

SUBJECT:	TRANSFORMING CHEPSTOW MASTERPLAN
MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	7 June 2023
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	CHEPSTOW

1 PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The Transforming Chepstow Masterplan is a placemaking plan for Chepstow, co-developed by Chepstow Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council and informed by consultation with stakeholders and the local community.
- 1.2 The masterplan provides a strategic regeneration framework for Chepstow, providing a shared vision, aims and objectives for the town. It sets out a suite of projects which have emerged from consultation, including ten high priority projects, by which that vision will be realised and the aims and objectives can be met.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to brief Cabinet on the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan, and to invite Cabinet to approve the for adoption and agree the establishment of a joint masterplan delivery group with Chepstow Town Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan and agrees its adoption.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves the establishment of a joint masterplan delivery group with Chepstow Town Council, which will agree terms of reference including its membership and the ability to review and revise the masterplan action plan from time to time as required.

3 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Transforming Chepstow Masterplan is proposed as the placemaking plan for Chepstow. It is provided at Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The Welsh Government promotes placemaking as an approach which involves “working collaboratively across sectors and disciplines to comprehensively

consider the future development of distinctive and vibrant places” (Design Commission for Wales, *Placemaking Guide 2020*). 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.’¹

- 3.3 Placemaking plans are strategic regeneration documents for a town or city which consider what placemaking means for that place. Developed collaboratively with a broad range of stakeholders, placemaking plans typically set out a vision for a place, consider the challenges and opportunities it faces, and propose actions and interventions to realise the vision and address the identified challenges and opportunities.
- 3.4 It is a prerequisite of Welsh Government Transforming Towns funding for town centre regeneration that appropriate placemaking plans are in place or being developed.
- 3.5 The proposal to produce a placemaking plan for Chepstow formed part of a report which was presented to Cabinet on 15 September 2021. It was proposed that masterplan would “pull together the various ongoing plans that impact on Chepstow town centre (e.g. the Transport Study, Town Council Place Plan and tourism via the Wye Valley Villages project) offering the necessary overarching strategic vision, co-ordination and governance... to enhance the long-term vitality and viability of the town.”
- 3.6 Regeneration strategies that serve as placemaking plans are already in place for Caldicot and Usk as well as for the Wye Valley Villages. Placemaking plans will also be required for Abergavenny, Magor With Undy and Monmouth: this is an action in the recently adopted Community and Corporate Plan and will be taken forward in the current year.
- 3.7 The Transforming Chepstow Masterplan was commissioned jointly by MCC and Chepstow Town Council in January 2022, and its development has been overseen by a steering committee comprising County Councillors in Chepstow and representatives from the Town Council. It builds on work done by the Town Council to produce a place plan. Chris Jones Consulting was awarded the contract to develop the plan following a competitive tender process.
- 3.8 The placemaking plan process has entailed six key steps:
 - Stakeholder communication and engagement to inform stakeholders about the plan and undertake the targeted stakeholder evidence gathering

- Review of baseline documents and evidence
 - Analysis and understanding of the Chepstow's performance compared to similar market towns
 - Development of ideas for physical streetscape and regeneration projects in the town
 - Public consultation
 - Preparation of the placemaking plan
- 3.9 Consultation on the placemaking plan took place over three weeks in October 2022, beginning with two face to face drop-in consultation events. The first of these was at the Palmer Centre in the town centre, and the second at Bulwark Community Centre. 168 people attended the events over the two days. The proposals were then displayed at Chepstow library for the rest of the consultation period. Information about of the placemaking plan proposals was also available online.
- 3.10 A briefing pack was prepared for County and Town Councillors to enable them to present the proposals to local interest groups. In addition, a workshop session was held with pupils at Chepstow Comprehensive School.
- 3.11 A survey was available throughout the consultation period, both online and in hard copy at locations around Chepstow. 398 people responded to the survey.
- 3.12 Key messages from the consultation included:
- Concerns about the town centre – including its identity, condition, and activities
 - Lack of provision for young people
 - Need for more local facilities – places to meet and support community cohesion
 - Need for infrastructure to support growth
 - Managing traffic and improving public transport

Full details of the consultation are provided in the consultation report at Appendix 2.

- 3.13 The Transforming Chepstow Masterplan's vision for the town, developed with stakeholders and informed by consultation, is that:

“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.”

3.14 The key aims of the plan are:

- 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.
- Aim 2: To develop the quality and range of community infrastructure across Chepstow's neighbourhoods that supports local well-being and improved life chances

3.15 Almost 30 potential projects to help realise the vision and aims were identified through the development of the plan and consultation with stakeholders and the public. Information on these is provided in the masterplan. To ensure a clear focus on delivery, County and Town Councillors have prioritised the projects. The top ten projects are:

1. High Street vacant property campaign: street level and bigger properties, meanwhile and pop-up use
2. High Street building improvement grants: High Street and Moor Street
3. The Dell play provision and wildflower meadow
4. Chepstow bus-rail interchange: regional and national connections, bus stops in town centre
5. Demand response transport: fflecsi scheme
6. The Drill Hall
7. Garden City active travel link and Wales Coastal Path
8. High Street workspace feasibility study
9. Thornwell primary school: community growing project
10. Bulwark active travel links and Wales Coastal Path links

3.16 The Transforming Chepstow Masterplan steering group agreed the final draft plan (as attached at Appendix 1) at its meeting on 26 April 2023.

