hub and Active Travel improvements.

We are not holding in-person events at this time; however, a virtual exhibition room has been created allowing you to view the information boards and documents that explain our proposals.

The virtual exhibition room can be accessed via chepstowtransport.virtual-engage.com or alternatively you can gain access by scanning the QR code below.

Our online public consultation is taking place between 14 June and 12 July 2022. Please respond by 23:59 on Tuesday 12 July 2022.





From understanding the policy context for the town, the challenges and opportunities that are local to Chepstow need to be understood so that we develop local and people based ideas. The investment in the Place Plan conversations have been meaningful and of the right scale with the need to use this dialogue as continuation of the process but also qualified by data and statistics, as well as physical observations and assessments.

CONVERSATIONS FROM THE PLACE PLAN

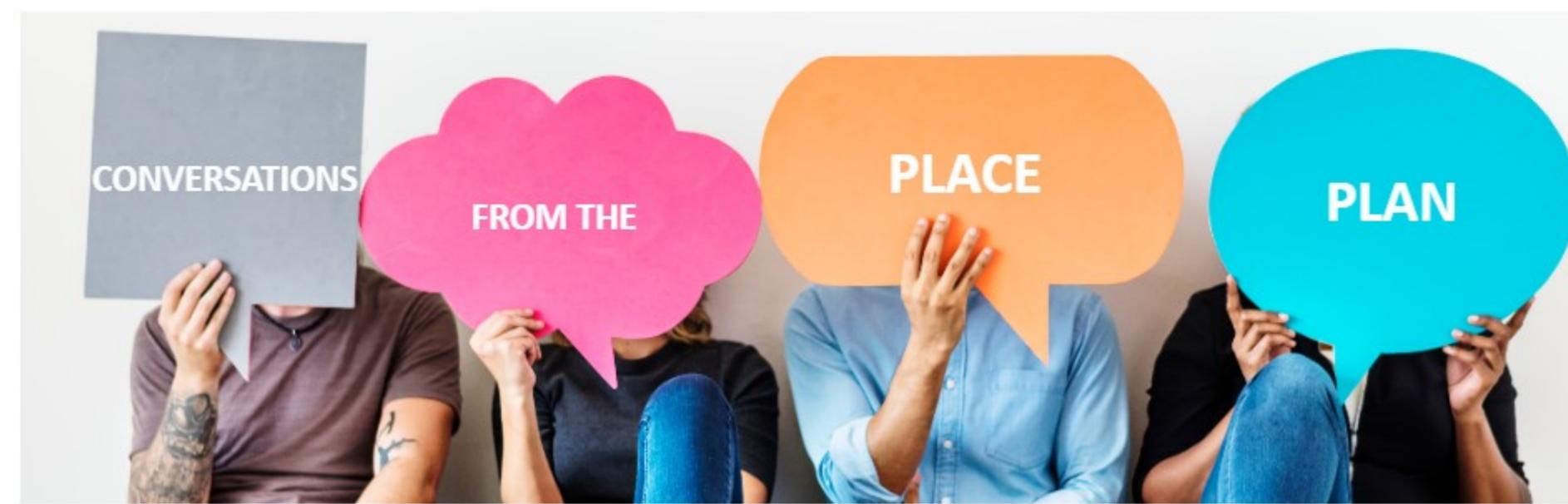
Traffic, Transport, Parking and Highways

- Strain on the existing road network is having an economic and environmental impact – people expressed concern that the current situation is not being addressed.
- Parking options to be considered – not just (free) car parking and improved disabled parking, but also cycle parking (need to make links with Transition Chepstow Transport Plan) as there is a need to enable and encourage less car use in the town where possible.
- Innovative solutions to enable people to move around without using the car should be considered such as a hop on and off electric bus around town.
- Joined up transport strategies needed to integrate train and buses with different modes of travel such as (electric) cars to e-bikes.

- Concerns about safety were expressed – at junctions for drivers and crossing roads for pedestrians – over and under the road.
- Public transport is not ideal for young people – connections are bad to cities such as Bristol and Cardiff.
- Active travel – cycling and walking (this topic attracted many comments on the town map) Walking for visitors and local people is very important for well-being and the economy of the town but also Wales. Recent improvements are welcomed and more are needed.
- Safe routes needed for children to walk and cycle safely around the town and to school.
- Dedicated route from Chepstow to Tidenham (consider pedestrian bridge).
- Safe active travel solutions needed (e.g. hop on and off buses, cycle routes).
- Cycle parking needed.

Town Centre

- Concern around empty shops in the town / shop front design and appearance of the retail centre.
- Due to topography, there are issues around accessibility for disabled people in the town – need accessible routes.
- Consider festivals to put Chepstow on the map.
- Increase vibrancy of town centre by living and working in the centre.
- Pedestrianisation – continuation of Covid-19 measures or not?
- Landscaping and artwork needed to address the backs of shops presented to the busy A48.



Facilities, Services and Community

- Not enough facilities / places for teenagers to go in Chepstow.
- After school provision is lacking – sports clubs are evident but not many facilities / clubs to cater for all interests.
- Improved links to the leisure centre needed – incorporate links with the secondary school.
- Retain essential services such as banks and post office and importantly the hospital. Also retain facilities such as Drill Hall.
- A number of people who attended were from the Bulwark area and expressed strong concerns about a lack of investment in their local centre which is in a serious state of disrepair.
- Important to harness local knowledge.

Built Environment and Heritage

- History of the town is positive (castle / port wall) but need more emphasis on its history.
- The river frontage is an asset which should be harnessed more.
- St Marys Church – can alternative uses be explored?

Housing, Jobs and Economy

- Smaller housing units needed for young people starting out – affordable – particularly in town centre. older people and "empty nesters" also highlighted as a group that needed smaller homes.
- Can people be encouraged to work from home – reduce commuting?
- Need small industrial spaces – encourage "modern" industries/ businesses to locate

to Chepstow – harness the town's assets! In particular, and for example to understand why we have a med tech cluster in Thornwell with a view to building on it.

- Need to improve infrastructure before building new homes.

Environment and Biodiversity

- Pollution is a major health concern – and much discussion was linked to traffic and the impact on the environment.
- Transition Chepstow is a local group facilitating local action about how the town can respond to climate change.
- Access to local green spaces and natural environment was highlighted as an asset of the town.

Tourism

- Need to attract tourists and increase the footfall in town and build on the success of the Sunday market.
- Tourism Signage across Chepstow an issue.
- Promote the town as a gateway to Monmouthshire and Wales.
- Promotion of National Cycle Network, Coastal Path, Forest of Dean, Offa's Dyke, Wye Valley Walk etc, focus on Chepstow's assets.

Green and Open Spaces and Play

- Play equipment needs updating in many play areas – consult with young people. Consider gym equipment. Audit play equipment.
- Accessible route needed to Barnett's Wood.
- Replicate the successful Garden City project and community orchards scheme in other parts of the town.

Themes

The community engagement activity has helped to develop an inclusive Place Plan project and based on the feedback from local people and organisations, a draft vision statement and six clear themes emerged. The proposed six themes are:



CHEPSTOW TOWN COUNCIL VISION 2022-2027

In November 2022, Chepstow Town Council adopted its Town Vision document. Its vision is:

Chepstow. A Place To Live, Work And Visit

The green gateway to Wales

As the first town in Wales, we are the entrance to the Lower Wye Valley in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Chepstow is the start and finish of Offa's Dyke Path, the Wales Coast Path and the Wye Valley Walk .

A destination for the arts

A town with a rich tradition in the arts and music provided for and with our residents. We are proud of our inspiring cultural foundations and aspire to be a destination for music and the arts.

A town of proud historic significance

Chepstow grew as a bustling market town from Britain's oldest surviving stone castle. We have a rich and fascinating history spanning centuries.

Key Focus Areas Include

TRANSPORT

We want to see improvements to:

- access and disabled access to the train station and the westbound platform
- frequency of buses footpaths and cycleways to encourage active travel
- connectivity between the riverside, Bulwark, the town centre and the top of Chepstow
- highways- road surfaces, pavements, dropped kerbs

- We want to see provision of:
 - electric bikes and scooters for green transport
 - access to free parking within Chepstow
 - a transport hub linked to the train station

HOUSING

We want to ensure that housing is developed to meet local needs by:

- assessing the need for, and developing, social housing
- providing safe, secure, well- maintained homes for all

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

We want to see:

- GP surgery in Bulwark
- services for people living with dementia
- a Minor Injuries Unit
- greater use of all community buildings by individuals and groups
- an extension to Primary Health Care facilities in Chepstow

OUR VISION FOR CHEPSTOW 2022-2027



covering the council wards of:

Thornwell, Bulwark, Maple Avenue, Larkfield, Chepstow Castle, Mount Pleasant, St Kingsmark



WHAT IS CHEPSTOW

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CHEPSTOW... ...A PLACE TO LIVE, WORK AND VISIT

OUR VALUES

These will inform every decision we make:

- AMBITION
- INCLUSIVITY
- RESPECT
- GREEN

GREENING

Work with land owners to:

- improve green spaces
- expand tree planting
- collaborate on litter collection
- create greater biodiversity

And to:

- work with Transition Chepstow to sustain and promote the town's orchards
- Campaign on pollution in the town and rivers

RETAIL, HOSPITALITY & TOURISM

Work with businesses to:

- improve the shopping areas of Chepstow High Street and Bulwark
- provide support for local businesses: start up funds, start up hubs
- explore options for the community use of the old Barclays Bank building
- explore the use of planning gain from the Lidl development to provide public space, to meet, play and relax
- support the development of hotels and B&Bs across Chepstow

INFRASTRUCTURE

Based on feedback from the public, we will strive to:

- monitor the impact of the traffic situations in the town centre upgrade the public toilets in Chepstow town
- provide a public toilet in Bulwark provide benches along the walking routes around Chepstow
- review and improve the aesthetic appearance of public buildings explore funding options for improvements to fronts of shops and buildings
- improve signage to tourist sites and other facilities, e.g. community buildings
- free car parking to enable visitors to explore

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

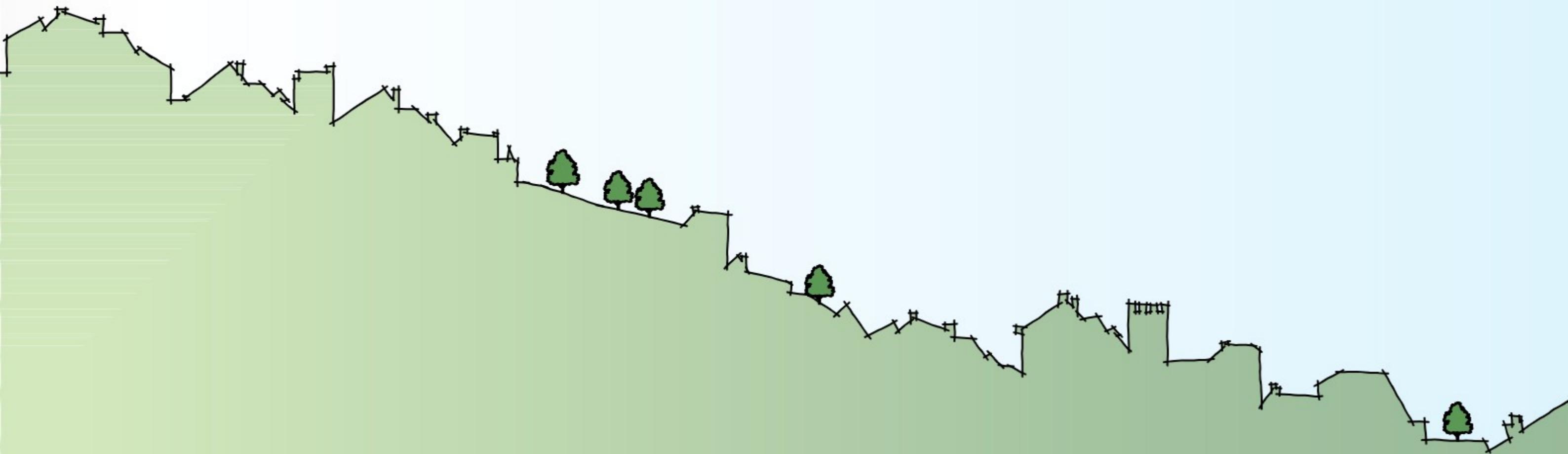
- Create a destination play space in The Dell Create a youth forum
- Ensure adequate play provision across Chepstow
- Listen to schools and engage with them Support and promote specialist activities, including sports, music, drama and exchange visits
- Support and develop extra-curricular youth provision

LEISURE, LEARNING & EDUCATION

- Improve adult and continuing education
- Work with partners to encourage businesses to provide work experience opportunities for young people

ARTS

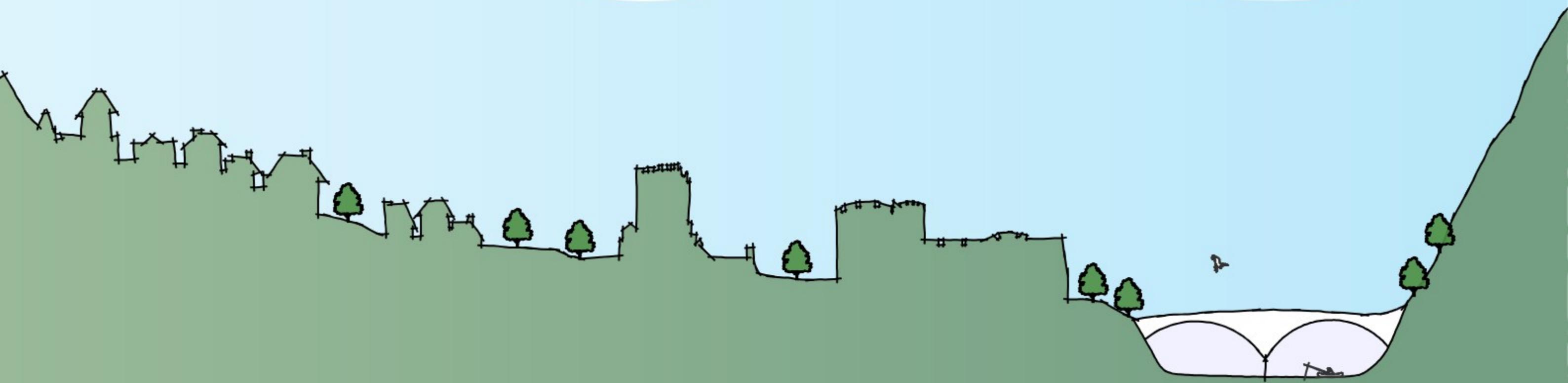
- Support and promote the annual Arts Festival Develop an arts venue in Bulwark
- Provide an artist in residence
- St. Mary's Priory as an Art Centre/ destination Develop an ambitious calendar of seasonal, festive and one-off events, and work with the Chepstow events team
- Support and promote community-led music events at the bandstand
- Continue to assess the need for an asset transfer of the Drill Hall to Chepstow Town Council
- Assess the need to retain the Old Library building
- Town Council funding of annual Firework Display
- Town Council funding of Bands at the Bandstand



Chapter 03

Challenges and Opportunities

33



DATA ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Building on the conversations, useful data and geographical information about Chepstow can help us identify opportunities for the community, local businesses and other groups and organisations. Data and statistics also helps us to understand our relationship to all Wales figures and also how it compares to other places that are similar in size and geography.

Town Centre

Chepstow town centre has a convenience offer that tends to stay constant. The service sector which includes food and drink, and takeaways has fluctuated over time but held its ground with only a 7 unit reduction since its peak in 2013.

Following the national picture in High Streets, comparison goods (non food e.g. clothes and household) have followed a gradual downwards trend with 59 units recorded in 2020 compared to 73 in 2005.

The proportion of national retailers within the central shopping area was 12.4% at the time of the 2020 survey, which is lower than Abergavenny (16%), Monmouth (17%), and Caldicot (13%).

For vacancies, the Council's 2020 retail survey shows that the 2020 vacancy rates of 13.5% is the highest since 2003 (see chart alongside) with the UK average at 14.5% in quarter 3 of 2021 obtained by the British Retail Consortium. The secondary frontages of the town centre tend to meet the UK vacancy average at 14.4% and the primary units being almost some 3 percentage points below at 11.8%.

People

Kingsmark ward area has the highest population (3,189) with the town centre area of St Mary's being the lowest at 1,916. Kingsmark also exhibits a higher cohort of people aged 65 plus compared to those other areas of the town with the Thornwell those area representing the lowest number for this age group.

Younger people (aged 16 to 17) tend to live in the Kingsmark area (110 no,) say compared to St Mary's at 38. Thornwell's 25 to 49 age cohort is the largest across the town at 982 compared to 476 in Larkfield which tends to point to those people being mobile, and located in this neighbourhood due to more travel to work patterns.

Employment

Chepstow is not a place that is dependent on the public sector for employment with lower than average representation in health and social work, education, public admin/defence and social security. Where it does spike, this relates to wholesale, retail and vehicle repair; accommodation, food and service; finance and insurance and professional, scientific and technical. This is due to a number of industrial estates in Bulwark and Thornwell with offices for the finance and insurance sector and small workshops and repair units.

Skills and Qualifications

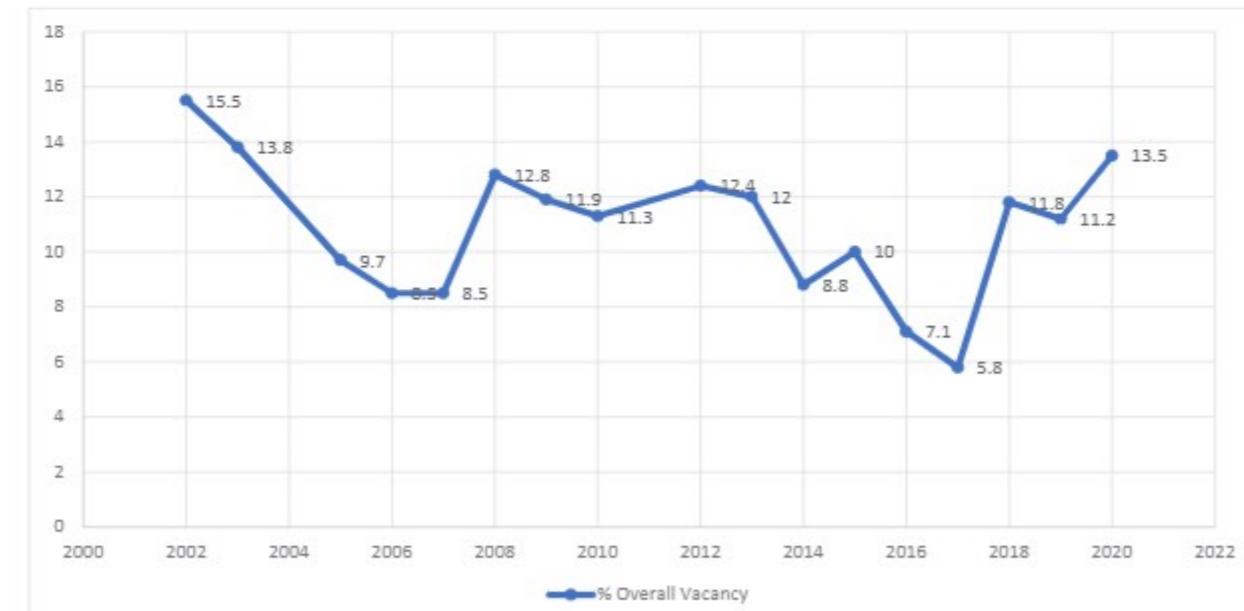
The type and levels of qualifications and skills within a community has a direct correlation to income, prosperity and wealth circulating within the local economy and the resultant multiplier impact. This also has a relationship to the general health and well-being of the community and its residents.

