

TRANSFORMING CHEPSTOW

SUMMER 2023

REPORT OF CONSULTATION



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1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to report on the consultation process as part of the Transforming Chepstow Masterplan process.

The initial draft Masterplan document was produced in March 2022. Due to local government elections in May, the process had been extended to ensure the new political administration had ownership of the Plan process and to ensure the preparation and hosting of a consultation process that was inclusive and town wide as practically possible.

This report shares the findings from the consultation process and some key themes of discussion.

Image 1 - Promotional Poster in Chepstow High Street



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

2. The Consultation Process

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.

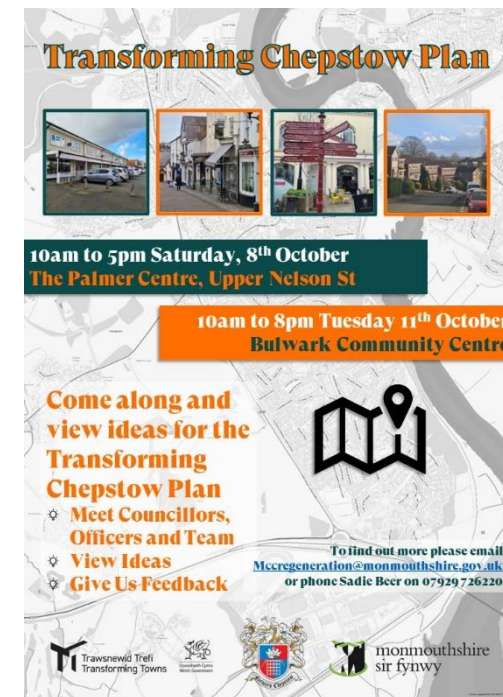
To meet these objectives, the following consultation activities were provided:

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, 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 of 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 of November.

Image 2 - Promotional Poster



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

3. 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

The 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)

- 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)

4. The Community Events

Face to face community consultation was provided through two days of physical conversations in the town centre at The Palmer Centre on Saturday, 8th of October from 10m to 5pm, and at Bulwark Community Centre on Tuesday, 11th of October from 10am to 8pm.

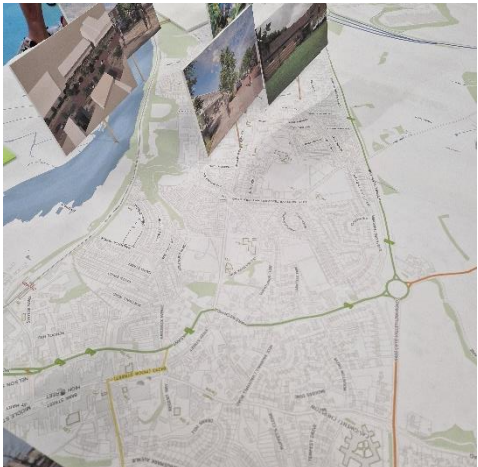
The consultation also co-ordinated with the Local Nature Scheme consultation that was also being led by the County Council, as it had a series of proposals to consult on within the town. This involved some pop up banners, a series of exhibition boards and plans and comment sheets.

Format

The physical, face to face consultation were organised in the following way:

- Meet and greet a member of the consultancy team or County Council officers to understand the order and ways to comment;
- A series of display panels in English and Welsh that presented the need, current position, proposed vision and series of proposals for the town (see appendices);
- A large format map of the town with proposals pinned in, so people could understand location, linkages and also discuss other ideas and opportunities;
- Copies of the community survey to complete and post at the event, or to take away and complete at home; links to the online survey were also provided.

Image 3 - Consultation Event at the Palmer Centre



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Town Centre Consultation – The Palmer Centre

Members of the public that attended The Palmer Centre consultation event either filled in a paper version of the survey or completed it online.

110 people attended the event.

In addition, some members of the public had direct conversations with members of the consultancy team or with County Council officers, where the following comments were noted. These are grouped under the following themes:

Town Centre

- Poor quality shop fronts
- Promote Chepstow as a Wye Valley producers' town
- Shopfronts and signage
- Condition of buildings on Moor Street
- Bridge Street – HGVs overrunning pavements – needs to be addressed
- High Street – theme – arts and antique
- The town should promote its eco credentials
- Need to find a way of sub-dividing larger properties e.g., British Heart Foundation
- Consider our audience – summer: visitor and overseas, winter: local – think of products and events – why isn't there an outdoors shop
- Arcade Gates on Nelson Street are not opened wide enough
- St Mary's Street needs bollards

Young People

- Older kids need a hang out space
- Garden City needs a play area/space or hangout for older kids
- Create a Youth Council

The Dell

- Feels unmanaged and overgrown
- Key link from Kingsmark to Lower Chepstow – feels unsafe and lacks maintenance

Riverside Area

- Make old bridge to castle two way
- The bandstand area – the litter bins are too big – they need co-ordination and need to be seagull proof

Train Station Area

- Lack of dropped kerbs on Station Road
- Close entry to Station Road

Accessibility and Paths

- Mobility scooters – availability and hire
- Electric bike scheme with a higher gearage for hills
- Pedestrian crossing outside hospital
- Penterry Park needs a footpath link
- Mounon Rd – walk/cycle route
- Wales Coastal Path above Wye Crescent in Garden City is in a poor condition and needs management
- Railway line link to Tintern through Tidenham Tunnel

Public Transport

- We need live real time information
- Outdates timetable for buses
- Better bus service to community hospital

Traffic

- A48 noise and pollution having an adverse impact on School Hill residential properties and abnormal loads are causing problems with congestion

Transport

- e-scooter rental hire scheme
- Plan does not feel integrated in terms of place and transport and the way movement works in terms of specific modes and origin and destination

Infrastructure

- Condition of roads is poor

Welsh Street

- Needs improvements on streetscene and speed reduction

Partnership and Volunteering

- Create litter groups – Keep Chepstow Tidy

Image 4 - Consultation Event at Bulwark Community Centre



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Image 5 - Consultation Event at Chepstow Library



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Town Centre Consultation – Bulwark Community Centre

Members of the public that attended the Bulwark Community Centre consultation event either filled in a paper version of the survey or completed it online.

58 people attended the event.

In addition, some members of the public had direct conversations with members of the consultancy team or with County Council officers, where the following comments were noted. These are grouped under the following themes:

Town's Identity and Unique Selling Points

- Location
- Gateway to the outdoors
- Eco travel and trails
- Wye Valley produce

Infrastructure

- Housing growth in Lydney and how to manage it with increased traffic

Town Centre

- Develop a pop-up campaign with ideas around a community bakery, pottery, comedy nights, an international shop of food – deli, cheese, breads, supper clubs etc
- Provision for young people such as gaming, board games and a pool table
- Other ideas – small gym, well-being, a pint and a lecture/chat of science – see Bristol

- Develop a wellness hub – drop in health club, health referral and a creche
- Put yellow lines down the High Street
- Make shops close later so they pick up custom from commuters – be more agile in their business models
- The traffic environment should be 20 mph – design in features to manage this speed
- We want a KFC in town
- Recycling on the go provision
- Chewing gum issue and removal in the High Street area
- The A48 verges need a tidy up through the town
- Pavement café culture
- Weekly Sunday market
- Missing shops/uses – greengrocers, shoes, menswear

Thomas Street Bus Station

- Deal with commercial bins, storage, screening
- Small town centre hopper bus service

The Dell Area

- Make more of the Dell in terms of management, maintenance and activities – outdoor gym, events space, music spaces, outdoor theatre
- More litter bins
- More town information and maps
- Bring back the Son et Lumiere festival

The Riverside

- Anti-social behaviour needs to be addressed

- Litter bin covers – anti seagull deterrents

The Drill Hall

- Build on their arts and culture offering
- Promote more of their film nights

Active Travel and Trails

- Provide an E-bike hire trial scheme across the town
- Fisherman’s Walk history trails
- Develop a walk and cycle app that shows routes and healthy steps

Community Cohesion

- Need to bridge new residents specifically within the Brunel Quarter so there is a sense of belonging – “we bring some stuff to Chepstow”

Local Facilities

- A more visible cinema – see Newlyn cinema and arts centre
- Book club?
- Well-being space for teenagers
- Arts and therapy

Ways of Working

- U3A is a large collection of people, ideas and energy

Public Transport

- 69 bus service needs to have a uniform timetable with live bus information stream
- We need a more integrated bus and train service at Severn Tunnel Junction

- Hopper bus service at train station

Transport and Movement

- Develop loop and links between bus and train station, bike hire shops, relationship to Brunel Quarter, onto Tidenham and Tintern etc
- Bulwark corner – stop right hand turn coming out

Bulwark/Larkfield Play and Youth Provision

- Improve Piggy’s Hill
- Make the skate park safer – more ramps, more room
- Make the play park bigger as well

Bulwark Shops

- Landowner issues and discussions
- Waste management
- State of carriageway and environment

Bulwark Facilities

- Develop a Together Works (Caldicot) in Bulwark – could this go into the MHA owned block at the shops
- Bulwark Community Centre improvements:
 - Visibility and signage
 - Outdoor space – wild play
 - Mini woodland walk
 - Internal improvements
- Create a connected series of small hubs:
 - Two Brewers
 - Burnt Barn way social club
 - Bulwark Community centre
 - Football club

- Rugby club
- Scouts
- St Marys RC Primary School
- Thornwell Primary School
- Pembroke Road Primary School
- Social/restaurant space
- Surgery
- Dentist
- Make Bulwark Community Centre more visible and within reach of Bulwark Rd – signage
- Develop better communication – local paper, digital and build on word of mouth

Others

- Station Rd recycling space

5. The Community Survey

The community survey generated 398 responses with 90% of these being online and the remainder being paper based returns.

Respondent by Type and Home Address

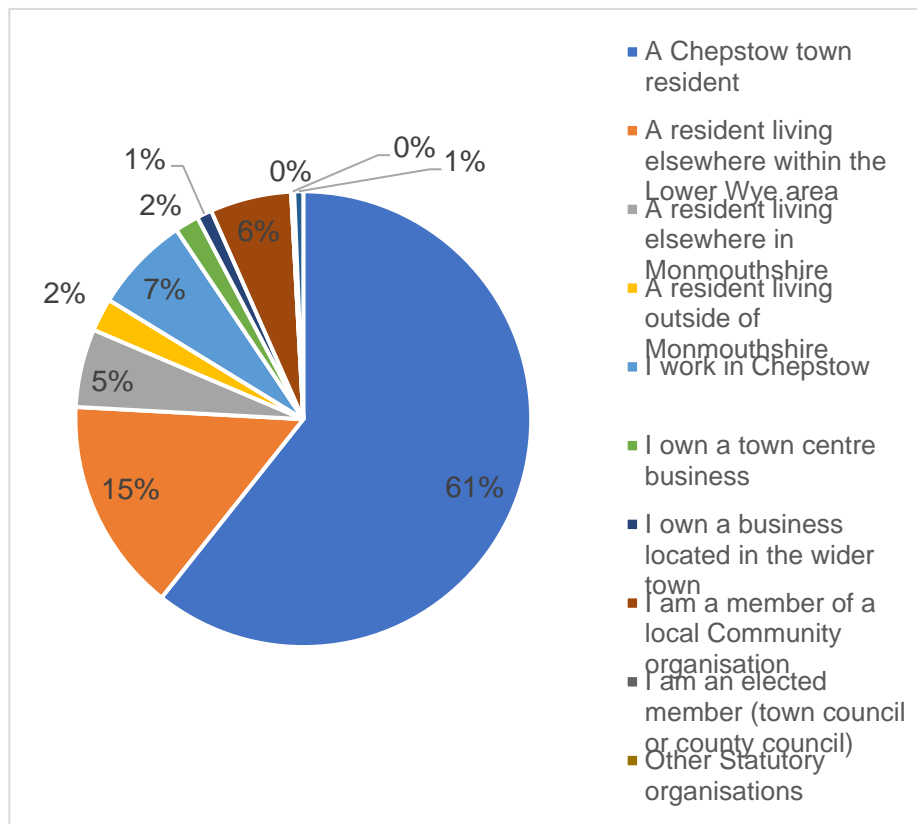
Figure 1 and Figure 2 shows the type of respondent who completed the survey. This question allowed people a multiple response choice.

61% of the respondents live in the town, with 15% living outside of the town in the lower Wye area, which supports the service centre role of the Chepstow within its wider rural hinterland.

7% of respondents work in the town, 6% work for other statutory organisations e.g., Welsh Government, local health board and 5% are residents living elsewhere in wider Monmouthshire.

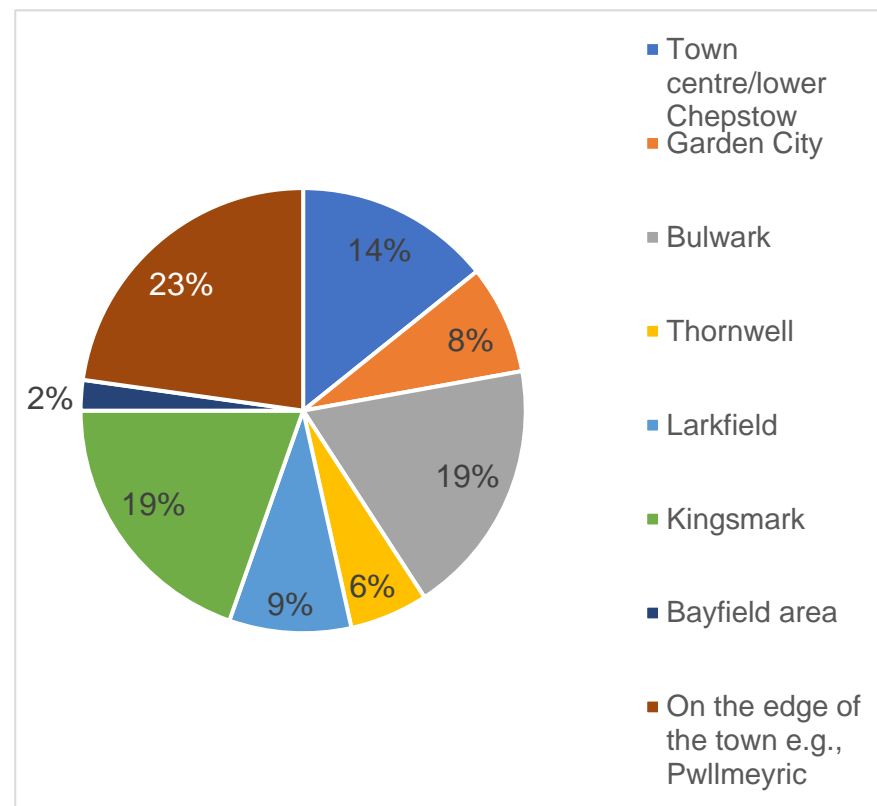
When asking those people who live in the town, the highest percentage (23%) live on the edge of the town in places like Mathern and Pwllmeyric, followed by 19% in Bulwark and Kingsmark, 14% in the town centre/lower Chepstow part and 9% from Larkfield.

Figure 1 - Type of Respondent



Source: Community Survey; N=398

Figure 2 - Where Respondents Live

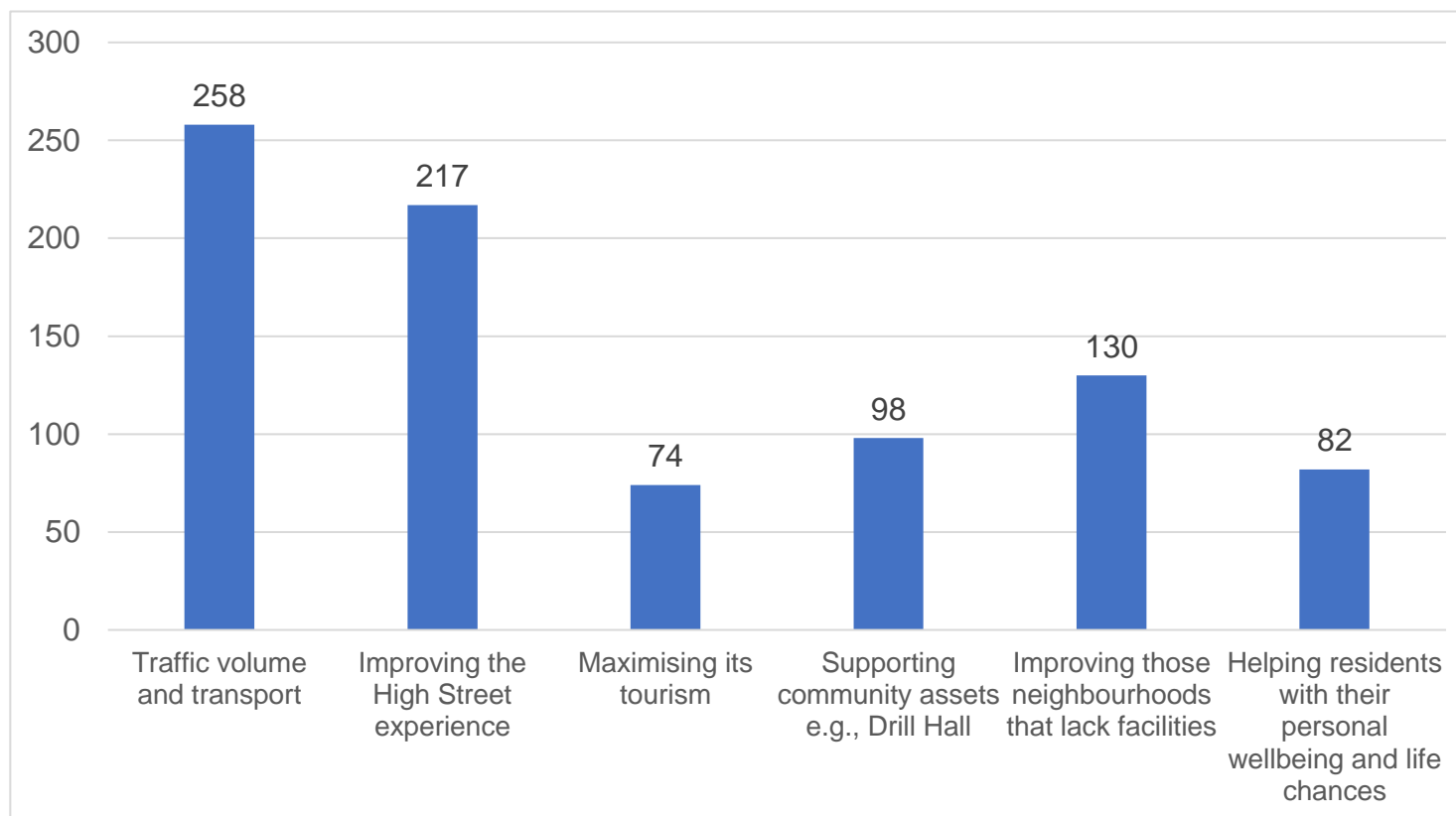


Source: Community Survey; N=316

Chepstow Today

Figure 3 indicates that 30% of respondents identify traffic volume and transport as one of the top challenges we need to address, followed by 25% want to see the High Street experience improved. 15% want to see the town’s neighbourhoods improved in terms of facilities and services. The lowest of the challenges seen as requiring attention is to maximise tourism (11%), which illustrates that the community wants to see investment in their quality of life, before looking towards the visitor offer and economy.

Figure 3 - How People Prioritise the Town's Challenges



Source: Community Survey; N=293

Is there any other issue or need we should be bearing in mind?

We have read and analysed the open response on this question and placed them into themes.