3.17 It is proposed that that the masterplan should now be adopted by both Monmouthshire County Council and Chepstow Town Council. The focus will then move to delivery of the projects set out in the plan and in particular the ten prioritised projects. The plan identifies lead organisations for each project and potential sources of funding.

3.18 It is proposed that a joint delivery group including representation from Elected Members at county and town council level should be established to drive and oversee the delivery of the plan, as has been the case for the other placemaking plans or equivalents that have been completed in Monmouthshire. The steering group which has led the development of the plan would provide a suitable basis for the delivery group and it is recommended that it is re-established with this function. The County Council's regeneration team would provide the secretariat function for the delivery group.

3.19 An early task for the delivery group will be to review its membership and consider whether there are other stakeholders who might usefully contribute to its work in delivering the masterplan. It is also recommended that the steering group should be authorised to review and revise the masterplan action plan from time to time as required, to reflect progress in delivery as well new priorities which may emerge.

4 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating equalities, future generations, Welsh language and socio-economic duty) is attached at Appendix 3.

4.2 The main impacts of the proposal identified in this impact assessment are:

- Positive impacts on the protected characteristics of age, disability, and pregnancy/maternity arising from projects proposed in the masterplan.
- Positive impacts in relation to socio-economic duty and social justice, relating to opportunities that would be created in an economically thriving town centre.
- Positive impacts on all the well-being goals.
- The development of the proposal meets the sustainable development principles.
- No impact on safeguarding or corporate parenting.

5 OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

5.1 The table below provides an options appraisal.

Options	Benefits	Risks	Comments/mitigation
Do nothing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No demand on resources of MCC or Chepstow Town Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision and aims of masterplan unlikely to be realised. • Resources expended in developing masterplan will be wasted • Loss of trust of those involved in masterplan development and consultation • Inability to access some grant funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended

Options	Benefits	Risks	Comments/mitigation
Adopt masterplan and deliver projects independently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced demand on MCC and Chepstow Town Council resources as delivery group will not be established • Potential for more rapid decision making in absence of delivery group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication of effort by respective Councils • Implementation fragmented and lacking benefits from pooling human and financial resources • Partners do not feel that they are part of a bigger strategy • Reduced interest from funders as lack of evidence of partnership working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not recommended
Adopt masterplan and establish joint delivery group as recommended here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes partnership working between organisations which can have benefits not identified in the Masterplan • MCC departments have the expertise and powers to be able to implement many of the actions identified in the masterplan once funding has been secured • Delivery is overseen by democratically accountable councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Failure to secure funding for priority projects, jeopardising realisation of masterplan vision and aims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

6 REASONS:

6.1 The adoption of the masterplan will enable the County Council to move forward with the delivery of the Transforming Chepstow masterplan and in particular the

priority projects which it identifies, as well as retaining opportunities for securing grant funding from some sources. It is anticipated that Chepstow Town Council will also adopt the masterplan, allowing the two councils to progress implementation together, which is the desired outcome.

- 6.2 A joint masterplan delivery group bringing County and Town Councils together to oversee the implementation of the plan, as recommended here, will ensure there is an appropriate focus on delivery with input and oversight from elected members at town and county level.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 7.1 The establishment of a joint masterplan delivery group will have resource implications for the Elected Members who are members of the delivery group. As noted, it is anticipated that the County Council's regeneration team will provide the secretariat function for the delivery group. This will be done using existing staff resources.
- 7.2 Implementation of the projects identified in the masterplan will require further funding, in some cases significant, and external grant funding is likely to be required to support delivery in all cases. The masterplan suggests potential sources of funding for each project. It is anticipated that the County Council's Regeneration team will lead on securing this funding, working with other sections of the Council and with the Town Council as appropriate. Many grants require match funding from MCC, Chepstow Town Council and/or other parties. This will be explored on a project by project basis.

8 CONSULTEES:

- 8.1 Public consultation on the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan is summarised above in section 3 and described in more detail in the consultation report at Appendix 2.
- 8.2 In addition the following have been consulted:
- Cabinet Member for a Sustainable Economy
 - County Councillors in Chepstow
 - Chepstow Town Council
 - Chepstow Chamber of Commerce
 - Cabinet
 - Place Scrutiny Committee
 - SLT
 - Communities and Place DMT
 - MCC officers in relevant sections

8.3 Place Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 25 May 2023. They supported the report recommendations and made comments in relation to:

- Wider traffic issues in Chepstow.
- The importance of ensuring that the Chepstow has adequate attractors to bring local people and visitors into the town centre.
- The implications for Chepstow of the recommendation (in the separate Regeneration Priorities and Funding report, which Place Scrutiny Committee considered in the same session and which Cabinet is expected to consider on 7 June 2023) to seek Transforming Towns funding for the Monnow Street scheme in Monmouth.
- The importance of flexible, demand responsive transport which allows people to visit the town centre, such as is proposed in the Flecsi scheme which is one of the projects prioritised within the masterplan.

9 CONCLUSION

9.1 Cabinet is invited to approve the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan for adoption and agree the establishment of a joint masterplan delivery group with Chepstow Town Council.

10 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

The proposal to produce a placemaking plan for Chepstow formed part of a report which was presented to Cabinet on 15 September 2021. That report can be viewed [here](#).

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Appendix 1: Transforming Chepstow Masterplan

Appendix 2: Transforming Chepstow Masterplan consultation report

Appendix 3: Integrated Impact Assessment (incorporating equalities, future generations, Welsh language, and socio-economic duty)