Chepstow is well below the Welsh average for people with no qualifications, slightly above average for residents with 1 to 4 0 levels/ CSE/GCSEs yet under-performing for level 3 qualifications related to people with 2 plus A levels. It however has a sharp spike on those people with a Degree or a Higher Degree.

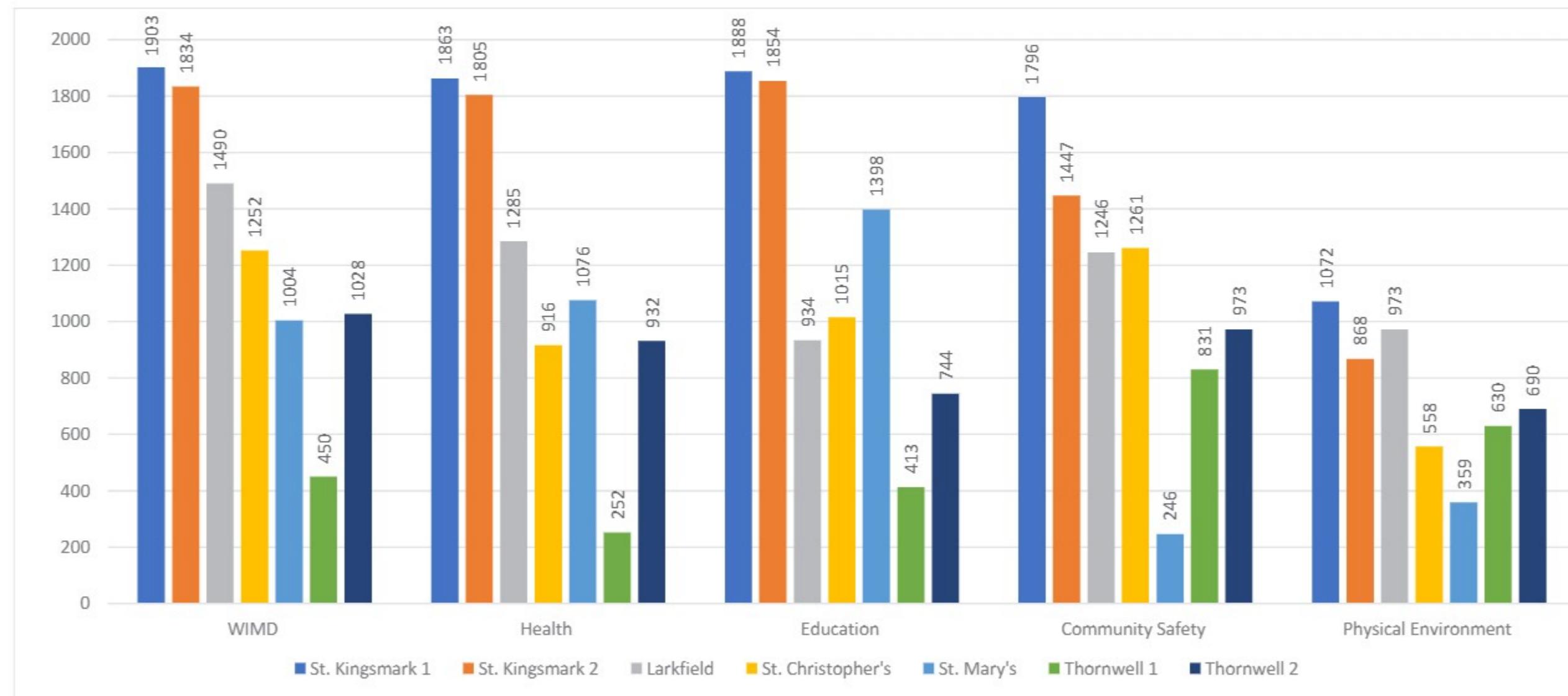
Deprivation

Thornwell lower super output area (LSOA) is shown to be the worst neighbourhood especially when it comes to income levels and quality of health, with education not far behind. The overall index figure for Thornwell 1 is 450 compared to 1903 for St Kingsmark 1. The St Mary's LSOA also exhibits some higher-than-average deprivation indices for domains such as community safety and physical environment, with the latter domain also highlighted as an issued in the St Christopher's LSOA followed closely by Thornwell 1 and 2.

Town centre vacancy rate



Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation for Chepstow Lower Super Output Areas



STRATEGIC PLACE ANALYSIS

This section of the document looks at Chepstow as a whole place and its challenges and opportunities. It considers key elements at a strategic place level:

- **Vehicular analysis**
- **Pedestrian analysis**
- **Key Assets**
- **Key green spaces, and its**
- **Overarching neighbourhoods**

The above helps to determine how people move through and around Chepstow as well as identifying where the principal attractors and destinations might be. This helps to determine, at a strategic level, those areas that might need considering for targeted interventions and improvements at whole place level.



STRATEGIC VEHICULAR ANALYSIS

Chepstow is well-placed on the M48/M4 corridor providing strategic links to Cardiff, Bristol, the wider southwest regions and beyond, with the A48 trunk road through the town linking to the Forest of Dean. It is well-known that the A48 through Chepstow is congested and at or near capacity, with bottlenecks and barriers to movement created by the river crossings and topography. Monmouthshire have identified the A48 corridor as an Air Quality Monitoring Zone and recent Place Plan consultations have raised issues such as the A48 creating a barrier to movement for pedestrians and cyclists.

There are currently two crossings of the River Wye at Chepstow: the A48 to the northeast, parallel to the railway bridge, linking to Tintern, Sedbury, Lydney and beyond and the historically significant and aesthetic Chepstow Bridge (Old Wye Bridge) to the north near the castle, from Bridge Street, which is the world's largest iron arch road bridge. Neither route provide a suitable proposition for pedestrians and cyclists, not to mention disabled access, yet the communities of Chepstow expand to the east of the river, into Tintern, Sedbury and Beachley, with school children of all ages commuting across the river.

Future planned housing growth not just in Chepstow and surrounding settlements, but Monmouthshire as a whole and the growth of neighbouring areas such as the Forest of Dean (8,000 houses identified in FoD Emerging Plan 'Plan 41' Issues and Options 2018) will result in increased strain on the A48 and surrounding road network, which is already lacking in resilience, with implications for the town and wider areas such as between Chepstow and Lydney.

Monmouthshire County Council are working collaboratively with Chepstow Town Council and the County Council's respective partners to ensure the transport and active travel networks are

improved and managed, that resident's well-being is safeguarded and enhanced, and to encourage visitors to the town.



STRATEGIC PEDESTRIAN ANALYSIS

Chepstow sits on and is the start (or end) of the National Wales Coast Path. This has the potential to mark it as a destination for walkers. The development of the new Brunel Quarter development offers the opportunity to improve the alignment of the Coast Walk, giving much expanded access to what has previously been a private river front. With improvement in connections to it, the Wales Coast path also has the potential to offer enhanced local connections. It could provide positive and attractive, off road links from Newhouse Farm to the town centre, picking up Thornwell, Bulwark and Garden City along the way.

In addition to the Wales Coast Path, there are several pedestrian desire lines leading to the Town Centre and other destinations. These vary in quality from attractive off road green corridors, to sub standard narrow footpaths along busy roads. There is the opportunity to undertake targeted improvements to the key pedestrian desire lines.

One of the main obstacles to walking and cycling within Chepstow is its topography. The neighbourhoods of Thornwell, Bulwark, Garden City, Larkfield, Mounton, Kingsmark and Bayfield, all sit higher than the Town Centre and riverfront. This has a psychological affect on the attractiveness and ease of walking and cycling into the town centre, particularly on the return journey which would generally be uphill. This perception further heightens the need for positive interventions to the key desire lines: for example, the introduction of strategically positioned resting places within attractive pocket kerbside parks or similar.



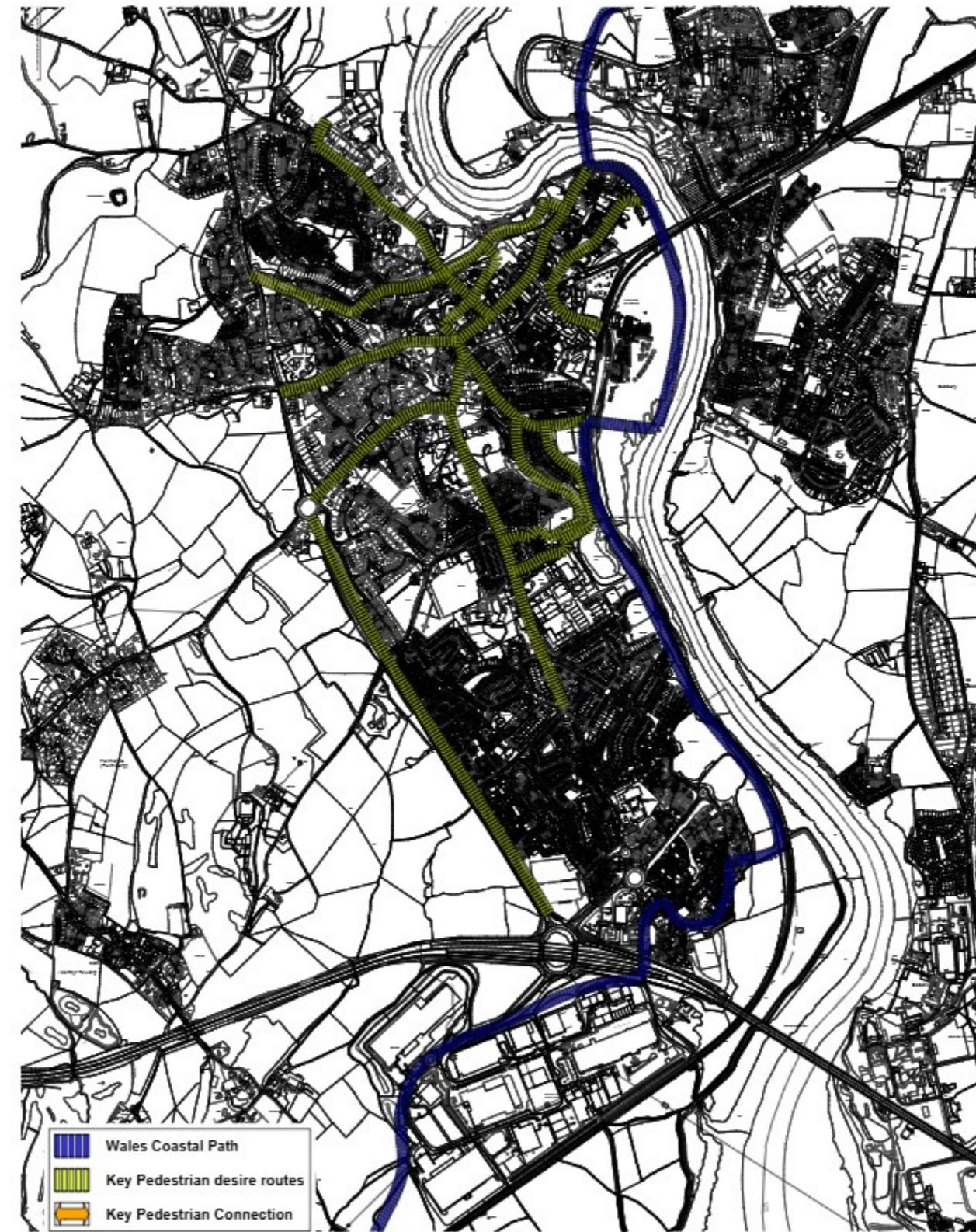
Wales Coast path



Narrow footways on busy road



Challenging topography



KEY ASSETS IN CHEPSTOW

As a town centre, Chepstow benefits from a number of assets, attractions and destinations. These range in nature and type:

Strategic / Town Wide:

- Community Hospital
- Leisure Centre
- Town Centre retail core
- Train station
- Library

Local:

- Schools- secondary and primary
- Local centres eg Bulwark shops
- Parks and play space
- Employment areas
- Library
- Surgeries
- Churches
- Community halls and facilities

Tourism:

- Castle
- Riverfront
- Wales Coast Path
- Museum

The above mix creates a place which caters for local residents, wider residents to whom Chepstow is their local centre and tourists from wider afield.



Chepstow High Street (during the COVID-19 pandemic)



Bulwark shops neighbourhood centre



Chepstow Castle



- 1 Links towards racecourse and north
- 2 Secondary School
- 3 The Dell
- 4 Chepstow Castle and Museum
- 5 Waterfront, pubs and bars. Bandstand events
- 6 Church and active travel route towards town
- 7 Library and carpark for town centre
- 8 Town centre
- 9 Train Station (new bus turning area)
- 10 Brunel Quarter development and riverfront
- 11 Community Hospital
- 12 Bulwark shops and industry area



KEY GREEN SPACES

Chepstow is fortunate to have a series of dispersed natural and formal open space areas. As can be seen on the adjacent mapping, these are located across the settlement giving all neighbourhoods access to some form of green open space.

In addition, there are several children's play areas, again, well dispersed across the town and its neighbourhoods. Many of these form part of a current improvement strategy and will soon benefit from upgrades and investment.

As discussed, the Wales Coast Path starts / finishes in Chepstow. This offers a linear recreation route through the Town from the riverfront. The route of this has the potential to be enhanced following the opening / completion of the new Brunel Quarter development. This development give much greater public access to the a significant stretch of riverfront.

The Wye Valley path offers a green recreation walking route northwards from 'the riverfront' area, along the River Wye. There is the opportunity to further promote this and link it to the Wales Coast Path.



The Dell / Castle



Garden City open space



Bulwark play and park



OVERARCHING NEIGHBOURHOODS

In addition to the Town Centre, Chepstow consists of a series of well defined neighbourhoods. Each has its own character from the older Garden City to the newest area of Bayfield and Barnett's Wood.

Each neighbourhood has been assessed and some of the key facilities:

- Shopping
- Employment
- Community uses
- Play
- Schools

As can be seen from the diagram, most neighbourhoods have access to the majority of facilities which are needed for daily life. The exception here is the area of Bayfield and Barnett's Wood area which is a later residential development.