Infrastructure and Growth

- Huge increase in population since we moved here over 30 years ago. Lots more council tax and s160 from builders. Increase in facilities, improvements in infrastructure - NIL. Community hospital needs MIU urgently - local facility to reduce trips to Newport Gwent, Nevill Hall and Grange hospitals - all difficult to access by public transport."
- A long standing lack of investment in infrastructure has left the town tired, old and without identity. The Comp is run down, tired and not fit for purpose. The Leisure centre is too small and without sufficient offerings to service the community. Local traffic infrastructure is a joke, and we have the most polluted street in Wales in the A48. The solution is not cycling, it is better roading, junctions and improved public transport. We are a commuter town - to not cater for commuters is ignoring the true issue. EV charging coverage is very poor. Sports infrastructure for the wellbeing of the locals is abysmal. Football clubs are creaking, rugby club has 16 teams and 2 pitches, cricket club has to use a pitch in England, Athletic club does not have an athletics track, cycling tracks are not joined up, Archery has use of a shed and lease land from Athletic club, no Netball facilities, no 4G pitches, lack of lit pitches, pool is too small etc. You have an obligation under the Future Wellbeing Act to put in place decent sporting facilities."
- The volume of rubbish left around in certain areas e.g., Bulwark. The dire state of pavements and roads in all areas.
- "Inadequate infrastructure and facilities for the growing population through increase of housebuilding. There are still the same number of doctors' practices as there have been for over 30 years, not enough dentists, no A&E, no open police station, increasing traffic and major pinch-points that will only be solved by a by-pass. Need to work more closely with FOD as pressures from increased housing on Gloucestershire side of the river impact on all these services in Chepstow. Much better public transport provision, i.e., more regular buses and trains.
- There are so many issues which need addressing not just one. Firstly, there is now such scepticism felt by residents who have answered countless surveys and studies all to no avail. There have been so many missed opportunities, but the outcomes are always the same - no improved/new roads, no new facilities (unlike Monmouth and Abergavenny - why should this imbalance exist?). Some immediate improvements have to be introduced to reduce both the scepticism and sense of unfairness. Action no more surveys. Secondly restore Chepstow's previous identity. Chepstow once had a strong identity as a viable market town for residents and with a castle that appealed to tourists. Chepstow is no longer able make the most of those two attributes due to a dire lack of town plan planning and investment. Only adding new housing developments has been prioritised. Thirdly offering a defined central point. Most successful villages and towns are able to offer one central

point with adequate parking, modern bus and train stations served by good new road infrastructure. There has to be an end to adding new housing developments without any visible improvement for both residents and tourists to restore Chepstow to its former standing. Any new public buildings like a replacement/restoration of the Drill Hall, train station, bus station should have solar panels and the best insulation. Existing Green Belts should be maintained to ensure that surrounding villages are able to maintain their identities and that Chepstow does not continue to sprawl into the surrounding countryside. Any new roads should have a defined cycle path adjacent to it to minimise dependence on cars. Finally, the importance of having the hospital restored as a full Community Hospital. There should be a letter sent out to all residents asking for support in restoring the Hospital to its former status i.e., restore the number of beds and its identity as a minor injuries unit and to stop it being used for administrative staff who could be accommodated in plenty of currently empty offices. This is a waste of the resource.

- Maintaining the Green Belt to ensure that Chepstow maintains its own identity and villages like Mathern and Pwllmeyric are not incorporated into one large housing mass. Planners need to carefully think about what they are trying to achieve at Larkfield Roundabout. This is a critical area and by having both a Greggs and a Subway there has only served to exacerbate traffic problems. When retailers' contracts are renewed, they should be encouraged to use High Street premises. Resolving congestion in this area, preferably by improving the road system, should be of paramount importance. It would help if a large car park were to be constructed at the Train Station to accommodate more passengers to use either bus or train routes to access Bristol.
- Not enough facilities to support the amount of new houses
- The mistake of splitting the Chepstow town area, and then allowing Tesco to develop a site on the far side of that road has killed the town. Chepstow was once a local shopping hub, but now everyone goes elsewhere to do their shopping (Caldicot, Abergavenny.... even Lydney has a better shopping area)
- Planning has been a farce
- Promoting individual businesses and preventing clone town
- Providing free parking anywhere in Chepstow
- Connectivity to surrounding areas (Wye Valley, Forest of Dean etc)
- Identifying and promoting the identity of Chepstow, e.g., historic market town with a rich cultural calendar"
- Road congestion passing through from Gloucestershire and clear lack of any joined up thinking cross border on effect of new housing. Opportunities for growth in the town and investment. But not if people can get to it sensibly.
- Public transport to Bristol after 7pm

- Modifications to the existing A48 bypass.
- Make Tesco Traffic Lights a proper crossroads rather than the joke that it currently is.
- Ban the Right Turn into and out of Bulwark Corner.
- Widen all lanes on Larkfield Roundabout to permit traffic to go left / right or straight on without blocking one another. "
- Not enough facilities to support the amount of new houses
- Transport is absolutely key; commuting is a nightmare and further housing should not be considered without relief roads.
- Lack of affordable, decent housing with supporting infrastructure
- Better cross-border communication. No further approval of large housing estates until infrastructure adequately updated to cope. Better public transport connections to Bristol/Cardiff/Newport/Gloucester that are actually practical for residents commuting to work.
- Impact on town's infrastructure from house building in Gloucestershire
- There is a greater stress on local facilities such as doctors and dentists in the town. I welcome housing developments as there is such a vital need, but it feels as if the infrastructure and facilities have not been put in place to cope.

Housing

- Affordable housing. The amount of homeless that are housed in local pubs/hotel that need to be housed in appropriate accommodation.
- All new housing should be passive in nature reducing fuel bills and becoming a more resilient town.
- Stop building housing estates, it is ruining the area."
- Affordable housing and decent shops.
- More affordable rented accommodation locally.
- reasonably priced housing, employment other than minimum wage and part-time.
- Linking different communities in Chepstow together more
- Balancing the need for housing and interconnectivity against encroachment on rural experience (which aside from building people like living more isolated)

The Town Centre

- Shops should have hanging signs, colours of shop facades, all to be in keeping with historical Chepstow. Town Council should advertise for these types of shops with perhaps a rebate for 1st year...
- Car parking for town

- As i understand a lot of businesses have closed because they cannot afford the rent
- Yes. Car parks should be free on weekends always if you want locals and visitors to stay in Chepstow
- Quality, diversity and attractiveness of shops/businesses. Good pubs/eateries. Unless you need a haircut or bargain booze or low quality factory shop products; why come to Chepstow High Street - even the charity shops are closing. How to measure and gauge success.
- Stop parking in the High Street, particularly outside Greggs
- Take down shop fronts which are inappropriate for a medieval town e.g., Bargain Booze and the shop next door to the town arch. Totally out of place.
- Maintenance - town centre schemes where quality paving has been patched/replaced by tarmac or mismatching paving and general 'repairs' - need to consider the long term maintenance of 'improvement plans' better in future, including, when green spaces or planters in public spaces are installed, and then left. or signposts and other street furniture that needs ongoing maintenance. Keeping surfaces free of graffiti etc. This never seems to be taken into consideration. Capital funding is great for installation, but there needs to be ongoing revenue expenditure, and people, to stop the place looking neglected. And which Council is going to take on the future responsibility for this...? It really does need to be a properly considered and funded part of any scheme going forward.
- Turn a grim and tired Chepstow High Street into a bustling area for all aesthetically and commercially."
- Chepstow is a town which needs to further capitalise on its natural assets for economic benefit. It is surrounding by amazing walking (but no shops selling outdoor gear etc) and cycling routes (but no bike shops). Having chains will attract people to the town and spend in independent shops - it could really do with shops like H&M, Mountain Warehouse, Evans bikes, Halfords...Look at Abergavenny and Monmouth for inspiration. I don't want to go to Bristol to shop for outdoor clothing, shoes, clothes etc. For myself and children or particularly online. Would prefer to walk to do it
- Make parking free
- The focus and need to attract people from other areas has meant residence who have lived in Chepstow their whole lives now have to leave. The traffic is terrible, the town is full of charity shops and the house prices are ridiculous. There is no consideration for young people or affordable housing. It's all aimed at bringing in people from Bristol. I can't afford to rent and there's no way I will ever be able to buy.
- Car parks should have at least two hours free parking to attract people back to the high street and cafes/pubs.
- Redevelopment and improvement of Moor Street. Established businesses need support and empty properties require renovation.

- Enforce no parking in downtown areas e.g., Moor Street, Welsh Street, have it for High Street, lower Chepstow etc.
- Encouraging businesses into the town centre that will draw more people into the town to bring economic growth.
- Suggest 2 hour free parking in all MCC town car parks to encourage people to spend some time in the town - Marks & Spencer got the message on that since the Pandemic and by observation you can see the volume increasing in that car park. This is key to drawing more people into Chepstow"
- Looking at Chepstow as a place that straddles the border, and so working with Gloucestershire on many of these issues. e.g., tourism promotion, activities for young people, traffic.
- Most residents don't know which local authority is involved.
- The Planners need to do a proper review of all the buildings and get rid of all the tat and 1960s rubbish. Replan the High Street and fill it with viable businesses preferably without chain stores. Get rid of all the non-essential traffic and create places for people - encourage cycling and walking / tourism / commerce / festivals / events that ring real wealth into the town. No town ever grew rich on tea shops. Promote the things which matter to people - arts / music / fun / sport / family / beauty / vision. Ignore those who promote the use of cars. Get rid of ALL the ugly street signs / furniture / bins / signage / yellow lines / ugly lighting etc. and create a place of beauty. Fine building Owners if their buildings are empty - encourage them to update and make money again. In short, get some people in MCC with vision / enthusiasm / knowledge / positive mental attitude and energy. Use local architects and designers.
- Many fine buildings left to rot, so many lovely places left undeveloped or underused. The town has so many vibrant pubs/clubs/venues and natural assets yet there is no vision or creative will to capitalise on these.
- No one seems to have the commercial acumen to create wealth through tourism and business in MCC, instead preferring to let local businesses "chance their luck" often failing. The town is never going to grow and flourish with tea shops and weak businesses - Castell Roc / the Arts Week / music on the bandstand / and community activities like Fun Runs and sports events are the ones that attract 1,000s of people into the town and generate significant income. In short, there is no Grand Plan for Chepstow but hopefully one day this will change. There are plenty of Architects, designers and visionaries in Chepstow. MCC officers do not seem to have the vision or qualifications to do this on their own."
- Supporting artist and artist led community initiatives that cater to public involvement will bring interest and commerce.
- Making better use of the riverfront.
- As a keen traveller I often compare Chepstow with other similar sized towns throughout Europe. I have to say Chepstow comes close to the bottom of the pile. There is no buzz about the place on normal weekdays; there is no reason to go into town since it has so little to offer other than the numerous hairdressers, charity shops, coffee shops and estate agents.

Consequently, it is dead and there is no wonder that it does not attract new independent shops like the excellent Toytastic probably because rentals are so high. I don't buy the theory that we are too close to Bristol or Cardiff.

- French towns are thriving since they are keeping their banks, their independent shops etc. There are busy throughout the day and parking is free. I now go into M&S since parking is free. I can do all I need to do in town inside 30 mins because it has so little to offer. When I moved into the area some 25 years ago there was a buzz about the town, but the lifeblood has been squeezed from it. Abergavenny and even Monmouth are so much nicer."
- Please take action on the dangerous situation facing pedestrians using St Mary's Street for shopping. Vehicles continue to drive down the pedestrianised street because the movable traffic bollards never seem to be put in place during the prohibited traffic hours. There have been several "near misses" as customers step out of shops into the street, expecting it to be vehicle free. Why are these new bollards not used?
- Finding one central point to attract tourists and improved facilities for residents - this could be achieved by improving the areas round the Castle and the Drill Hall. Most successful villages and towns have a recognisable centre whereas in Chepstow everything is disorderly-the bus station far from the train station, the Drill Hall being dated and unappealing and in dire need of replacing, the High Street being decimated, and the road system having remained unchanged for decades and consequently incapable of answering the ever increasing flow of traffic. Chepstow lacks one definite identity whereas before it was a thriving market town with viable shops it is now a complete mess due to the lack of proper town planning. The only change has been to accept new housing developments without making any other interventions. It does cause residents to wonder who benefits from this ongoing lack of planning. So many opportunities have been missed to make Chepstow appealing to both residents and tourists - e.g., the area where the old Fairfield Mabey has been allocated to a new housing development which is a significant lost opportunity to provide a great central area where new parking, improved bus and train station and other facilities could have been created. This is a last opportunity to improve Chepstow.
- Improving the appearance of the shops and buildings on the High Street.
- Cost of parking which is driving away potential customers to the few shops that are left in town.
- Also, the cost of business rates is not encouraging small businesses to set up in the town. "
- Car parking to be free
- We've lived in Chepstow for 35 years and despite the rapidly expanding population, we have watched the town deteriorate. I have stopped walking down the Dell, it's a dump and depresses me.
- No reference to the bandstand area, that is already very popular in the summer,
- The toilets could do with being improved

- Littering/disorder caused by black bin bags being put out on incorrect days/dumped. Often seen at the bottom of Steep Street/Hardwick Terrace.
- Very degraded and unsightly awnings and advertising boards on Moor Street. Not a good advertisement to visitors entering town this way."
- Yes. Your master plan is full of imagery and words that suggest improving the quality of Chepstow by making it less dominated by cars and motor traffic. How do you reconcile these noble sentiments with the disastrous decision to reopen the High St to motor traffic. What a foolish decision this is already proving to be.
- Making the town more pedestrian friendly.
- It is not sensible to prioritise 3 as all need attention. Also, although there are headings what do they mean? There is such a lot of 'consultation' and very little action. Consultation must have cost a fortune. It was our Golden Wedding celebration recently and my friend who lived in Sedbury was distressed to see Chepstow now after many years. It used to be vibrant, bustling and attractive. In July it was empty, desolate with trees and planters and seats looking precarious and out of place. There should be a variety of attractive shops and parking should encourage people to visit and stay for a while. Now parking is hard to find, expensive and discouraging. Extra costs have recently been introduced so although you are trying to encourage visitors and residents to our High Street others in MonCC are doing the opposite. Ian walking the Cotswold Way and have spent money on Winchcombe, Dursley and Wotton under edge. It is difficult to find places to spend money in Chepstow. Just before the Jubilee in Winchcombe shopkeepers were so welcoming and helpful and it cost a £1 to park all day. 3 of us must have spent almost £200 that day including food. Chepstow must be more welcoming.
- The town is bisected by the A48 and needs to become ""whole"" again. Free parking in the Welsh Street car park and the Castle Car Park for two hours would encourage tourists and shoppers to visit the town. Bulwark is often forgotten when facilities in the town are discussed and should figure in the plans, such as are being put forward."
- Most people visit or move to Chepstow for its fantastic access to the outdoors and countryside, yet Chepstow town doesn't reflect/make the most of this at all. There is none of this identity reflected in the shops on the High Street and it's a pretty grey town centre for somewhere so close to beautiful scenery. Families don't want to go to Bristol/Cardiff for the shops and experiences but there's nothing to come to in Chepstow! No climbing wall, crap parks, a crap skate park, a rubbish swimming pool for kids, no outdoor clothes/gear shops, no real kids' clothes or shoe shops, very few kid friendly eateries, no ice cream parlour, no kids film showings... Nothing to keep families in the town and spending money. It's obvious what Chepstow needs, we're just waiting for the council to keep up!
- Removal of traffic from high street except for those with accessibility needs

- Free business rates
- "The Town Centre has had its heart ripped out of it. Whilst all High Streets have suffered, Chepstow has become more of a wasteland. A town cannot survive on charity shops and a fortnightly Street Market (which does nothing for tax paying shop owners). Whilst the cycle of running down goes around between Monmouth, Abergavenny and Chepstow, Chepstow is looking pretty poor these days. Pubs are shutting, and an over reliance on seasonal tourism means the local economy is unsustainable. The traffic through the centre of Chepstow is almost back to pre-COVID levels - so encouraging Bristol incomers is possibly not the way forward. A focus on eco-transport may be a distraction. Chepstow is built on a hillside, and the train service is still poor.
- Regenerate the quayside and improve transport links - a bypass would enable the centre to recover.
- Chepstow is turning into a less effective Thornbury."
- Even with regard to the market, the assumption is that it should continue on a Sunday, with a street closure and minimal interaction with other aspects of the local economy. Why not hold it on a Saturday with stalls confined to the pedestrianized spaces (such as the paved space adjacent to Bank Street, the paved area between Bank Street and High Street, the smaller paved area outside The White Lion and La Place de Cormeilles."
- We live in the town and the noise from the White Lion on some weekends is unbearable. Please ask venues to be considerate of neighbours
- Rejuvenation of town centre; a lick of paint and roof top sweeded! I was sad to see this in the proposal"
- "There's nowhere to buy clothing for children at an affordable price. If I need something urgently for my children for school / uniforms / costumes etc, I drive to Cribbs or Newport.
- "Really need better shops, a next, Debenhams, a store that would provide something for everyone that covers, clothes, homeward etc.
- Bring back Hoggin the bridge to Chepstow and more evens in The Dell Park"
- Communities such as North Street in Bristol should be used as a model as to how to regenerate the high street. Supporting local and new businesses, attracting new businesses to the centre and encouraging community to engage with and spend money locally.
- "Cleaning of streets. Some streets in Chepstow need to be cleaned up, weeded & a general tidied up, pavements jet washed.
- Some buildings need some attention to be maintained & brightened up, in order to look more attractive.

- The bus station is very dirty, scruffy & unattractive to residents & visitors. If it is re designed, it could be much better.... But it will need to be kept clean & well maintained."
- The significant number of sleeping policemen/speed bumps in the Bulwark area. Needs to be rethought.
- Chepstow is being designed with small town mentality with a lack of imagination.
- You need to look at wider areas! For example - the regeneration of Newport market! Completely changed that whole area of Newport with a fresh look, good venue and lovely small food eatery and shops - rammed from Wednesday- Sunday with people looking for a good experience "
- Car parking should be free to attract people to use the high street.
- Rates need reducing to attract new shops not having empty premise.
- Old bank to be indoor market and street food
- High powered fast electric car chargers in car park at top of town and castle car park, we have an electric car when we charge in other areas of the country we walk and spend money local to the charge point. Chargers would pull off motorway to use
- Shops are closing Chepstow hight st is dying off the council needs to help businesses
- Parking. If people could park for free for 2 hours, I think more people would use Chepstow Town. People would meet friends for coffee and a catch up then have a browse if they could park for free for those 2 hours. Although if it was free all day all the spaces would be taken by the people who work in Chepstow.
- Clean the streets and pavements, I am ashamed to bring visitors to the town. The litter seems to be on the agenda
- Car parking rates should be lowered. Monmouth is so much cheaper.

Tourism and Visitors

- The town must be needful of what a tourist would expect to find. Part of the town identity should relate to the historical nature of Chepstow - antique shops, shops, clocks, ironmongery, etc. The other historic options should be about modern deli - modern wine - upmarket shops for locals.
- Make lower Chepstow tourist friendly - make it people only
- Maximising tourism will, in my opinion, only happen when the volume of through traffic reduces with the building of a bypass.

Neighbourhood Focus

- Don't tart up Chepstow town and forget its suburbs. Bulwark is as bad as many third world towns. John Huntly will be turning in his grave.

- Bulwark. The scheme to coordinate with the relocated Aldi store in Bulwark is incomprehensible. There is no Aldi store in Bulwark and there is no proposal for a relocated Aldi store.
- It is of great concern that such reports reflect the degree of research and are to be used to inform proposals for forward public expenditure. The major worry here is that money will be wasted on tinkering around with plans to enhance the environs and there will be nothing left in the purse to take action after the by-pass construction.
- Bulwark shops area needs updating to attract more to people to shop with better shops."
- There are no gp surgeries in South Chepstow and only one pharmacy, creating health inequalities in the built environment.
- "Bulwark Shops!!!
- Please note that in the list of areas in Chepstow that I live in you do not mention any areas on the 'wrong' side of the A466. I live on the Bayfields/Barnet's Wood/Woolpitch Wood Estate (it doesn't even have a name!). There is also Edmund Lockhart Court and St Lawrence Park. This is indicative of an issue that doesn't appear to be addressed anywhere in the plan.
- Nothing mentioned re car parking by Bulwark shops-turning it into a high street or whatever will just cause more traffic problems elsewhere. Need disabled parking too
- The significant number of sleeping policemen/speed bumps in the Bulwark area. Needs to be rethought.
- Bulwark shops need updating

Accessibility

- Provide more disabled parking spaces please
- Accessible pavements and room for those with mobility aids.