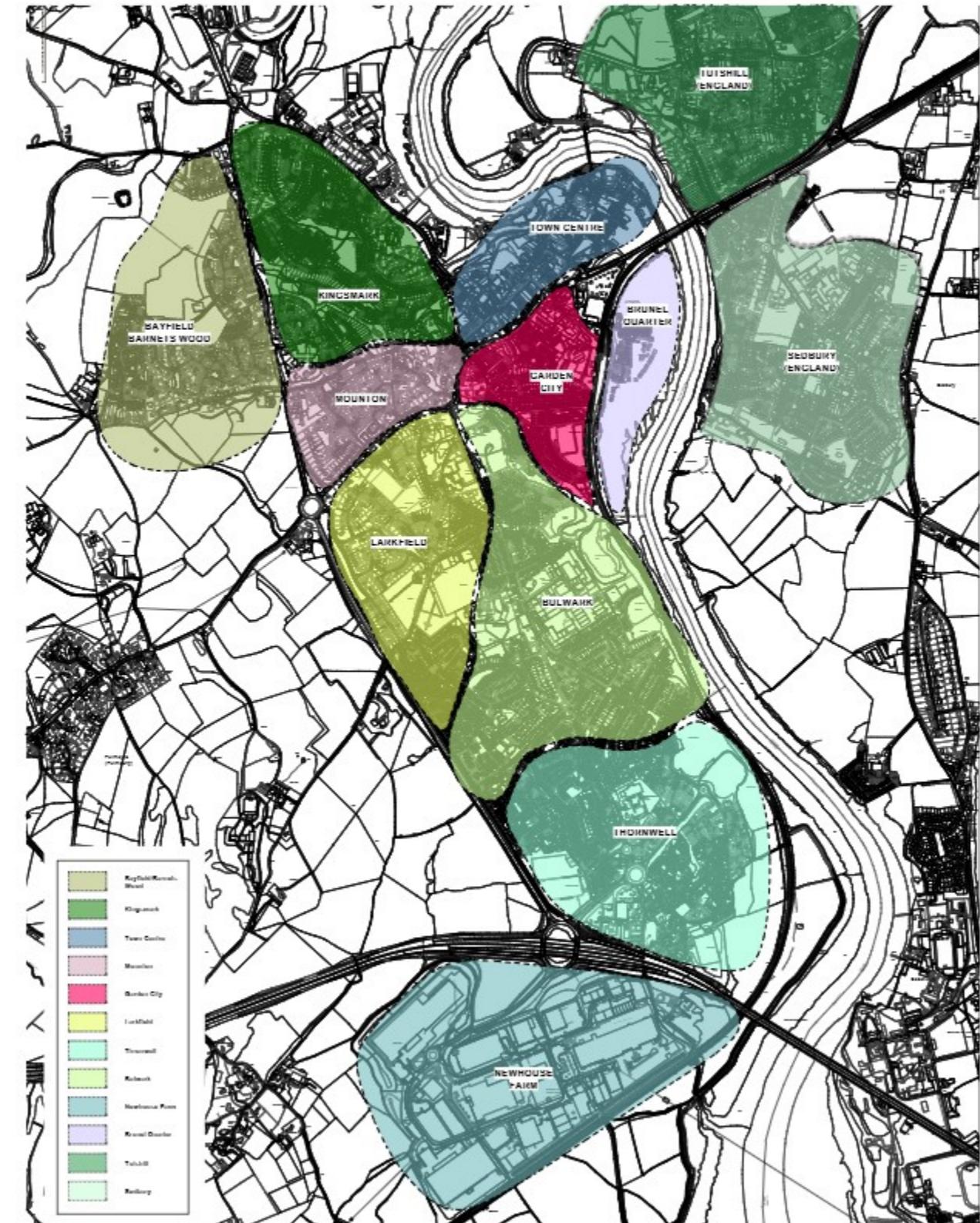
Access to schools



Access to play

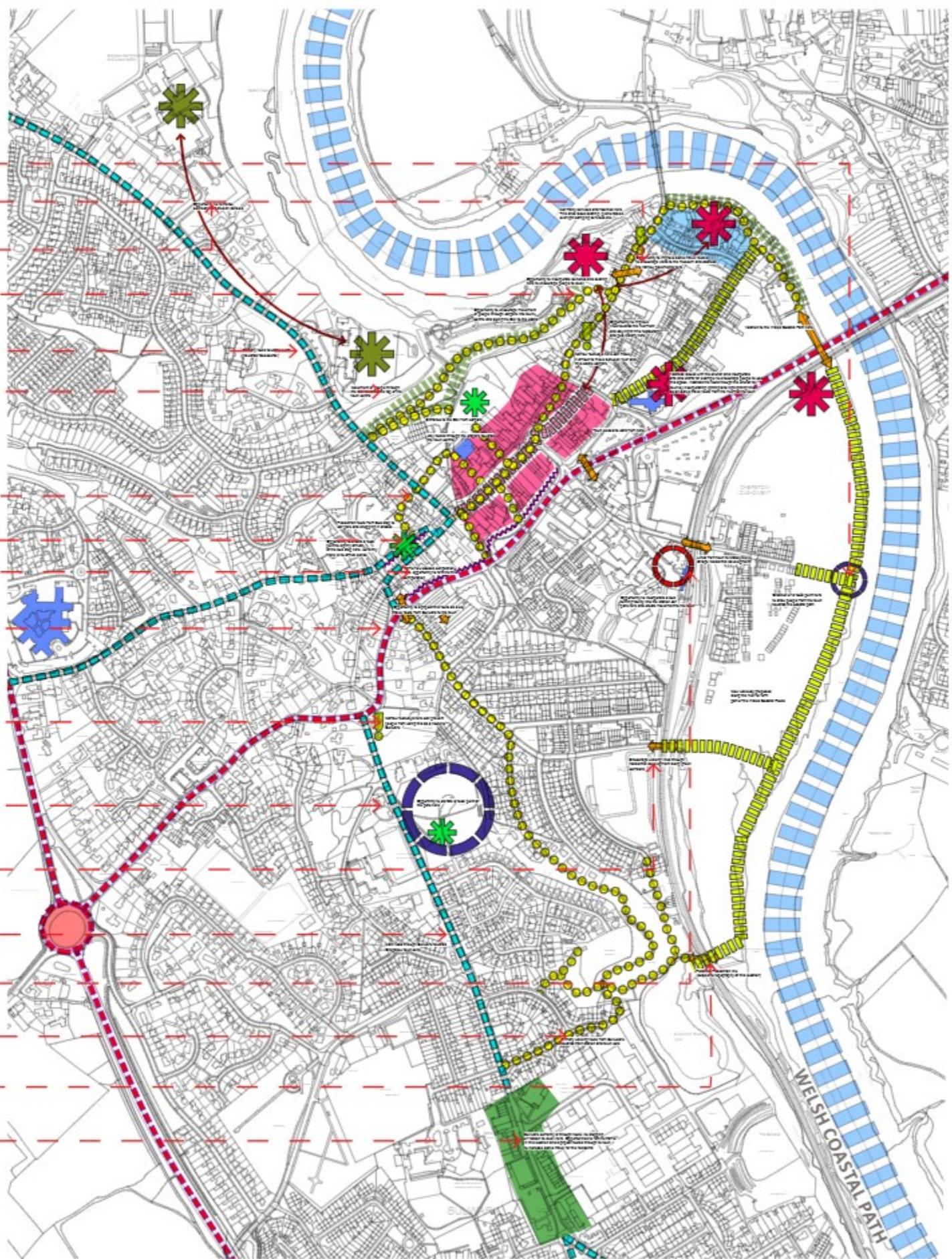


Access to retail



PLACE BASED ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

- Creation of focal point to draw people from town towards the Wales Coastal Path
- Opportunity to improve connectivity between the castle, TIC and museum and enhance the public realm
- Opportunity to reinforce connections between schools on Welsh St
- Not many services at the Castle. This area lacks seating/picnic tables overnight camping services etc.
- Primary route towards North (towards race course & Wye Valley)
- Movements of people through the Dell towards the top of the town centre
- Pedestrian route from bus stop to car park and shopping in arcade
- Movements of people through the Dell towards the top of the town centre
- Traffic flow causes congestion here, opportunity to re-think this configuration
- Opportunity to signpost this route as a key travel route from Bulwark to the town
- Narrow footways here can prevent people from using this as a route to Bulwark
- Opportunity to create a focal point at the park here
- Encourage walking links through residential development along green corridor
- Main road through Bulwark towards Chepstow town centre
- Links from town to Mabey Bridge residential development
- Primary walking route from Bulwark towards train station and town centre
- Potential pedestrian link (subject to topography at this location)
- Bulwark currently a through route, no stopping or reason to dwell here. Opportunities to rethink traffic in this location and signpost routes through to town to increase active travel for the residents





STRENGTHS

- Gateway into the Wye Valley from the south
- Historical walled town known for its Castle and location on the River Wye
- Characterful town centre set within a conservation area with some notable keynote buildings and structures – the Town Gatehouse, Old Wye Bridge, St Mary's Priory Church
- Location next to the M48 and the Severn Bridge
- Chepstow racecourse – home to horse-racing, concerts and events
- Some distinctive independent town centre businesses
- A range of town centre events e.g. castle rock, Arts Festival, Walking Festival and more
- Lots of community and voluntary organisations who are passionate about Chepstow
- Some strong employers in research and development, technology, etc
- There is a sense of neighbourhood in places like Bulwark
- Long distance footpaths – Wales Coastal Path, Offa's Dyke, Wye Valley Walk, Tidenham tunnel
- The heritage of the River Wye – boatbuilding, painters, port, ferry
- Notable people – author JK Rowling, cyclist Geraint Thomas



OPPORTUNITIES

- The Place Plan process – making the case for change and funding
- Bristol house-buyers bring new demand in the town
- To grow distinctive clusters of town centre businesses – arts, food and drink, creatives, community
- Some large town centre buildings could unlock arts and cultural facilities
- A growing arts scene – festivals, galleries, shops, events, clubs
- Connect the Castle, Museum and Riverside into a more cohesive destination
- Planned investment in the leisure centre and comprehensive school campus
- Creation of small to medium sized workspace for start ups and innovation
- A hub for artists, makers and producers within the lower Wye Valley, Forest of Dean and Gwent Levels
- Maximising the walking products and their economic benefits for the town – e.g. Monmouthshire Way development




WEAKNESSES

- Its proximity to Bristol does result in leakage of activity specifically shopping and leisure related activities
- Traffic volume on the A48 and its resultant impact on the local highway network, environmental quality and economic performance of the town
- The topography of the town centre does create challenges for destination management and accessibility
- The town centre performance follows UK trends in shopping but is compounded by its physical challenges, its traffic and a lack of co-ordination
- Pockets of deprivation that are associated with health, education and income and some neighbourhoods have a poor environmental quality
- Travel to work has a long reach with no strong clusters of quality employment
- The housing market has drawn in buyers from Bristol due to its being cheaper which has increased demand and prices



THREATS

- Housing growth and strain on infrastructure
- Perceived encroachment on rural edge with housing
- Waiting for big solutions to the town traffic and not looking for practical solutions
- Future of the High Street – needs to agree a purpose and direction
- Sense that the community hospital is losing bed space and a wide range of care

WHAT YOU TOLD US? REPORT OF CONSULTATION

The consultation process was designed and organised to meet a number of objectives:

- To ensure a blended approach of face to face and digital consultation opportunities were provided;
- To provide a good length of time for people to be aware, engage with and comment on the Town Masterplan process;
- Where practical, to provide a Town wide approach to the consultation that covers neighbourhoods such as Bulwark and Thornwell, in addition to the town centre.

To meet these objectives, the following consultation activities were provided:

1. County and Town Councillors were provided with a briefing pack which facilitated them organising short presentations to local interest groups and organisations; this provided an opportunity to promote future events and the community survey;
2. The County Council provided a project web page on its website where people could view and download the proposals and also complete the online survey;
3. The community survey was provided online and was promoted through local networks, social media and at face to face consultation events; paper copies were also made at the Town Council's offices and at Chepstow library as well as at face to face events;
4. Two days of face to face consultation were held in the town centre and in the Bulwark community on the 8th and 11th October 2022, respectively. The venues at The Palmer Centre and at the Bulwark Community Centre

were accessible, central and known to the community;

5. A static exhibition was held in Chepstow Library from the 12th October until the 30th October; paper versions of the survey were provided, along with a post-box for completed copies;
6. A workshop session was held with Year 7 to 13 pupils at Chepstow Comprehensive School on the 16th November 2022.



Transforming Chepstow Plan

McCregeneration@monmouthshire.gov.uk or phone Sadie Beer on 07929 726220'. Logos for 'Trawsnewid Trefti Transforming Towns', 'Monmouthshire County Council', and 'monmouthshire sir ffinwy' are at the bottom."/>

WHAT YOU TOLD US? REPORT OF CONSULTATION

Key Consultation Messages

The Two Days of Face-to-Face Consultation

- The Town Centre – its identity, condition, activities, meanwhile uses, management, wellness theme, The Dell, Drill Hall promotion
- Young people provision – outdoors and inside
- Local facilities – wellbeing space, a more visible cinema, places to meet, community cohesion
- Play and space – improvements to existing and linkages
- Getting around – routes, e-bikes and linkages to Wales Coastal Path
- Public transport (Thomas Street), environment, information, hoppa bus service for town centre
- Traffic and transport – more integration with transport hub proposal
- Bulwark shops a priority combined with local facilities: social, hubs being connected, health and dentists and a community wide active travel network

Survey Findings

- Infrastructure and growth – facilities and maintenance
- Managing traffic and improve public transport
- Affordable housing
- Town centre: parking, shopfronts, build an experience, events, role of old bank and other empty buildings
- Neighbourhood focus
- Transport and movement
- More on employment and jobs
- Greening and biodiversity
- A sustainable Chepstow
- Young people – their needs and provision
- Partnership working

Members of the public were asked to comment on the draft vision with some additions highlighted below.

VISION

“Chepstow is a great place for local people, businesses and visitors. The town centre is an accessible and distinctive place for local enterprise, arts, culture and public spaces. And the town's neighbourhoods are well-connected, with the right range of services to support residents' well-being”.

- Focus more on the green agenda
- People are split between community and tourism
- Need to support its identity
- It doesn't tackle the traffic problems
- Needs to consider its setting and relationship to other places close to the town

What one thing would you want the plan to start delivering tomorrow, if no restrictions on funding, partner support and other resources were not present? (the number in brackets represent the frequency of the item being mentioned)

PRIORITIES

- Improve traffic and transport situation (86)
- Making the High Street more of a destination (37)
- More town centre shops (14)
- Upgrade Bulwark shops (9)
- The Dell Park (6)
- Parks and play areas (5)
- Town centre parking (free or improved) (4)
- Improve pedestrian experience (2)
- Thomas Street bus station improvements. First impressions count. (2)

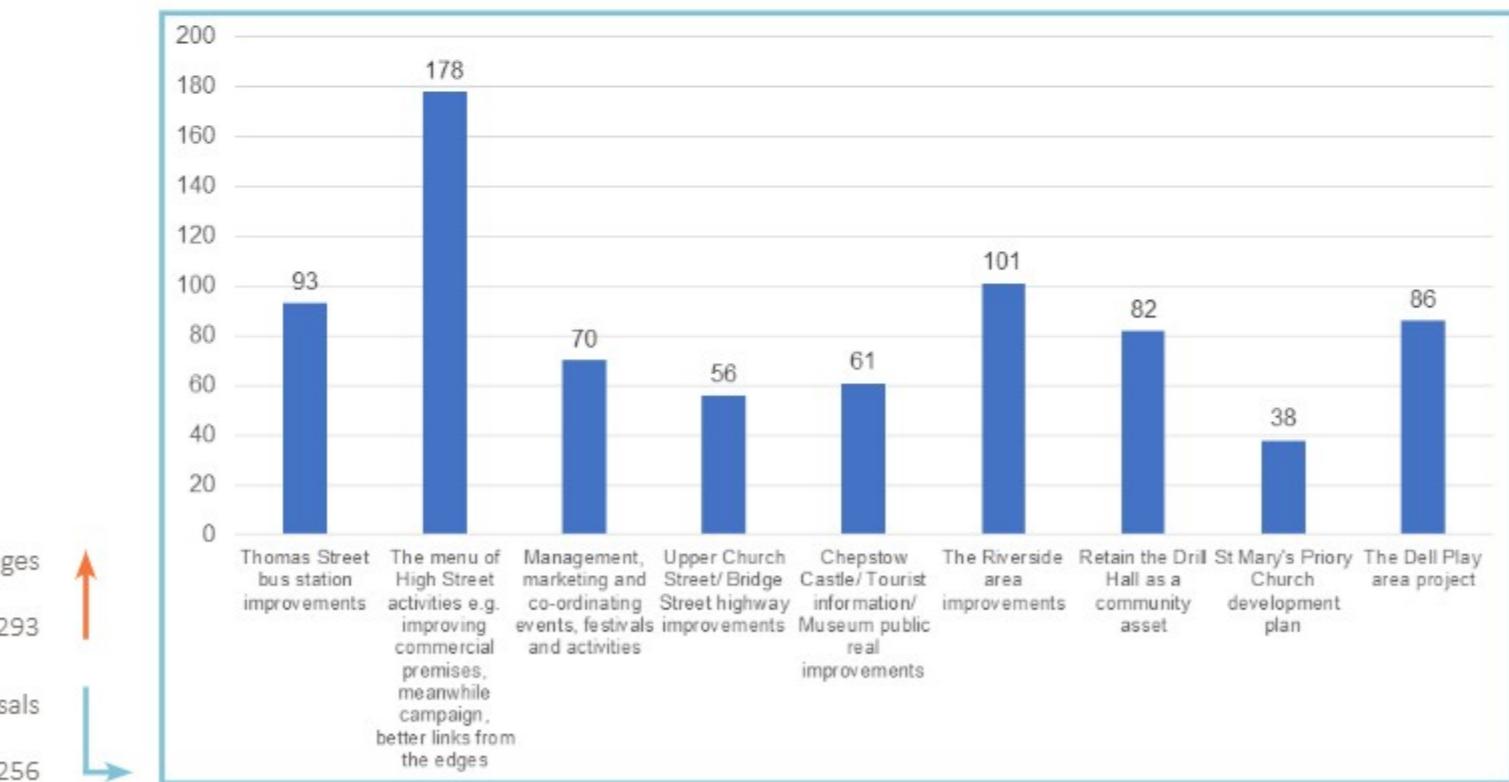
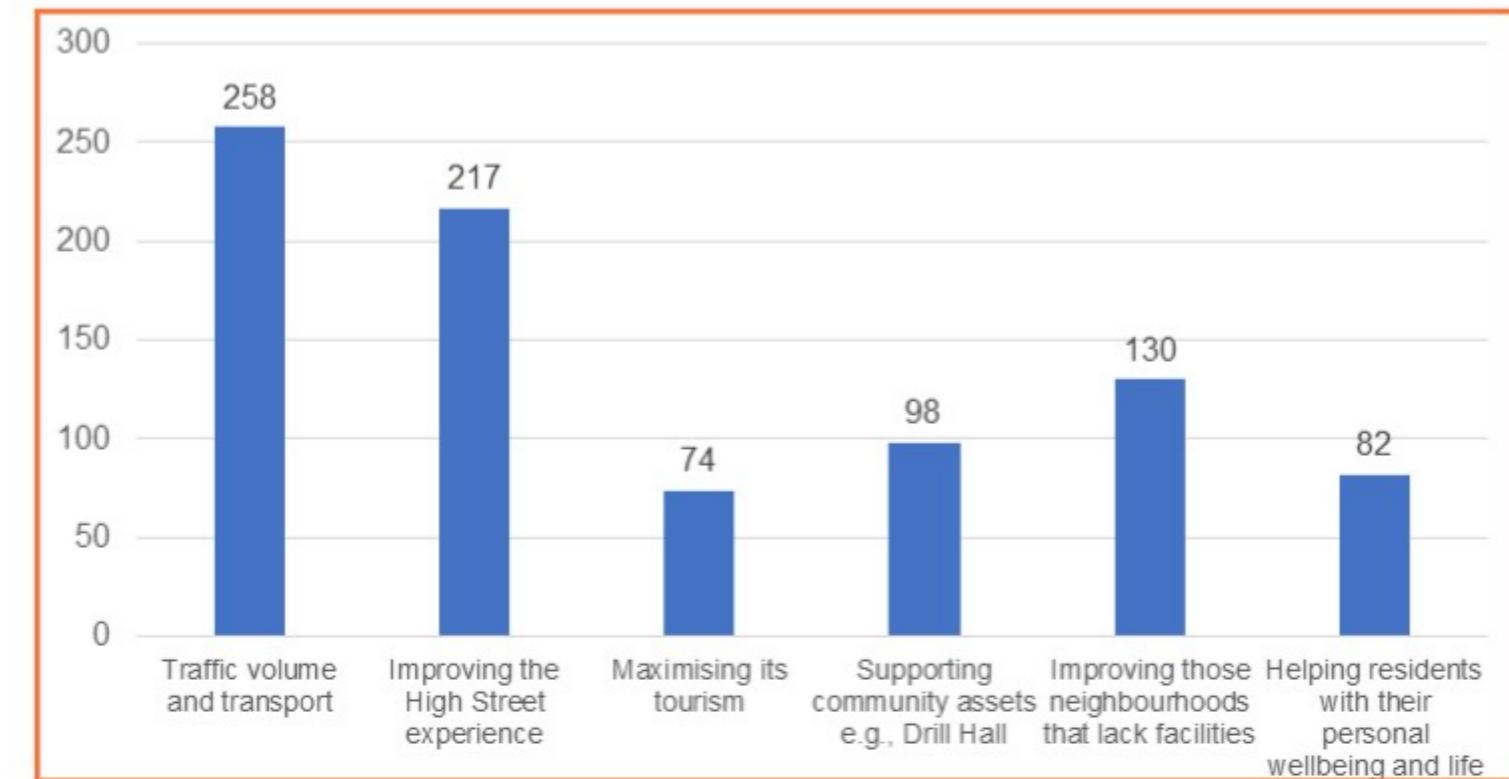


How People Prioritise the Town's Challenges

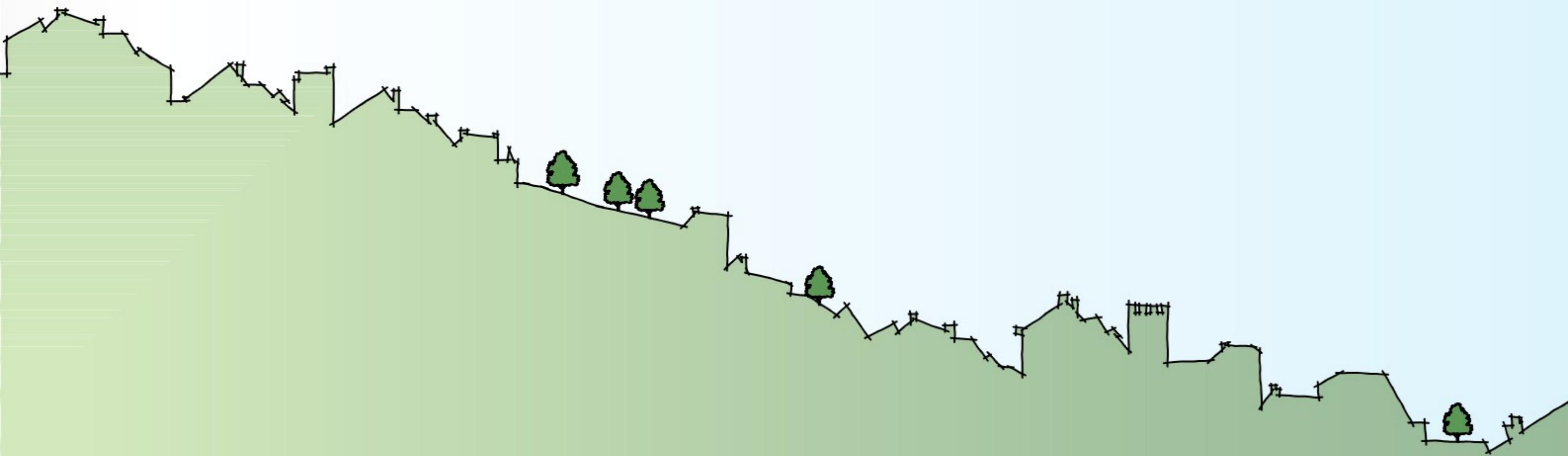
Source: Community Survey; N=293

How People Prioritise the Town Centre Proposals

Source: Community Survey; N=256

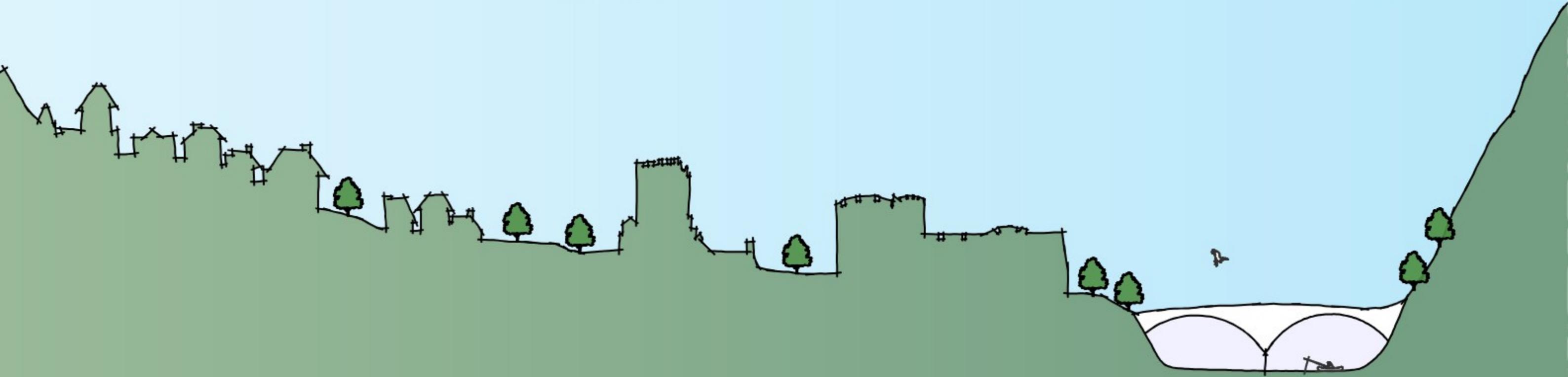


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Chapter 04

Vision, Themes and Projects



Vision

Chepstow is a great place for local people, businesses and visitors. The town centre is an accessible and distinctive place for local enterprise, arts, culture and public spaces, with transport and movement improved through integrated and multi-modal provision. The town's neighbourhoods are well-connected, with the right range of services to support residents' well-being through a focus on green solutions.

Aims

AIM 1

To develop Chepstow town centre as a destination for the local community and visitors that is built on its heritage, walled town character and successful businesses and attractions.

Objectives

1. We will develop and deliver a town centre identity and experience that is supported through place marketing, local business support and on-street activity.
2. We will deliver a co-ordinated approach to tackling underused space and buildings that meets town centre user needs and builds an experience.
3. We will manage space within the High Street area so that it hosts frequent events, festivals, markets and more that builds on reputation, quality and welcome.
4. We will enhance the arrival and linkages between the Castle and Riverside area, its Drill Hall, amenity improvements and event/activity programme.
5. We will develop a parking strategy that enables convenient "popping-in" parking as well as longer term dwell in the town centre.
6. We will develop, create and manage green space within the town centre for dwell, play and other activities.
7. We will support community assets that form part of the Chepstow experience and help their long term viability and role in the community.
8. We will manage how people arrive in the town centre and help them explore and clearly find their way around.

AIM 2

To develop the quality and range of community infrastructure across Chepstow's neighbourhoods that supports local well-being and improved life chances.

1. We will improve the quality of the setting of Bulwark neighbourhood shops and its linkages within the community through a co-ordinated design that addresses the main road, frontages and immediate spaces, and supports a range of local services and uses.
2. We will support community organisations with people based buildings, venues and spaces by signposting them to funding and aligning training and support that improves skills and people based outcomes.
3. We will improve under-used outdoor spaces within the community for that help local biodiversity, enhanced greening of public spaces, education and opportunities for community growing.
4. We will create walkable neighbourhoods that ensure access to amenity and services, by foot and bike, that also link into the town centre through the wider active travel network and into various long distance footpaths.

Themes

Community and people

Connected neighbourhoods

Joining Up Transport

Looking outwards and linking to the wider area

Re-purposing space focused activities

Managing infrastructure

PLACE THEMES

The Placemaking Plan sets out a future direction for Chepstow and lays the foundations for future prosperity and wellbeing. The priority themes respond to Chepstow's key challenges and opportunities identified from our research and endorsed by the local community and

stakeholder consultation. Realisation of the Vision and Strategic Outcomes for Chepstow will be driven by local actions for change. There are four priority cross-cutting themes for intervention, that support the four distinct neighbourhoods and areas of the town. Each priority theme also

reflects the overarching challenge of climate change, providing an integrated response to realise a long-term sustainable outcome for Chepstow.

GETTING AROUND TOWN



- Public transport
- Active travel
- Space for pedestrians

The need to develop solutions in the short to medium term that addresses the town's traffic through more integrated and efficient public transport, thereby presenting a quality alternative to the car. Quality bus infrastructure across the town with a bus-rail interchange at the train station appealing to those employees in Bristol, Cardiff and afar needs to be developed. Connected neighbourhoods form part of the 15 minute walkshed approach that links places of work, education, leisure, shopping and open spaces with its residents. Pedestrians need to be given more space where practical, so they feel safe and have priority over motor vehicles. This theme should link in with green infrastructure.

COMMUNITY AND PEOPLE



- Community buildings
- Play provision
- Plugging gaps in provision
- Skills and training opportunities

A community needs the right range of facilities and amenities for it to thrive, socially and economically. Applying the 5 and 15 minute walkshed approach provides a neighbourhood with an audit of its assets. At a local level, basic provision for meeting places, play provision, access to a convenience store and an environment that is safe, attractive and connected needs to be met. New investment should think holistically in terms of smart community and local enterprise provision that opens pathways to employment for those inactive as well as using redundant land and buildings for well-being purposes.

OPEN, NATURAL SPACE, ENVIRONMENT & WELL BEING



- Well-being spaces
- Paths and Trails
- Biodiversity and community outreach

The location of Chepstow has strategic and local benefits as it looks to the Wye Valley and Severnside with national footpaths and cycleways journeying through the town that brings economic benefits. The need to ensure green infrastructure is protected and improved is key to the quality of life of residents and addresses climate change. Ensuring green and open space, areas of local nature and biodiversity that complement active travel, play and spaces for community life is important.

DESTINATION AND EXPERIENCE



- Neighbourhood Hubs
- Town Centre Experience
- Enterprise Space

Chepstow town centre needs to build an identity that respects its past but recognises the need for change, appealing to its residents and visitors alike. It needs to foster green shoots of business and create the right experience for the town to be known for specialty shops, diverse eateries, markets, year round events and use. Its Castle, Museum, Norman Church and Riverside can form a coherent circuit of activity. Space that supports blended remote working, meeting space and other complementary businesses should be enabled. Local centres such as Bulwark need investment that encourages footfall, dwell and social activity.

PLACEMAKING PRINCIPLES (CODE)

5 Minute Walkshed

- Amenity space – pocket park, place to sit, walk the dog, have a picnic
- A community building or a social space to meet, talk, engage, learn
- A local convenience store or business
- Accessible, safe, pleasant paths and trails

15 Minute Walkshed

- Healthcare clinics and pharmacies
- Primary schools and nurseries
- Green spaces and parks
- Emergency services
- Local government outlets or hubs
- Grocery stores and other essential retailers
- Food and drink
- Leisure facilities
-

5 Minute Neighbourhoods

Whilst the placemaking strategy is about looking at ways to improve the whole town of Chepstow, its community is made up of distinct neighbourhoods which are defined by the physical form and central hubs or places. This is where people tend to gather or meet, shop, work, play, go to school, amongst other activities.

Neighbourhoods should be compact, pedestrian-friendly, and mixed-use, with many activities of daily living should be within walking distance.

When finding ways to organise a place, "walksheds" are where a distance that can be covered in five minutes at a normal walking

pace—typically shown on a plan as a circle with a quarter-mile radius, which is 400 metres.

By applying this in Chepstow we can overlay a number of 5 minute walksheds that radiate from a central point such as a parade of shops, a key roundabout or junction or roads, a key community service or in the middle of a town centre.

Whilst we recognise people don't walk in a straight line or "as the crow flies" it gives you a general sense of space where people can get to within 5 minutes.

This neighbourhood unit could have a number of assets and activities that residents can access which could include:

These 5 minute walksheds can coalesce with adjoining neighbourhoods, with a series of connecting rings collectively creating your 15 minute walkshed. This larger area has a goal that no matter where you live, all residents should be able to go to school, enjoy leisure activities, work and shop within walking or cycling distance of their homes – and enjoy a better quality of life as a result.

Carlos Moreno, an urbanist and professor at the Sorbonne University in Paris, reinvented and theorised the 'La ville du quart d'heure' concept with six social and urban functions at its core: living, working, grocery shopping, education, healthcare and self-development.

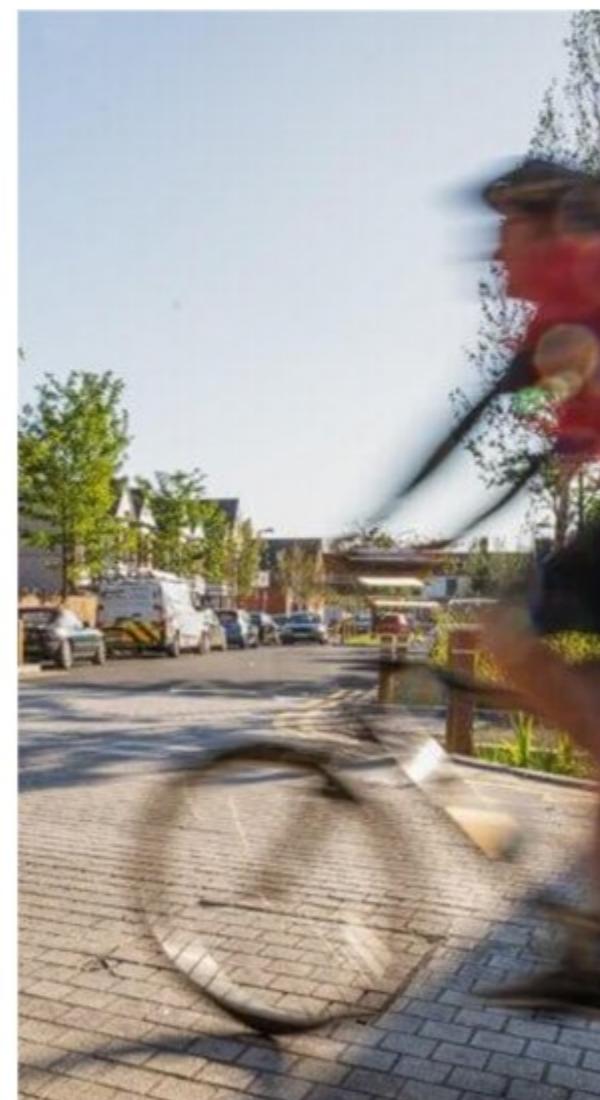
The main aims of a 15 minute walkable town or place is to:

1. Reduce car use and unnecessary long-distance trips
2. Improve key service and amenity accessibility for people from all backgrounds
3. Create and grow social and park space for people across communities
4. Improve personal health and wellbeing across whole regions
5. Create more time for activities, such as connecting with friends and family
6. Give flexibility to how people live – e.g. flexible or hybrid working
7. Promote densification to make local amenities and services self-sufficient
8. Enhance connectivity based on cycle routes and walkability
9. Reduce through-traffic and the negative effects that come with it
10. Unlock a more sustainable way for us to live and move around

This placemaking plan therefore needs to adopt some principles around:

- Developing corridors and streets for 'people areas'
- Supporting liveable neighbourhood plans
- Helping provide the facilities required for a 15-minute community

- Undertaking regeneration with a greater provision of local leisure, community and retail facilities
- For this plan to understand public and stakeholder issues and visions for their area, that promote cycling, walking and public transport use



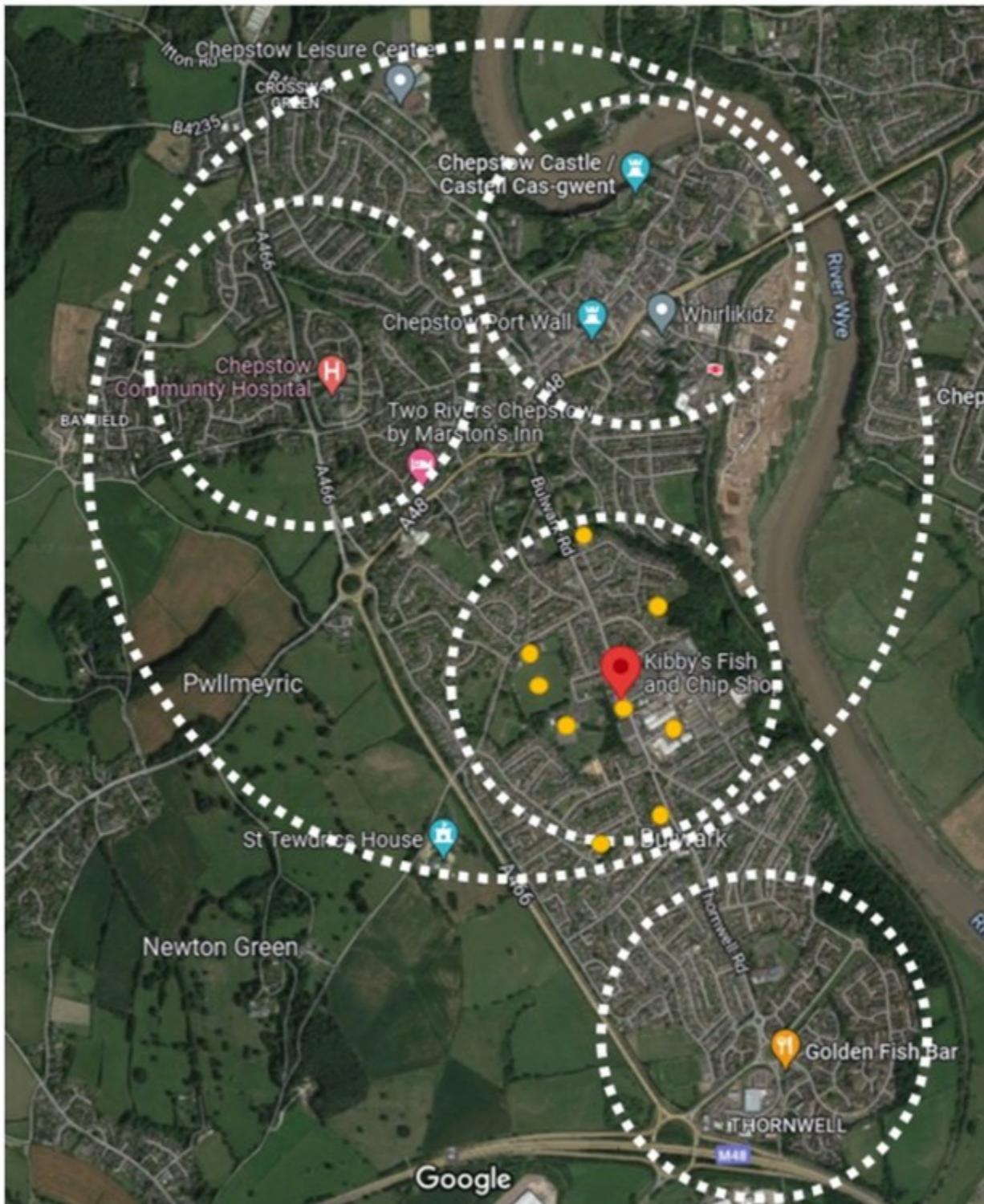


Figure 24- 5 and 15 minute walksheds, Chepstow

Repurposing Space

Chepstow is a town in flux with a need to rediscover itself as it emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic. Before the pandemic its location presented challenges for its local economy and its town centre. due to its border location, travel patterns and its physical characteristics.

Whilst respecting its heritage it needs find ways of repurposing built assets and spaces that helps its transition and reimagination. This is about arts and cultural activities, adding value to existing community hubs to maintain their viability, developing workspace that meets agile and remote working, health and well-being services and ways to channel local ideas, producers, entrepreneurs through its High Street.

People Focused Activities

Chepstow has a community of mixed needs with pockets of deprivation in Thornwell and Bulwark that have been shown within our local area statistics analysis. Income, educational attainment and general quality of life tends to be less than the Welsh average with a need for place based investment to find ways of improving opportunities and peoples' mobility and outlook. This could relate to underused or redundant assets that could be repurposed for activities such as community growing, Men's sheds, job club activity and training. It can also be about maximising the social value of investments through procurement, construction projects with apprenticeships, work placements and other support.

Looking Outwards- linking

The town needs to look outwards and link into its natural and environmental assets as well as other visitor destination. Its strategic position for the Wales Coastal Path, Offa's Dyke Long Distance

Path, the Wye Valley Walk, the Gloucestershire Way and other local/County paths and trails need to be maintained and developed so that day walks and short stay breaks bring activity and expenditure into the local economy, stimulating new enterprises and opportunities.

Destinations like Chepstow Racecourse, Tintern Abbey, the Forest of Dean Sculpture Trail and the newly opened Tidenham tunnel that links you into the Wye Valley need to form part of the visitor passport to the town and area. It also looks south to the Living Levels area of Severnside with views out to the Severn Estuary and local heritage including Caldicot Castle and Country Park.

Chepstow as a base for a day out, weekend or week away is promoted through Visit Monmouthshire and Visit Forest of Dean. The town needs to ensure it has the right quality and diversity of infrastructure that will attract people to visit in terms of accommodation, food and drink, shops and services and public transport.