Transport and Movement

- Improving train services and making Chepstow station platforms accessible
- Public transport access to larger employment areas i.e., takes 1.5 hours on a bus to Bristol for work.
- The most important factor in improving the quality-of-life for the people of Chepstow will be the provision of a bypass
- "Improved infrastructure - road improvement, traffic management should be high priority. Increasing public transport, job on hop off buses will not help with the volume of commuters since removal of bridge tolls / migration of Bristol people as a result. "
- Having read the report, I am of the opinion that no more resource should be put into Placemaking or town Masterplanning until the by-pass has been built and we are able to see a truer picture of life in Chepstow. After this road construction it will be possible to identify and enable practical and meaningful Placemaking.

- Congestion is awful due to the lack of a bypass. The opening of the town arch has greatly improved this and shortened journeys for residents, as well as making the centre accessible. Do not close the centre again. "
- Improve the High Beech roundabout traffic flow.
- Traffic, road safety and public transport provision are the most important issues, because the community is gridlocked at times of day when people need to get to/from work and to extracurricular activities and shops.
- Traffic is the dominant issue in Chepstow, but this doesn't seem to have been addressed in the Plan. "
- Traffic is hideous in Chepstow – unbearable.
- Bridge and traffic congestion is unbearable
- The A48 through road is killing Chepstow. Either close the road bridge across the Wye (not very practical) or build a by-pass so that traffic with no intention of stopping at Chepstow can easily progress on a suitable road. With this traffic burden released from the town, there is every chance that Chepstow can become a destination for visitors and local people can benefit from a pleasant environment. For too long the County Council have muddled by from day to day with no real effort to address the basic problem of having the busy A48 bisecting the town. Twiddling with speed limits, cycle routes, planting flowers and opening coffee shops will never have a positive impact on the lives of Chepstow residents and visitors.
- Talking about a by-pass and seeking interim solutions to perceived problems will not cut any mustard with the ratepayers of Chepstow. A timetable for construction will give hope and certainty to all affected by the choking effect of the road. In the meantime, it would be of some relief to all if the High Street was returned to two way through traffic reinstating the alternative routes for local traffic. A bypass is the solution to many congestion and safety problems within the town.
- Build it and they will come. The County Council should not hide behind the excuse that money cannot be spent on Chepstow because that would be unfair to Monmouth and Abergavenny. Nor should the Welsh Labour Government's contentment with the road building in Cardiff and subsequent refusal to consider road building elsewhere be used as an excuse not to go ahead with this vital project.
- The lack of on-street electric car chargers where residents don't have access to home charging solutions.
- Traffic on slip road from High Beech roundabout to Severn bridge is bumper to bumper from 6-15am to 9am on Wednesdays. Also, traffic is tail back to Thornwell School to get out.
- Lack of dog waste bins by the bus station.
- The heavy traffic on the A 48 psychologically cuts off this side of the town from the centre the other side of the road. "
- Infrastructure - road improvements to address appalling traffic congestion issues

- We urgently need a Chepstow by-pass road. I live 3 miles from the town centre and used to go there for all my shopping, but I avoid going there nowadays because I hate sitting in a queue of traffic for 45 minutes and then having to negotiate Larkfield roundabout which is often more like a car park than a roundabout in recent years. Frankly, I can nip on a train to Cardiff to do my shopping in the time it takes to get to Chepstow.
- I don't think cycling on the A48 is safe. Buses around here are few and far-between. When people are going to the supermarket to do a big shop, the easiest and most convenient way to get your shopping home is by car. I hope that none of the proposed improvements will make it more difficult to get in and out of Tesco car park at the busiest times, such as around Christmas, than it is already."
- Public transport from outlying villages e.g., Tintern,
- Car-traffic is the main issue. As well as a lack of support for businesses in town.
- The speed of traffic on Hardwick Avenue. This road has footpath access links to the Welsh coastal path and lots of children walk to and from school. Speed bumps are required.
- Poor transport links to where everyone works (Bristol, predominantly) mean traffic is silly. For some reason efforts so far have focused on increasing traffic capacity rather than reducing demand.
- Join Tesco's to town centre
- Improve traffic flows in town and at High Beech roundabout
- Provide a dedicated right turn lane at Larkfield Garage/ Greggs commercial zone to free roundabout
- Traffic is becoming more of an issue and i struggle to get to work because of it, 2 main roads through to Larkfield, and only one main road through town.
- It's a saver they opened the high street again.
- Wasting lots and lots of money, for example removing a fully working crossing near costa then replaced it with a worse one,
- Then trying to make the road look nicer by putting stupid plant pots, which looked so out of the way.
- There is no thought for the residents or businesses, as building prices are rising, more businesses are having to close, and it's a shame, because Chepstow was once lovely until the council got involved, start thinking of residents who live here with proper opinions other than yourself and money."
- Related to traffic volume and transport - I just did not see reference to public transport (train and bus services out of Chepstow) in the plans. For me that is the key for improving the volume of traffic. Reliable and regular public transport to Bristol etc would take me off the road. Unfortunately, current options are not ideal (I do get train and T7 bus when I can, but timings and price are often a factor by which I go by car instead)

- Access and safety- with a small baby in a pram there are many areas/ road crossings (such as from Garden city over the A48) which are unsafe and make us less likely to want to walk into and enjoy the town
- We desperately need the link road that was once proposed. Traffic is awful in Chepstow, especially during rush hour.
- So much better now the high street is open to traffic. No more backed up to top of Welsh street or up by marks and Spencer's best decision.
- A48 congestion and also Forest of Dean plans to build an extra 600 houses around Beachley. Especially following recent years 4 new developments around Tutshill and Wyedean!
- You should work more closely with Gloucestershire County Council/Forest of Dean District Council - communities in Tutshill and Sedbury regard Chepstow as their nearest town too irrespective of the border. It would make sense to improve the active travel routes to these areas e.g., the path that cuts down through middle of Casteford Hill. This could be promoted more like a nature trail if tidied up a bit. I use it regularly and have seen slow worms, frogs, shrews, bats and various birds. It is steep of course, but good exercise and better than driving into town. I understand that due to the border this will probably be out of scope of this consultation, but Tutshill residents use Chepstow services and cause traffic.
- English housing overloading Chepstow's roads
- Traffic is a joke. That's what you should be sorting out
- "Public transport links to Bristol. The train station is a great asset but underused due to lack of direct links to Bristol. Commuting by car would decrease dramatically if there were commuter trains specifically in the week to get people back and for to work without having to change at Severn Tunnel junction for long periods of time with no facilities.
- On the weekend and during the day there can be long waits of up to an hour at Severn Tunnel for the connection to Chepstow. This is not good enough when this could be serving the town by reducing pollution and congestion and improving tourist links to the town.
- Lack of regular transport on the outskirts of Chepstow i.e., to Tutshill. Too many new developments without the necessary infrastructure.
- Traffic
- The town clearly needs a proper bypass not piecemeal measures that are solely designed to remove car use from what is essentially a rural area.
- Public transport. Buses going to railway station and connecting with trains
- Sort out the daily crazy traffic queues, it's all negative on social media. The history of the town has been swept away by building these flats and houses on the riverside and shipyard site.

- Yes, we need better public transport. It's appalling
- "A lack of safe and pleasant walking routes.
- No traffic lights / pedestrian crossings on Hardwick Hill.
- No care or interest in tackling noise pollution caused by backfiring cars with illegal exhausts."
- public transport to and from outlying villages to enable easier access to town for leisure and social activities
- Pollution
- Traffic is killing the town, why are we so poorly served by rail?
- Yes - the high pollution levels on Hardwick hill and the necessity for a bypass. The town infrastructure doesn't support the evolution of Chepstow as an expanding town and a bypass is urgently required.
- commuting traffic is a nightmare
- Improving public transport from Tesco's to Chepstow Bus Station & ensure that users know about the services.
- A bypass. and then the challenge of traffic volume won't be relevant. and so, community assets can be elevated.

Active Travel

- Enhancements and improvements to support active travel to further encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- The railway tunnel at the bottom of Hardwick Avenue has never previously provided a link to lower Chepstow or the riverside. Therefore, it is incorrect to state that it may be restored.
- Safe walking routes
- Preserve and conserve Chepstow Bridge by pedestrianising it.
- Cycle lanes
- Active travel infrastructure - making the town easy and safe to get around by bike (I know the gradients are challenging but surely a zig-zag route can deal with this?)
- Improve the walkways between Chepstow and Sedbury to reduce need for people to drive in. Roadside path over A48 bridge is covered with grit and sand. Need to wear glasses to protect eyes. This route is used daily by numerous school children.
- Why have St Mary's school been omitted from any plans?
- Safety of children and pedestrians on dangerous roads made worse by frustrated drivers.
- Illegal parking in close proximity to the dell school at drop off and pick up times.

- Really strong walking / cycling links within the community. Especially to create routes away from existing fast roads
- Many walking tourists use this hill and visit the wall. Residents from Bulwark and Garden City frequently use this route as a short cut.
- A couple of park benches each side on the grass verges might be useful.
- Secondly, the steep lower part of the street is in need of repair and unattractive often with bottle necks.
- Poor off road cycle routes (or cycle lanes) into Chepstow from nearby towns and villages

Employment

- There was little in the plan on maximising employment opportunities locally and making sure local people have the opportunity and skills to access opportunities.
- Broadly, encouraging local young people to stay or to return (after education) to the area. This is not an easy thing to tackle but I think it's important that the town retail/leisure/work offering facilitates this, as it's crucial to the long term health of the town. Lots of other Monmouthshire towns are struggling because young people cannot / do not want to remain in their hometown, and the increasing average age is putting great strain on the community and local services.
- Local employment for people so encouraging less need for travel, I.E low cost office space, reduced costs for industrial unit.
- The plan is limited on ambition to improve transport links and energy efficiency. If vast sums are to be spent on the town would it not be better upgrading the infrastructure.
- Making Chepstow attractive to quality business/employers that want to invest and partner with the community

Local Facilities

- More could be done to improve facilities for the older generation, particularly for men in their 70s/80s. Meeting places, clubs, day trips etc.
- Spreading the load of leisure activities around the town and not concentrating on just Riverside.
- A central hub for people to come together to share their interests and support each other like the Together works project in Caldicot
- We need a Chepstow minor injuries unit and decent out of hours doctors / dentists now there's more young families...Newport, Abergavenny, etc. too fair to drive with a small child at 2am.
- The town's cultural offer - particularly around the arts.
- Sports facilities - totally overlooked.
- Swimming pool and leisure centre is too small.

- No athletics track.
- Athletics/cricket club needs more investment.
- Football teams oversubscribed and no real home.
- Work with government to improve access to NHS Dentists and Minor Injuries Unit at Hospital
- Increasing GP Services and healthcare. Having minor Injuries Unit in Chepstow itself

Greening and Biodiversity

- Improving biodiversity. Steps already taken e.g.; rewilding of small green spaces have increased a general sense of wellbeing "the natural environment the Dell/ Garden City Woods"
- Planting trees and other greenery to blend Chepstow into its surrounding area.
- Prioritising the protection and development of green spaces for the well-being of all care of the elderly and care for their carers in the light of the current strain on social services and the NHS. Loneliness is a serious issue."
- The environment really matters for the future of all so it should be a top priority to preserve and develop green space
- "Tidying all areas so it looks better. Remove old signs such as new housing estate/ new road layout. They have been there years. Plant trees behind the high street between the service road and main road. It looks horrible as you drive down the A48 towards/from Tesco.
- Biodiversity and green space. Elements that help the climate campaign.

Sustainable Towns

- The plans seem to assume that life is going to carry on in its familiar patterns, ignoring the threats facing our electricity and water supplies, food security and every other aspect of resilience. Such an approach is short-sighted and unjustifiably optimistic. We need to take steps towards developing microgrids to generate, store and distribute electricity at the most local level, weaning ourselves off grid-dependency. We need to do something similar for local water capture, filtration, storage and distribution, reducing our dependence on the water companies. We also need to tackle the issues of waste management, reducing our reliance upon the sewage system.
- Localization of food production and distribution is also essential. Approaches might include the development of local high-rise hydroponic systems and the encouragement of vertical growing.
- Even more urgently, we need to relieve the stress on our rivers. A few years ago, the Wye was just about the least polluted river in the UK, but right now it's less than two years away from irreversible collapse.

- Something also needs to be done about the declining biodiversity. I've noticed that in my neighbourhood (in garden city) the newer house-buyers are almost universally blocking off the remaining wildlife corridor, placing increasing stress on hedgehogs, amphibians, reptiles and other ground-dwelling groups. This is a disaster, and steps need to be introduced to open up, develop and connect stretches of wildlife corridor. At the same time, we need laws to ban the toxification of the environment through the profligate use of weedkillers, insecticides, rodent poisons, etc.
- We could be developing a shock-absorbing community. Instead, the report focuses on trivia.

Young People

- Attractions for young people
- Play areas for children.
- Safeguarding all play areas by fencing them in as in the Dell.
- Facilities for young people, to both support them and to help combat antisocial behaviour.
- Facilities for children and young people - especially spaces for teenage girls. The Friends of the Dell Park group, to their undying credit, have been plugging away for years against enormous odds but where is the public investment in spaces for children and families?
- The children of Chepstow seemed to be left out. There needs to be on going activities, somewhere that children of all ages can attend for a small fee or free. We constantly see posts about children's behaviour in and around Chepstow, now we need to hear some positive posts. There are a lot of empty churches, community centres that cater more for adults. Let's see the council get off their backsides and do more in the community with the children.
- Extra-curricular activities for children and youth: soft play, bowling, classes, opportunities for them. "
- Children and young people need facilities.
- Outdoor paddling pool

Community Safety

- Massive drug problem in Chepstow. More police needed and action taken against known activity. I.e.. Alice crescent
- Amount of drug dealing visibly going on in the area needs to be dealt with. "
- Stopping racism. Improving community cohesion and promoting diversity.

Partnership Working

- Partnership is fine but is often reliant on volunteers and many voluntary organisations are nearing burnout, also ageing. They need support.
- Need to engage business community
- A confirmation from Monmouthshire County Council that funds that will be made available to bring any plan to fruition. The total figure (£'s) of such funds to be allocated and a written timescale on when the funds will be made available."
- The council of Chepstow and Monmouthshire have no care for the people in Chepstow. All they care about is money, and houses.
- The main focus should be pushing funding into institutions. The lack of primary and secondary schools has been made evermore apparent as covid has made commuter towns so attractive for those wanting to escape the city and or work from home. There is a huge need for a new GP's office/dentists etc. If the residents of the town cannot be provided for how a town is supposed to flourish. It must be taken seriously how attractive Chepstow is for commuters from Bristol.
- Communication to communities. So many new people to town and surrounding area. There is not one easily accessible source point to find out any information

Other

- Those options above are not representative of the top issues facing Chepstow.
- All of the above are important but the poor traffic situation, degeneration of high street & community assets have a knock on effect on other aspects.
- I notice that the residential area on School Hill and business area on the lower part of the hill are omitted.
- You've not included Tutshill and Sedbury in your plan which is disappointing for a border town. We may 'reside outside Monmouthshire' but we live less than a mile from Chepstow Castle and have a great interest in improving our local area
- We just moved here from Bristol and we're so sad we did, dying town, feels very "chavvy" and unsafe. No after school provisions for Thornwell school. Very bad.
- Please can we have blue, purple and food recycling bags available in more locations than just the library. It was useful during lockdown when we could collect them at Lidl and Tesco Express

Chepstow Now

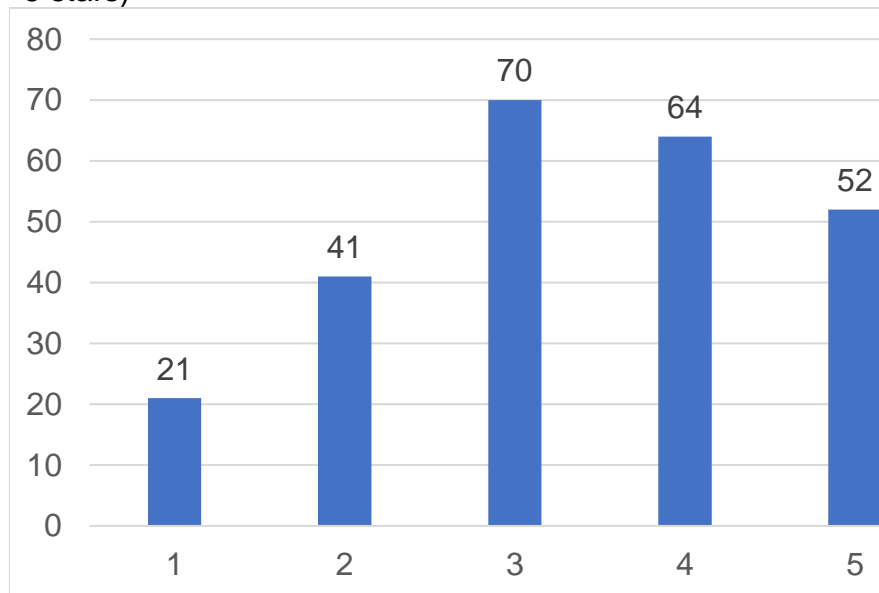
Figure 4 indicates where people see Chepstow now as a place with "tired", "potential" and "sad" being the dominant words.

Proposed Town Vision

Figure 5 shows how people rate the proposed town vision which is *“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”*.

75% of people rate the vision as being 3 stars and above with 21% rating it as 5 stars.

Figure 5 - How People Rate the Proposed Town Vision (1 to 5 stars)



Source: Community Survey; N=248

Additional Feedback on Vision

A range of comments were made on the Vision, with some extracts provided here:

- The town centre lets the whole vision down
- No mention of appeal and accessibility for tourists and visitors. Used to be busloads of visitors from Valleys and Bristol and further afield to visit attractive small town with fantastic castle and an array of interesting and independent shops. No longer applies.
- Chepstow is much more than just local people. Our geography and heritage means that you hear a great diversity of accents on the High Street. Its one reason why I've loved growing up here.
- I think most people think Chepstow is a great place...its the businesses and visitor part that's key and needs prioritising. Chepstow needs to become a special place to visit to get badly needed revenue. Not sure if well connected neighbourhoods or well-being services are so critical for most residents.
- Include a statement on Chepstow's green agenda
- Missing importance of community belonging - clubs, groups, meeting spaces. "
- It takes more than street furniture or similar such hardware to achieve this vision. Encouraging businesses /retail /local enterprise etc to the town centre needs changes to rates etc to increase viability, and perhaps a more proactive approach to allow businesses to try out whether they are viable with short term lease opportunities or small units which the council might support...
- Chepstow is a fantastic potential staycation location and Active Travel destination. More could be made of the many national walks which start on Chepstow (Offa's Dyke, Welsh Coastal Path, Wye Valley Walk), potential Harry Potter Trail, caving with one of the best caving networks under Piercefield, climbing and the potential climbing wall in St Mary's Church, the historic nature of the Town with its Castle, Museum, walled town, port and ship building. The many festivals, racecourse, galleries, Market and many firsts as a gateway to Wales, first town in the UK to go single use plastic bag free, first plastic free town in South Wales, first town in Wales to have a Sustainable Transport Plan.
- Chepstow could be an active travel location implementing the Town's Sustainable Transport Plan (the first in Wales) and linking to national paths that start in Chepstow (Welsh Coastal Path, Offa's Dyke, Wye Valley Walk, local climbing experiences (and development of a climbing wall in St Mary's Church), caving - under Piercefield is one of the most spectacular caving systems in the UK, creation of a Harry Potter Trail, playing more on the local heritage making Chepstow a staycation destination feeding festivals, events and markets increasing footfall for local businesses. Developing a distinctive shop front style (such as Bath) enhancing the town centre.