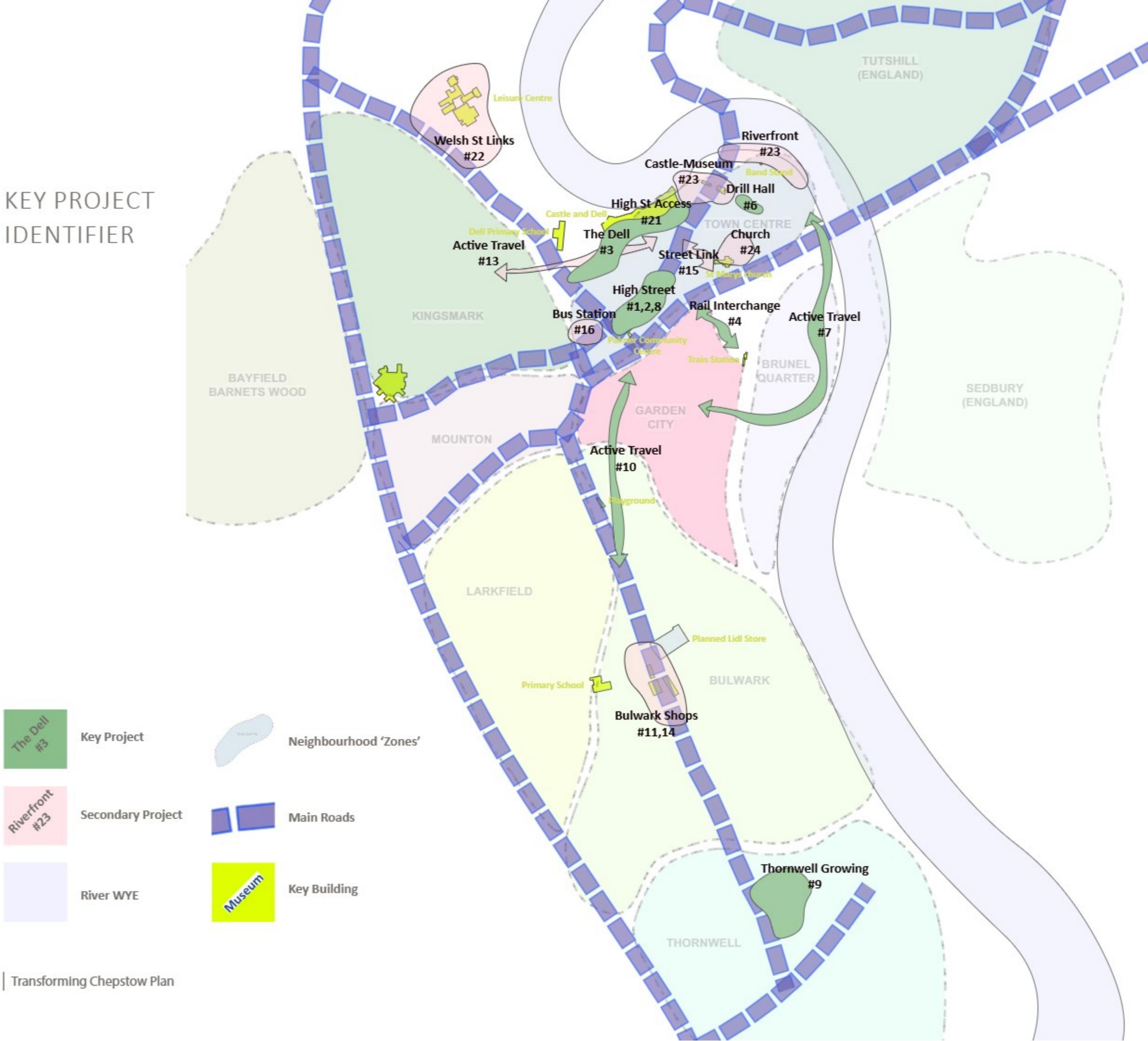
PRIORITY PROJECTS

Ranking	Action	Getting Around	Community and People	Environment space well being	Destination & Enterprise
PRIMARY PLACE MAKING PLAN PROJECTS					
01	High Street- Vacant Property campaign- street level and bigger properties- meanwhile and pop up etc				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
02	High Street - Building improvement grants- High Street and Moor Street				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
03	The Dell Play Provision & Wildflower Meadow	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
04	Chepstow Bus-Rail Interchange- regional-national connections; bus stops in Town Centre	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
05	Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)- Fflecsi scheme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
06	The Drill Hall		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
07	Garden City Active Travel Link and Wales Coastal Path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
08	High Street Workspace feasibility study				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
09	Thornwell Primary School- community growing project	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
10	Bulwark Active Travel Links and WCP links	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

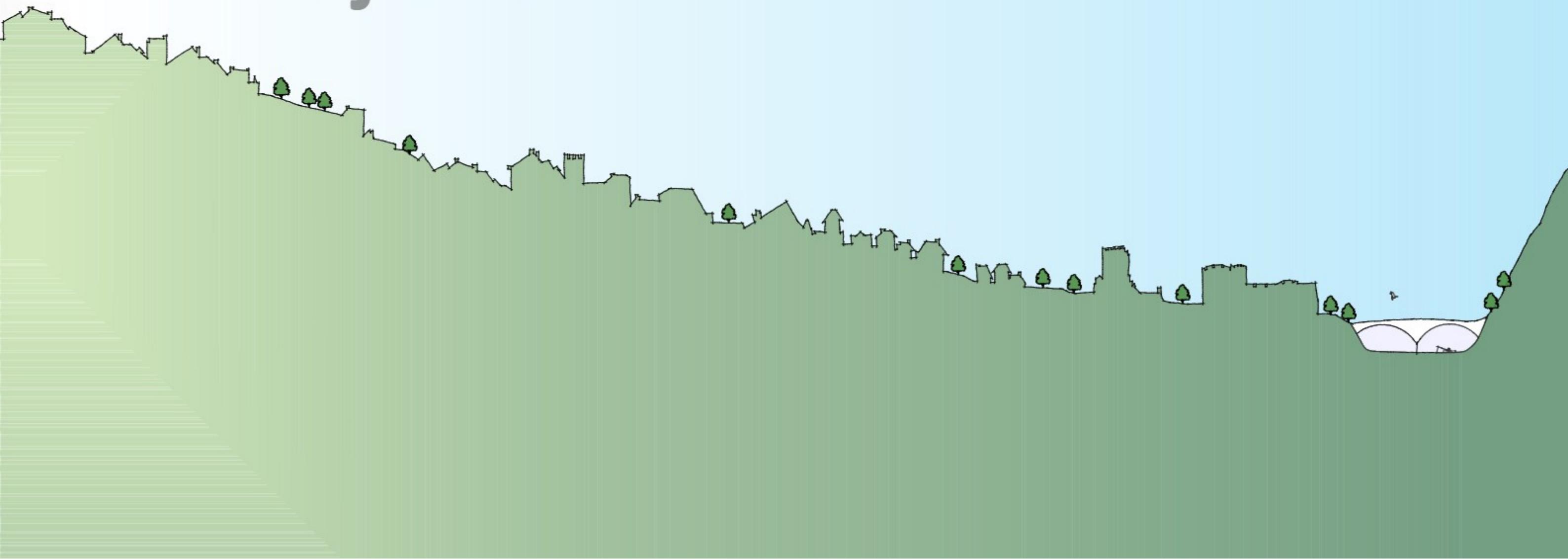
SECONDARY PROJECTS

Ranking	Action	Getting Around	Community and People	Environment space well being	Destination & Enterprise
SECONDARY PLACE MAKING PLAN PROJECTS					
11	Bulwark Neighbourhood Shops (community and basic services and retail) environmental improvements	✓			✓
12	Local Nature Scheme and Play – Various Sites	✓	✓	✓	
13	Kingsmark and the Danes – Active Travel Links & Community Nature Space- Connectivity- RLDP sites	✓			✓
14	Bulwark Community buildings- assets- signposting, connectivity and improvements, co-ordination and information exchange	✓	✓		
15	Upper Church Street/Bridge Street Link	✓			✓
16	Thomas Street Bus Station and Moor Street (building grants, commercial waste, traffic management, gyratory around Thomas Street	✓			✓
17	Play and Sensory Garden	✓	✓		
18	Chepstow Castle/TIC/Museum Linkages	✓			✓
19	Bike Share Scheme	✓			
20	Local Town Centre Bus Services	✓			
21	High Street – Access and Spaces- cross town linkages- library to A48	✓			✓
22	Welsh Street – Education and Leisure Campuses and Wye Valley Path	✓	✓	✓	
23	The Riverfront- link, public realm and public toilets	✓	✓	✓	
24	St Mary's Priory Church		✓		✓
25	Place Management- cleansing, streets, toilets, civic pride				
26	Smart Towns scheme roll out				
27	Events & Activities- marketing and promotion, events development, co-ordination and links to physical projects				
28	Green Spaces – The Warren and Bluebell Drive Woods				

KEY PROJECT IDENTIFIER



Primary Place Making Plan Projects





HIGHSTREET - KEY-NOTE UNDERUSED BUILDINGS

- Reuse keynote buildings that activate space and town experience
- Test out uses and activity before any permanent solutions are found
- Work with public realm to announce/compliment street activities

Dependencies	Building owner co-operation A meanwhile project officer to be appointed
Lead Organisation(s)	Demand from start up businesses Monmouthshire County Council Chepstow Town Council Local property agents
Funding	Welsh Government Transforming Towns Chepstow Town Council Business Wales support



Timetable 2022-2025 2025-2030 2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- To target and repurpose keynote buildings that are vacant or underused in the High Street
- To develop a meanwhile campaign that complements the existing offer and builds on an emerging identity and brand
- To co-ordinate frontages and the immediate spaces to create the right draw and experience

In Barclays Bank, the internal layout and subdivision of the building may limit temporary uses but it could house a temporary art gallery, an indoor or outdoor cinema and other cultural activities.

A brand and campaign would be developed to support the project and promote the activities to the local community.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The former Herbert Lewis building has been vacant for a significant period of time and is a key barometer for how Chepstow High Street is performing. Joined by the former Barclays Bank building which is a prominent and central vacant building in the town. The two buildings are privately owned. Whilst the Herbert Lewis building is suitable for conversion to residential apartments on the upper floors, Barclays Bank is more challenging in terms of setting and privacy.

To assist the owners in stimulating more permanent occupation we would propose a meanwhile project that bridges these two buildings. This would need to be resourced with a project officer or co-ordinator that facilitates negotiations with the owner on terms of a license/lease, respective insurances and liabilities and an agreement on uses and any temporary fixtures and fitting, and finally any rental agreement. The terms would be for a fixed period, subject to review and interested occupiers.

In Herbert Lewis this could centre on a pop up food and drink experience with producers, taster events, talks, demonstrations and even a supper club for start-up businesses to test demand.





HIGH STREET BUILDING IMPROVEMENT GRANTS



- Reusing existing building stock
- Delivering a unified design code
- Creating agile space
- Ensuring a diverse town centre experience

Dependencies

This project is dependent on interest from respective building owners and landlords, specifically with the grant process and their contribution.

Lead Organisation(s)

Monmouthshire County Council as highway authority.

Welsh Government

Respective Landlords

Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme

Monmouthshire County Council

Private Sector Contributions



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Tackling local standing vacant/under-used buildings
- Repurposing uses and activities
- Introducing town centre living
- Improvements to street scene and physical fabric
- Adopting a design code approach

In addition to this flexible grant funding pot, a specific project to deliver improvements to Hanbury House in Chepstow has also been included here. This project was originally developed for inclusion in Monmouthshire's Placemaking Grant programme for 2021/22, but was not able to be brought forward at that time.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Monmouthshire County Council has a strong track record of delivering grants projects to bring about improvements to the appearance and use of town centre buildings.

This has included Targeted Regeneration Investment and Transforming Towns-funded shopfront enveloping projects, meanwhile use schemes, and interventions to bring empty or underused buildings back into use. The issues which these types of grants are intended to address – vacant or underused retail units or buildings, and buildings whose condition impacts negatively on the success of the occupying business as well as more widely the look and feel of the town centre – remain significant concerns in Chepstow town centre.

The core proposal for the Building Grants part of the programme is the establishment of a flexible pot for grant funding to deliver improvements to town centre buildings in Chepstow.

This will permit interventions under three of the Placemaking Grant themes – Commercial Property Improvement Grants, Town Centre Meanwhile Uses, and Shop Frontage Enveloping Schemes – reflecting our experience of the range of needs and context of projects which we have supported historically, and of potential projects which have been identified. This flexible approach will permit us to tailor the grants most effectively to respond to local circumstances in each town and to opportunities as they come forward.

The initial focus of the work will be the preliminary development and design of potential Building Grant projects in Chepstow, with works to buildings unlikely to commence until late 2023/24.

What to avoid



Cohesive design code





THE DELL PLAY PROVISION AND WILD-FLOWER MEADOW



- Animation of the Dell route and Wye Valley Way
- Play provision that is accessible to all
- Green infrastructure and local nature provision

Dependencies Planning Permission

Lead Organisation(s) Friends of the Dell Park Chepstow (FDPC)

Funding Monmouthshire County Council
Local Places for Nature (LPfN) funding
Chepstow Town Council



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhancement of existing play provision
- Interpretation of town wall
- Improved access to the lower level of the Dell
- Introduction of enhanced biodiversity and pollination opportunities
- Activity on Wye Valley Walk and key town route

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Castle Dell is owned privately by the Denny family (Sir Charles Denny and his brother) and has been leased by the council from the family since 1946. The latest lease renewal was in 2017 and the owners have given their approval to the proposed play area improvements.

The play area at Castle Dell Chepstow has been in situ for many years and whilst the equipment is maintained to the relevant standards by the Council it is dated, has limited play value and is not fully inclusive. The site is close to the town centre, next to the Bank Street car park, giving good access to the play area and the wider open space. The land at Castle Dell is in private ownership and is leased by the county council on a long term basis.

The Friends of Dell Park Chepstow (FDPC) was set up a few years ago by a group of interested parents with a view to upgrading the play area and has been working for the last three years with a landscape architect to redesign the site.

When the Council undertook an independent assessment of its 110 play areas back in 2019, Castle Dell ranked as poor in terms of play value, with a PV rating of 18 out of a possible total score of 84. FDPC has undertaken a considerable amount of local consultation about the park and its proposed redevelopment, and their

thoughts and proposals are very much aligned to the Council's revised approach to fixed play provision, agreed by Cabinet in January 2020. This involves moving away from tubular steel equipment towards the use of more natural materials such as sustainable hardwoods, with a significant proportion of inclusive equipment for children with disabilities and other support needs. The Friends of Dell Park Chepstow are preparing the planning and SAM applications and on the lottery bid for the play area project. MCC has committed capital match funding budget already. It is hoped that when the play area project is completed then CADW will look to install some interpretive plaques about the town wall and will also undertake some works to remove unwanted vegetation from the walls.





BUS-RAIL INTERCHANGE



Connecting into active travel network



For enhanced bus facilities that support town centre activity



To use enhance existing infrastructure



Promote the use of public transport, specifically the integration of bus and rail services

Dependencies

The County Council would need to progress the detailed design for this option once funding is available.

Lead Organisation(s)

Welsh Government (Transport for Wales)
Monmouthshire County Council

Funding

Monmouthshire County Council
Welsh Government (Trafnsport for Wales)
UK Government Levelling Up Fund (subject to decision in January 2023)



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Use of railway station forecourt for bus turning area
- Two independently usable bus bays on Station Road directly south of MCC station car park
- Provides significant bus-rail integration opportunities
- Provides opportunities for EV charging and adequate cycle parking facilities within existing car park
- Proposal would include public realm improvements and new pedestrian access towards the south-eastern corner of the car park
- Option would require a relocated vehicular access to the car park but there would be minimal impact on the number of total car parking spaces

Delivery of a Chepstow Transport Hub is likely to have some impact on a number of car parking spaces at the station and the surrounding area. The Park and Ride workstream to the Chepstow Transport Plan sets out a recommended car parking strategy to be delivered in conjunction with the Transport Hub in order to maximise the impact and uptake of sustainable transport in Chepstow.

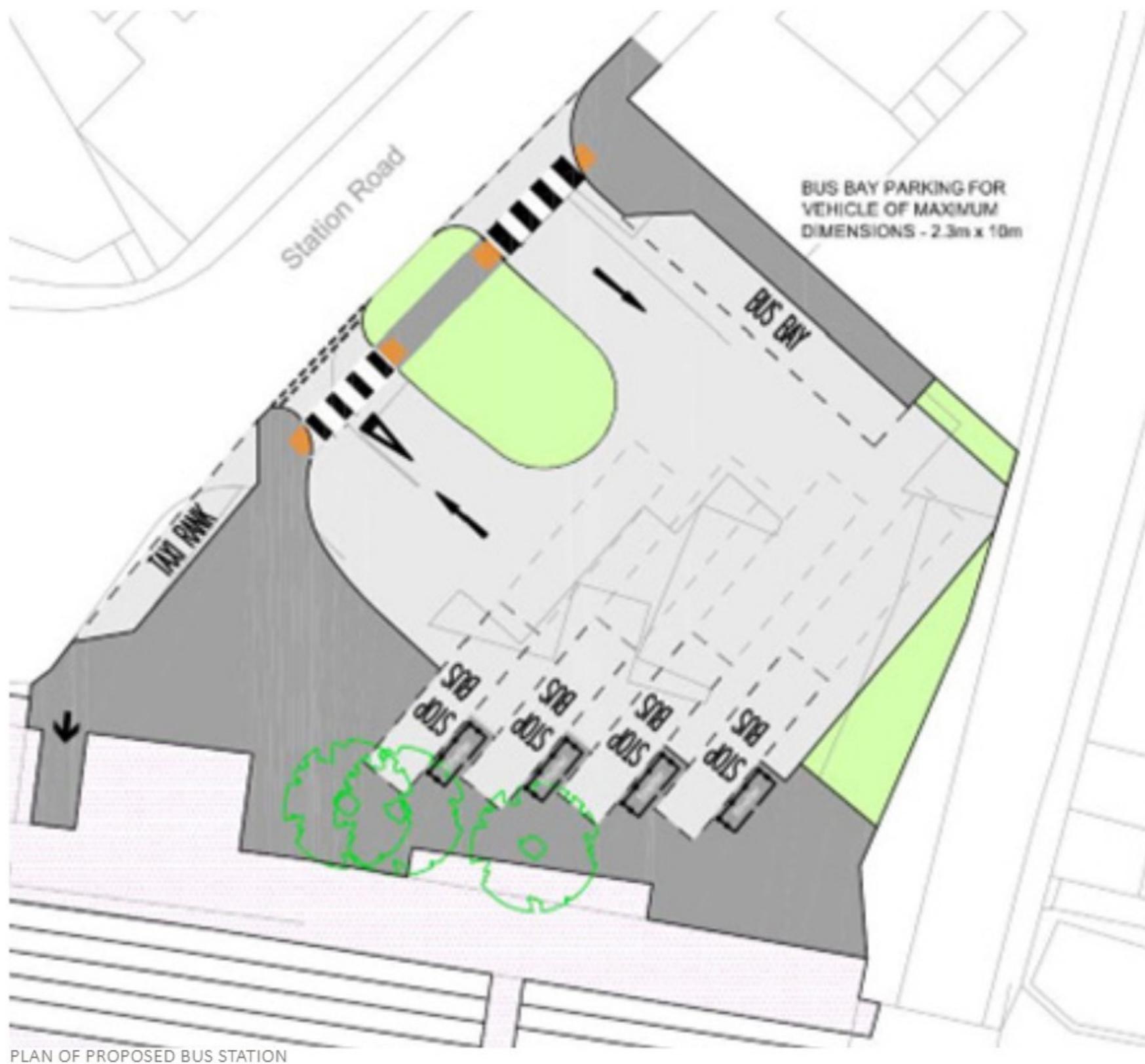
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This preferred transport hub improvements have the potential to provide significant bus-rail integration benefits through use of the railway station forecourt for bus turning area, with two bays parallel to the existing car park access and appropriate space for buses to manoeuvre in forward gear. The option would also provide cycle parking, EV charging and enhance the pedestrian environment through improvements to public realm. All of the land required is within public ownership. The main design principles for the transport hub proposal are:

- Maximise integration between sustainable transport modes
- Drive in, drive out arrangement preferred
- Ensure design is fit for purpose
- Minimise interaction between bus movements and private vehicles
- Maintaining/improving pedestrian access
- Improve/increase cycle parking facilities
- Providing for appropriate levels of EV charging
- Retention of car parking and taxi rank



Current image of train station



CHEPSTOW TRANSPORT HUB



DEMAND RESPONSIVE TRANSPORT

- Connecting into active travel network
- Managing climate change through sustainable transport
- Improving access to local facilities across the day and evening

Dependencies

A Fflecsi service would be likely to have increased costs if implemented as proposed with new vehicles and significantly extended hours of operation. In the longer term there is considered good potential for these to be offset by lower per mile running costs and increased patronage that may be attracted to the service which can offer flexible journey times and routes to suit an increased number of passenger journey requirements. These costs and its future operation will need consideration.

Lead Organisation(s)

Welsh Government (Transport for Wales pilot)

Monmouthshire County Council

Funding

Monmouthshire County Council subsidy for C1, C2, C3 and 761 services



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Vehicles can be used flexibly e.g., to operate Fflecsi services most of the day but to serve as scheduled bus services at certain points e.g., a school service or high demand peak periods.
- Fflecsi typically operates with smaller vehicles based on long wheelbase minibuses which are fully accessible but can access more areas than would be possible with larger bus vehicles.
- Vehicles can be set to have fixed time locations e.g., always call at the train station when trains are arriving/departing.
- Services can operate on a near door-to-door basis making them more attractive for people with mobility issues.
- Smartphone app can help attract younger users, call centre provides an alternative for those who would prefer an alternative booking method.
- DRT was considered to have good potential to cover the service area (and all infill areas unserved) by the 'C' services currently operating in Chepstow and extending to Beachley, Sedbury and Tutshill which are functional parts of the urban area.

responds to passenger demands and will pick-up and drop-off passengers at a location of their choice within a service area.