- Improve neighbourhood connection with 80% of children getting to school using active travel.
- Fails to identify any means of addressing and resolving traffic and transport issues, particularly the problems of severance and congestion resulting from the current A48. Many residents find it difficult to access the town centre by foot, car, or any other means. A partial solution would be to restrict the A48 to local traffic, but this would require the completion of the bypass and bridge at Thornwell/Sedbury. Without such major investment Chepstow will not become "accessible and distinctive".
 - It lacks clear reference to the environment
 - Your proposals do not appear to address concerns of locals. Improved infrastructure - roads, traffic management, schools, drs, dentist
 - The vision is flawed. This whole presentation needs consideration after the construction of Chepstow by-pass.
 - You need to reflect what residents tell you in your decisions. It's not up to you, it's up to us. Your job is to make it workable.
 - Where is the funding coming for the MCC vision and would more direct help for families & individuals struggling with current economic conditions by targeting funding to support more community based projects to help people in these times such as community lunch clubs, warm places to meet over a hot drink and additional funding for volunteer groups such as foodbank / community fridge etc.
- Chepstow needs a Grand Vision and a 3/5 /10 year Masterplan based on commercial reality. Planning needs to stop being reactive and start being proactive and less negative to new ideas and development. I personally don't think anyone in MCC has an imagination at all!
 - MCC have somehow managed to take a town with huge potential and change it into somewhere with ugly eyesores, horrible 1960s blight, too many empty rotting building, too many missed opportunities, a narrow range of low-income businesses and a total lack of vision or creative wealth creation. Planning policy is poor and reactive, highways policy confused and rather naive and tourism not supported as it should be. Bring money into the town via special events and invest it in great design using local architects and designers!
 - It is an exciting vision, which I very much hope will be successful in receiving funding from the Welsh Government. Chepstow has been long neglected for funding. The proposals on show at the Palmer Centre were very inspiring.
 - Chepstow is ""the gateway"" to the wye valley, but the river is not used for any economic benefit in Chepstow. And other tourist features; the old wye valley railway route, or river walk is not capitalised. There are loads of cyclist in Chepstow on a weekend. yet there is no cycle shop or rental available. or other outdoor tourist services to make Chepstow a base for travelling up the wye

- Think it would be good to have a unifying theme such as The Wye Valley Producers Town - Gateway to Wye Valley and encourage local producers to take up empty shops. Also, would be good to have guidelines about what shop frontages look like to have a more pleasing, cohesive aesthetic e.g., Bragin Booze looks out of keeping with tone of street
- Disagree with the focus on tourism at this stage - focus should be on making this a great place to live and work.
- There's nothing in there to disagree with, but it could apply to any small-to-medium sized town anywhere. Is there space for something that is a bit more Chepstow-specific? Something about the town's particular place right on the border between England and Wales? Something about the exceptional local natural environment, the town's history, but also, it's track-record of being quirky and at the cutting edge of modern social movements?
- "The vision is great, but I think some key principles should be adopted across the proposals to ensure the priority of active travel and public transport over cars:
 - Think this is super encouraging and I truly hope it happens. Such a beautiful town, steeped in history and with so much potential. It is a shame that it currently is as empty and left as it is. We need some high street brands in Chepstow to encourage trade and the younger generation. So much potential!!!
- The vision is fine if it is supported by investors and also the local and county council! Such consideration to

parking charges for example which have go up over 200% which would cause anyone investing in Chepstow concern as there could be no foot fall due to high parking charges!

- It should read residents and communities. The communities that use Chepstow as their hub also help Chepstow prosper
- Agree with aims but to date none of the actions by the councils have meaningfully supported the vision

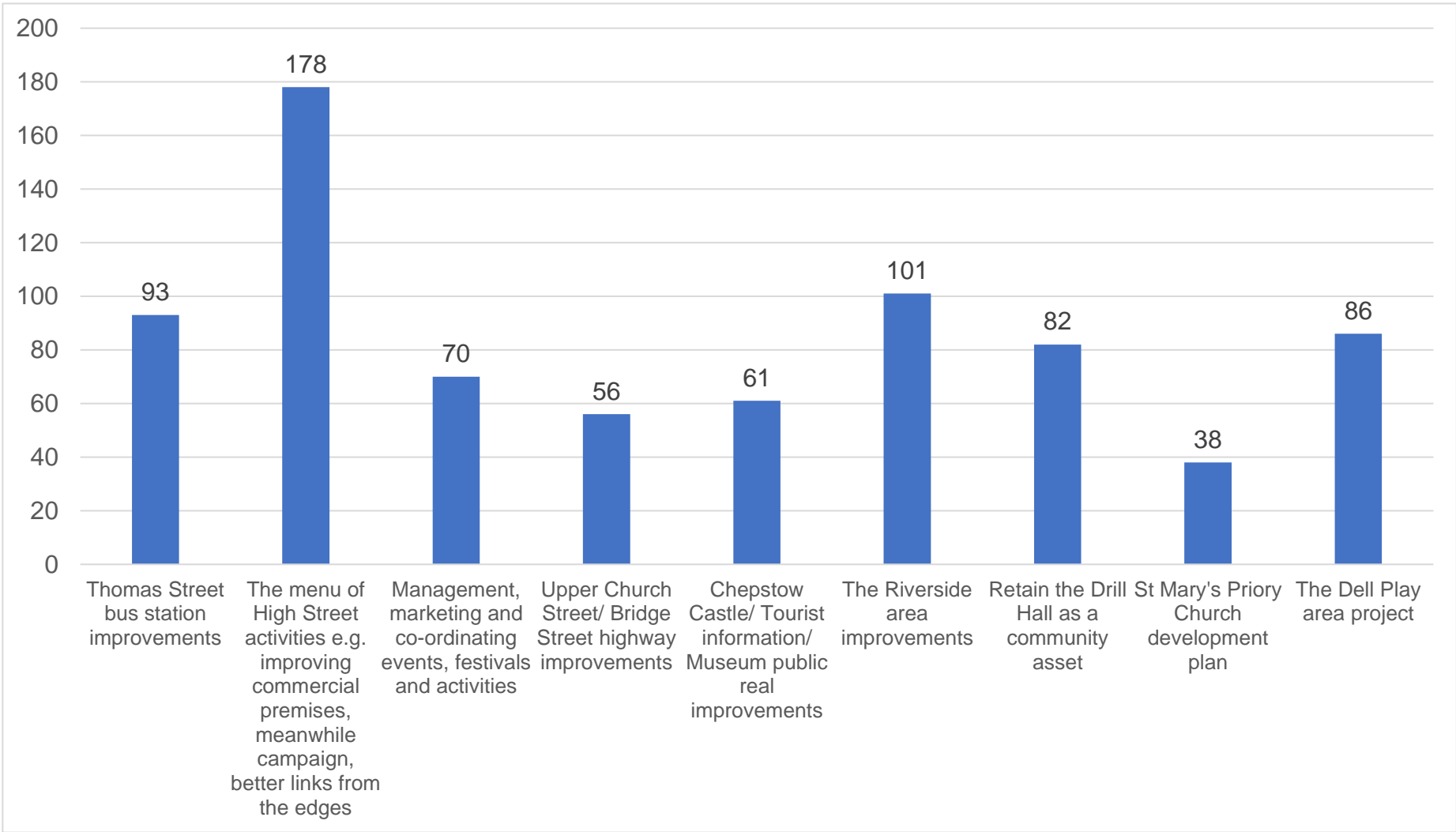
Town Centre Proposals

Figure 6 illustrates where people see the priorities when reviewing the town centre proposals.

23% of respondents rate the menu of High Street activities as the highest priority, followed by improvements to the Riverside area (13%), Thomas Street bus station (12%) and then by the Dell Play area project at 11%.

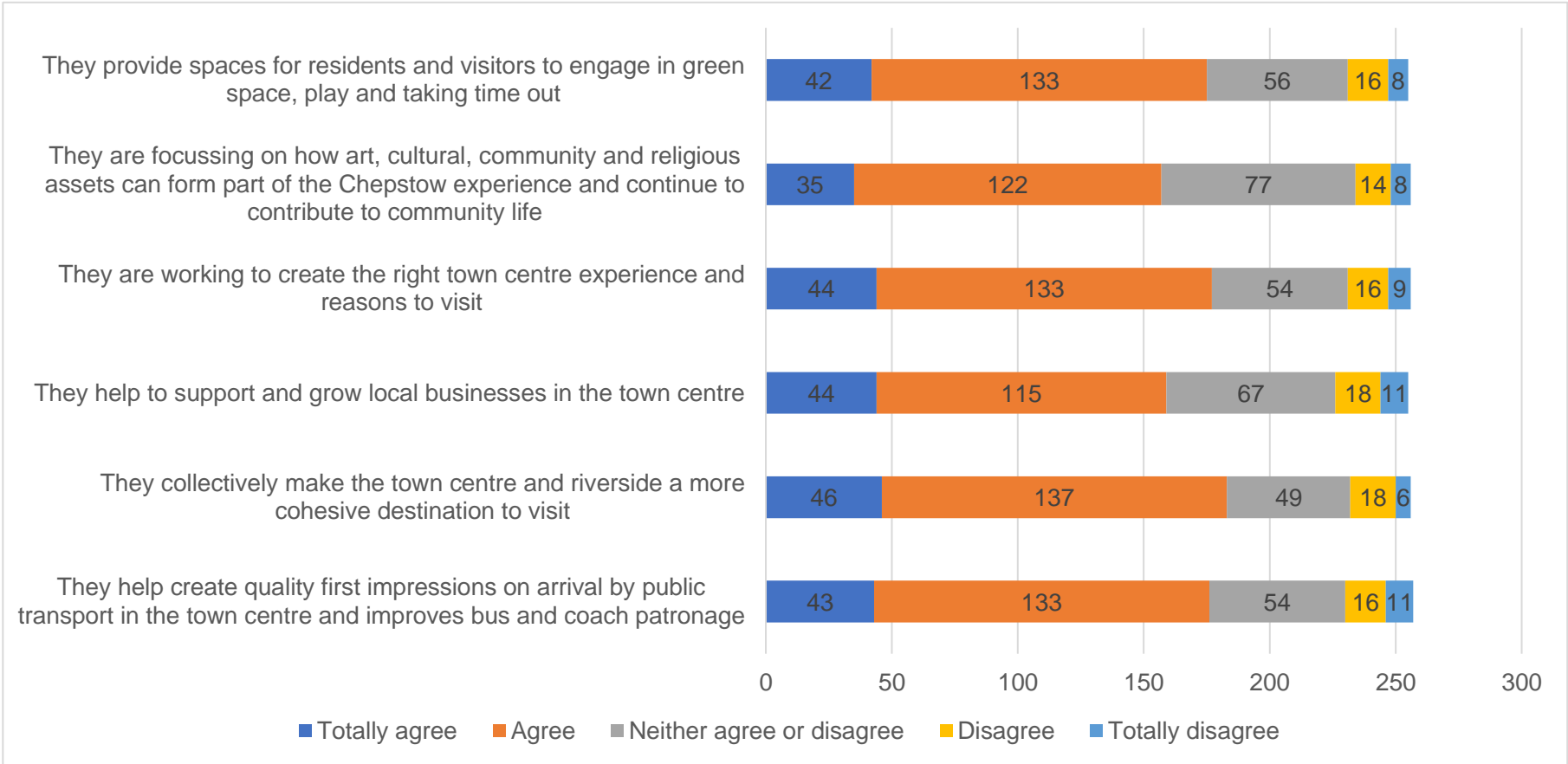
Figure 7 asked people to rate the proposals against a series of statements. From the chart, most people agree with what the proposals are setting out to achieve, with the highest degrees of agreement for the proposals working to create the right town centre experience and reason to visit, in addition to them collectively make the town centre and riverside a more cohesive destination to visit.

Figure 6 - How People Prioritise the Town Centre Proposals



Source: Community Survey; N=256

Figure 7 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements on the proposals?



Source: Community Survey; N=258

Are there any other ideas or focus that are missing for this area of the town?

A range of comments were made on items that people felt were missing. These are some extracts:

- Key is good independent shops; encourage landlords to reduce rents/smaller units/update to living accommodation above.
- More "run around" minibuses to connect town centre with outlying estates for people with poor mobility, heavy shopping, babies and toddlers etc
- What about creating a modern new space in the centre of town to attract people?
- What about linking with regional attractions (Wye, Tintern, Monmouth, Piercefield House etc."
- Close from the High Street/Upper Church Street to traffic except at commute times or in case of emergency/road blockage on a48.
- Please consider the music community in the town. It's important for how the town speaks for itself.
- Tidiness - make the place look ultra-attractive and keep it maintained
- Other towns have adopted more pro-active and innovatory approaches to the empty shop syndrome - look at these and see what can be learnt and tried in Chepstow. "
- The development of Chepstow library as a theatre and cinema in evenings with parking nearby and the addition of secure bike parking.
- Chepstow town centre is changing with experiences and services becoming more prevalent - therapies, coffee shops, hairdressers, Sunday Market, nail bars, restaurants - often these require small shop units to start up so it would be beneficial to split empty larger shops to populate with smaller start-ups.
- Chepstow has a plethora of sports clubs (Athletics, Archery, Boxing, Cricket, Football, Rugby, Tennis...) which involve a lot of young people but there appears to be little linkup with the Town Council and inclusion in future plans. "
- As before - Chepstow is a town which needs to further capitalise on its natural assets for economic benefit. It is surrounded by amazing walking (but no shops selling outdoor gear etc) and cycling routes (but no bike shops). Having chains will attract people to the town and spend in independent shops - it could really do with shops like H&M, Mountain Warehouse, Evans bikes, Halfords...Look at Abergavenny and Monmouth for inspiration. I don't want to go to Bristol to shop for outdoor clothing, shoes, clothes etc. For myself and children or particularly online. Would prefer to walk to do it
- Need one-way system in High Street, with 20 mph speed limit throughout town centre, more crossing places, environmental improvements, better use of open spaces, and more parking provision.
- Support improved bus station at Thomas St (rather than recent poorly thought-out proposals for ""hub"" at railway station), but with better connections between the two.

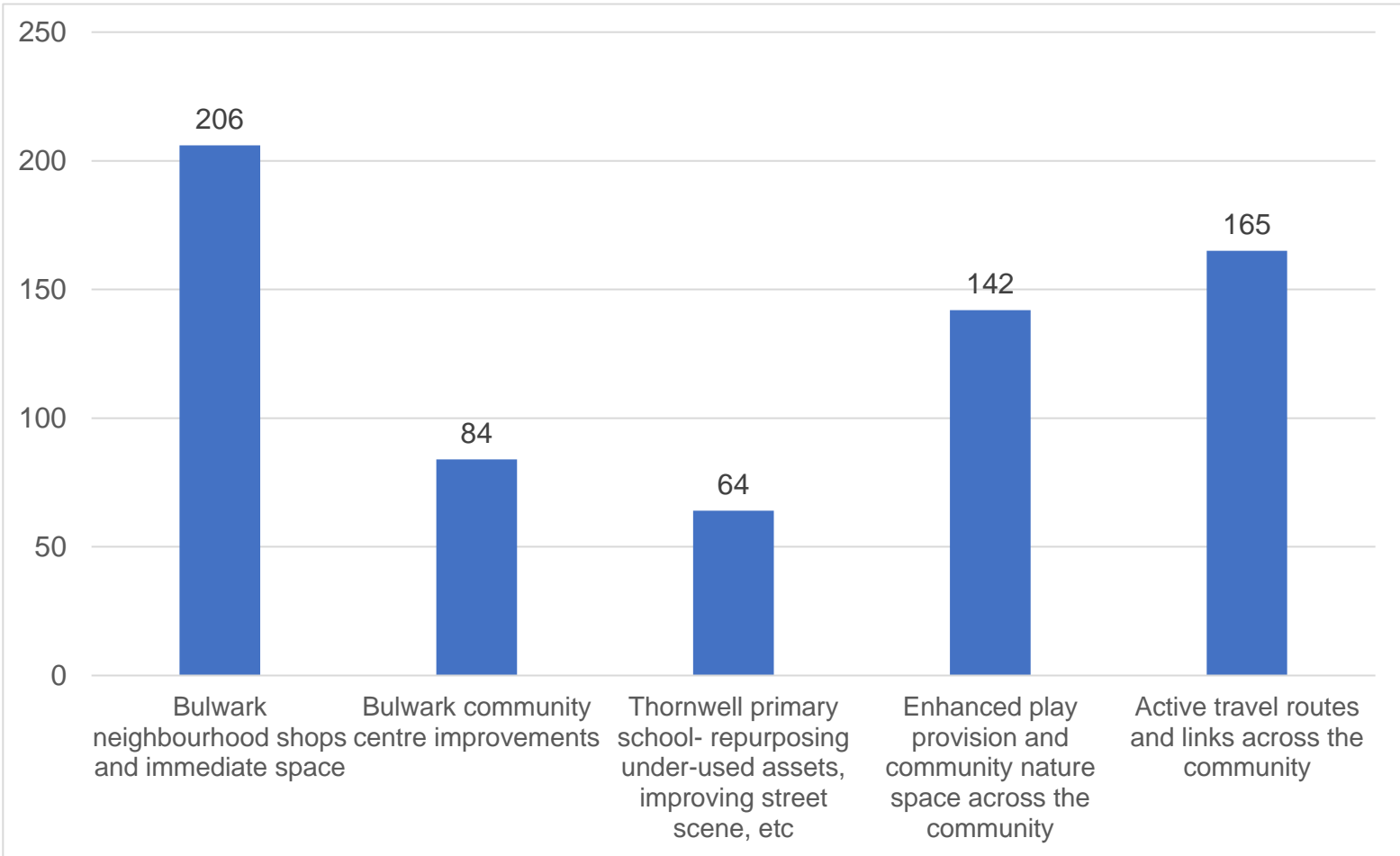
- Provide shuttle bus to old bus station
- The issue of High St misses the key question, as to whether motor traffic is part of the aspiration or not. I would argue that removing, or managing, the traffic makes all the other aspirations more likely to succeed.
- I have visited many similar small, walled towns around Europe that reduce/remove traffic to make better spaces for residents, businesses and visitors. It can be done."
- Chepstow could so easily be more of a foodie destination- more could be made of the Sunday market, for example.
- There has been very limited consideration of cycle routes into and around town e.g., no bike lanes or shared cycle/pedestrian routes without cars, especially in relation to routes from more rural areas such as Boughspring and Woolaston where residents rely on Chepstow for services and leisure. 2. lack of consideration about arrival by train and how this connects (physically and visually) to the town centre. 3. Unclear on impact on taxi ranks in the area, there is already a shortfall which makes Chepstow undesirable as a night-time location because it is so difficult to find transport home.
- The big HSBC building, we need to reclaim this for the community
- The Wales Coastal Path should be developed in conjunction with the Severn Princess Preservation Trust and the Mabey site development"
- EV charging. A lot of electric car visitors to wye valley from England will need somewhere to charge. Charging takes a good hour or so. If we had a destination - maybe farm shop showcasing our local products - with significant ev charging points, we could capitalise on the passing through trade. People might even come off the m5 to especially visit.
- The drive through Chepstow on the A48 is not pleasant. Traffic is awful but trees also need to be planted to obscure the back of the shops which are very unsightly. You do not get a sense of how lovely the town is, and people will not be tempted to check it out when they see the back of the shops which resemble more of an industrial estate. Improving this area should be high on the list in my opinion."
- High Street improvements should seriously include removing the Barclays building to reinstate a market location and opening up connectivity to the shops and arcades behind it. creating a town square type location that acts as a true centre for Chepstow. Tourist info, maps, access could then all pivot of this location"
- Better Park, best use of the dell area makes it more appealing to people, a bypass
- The vision does not mention resolving the two biggest issues Chepstow has: poor transport links and traffic congestion.
- Without this the rest of the proposals border on pointless. People and businesses will not be attracted to a gridlocked, polluted town that is getting worse.

Bulwark and Thornwell Proposals

Figure 8 illustrates where people see the priorities when reviewing the Bulwark and Thornwell proposals. 31% of respondents wish to see Bulwark neighbourhood shops and its immediate space improved, followed by investment in the wider active travel network (25%) and enhance play provision and community nature spaces at 21%.