Fflecsi services are centrally managed, and routing is largely automated undertaken by Via as a third party supplier. Passengers can make a travel request within the service area either by use of a smartphone app or by calling the Fflecsi call centre depending on conditions which differ by area request to travel may be short term (even immediate) or for a future time/date.

Experience to date indicates that Fflecsi is best suited to a smaller service area where trips are short enabling connections between more people, their local community and regional transport network. It is therefore recommended that Fflecsi would operate over a service area covering Chepstow and the Beachley peninsula. If introduced Fflecsi would replace the C1, C2, C3, and 761 services which operate Monday to Saturday with a total fleet of three vehicles. The existing scheduled services currently operate hourly, Monday to Saturday but it is recommended that the Fflecsi service would operate for extended hours and on a Sunday, offering a comparable service that provided by Fflecsi in Ebbw Vale. The proposed operational hours are:

- Monday to Saturday 05:30 to 22:30
- Sunday 09:00 to 16:00



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Commission for Integrated Transport define Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) as any form of transport where day-to-day service provision is influenced by the demand of the user (CfIT, 2008). DRT bus services therefore provide something of an intermediate between buses and taxis and typically operate with smaller vehicles and without a fixed timetable or stops where the route and timing adapt to meet the demands of users.

To support the scheduled bus network Monmouthshire County Council also supports the operation of Grass Routes a responsive flexible bus service operated with accessible smaller buses that makes trips on request Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 16:30. Rather than a typical timetabled service Grass Routes is able to pick and drop off passengers within their service area, changing their route based on daily passenger requests.

Since 2020 Transport for Wales (TfW) has been piloting 'Fflecsi' branded DRT services in Wales. Like Grass Routes, Fflecsi services



THE DRILL HALL



The sustainability of a key community asset in lower Chepstow



Good linkage and visibility of the Drill Hall for visitors and the local community, forming part of the Castle/Museum and Riverside experience

Dependencies

Outcome of Community Asset Transfer study and decision between Monmouthshire County Council and Chepstow Town Council

Lead Organisation(s)

Monmouthshire County Council
Chepstow Town Council.

Funding

To be confirmed



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- To ensure the Drill Hall remains as a welcoming and accessible community-led cultural facility for the benefit of local people and visitors to Chepstow.
- To develop the Drill Hall's potential as a centre for community education in the arts, culture and heritage of the area.
- To build the capacity of the Drill Hall to accommodate new community activities, in order to promote health & wellbeing and in line with identified community need.
- To realise new community and social enterprise opportunities that help to sustain the Drill Hall in the long-term

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Drill Hall Chepstow is a community and arts venue which, since it was leased by Chepstow Town Council in 2008, and handed to a volunteer management committee, has rapidly become a major focus in Chepstow's artistic and community life. With a programme that includes cinema, professional live theatre, concerts, local amateur dramatic performances, poetry readings by nationally known poets, book talks by famous authors, day schools on subjects of historical and environmental interest, art and craft and craft exhibitions, produce shows, dances and the regular monthly meetings of The Chepstow Society and Chepstow U3A.

Gareth Kiddie, the Director of community regeneration specialists, GKA was commissioned by Chepstow Town Council (CTC) in August 2021 to help guide the Council through the process of successfully securing the Drill Hall from Monmouthshire County Council on a Community

Asset Transfer (CAT) basis. He has undertaken extensive consultation with local stakeholder and the wider community. At the time of writing this document the consultation findings had been published with the following some of the main summary points

The things that respondents in general really liked and appreciated include:

- its size, the variety and quality of the entertainment on offer (most especially the film showings and author talks)
- the recent improvements made to the building,
- the relaxed atmosphere and community feel, welcoming and helpful volunteers,
- reasonable ticket prices and on-site parking.

The things that respondents in general thought might be areas for improvement included: the internal décor, better event promotion, more

activities for younger people, the heating & ventilation, the sound system, the seating, parking during popular events and, the entrance and hallway could be more welcoming.

Consultees have been presented with three areas that it was said the Drill Hall might further develop or develop anew in the future. The overwhelming response was in favour of the further development of the arts entertainment offer, with good support for the idea of introducing more community education opportunities.

The next step is therefore conceived as being a Community Visioning Workshop to which representatives of all Drill Hall stakeholders will be invited. The purpose of the workshop is not to cover old ground, nor to take the form of a public meeting, but to run a participatory event that allows genuine and constructive input of good ideas for programme development, building on what already works well.





GARDEN CITY LINKS/WALES COASTAL PATH



- Create safe, healthy, accessible corridors and trails that are integrated
- Use of green infrastructure (SuDS)
- Connecting to 5min neighbourhood

Dependencies

- Consideration by Natural Resources Wales
- Brunel Quarter residential scheme completion
- Riverfront link under new Wye Bridge

Lead Organisation(s)

- Monmouthshire County Council
- Natural Resources Wales
- Brunel Quarter Developers

Funding

- Natural Resources Wales
- Section 106 monies



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- To reopen link from Hardwick Avenue through railway tunnel onto Brunel Quarter along Riverside to lower Chepstow
- To consider how the Wales Coastal Path benefits the town centre economy in terms of route, signage, interpretation

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

As part of Active Travel improvements, the aim is to redirect the Wales Coastal Path through the closed tunnel onto the Brunel Quarter residential site, following the banks of the Wye, under the new Wye Bridge and onto the start/finishing point on the Riverfront. There are opportunities to light or use artwork within the tunnel as part of an enhanced experience.





HIGH STREET WORK SPACE FEASIBILITY STUDY

- ✓ Reusing existing building stock
- ✓ Creating agile space that has multiple benefits
- ✓ Ensuring a diverse town centre experience and neighbourhood feel

Dependencies The project is a feasibility study so is only dependent on the quality and scale of research that informs the process and outputs.

Lead Organisation(s) Monmouthshire County Council

Funding Welsh Government Transforming Towns programme
Monmouthshire County Council



Timetable 2022-2025 2025-2030 2030-2037

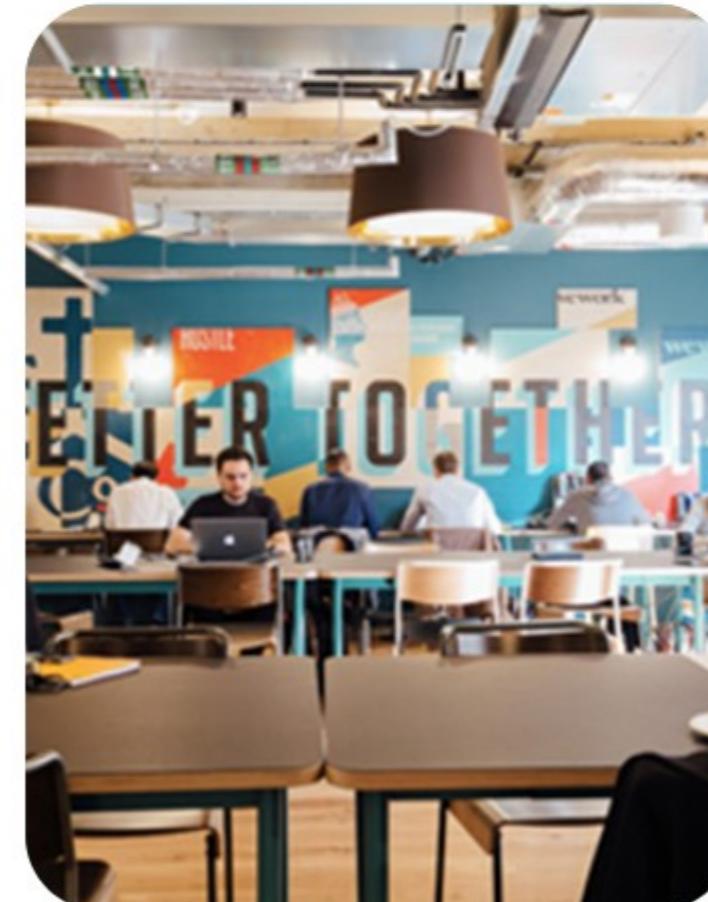
KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Attract new activity to town centre
- Repurpose an underused building or space
- Provide a springboard to vacant units
- Develop a local supply chain network

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

To undertake a feasibility study into the demand and operation of a workspace within Chepstow High Street, specifically centred on an agile or co-working set up. The study would look at any previous or current activity in the County in terms of supply and demand, with market research to understand needs within Chepstow and its hinterland.

Linking into other High Street projects, the study would assess available building stock and space against workspace requirements, and also identify other complementary uses and activities which could add to its appeal and sustainability. It would also develop a network of suppliers that could support such a workspace such as IT support consultants, accountants, stationers, sandwich bars, etc. Dependent on the timing of the feasibility study it may inform some of the building improvement grant activity.





THORNWELL PRIMARY SCHOOL



- Civilised street principles
- Use of Green Infrastructure
- Creating social spaces
- Connecting to 5min neighbourhood

Dependencies

Feasibility report outcomes and options appraisal for caretakers lodge

Ownership process from the primary school and neighbouring residents

Monmouthshire County Council

Thornwell Primary School

Registered Social Landlords

Welsh Government Active Travel programme

Community development grants and trust funds



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Repurpose former caretaker's lodge
- Enhance how school engages with Thornwell Road
- Streetscene improvements and introduce green infrastructure
- Connect into Active Travel Network

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The primary school has been pioneering with it growing produce and understanding where food comes from with a small community farm established which its pupils and teachers maintain and manage.

The redundant caretakers lodge could meet a need within the community and is subject to a feasibility study. It has a presence on the main road and could provide a visible community hub that acts as a bridge between residents and the school.

The extension of the food and growing theme could be developed with the building provide a community kitchen, classroom and training, storage for tools and anchoring a community allotment, food share activities, community composting and providing pathways for learning as well as social events e.g. supper clubs, harvest festivals, cookery clubs, etc.





BULWARK ACTIVE TRAVEL LINKS



- Transforming roads into streets (20mph)
- Create safe, healthy, accessible corridors
- Use of green infrastructure (SuDS)
- Connecting to 5min neighbourhood

Dependencies Schematic design development, initial cost appraisal

Lead Organisation(s) Monmouthshire County Council

Funding Welsh Government
Welsh Government active travel programme

Monmouthshire County Council
Section 106 monies



Timetable

2022-2025

2025-2030

2030-2037

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Active travel improvements that support increased mobility, healthy lifestyles and journeys to work, learning, leisure, shopping and more
- To address known hotspots for pedestrians and cyclists such as crossings, accessibility and to present a continuous series of routes
- The Active Travel Links support the 5 min neighbourhood and links into the larger 15 minute walkshed

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

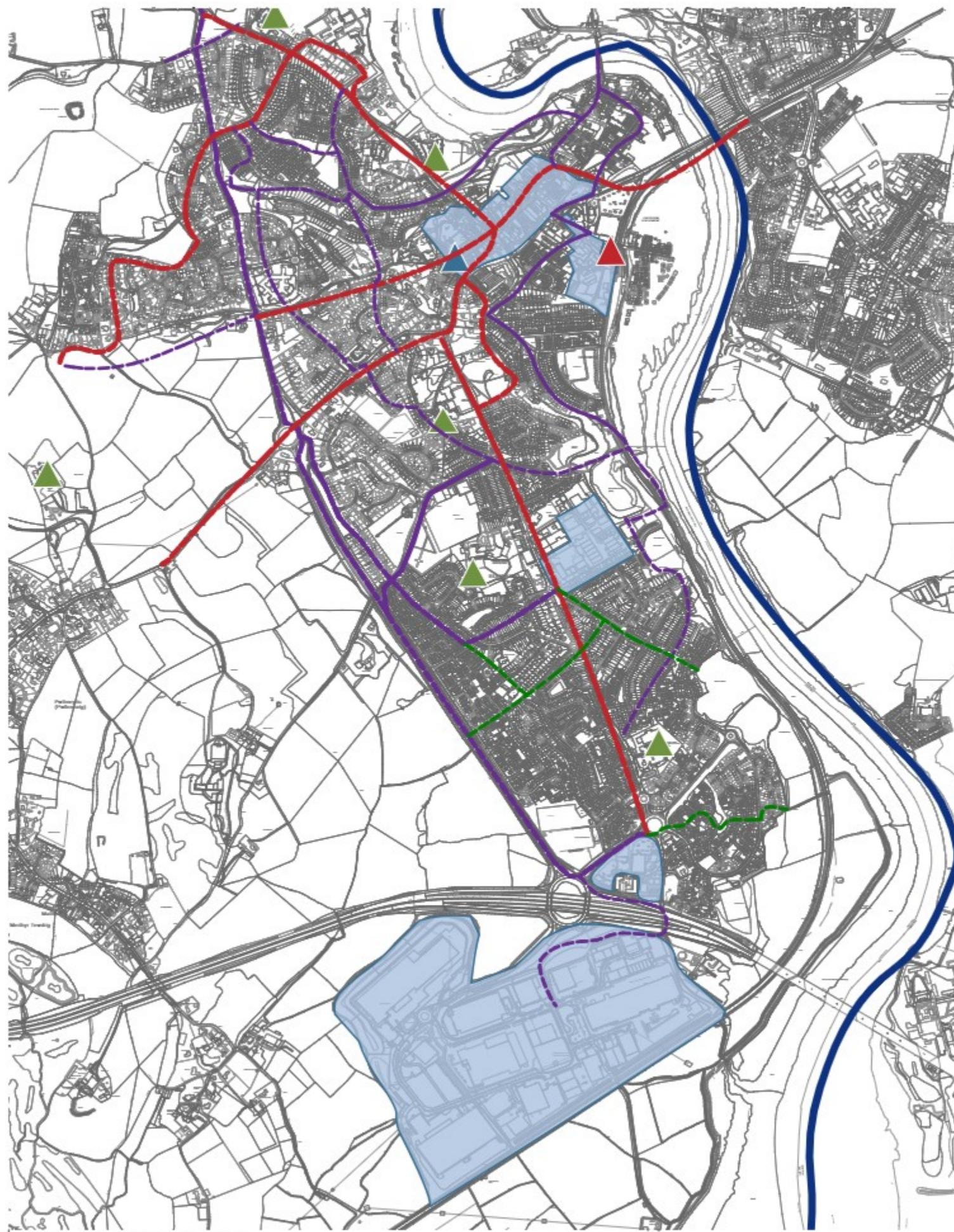
In 2021, the County Council undertook its Active Travel Network Map Consultation which led to a prioritisation assessment. Within the context of Bulwark these are the proposed improvements.

- Bulwark Corner.** Important connection between Town Centre and residential area to South. Currently unacceptable waiting times to cross the A48 Hardwick Hill. Controlled crossing would benefit, though consideration may be needed for timings to link in with lights at bottom.
- Wye Crescent to Strongbow Rd/Bulward Rd junction.** Useful connection between Bulwark and Town Centre. It appears to be well used with lighting in place. Some leaf litter and minor vandalism.
- C4D Link to Bulwark.** Would provide link between shared use path to Town Centre, Bulwark employment and residential area.
- Mathern Road to Wye Valley Link.** Route is pleasant to walk along, but quick win opportunities to improve experience would be drop kerbs/tactile provision closer to

desire lines (e.g. at Channel View crossing). Quick cycle improvements would include additional directional signage to link

- Caerwent Road to St Marys RC Primary School.** Route connects through Bulwark to south. Route is direct and connects a number of key trip attractors. Crossing points in place to connect trip attractors on opposite side of route. Longer term improvements should seek to provide dedicated separated provision.
- St Marys RC Primary School to Rockwood Road.** Realigned route from 2017 via park and Rockwood Road avoiding steep and narrow Hardwick Hill. Route would benefit from improved crossing facilities and signage.



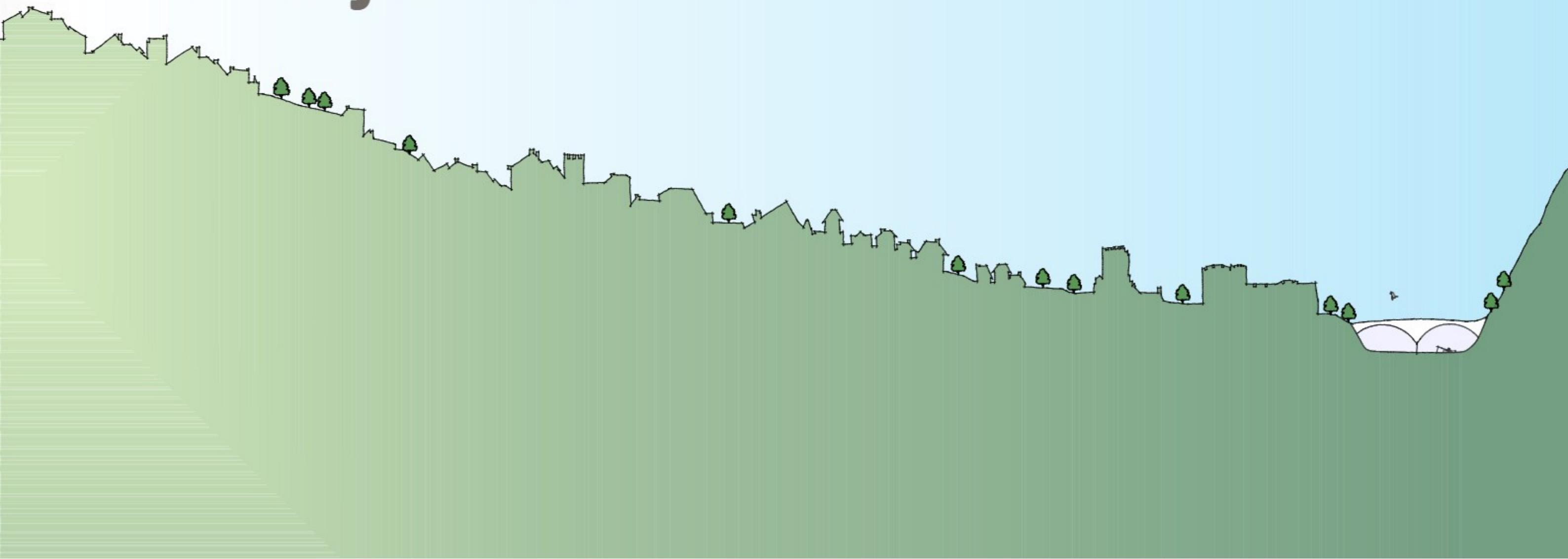


ACTIVE TRAVEL MAP

Key:

- Other Long Term Connections
- Low Usage Routes
- Medium Usage that meet standards
- Priority Usage that require improvements
- Other Routes that require improvements
- Secondary School
- Primary School
- Employment

Secondary Place Making Plan Projects





BULWARK NEIGHBOURHOOD SHOPS

Key Opportunities

- Improve shopper experience
- Reclaim space from highway domination
- Rationalise under used and left over green spaces
- Improve green infrastructure
- Upgrade pedestrian environment

Project Description

This busy neighbourhood retail hub has the opportunity to become a vibrant retail and leisure core centred around a quality pedestrian friendly, green and safe public realm.

The illustrative proposals demonstrate how the area could be redesigned based around good place principles. Re-claiming excess space currently given over to highway could create more space for shops to display their wares, cafes to spill out into and parking solutions to be rationalised. Such interventions can begin to activate the street and help to create a destination place.

Such interventions will also create additional space for integrated green infrastructure. Not only will this create a more visually pleasant environment, it also had the potential to improve biodiversity, sustainable drainage and reduce carbon emissions.

The parade of shops could also accommodate local community and well-being services that are a natural space for people to meet, gain advice, participate in activity and also be signposted to other local facilities.





PLAY PROVISION/ PLACES FOR NATURE

Key Opportunities

- To re-provision play sites within Bulwark and Thornwell that continues to provide a community resource yet maximising the natural capital of the spaces
- To retain play spaces and green spaces but with enhanced biodiversity value

Project Description

To upgrade existing play provision that meets the needs of the community and forms part of a 5-minute neighbourhood principle.

To deliver community nature schemes through play provision which could include:

- Planting for pollinators and other wildlife
- Mini- meadows / native hedgerow
- Trees and shrub planting/Fruit trees / orchards- Community food growing opportunities

Sites to include: Burnt Barn Road, Garvey Close, Valentine Lane, Bishops Close, Strongbow Road and Larkfield Park

Additional sites to explore include: Pembroke Road, Aust Crescent and Piggies Hill.

This project needs to add value to the Community Orchard trail, developed by Transition Chepstow and Chepstow Town Council.



ACTIVE TRAVEL AND COMMUNITY NATURE SPACE

Key Opportunities

- To link the northwestern edge of Chepstow community within the town centre and other destinations through the Danes, Mounton Road and onto Welsh Street
- To make additional investment in the Danes open space through local spaces for nature measures
- To improve existing routes to meet Active Travel standards

Project Description

The linear footpath in the Danes, linking Kingsmark Lane and the main open space/play area, is included as one of the sites in the CNS (Community Nature Spaces) project this year and offers some opportunities for improvement. The topography of the site doesn't currently offer a realistic accessible off-road link to the town centre and the start of the off-road footpath in Castle Dell down to the Castle, Museum and Riverside. This needs to be reviewed and options for making improvements need to be explored.

To create this coherent series of pedestrian routes from the north western edge of the town from Bayfield and Barnett's Farm that ensures access to and from the town centre, and in addition links into local public transport that supports return trips. The addition of other initiatives such as e-bike hire scheme and charging stations in this upper area of the town would help increase peoples' mobility and accessing local services and facilities.





BULWARK COMMUNITY CENTRE

Key Opportunities

- Enhancing existing community assets to aid demand, viability, future sustainability and social cohesion
- To integrate assets such as Bulwark Community Centre and Pembroke Road Primary School into the local community

Project Description

The local community recognises the value of community and educational assets such as Bulwark Community Centre and Pembroke Road Primary School. Suggestions include:

- Improved signage and accessible footpaths, to and from the Community Centre and improved accessibility to building and car park.
- Enhanced play provision alongside the Community Centre.
- To support the Community Centre with its uses, activities and cross-community promotion, and planned refurbishments – promoting it as a local Hub.
- To develop with the Primary School, an out-of-school hours community activity plan that supports the ethos of a community school.
- To appraise how the school grounds work with immediate streets, edges and boundaries and footpaths, etc, and to understand if there are opportunities to create more permeability, whilst ensuring the security of pupils.



UPPER CHURCH STREET / BRIDGE STREET LINK

Key Opportunities

- Rationalise carriageway
- Reduce junction geometry to increase pedestrian space and slow vehicle speeds
- Enhance pedestrian priorities using crossovers at side junctions
- Improve setting of historic Almshouses

Project Description

This corner is a key pedestrian nodal point with multiple connection choices to the High Street, church, castle and riverfront. It is, however, currently dominated by a highway design geometry and vehicle priority.

There is an opportunity here to redefine the space and create a pedestrian priority node. This can be achieved quite simply through the reduction of highway junction geometry combined with effective pedestrian priority features such as side road crossovers and highway narrowing at key pedestrian desire lines.

The introduction of street trees and kerbside landscaping can also establish the node as a place whilst also helping to deflect the carriageway and reduce traffic speeds.





THOMAS STREET / MOOR STREET BUS STATION

Key Opportunities

- Creation of a public transport arrival gateway with new quality public realm with integrated green infrastructure
- Reduce dominance of large areas of 'dead' paving by reduction of bus bays
- Activation of space through the introduction of a 'service' use eg coffee kiosk
- Opportunity to relocate disabled parking from Moor Street to Thomas Street, helping to reduce moor Street congestion

Project Description

This project offers a great opportunity to completely repurpose the existing and utilitarian space and public realm. A review will need to be undertaken of the existing bus services with a view to reduce the number of bays required. This would link into the recommendations of the bus-rail interchange project and the local bus services activities. This will release currently sterilised land for re purposing into quality public realm.

Introduction of meaningful green infrastructure will help to soften the currently hard environment and create the backdrop for a supplementary and complimentary use eg coffee kiosk with south facing seating / rest area. The additional space created will also offer the opportunity to relocate the disabled parking spaces from Moor Street. These currently narrow the street to a single carriageway. Whilst this calms the traffic, it also creates congestions which impacts on the look and feel of Moor Street.



PLAY AND SENSORY GARDEN

Key Opportunities

- Improve existing play provision
- Support Community Group with sensory garden improvements
- Ensure whole space works for well-being, play, football and informal recreational use

Project Description

Hardwick Village open space was laid out by the Admiralty 'National Shipbuilding Company' as part of the new Hardwick Village built for workers of the Government's new shipyard at Chepstow in 1917 to provide ships for the war effort.

The Garden City Community Group has developed their overarching plan for the whole site, with plans for a new perimeter footpath, new play equipment for younger children and to replace old play equipment. It is a protected field with Fields in Trust (National Playing Fields Association) – so it is protected as a public open space in perpetuity for current and future generations. The designation is as a WW1 commemorative site – the houses were built to house the naval shipyard workers as part of the WW1 war effort.

The County Council is to install items of play equipment for the younger (pre-school) age group and in the longer term we would like to replace all of the existing but outdated fixed play equipment for the primary age group (5-11 years). Works to the sensory garden will also take place.





CASTLE / TOURIST INFO & MUSEUM PUBLIC REALM

Key Opportunities

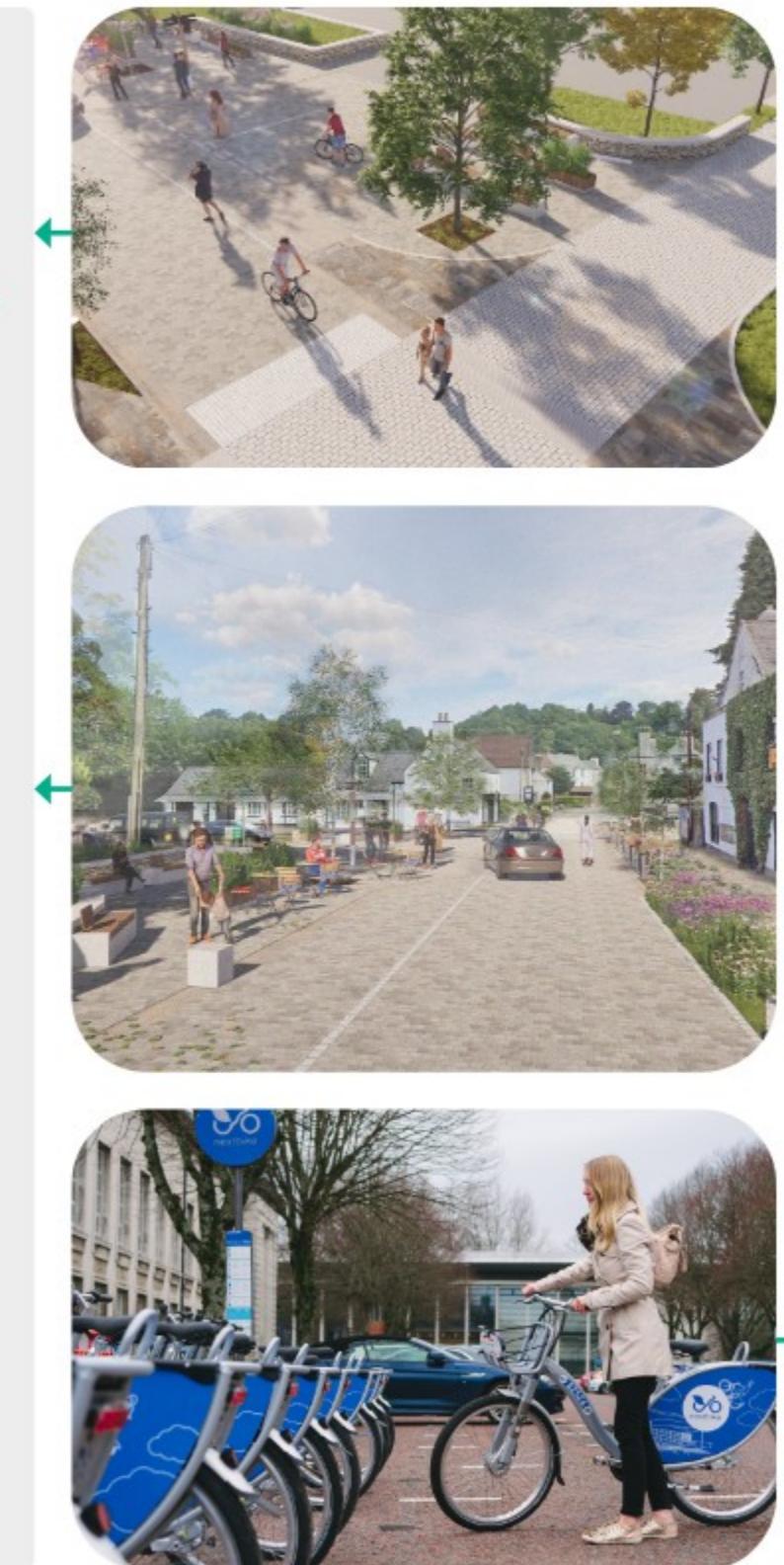
- Reduce traffic speed
- Widen footways
- Create places for pub seating
- Rationalise castle car park access
- Improve pedestrian link between castle and museum

Project Description

This area of the town is a key arrival point and gateway for many of the visiting tourists. However, relatively fast moving traffic, narrow footpaths and a tired public realm does not portray this. There is a real opportunity, through relatively simple and straightforward intervention, to create a real sense of arrival here.

There is also an opportunity to far better integrate the neighbouring uses into a unified space. Through the slight horizontal deviation of the street, footpaths can be widened, offering space which the adjacent pubs could use for external seating. This could be combined with modest rain gardens and landscaping to help with green infrastructure and drainage.

At present the museum feels divorced from the castle experience. There is the opportunity, as part of the aforementioned street public realm enhancement, to provide a more direct, visually and physically apparent link between the two, better integrating the museum into the space and place.



BIKE SHARE SCHEME

Key Opportunities

- Bike share can support the objectives of WG transport policy by reducing carbon emissions, attracting new cyclists and increasing the attractiveness of public transport.
- Electric bikes can assist with challenging topography and make bike share more inclusive.
- A suitably sized scheme for Chepstow would include around 100 electric bikes and 10 docking stations.
- The key benefits of bike share include reduced carbon emissions, improved local air quality, attracting new cyclists and increasing the availability and attractiveness of public transport.
- Chepstow could be used as a test case to trial a range of shared mobility options to complement the core Metro network

Project Description

A Docked Electric Bike Share best addresses the Chepstow WelTAG study objectives. Electric bikes can assist with challenging topography and make bike share more inclusive. A suitably sized scheme for Chepstow would include around 100 electric bikes and 10 docking stations. The preferred option would cost around £500,000 to set up initially (bike purchase and station installation) and require around £100,000 of ongoing operating subsidy per annum. This is less than the estimated cost of operating subsidy provided to local C1/C2/C3 bus services.

The geographic extent of the proposed scheme, number of docking stations and their spatial distribution has been discussed with local stakeholder groups and a total of 10 docking stations and 100 electric bikes is considered a suitably sized scheme for Chepstow.





LOCAL TOWN CENTRE BUS SERVICES

Key Opportunities

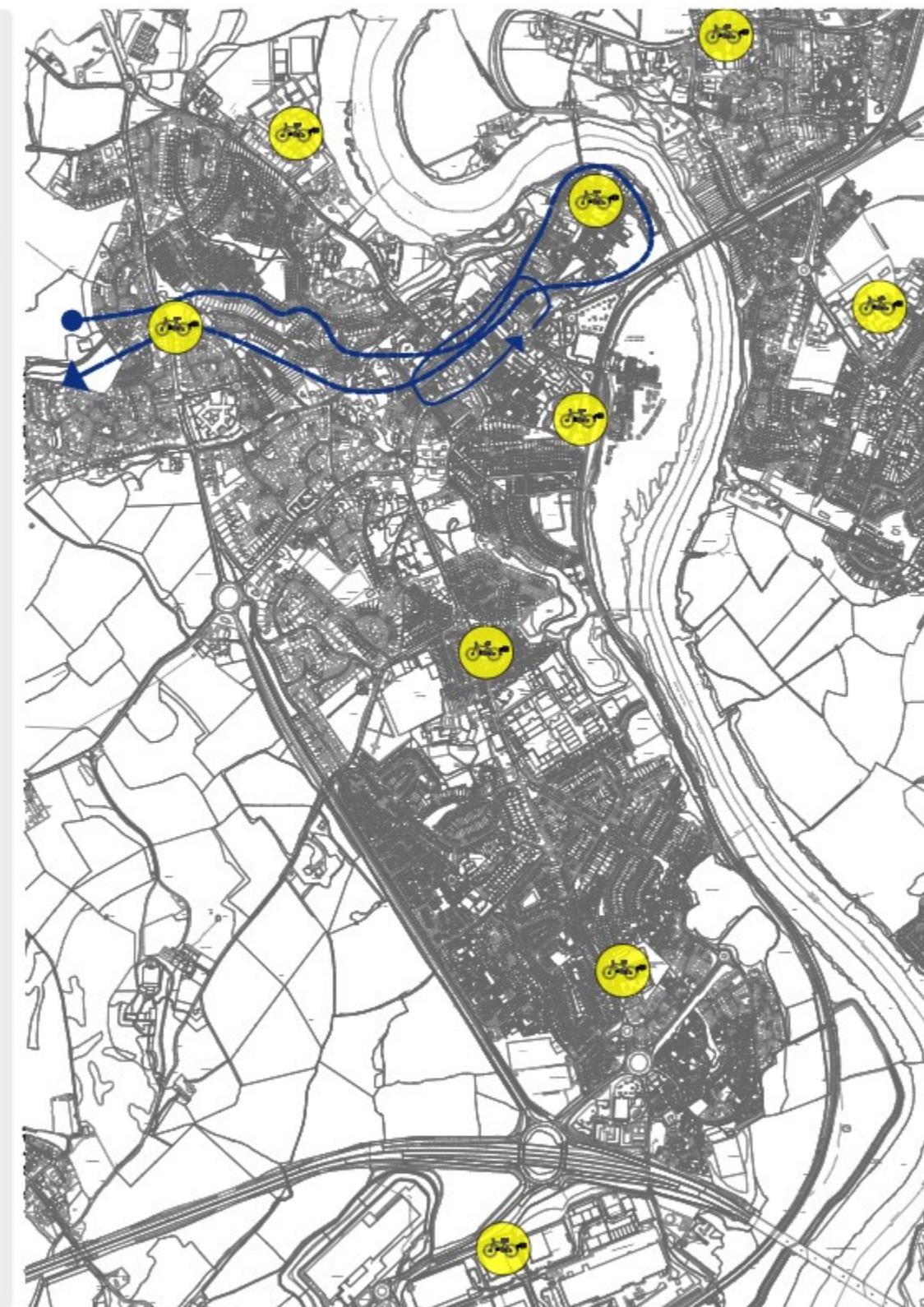
- Provide better accessibility between local destinations for both existing and potential bus users. It is these journeys for which demand (and potential demand) for bus travel is typically highest;
- To connect more bus services (and therefore local destinations) with rail services at the proposed Transport Hub at Chepstow railway station in order to improve regional accessibility; and
- To operate a future bus network with a similar level of operating resources

Project Description

The proposed bus network utilises Moor Street (and the existing Thomas Street bus station), Hardwick Terrace, Mount Pleasant (A48), Beaufort Square, and High Street with all routes circulating in an anti-clockwise direction through the town centre. The loop enables all buses to connect to either the Thomas Street bus station, the Transport Hub, or both.

To support the bus box idea and Transport Hub, new stops have been proposed on the A48 and adjacent to the current bus station.

A new bus stop is proposed on Moor Street which enables buses travelling westbound, past the bus station, to pick up and drop off passengers without the need to loop through the bus station which is one-way north bound. As well as stop infrastructure for the stop it is recommended that pedestrian facilities are included in the signalised junction.



Key:

- Town pedestrian walking circuit
- Bus box loop
- Existing bus stops
- Proposed new bus stops
- E-bike docking stations



HIGH STREET ACCESS AND SPACES CROSS TOWN LINKAGES

Key Opportunities

- Creating more clear and legible pedestrian links
- Linking assets such as parks, libraries, toilets
- Connecting into active travel network
- Signing town centre edges

Project Description

This project is to provide stronger cross-town linkages from The Dell green space through the walled entrance across Welsh Street car park, passing Chepstow library/Community Hub and into the town centre.

From the southeastern side of the town centre, specifically the Upper Nelson Street service road there is an opportunity to provide clearer signposting to and from the High Street. This could support an element of "popping in" type parking (limited stay) within Upper Nelson Street.

Types of improvement works could include:

- Waymarking and other forms of signposting (repeater and directional)
- Changes to pavements and surfacing to direct town centre users
- New public realm improvements to targeted areas
- Landscaping where required





WELSH STREET LINKAGES

Key Opportunities

- Improve safety of children in accessing school
- Create new gateways into school and leisure centre
- Introduce green infrastructure
- Promote pedestrians above vehicles

Project Description

This relatively modest project offers the potential to re-imagine sections of Welsh Street, primarily at the access points to the school and the leisure centre as well as with those residential streets that come down from the Kingsmark area.

The access points could be 'announced' in the street scape through the use of:

- Civilised streets surface treatments
- Localised street narrowings through the use of green infrastructure
- Relocate crossing points to safer positions
- Build up of features upon approach to school and leisure centre gateways
- Investigate green pedestrian/cycle connection from leisure centre to town centre
- Better signage for pedestrians/cyclists and awareness of a people centred space to car drivers



THE RIVERFRONT

Key Opportunities

- Create a sense of place that is worthy of the world-renowned Wales Coast Path
- To make the space more coherent for the Wales Coastal Path southern gateway and the amenity area of the Riverfront area
- Incorporate features that connect the north and south gateways to create a sense of connectivity along the path
- Install artistic features which people will post on social media, providing effective marketing for the path
- Provide a lasting legacy to the 10th anniversary of the Wales Coast Path

Project Description

The riverfront area needs to re-enforce itself as destination within the town and part of the lower Chepstow trail of heritage and natural assets. It needs to work with the Castle/Museum and Tourist Information Centre area in terms of wayfinding and interpretation. On arrival there needs to be a clear sequence of movement from the old Wye Bridge to the river-bank and band stand area with the southern gateway for the Wales Coastal Path having a stronger presence with some vertical structures to announce the Path that is instagrammable. Proposals from Natural Resources Wales include: Improved signage, Linking words, Telling the story and Audio interpretation. There also needs to be clear continuity signage and consideration of how any re-routed Path from Garden City, landing at Brunel Quarter and the Riverside is implemented and managed.





ST MARYS CHURCH

Key Opportunities

- Return the Priory to its ancient purpose as the thriving centre of community life for all residents and visitors of Chepstow
- Preserve the Priory as a major historic building of the town for future generations to enjoy
- Develop the Priory's facilities to meet the needs of 21st Century and beyond
- Maintain the Priory as a centre of family life where families can celebrate or mark life events like, christenings, weddings and funerals and other family celebrations
- Maintain the 1000-year connection with Christian worship and prayer for the people of Chepstow
- Worship and prayer for the people of Chepstow

Project Description

St Mary's Priory Church has come to a cross-roads where it needs maintain its place of worship within the community, safeguards its historical value but also open itself up to more community and town wide activities and events. Some investment is taking place around the perimeter of the Church, but the fabric of the building is in need of essential repairs if it is to continue as a place of worship.