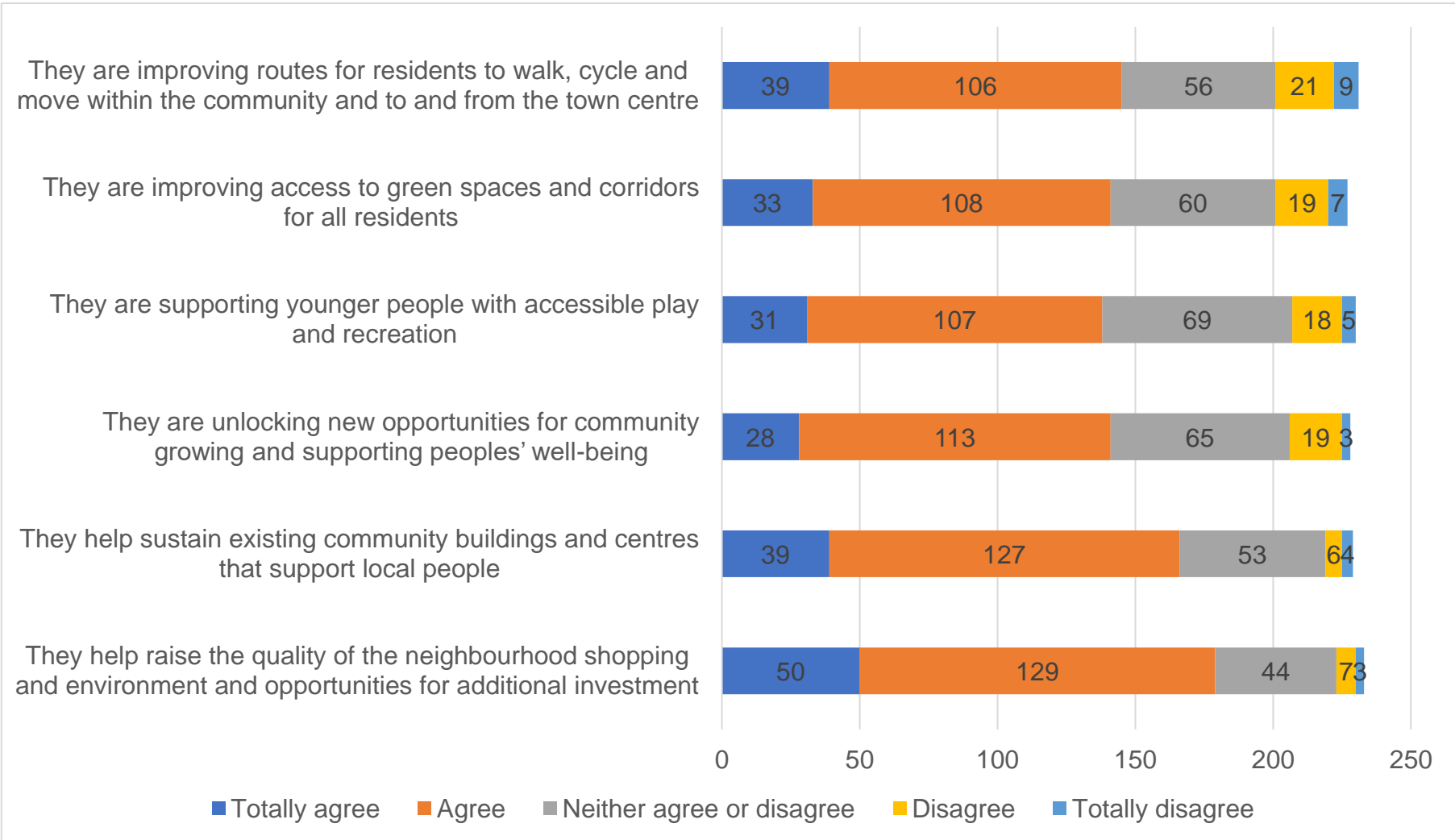
Figure 9 asked people to rate the proposals against a series of statements. From the chart, most people agree with what the proposals are setting out to achieve, with the highest degrees of agreement for the proposals working to raise the quality of the neighbourhood shopping and environment and opportunities for additional investment, and also help sustain existing community buildings and centres that support local people.

Figure 8 - How People Prioritise the Bulwark and Thornwell Proposals



Source: Community Survey; N=231

Figure 9 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements on the proposals?



Source: Community Survey; N=234

Are there any other ideas or focus that are missing for this area of the town?

A range of comments were made on items that people felt were missing. These are some extracts:

- Needs radical modernisation
- Demolish existing buildings not in use and start again.
- Objection to why St Mary's RC Primary School has not been included in proposals
- Create more of a mixed shops rather than just the couple of takeaways and a supermarket
- "Need to stop the traffic turning right from A48 into Bulwark and right onto A48 from Bulwark.
- Main problem in Bulwark is the removal of public free parking which has been boarded up by old social club. The shops are privately owned. Public money should not be spent on improving them. Owners should be encouraged to maintain them."
- GP and Banking Provision.
- More regular bus service."
- Bulwark corner- a stranglehold
- Safety of area at night.
- "With reduced speed limits and reduction of rat runs allowing children and those using active travel to take priority reducing traffic and increasing community spirit.
- 80% of children to go to school using active travel
- "The majority of sports clubs are based in Bulwark and Thornwell and these could be better promoted and integrated into the Bulwark and Thornwell neighbourhoods.
- The creation of active travel taking priority over vehicles, reducing speed limits, reduction of rat runs so streets are reclaimed by children and make safe for active travel."
- Need to ensure that Coast Path route is completed along riverside through new development east of railway.
- Industrial site needs upgrading roads and signage layout.
- Make use of Bulwark shops as a central meeting point to access travel options. park and ride buses, taxi, buggies, bikes / mobility hire.
- "Having viewed your consultation proposals for Chepstow I am disappointed that you recognised and are making recommendations for improvements to three Primary Schools namely Thornwell , Pembroke in the Bulwark ward and the Dell, but no mention of St Mary's RC Primary School, as a school we urgently need pedestrian crossing at the school entrance in Old Bulwark Road and opposite the church in Bulwark Road, we have had two near misses of cars colliding

with staff and children. It is also noted that St Mary's has provided 16 placements for Ukraine refugees since May 2022, two have moved to higher education, two have moved back to Ukraine and one has moved to Tutshill Primary following a successful appeal against their initial application. In addition, we have 27.9% of pupils with additional learning needs compared to the Dell with 5%, so we as a school are certainly serving the Chepstow community. Can you please feedback why we as a school have blatantly been overlooked in this review.

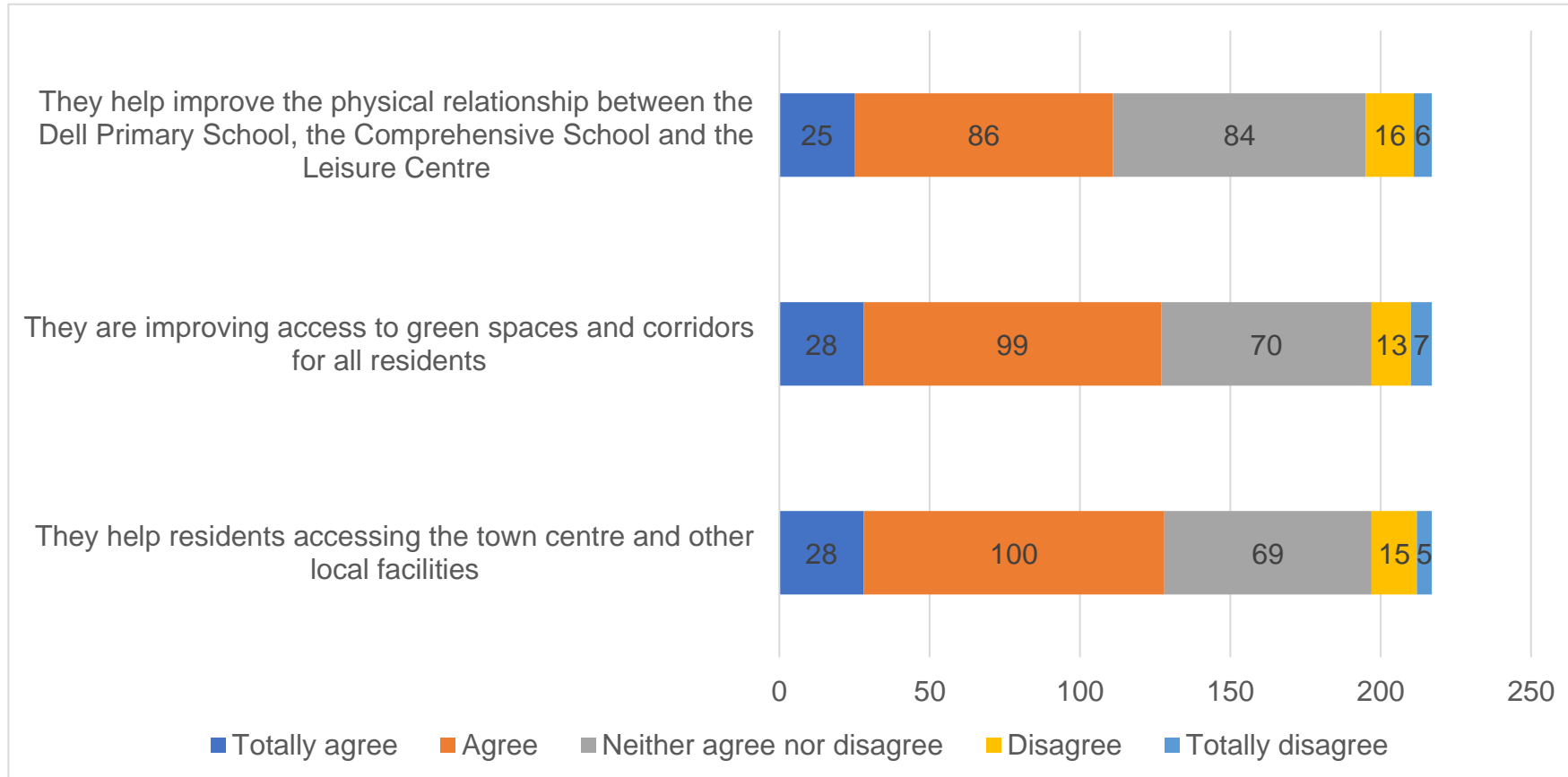
- Youth facilities are not very apparent and would benefit the community if this is addressed. Perhaps such facilities are readily available but need more advertising.
- GP surgery needed. Easier access to library facilities needed: could there be a satellite in bulwark or Thornwell?
- You say this, but green infrastructure is key. Could do some small scale initiatives, e.g., pocket parks, pollinator highways, and street trees
- Better police/community support officers' presence. Better enforcement of speed limits and more bins that are actively emptied.
- "- Although the proposals for Bulwark high street are a huge improvement on the existing situation, pedestrians still do not seem prioritised. Proper 'continuous footways' would be preferable, i.e., no level/construction/materials change for pedestrian crossings over road junctions; Instead of expensive interventions to segregate bikes from car traffic, install plastic/metal 'wands' to lightly segregate on wider roads, particularly uphill and on routes to school. - Implement on-street parking restrictions along all residential parts of Bulwark Road (not alongside the shops) and Thornwell Road. Parked cars slow buses and general traffic, are dangerous for cyclists, and there is ample on-street parking on side streets."
- NO AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS CURRENTLY. How are we supposed to work???
- Keeping the area around the Bridge Underpass clean and tidy, more bine and dog waste bins. This is often the first area

Kingsmark and Western Chepstow

Figure 9 asked people to rate the proposals against a series of statements. From the chart, most people agree with what the proposals are setting out to achieve, with the highest degrees of agreement for the proposals working to raise the quality of the neighbourhood shopping and environment and opportunities for additional investment, and also help sustain existing community buildings and centres that support local people.

Figure 8 - How People Prioritise the Bulwark and Thornwell Proposals

Figure 10 - To what extent do you agree with the following statements on the proposals?



Source: Community Survey; N=218

Are there any other ideas or focus that are missing for this area of the town?

A range of comments were made on items that people felt were missing. These are some extracts:

- Improve footpath/walking access from Bayfield/St Lawrence Park/Penterry Park via Ruffets open area to Schools and Town Centre opening onto Mounon Rd via grassy area of Tempest Drive - children already clamber over wall for short cut. Look at all unofficial short cuts and make proper walkways and crossings.
- "The Comp is not fit for purpose and is in an embarrassing state. We were promised a new school 6 years ago.
- The Dell is bursting at seams."
- Danes' children play area fenced in for safety and to keep dog out. xxx is near swings where children play.
- Needs to be a 20 mph down Welsh Street."
- Cars and street parking. Puts cars on driveway.
- It seems like this is focused on Dane's area - what comes under Western area. New estates left out - e.g., Bayfields, Laurence Park, around hospital & behind Spar. Large housing areas with little in the way of community assets - e.g., community centre.
- The new housing estates past the Dane's (e.g., behind Spar, Bayfields etc) have been completely left off this town plan like they don't exist - despite their size & proposals for increased house building in the LDP. What about community assets there?
- Lack of children play areas at the Del for both residents and visitors
- "Decrease speed limits and stop rat runs to enable children and those using active travel to retake the streets of housing estates and increase community cohesiveness.
- Use of the Danes for community activities such as street parties
- Stop house building and attract businesses
- A revision of the catchment area for The Dell School to include the local children rather than travelling pupils could considerably help with improvement of physical relationships and reverse the effects of community divisions.
- Vital the speed and traffic issue are addressed on Welsh St. there are 2 big schools and no additional safety measures.
- I live on the Danes. You have not mentioned that Huntfield Road is used as a part run and safety in a residential area should be addressed. Of course, all green space should be valued. The gym equipment in the open space should be safe and useable. The pullback apparatus hurt my back as could not pull it back, wrote to MonCC as thought it was concerning, no reply.

- Might want to also consider how this part of the town faces outwards as well as connects into the town centre. Key pedestrian linkages into the AONB through the Piercefield, Wye Valley Walk, Barnett's Wood etc - these are currently under-promoted and key linkages (e.g. access into Barnett's Wood) could be made much better for pedestrians.
- I don't think this plan takes in any of 'Western Chepstow' - i.e., west of the A466
- More commercial facilities/convenience stores/chip shops etc could benefit this area that feels quite lacking in facilities compared to the rest of town
- Allowing enormous housing developments to be built with absolutely no road improvements (the token Tesco junction works do not count) or any requests for more frequent train services causes so much harm to this town and is negligent behaviour by the council."

Future Chepstow

Figure 11 indicates where people see Chepstow in the future with "improved", "better", "improving", "vibrant" the dominant words. Not so dominant but words such as "welcoming", "hopeful", "thriving" and "congested" are used.

Figure 11 - Please provide a single word on how you see Chepstow if this plan was delivered over time?



Source: Community Survey; N=209

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?

Numbers in brackets indicate frequency of activity being mentioned

- Improve traffic and transport situation (86)
- Making high street more of a destination (37)
- More town centre shops (14)
- Upgrade Bulwark shops (9)
- 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)
- Better signage
- More/better health facilities
- Concentrate on people, without them nothing will survive anyway
- Who knows how many centuries Chepstow will have to wait for it
- Community facilities for all
- Links to Coastal Path
- Better bus services (regularly)
- "Keep Chepstow tidy - litter, glass, bin emptying, dog poo
- Economic and wellbeing benefits
- Do something with the empty Barclays bank
- Prioritising locals- more affordable housing
- More green planting. It's an easy win to enhance an area.
- "Free electric minibus shuttle.
- Safe active route Bayfields"
- Safety for ALL
- Green spaces
- Stop developments until such time as a proper road structure is in place to meet the demands of local residents and other roads users who bypass the town.
- Community cohesion.
- On-street electric car chargers in residential areas
- Upgrading and improving Thornwell and Bulwark
- Chepstow / Tidenham Cycle / Pedestrian Link
- Too many houses being built with a lack of infrastructure
- "Attract more big companies into Chepstow town.
- Make the Dell a better place to be proud of
- Cut Business Rates until every shop is occupied
- Improving the town's appearance
- Barclay bank repurposing, pop-up support on main high street.
- Close the high Street permanently and pave it like Caldicot
- Improved sports facilities
- Minor injuries / out of hours GP & Dentists at Chepstow Community Hospital.
- Promoting cohesion and diversity. No more insularity.

- Money needs to be spent
- Community transport
- Long-term resilience and adaptivity, including capacity for antifragility.
- Green spaces enhancement for play and wellbeing
- realistically providing proper services (hospital, dentist, new schools) but I think the bus station needs a much overdue clean up.
- Maintenance
- Take control from the old fashion council
- Have the right people in place

6. Chepstow Comprehensive School Workshop

During lunchtime on the 16th of November, a number of pupils came together from across all of the school years to share their thoughts on where they see Chepstow now as a place, and its focus and priorities for the future? The session was run by the County Council's Regeneration team with the support of Chris Jones Regeneration. With the exception of one pupil, everyone who participated live in the town.

Chepstow Now

| Positives | Negatives |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Nature | Lack of shops |
| Walks | Same thing every time...no difference |
| Sunday market | No cinema |
| Tourist things | Lack of restaurants |
| Tradition | No birthday celebration place |
| Heritage | No Select shop |
| Quiet | No hair and beauty shop |
| The environment | A drive through town or community |
| Picturesque | Normal |
| | Quiet |
| | Boring |

| | |
|--|----------------------|
| | Traffic |
| | Not much stuff to do |

High Street

- Pedestrianise it
- Space for people
- Awareness of cars now
- Need to sit out
- Planting
- More things to do
- More shelter
- Where does traffic go?

Areas for Focus

Local Services

- Have a small A & E in community hospital
- Waiting times are long at doctors
- Lack of NHS dentists
- Community hospital isn't used by local people

Public Transport

- Always have to change at Severn Tunnel Junction
- Change trains for Bristol and Newport
- No high speed trains – 30mph speed limit on track?
- Train station improvements
 - Poor for blind and visually impaired
 - The pedestrian bridge is a barrier
 - It feels old
 - It's an inconvenient space at the front

Active Travel

- Trial out E-bikes
- We love Tidenham Tunnel
- Wyedean and Tintern from Chepstow is not accessible
- We need to find ways of segregating cyclists as it's not safe

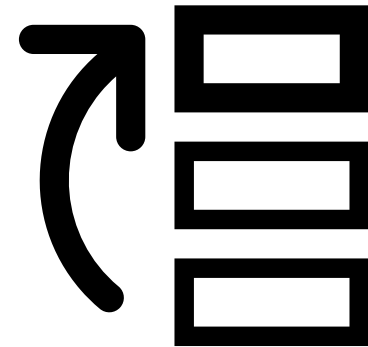
Employment

- Hard to find casual jobs when in sixth form
- It's a place to leave and not stay for work...will come back if you want to settle down

Priorities

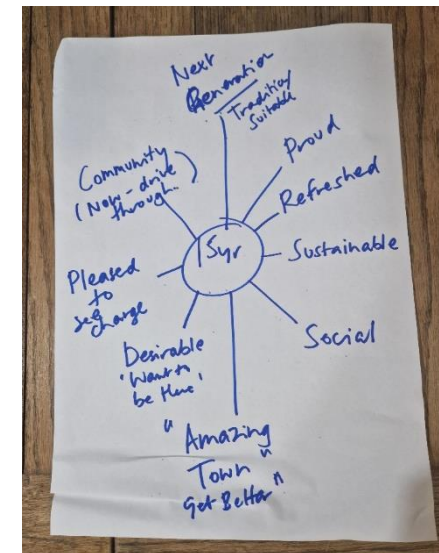
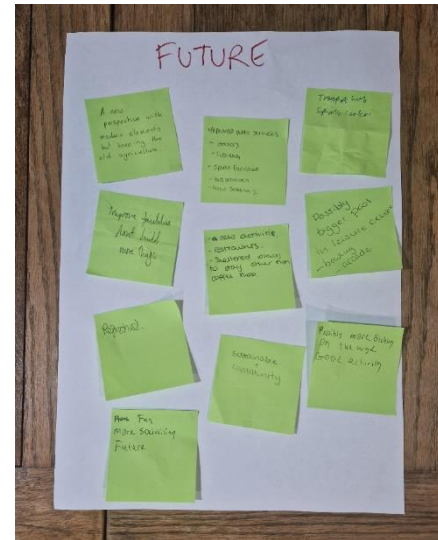
- More fishing on the Wye – challenges are access and its tidal
- Improve public services – health, sports and recreation
- New uses and experiences - bowling, cinema and theatre
- Bigger leisure centre and pool – 20m increase to 25m pool
- Better things for youth and sport
- A general perspective – “adding” not familiar
- Improve facilities – don't build more things
- The environment – lack of greenery and trees – watch housing growth

- A Cinema – two to four screens
- Have a minor A&E and community hospital
- Modernise rail network – new station, faster trains, more connectivity



Future Chepstow

- Modernise
- Don't overload history
- Next generation
- Proud
- Refreshed
- Sustainable
- Social
- Pleased to see change
- Community
- Desirable – want to be here
- Amazing town that has got better
- Improved public services
- New town centre activities
- A new perspective with modern elements but keeping the old agriculture
- More fun
- More socialising



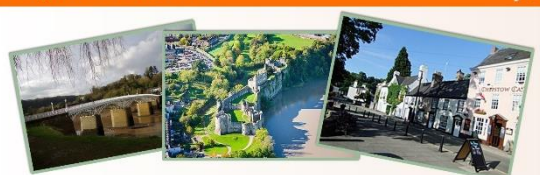
Appendices

Consultation Material

Image 6 - Exhibition Panels 1 to 3

Why Are We Here?

chris jones




Monmouthshire County Council and Chepstow Town Council identified the need for a Town Masterplan that would provide the strategic framework which will guide future place making and changes in the town.