The Church has developed a Vision which is about looking to using the internal space in a number of ways that respects its core purpose, yet also attracts new audiences and leads to it being seen



as accessible and inclusive to all. Some activities that are easy to provide include provision for baby and toddler groups, school holiday activities, soft play activities, or inflatable park and support groups for young parents or those with post-natal depression.

For young people, areas of the church could be provided for weekly youth clubs including table tennis, pool, music such as safe discos (for example: <https://www.bluelightsa.org/about>).

For older people activities such as dementia Café, day centre, concerts, theatre, cinema, use by societies and clubs and arts exhibitions.

The celebration and promotion of the Arts could include Festivals – Music and Performing arts, Literature- Poet/Artist in residence, Exhibition space – Photography, Painting, Video, Mix media and Sculpture.

Some proposals that could be trialled or semi permanent include:

- Temporary Climbing wall
- Temporary skate park

The external and internal fabric of the building would need to form part of a package bid for funding with the income from the activities listed above to form part of the match-funding contribution.

The setting of the Church would also need to be improved in terms of perimeter paths, parking areas, its church hall and its relationship to lower Church Street and Church Street. Its main entrance needs greater announcement as you approach from Upper Church Street by foot such as carriageway treatment and signage.



OTHER PLACEMAKING ELEMENTS

Place Management

To support the physical projects, there is a need for place management. The Institute of Place Management defines the activity as "a coordinated, area-based, multi-stakeholder approach to improve locations, harnessing the skills, experiences and resources of those in the private, public and voluntary sectors". Place management is focused on ways to improve a location or to maintain an already attained desired standard of operation. For Chepstow, local organisations are directing activity and resources to help support the town centre but these would have greater impact if there it was more integrated. Some building blocks for place management include:

- **A town centre management way of working.** Options for a manager or a multi-sector operational group. This would focus on operational and street based resources initially before moving into other activities.
- **Street animation.** To explore simple ways of animating the town centre streets, building on street bunting and floral displays. This could include training on business signage and A boards, use of flags, social space adaptation, amongst other items.
- **Digital platform.** A town website with supporting social media campaigns that also links into physical identity within the town e.g. signage, event signage, etc
- **Events and Activities.** Adding to the current programme of town events, there is a need to explore a meanwhile or pop up scheme that would focus on empty properties, trailing ideas, products, events that act as a springboards for micro-businesses and start-

ups. This would be linked to the town centre resource or could be a fixed term project officer. Other events and activities could fill gaps in the event/festival calendar which could be within physical buildings or outdoor space e.g. outdoor cinema.

Events & Activities

The town is already active with events has been for many years. From the Castell Rock Music Festival to the annual Arts Festival through the town's Walking Festival, to name a few, are all created and run by volunteers bringing pride and passion for their town. The weekly Sunday markets in the High Street have become regular dates in the diary, building a following and draw to the town. The opportunity therefore exists to bring these altogether into a co-ordinated calendar and to also look at any common ground for pooling resources across events and festival groups. As illustrated within place management, the need for a single town website would provide a unified platform for promoting events and would start to present a single identity and set of messages.

Smart Towns

Smart Towns actively embrace new technologies to achieve economic, social and environmental benefits such as increased footfall and growth in spending, improved traffic management, energy saving, cleaner safer streets, and increased public involvement.

Smart Towns adopt the same technology and data that national brands, have been using for decades to enable small businesses and town centres to compete on an equal footing. Smart Towns also help to 'levelling-up' so that every business and

organisation within a town has access to the same information they need to help grow their business and the town centre.

Owen Davies Consulting were appointed to review how "smart" Chepstow is as part of a County Wide assessment and action planning process. These are their findings.

Steps the town could take to exploit its digital infrastructure further in relation to heritage and culture.



Digital infrastructure & technology in Chepstow

Chepstow has good quality strategic-level infrastructure, including comprehensive 4G coverage across all networks as well as superfast broadband. However, similar to most towns in Monmouthshire, the town does not have 5G coverage or ultrafast broadband coverage. These are areas for future investment as the increased connectivity provided by 5G and ultrafast broadband enables existing businesses to further utilise online platforms and tools. In addition, high quality connectivity provided by these networks can attract new independent businesses to set up in the town.

Chepstow does not currently have any public footfall counters (a basic building block of a Smart Town). Footfall counters would provide evidence around how people use the town centre, supporting decision making around some the town's top priorities such as transport and parking.

There is evidence of some digital heritage and culture initiatives in the town centre, such as Transition Chepstow publicising their planting through QR codes on planters. In addition, HistoryPoints are located throughout the town centre featuring information provided by the Chepstow Society. HistoryPoints are a Wales-wide initiative to place QR codes at historical sites which provide concise historical information on a web page, when the QR code is scanned. There is potential to build on this further through integrating the Castle with the heritage found throughout the town centre as well as tying in the town's heritage with new and existing events. Raglan Castle may provide a model for the next



Online presence

The online presence is how the town appears, primarily, on search engines and social media. This outward facing online presence is often the first point of call for visitors seeking to find local information, events & attractions, hospitality and retail offerings when they visit.

Websites, apps and social media platforms can be a useful place for visitors and locals alike to interact with businesses and Councils within the community from their own channels and share their own experiences with others.

This enriches the town's online offering to other potential visitors and therefore acts as organic marketing which can positively effect growth dramatically. There are many advantages to cultivating a business's brand online and via social media. It can help improve brand awareness, communicate with customers on a new level, help engage and reach new audiences, build authority and drive traffic to businesses' websites.

Whilst 70% of people in the UK spend 3 hrs on social media a day on average only 28% of UK business are active on social media.

Data from Maybe* shows that approximately 287 businesses in Chepstow town centre have an online presence, primarily on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Of these businesses, around half are actively promoting their business online. The engagement volume (a combination of likes, comments and shares) for Chepstow town centre is around 10,000 a day but has previously peaked at 30,000 in a single day. Businesses such as Wye Valley Meadery, Chateau Bon Bon, La Bonita Boutique and local beauty salon Albion House are regularly posting content and are therefore building their follower count and communicating with their customer base actively

Digital priorities for Chepstow



Install proposed smart sensors and LoRa

to enable the town centre businesses and stakeholders to get the most value of the systems, as soon as possible



Town centre and castle link

use sensors to understand in detail the relationship between the Castle and town centre, to identify areas for improvement which could be targeted by future investment. Use data from sensors to establish a baseline for performance of different areas of the town centre and provide businesses and stakeholders with visitor numbers, dwell time and other analytics.



Promoting Chepstow online

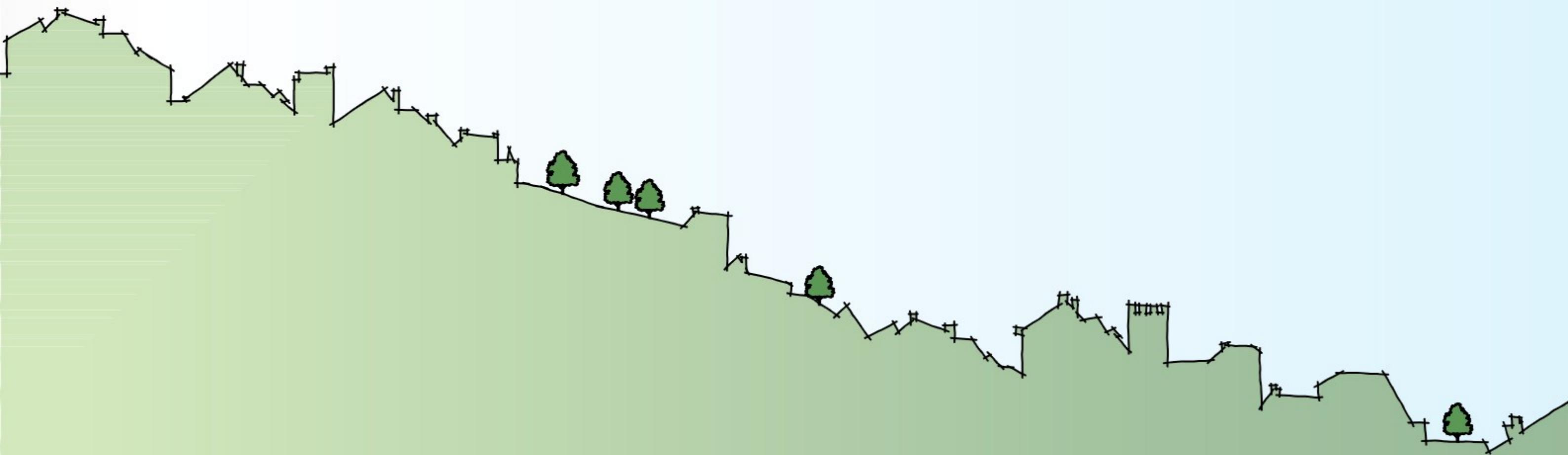
building on the town centre's long history of tourism with a developed online offer that brings together Chepstow's in-person offer in one space, to attract more visitors to the town centre.



Managing traffic, parking and pedestrianisation

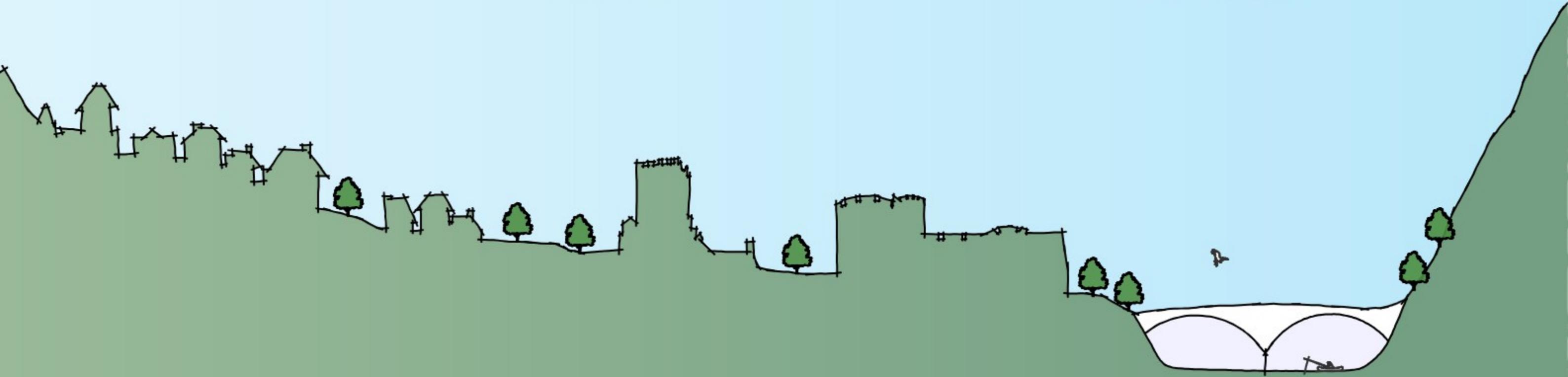
use sensors to identify any problem areas, the nature of the issues and when these issues arise. In turn using the evidence from the sensors to help make decisions around how parking, traffic and pedestrianisation is managed.

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Chapter 05

Action Plan and Programme



PRIORITY PROJECTS ACTION PLAN & PROGRAMME

Neighbourhood	Ranking	Action	PROGRAMME			THEMES		
			2022-2025	2025-2030	Getting Around	Community and People	Environment space well being	Destination & Enterprise
PRIMARY PLACE MAKING PLAN PROJECTS								
Town Centre and Riverside	01	High Street- Vacant Property campaign- street level and bigger properties- meanwhile and pop up etc	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Town Centre and Riverside	02	High Street - Building improvement grants- High Street and Moor Street	<div style="width: 50%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Town Centre and Riverside	03	The Dell Play Provision & Wildflower Meadow	<div style="width: 50%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Town Centre and Riverside	04	Chepstow Bus-Rail Interchange- regional-national connections; bus stops in Town Centre	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Other Placemaking	05	Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)- Fflecsi scheme	<div style="width: 50%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
Town Centre and Riverside	06	The Drill Hall	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Garden City	07	Garden City Active Travel Link and Wales Coastal Path	<div style="width: 50%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Town Centre and Riverside	08	High Street Workspace feasibility study	<div style="width: 50%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Bulwark and Thornwell	09	Thornwell Primary School- community growing project	<div style="width: 50%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Bulwark and Thornwell	10	Bulwark Active Travel Links and WCP links	<div style="width: 100%; height: 10px; background-color: #555; margin-bottom: 5px;"></div>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

MAKING IT HAPPEN

Ways of Working

Development & Delivery Strategic Projects

Delivery of this is dependent on a partnership approach where strategic and local organisations bring their own individual objectives into a collective set of proposals that mutually benefit each other and importantly benefits the town centre. The proposals and opportunities within this vision and strategy require different mixes of partners, resources and timetable for development and delivery.

The key success factors for delivery within a regeneration setting includes:

- Understanding individual strengths and how these can be aligned.
- Communication and co-ordination at both a strategic and implementation level.
- Working to a common design code that ensures consistency in built environment.
- Connecting the need of users with potential supply in buildings and space.
- Presenting a unified identity for a place like Chepstow, whilst respecting individual organisations identities.

Town Operational Management

Towns are complex areas with multiple stakeholders that need to be effectively managed if they are to function effectively.

Examples of ongoing day-to-day operational functions that are vital to Chepstow town include:

- Highways, parking, traffic, public transport, traffic wardens, highway inspectors, street

lighting etc

- Policing, addressing crime and disorder, speeding, vandalism, theft, CCTV etc.
- Public toilets, litter bins, dealing with dog fouling, littering, street cleansing etc.
- Trading standards, licencing, planning consent, enforcement, building regulations etc.
- Grass cutting, managing green space and trees etc.

This list is not exhaustive and other operational functions are also important, including events and business support. The key public agencies involved are Monmouthshire County Council, Chepstow Town Council, and Gwent Police.

Visualising Success

The need to understand what success looks like is important when you are enabling and delivering change within a place like Chepstow.

It helps to understand the outcomes that you are reaching and the process you need to follow to meet these. Visualising success is also good for motivation and rally around a common purpose, building trust and relationships. It also importantly demonstrates to those organisations that are funding projects, that you are attaining your outputs and outcomes and shows a return on investment. The diagram shows examples of outputs and outcomes by theme.

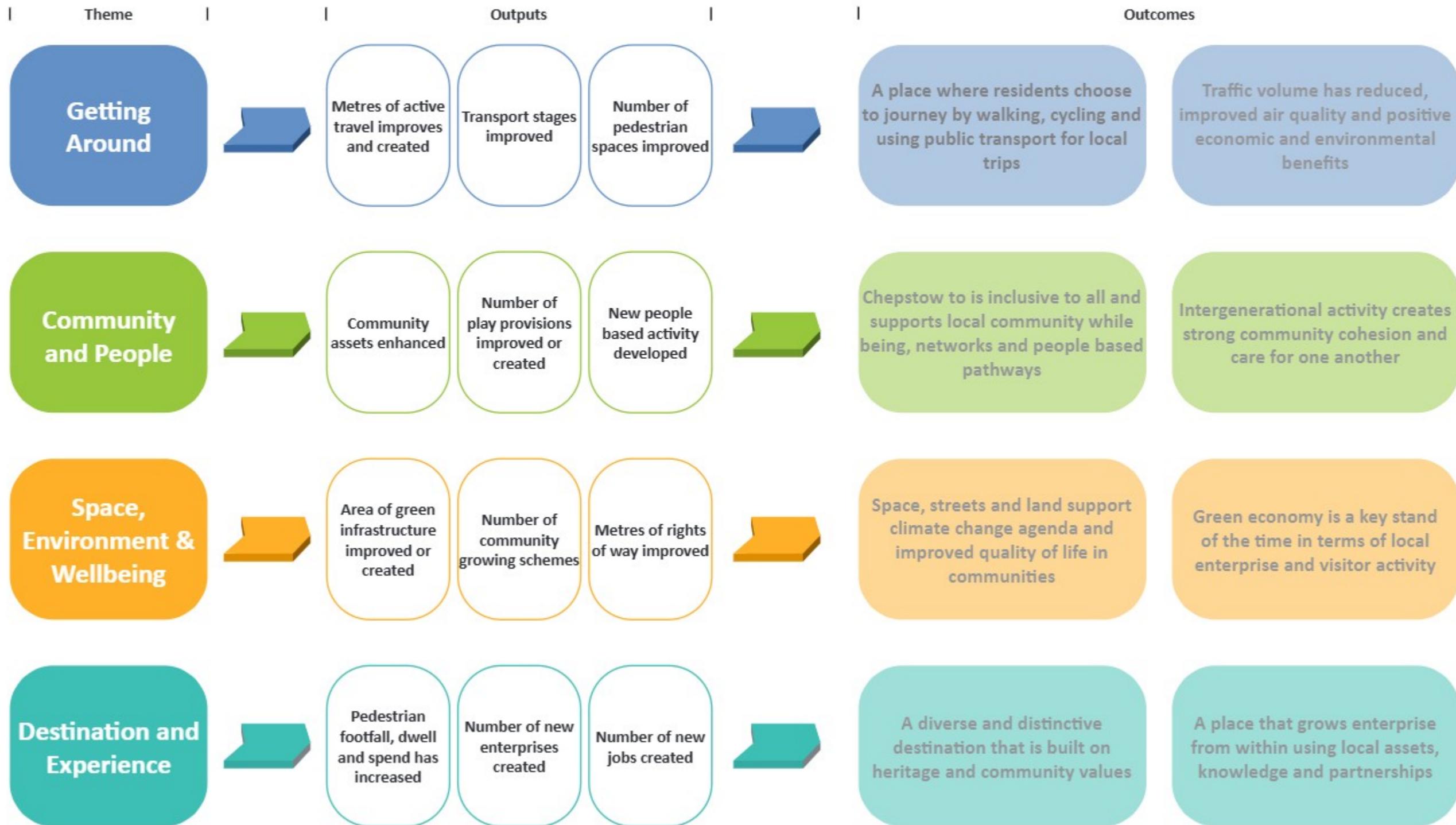
Before this diagram is a table of "place metrics" which shows a suite of indicators that could be used to monitor progress, by neighbourhood and by theme. Along with the outputs and outcomes, these would form part of an evaluation framework that a place partnership would use to monitor progress.

Place Metrics

Getting Around	Community and People	Space, Environment and Wellbeing	Destination and Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of walking/cycling movements • No of passengers (bus) • Air quality count • No of walking/cycling movements • Vehicle volume • No of walkers on Wales Coastal Path and other LDPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of community building users • No of community groups supported • No of new community groups formed • No of people economically active • No of people engaged in volunteering • No of people engaged in gardening and community growing • No of people on social prescribing pathways • No of people engaged in play • No of users visiting Drill Hall • No of community groups supported • No of new community groups formed • No of people engaged in play • No of people engaged in volunteering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No of people accessing open space and engaging with green infrastructure • No of people on social prescribing pathways • No of footpath users • No of green enterprises created • No of people accessing open space and engaging with green infrastructure • No of people on social prescribing pathways • No of footpath users • No of people accessing open space and engaging with green infrastructure • No of footpath users • No of green enterprises created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian footfall • No of vacant properties • Diversity of uses • Average stay (dwell) • No of visitors • Digital following and engagement • Local supply chains supported • No of new business openings

VISUALISING SUCCESS

MONITORING & EVALUATION





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