The Aim of the Study


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.

What is Placemaking?


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. Placemaking can be summed up by the following four areas:




Public Space



High Quality Built Form



Happiness And Well-being



Character And Identity


How Can You Help?

We want your views on the ideas that are proposed within this Plan for Chepstow. What do you believe are the priorities? Where should we start? Is there anything missing that we need to consider?

Your views are so important for us knowing what Chepstow needs, so none of these ideas are final and they remain proposals until the resources and funding become available as well as developing partnership working.


Ways to provide comment are provided on the final panel. Thank you for taking an interest in the future of Chepstow.

Chepstow Town Council and Monmouthshire County Council



Town Conversations

chris jones



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 during 2020 to 2021. Online community engagement activities ran between March and end of May 2021. The online engagement resulted in a vast array of responses, which are outlined below and have helped inform our ideas which are shared later on.

Traffic And Transport

- 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.
- Concerns about safety were expressed – at junctions for drivers and crossing roads for pedestrians – over and under the road (A&S).
- Active travel – cycling and walking. Walking for visitors and local people is very important for well-being and the economy of the town but also Wales.

Strain on the existing road network is having an economic and environmental impact.

Access to local green spaces and natural environment was highlighted as an asset of the town.

Due to topography, there are issues around accessibility for disabled people in the town – need accessible routes.

Not enough facilities / places for teenagers to go in Chepstow.

Built Environment & 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 such as driving walk, community spaces?

Housing, Jobs & Economy

- Smaller housing units needed for young people starting out – affordable – particularly in town centre.
- Need to improve infrastructure before building new homes.
- Pollution is a major health concern – and much discussion was linked to traffic and the impact on the environment.

Environment & Biodiversity

- Pollution is a major health concern 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.

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 Binnetts Wood on the western edge.
- Replicate the successful Garden City project and community orchards scheme in other parts of the town.

Tourism

- Need to attract tourists and increase the footfall in town and build on the success of the Sunday market.
- 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.
- Concern around empty shops in the town / shop front design and appearance at the retail centre.
- Dedicated route from Chepstow to Tidenham (consider pedestrian bridge).

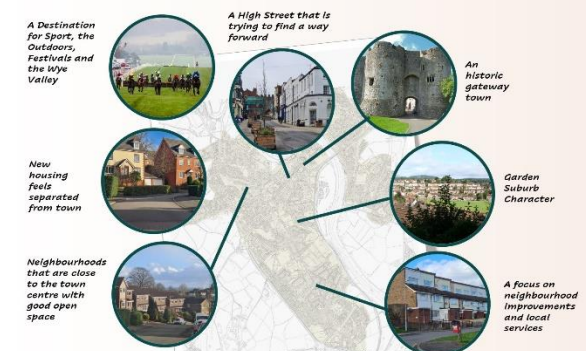
Facilities, Community & Services

- Not enough facilities / places for teenagers to go in Chepstow.
- After school provision is lacking – sports clubs are excellent but not many facilities / clubs to cater for all interests.
- Improved links to the leisure centre needed – incorporate links with the secondary school.

Challenges & Opportunities

chris jones

From reading through the community's comments and looking at local statistics, the following challenges and opportunities have been identified.



Strengths

- Gateway into the Wye Valley from the south
- Historical walled town known for Castle and location on the River Wye
- Characterful town centre set with a conservation area
- Location next to the M48 and the Severn Bridge
- Chepstow racecourse – home to horse-racing, concerts and events
- Some distinctive independent town centre businesses
- Range of town centre amenities e.g. Rock in the Doll Arts Food and more
- Lots of passionate community and voluntary organisations
- Some strong employers in research and development, technology, etc
- There is a sense of neighbourhood in places like Bulwerk
- Long distance topography – Wales Coastal Path, Offa's Dyke and more
- The heritage of the River Wye – boatbuilding, painters, port ferry

Opportunities


- The Place Plan process – making the case for change and funding
- Bristol house buyers bring new demand in the town
- Stag station tourism market due to Covid and whether this continue
- To grow distinctive clusters of businesses – arts, food, creatives, etc
- 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 place
- Planned investment in the leisure centre and commercial school
- Creation of small to medium sized workspace – start ups and innovation
- A hub for artists, makers and producers within lower Wye Valley
- Maximising savings products and their economic benefits for the town

Weaknesses

- 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 poses certain challenges for destination management and accessibility
- The town centre performance follows UK trends in shopping but is compounded by its physical challenges, its traffic, amongst other things
- Pockets of deprivation that are associated with health, education and income and some neighbourhoods have a poor environmental quality
- Transportation has long reach and no strong clusters of quality employment
- The housing market has shifted away from Bristol which has increased demand and prices

Threats

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



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Image 7 - Exhibition Panels 4 to 6

A Vision For Chepstow...

Our Vision for Chepstow

"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"

Our Aims & Objectives

- Aim to develop Chepstow Town Centre as a destination for the local community and visitors that is based on its heritage, local town and increases character and successful local businesses and attractions.
- Develop and co-deliver a town centre identity and appearance that is supported through place marketing, local business support, and on-street activity.
- Develop a partner-led approach to tackling underused space and buildings that meets town centre user needs and builds a distinctive experience.
- Manage space within the high street area through a town centre partnership so that it hosts frequent events, festivals, markets and more.
- Manage how people arrive in the town centre and help them explore and find their way around.
- Ensure that all town centre infrastructure is accessible to all with infrastructure ensuring people can travel to and from safely with the right facilities to encourage visits, dwell and linger.
- Enhance the arrival and linkages between the town centre, the Castle and Riverside area, the Drill Hall, develop amenity improvements and on-foot event/activity programme.
- Develop, create and manage green space within the town centre for play, biodiversity and other activities.
- Support community assets through a partnership led approach that forms part of the Chepstow experience, and help their long term viability and their role in the community.

- Improve the quality of the setting of Bulwerk neighbourhood shops and its linkages within the community through a co-ordinated design that addresses the main road, frontages and immediate spaces.
- Support and enable community organisations with buildings, venues and spaces by supporting them to fund and ongoing training and support that improves skills and people based outcomes.
- Support a local partner-led approach to improve under-used outdoor spaces within the community and help local facilities, enhanced quality of public spaces, education, social membership and opportunities for community growing.
- Develop and create accessible, friendly, 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 to various key disease hotspots.

Our Proposals

Presenting the key projects for the town, then visualizing the key proposals for each area in further detail, the key project areas are as follows.

The Town Centre

1 Thomas Street Bus Station

This project offers a great opportunity to completely repurpose the existing bus station 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 will release currently underused land for repurposing 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 complementary use e.g. coffee kiosk with south facing seating / rest area.


- Creation of an improved public transport arrival gateway
- Reduce dominance of large areas of 'dead' paving by reduction of bus bays but not impacting on bus services
- Creation of new quality public realm with integrated green infrastructure
- Activation of space through the introduction of a 'service' use e.g. coffee kiosk
- Improve setting of the church
- Opportunity to relocate disabled parking from Moor Street to Thomas Street, helping to reduce Moor Street congestion

Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Image 8 - Exhibition Panels 7 to 9

The Town Centre

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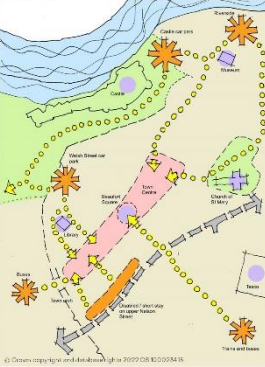


2 High Street Area

A menu of activities to activate, animate and repurpose the Chepstow High Street experience that includes:


Place

- To work with the existing public realm and introduce planting, signage/promotion and re-enforce events/activities space that complements the business offering.
- To provide a Building Grants initiative that is a flexible pot for grant funding to deliver improvements to town centre buildings that will facilitate interventions such as Commercial Property Improvement Grants, Town Centre Meanwhile Uses, and Shop Frontage Enveloping Schemes.
- To co-ordinate frontages and the immediate spaces to create the right draw and experience through a design code and manual for businesses.
- To develop the Welsh Street link public realm with the existing town centre scheme to deliver improved pedestrian link between The Dell green space and playground, Welsh Street car park, Chepstow library/Community Hub and the town centre.
- Explore the creation of short term parking on Upper Nelson Street with an improved link to the High Street, alongside former Herbert Lewis store.



Activity

- To develop a meanwhile/pop-up campaign that complements the existing offer and builds on an emerging identity and brand.
- Create and install outdoor pods that can trial ideas such as cinema, theatre, talks. This can help test ideas in a low cost way before investing in buildings.
- Bring altogether into a co-ordinated town events programme such as Castell Rock Music Festival to the annual Arts Festival through the town's Walking Festival, ensuring town centre space is event-fit.



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The Town Centre

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Place Management

Local organisations are already 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 partnership** that has a focus on how the town centre works together, both operationally and about events and 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.
- A **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, trialling ideas, products, events that act as a springboards for micro-businesses and start-ups.




The Town Centre

8 The Dell Park

Castle Dell is owned privately by the Denny family and has been leased by the council from the family since 1946. 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 Friends of Dell Park Chepstow (FDP) 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. The proposed adaptations and improvements to The Dell Park include:

- 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




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The Town Centre/Riverside


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14 Chepstow Castle/Tourist Information/Museum Public Realm

This area of the town is a key arrival point and gateway for many of the visiting tourists. There is a real opportunity, to create a real sense of arrival here. There is also an opportunity to far better integrate the neighbouring uses into a unified space. Specific activities include:

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



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Prepared by Transforming Towns

Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Image 9 - Exhibition Panels 10 to 12

Lower Chepstow chris jones

15 The Riverfront
 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. On arrival there needs to be a clear sequence of movement from the old Wye Bridge to the river-bank and band stand area.
 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

16 The Drill Hall
 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. Key areas of focus to sustain this building are:
 To ensure the Drill Hall remains as a welcoming and accessible community-led cultural facility.
 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.
 To realise new community and social enterprise opportunities that help to sustain the Drill Hall in the long-term.

17 Upper Church Street/Bridge Street
 Rationalise carriageway
 Reduce junction geometry to increase pedestrian space and slow vehicle speeds
 Enhance pedestrian priorities using crossovers at side junctions
 Improve setting of Alms houses

18 St Mary's Priory Church
 St Mary's Priory Church has come to a cross-roads where it needs to maintain its place of worship within the community, safeguard its historical value but also open itself up to more community and town wide activities and events. 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. Ideas include:
 Activities to include provision for baby and toddler groups, school holiday activities, soft play activities and support groups for young parents
 For young people, areas of the church could be provided for weekly youth clubs including table tennis, pool, music such as safe discos.
 For older people activities such as dementia Cafés, day centre, concerts, theatre, cinema, art 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, etc
 Some proposals that could be trialled or semi permanent include temporary climbing wall and a temporary skate park.




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Bulwark & Thornwell chris jones

9 Bulwark Neighbourhood Shops
 Improve shopper experience.
 Enhance frontages of shops and buildings.
 More public space to sit out, dwell and use.
 Make the road into a street.
 Better pedestrian crossings.
 Links into nearby neighbourhoods.
 More trees and planting.
 Scheme to co-ordinate with relocated Aldi store proposal

10 Bulwark Community Centre
 Enhance existing community assets such as the community centre would aid demand, viability, future sustainability and social cohesion in the area.
 To integrate assets such as Bulwark Community Centre and Pembroke Road Primary School into the local community.





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Bulwark & Thornwell chris jones

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

11 Play Provision
 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

12 Active Travel Links
 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







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Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Image 10 - Exhibition Panels 13 to 14

Garden City
chris jones



13 Play and Sensory Garden

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

14 Links to Coastal Path

- ❑ 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

Kingsmark and Western Edge



15 Welsh Street Linkages

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

16 Active Travel And Community Nature Space

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



Have Your Say – Next Steps
chris jones



Have Your Say:

Thank you for taking the time to view these proposals for Chepstow

You can feedback your comments in a number of ways:

- ❑ Come along to our face to face events on the 8th and 11th October in the town centre and Bulwark
- ❑ View the proposals in Chepstow library from the 12th to the 30th October
- ❑ Viewing the proposals and completing our on-line survey at www.monmouthshire.gov.uk
- ❑ Posting your completed survey at Chepstow Town Council (the Gatehouse) or at Chepstow library by the 30th October
- ❑ If you have a specific comment that cannot be included in the survey, please email us: mccregeneration@monmouthshire.gov.uk or phone Sadie Beer on 07929726220



You can access the survey via either the following link to the website, or by scanning this QR code which will take you to the site:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/fr/chepstowtownsurvey>

Do you agree with our vision?

Do you agree with the proposals

Is there anything missing?

Do you want to get involved?

Next steps...

After the consultation period has finished we will:

- ❑ Read and analyse your comments
- ❑ Share the consultation responses with you
- ❑ Refine proposals and the plan
- ❑ Publish the Plan once formally adopted



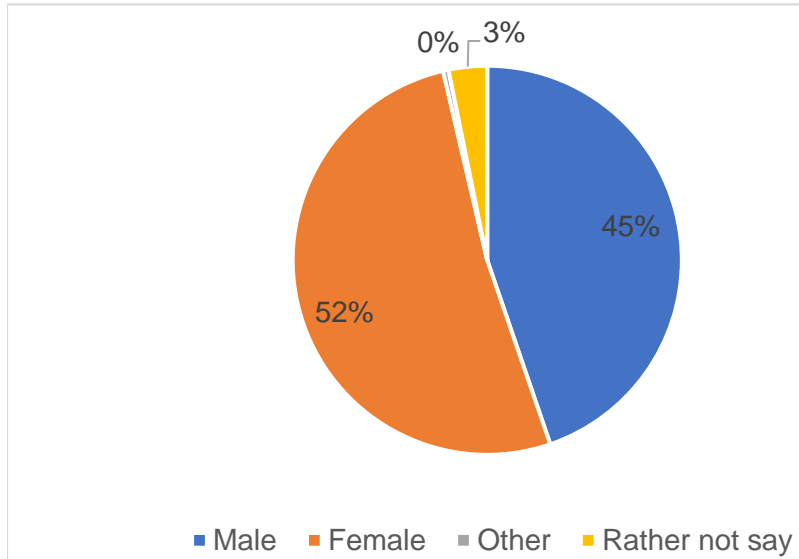
Have Your Say



Source: Chris Jones Regeneration

Respondent Breakdown

Figure 12 - Breakdown by Gender



Source: Community Survey; N=222

Figure 13 - Breakdown by Age

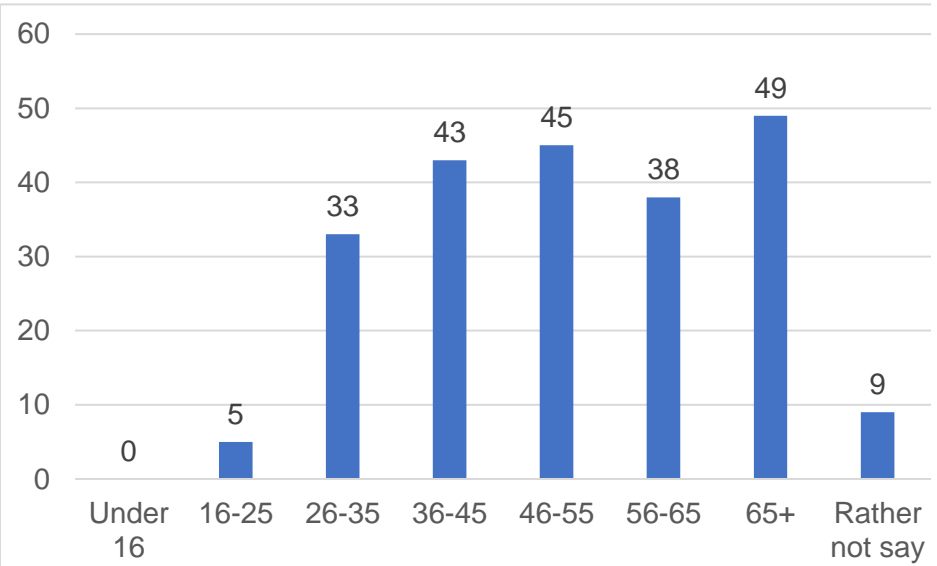
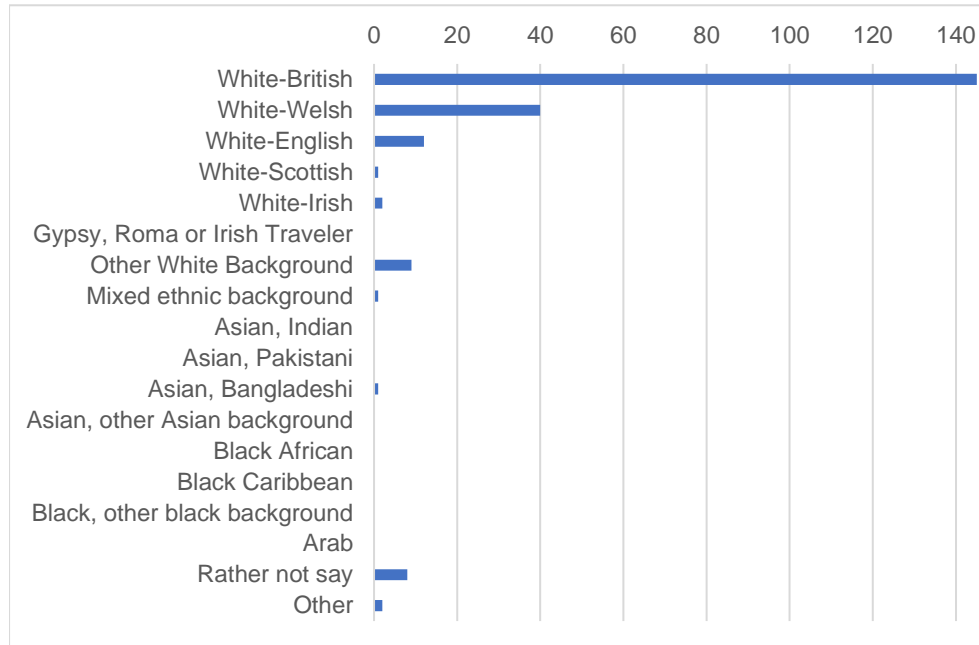
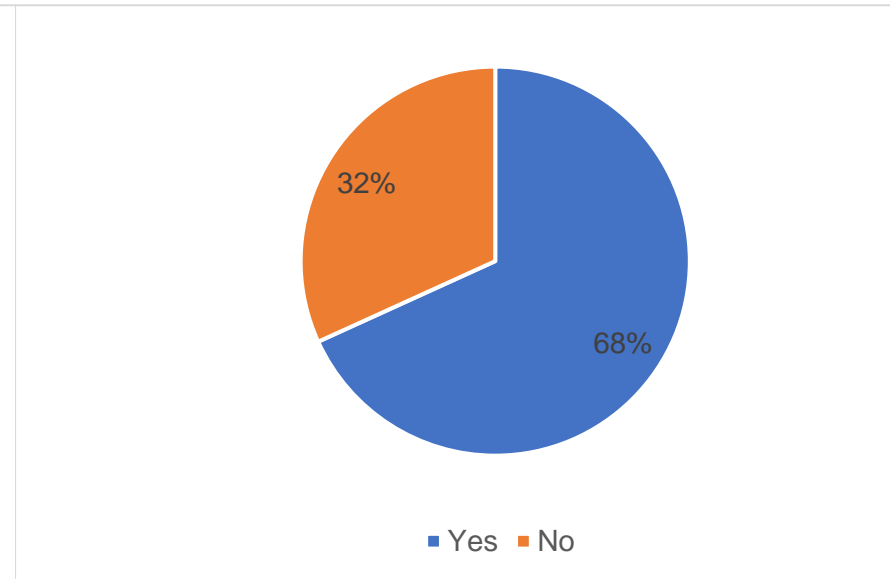


Figure 14 - Breakdown by Ethnicity



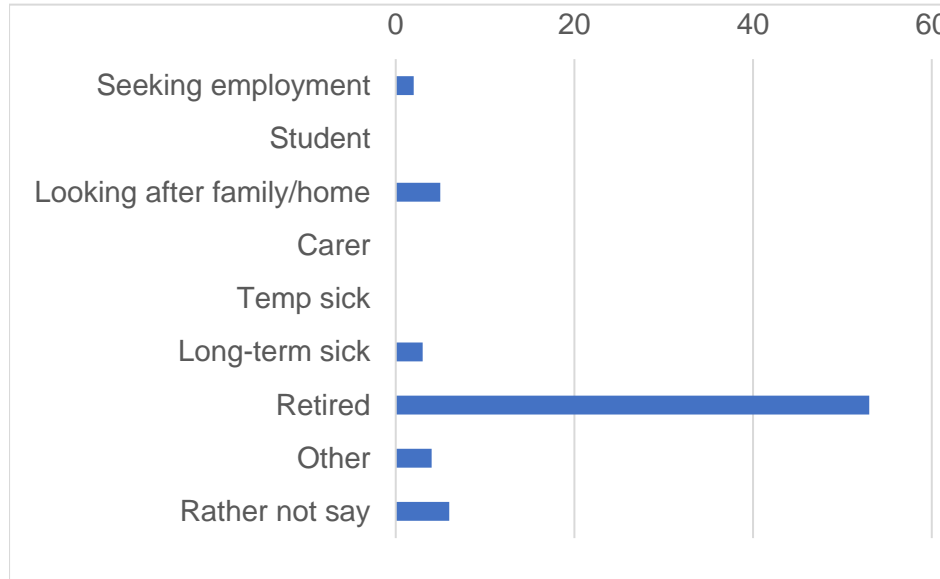
Source: Community Survey; N=221

Figure 15 - Are Respondents Employed?



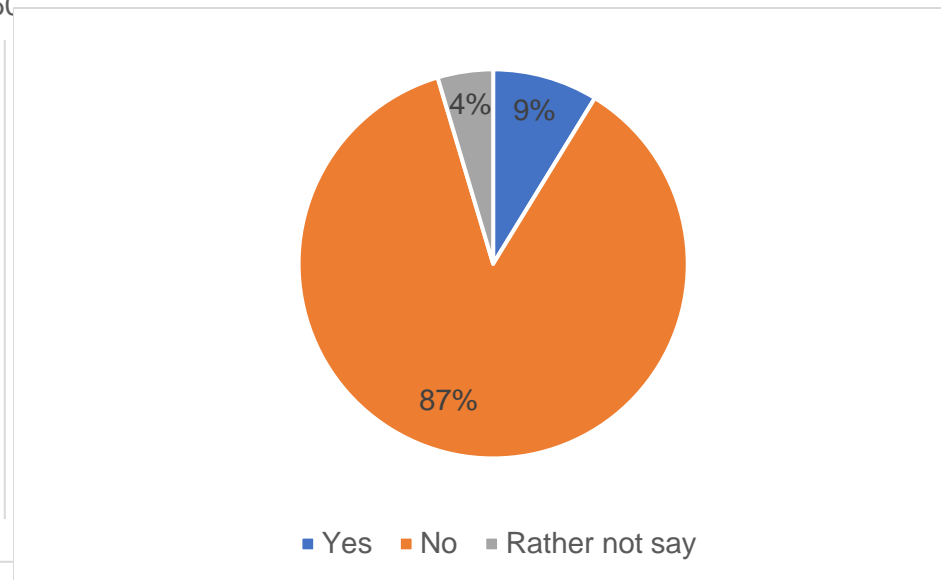
Source: Community Survey; N=217

Figure 16 - If you are unemployed, which one of the following applies to your current status?



Source: Community Survey; N=73

Figure 17 - do you consider yourself as having a disability?



Source: Community Survey; N=217

Further Comments

- Visitors feel lost. Inadequate signage. Questions - where is bus station - where is Bank Street?
- The task is massive to repair years of neglect.
- Please refer to supporting letter of representation
- Improve public toilets
- Too much jargon - at times - what does co-ordinate frontages and co-ordinate spaces to create the right draw and experience through a design code mean?
- Need to attract big businesses and opening hours need to be longer - 9am to 6pm
- Less housing, more infrastructure, less talking, more action. How many more surveys, consultations, public meetings before actual improvements are made. No more introduction of superficial items of improvement whilst root causes of dissatisfaction are not addressed.
- If roading and sports infrastructure are not improved, you are not delivering for
- future generations. The council have an obligation under the Future & Wellbeing Act
- to invest now for the future.
- I doubt any of this or other feedback is included, we all know that consultation is box ticking,
- before you crack on with what you want to do anyway. Another lost opportunity for Chepstow and its
- residents."
- Start as quickly as possible
- The present bus station actually does not have enough bays. Any attempt to reduce them would cause chaos.
- Until the traffic flowing through Chepstow from Lydney direction is addressed - the town will remain polluted, and car focussed.
- Move away from ""Bristol people"" phrase - we need to embrace everyone - make them feel welcome
- Council has a thankless task judging by residents' actions to the High Street in Covid."
- I'm concerned about the proposals for St Mary's Church. Please seek to preserve its voice and mission to our town.
- Improve traffic flow at rush hour
- Make it a special place.
- Green spaces should look natural not contrived
- Better signposting for a history trail - link in blue plaques."

- Don't just write elaborate and expensive plan; start with small effective changes which will bring the greatest benefit to most people
- I think they are quite pedestrian in places & not as developed as they could be. Many of the things like keeping Drill Hall, improving Dell Park, updating Bulwark community centre are surely givens and not aspirational. Surely a place plan should help guide town & county council planning decisions & yet missing reference to key areas in town which feature heavily in LDP? Town centre lacking detailed vision for what people want to make the town unique & a destination for residents & visitors
- We will wait and see
- The involvement of sports clubs, religious communities and local clubs and organisations would help get buy in to the plans and faster implementation.
- All new houses should be passive in nature reducing residents fuel bills and making Chepstow more resilient.
- Push the Welsh Government to expedite the WelTag Study on High Beach Roundabout so there is hope for traffic congestion in Chepstow.
- You state that grants could be available for high street premises. Surely this is down to the property landlord, and not taxpayers.
- "For too long the County Council have muddled by from day to day with no real effort to address the basic problem of having the busy A48 bisecting the town. Twiddling with speed limits, cycle routes, planting flowers and opening coffee shops will never have a positive impact on the lives of Chepstow residents and visitors.
- Talking about improvements and seeking interim solutions to perceived problems will not cut any mustard with the ratepayers of Chepstow. A timetable for construction will give hope and certainty to all affected by the choking effect of the road. In the meantime, it has been of some relief to all that the High Street has returned to two way through traffic reinstating the alternative routes for local traffic. A bypass is the solution to many congestion and safety problems within the town.
- Build it and they will come. The County Council should not hide behind the excuse that money cannot be spent on Chepstow because that would be unfair to Monmouth and Abergavenny. Nor should the Welsh Labour Government's contentment with the road building in Cardiff and subsequent refusal to consider road building elsewhere be used as an excuse not to go ahead with this vital project.

- The County Council and the Town Council should make every effort to ensure this vital road is built. Thereafter will be the opportunity to make proposals about Placemaking and Transforming Chepstow.
- Be bold, represent the community and get this done.
- Do not make bike access through parks, particularly the Danes. It's dangerous and stupid. Could not believe it when I saw that. "
- TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE
- St Mary's R C Primary School needs to be considered and the playground opposite also needs improvement. Safe crossings at the top and bottom entrances are a must.
- "Chepstow will have to address managing (and reducing) motor traffic if there is going to be improvement in many of these aspects.
- Cycling - one aspect that can be encouraged. But geography doesn't help. However, e-bikes could transform this. A plan that involves e-bikes and more traffic-free routes could make this a pioneer destination.
- Tourism - is there any joined up tourism planning with Glos Council/Forest of Dean? Chepstow is a hub for Monmouthshire, Glos and Bristol.....and could be marketed coherently in this way.
- St Marys Church use is a great challenge. And potential opportunity. But some of the visions for it overlap with those of Drill Hall. Perhaps one multi-use space done well is the realistic ambition, not two.
- Get someone with a vision to start designing spaces for people and creating real income and wealth.
- "There is an obvious very desperate need for better public transport links.
- I'm also informed there are plans to enhance all primary schools except St Mary's, could you explain the reasons for this please as it appears very unfair as is.
- Thanks"
- Attracting businesses seems to be missing
- See previous comments about addressing the traffic issues in Chepstow
- Need to be realistic in time scales and what money is available.
- These proposals are great, but they don't solve the problem with Chepstow - the traffic. I have friends who won't visit Chepstow from Bristol / Cardiff as the traffic is so bad....
- Not sure if this is possible, being a private building, but it would improve the town if the ugly closed Barclays Bank were demolished, and an open attractively arranged space with seats and mature trees could be planted in its place.
- Mature trees planted along both sides of the High Street would greatly enhance the area. "

- Be ambitious on developing around natural resources. as all progressive towns do
- All proposals should be considered after the building of the town by-pass route. Whilst this through traffic problem remains, any proposals are tinkering around the edges and will not provide any significant benefits no matter how much resource is mis-spent.
- Connect the M4 and M48 bridges with a new coastal road
- Keep up the good work, not every idea will be a winner but there are more positives here than negatives.
- Expand the services provided at Chepstow Community Hospital and provide a transport link.
- Encouragement for a more diverse shopping and leisure experience.
- Stop talking - start doing!
- High Street to return to pedestrian status, at least on the weekends, with seating areas as they were before the reopening.
- Strict, controlled speed limits to be imposed in town to discourage unnecessary traffic and improve air quality and pedestrian experience."
- Priorities are the Dell Park, bulwark shops and access tunnel from near garden city to river
- We need to make more of a fuss about Traffic congestion. It needs Government Action.
- A town website with a list of events would be very useful - as a new resident I've found it difficult to find out what is going on in Chepstow
- The outdoor spaces seem to revolve around the idea of putting out some chairs and opening a café every 30 yards to make the town look nice. But we've already got a dozen café and coffee shops
- There is no mention in this survey about Garden City and the access tunnel to the new estate. I have been advised that this, once opened, would be for pedestrians and cyclists only. I think this needs to be confirmed.
- These proposals also do not address the general run down feeling of Chepstow, unkempt kerbs, poor road surfaces, litter etc "
- Chepstow has greatly deteriorated in the past decade - poor High Street, A48 problems because of overbuilding of houses without necessary infrastructure and causing pollution, poor leisure facilities, comprehensive school not performing as well as it should, hospital not properly utilised for residents. Chepstow should be vibrant and a great place to live and visit - gateway to Wye Valley, Forest of Dean, Wales, Chepstow Castle, Racecourse, Golf course, riverbank. Chepstow should not be 997 out 1000 for best retail / vibrant place to visit as in national survey in 2021. Chepstow seems to be the poor relation of Monmouthshire with lack of investment. Yet there is so much to offer. We need good shops, traffic flow with less pollution,

integrated public transport, good education and a functioning hospital, respect for green spaces. More action and less continuous consultation please.

- Thank you for all the hard work on these proposals. It's great to see the effort put into improving the local area.
- Be creative with procurement, business rates etc. There are a lot of creatives and talent here. Maybe we could set up a low cost business loan scheme? Introduce a Chepstow currency? Love the direction of travel and partnership approach to the what - but we need to ensure sustainable through the how.
- Too many to list
- How will you prioritise all of these items? Different parts of Chepstow have different needs
- No real substance and not addressing the things that really matter. The infrastructure needs addressing before anything else - enough schools, facilities, traffic - not fluffing around with the bus station and bulwark shops. Aesthetic improvements are a nice idea but there are fundamental problems which need addressing first. Investment in the high street is essential to create a vibrant town that should be on a par with Monmouth and Abergavenny. There is huge untapped potential which this plan will not unleash.
- Just get on with it! Anything will be an improvement on the current town.
- Keep the toilet facilities they are such an asset for community and visitors so much better than most towns and cities
- When we first came to the area in 1985, Chepstow was a lovely little town with nice shops and lots going on. Now it looks as though nobody can be bothered with it anymore. Lots of expensive houses are being built which local people can't afford, making it impossible for our young people to stay in the area. On a starting salary of £30,000 per year you can just about afford a property costing around £180,000, if you already have a decent deposit saved up. How many properties are there around here that you could buy for £180,000? Where are all the so-called affordable homes?
- Please bring in more retailers who can provide local shopping to those with young families.
- Great vision, but even greater priority must be given to active travel and public transport! I believe that in doing this we will create better places for people to linger and socialise. We should take inspiration from how it is done in the Netherlands.
- Overall proposals are good, I would suggest that there needs to be a clearer high level plan for Chepstow that identifies how each area contributes and even a long term plan to redevelop some of the central cites that provide lots of potential but are correctly not adding much to the overall town identity.

- The plans need to identify how Chepstow will connect people to the surrounding areas that draw tourism (e.g., forest of Dean, Tintern, Wye Valley etc)
- It is identified that Chepstow is well connected to walking cycling routes but no provision to support the activities is made in the plans. e.g., a cycle hub (think mud Dock Cafe in Bristol as an example)"
- Without addressing the cross border challenges there will be an improved appearance only. Investment and prosperity will only arrive if congestion improves.
- Improve the coastal path experience near the industrial aspects
- between Bulwark and Hardwick.
- Work to lower rates in the Town Centre to help rejuvenation and employment. "
- Wake up. You're sleep-walking into disaster.
- The bus station should be prioritised
- The challenge is to attract more diversity in retail and high street offerings to compliment the current wonderful shops.
- Public transport links to Bristol and towards Newport and Cardiff could be a lot better
- I understand the government will not build a bypass because it encourages vehicles and likely increase carbon emissions do not reduce. If money wasn't a restriction, having a direct or quicker train link to Bristol would reduce traffic, encourage public transport and reduce carbon emissions
- I really hope something can be done as the general attitude about Chepstow seems really negative. I moved here 3 years ago and would love to make a proper home here for the coming years (looking to buy first house!) and a mood shift is needed in the community in general to feel a bit more hopeful about this.
- Please keep the core issue in mind at all times- to improve it needs to feel like a town, not a through road- cars speeding, thin pavements, lack of safe crossings, lack of easy/ well maintained walkways are what keeps us from engaging more... and with the many new houses being built this won't improve without real work and investment. You can make the town perfect but until it feels more accessible, and less like an afterthought to the A48, people won't come. And this needs to include access from the otherwise of the A48 Bulwark, garden city etc- not just Kingsmark etc. This is both for pedestrian and drivers- some of the turnings (right out of Garden City, right out of Bulwark) are horrible, as are crossing the road as a pedestrian (worse with a pram and I imagine much worse if you're reliant on a wheelchair.) Please make sure residents feel comfortable and enjoy walking/ driving around Chepstow as a priority or you won't get the footfall!
- A48 is a very busy road and there are a number of island crossings which are not addressed as part of making it more attractive to access Chepstow and schools by foot

- Chepstow is an historic town with much character and beauty, ideally situated on the River Wye. Please stop it being choked in traffic. I know Mr. Drakeford has stopped new road building in Wales however there are many ideas out there
- to improve traffic flow and stop the pollution near Hardwick Hill.
- Local community needs to be brought on board with any plans and have an ongoing way to voice their opinions on planned developments.
- There are general negative feelings from the community not being involved in decisions such as opening / closing the high street, lack of warning about planned works and money being wasted on vanity projects without consultation (pedestrian crossing being taken out and reinstated by Superdrug, bin store by the Boat Man). There is also negative feeling towards new residents in the town, particularly aimed at those moved from Bristol who more likely have economic means to booster and bolster the economy but feel unwelcomed in the town.
- For change in Chepstow the whole community needs to be involved and have a say, not led by Facebook poles by the most vocal shouting down any differing opinions to their own. "
- It doesn't address the key issue of traffic congestion to and from the m48 and the impact this has
- Pedestrianizing the centre is not useful. It didn't work for the high street, slows transport and is dangerous - kerbs are there to protect people!
- Remove the speed bumps from bulwark which damage cars and increase emissions (speed up, slow down).
- There's no point ferrying more people to a dead high street. People visit Cribbs Causeway for popular retailers and free parking.
- You've also got the racecourse, with a Sunday Market which brought thousands of people and the opportunity for many events.
- Coleford has a music festival, transport festival and beautiful Christmas lights. Simple things!"
- Please listen to feedback and reach out to communities in surrounding areas that have made a positive impact. Chepstow will not be fixed with a new bus station
- Please start asap :)
- Stop obsessing about the green drives promoted by a minority. What people want is a return to the vibrant market town Chepstow once was. You cannot do this by reducing traffic flow and forcing everyone to walk everywhere otherwise you will have no-one visiting.
- Traffic is the biggest issue to date. We feel prisoners at times as can't get to where we want to go.
- A general Survey of all existing residents for those unable to attend meetings or who have no on-line access

- Main roads through town are too congested. Travelling in to or out of town takes much longer than it should compared to towns of similar size that have more on offer (better stores, green spaces etc)
- Stop building houses for rich commuters from Bristol
- Road improves by pink house as no give way for bus, taxis
- I think that you are trying to make Chepstow into something it's not. It was a market town same as Monmouth and Abergavenny and we should look how they've improved over the years but kept their identity
- There should be a full investigation into how the huge housing development near the station, which will dump thousands more residents and traffic into the town, was permitted with absolutely no transport improvements accompanying it.
- Please improve Chepstow and bulwark shops
- If money is not available to provide all that is proposed, please consider reducing charges on business and residents so that existing shops and services can prosper
- Please sort the traffic out
- Better shops, make the town more interesting, I'm now travelling to Yate shopping get the full package, local shops, supermarkets, coffee, kid's activities, a full day for 17 miles away.
- no parking charges, "
- Have the right people in place
- I'm encouraged by the new CTC and MCC councils and hope they can actually start to deliver on this long overdue attention to Chepstow. As a resident of 20 years all I've noticed is decline and neglect. I am an active contributor to Chepstow societies who use the Drill Hall and would like to see this venue reformed and cared for and focussed on community groups. BCC is also an invaluable space that we should cherish. Thank you!
- Build a bypass! Please! No point spending money on anything else until the traffic situation is improved

Other Email Correspondence

Dear Sadie,

The upgrading of the Chepstow castle area and Bulwark and Thornwell with paving that cars can drive over needs to be implemented in the town centre itself as a priority. Surely transforming Chepstow needs to start with the town centre itself first and foremost of all as well as the other areas included in the masterplan. It looks like the centre of town has been forgotten when it should take centre stage of the transforming Chepstow masterplan and be paved over in the same way as suggested by the castle.

In terms of priority for upgrading and paving it should be town centre first, followed by the Castle area, followed by Bulwark and Thornwell which is only a secondary shopping area not the main town. Priority must be given to the town centre high street itself and hopefully extend to Moor Street before looking elsewhere.

In addition, care needs to be taken with the materials, the laying of the paving to ensure it is fit for purpose and laid properly otherwise it will result in maintenance expense with cracking as a result. This has happened in the shared space area of Shirenewton village and there have been problems with a shared space area of Poynton in Cheshire due to the weight of lorries cracking the paving near the drains. So, the surface it is put on and how it is laid, and its future maintenance needs to be carefully considered prior to laying down to avoid unnecessary future expense.

Active travel links to nearby villages to link in the town to them have not been included. The villages in my ward nearest to Chepstow town are Pwllmeyric, Mathern and Mounton. Active travel links to villages near Monmouth and Caldicot are considered but not to villages near Chepstow town and should be included in this masterplan, particularly if there are developments in the RLDP which are at the top end of the High Beech roundabout.

Also, the need for a Chepstow relief road /by pass and improvements to High Beech roundabout needs to be included in the plan to alleviate the traffic going through Chepstow high street and to make it more feasible to have a pedestrian area in the centre of town for a longer part of the day, which is not possible due to the traffic congestion on the A48.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Chepstow masterplan and please treat this as my consultation feedback.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email 1

Hi Sadie- thanks - I forgot another suggestion. That is the approach to Chepstow from the Severn bridge up to high beech roundabout. Its prone to rubbish - [REDACTED] can fill you in. We could really do with a solution to that problem. It would also be nice if something could be done to make more of the approach to the town from Severn bridge - perhaps a sea of pollinator plants - just as one example. I know that area comes under Sewtra, but I doubt they would mind. Since we are home to the coral Welsh national, it would be nice to have, for example, some wicker horses on the roundabouts - or better if funding available. At the moment, the approach does not say "welcome to the gateway to Wales" - there are lots of things that could be done but wild flowers/pollinators would be great. Something that creates a real positive impression. Some sort of signage indicating any events going on in the town would be good too.

Better signage to indicate we are the gateway to Wales on the approach and that we are walkers are welcome town.

Another idea would be to have some murals painted in the two under passes in town - the one at top end by pink party shop and the other further down going to Tesco. There are so many themes that could be painted on the walls making them more pleasant and less intimidating at nighttime. Chepstow has such a history we would not be short of subject matter to paint.

I think I mentioned new benches for the dell park area, but we could do with new, low maintenance benches throughout the town centre - maybe aluminium? CTC have a horrible history in poor maintenance of benches. I think they have deleted maintenance off their list rather than do something about the matter.

It would be good to catch up on my return - perhaps on phone in case I've missed something. In the meantime, I'll send any other thoughts.

Thanks for getting in touch

[REDACTED]

Email 2

Hi Sadie - another thought is the lack of recycling bins for the public. Also, I remember talking to [REDACTED] about having some screens to put rubbish bags behind - town centre often looks terrible with bin bags out on the street, especially around the Boatman. We had that disastrous attempt by CTC to put those bins in which the public hated - that was not thought through at all.

[REDACTED]

Email 3

Hi again - something else missing is the refurbishment of public toilets. All town centre toilets need refurbishment. The ones on the riverbank by the bandstand are awful. The ones at TIC and in library car park would all benefit from refurbishment/ redecoration. None of them are particularly pleasant. I don't think any of them cater for the disabled - that's something that really should be added to the list.

[REDACTED]

Email 4

Town Gate- there is a space here that typically looks unkept with poor quality advertising. We'd like to see this given over to a professional historical scene relating to Mary Clayton with historical information. The town gate has been here for a long time and the lack of historical representation/information is poor. As is the lack of a decent historical feature relating to William Williams VC winner

[REDACTED]

Email 4

I have a rough design of a sign we would dearly love to see at the bottom end of town re the Welsh coastal path - will forward on return

[REDACTED]

Email 5

Hi again - sorry for all the emails - just sending as I remember/ think of things. I mentioned the need to spend on the museum - I can think of a few exhibitions that would be nice to see - it really needs bringing up to date as well as refreshing. The offering there really does need investment. There is a lot of space outside the museum - perhaps that could be developed in lieu of the suggested tables and chairs on the roadside. There is a lot of unused space there. Some planting to make it more attractive. Perhaps some pop-up stalls for visitors to buy local. With planting that could be an area for tea/ coffee - additional income for the museum. Needs thinking about but definitely something that could be developed

Email 6

Hi Sadie

Just following up on previous email - [REDACTED] old so thought I might as well send you some feedback now. Bear in mind am doing this from afar and without all my files to hand but here is some feedback sooner rather than later.

In general, the consultation lacks detail. A lot of theoretical but a serious lack of actual solutions. For example, within the Town Conversations, there is a reference to pollution. For years we have had an air monitoring station on Hardwick Hill, but we have not had any real solutions to date. I've known MCC to allow the felling of protected trees in the area. We cannot expect Transition Chepstow, a voluntary organisation, to come up with professional solutions. There is a reference to a need to improve infrastructure - yes there is, but what and how? Much was made of this issue when the building works down on the Mabey site for the new housing development was going through planning, but it was ignored.

When we put forward our report on the town in 2017, the Town Council resolved to work with us on the issues raised but they never did - we were left to do what we could working by ourselves or with individuals within MCC who did their best to help. In the minutes of July 2017, there was reference to other, previous reports on the town and how they had gone by the wayside. I have documentation at home going back to the 1980s and I think I have something going back to the 1930s outlining plans for the town, yet it's been on the decline since a previous Clerk, [REDACTED], retired.

My point is - how can we have confidence? The management of the recent High Street configuration during COVID was very detrimental. MCC tend to have good ideas but repeatedly lack the skill to implement successfully. Just look at the A Board debacle.

Same with CTC - just look at the recent issues with the recycling bins next to the Boatman statue. See also the reports that I sent to you in a separate email.

Here are some more specific comments:

1. Thomas Street Bus Station

This is an area very much in need of renovation. It looks seriously "dead end" and not very welcoming at all. We have been asking for help to tidy up this area for years. It took 5 years to address litter issues and around 5 years to get the new bus shelter, which has been a disaster. It "feels" like someone at MCC is determined to kill off trade at the top end of town.

Of great concern is the bus service and the impact on trade. If trade falls, and M&S were to move out, that would be devastating.

What about the taxi service on offer from this area?

in the pictures, no sign of buses and it looks as though there are tables and chairs next to the road. As the previous High Street configuration during COVID, this is not very good from a health and safety perspective and certainly not good having people breathing in vehicle fumes .

The idea of some disabled parking is a good one as this is a major issue in terms of accessing the High Street and was a major issue in the COVID pedestrianisation, which was disastrous.

There are privately owned buildings in this area in serious need of repair. How do you plan to get the landlords to renovate them - take, for example, the building owned by Victory Church. That is quite an eyesore. Myself and [REDACTED] tried to contact the owners some years ago about the state of it but to no avail. Some of the takeaways are owned/ staffed by individuals that have families overseas. All their money goes there rather than investing in improving the buildings. There has been some serious landlord neglect of buildings in this area. This is not an easy one to tackle but needs it.

2. High Street

The changes made during COVID were a good opportunity wasted. The way in which this was managed during COVID created a lot of anger and did a lot of damage to business.

The idea of coordinating shop frontage/ signage is a good one - something we have wanted for some time. Our retail consultant of 2017 came up with the idea of creating a look of a walking through town as though it were a shopping mall e.g. depicting sections

of the town, such as the Tudor looking buildings in Moor St But how will you achieve this given that we have so many private landlords who often expect their tenants to pay for structural renovations? How will you deal with corporate branded outlets?

Short term parking behind the Palmer Centre is a good one - disabled parking would be good. As mentioned above, this was very problematic during the COVID town centre layout.

The market - needs attention and could be a lot better. The placement of stalls is often a headache for businesses on days when they open as it blocks access to their premises. We were involved initially but cut out by a now ex CTC employee - could be a lot better.

3. Place Management

Town Centre Partnership - this won't work if run by Town Council. We need an employed Town Team who are skilled and experienced and not answerable to what are effectively a group of volunteers with a random set of skills and abilities. This team should be based in the town and focus on the town but regularly consult with residents as part of their brief. They should also report in to MCC and form part of the County plans.

Website - we have one, recently went live. This was created as Town Council have consistently failed to support local business and were found to have "waged war." Refer to previous email sent. I can provide you with very specific examples. Re the website - would be fantastic if we could develop that - we have lots of ideas and could get on with them a lot quicker than either council if we could get some funding. We are able to make small amounts of money go a lot further.

Events and activities - again, not if left to Town Council - no business can have faith in them. There is an assumption here that there would be an ease of cooperation - there won't. There is very little good will left. Where events are part of a business' income stream, they will not want to be at the mercy of third parties who could significantly impact income.

Empty properties - this is fraught with problems re rent payments/ insurance etc. We've looked at this several times. There are potential solutions, but they are not straightforward and again, outside the capability of Town Council to successfully manage.

4. Dell Park

This area needs serious attention in regard to benches and bins. Ideally, low maintenance furniture - perhaps aluminum. This would be the case throughout town. We have asked for help from Town Council in the past, only for us to be accused to harassing the

staff, despite Town Council being responsible for maintenance. We now know more about the horrible history of town bench maintenance by CTC.

The footpath through from Welsh St to the Library Car Park needs replacing. Every time we have rain, grooves are cut into it. I then email Nigel Leeway to put it on the list for maintenance. One day, someone will sprain their ankle - I've seen people go over after heavy rain in the area. Makes it very difficult for pedestrians and particularly difficult for prams, wheelchairs, etc. An enhanced play area would be fantastic. This area is prone to teenagers leaving litter and nitrous oxide canisters.

5. Chepstow Castle/TIC/Museum

Again, pub seating and traffic = health and safety hazard and bad for inhaling vehicle fumes.

Rationalising car park access in our main tourist spot is not a good idea. Any reduction in car park access in Chepstow is not a good idea - we actually need more as it is in such high demand.

These proposals could be detrimental to coach access which we need to bring visitors to the area.

Much better and the most obvious improvement would be plans to spend money on the museum itself, refreshing the exhibits and allowing exciting new exhibits to be created. Also, to improve the shop offering.

6. The Riverfront

This seriously lacks detail, "On arrival there needs to be a clear sequence of movement from the old Wye Bridge to the riverbank and band stand area" - seriously? Anyone visiting that area can see how to get from the bridge to the riverbank!!!!

We have proposed "artistic features" which people can post on social media making the area world famous, but all suggestions ignored so far. One suggestion for a particular sign would make us world famous and would not cost a lot - could be paid for by CTC but again, ignored.

7. The Drill Hall

"has rapidly become a major focus in Chepstow's artistic and community life" - really? [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Drill Hall situation created uproar in the community - did you know that local [REDACTED] actually died during one of the meetings about its future?

This is a major project in its own right. Some work has been done by a consultant elsewhere. There are fundamental issues that have been ongoing for years which need to be resolved here relating to the management and the programme. Also, serious implications re parking in the area.

8. Upper Church Street/Bridge St

This whole area needs renovation but involves privately owned properties.

Not sure about these proposals

9. St Mary's

Again, this is a project in its own right. It is a listed building and has £50k of essential maintenance works just as a start point. The proposals are very theoretical - actually implementing them will take significant investment.

10. Bulwark

Again - lots of private landlords and the issues that brings with it but would benefit from improvement for sure.

11. Bulwark Community Centre

It would benefit the town if Community Centres and maybe the Drill Hall were put into a basket and managed away from CTC. They tend to compete with each other - they need better coordination and vision.

12. Thornwell Primary School

What about other schools in the area?

13. Play Provision

No detail

14. Active Travel Links

This is problematic - what we really need is a bypass.

15. Garden City

Can't some of this be improved now?

15. Links to Coastal Path

Chepstow seriously undersold with Coastal Path.

How will you achieve this given involvement from other organisations?

Lack of detail again

16. Kingsmark and Western Edge

Welsh Street - improving safety of children accessing school - YES

Need to provide drop off/pick up zones for parents as this is a major headache.

Another area of annoyance is the number of vehicles that park on the pavement opposite Wilko - pedestrians are often forced onto the road - often with children. inadequate parking enforcement.

Active travel - again lack of detail. Chepstow is very hilly so cycling not for everyone.

OTHER

I mentioned that I am trustee of the Severn Princess Ferry. This could be a significant tourist attraction but needs funding. We've spent a lot of time this year being filmed for TV - ITV's Vanished Wales, S4C, we've been live on Wales Online FB feed. We've just won a GAVO award for Welsh Culture and Heritage. We are currently located on the riverbank down at the Mabey new build site. Promises of funding from the Maybe development were indicated but zero has come forth. This could be an amazing feature on the Welsh Coastal Path, but we need help and funding.

Hope these notes are of help - the consultation document is fraught with issues when you get into the detail. More than happy to discuss and help. For local business, situation is very difficult at the moment. I have plenty of documentation to support the above notes if of any help.

Regards



[REDACTED]

Email 7

Forgot to say - attached our report on the town from 2017

Also, for all sorts of reasons, we've put together a town/business website which we'd like to see supported and developed Visit Chepstow – Visit Chepstow – The gateway to Wales.

We've also been working on other projects relating to town trails and maps for several years - we are currently creating a new version which will be printed in a specific way - draft attached FYI. All pulled together by volunteers and donations. Would like to see a future for them given the huge amount of time and effort that has gone into them.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Dear MCC,

Can you please confirm the reasons why proposals to enhance The Dell, Thornwell and Pembroke are included in the Chepstow Town regeneration plan, whereas a proposal to enhance St Mary's RC Primary has not been included?

As a parent of one of the pupils, PTA member and former Clerk & RFO to SACC, I am concerned by this. Are the children of St Mary's not also worthy of council funded improvements to their school? This doesn't seem egalitarian, particularly as its a small school meaning the PTA would command less funding than the others.

Can this please be reconsidered?

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email

Having viewed your consultancy proposals for Chepstow, I am disappointed that you recognised and are making recommendations for improvements to three Primary Schools namely Thornwell, Pembroke and the Dell , but no mention of proposals for St Mary's RC Primary School in Bulwark, as a school we urgently need pedestrian crossing at the school entrance in Old Bulwark Road, and opposite the church in Bulwark Road , we have had two near misses of cars colliding with staff and children .

It is also noted that St Mary's has provided 16 placements for Ukraine refugees since May 2022, two have moved to higher education, two have moved back to Ukraine and one moved to Tutshill Primary on appeal against their initial application. In addition, we have 27.9% of pupils with additional learning needs compared to say the Dell with 5%, so we as a school are certainly serving the Chepstow community.

Can you please feedback why we have blatantly been overlooked in this review.

Regards

[REDACTED]

Chair of Governors

[REDACTED]

Hello

I am Vice-President of the [REDACTED] and have read your Study with interest.

Until recently I was leading a project to commission a statue of William Marshal ('The Greatest Knight') to be placed in front of Chepstow Castle- his base. In case you are not familiar with Marshal I attach a note about his life from which you will see that he was a remarkable man and one who could be used to increase tourism to Chepstow.

Chepstow needs tourism as it's trade is overshadowed by Cribbs Causeway and the statue plus an exhibition in the museum would generate interest.

I abandoned the project for health reasons and because I didn't think that raising money for a statue was appropriate in these difficult times, but I do think that this project would be of much benefit to Chepstow.

Regards,

[REDACTED]



WILLIAM MARSHALL – THE GREATEST KNIGHT

Possibly the most famous, influential and iconic man to be based in this county was William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke and Lord of Striguil (Chepstow) 1147 – 1219.

Books, films and television programmes have been made about this remarkable man who had his base in Chepstow Castle. He acquired this due to his marriage to a local noblewoman Isabel de Clare. Her family had extensive land holdings in England, west Wales and Ireland but her base was Chepstow Castle.

He was born of lowly stock, sentenced to death at the age of five, survived and owing to his amazing prowess in the jousting tournaments, rose to become the trusted supporter and right-hand man of five kings and was known and respected throughout Europe simply as 'The Marshall'

At the age of seventy he led an army which fought off a French invasion in 1217 after the death of King John and then became the Regent of the kingdom during the infancy of John's son, Henry III.

Perhaps his most lasting legacy however was his part in making Magna Carta the revered document that it is today.

When the struggle between King John and the Barons was at its height, and threatening to turn into civil war, Marshall was one of two trusted intermediaries (the other being Archbishop Stephen Langton) who helped to preserve the peace with the agreement at Runnymede in 1215 known as Magna Carta.

However, King John petitioned Pope Innocent III immediately and, with the Pope's support, abrogated Magna Carta shortly after he concluded it, and it was only due to his fortunate death in 1216 that the situation was saved.

His son Henry became King Henry III at the age of nine and by universal consent, Marshall became ruler of the kingdom as 'guardian of the kingdom' (in effect Regent) during Henry's infancy.

His first task was to reassure the barons that King Henry would not follow his father's duplicity by re-issuing Magna Carta in 1216 and thus establishing Magna Carta as the guarantee of the rule of law that is respected throughout the world today.

He is buried in Temple Church in London.

Email from a Local Resident

In response to your proposed plans, please see my views below:

Firstly, I suggest you leave it the hell alone. The demise of the Chepstow area and high street is at the hands of the council and town council already.

We used to have a thriving community which hosted lots of events, such as the annual carnival and hogging the bridge, which were fantastic for locals and tourists alike.

Sadly, the town council didn't like the success of these events nor the money it generated to small business, so closed them both and Caldicot in their wisdom grabbed both events with both hands - and good on them! The people of Chepstow now travel to Caldicot to support their businesses instead.

Chepstow keeps being labelled as a "market town" an identity it lost some years ago, when the council decided it would be a great idea to over build with thousands and thousands of new and unnecessary houses, turning Chepstow into a commuter town. As the council would have been fully aware, the infrastructure was not in place to support such over building and yet they act surprised that there is now a problem with traffic volume. As the council would also have been fully aware of, people do not eat, drink, shop or socialise in commuter towns. They do that in the cities where they work - again the council then acts surprised that many of the pubs and restaurants have reduced opening hours, the number of days they are open or have closed all together.

The council then decided to close the high street for two years, which was the final straw in the camel's back and no amount of money thrown at the high street now, will get people back. Why would they? In those two years they discovered the ease of shopping online and ventured else where to find lovely places to eat. Again - all thanks to the council.

The same council then decided to litter the high street with lop sided wooden monstrosities full of weeds, ensuring the high street lost all aesthetic curb appeal.

The monthly market became weekly and sprawled itself so much that the shops that used to open on a Sunday had no choice but to close, as people couldn't access the high street or the shop front. Well done there, for supporting what few shops we have left.

The same council then built a bus shelter, under a bus shelter (money well spent I am sure) which does little more than now reduce the ease in which the public may walk down the path, passing and talking to people waiting for their buses. This same bus stop also

makes manoeuvring a wheelchair or buggy from the pavement up the ramp to Marks & Spencer nigh on impossible, again driving such people, the latter of whom will be the ones actually around by day to utilise the high street, elsewhere.

The only part of town which is thriving is the lower part by the tourist information and along the riverside. Why? Because the council / town council haven't got their claws into it. Your proposals to throw money at destroying what little life we have left in town, down by the castle and riverside will be nothing short of full suicide for the entire of Chepstow.

You talk in your proposal of pop-up places for cinema, theatre and talks. We already have that, usually hosted at the Drill Hall and Chepstow school - thanks to independent people such as the Bookshop. Likewise, Castle Rock remains a great success year on year, because that too is run independently. I sincerely hope Matt & Carol refuse to hand over the reigns of their enterprises to the town council, or many years of hard work will all be wasted, as I am sure the town council will have destroyed both in no time. The town council refused to even hang the bunting for the Nashville day (another event that is run independently), so instead volunteers from the fire brigade stepped in. You see, we do still have a community here. A community that is being drained of energy and resources in fighting the council to try and retain a little of what is left.

So, my opinion as a local resident who lives in the high street and yet wouldn't step foot in it anymore, is - LEAVE IT ALONE! You've done enough damage. Spending hundreds and thousands of pounds trying to scrape back what we had, and you threw away, is futile. Every single member of Chepstow Town Council should be ashamed of themselves.

I appreciate that this survey is simply a process and not a single opinion of residents or local business owners means a jot.